

# WOLVES OF GOD



A ROLE-PLAYING GAME OF DARK AGES ENGLAND  
BY KEVIN CRAWFORD



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A Role-Playing Game of Dark Ages England  
by Kevin Crawford



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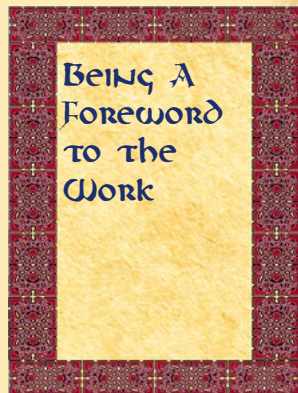
**I**T WAS TO THE universal excitement of all ludologists of antiquity when the document now known as the Rathmore Codex was discovered in 1998, unearthed during construction at Homerton College in Cambridge. I hardly need to rehearse the remarkable qualities of this document or the interest it garnered among scholars, but I fear a certain amount of explanation is necessary if the present publication is to be put in its correct scholarly context.

Ludologists of post-Roman Britain have been painfully limited in their source evidence. Aside from a few fragments of Pictish treasure tables and the discovery of a debatable Briton weapon-versus-armor matrix scratched into a sword blade, the early evidence is almost nonexistent. Only the discovery of the Bolingbroke Road manuscript in 1975 cast the slightest light on the development of RPGs in pre-Conquest England and that manuscript was clearly written in reaction to a significantly older tradition.

The Rathmore Codex appears to be the keystone to the mystery. Authored by a monk of Jarrow in 710, it is a compendium of contemporary gaming practice and traditions. The “Brother Cornix” who appears to be the primary contributor included everything he knew about the customs, practice, and implementation of role-playing games in Anglo-Saxon England at the time. The physical artifact itself was in astonishingly good condition thanks to the peculiar circumstances of its preservation, which need not be repeated here, and it seemed as if this Rosetta stone of early gaming practice was soon to be in wide circulation.

Unfortunately, the publication of a critical edition of this vital work has been lamentably delayed for more than two decades now. Despite numerous excerpts and fragments published over the years in ludological journals, efforts to produce a single, properly-edited critical edition of the text have foundered on a series of setbacks and personal complications. It is not necessary to remind readers of the unfortunate affair of Mr. Featherstonehaugh and the all-too-early death of Professor Grinton-Smythe, but it is a regrettable fact that there is no expectation of any imminent publication of the work.

In the hope of providing some practical material for scholars outside that charmed circle which has access to the physical text, I have produced



this modest translation of the Rathmore Codex. I understand the somewhat scandalized reaction of certain fellow scholars at producing such a popularized translation, and the effort would doubtlessly have been improved enormously by the contributions of more able researchers than myself, but at this late date it seems to me that something must be put before the public if the Rathmore Codex is not to languish in wholly unjustified obscurity.

I have made certain alterations and adjustments to the text to aid the understanding of modern readers, and note significant edits to the RC manuscript in the footnotes. These notes are also used to provide clarifications on vague points of play or obscure gaming practices. I have at no point attempted to harmonize Brother Cornix's worldview with more contemporary values; such a choice should not be interpreted as a moral judgment on the editor's part, aside from the judgment that it is best to let the past speak in its own voice. If using this material at the table, it will be for individual groups to adjust the details of the setting to best suit their own tastes.

Kevin Crawford  
2020



**L**ISTEN! **We are the** English, the sons of conquerors and the fathers of kings, who came over the whale-roads to whelm the Wealh and take from them the land they had lost by their weakness. We are a great people, in sin and strength alike, and God has used us for His ends. Once we were His wolves upon the wicked, to wound the faithless and condemn their crimes, and now we are His children in the true faith. But our sins hang heavy on our hearts yet, and a shadow falls upon us from the deeds we have done.

I write this book so that the gamesmen of other lands may know of us and our ways, and may play at our mighty deeds as they do their own. The dicers of the Franks may add English heroes to their tale-makings, the Greeks may smile at our customs from the carved halls of Constantinople, and even the distant men of Tang may make curious stories of our far-off isle in that land of silks and strangeness. We are a poor people before the riches of Rome and the splendors of the Persians, but we are conquerors still, and our tales are worthy of telling.

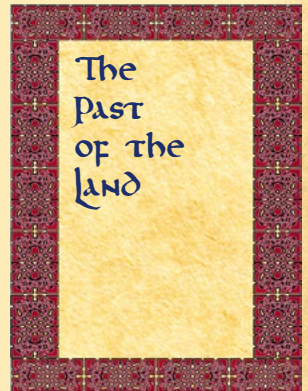
Few are the gamesmen who can bear to be told ten thousand things before the dice rattle on the board, so I spare for now the many things I might say, and tell you only what you must know to fashion a hero of your own, and what grave perils await the work of your thoughts.

**FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS** Rome ruled Britain and its people, appointing its lords and instructing the Wealh in their ways, making the land richer than any in all the North. But so thoroughly had the Romans broken the Celtic kings that few among them were found fit to bear the sword, and so the legions sought for strong men from other lands to serve as their auxiliaries. Our fathers were first among these warriors who came over. Our own lands were poor, and the waters were rising year by year and drowning their halls upon the shore.

For a long golden season the Britons grew wealthy and grand. They raised cities of stone under Roman tutelage, and the Artifexes of Rome taught them secret ways by which wondrous Arxes and sorcerous marvels were wrought by their sages. They scattered rich villas upon the hillsides, where slaves labored to bring sweet wine to the lips of languid

*Effective Roman rule lasted from around 43 to 410 AD.*

*Britain became an important Roman province, with much wealth.*



masters. Roman saints made Christians of the Britons in Constantine's time, though some lingered in the worship of false gods and made sacrifices to Mithras or Isis in their temples in Londinium. They wore the Roman toga and spoke the Roman tongue and forgot the war-chariots of their fathers and the feel of the spear in their fist.

But ten generations ago, Rome released its grasp upon the island, for the empire was scourged by heathens and tormented by barbarian spears. It called home its legions and left the Britons to their own devices, telling our fathers to find their own food in labor upon the land. No sooner had Rome's legions left than Rome's peace departed with them, and the Britons turned upon each other like furious beasts, frenzied and tearing at each other for the avenging of grudges and the seeking of gain.

But they were only *Wealh*, and while their hate was strong, their hands were weak. They loved cleverness too much, and cunning words, and womanish artifices of deceit and subtlety. They went to our fathers and begged their aid, offering the riches of their prosperous lands in exchange for our spears. Our ancestors called over the whale-roads to their kinsmen on the continent, and bade them come and fight for the Britons. Year by year, more came to aid these British lords for British bread and silver.

For a time we fought for the land's lords, but their sin was great, and where *Wrath* was found, so too was *Avarice*. They stinted their silver and begrudged their bread, until our fathers grew furious, and took with their own hands what was not given freely. More and more of our people came from over the sea, to swell our steadings and conquer the unworthy holders of this land. The *Wealh* had worn themselves out with their strifes and killings, and the brave among them were already dead. They had no hope against our spears.

In some places we slew, slaughtering every Briton that could not flee us and burning their cities of stone. In other places we were content to conquer, making ourselves lords of British peoples and commanding that they labor for our food. In a few, we made ourselves allies to *Wealh* lords who still had strength to oppose us. But all through the good land of England there were none who could drive us out. The *Wealh* ran, hiding themselves in the shadows of the mountains and the hollows of the hills, seeking refuge with the Picts in the north and fleeing to ancient fastnesses in the western depths.

They dwell there still, cursing us year upon year for what we have taken from them. We fight them every war-season, raiding and being raided, slaying and being slain. Their bishops will not even break bread with our own

*Starting in 410, Rome was forced by internal turmoil to cut Britain loose.*

*Britain fell into anarchy, outside raiding, and civil strife.*

*The English came as mercenaries, raiders, and colonists, adding to settlements that dated back to Roman times.*

Britons  
don't  
all hate  
English, but  
unconquered  
ones are still  
hostile.

There are  
several  
major  
English  
kingdoms  
and  
numerous  
petty ones.

but left it to Roman missionaries to make Christians of us. There are times when a peace is made between a Briton king and an English one, though only ever to make mischief. They are friends to our exiles and vagabonds, and good companions to usurpers and oathbreakers, for they know that such men will bring bloodshed upon their kin.

Now we of the English peoples rule all the good parts of the island, leaving only the desolate north and unprofitable west to the Wealh. Our land is divided into several kingdoms, each belonging to one of the kindreds that came over the sea. The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes together make up the English tribes, and their several kings are as often at war with each other as they are at peace. Each is eager to make himself *bretwalda* over all England, overlord and greatest of all the kings of the isle, and they use sword and scheme alike to get their way.

**YET FOR ALL OUR** glorious past, England suffers now under harsh troubles, ones earned by our own godless wickedness and the enmity of old foes. Each of these troubles requires heroes to rise up and dispel them, to smite the forces of Hell and upbraid the intriguers among men. Common ceorls have no hope to overcome such troubles, but only brave gesithcund who fear neither devil nor man.

## OUR PRESENT TROUBLES

Some degree  
of warfare  
between  
English  
kingdoms  
is a normal  
state of  
affairs.

*Primus*, we war among ourselves. Kings fight kings, ealdormen fight ealdormen, and gesith fight gesith. Even common ceorls will take up the spear to avenge some slight or seek some passing gain. Royal law is bent and broken, and *wergild* goes unpaid. Some lands are stronger and better-ruled than other, but no king sleeps easy in his hall, and every man knows well that a bloody raid may meet him and his herds on the morrow. We need peaceweavers to bind up our self-made wounds and teach us to honor the law.

*Secundus*, we war with the Wealh. While they are a beaten race in many places, docile beneath our hands, the free lords in the north and the last of the Roman kings in the west remember old grudges. They send raiders to plunder our halls and steal our cattle, and encourage outlaws and usurpers with shelter and aid. Some Wealh kings can be bargained with, and sometimes a lasting peace can be made, but it takes a wise man to best the cunning Britons at all the works of speech. If they cannot be tamed with words, they must be broken with steel if our people are to have peaceful enjoyment of the land. Dumnonia has fallen to King Ine of Wessex, but much remains to their lands.



*Tertius*, we are tormented by heretics and pagans. So much did some Wealth hate us that they pledged loyalty to Hell or to false infernal doctrines, winning Satan's aid in exchange for their friendship. These heretics and apostates hide in the dark places of the world, creeping forth from Roman ruins and empty towns where they nurse their fury and offer foul sacrifices. Almost so bad are the pagans who have never accepted the true God's faith, who dwell in the southern forest and northern wilds, who make bargains with dark things to get the strength they need and who take what they will from their godly kinsmen. The holy saints in their minsters struggle against such godlessness, but they are men and women of peace.

*Servants of Hell call on dark and terrible magics.*

*Quartus*, we are afflicted by the Arxes and the remnants of the cities. When the Roman Artifexes built these caesters, they crafted the hidden dwellings that are called Arxes as places of security and secret wisdom. Many were the Britons who fled into them to escape us, shutting fast the hidden doors and hiding for long generations in the secret places below. They are turned strange and terrible now, monsters rather than men, and the doors of the Arxes are opening to unleash them upon us. The Roman cities are places of peril, full of hideous things, yet men also find in them all the riches of a Rome that fell long ago.

*Arxes are pocket dimensions within ancient Roman buildings.*

And *quintus*, we are yet a poor and ill-adorned race. Our kings must ride from hall to hall if they are to get enough to eat. There are but four settlements in all England that could be called towns, and they are merely meeting-places for traders. Even the richest of us, the Jutes of the kingdom of Kent in the south, are meager compared to the Franks over the sea, and they are but beggars before the glory of Rome. We must have sages and exemplars to lift us out of our poverty and ignorance, so that we may be rich as the Britons once were.

*The English are very poor and even the rich sometimes go hungry.*

These are the woes our people face<sup>1</sup>. May your heroes find ways to overcome them, and give us a better future than presently prepared for us.

---

1 Brother Cornix's impression of the English past is doubtless colored by his own preconceptions, but is a fairly close match to the history related by his colleague, the Venerable Bede. If nothing else, it seems to be an impression widely shared by English of the time.

The historicity of it, however, remains up for debate. The traditional interpretation of the English Settlements laid heavy emphasis on genocidal levels of violence and the forcible expulsion of the native Britons, while some modern scholars have conversely argued for a largely bloodless migration of English groups who culturally absorbed and largely erased the existing British communities.

While the historical truth of the matter is consequential for scholars, the English of Cornix's day clearly had their own traditions... and acted on them accordingly.



**THE ENGLISH ARE** a fierce and mighty host, fell-handed and grim, and our women bring forth heroes. Our folk are not without sin or shame, but our spears are swift to battle and our scopps sing long of our great deeds. If you would play at being a hero of England, you must make one worthy of such a great name. Mudfooted thralls and gibbering foreigners will not serve to earn the glory of our English story and song.

Remember also that a hero does not stand alone in their story. The scopps have many tales to tell, and a mere name or glimpse in one may glint of a different legend, one equally proud. You will have companions around the hall-fire, friends at mead and meat, and you must not seek so much glory that there is none left for them. Together you must make your heroes, and together you must gain your fame. To desire to go alone is to shame your spear-brothers<sup>1</sup> and be over-proud of ambition. What is a war-leader without his warband, or a king without his beloved thanes? Do not be a mere gray-clad wanderer, treading the whale-roads and walking the hart's highway, alone and without friend or faith.

So too, the rules in these pages will show you how to make your bold adventurer, but do not be a thrall to man-marked ink on pale parchment. If your band of gamesmen has their own thought to the right way to manage a matter, then let it be done as you and your companions think best.

Listen, then, and I will tell you how to make an English hero. From the first strong sinews of the mortal body to the crown of reason and high ambition, you will learn what makes a mighty champion of our people.

---

1 While Brother Cornix assumes a male audience, Anglo-Saxons were not as patriarchal as some other societies of the time. Women had rights by law and custom, and they were considered people in their own right, and not merely the dependent of a father or husband. They owned property and disposed of it as they saw fit, and their oaths were credited in legal matters. Wives managed a family's resources, and abbesses invariably ruled the "double monasteries" that held both monks and nuns.

Women, however, were traditionally part of the domestic sphere of Anglo-Saxon society. They were not normally warriors or adventurers, and while the occasional spear-maiden might know something of war or a *waelcyrige* might be thought blessed with battle-sight, they were not expected to fight or be fought. As many players will wish to play female characters in more than political or domestic roles, GMs are advised to make room for "remarkable women", war-heroines, *waelcyriges*, battle-queens and galdorwives who fill roles that might have been reserved for men. If a player wishes to play such a remarkable woman, let the world treat her as befits her chosen role.





**God grants men their** lot in unequal shares, some with many gifts of grace and others going forth with empty hands. It is not mete for men to be all alike in ability. It is by struggling with what we have not that we often come closest to pleasing God, while those who are greatly gifted most easily plunge into pride and a foolish fall. So do not be saddened if you learn that your hero is not so graced as you might wish.

There are six numbers by which we measure the might of a man's mind and limbs. These are the **ATTRIBUTES**. They are measured on a scale from three to eighteen. Three is the least and worst, signifying a weakness so great that the hero must rely on the

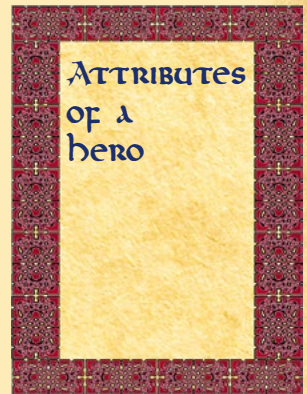
Holy Trinity alone to support him in it, for only God's grace can help him if he be thrown upon its need. Eighteen is the greatest and strongest, for it is twice nine, signifying double completion of all natural fullness,

**STRENGTH** is a measure of the hero's might of arm. Three means that they are a weakling, scarce able to lift a man's spear and given to groan under the weight of a burden. Eighteen is for a bull of a man, one who can lift a strong warrior from his feet with but one arm and break an oaken hall-table with one great blow.

**DEXTERITY** marks the swiftness of their limbs and keenness of their aim. Three is a palsied man, clumsy and numb-handed, untrustworthy with a bow or hurled spear. Eighteen is for one light-footed as the breeze and swift as a spring flood, who knocks starlings from the air with pebbles and passes laughing through the bared blades of foemen.

**CONSTITUTION** is the heart and hardiness of a man. Three is one sickly and nigh to death, who groans at small pains and falls in the furrow before half the field is ploughed. Eighteen is for a man who scorns sleep, who will swim the whale-roads for hours without pause and who will fight for half a day without asking halt for rest.

**INTELLIGENCE** is the reason and memory of a man, his power to learn and retain what he has learned. Three is a simpleton, who understands nothing that does not stand before him or rest within his own hands, who can be taught nothing of letters or cunning thought. Eighteen is a man of great learning, more read than a Wealth bishop and swift to remember all the words he has stored up in his heart.



*Strength  
is bodily  
might.*

*Dexterity  
is quickness  
and agility.*

*Constitution  
is hardiness  
and physical  
endurance.*

*Intelligence  
is memory  
and wit.*

**WISDOM** is for judgment and keen perception, the understanding that shows the truth of a matter and the right road to go. Three is a fool, incontinent in passions and blind in perceiving what is about him. Eighteen is a sign like a saint's own clear understanding, seeing the truths in men's hearts and counting every leaf on a tree with but a passing glance.

*Wisdom is judgment and insight.*

**CHARISMA** is the attribute of kingliness and faithful friendship, the grace that makes men yearn to follow and obey. Three is for a scorned and contemptible man, such that even sound speech he utters is disdained because it comes from his mouth. Eighteen is for one mantled in lordly bearing, bright and heart-helping, such that men would liefer follow his folly than go a wiser way.

*Charisma is charm and presence.*

To mark the gifts of your hero, roll 3d6 six times and place the numbers where you will, choosing for yourself how your hero is to be measured. If none of the numbers are 14 or greater, there has been a mistake, for no English hero is wholly without gifts. Change one of your numbers to 14, and tell your companions a few words about how your real gift became clear to your kinsmen.

*Roll 3d6 and assign numbers where desired.*

If you would prefer not to trust your hero's doom to God's pleasure, you may instead put these numbers into your attributes in whatever order you desire: 14, 13, 12, 10, 8, 7.

*Or else assign 14, 13, 12, 10, 8 and 7.*

**Now that you have** marked the attributes of your hero, you must mark their **ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS**. This is the number which is added to or subtracted from your die rolls when your attribute modifies a roll. I will guide and instruct you on when you are to apply the modifier.

Note on your character sheet the modifier for each attribute. Thus, if your Intelligence score is 15, write "+1" for it, while a dim-eyed hero with a Wisdom of 5 would record a "-1" for that attribute's modifier. If the cruel scars of battle or the chance blessings of fate lessen or increase your attribute scores, your modifiers may change as well.

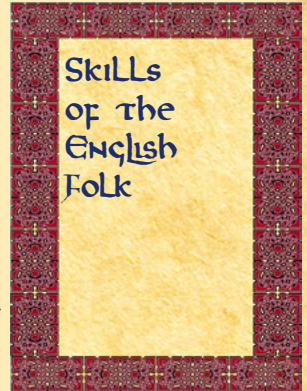
*Write the modifier for each attribute beside it.*

## ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Score	Modifier
3	is -2
4-7	is -1
8-13	is +0
14-17	is +1
18	is +2

Do not be forlorn if your hero is not glorious in all ways, or if he should have fell failings in some form. A hero will prosper or perish based chiefly on the choices you make for him. Fair dice can give you victory when the matter is in doubt, but they are no substitute for cunning thought. The wise hero makes prudent plans and does not give ill luck an easy road to reach him.

**We of the English** do not command the great skills of old. We have not the stone-cunning of the Romans, nor the sorcerous arts of their Artifices, nor the secrets of silk-making as do the far-distant Tang. Our halls are simple, of carved wood and painted walls, and our wares are fashioned by humble hands. But we have our skills, and they were art enough for our fathers to take this land.



*Skills are rated from level-0 to level-4.*

Each skill is named and measured in degree. The smallest degree of competence is level-0, the proficiency of an ordinary practitioner without exceptional skill. Level-1 belongs to the veteran of the skill, one that others respect for his craft. Level-2 is a splendid artist in the work, the finest in a hundred. Level-3 marks one so skilled that there is likely not his better in all his kingdom, and level-4 signifies the soul who is among the greatest of that art.

*New PCs never have a skill rating above level-1.*

As your hero is but young in their story, their own skills will be at level-0 or level-1, to grow better with time and great deeds. As you choose your past and decide your present, you will be told which of these skills your hero bears.

Some skills have double purpose, such that they might both be fitting for a particular end. A great poet of Rome might be a man known both to a scholar's Ken and a scop's Perform, while drawing a bow to slay a leaping hart might be both Shoot and Hunt. In such matters, your hero may use whichever of the skills seem best, as the GM thinks proper. If the skill seems close but not quite right, then apply a -1 penalty to the skill check.

*Roll 2d6 plus your skill level plus an attribute modifier to equal or beat a skill check's difficulty score.*

To use a skill successfully, you must roll 2d6, add your skill level, and add the ability modifier that is most relevant. If you have not even level-0 in a skill, take a -1 penalty, if the GM allows you to try at all. If the total is greater than or equal to the difficulty of the check, you succeed. If less, either you fail outright, or you succeed in a way that does not help you, or are cheated of success by cruel *wyrd*.

**CONNECT**, to find friends in far places, to know who is master in a place, and to know who to seek when a certain thing is desired.

**CRAFT**, to build and repair all the things known to the English.

**EXERT**, to swim, climb, run, lift, and exert your form mightily.

**GIFT**, which is how we English commonly trade, gifting one thing for another, even if both know full well that it is a mercantile matter.



**HEAL**, to cure the sick and mend the battle-bloodied ally. Great marvels of healing can be accomplished through a saint's prayers, but oftimes no more than mortal help can be found for a friend.

**HUNT**, to take game with snare and arrow and boar-spear, to know where it may be found, and to know the habits and manners of beasts.

**KEN**, to know what scholars know, such as the tongue of Rome and the history of men and all those things which are found in books.

**LEAD**, to make men brave for war and obedient to kingly commands. One who can lead will get others to follow even when they fear it.

**MAGIC**, known by galdorcrafter and other men who meddle with things unloved by God. Only they may learn this skill, to their soul's woe.

**NOTICE**, to see what is subtle and sense what is hidden, either in men's speech or in the deep weald's boughs.

**PERFORM**, to sing as the scop does and know the old stories, that you might give men courage and wisdom by your words.

**PRAY**, like the saints do in their holiness, knowing of God and of the Church and how both are to be served.

**REEVE**, managing land and ceorls and thralls alike, seeing that work is done and the rent-*feorm* is gathered, and knowing much of the tricks of the low and the greed of the great.

**RIDE**, to sit well on a horse, and keep hale one's mount, and cure of it sicknesses and wounds.

**SHOOT**, whether hurled spear or strung bow, all things that fly through the air may use this skill to discern their success.

**SMITE**, to strike a foe with fist or foot alone, and to wrestle and fight without weapons. This skill is useful in sport, but oft a swift death in true battle.

**SNEAK**, to prowl unnoticed, hide things so they cannot be found, to travel without leaving traces, and to neatly open the great iron locks that the wealthy have upon their cupboards and chests.

**SPEAR**, to strike with a spear or sword or other instrument of war, and also such weapons that are thrown in battle.

**TALK**, to speak sweetly and wisely to another so as to persuade them that what you say is true. It is no galdorcrafter, to control a man's mind, but it may persuade him to agree with your measure of a matter.

**TOIL**, to plow fields, tend herds, weave cloth, hew trees, build halls, and do all those other things that an English man or woman must do as common daily labors. Toil oft overlaps with Craft in matters of building or shaping.

*Hunt can substitute for Shoot in attack rolls against men at one level less, to a minimum of level-0.*

*You can speak and read Latin if you have Pray-0 or Ken-0.*

*Unarmed attacks do 1d2 damage plus your Smite skill.*

*A thrown weapon can use either Shoot or Spear skill.*

**A hero is made** by his own hands. The English have little interest in a man's fathers if they were not kings, and even an ealdorman's son has but a modest name until he earns glory and a king's friendship. Land, wealth, fame... these things must be earned anew every generation, and the feckless fall swiftly from old glory.

*Pick or roll a background.*

Many different pasts are offered to you on these pages. You may dice one out if the whim takes, or choose one that best matches your hero's prior life. If none suit exactly, beseech the GM to permit you to change one a little, and it will suffice.

*Choose one of the three methods here to get the rest of your background skills.*

When you have chosen a background, you will gain one skill pick that all men with such a past must have. This skill becomes level-0. Then you must choose one and only one of three different paths.

*Primus*, add the two skills noted as "Quick Skills" to your sheet beneath the free skill you have just gained, all at level-0. Such talents as these are those commonly possessed by men with such a past. Choose this option if you care little for particulars, and wish only a hero competent at his prior trade.

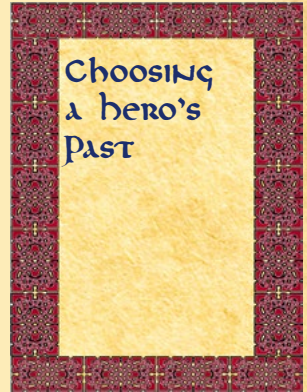
*Secundus*, choose two skills from those on the Learning table for your background. If an entry says "Any Combat", you may choose either Shoot, Spear, or Smite as you desire. If an entry says "Any Skill", you may not pick that. Choose this option if you have particular skills in mind for your hero.

*Tertius*, take your dice in hand and roll three times, choosing either the Growth or the Learning table each time. If an entry adds a bonus to physical attributes, you may add it to Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution, while mental attribute gains may be added to Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. A bonus of +2 may be split between two attributes. If an entry says "Any Skill", you may pick any skill you wish, save Magic, which is no earthly art.

*Pick any one skill for free, except Magic.*

Lastly, pick any skill you wish except Magic. This represents your hero's own curiosities and desires, and such skill as they earned by chance or their own interests.

If you gain the same skill twice by any means, it becomes level-1 instead of level-0. If you somehow get it a third time, either by dice, or by choice, or by Focus, you may instead pick a different skill, any save Magic. This is the rule and it applies in all ways, for no novice hero may have a skill greater than level-1.





ÞJO	BACKGROUND
1	Ceorl
2	Crafter
3	Eorlishkind
4	Herdsmán
5	Hunter
6	Minsterkind
7	Reeve
8	Scop
9	Thrall
10	Wanderer

You may roll on the adjacent table to discern your background or choose one that suits you. Your background will not dictate your future heroics; an ealdorman's son raised to the spear may yet become a pious Saint, while any common ceorlish farmer may have an arm fit to be a fighting Warrior. Your background merely says what things your hero has known in the past and the life they are commonly fitted to lead.

*You can roll, pick, or make your background with your GM's permission.*

If none of these choices suit you, you may simply describe the background of your hero and pick any three skills that fit it. If you wish, you might even pick choices for Growth and Learning tables for your self-made background with your GM's leave, or adapt existing tables to better fit your ideas. Remember, though, that England is a simple land, and few are subtle laborers. Only a scant few can be fed on the labor of other men.



**CEORL:** You are a free man of the English, a ceorl, pronounced as “churl”. Your parents did not have much land, but they had a hide of it, or two, or perhaps three if they were wealthy. They had honor in the settlement and the right to bear a spear as befits a free man, and if they owed labor and *feorm*-rent to a lord, it was not a shameful service. You know well the work of farm and field and keeping faith with neighbors.

*Most people in England are farmers and ceorls. Even a king is no more than two steps away from a farmer.*

Free Skill	d6	Growth	d8	Learning
Toil-o	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Any Skill
	2	+2 Physical	2	Connect
<b>Quick Skills</b>	3	+2 Physical	3	Craft
Spear-o	4	+2 Mental	4	Exert
Connect-o	5	Exert	5	Hunt
	6	Any Skill	6	Reeve
			7	Spear
			8	Toil

**CRAFTER:** You are one raised to know the chisel and the axe. Your family farmed, as virtually all men do, but they also had skill in some useful craft, whether as blacksmiths, carvers, tanners, shieldwrights, bowyers, or other arts. Many came from other places to gift them in exchange for their work, and their skills were prized by their lord. Naturally, they worked not for coins, but for dignified gifts from those they aided.

*The rarest arts and crafts are found in the employ of the minsters and the Church.*

Free Skill	d6	Growth	d8	Learning
Craft-o	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Any Skill
	2	+2 Physical	2	Connect
<b>Quick Skills</b>	3	+2 Mental	3	Craft
Gift-o	4	+2 Mental	4	Gift
Connect-o	5	Exert	5	Ken
	6	Any Skill	6	Reeve
			7	Talk
			8	Toil

**EORLISHKIND:** Your father was an ealdorman or other noble and you were raised to be a warrior like him. You know well the spear and the shield, the camaraderie of the mead-hall and the stench of opened bellies in battle. Yet calamity befell your kin, or you were disowned for some evil, and now you have nothing but your spear and the steel of your will. If you would be noble again, you must earn it anew.

Free Skill	d6	Growth	d8	Learning
Spear-o	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Any Combat
	2	+2 Physical	2	Any Skill
<b>Quick Skills</b>	3	+2 Physical	3	Connect
Lead-o	4	+2 Mental	4	Gift
Connect-o	5	Connect	5	Lead
	6	Any Skill	6	Ride
			7	Spear
			8	Talk

*Noble sons are no more than men if they have no land and no lord of their own. They will get the honor they earn, and no more.*

**HERDSMAN:** Cattle are the best wealth of a man, giving meat and milk and hide for the preserving of life. Poor men who have but a few can keep them close to their halls, but richer men must send their herds out to pasture, and capable herdsmen are needed to guard them from thieves, wolves, and mischance. Such herdsmen may sleep three seasons of the year out on the wild hillsides.

Free Skill	d6	Growth	d8	Learning
Toil-o	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Any Combat
	2	+2 Physical	2	Any Skill
<b>Quick Skills</b>	3	+2 Physical	3	Exert
Any Combat-o	4	+1 Any Stat	4	Heal
Exert-o	5	Exert	5	Hunt
	6	Any Skill	6	Notice
			7	Ride
			8	Toil

*Herders live the lives of Saxon cowboys; harsh, isolated, and dangerous even by English standards.*

**HUNTER:** You hunt for your meat, either by right on land you are permitted to harvest, by service to a lord who owns that right, or by your own cunning poaching. Your life has been a lonely one, and you have known danger in the trackless weald and desolate moors, yet you are equal to it. Hunters who are not in service to a lord's personal table must commonly farm for their bread as well, or labor for a man who does.

*Bows are tools for hunting, and rarely for war, yet you may be among the few skilled enough to use a bow well in battle.*

Free Skill	D6	Growth	D8	Learning
Hunt-o	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Any Combat
	2	+2 Physical	2	Any Skill
<b>Quick Skills</b>	3	+2 Physical	3	Exert
Notice-o	4	+2 Mental	4	Heal
Sneak-o	5	Exert	5	Hunt
	6	Any Skill	6	Notice
			7	Shoot
			8	Sneak

**MINSTERKIND:** You are a monk or nun for Christ, perhaps a man ordained to the priesthood as well. Pledged young to a minster, your youth passed in a holy and pious circumstance. Some calamity in the minster or special leave from the abbot or abbess has sent you out into the world, surrounded by sin and sorrow. It may even be that you have left this holy life behind to take up the spear of war.

*All clergy normally live together in minsters, with priests venturing out to give the sacraments and preach to laity.*

Free Skill	D6	Growth	D8	Learning
Pray-o	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Any Skill
	2	+2 Physical	2	Connect
<b>Quick Skills</b>	3	+2 Mental	3	Craft
Talk-o	4	+2 Mental	4	Ken
Ken-o	5	Connect	5	Perform
	6	Any Skill	6	Pray
			7	Talk
			8	Toil



**REEVE:** Your father was one who represented a lord and tended to his interests in a village or grange. While he was of no eorlish kind himself, he was honored by his neighbors and trusted by his master. You learned much of gathering the *feorm* that is the food-rent owed to the lord, and of the tricks of men, and of mediating between quarreling souls in between the hours spent tending your own land.

Free Skill	d6	Growth	d8	Learning
Reeve-o	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Any Combat
	2	+2 Physical	2	Any Skill
<b>Quick Skills</b>	3	+2 Mental	3	Connect
Notice-o	4	+2 Mental	4	Notice
Toil-o	5	Connect	5	Reeve
	6	Any Skill	6	Ride
			7	Talk
			8	Toil

*The reeves of great lords are often lords in their own right, but your kin were of humbler stock.*

**SCOP:** Every warrior at the mead-hall table is expected to be able to at least sing a song or recite a few lines of verse, but a scop is something special, a man skilled in countless poems and myriad mighty songs. He plays upon the harp and tells of former days and is a welcome guest in any man's hall, though he likes best the hearths of those with wealth and gifts to spare. He will travel far to find them.

Free Skill	d6	Growth	d8	Learning
Perform-o	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Any Combat
	2	+2 Physical	2	Any Skill
<b>Quick Skills</b>	3	+2 Mental	3	Connect
Talk-o	4	+2 Mental	4	Gift
Connect-o	5	Connect	5	Ken
	6	Any Skill	6	Notice
			7	Perform
			8	Talk

*The English are largely a pre-literate people, and the ability to sing and recite are precious at all social levels.*

**THRALL:** You were a slave owned by another man, whether born to it or captured. Thralls are common among wealthy English, the product of the many raids and wars between kingdoms. A warrior can expect death if captured in battle, but a common ceorlish man or woman is worth more for their toil. By manumission or stealth you have escaped the reach of your former master and can make whatever future you dare.

*Thralls have little dignity, but former thralls can hope to rise high by courage and skill.*

Free Skill	d6	Growth	d8	Learning
Toil-o	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Any Combat
	2	+2 Physical	2	Any Skill
<b>Quick Skills</b>	3	+2 Physical	3	Connect
Sneak-o	4	+1 Any Stat	4	Craft
Exert-o	5	Exert	5	Exert
	6	Any Skill	6	Notice
			7	Sneak
			8	Toil

**WANDERER:** You are an outlaw or unprotected foreigner. You have no home, either for crimes you have committed, because you are a friendless foreigner, or because your hall has fallen in flame and battle-smoke. You are without friends save for your spear-companions and can expect no more justice than your right hand can take. You are accustomed to suffering and hardship, and fear neither death nor dearth.

*To be a kinless wanderer is a fate feared more than death by many English.*

Free Skill	d6	Growth	d8	Learning
Exert-o	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Any Combat
	2	+2 Physical	2	Any Skill
<b>Quick Skills</b>	3	+2 Physical	3	Connect
Hunt-o	4	+2 Mental	4	Exert
Any Combat-o	5	Exert	5	Hunt
	6	Any Skill	6	Notice
			7	Sneak
			8	Talk

**Suppose our brother Bede** is at the gaming-table of a night and wishes to roll up a hero. Being a godly man, Bede considers choosing a Minsterkind background as it is one he well knows, but decides to trust to God's pleasure and roll for it. He rolls a d10 on the table and sees that his hero has led his life as a Hunter.

## An Example of Choosing a Background

Bede then thinks; should he do things simply, and just take the Hunt-0 skill all Hunters get and the two quick skills of Notice-0 and Sneak-0? Should he be more particular, and take the Hunt-0 skill and pick two more from the Learning table? Or should he trust to his *wyrd* and let the dice speak? He decides the lattermost.

Because he is willing to trust to fate, he may make three rolls, instead of the mere two picks a more guarded man would have. In addition, he may choose to roll on the Growth table as well as the Learning one, chancing the hope of improving his attributes. In the end, Bede decides to roll once on the Growth table and twice on Learning.

His first roll on the Growth table renders a "+2 Physical" result. He may add two points to one of his physical attributes, that is, his Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity. He might instead add +1 to two if he wished. He may not increase an attribute above 18, for that is as great as any mortal man may be. He decides to put both points into Dexterity, that he might be swift and keen with his hunter's bow. This increases his score from 12 to 14. Because this changes the attribute modifier as well, he scrapes the "+0" modifier from beside Dexterity on his sheet and inks it anew with "+1".

His next roll is on the Learning table, and he rolls "Hunt". He already has the Hunt skill at level-0 because he is a hunter, so it becomes level-1 instead. He takes his third roll from the Learning table as well, and yet again he rolls "Hunt". No novice hero may be better than level-1 in a skill, so he may pick any other skill he wishes in its place, except for Magic. Of course, Bede being the man he is, he picks Pray for his skill, that his hunter may be a godly man who knows how he ought to believe and pray. He gains the skill at level-0.

Lastly, he may pick any skill he wishes to represent the natural wit and learning of his hero. Bede wonders how his hero is to protect himself from foes, but his GM explains that his Hunt skill may be used at one point less in place of Shoot when he fights men with his bow. Assured, he chooses Sneak, gaining Sneak-0 to represent his hunter's cunning and subtle step.

With that, his background is finished, and he may move to choose what class of heroic prowess his young hunter follows.



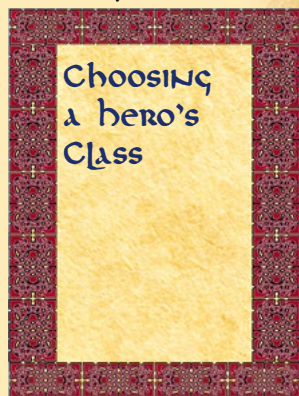
**A hero is made** by deeds, not birth. It is true that only those with royal blood may be kings, but beneath the glory of the king-helm there is little meaning in blood. Only by courage, faith, and wisdom may a man get glory and honor among the English. An ealdorman's son may have silver by birth, but he must get respect by the spear.

Your hero is gifted with certain strengths suitable for adventure. Perhaps they are a mighty Warrior, swift to battle. It may be they are a holy Saint, bringing God's light into the darkest of giant-wrought ruins. It may even be that they are a Galdorman, one who wields a dubious and sinister sorcery for ends rarely pleasing to God. And of course, you may yet be a simple Adventurer from over the sea, with some strange mix of special virtues and talents. The pages that follow describe each of these **CLASSES**, and you may pick one to best suit your hero.

Your class need not mesh perfectly with your background, for you need only explain how you acquired your special skills. A common ceorl might have befriended an old wise-man and been taught the ways of a Galdorman. A brave eorlish lad, raised to sword and shield, may have turned from the vanities of the world to become a Saint in some holy minster. It may even be that some minster-bound monk throws over his holy vows, forsaking God to snatch up a Warrior's spear. You may choose any class you wish and need only explain how you came to its ways.

Choose the class that has such tools as you wish to use in adventure. If you wish to rely on your own skills and personal might, be a Warrior. If you would bring wisdom, guidance, and holy help to your friends, be a Saint. If you favor dark spells and ungodly tricks of natural philosophy, then be a Galdorman. And if you cannot decide among these things, look to the Adventurer and see if that can suit.

Be mindful that only heroes commonly have classes. In the rest of the world, a sword-wielding gesith is just a gesith, not a Warrior. A heretical *dru* is just a sorcerer, not a Galdorman. These non-players use their own rules and have their own powers, for just as God did not make all men the same, it makes no sense that all men should live in the same fashion or be described in the same words.





A hero must seek glory and shun all base and shameful actions. By great deeds they gain power and renown, while miserable wickednesses and weaknesses bring only disgrace. Great deeds are called **GLORIES** and grave failings are **SHAMES**.

## GLORIES, SHAMES AND LEVELS

Every time your hero performs a Glory, add one to their tally. Most Glories can be performed only once per adventuring session at most, though the GM might give you still more credit for particularly magnificent feats of honor and might.

Every time your hero commits a Shame, take away a point of Glory. If you are not a Saint, you can avoid this penalty if no living man knows the truth of your wrongdoing, for no one will know to blame you. Saints do not have this refuge, for God knows all things.

Once a hero accumulates enough Glories they become stronger, gaining new abilities and skills. A hero's power is measured in **LEVELS**, with novices beginning at first level and the mightiest heroes of England reaching tenth level. You begin with no Glories and no Shames, because your epic has yet to be written.

**MISTRUSTED AND FEARED, THE** Galdorman is a wielder of magical arts and sinister knowledge. While it is true that their mouth is often full of prayers and the names of saints and angels, they use their knowledge to conjure wonders and enact marvels unfitting to men. They alone of all heroes can cast magical spells<sup>1</sup>.

A hero who chooses to become a Galdorman gains certain graces by it, as given below.

**THEY GET MAGIC-0 SKILL FOR FREE** as part of their training. They are the only class that can gain or improve this ungodly skill. They may use their optional free skill pick to increase this skill to level-1 if they so desire.

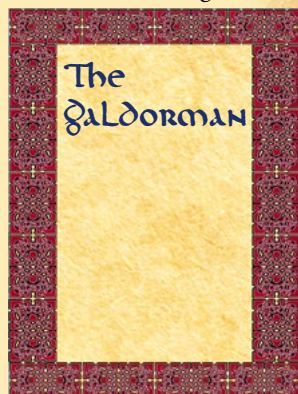
**THEY GAIN A SORCERY SCORE** equal to one plus their Magic skill plus the highest of their Intelligence or Charisma modifiers. Thus, a novice Galdorman with Magic-0, an Intelligence of 14, and a Charisma of 5 would have a Sorcery score of 2. They use this Sorcery to cast the spells they know.

**THEY MAY PICK A NUMBER OF MINOR SPELLS** to know equal to two plus their Magic skill plus the highest of their Intelligence or Charisma modifiers. Thus, the same Galdorman above would choose three Minor spells to know. He may learn more from other teachers or secret lore he finds while adventuring. These spells are listed on page 110, and the rules for casting them on page 88.

A Galdorman is not forbidden to wield spears and bear war-harness or do any of the other things a man might wish to do, but he will never be so skillful in any of these things as a Warrior might be. He must spend too much time poring over his studies and practicing his unclean arts to gain prowess in more manly pursuits.

1 A Galdorman isn't like the conventional spell-slinging wizards of more customary fantasy games. He won't be throwing fireballs in combat or performing loud, flashy displays of magic. Many of his spells are only usable with hours of patient ritual, and many of them are oriented much more towards the concerns and problems of ceorls rather than adventurers.

A Galdorman's player needs to know how to take advantage of this, and their comrades need to know how to help them get the best use out of their powers. A Galdorman can provide favors to people that they just can't get from the Church and do marvels of vital importance to the people the PCs interact with. In many ways, a Galdorman's arts have much more to do with dealing with people than blasting foes.





A **Ǫaldorman is considered** a suspicious and untrustworthy man in the best of seasons. They may protest that their magic is a gift from God and a seemly thing, but every godly man knows that *dru*-craft and sorcery are no clean matters. Still, if you carry out the Glories listed below you may grow in power and renown, if not trust and love.

## Ǫaldorman Glories and Shames

**GET GLORY IF YOU AID A DECENT CHRISTIAN HERO** in an adventure of worthy and honorable purpose, thus demonstrating that your powers may be used for good ends.

**GET GLORY IF YOU DEFEAT A HEATHEN SORCERER** or *dru*, showing that your arts are a useful defense against the witchery of damnable men. This Glory is also granted if you merely aid your companions in doing so.

**GET GLORY IF YOU DEFEND A CHRISTIAN AGAINST EVIL MAGIC** or supernatural powers, whether that evil be an overt attack or a sinister scheme. You must break the spell or drive away the danger, and not merely forestall it for a time.

You do not count as a decent Christian yourself for purposes of these Glories, for you are a Galdorman, and you will never be trusted wholly. You must aid others of godlier bent to become honored. In the same vein, you must shun the Shames below if you are not to be scorned and despised by others. As with all Shames, they only bite if they are discovered, of course; hidden ill-doings bring only God's reproach.

**SUFFER SHAME IF YOU USE YOUR MAGIC AGAINST A CLERIC**, whether monk or nun or priest or any other minsterman, however wicked they may be.

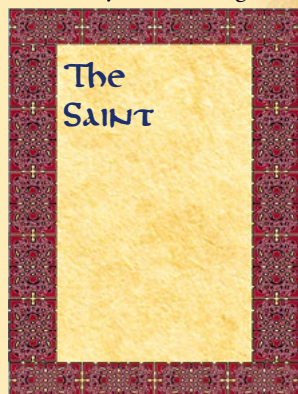
**SUFFER SHAME IF YOU GIVE FRIENDSHIP TO A HEATHEN SORCERER**, or accept teaching from any heathen or heretical sage. Learning from their abandoned books or relics is no honorable thing, but it is not a Shame.

**SUFFER SHAME IF YOU USE YOUR MAGIC TO CHEAT ANOTHER MAN**, or curse him, or gain unfair advantage on him in honest trade or talk or competition. This Shame does not apply if the man is an open foe of yours whom you might be expected to fight with all your strength.

A Galdorman can never expect to be honored and loved by his neighbors, but he may yet be respected, and allowed to live peacefully among them if he shows himself useful to his people.

**holy men and women** of Godly will, the Saint is a rarity even among the pious monks and nuns of the minsters. While every honest monk tries to live a Godly life, a Saint is specially graced with a faith and holiness that lets them bring forth miracles to aid the faithful. A Saint most often comes from the clergy of a minster, but even common ceorls or warriors who have put down their spear may find the grace of God in their hearts.

A hero who chooses to become a Saint gains the blessings noted below.



**THEY GET PRAY-0 SKILL FOR FREE** as part of their training. If they already have Pray-0 skill from their background, it becomes Pray-1. If they already have Pray-1 for some reason, they may pick any other skill they like with this bonus, except Magic.

**THEY GAIN A HOLINESS SCORE** equal to one plus their Pray skill plus the highest of their Wisdom or Charisma modifiers. Thus, a novice Saint with Pray-0, a Wisdom of 18, and a Charisma of 12 would have a Holiness score of 3. This Holiness empowers their miracles.

**THEY MAY PICK TWO FAVORED MINOR MIRACLES** from the list on page 90. These are miracles that come easily to them. They may use any Minor miracle *in extremis*, but using unfavored miracles costs them more Holiness to do so, as explained on page 89, and their plea may not be answered.

**THEY ARE PROTECTED BY GOD.** While it is forbidden for Saints to wear armor or wield weapons of war, a Saint's base unarmored Armor Class is equal to fourteen plus half their level, rounded up. This Armor Class may be modified by Dexterity, but they are not allowed to bear a shield.

A Saint is bound to godly and honorable behavior in their own life, but it is not always in their power to compel their companions. While a Saint may never kill a man, nor use sorcery, nor bear martial arms, their companions may do these things without injuring the Saint's holiness. They may aid allies who are not behaving in a godly manner and support them even in ill ends, that they might have a chance to persuade them to better deeds and temper the worst of their trespasses. Even so, they may not personally do evil.

Of course, if the Saint *urges* them to do these things, or otherwise uses them as but thin excuses for their own plans, then God will not be deceived.

**Beloved of God** and much cherished by men, the Saint brings God's mercy and His justice to those in need of both. A Saint may have various duties and obligations, depending on whether they are a priest among the people or a bishop in his cathedral or a hermit in the forest, but certain deeds bring Glory.

## **SAINTLY GLORIES AND SHAMES**

**GET GLORY IF YOU CARRY OUT A MIGHTY DEED FOR GOD** or a worthy adventure for His glory, or if you aid another Christian in such a work.

**GET GLORY IF YOU CONVERT A POWERFUL HEATHEN** to the true faith, or make a sinning lord or magnate repent openly of his crimes and make amends.

**GET GLORY IF YOU RISK DANGER TO HELP THE WEAK**, or spend at least a third of your wealth in successfully upholding the desperate or aiding those who have no power to repay you or profit you in fit measure to your labors.

A Saint is under stricter law than other heroes, however, for they answer to God as well as to men. These are the Shames of a Saint.

**SUFFER SHAME IF YOU STRIKE A HUMAN BEING** with intent to harm them.

**SUFFER SHAME IF YOU LIE, STEAL, FORNICATE, DISOBEY** your clerical superior, honor false gods, dishonor the Sabbath, bear weapons, wear war-harness, or otherwise knowingly break the laws of the Church.

**SUFFER SHAME IF YOU WILLINGLY WIELD A HEATHEN MAGICAL OBJECT** or choose to receive a Galdorman's spells, for you must shun the use of all magic.

Saints suffer especially from Shameful acts, for they always are inflicted whether the world knows about the deed or not. In addition, a Shame robs a Saint of his use of miracles until he has had time to pray and repent of his error.

If the Shame was done unwillingly or as the lesser of two evils, his maximum Holiness decreases by one until he spends a week in penitent prayer, but he may still use his miracles in the meanwhile.

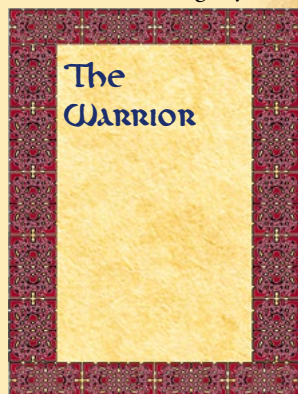
If the Shame was done willingly but in a moment of passion or in the heat of sudden circumstance, he must go on a godly adventure to do some penitent deed, after which he regains his miracles.

Shames done forethoughtfully and for gain are not forgiven in this life. Utterly fallen Saints, however, may gain powers from the Devil's favor. PC heroes are never fit for such miserable ends, but fallen Saints they may encounter in the world may draw great powers from their damnable lord.



**Every brave soul in** England honors the way of the Warrior, the glory of the strong arm and true heart. If your hero does not wield sorcery as a Galdorman, nor serve god as a Saint, then he is a Warrior.

Not all Warriors live only for battle. A honey-voiced scop may be a Warrior, as might a restless far-traveled wanderer, or a simple hermit who seeks only solitude, or some other hero that does not fit well in the role of Galdorman or Saint. Whatever their nature or past, a Warrior gets graces by their art.



**THEY GET A BONUS TO HIT ROLLS** that begins at +1 at first level and increases by +1 at each additional level. They may add this bonus to all hit rolls they make with any weapon.

**THEY ROLL 1D6+2 FOR THEIR HIT POINTS** at each level, instead of the 1d6 that the other classes roll.

**ONCE PER FIGHT, THEY MAY CALL ON THEIR SKILL** as an Instant action either to turn a missed hit roll they made into a hit, or turn a successful hit roll that a foe made against them into a miss. They must choose one or the other, but may choose to avert a hit even after the foe has rolled their damage. This warrior's luck cannot protect them against environmental hazards or injuries that are not war-blows.

**THEY MAY PICK AN EXTRA FOCUS.** All heroes can pick one Focus, but Warriors may pick two, either taking two different Foci at first level or taking two levels of a single favored art.

If a gamesman cannot decide what manner of hero he should be, then let him be a Warrior, and be strong for mighty deeds<sup>1</sup>.

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1 Modern players may struggle a bit with understanding the values of a heroic English warrior. While brute force and personal prowess are praised and valuable things, the heroic warrior is first and foremost a functional part of his tribe and society. Trustworthiness, generosity, loyalty, and prudence are all qualities every bit as important to a warrior's renown as his ability to gut people efficiently. Warriors who can't be trusted by their lords or who pick useless fights simply don't live very long.

Remember also that the primary bond between warriors is personal devotion, not loyalty to a title or role. A gesith loves his lord in a very direct and personal sense; he's his best friend, dear provider, and faithful giver of justice and gifts. These bonds provide not only material resources, but nourish basic human needs for love, belonging, and respect. It is for these reasons that betrayal is considered a warrior's worst crime.

**Brave and blessed with** glorious might, the Warrior's path is perhaps the clearest one to Glory. All that is asked of a Warrior is that he be strong and capable, swift to aid his lord and his kinsmen and mighty against his foes. Deeds that show his strength and skill will get him Glory, whether that skill is swiftness with his spear or a surpassing persuasiveness in the wisdom of his counsel.

## A WARRIOR'S GLORIES AND SHAMES

**GET GLORY IF YOU DO A MIGHTY DEED** or carry out a worthy adventure in service to a lord or to kinsmen or to neighbors.

**GET GLORY IF YOU DEFEAT A FOE WHO HAS TWICE AS MANY HIT DICE** or levels as you possess, provided you do so with no more than a half-dozen companions with you at the time. This deed counts only once during any given adventure, no matter how many foes are slain.

**GET GLORY IF YOU OVERCOME A GRAVE PERIL**, great challenge, or stern contest with your own skills and abilities. The peril must be such as risks your life or that of your comrades, and a contest must be against one widely held to be your better. This peril does not relate to combat, as the above one does.

Yet if a Warrior's path to Glory is plain, so too is his road to ignominious Shame. Shun the things below if you would be honored by men, though if your crime is hidden you may escape rebuke.

**SUFFER SHAME IF YOU BETRAY YOUR LORD OR YOUR FRIENDS**, or forsake them when they need you and you have the power to aid them. All men hate and despise a betrayer of their own, as it is the most terrible of all crimes.

**SUFFER SHAME IF YOU FLEE FROM A FIGHT YOU STARTED**, or abandon your allies on the battlefield, or worst of all, if you run from your lord's side in war.

**SUFFER SHAME IF YOU BREAK YOUR OATH**, or swear falsely, or clearly fail to do a thing you said you would do. Such empty boasting makes your word worthless in the eyes of men. Remember that men hold you to account for words spoken in the grip of strong drink.

Not all Warriors are swiftest to the spear; some do better with wise counsel, or great skill, or steadfast service to their beloved lord. Yet in all things they are expected to be true and loyal to their own, whether that is their lord, or their comrades, or their kinsmen. A Warrior who is not faithful to his friends is of no use to any man, and many grave sins may be forgiven to a devoted heart.

**There are times when** the hero you have in mind fits neither the Warrior, the Galdorman, or the Saint perfectly. Such heroes may simply take the Adventurer class and explain to the GM's satisfaction how they got their powers. An Adventurer may also be used to represent traditions of heroism from overseas that speak to more than one kind of prowess.

Adventurers have no arts of their own. Instead, they pick two partial classes from the list below and add their benefits together.



**PARTIAL GALDORMAN:** You gain Magic-0 as a bonus skill. Your Sorcery score is the same as a full Galdorman, less one, to a minimum of one point. You pick half the starting spells as a full Galdorman, rounded up. You cast spells at your full character level, but you will never learn the most powerful spells as a full Galdorman will.

**PARTIAL SAINT:** You gain Pray-0 as a bonus skill. Your Holiness score is the same as a full Saint, less one, to a minimum of one point. You pick one starting Minor miracle instead of two. Your saintly miracles are invoked at your full character level, though you will not attain the heights of God's grace the way a full Saint will. You also gain a Saint's natural Armor Class bonus.

**PARTIAL WARRIOR:** In place of the full Warrior benefit, you gain a bonus to your hit roll equal to half your character level, rounded up. You add +1 to this bonus at fifth and tenth level, thus giving you +1 to hit at first level, +4 to hit at fifth, and +7 at tenth. You roll 1d6+2 at each level for your hit points and you gain a bonus Focus pick when creating your character. You do not have a full Warrior's power to avert a blow or ensure a successful hit.

Note that some blends of classes make no sense to the English. How could a Saint ever have a Galdorman's sorcery, and how could a bloody-handed Warrior ever wield the holy favor of a Saint? Yet such a man may come from over the sea, or he may be a heretic or heathen with marvels from the Devil and not from God, or the GM himself may smile at our English ways and think it no conflict. I write these things here so you may do with them as you see fit.





**ADVENTURERS CHOOSE THEIR OWN** Glories and Shames from the classes they have picked. They must choose two Glories from one class and one from the other, and two Shames from their first partial class and one from the second. If they have a particular thought for a different set of bindings, they may have words with the GM and see if their thinking is acceptable. So long as they have three Glories and three Shames to their name, it is enough.

### **AN ADVENTURER'S GLORIES AND SHAMES**

Be mindful that your hero ought to have a care in choosing Glories and Shames so they do not stifle their own abilities. A Warrior-Saint who is forbidden from shedding blood may lead an unhappy life, much as a Gal-dorman-Saint who is barred from wielding sorcery. Pick different Shames, or devise a Shame that pleases your GM in its stead.

Also take care not to pick Shames that would end up binding the rest of the party to your own character's limits. Just as a Saint may work with heroes who do not share his holy ways, so too your Adventurer must be able to cooperate with a party that may not honor the same ways. Perhaps he will chide them for their customs, but he must not disrupt the game with such things.

**No hero is without** his *wyrd*, the destiny that awaits him before he sleeps in grave-grasp. Every man has his *wyrd*, but those of common ceorls and ignoble thralls are of little consequence and small glory. Their virtues are small and their vices of little account, petty in good and trifling in evil. But a hero is different, for his *wyrd* promises greatness in valor or in terrible crime, and not uncommonly in both.

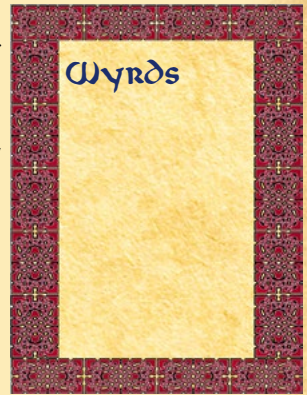
A man's *wyrd* is not the whole of his story. He may be a good man or a wicked one, he may do many great deeds or many foul crimes, but his *wyrd* is what is inescapable. He will not die until he has drunk its cup, and his measure is in how bravely he bears it.

Now you must choose or roll two noble *wyrds* and one ignoble one to shape your hero's destiny. These *wyrds* describe your hero's character and mood, the passions that press them on to glory and the flaws that goad them to infamous deeds. If you would wish to give the devil more than his due, you may exchange one of your noble *wyrds* for two additional ignoble ones, but this concession may be made only once. A man without any noble nature can be no hero, nor worthy of words of memory.

The *wyrds* tell you of your hero, but what place do they have in the game? When your hero faces a terrible foe, or strives to do a mighty deed, or is forestalled by some impossible challenge, he may invoke his *wyrd*, naming the destiny he calls upon to defeat the foe, do the deed, or best the challenge. He must describe the way in which his *wyrd* will help him, though the skein of the tale can bend greatly to make it so. Once the foe has been bested or the deed achieved, the *wyrd* is marked as fulfilled. The hero may still show its traits or bear its mark, but he can never again invoke it to aid him.

A hero chooses the time for invoking his *wyrd*. The GM cannot compel him to call on his destiny, with the exception of his ignoble *wyrds*. The GM can force him to succumb to his flaws if the alternative is death or disaster, obliging him to pay *wergild* for his past choices by compelling his cowardice, treachery, or shame. It is a common thing for true heroes to sin greatly in their youth, to do an evil they labor long to live down.

A hero cannot die until every *wyrd* he bears has been invoked. He may suffer scars, bear grave wounds, and lose kin and hall and spear-companions, but he will not know God's judgment until his *wyrd* has been lived out to



A GM will always invoke an ignoble *wyrd* to avoid death. They might also do so to avert an event the PC hates.

DOO	NOBLE WYRD	IGNOBLE WYRD
1-4	An angel guards me from above.	Anger blinds me to good sense.
5-8	False words do not deceive me.	I abandon my own.
9-12	God loves my piety.	I aid strangers before my own people.
13-16	Hearts are lifted by my words.	I am a coward at moments of peril.
17-20	I am a bane of monsters.	I am a friend to outlaws and monsters.
21-24	I am a fearsome warrior.	I am treacherous to my spear-brothers.
25-28	I am a scourge to Hell's sons.	I begrudge the giving of gifts.
29-32	I am stoic in my pain.	I betray my own people.
33-36	I am true to my spear-brothers.	I claim glory that belongs to another.
37-40	I avenge wrongs done to me.	I do evil in secret ways.
41-44	I defend my own.	I fear pain and suffering.
45-48	I keep my oaths.	I love the telling of lies.
49-52	I know the right time to act.	I pray to the old pagan gods.
53-56	Men follow my lead.	I seduce the women of other men.
57-60	Men tremble at my wrath.	I speak reckless insults without cause.
61-64	My deeds know no weariness.	I suffer wrongs and do not avenge them.
65-68	My gifts win true loyalty.	I take more than I am due.
69-72	My judgment is just.	I wound friends to gain my desire.
73-76	My memory is long.	I wrong God and Church to get my will.
77-80	My people love me well.	Men are quick to hold me in contempt.
81-84	My skill is great.	My boasts outstrip my skill.
85-88	My word is trusted.	My deeds are full of folly.
89-92	My wrath is for the deserving.	My lust for riches is past reason.
93-96	No lie can hinder me.	I will break my oath for my own gain.
97-00	Wisdom is in my words.	My people love me not at all.

the last. He will always stabilize if Mortally Wounded, and fate will bend to somehow spare him from other deaths. Yet he must play fairly, and the GM may slay him if he abuses his *wyrd* and acts as a fool over-confident in his fate.

When you invoke a *wyrd*, you may describe the way in which it helps you, and if the GM does not find it too implausible or unseemly, it will come to pass as you have said. In the same manner, when the GM invokes an ignoble *wyrd* he may master your hero's actions for as long as the *wyrd* requires.

*Wyrd won't save a PC who plays in bad faith, relying too much on it to survive foolish acts.*



**Your class gives you** certain powers and helps, but not every hero of a given class is the same. Some Warriors will be possessed of honeyed words and wise counsel, while others will have remarkable gifts for the hunt or a fearless heart that cannot be shaken. Such a special gift is a **Focus** and each hero begins by picking one from the list that follows here. A Warrior may pick two.

*Pick one Focus from the list here. Warriors can pick two. You get the focus at level 1, or level 2 if a Warrior uses both picks on it.*

Each Focus has two levels. When you pick it, you gain the first level. If you pick it again, you gain the benefits of the second level as well. You may not pick the same Focus three times, though some may be taken multiple times to apply to different skills or pursuits.

Many Foci give bonus skills. You may add this skill to your sheet as if it were one you picked for your background. If you already have it, it is increased just as you would for a twice-rolled background skill. If you already have it at level-1, you may pick any other bonus skill instead, save for Magic.

## Foci, The Great Talents of heroes



**AS OUR POWER LESSENS:** Marred and marked by spear and sword, you yet defy your wounds and scorn the scar's bite. *Level 1:* Ignore a number of Scars you have earned in battle equal to two plus your Constitution modifier. These Scars still exist for you, but your determination is such that you overcome them and find ways to surpass their limits even without supernatural prosthetics. You cannot suffer these Scars again, ignoring them if they are re-rolled due to a mischance of battle. *Level 2:* Every Scar you have grants you a +1 bonus to hit rolls and +2 additional maximum hit points. This bonus increases every time you gain a new Scar.

**BEASTBANE:** The beasts of fell and forest fear your dreadful hand, for you are a hunter beyond compare. You have power over all creatures that walk upon four legs, or swim with fins and scales, or fly with feathered wings, whether they be fashioned by God or twisted by the arts of Hell. You have no power over those creatures that walk or think like men, however. *Level 1:* Gain Hunt as a bonus skill. Roll all hit and damage rolls twice against beasts, taking the better result for each. *Level 2:* Your hit rolls against beasts never miss, provided it is physically possible for you to hit the target.

**BERSERKER:** You are prone to terrible battle-frenzy and a killing fury that consumes all reason. Men are wary of you, for when the blood-lust is on you, you know no kin or law. *Level 1:* As an On Turn action, you may choose to go berserk. While berserk, gain an extra 10 hit points, a base Armor Class of 16 if not already better, and an additional hit bonus equal to twice your Spear skill. You are immune to Shock damage while berserk and to any effect that compels fear or pacification. While berserk you can take no action not immediately related to killing something or reaching a target to kill them, and must wield your most effective melee weapon, even if that's nothing more than your bare hands. You may end the berserk as an Instant action immediately after reducing a target to zero hit points; otherwise, it takes an On Turn action and forces a Mental saving throw. On a failure, you remain berserk that round and must seek to kill the nearest living target, whether friend or foe. When the berserk effect ends, you immediately lose the extra 10 hit points, and may be mortally wounded by the loss. *Level 2:* All damage dice you inflict are rolled twice while you are berserk. Once per day, when reduced to zero hit points while berserk, you may continue to fight for a number of rounds equal to your Spear skill before falling, mortally wounded. Additional damage during this time cannot stop or kill you. If healed during this span, you continue to stand, but the ability's benefits end.

**BRINGER OF ENDINGS:** Your spear sparks red with the sunsets of men. Your terrible war-tree is a hard thing to flee. *Level 1:* Gain Spear as a bonus skill. If your weapon has a Shock value, increase it by one plus one third of your character level, rounded up. *Level 2:* If your weapon has a Shock value, it applies to any Armor Class equal to or lower than 20, unless it already affects a higher Armor Class than that.

**FAR FARING:** You have journeyed far over the earth, perhaps even over the sea to the lands of the Danes or the Franks. You know the ways of many peoples, and have friends in far places. *Level 1:* Gain Gift or Talk as a bonus skill. You can speak all the common languages of Britain and the adjacent continent. Gain a +1 on all social skill checks and reaction rolls related to foreigners and non-English humans. *Level 2:* You know the approximate way to any human settlement and will never get lost when journeying from one such place to another. When in a new community, once per game session, you may declare that there is someone there who is friendly and well-disposed toward you, if such is at all physically possible. The details of this friend are decided by the GM.

**HARDER BE PURPOSE:** Your will is of iron, unbreakable by the words of men or the *dru*-craft of Hell-bound sorcerers. This gift cannot help you against afflictions you willingly accept, however, such as the fury of a berserk or the love of an evil woman. *Level 1:* Roll all Mental saves twice, taking the better result. Neither this nor the level 2 ability can be used to resist effects that you have voluntarily initiated. *Level 2:* Once per day, automatically succeed on a Mental saving throw as an Instant action. You are immune to any effect or ability that would subvert your will or control your actions, regardless of whether or not a saving throw is allowed. Arts that would merely make your actions more difficult to carry out are not affected.

**HEALER'S HAND:** You are a leech of skill and cunning, wise in ways to snatch the lives of men from the grave-grasp. *Level 1:* Gain Heal as a bonus skill. Roll 3d6 for all Heal skill checks, dropping the lowest die. Once per day per target, tend a person's wounds for five minutes, restoring 1d6 hit points for every two character levels you possess, rounded up. *Level 2:* You can raise a man up from the brink of death without lasting ruin, and your prior healing ability is improved. When you tend a gravely wounded companion, any Scar rolls they make may be made twice, and the preferable one chosen. Your healing ability now cures 1d6+2 hit points per two character levels, rounded up.



**HEART SHALL BE BOLDER:** You fear no evil, not of men and not of Hell.

Your courage strengthens the hearts of your comrades and puts fear in the marrow of your foes. *Level 1:* Gain Lead as a bonus skill. You are immune to any effect that would induce fear in you. Foes who are forced to make a Morale check by you or your allies do so at a -1 penalty, which does not stack if multiple heroes have this Focus. *Level 2:* You receive a bonus Splendor reroll once per game session. Allied NPCs who can see or hear you gain a +2 bonus to their Morale scores.

**JOYOUS REVELER:** Yours is the sweet song in the mead hall and the loud laughter at the fire. The presence of brave companions and bright mead lifts your heart and restores your strength. *Level 1:* Gain Perform as a bonus skill. You suffer no penalties for drunkenness and never lose your sense or your skills through mead or wine. The first time you drink a hornfull of alcoholic beverage in a day, regain 1d8 lost hit points per two character levels you have, rounded up. *Level 2:* Gain a +2 bonus on all social skill checks made while feasting or socializing over alcoholic drinks. Once per *symbol*-feast, ask any single participant in the revel for a favor that would not greatly inconvenience them; they will agree unless they hate you or the favor would occupy their attention for more than the following day.

**MANSLAYER:** God mourns your pitiless spear, that lesser men and meager beasts should have no hope but to die when you raise it against them. Only a Warrior or Adventurer with Partial Warrior may choose this Focus. *Level 1:* Gain Spear or Smite as a bonus skill. Roll melee hit rolls twice against targets with 1 hit die, taking the better hit roll. *Level 2:* You invariably hit in melee against any target with 1 hit die, assuming your weapon can harm them.

**MIGHTY ART:** You wax great in a given art, either by nature or by nameless grace. Pick one skill that isn't Pray or Magic. Gain it as a bonus skill. *Level 1:* Roll 3d6 on skill checks for that skill, dropping the low die. *Level 2:* Once per scene, reroll a failed skill check for that skill as an Instant action.

**MORE PROUD THE SPIRIT:** You refuse to be bested in battle, fighting on despite terrible wounds and grievous weariness. *Level 1:* You gain an additional 2 maximum hit points each level. If you take this focus after first level, this benefit is retroactive. This bonus does not stack with other Foci that give bonus hit points per level. *Level 2:* Even when otherwise mortally wounded, you will eventually stabilize with one hit point an hour later unless someone intentionally finishes you off or you have suffered hurts that no man could taste and live. You roll all Scar checks twice and take the one you prefer.

**OAKEN HIDE:** Whether by a charm, by swiftness, or by implacable will, you have the art of turning aside blows and shedding spears even when unharmed. *Level 1:* Your base Armor Class is equal to fifteen plus half your level, rounded down, as if you were wearing armor. You can benefit from using a shield, but armor inferior to this Armor Class will do you no good. *Level 2:* Such is the steel of your limbs that you are impervious to Shock damage, regardless of your Armor Class.

**PEACEWEAVER:** Blessed you are with soothing words and a temperate heart, like a royal daughter pledged to bring peace. You may wield violence when the hour demands it, but your heart is ever devoted to mercy. *Level 1:* Gain Talk as a bonus skill. All reaction rolls as per page 66 that you are involved in are improved by +1. Once per scene, reroll a failed Talk skill check when your goal was to broker peace or a mutually-beneficial agreement. *Level 2:* The reaction roll bonus is improved to +2. Your peaceful nature is so evident and so plainly godly to others that you and your comrades never suffer Shame from any action your party takes that is clearly and unselfishly intended to prevent violence, though you may still incur legal penalties or personal grudges.

**SCOP-WISE:** You have learned much of song and poetry, and been taught greatly of the deeds of former days. Men recognize you as a true scop, and no mere droner of dead words. *Level 1:* Gain Perform as a bonus skill. You may claim hospitality from any lord for a space of a week, unless you give him reason to despise you. Once per game day, ask the GM a question related to English history, important personages, or important current events and get a full answer. *Level 2:* Roll 3d6 for Perform skill checks and drop the lowest die. When you encounter an Englishman, you may add +2 to the initial reaction roll if allowed the chance to utter some seemly lines of poetry.

**SHAMELESS:** You are reckless as a king in your deeds, unblushing and unabashed by acts that would halt the hands of more scrupulous men. So persuasive are your words and so plausible your excuses that men forget the scandal of what you have done. A Saint may not take this Focus, for God is not cozened. *Level 1:* Gain Talk as a bonus skill. Once per game session, take no Shame from an act that would otherwise incur it. You may still suffer legal penalties or personal enmities, but no Shame adheres to you. *Level 2:* Pick one category of Shameful acts from the list given for your class. You are so good at justifying such deeds or are so expected to perform them that you suffer no Shame from this category of ill deeds.

**SHIELDBEARER:** Your shield is an oaken wall against weapons, a fierce defender of flesh. Every free Englishman knows how to carry a war-wall, but yours is a deeper knowledge. *Level 1:* When you carry a shield, improve your Armor Class by one point from whatever it otherwise would be. Your shield heartens you against evil; while you carry one, gain a +1 bonus to all your saving throw rolls. *Level 2:* Your shield is an impenetrable wall against a multitude of foes; while you carry it, you are immune to Shock damage. The Armor Class bonus this focus grants improves from one point to two.

**STRONGBOW:** Your eye is keen and your arrow flies fast to the target. You have a name for your prowess with the bow, and no man you take for a target escapes wholly unscathed. *Level 1:* Gain Shoot as a bonus skill. When engaging in target shooting, roll 3d6 for Shoot skill checks, dropping the lowest die. Bows you use gain the Shock property at 1 point against AC 15 or worse. *Level 2:* Your bow's Shock property becomes 2 points against AC 17 or worse. Once per scene, reroll a Shoot attack roll as an Instant action.

**SWIFT OF HAND:** When the spears rise to battle, yours is first to find the foe. *Level 1:* Roll Initiative rolls twice, taking the better one. You cannot be surprised or ambushed without the aid of magic. *Level 2:* You always win Initiative rolls against non-supernatural foes, unless your foe has this gift too.

**WÆLCYRIGE:** You are a *wælcyrige*, that the Norse call *valkyrie*. Only a woman may be such a thing, and only a Warrior. *Level 1:* You cannot be surprised or ambushed by any man who bears weapons. Once per game session, you may ask the GM to learn the most likely outcome they foresee should you and your allies choose to fight a particular battle. *Level 2:* You choose the slain. Once per round, as an Instant action, choose a mortally-wounded target you can see; they will either instantly die or instantly stabilize as you wish.

**WRESTLER:** Your empty hands are terrible weapons. *Level 1:* Your unarmed Smite attack does a base of 1d6 damage and Shock 1/AC 15. You gain +1 on all grappling skill checks. *Level 2:* Your fist counts as a magical weapon against uncanny foes, and even a supernaturally strong foe's might grants them no more than +2 on grapple checks to wrestle you or escape your grip.

**WYRDMARKED:** You carry the burden of destiny upon your brow. Yours is a deeper fate than others have had woven for them. *Level 1:* Pick an additional noble *wyrd* of your choice. *Level 2:* Gain an additional *wyrd*; "I bear a mysterious fate." You may invoke this *wyrd* to apply to any situation as if it were a *wyrd* specifically applicable to your need. This *wyrd* is expended after invocation, but you may choose a new focus level in its place.



**Your hero is now** almost ready to fare forth, to find adventure with brave companions and meet their *wyrd* with courage.

*Primus*, roll your hero's maximum **HIT POINTS**.

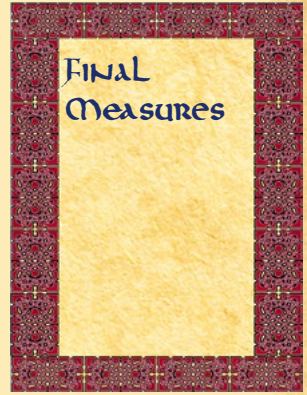
Your hit points are a measure of how close your hero is to mortal injury. When wounded, greatly disheartened, sorely wearied, or over-trusting in their luck, they may lose hit points. If dropped to zero, they are mortally wounded or unable to go on, and may die. They recover lost hit points with rest or holy prayer.

Roll 1d6 for your hit points, or 1d6+2 if you are a Warrior, or an Adventurer with Partial Warrior. To this add your Constitution modifier, yet even a penalty cannot reduce your hit points below 1.

*Secundus*, choose his name and home. A number of common English names are given here, and if you want more you may consult the table on page 303. The English have but one name as a general rule, with epithets to distinguish among them when such is needed<sup>1</sup>.

Decide also whether he is to be an Angle, from the kingdoms of Mercia, Northumbria, or East Anglia, or if he is to be Saxon, from the lands of Wessex, Essex, or Sussex, or if he is perhaps a Jute from Kent. Perhaps he is even of Wealh blood, merely one born in English lands. All heroes speak English, of course. If your PC is Wealh, then he also speaks the Wealh tongue, or Pictish if a Pict, or any other language that is sensible to his past. The learned with Ken-0 or Pray-0 may read and write Latin, or English too if they must.

*Tertius*, choose an ambition for your hero. Does he crave riches to give in good friendship? A mighty name, with lands and loyal followers? Your hero must have a reason to seek danger and bold adventure, or he would have remained at home, sitting by the hall-hearth. Give him a goal to seek.



Roll starting hit points on 1d6 plus your Constitution modifier, or 1d6+2 for Warriors and Partial Warriors.

Pick a proper English name and homeland. You are literate if you have Ken-0 or Pray-0 and can read and write Latin. Other languages are known if your background suits them.

### MALE English Names

Osrice, Edmund, Thrydwulf, Wuffa, Eadburt, Aldwulf, Cenred, Egfrid, Bertwald, Hrothgar, Oswald, Wilfrid, Sigbert, Wulfhere

### FEMALE English Names

Elflada, Hildeburga, Aelfgifu, Beornwyn, Ceolwen, Cyneburh, Eadgifu, Eadwyn, Leofwen, Tola, Wigburh, Winflaed, Wulfwyn, Mildryth, Lufu, Eadburh, Bertana

<sup>1</sup> For an explanation of Anglo-Saxon name construction, see Peter Kitson, "How Anglo-Saxon Personal Names Work", *Nomina* 25 (2002): 91-121



## Equipment Packages

All heroes begin play with a set of woolen clothes, simple shoes, a knife, and either a broad spear or a barbed spear as described on page 119. Saints, priests and those forbidden arms may trade their unwanted spear for a different item from page 117 or the packages below.

**FARMER:** Broad Shield, Three days of dried meat, Leather sack, Hatchet, Warm woolen blanket


**HUNTER:** Bow, Hatchet, Quiver and 20 arrows, Tinderbox and ember-carrier, Salt in a four-pound satchel

**PRIEST:** Carved wooden crucifix, small book of pious writings, three days of hard bread, medicine bag of herbs and bandages, a jar of wine for Holy Communion

**WANDERER:** Broad Shield, Three days of hard bread, Leather sack, Sturdy boots, Waterskin to hold a full gallon

**WARRIOR:** Seax, Broad Shield, Leather sack, Three days of hard bread, Waterskin to hold a full gallon

**FREE CHOICE:** Pick any five items or weapons from the section on page 117, albeit you may not choose anything that grants Splendor or that the GM finds unfit. Alternately, simply choose a package above and change a choice or two.



*Novice heroes begin with no coinage. Shillings are usually mere units of account, and actual coins are more trophies and art objects than currency.*

*Quartus*, record your hero's **SAVING THROWS**, as explained on page 44. Your Physical save is equal to fifteen minus the better of your Strength or Constitution modifiers, Mental saves are fifteen minus the better of your Charisma or Wisdom scores, and Evasion saves are fifteen minus the better of your Intelligence or Dexterity. When the GM calls upon you to make a saving throw, you must roll a d20 and get equal or better than this score to successfully save.

*Record your three saving throws.*

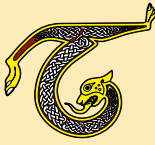
*Quintus*, choose why it is he has befriended each of the other heroes in the band. What bond of kinship or shared peril has woven them together? What deeds did they share in their youth? No English hero would adventure with men who are not well-trusted. The word for loner is *warg*, the lone wolf, the unfriended outlaw who dies hated and alone. Do not be such a beast.

*Name the reason you trust your fellow PCs.*

Finally, equip your hero with his initial possessions as given in the table above, choosing the package you like best for your hero. Where a package mentions a weapon, you may pick a different one from the list on page 119. Saints and those forbidden weapons or shields may choose a different item in place of war-harness, as if by free choice.

*Choose your starting equipment*

Now your hero is ready. Your GM shall set you to your first adventure, but all your doings beyond that day will be by your own wit and wise choice.



**Those who would play** this game must know well the rules. They are not so complicated as those the Wealh like, for the Wealh like all things complex and subtle, and the ways of the western coast are not as the ways of the middle land. In these pages I explain how it is your heroes are to journey, and battle evil, and escape the curses of *maers* and the evils of *fifel*-kind.

When you sit together at the hall-table to play, keep this book close to hand. Yet if you forget a rule, or if a thing is debatable to you, merely make a decision that seems just and continue on. Do not pain yourself with searching every page as if it were Scripture to find that verse that will be your salvation. It is merely a game. A ruling that is sufficient and immediate is a better thing than a ruling that is perfect but takes half a Mass-candle's burning to find. After the game is done you may consult the book and decide whether your ruling was good or ill, and change your future rulings accordingly, but all such searching and seeking should be saved for after the game.

If you are a player at the table, do not quarrel with your fellow game-men or with the GM. It would be a shameful thing if shouts were uttered and blood was shed over the mere rolling of dice. If a ruling seems evil and foolish to you, say it so, but if the GM is not moved by your protest then let it be and play on. After the game is over you may dispute it, or show him where the book says otherwise, but do not think to hide behind this little shield of parchment and hide. The GM chooses what he thinks is best for his table, whether it conforms to this book or no. If it is not so much to your liking, then take up his burden and let him be the player.

Remember always that the souls about the hall-table are of more significance than any writing of men. A rule that is good and just for the multitude may be very bad for you few about the fire. It is not your concern to make rulings that are perfect for the faceless many, or balanced for bands you will never know, but only right and just for the people who play with you. You know the wishes and habits of Hrothgar and Bede and Aelfwyn<sup>1</sup>, and you know what they like and how they are apt to act. Let your rulings account for *them*, not for some nameless soul who will never sit at your table.

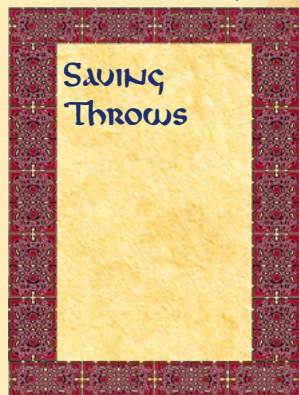
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<sup>1</sup> This passage strongly implies the participation of women in pre-modern gaming. It does stand to reason, as Anglo-Saxon wives had conventional control over the family hall and its daily operation, and it would be quite impossible to have a casual social game there unless the hall's mistress consented to it.





A **BRAVE HERO** is sometimes faced by a chance of dire misfortune. He may be teetering at the edge of a crumbling Roman roof, or the pained target of a malicious sorcerer's spell, or writhe under the whip of some serpent's evil venom. If there is any question over whether he may keep his balance, or resist the spell, or endure the poison without perishing, he may make a **SAVING THROW**.



*You can't save against weapon blows.*

A saving throw is only allowed at the GM's discretion. Many pains do not allow it; a sword-blow or a plunge into a pit, or any other thing that has already been decided cannot be saved against. Yet many evil powers and misfortunes specifically allow a saving throw and the GM may permit others too.

*PCs have three kinds of saving throws.*

There are three kinds of saving throws, **PHYSICAL** saves are made against perils that tax the hero's strength, endurance, or other bodily prowess. Poisons, exhaustion, sicknesses, and other such plagues are resisted with a Physical saving throw. **MENTAL** saving throws are made against spells that dazzle a man's mind, or woes that test his willpower and spirit. **EVASION** saving throws call upon nimbleness and swift response to leap away from dangers or avoid a doom that swift response could evade.

*To make a save, roll equal or higher to its score on a d20.*

To make a saving throw, roll a d20. If the number is equal or higher than the subject's saving throw score, then the save is a success, and the woe is avoided or mitigated. If it is less, then the save is a failure, and the full force of the trouble befalls the victim. A roll of 1 is always a failure, and a roll of 20 is always a success, no matter what modifiers may be applied to the throw.

A hero's saving throws are equal to 16, minus their character level, minus the best modifier of two attributes. For Physical saves, these are Strength and Constitution. Mental saves use Wisdom and Charisma, and Evasion saves use Intelligence and Dexterity. Thus, a 3rd level Warrior with a Wisdom of 6 and a Charisma of 14 has a Mental saving throw of 12; 16 minus his level of 3, minus his Charisma modifier of +1. If by some chance a hero has attribute penalties in both scores, the penalty worsens their throws.

*Monsters only bother with one saving throw score for all uses.*

A monster's saving throws or those of some NPC are equal to 15 minus half their hit dice, rounded down. Thus, a veteran gesith with 3 hit dice has saving throws of 14. Most such creatures have only one saving throw recorded, the same for all three tests. Some might have advantage on certain saves, but usually it is not a concern.



**SOMETIMES A MAN MUST** do a task that would challenge even an English hero's skill. A skill check is not for things that all folk ought to be able to do, such as start a fire, or gather pot-herbs, or lead cattle, but only such things as are real challenges, where failure or success makes a meaningful difference in the game.

To make a skill check, the hero rolls 2d6 and adds their most relevant attribute modifier and most relevant skill level. If they have no skill at all in the work, they suffer a -1 penalty, if the GM decides that the task is one a completely ignorant man may try. If the roll is equal or greater than the skill check's difficulty chosen by the GM, the check is a success. If less, it is a failure, and the hero has either botched the effort, succeeded in a way that does not help him, or has been foiled by evil chance and cruel *wyrd*.

Do not make a hero roll a skill check for such things as are normal to their background. A scop will not stutter over an ordinary song, a hunter will not fail to skin a hare, and a monk will not fail to recognize his bishop. If failing a skill check would make a man seem incompetent at his trade, do not roll it.

If two souls compete at a skill, let both make a skill check, and the high roll will prevail. If a tie, let them roll again if a tie in it would not make sense.

If a hero's friend wishes to help in his task, he should declare what manner of action he is taking to aid. A scop might begin to pluck a sweet song on his harp as his friend tries to reason with the king, while a huntsman might hasten to fetch herbs to help his healer friend at his work. If the GM agrees that the help makes sense, let the helper roll a fitting skill check against the same difficulty as the PC faces; on a success, the PC gains a +1 bonus on the roll, while a failure means no help is given. Any number of friends can try to help if their efforts are sensible, but no more than +1 can be granted to the roll.



*Don't call for a skill check unless success or failure actually matters in play.*

Difficulty	
6	One who does this for a living might fail this task, if rarely.
8	A skilled practitioner would be challenged by this.
10	Even an expert at this skill might fail this task half the time.
12	Only an expert at this skill has even a chance of success.
14+	A true master is needed to even try to achieve this deed.

*Very good or bad situations can modify difficulties by up to -/+2.*



**ONE MAY NOT HAVE** a meaningful campaign if stern record of time's passing is not kept. This can be a difficult thing to carve out, so this game measures time in certain ways.

Most often, time is tracked only in days and nights. If it is not otherwise important, then the heroes may simply say that they spend a day doing something, or a morning at a work, or otherwise count off their labors. Record these for your campaign, so you know that what was the 10th of May<sup>1</sup> is now the 14th after they finish helping a hall-raising.

A **ROUND** takes six heartbeats to pass. Time is only measured in rounds when the spears flash bright in battle or some time of great peril is upon the heroes where every moment is of matter.

A **TURN** is a span of ten minutes, and is the unit of time's measure when heroes are delving in Arxes or exploring the perils of a ruined Roman caester or villa, or some other occasion when specific and careful time-tracking is needed. Heroes must fear the dying of light or the approach of foes within such places, so it is not so convenient to be casual about the passage of hours.

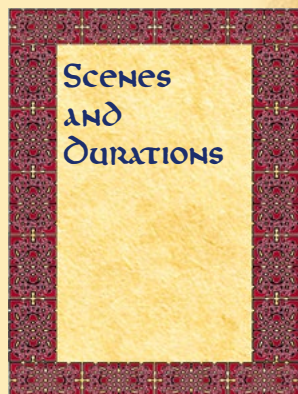
A **SCENE** is a more loosely measured situation or string of events. A feast is a scene, as is an encounter with brigands in the weald, or a negotiation with some hard-eyed abbot. Exploring a ruin or a caester is a thing more often measured in turns, the better to keep track of burning torches and creeping foes. Most scenes last no longer than a turn, though it may be longer for particularly cohesive events such as a feast or clash of armies. Many powers and abilities are noted as lasting for a single scene, or being usable only once per scene. Assume this counts as one turn if used on some other occasion.

In longer campaigns, take heed of the passing of seasons. When the winter winds blow and the snows drift white in the weald, there is little joy in journeying. The wise warrior will seek shelter with kinsmen or friends, and while away the long nights in good fellowship and winter labors.

So also do men grow older with the seasons, and strong limbs must fail with the falling of leaves. This game makes no law for long life, nor need the white-haired hero forsake his strength, but this is because few who fare out to do deeds of glory live so long as to lose their young-hearted health.

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1 The Anglo-Saxon month names differed from ours, but for convenience's sake they have been translated in this text.



*Rounds last for six seconds and are used in combat.*

*Turns last ten minutes.*

*Scenes last for one event or encounter, usually no more than 10 minutes.*

**A hero can bear** only so heavy a burden before his steps slow and his vigor flags. Here you may learn the limits of your own strength and the means by which a hero can carry their needful things.

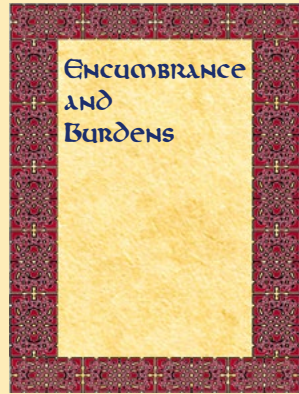
The encumbrance of a hero is measured in items. An item commonly is anything the hero may carry with one hand. If it requires both hands to haul it, it counts as two, or even more items. If it is so small and trifling that the hero could have a half-dozen such things in his purse without noticing the weight, then it does not count as an item at all, and the hero may have as many such things as the GM thinks is reasonable. The ordinary clothing of a hero does not count as an item, though especially heavy and Splendid mantles may do so.

A hero may carry a number of **READY ITEMS** equal to half their Strength score, rounded down. A Ready item may be used as part of any action that requires it. It is held in the hand, or sheathed readily at a man's girdle, or in a pouch dangling from his belt that is easily accessed. The armor he wears and the shield he carries must be Readied items.

In addition to this, a hero may carry a number of **STOWED ITEMS** equal to their full Strength score. A Stowed item is tucked away carefully in a sack, or bound up securely in a pouch, or strapped to a limb, or otherwise packed so as to be secure, if more difficult to draw out. A hero must use a Main Action to dig out a Stowed item before it can be wielded or used. A hero must also say *where* he is keeping a Stowed item, for he may find it needful to drop a sack to fight or cast away a purse of meat to distract a beast's hunger, and then he will lose all within that container.

A hero may bundle like objects together to make them easier to carry, if more difficult to access. Rations, sheaves of arrows, large skins of water, and other bulk goods may so be tied together. Three such packed items count only as one, but require an extra Main Action to break open.

A hero whose greed overwhelms his prudence may carry an extra burden. A hero may add either two Readied items or four Stowed ones to his harness at the cost of becoming lightly encumbered, moving at a pace of 20 feet per Move action instead of 30. The treasure-laden hero who is willing to become heavily encumbered may again add two more Ready or four more Stowed items, though his speed then drops to a mere 15 feet per Move action.



*A PC can carry half their Strength score in Readied items and their full score in Stowed items.*

*Readied items may be used as part of an action. Stowed take a Main Action to pull out or put back.*

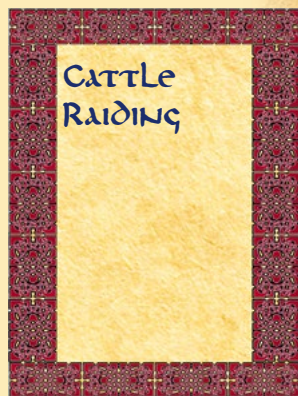
**ALL GAMESMEN AGREE THAT** a game cannot be good save that it has guidance for the tasks common to heroes, such as spear-clashing, and cunning deeds of skill, and growing in might, and cattle raiding, and feasting, and all common challenges they may face. So it is here that I advise you as to how a GM might rule over a cattle raid.

As you well know, a settlement's cattle and other livestock are sent into the hills and forest when the winter passes so that they may pasture there. The herdsmen take some beasts upon one path and others upon another so that all may eat their fill. Some return to the settlement daily, while others return only when winter comes. When the cattle go out they are entrusted to the herdsmen, and sometimes also to women if the distance is not far to the village or the danger seems small.

So it is that wicked or desperate men from another place will gather together and journey for a few days, so that they might not be recognized, and then leap upon herdsmen and despoil them of their cattle. They do not like to kill herdsmen, for a kinship that is owed the man-price will be furious to find the killer, while one that has only lost some of its cattle may think better than to risk more to regain them. Even so, it is no surprising thing that a man be killed in cattle-raiding. If many herdsmen are killed in a raid the revenge for it may be terrible.

Once the raiders have the cattle, they hurry them into the forest, and along the beds of streams, and across rocky places where they are difficult to track. They must rely upon their head-start to get away, before the men of the village can be alerted and come rushing to reclaim their stolen cows with sharp spears. If a raider is killed in the forest it is no grounds for revenge, for as the laws of King Ine say, a man who is found off the roads in the forest who does not shout or blow a horn to announce himself may be treated as an outlaw and slain or redeemed as his finder wishes.

If the raiders are cunning and swift, they may get clear of the pursuers and conceal their tracks. If they are merely dogged in their flight, they may run too far away, and the village men may not dare to follow them. Yet if the villagers have friends in neighboring steads, other villages may send men to



*Cattle thieves are usually just ceorls turned bandit.*

*A sneaking stranger in the forest can be killed with impunity.*



chase the raiders out of friendship, and the bandits may be pursued for many miles. So it is that they like best to steal from quarrelsome men.

If a raider is captured, the villagers will be angry, but if no killing has been done then he will most likely live if his kinsmen can pay the *wergild* for his theft. If they cannot or will not, he will die. If he has killed a man, however, there is a risk the enraged villagers may slay him on the spot as is their right, and he must speak very sweetly indeed if he is to live long enough to beg his kindred to pay the man-price for the dead.

When the raiders are safely away they divide up the cattle that have been taken and bring them to their own herds. They spoil the cattle brands and cut off clipped ears and otherwise hide the true owners. If the village is righteous, their neighbors will condemn them to the lord for this theft, but alas, many are the eyes that grow blind when a kinsman's herd swells strangely, and a gift of meat stops many a mouth. And if the raiders have stolen from enemies of the lord, they need fear no law at all.

**The raiders must find** and overcome the herdsmen before stealing their cows. It is common to find a herdsman for every dozen cattle, each with spear and shield close to hand. They will fight bravely, knowing that a raider has no *wergild*, but may be beaten or driven off without killing them as described in the less-lethal combat rules and the rules for Morale checks. It is not uncommon for a herdsman to flee immediately to warn of bandits. If none escape, assume that the are missed at noon or dusk, whichever comes first and give a bonus to the bandit's rolls.

A single rustler may manage one stolen cow. If he has Toil-0 skill, he can manage two, doubling for each further level of Toil. If he is mounted or has a good herding-dog, double this number, or triple it if he has both. If he is greedy, he may drive up to twice as many cows as this, but each rustler who does this causes a -1 penalty to all raiding skill checks described below. It is far more difficult to hurry cattle along hard places than to leisurely drive them to pasture, so it takes skill to herd many at once.

When the bandits flee with their cows, one shall be the Pacer, he with the best Exert skill, or Ride if all bandits are mounted. One shall be the Herder, he with the best Toil skill. And one shall be the Masker, he with the best Sneak or Hunt skill, using whichever is best. If a man must be two roles let him take a -1 penalty on all the raiding skill checks below, and if he must be all three, let him take a -3 penalty on his checks.

## Rules for CATTLE RAIDING

*Every child  
in England  
knows how  
to lead  
cattle.*

*The Pacer rolls to see how fast the thieves flee.*

The Pacer must read the bandits well, measuring their pace and their haste so that all move as quickly as possible without exhausting themselves too soon. He ranges ahead to ensure that the path is clear, and hurries back to give guidance on the best way. He rolls his skill, whether Con/Exert if on foot or Con/Ride if all bandits are mounted, and his roll becomes a difficulty that the pursuers must equal or best.

The GM then rolls for the pursuers, giving them a +2 bonus for not being encumbered by a herd of cattle. For most villagers, their talents count as a +1 skill modifier, so most pursuers would roll a skill check of 2d6+3 to equal or beat the Pacer. If one side is all mounted and the other is not, give them a +2 to their roll. If the Pacer beats the pursuers, then the bandits are moving too quickly to be easily caught. If the pursuers equal or beat the Pacer, then they risk catching up with their hurried pace.

*The Herder rolls to see whether their cattle can be kept together.*

Now the Herder must roll his Toil skill as he tries to keep the herd together and moving quickly. Cattle do not like to do this, and it takes a perceptive and skillful judgment to urge them along hard ways in quick fashion. He must make a Wis/Toil skill check against a difficulty of 10. If he fails, half the cattle, rounded up, are lost along the way as they stumble into the wilds or are left behind. The difficulty then drops by 2 and he must repeat the process, losing half the cattle if he fails. He must make these rolls until one succeeds or he has lost all the cattle.

*The Masker rolls to see if their path is easily tracked by pursuers.*

Lastly, the Masker must try to hide the herd's path, choosing streams to run through and hard ground to cross and all his tricks to escape notice. This is a difficult thing, but he may make an Int/Sneak or Int/Hunt skill check to do so. Against this, the pursuers must make a Wis/Notice or Wis/Hunt check to follow the signs, usually rolling 2d6+1 to do so if they are common villagers. If they equal or beat his roll, then they pierce his deceptions, while a failure means that his tricks have won the thieves time.

*If the thieves have a larger total margin of success, they escape. If not, they are caught.*

Once all have rolled, the GM counts how many total points the bandits have won or lost by in the rolls of Pacer and Masker. If the Pacer beat the pursuer's roll by 2 points but the Masker lost by 1, then the bandits won the chase by 1 point. If the Masker won his roll by 3 points by the Pacer lost his by 4, then the bandits lost the chase by 1 point.

Whatever roll was lost by most is how the losers failed. If the bandits lost and the Masker's roll was worst, then the pursuers came upon them because the deceptions were not good enough. If the bandits won and the Pacer's roll was best, then clearly they got away because they ran so quickly that none

could catch up with them. The GM uses these rolls to decide how the chase played out.

If the bandits lose, they likely face the wrath of the village's men<sup>1</sup>, easily two or three dozen men eager to avenge their wrongs, if not even more. Their only hope is to abandon the cattle and flee, but with their pursuers so hot on them each bandit must make a Con/Exert or Con/Ride skill check against a skill check made by the pursuers, and if they lose or tie, they are caught and must fight, bargain, or surrender. If one of them is mounted and their pursuers are not, give a +3 to the rider's roll. The same roll is used for the pursuers against each of the fleeing bandits, so it may be that some bandits are caught while others are not. In such a case their companions might turn back to stand with them or they may shamefully continue their headlong flight.

It may be that participants other than the Herder, Pacer, or Masker might wish to help, or that heroes among the pursuing band might wish to aid the chase. Let each such helper explain what they are doing to help, and if the GM agrees that it makes sense, they may make an appropriate skill check against difficulty 9. On a success, they add +1 to their chosen subject's roll, while on a failure no help is given. Any number of PCs may try to aid an ally, but their help never adds more than +1 to the roll, and a hero can try to aid only one roll in each chase.

*Allies can aid skill checks as per the rules on page 45.*

It may also be that one side has some clear and pointed advantage over the other, such as allies poised to ambush pursuers, or pursuers who have friends who vigilantly watch the only path into their valley. In such cases the GM should apply modifiers to the skill rolls of up to plus or minus three in extreme cases. In some circumstances, the advantage might be so great that no success is possible on the roll.

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1 In any age, raiders and bandits hate fair fights. The prospect of engaging an entire village of furious Saxon ceorls is not a welcome one, even if the warriors are confident that they could win. The fight would result in casualties, wounded men move slowly if at all, and ceorls don't usually even carry personal wealth worth looting. Cattle raiding offers the prospect of high rewards with acceptable personal risk.

Cattle can be stolen without risking an attack on an entire settlement. While a determined king or vengeful lord might mount a punitive expedition specifically to burn down some troublesome village, few would ever think to do so for profit. Unlike minsters, there is usually little in the way of portable treasure in a village, yet every free Englishman there will be armed and at least minimally competent at war. Even after a victory, what good is it to plunder a granary when there's no way to transport the grain, or burn down simple wooden halls that can be rebuilt in days? When warriors attack villages it is generally to kill the inhabitants, not to make some profit on it.



**These are the rules** of battle for your heroes. The Wealh dice things a different way on the western coast, favoring tables and complications and laws of arms they say are more realistic, but they are only Wealh, lovers of too many thoughts and too few deeds, and they need not be heeded. What I tell you now is the English way to dice out a battle.

Before I instruct you, however, understand well that battle is a killing thing, even for heroes. A warrior should never raise his spear unless he, too, is willing to die in the deed, for that may well happen if his *wyrd* does not guard him. A man who fights recklessly, who thinks every foe must be met by steel and every clash must be craved, will die quickly in England. Battle must be a carefully-measured risk to be taken, not a simple recourse to be sought every time a peril rises.



*Each side rolls initiative with 1d8 plus the best Dex modifier on a side. The side with the high roll goes first.*

When a clash first begins or time becomes a matter of grave importance, the GM calls for an **INITIATIVE ROLL**. The GM may choose to roll initiative by sides, or by individuals, but I would counsel the former as being easier to manage and the default choice, if perhaps more dangerous to the heroes should they lose the roll. If Initiative is to be rolled by side, let the quickest warrior of each side roll 1d8 and add their Dexterity modifier. For NPCs, this is usually +0 unless the GM decides they are remarkably quick.

Whichever side rolls highest may take their actions first in whatever sequence they agree among themselves to follow, with ties going to the heroes. If a hero has some special Focus that lets him move more quickly, he may do so even if his side loses initiative. If you choose to roll Initiative individually, let each participant roll 1d8 plus their Dexterity modifier, and all shall go in order, highest to lowest, with heroes winning ties or agreeing on the order should they roll the same. Once Initiative is determined, it cycles over each round, starting anew from the top. It is not re-rolled each round.

*Ambushed sides lose a turn before rolling initiative.*

Sometimes a side may be ambushed, with foes springing upon them unawares. Such a surprise may require competing Sneak or Notice skill checks, or the GM might decide that the situation is so utterly astonishing that no forewarning is possible without special Foci that guard against surprise. The more wary the subjects, the harder it is to surprise them; foes bursting through the hall doors in the midst of a feast may perhaps surprise the revelers, but

watchful heroes prowling the halls of a Roman Arx will not be taken unawares by anything short of a carefully-set ambush. If a side is surprised, they lose their first round of actions, while their foes may act normally. On the second round, Initiative is rolled as normal, and the survivors may battle on as they see fit.

**Each round, every participant** gets a turn to act, each acting on their turn in the initiative order. There are four kinds of actions a participant may take in battle.

## Types of ACTIONS

A **MAIN ACTION** is anything that can be accomplished in six heartbeats or less. To assail a foe with an attack, to brace shut a door, to bind up a mortally-wounded ally's worst wounds, or to dig a Stowed item from a sack all require a Main Action. A fighter can take only one Main Action on their turn.

A **MOVE ACTION** lets a fighter hurry up to thirty feet amid the perils of battle, or half that if they must climb, swim, or navigate treacherous footing, or they may rise up from a prone position if they have fallen. They must spend all this movement at once, and cannot spend half of it before taking a Main Action and the other half after. If they are locked in battle with a foe who wields a melee weapon, they must spend a Main Action on a *Fighting Withdrawal* action before they come away, or else their foe gets a free instant attack on them as they turn to flee. A fighter may choose to spend their Main Action to take a second Move if they wish.

An **ON TURN ACTION** is a quick thing that can be done with little thought or effort, and may be performed at any time on the fighter's turn. Speaking a few words, falling prone to the floor, drawing a Readied item to hand, or anything else that can be done quickly and easily is an On Turn action. A fighter may make as many On Turn actions on their turn as the GM thinks reasonable.

An **INSTANT ACTION** is special, for it is so swift that it can be done even when it is not the fighter's turn. It can even be done after a roll has been made. A Warrior's class ability to turn a foe's hit into a miss or their own miss into a hit is an Instant action, so they may see whether or not the dice favor them before invoking it. Very few actions are Instant. If more than one fighter uses an Instant action at the same time, they happen simultaneously.

The type of action for a given hero's doings is usually clear, either in rules or reason. If there is any doubt or dispute on the matter, the GM should pick a choice that makes sense to him and rule accordingly.

**To harm a foe** who is capable of resisting, a fighter must first make an **ATTACK ROLL**. This attack roll does not reflect a mere single thrust of a spear, but the strikes and weaving and aiming that they do over a full six heartbeats of battle.

## STRIKING A FOE

*Hit rolls are 1d20 + skill level + attribute modifier + any Warrior class bonus. Rolls that equal or exceed the target's AC harm them.*

If the roll is a success, then their foe is wounded, exhausted, frightened, or otherwise harmed by their attack. If it is a failure, their foe is undaunted.

To make an attack roll, roll 1d20, and add to it your relevant weapon skill, any attack bonus a Warrior has from his class, and the attribute modifier your weapon uses. If you lack even level-0 in a weapon skill, you suffer a -2 penalty on the attack roll. If the total is equal or greater than your target's Armor Class, your attack is a success. If your roll is a natural 20 on the die, the attack always succeeds, and if it is a natural 1, it always fails. If your attack fails, you may still inflict Shock damage on a foe, reflecting the inevitable risk, bloodshed, and exhaustion of clashing in battle with an armed foe as I describe below.

*Damage rolls are the weapon's damage die + attribute modifier. A hit never does less damage than Shock would on a miss.*

If your attack succeeds you may then roll damage. For this, roll your weapon's damage die and add to it the weapon's relevant attribute modifier. If you are striking a foe bare-handed with Smite, you may roll 1d2 for the damage roll and add your Smite skill level to it, unlike a weapon attack that does not add a skill level to its damage. Whatever the roll, the damage done by a weapon on a hit is never less than the Shock that would be done by it on a miss, as described below. This damage is subtracted from the target's hit points. If they are reduced to zero hit points they are slain, mortally wounded, unmanned by terror, or otherwise felled as explained on page 62.

A weapon's attribute modifier is whichever is noted for it. Thus, an axe's modifier is Strength, while a barbed spear can use either Strength or Dexterity, whichever the wielder wishes. This modifier is added to attack rolls, damage rolls, and any Shock inflicted by a weapon.

*Shock is inflicted only a miss, and only if the target's AC is low enough to be affected by the weapon's Shock.*

**SHOCK DAMAGE** is injury or exhaustion inflicted by the inevitable peril of clashing with a foe in melee combat. If a man seeks your life with a knife and you have no shield to hold him back, he is very likely to wound you whatever you may do. So it is that Shock damage can hurt a foe even if the attack roll is a failure, if they are not sufficiently armored and shielded.

Shock damage is inflicted if the attack roll is a failure and the target has an armor class equal or less than the Shock property of the weapon. Thus, a spear that has a Shock of 2 points/AC 13 would hurt any foe with an Armor Class of 13 or less, inflicting two points of damage plus the spear's attribute



modifier. A knife with a Shock of 1 point/AC 15 would harm a foe with an AC of 15 or less, doing one point of damage plus the attribute modifier used for the knife attack. If the weapon is magical, or it has some bonus to damage that always applies from Foci or other sources, then any such additional damage is added to its Shock as well. Special effects that only trigger on a hit are not triggered by Shock damage.

A man with a shield can ignore the first instance of Shock he would otherwise suffer in a round. One who hurls himself into the *Total Defense* action described below can also evade all Shock in a round. Normally, only melee weapons inflict Shock; bows, hurled spears, and other projectiles are not so certain in their bloodshed as a tight-gripped seax.

A GM may choose to give bonuses or penalties to an attack roll based on circumstances. Shooting a bow at a foe who is half-hidden by a wall might apply a -2 penalty to the attack, while a target that is almost entirely occluded might force a -4. Thrusting a spear at a prone foe might allow a +2 to hit, while trying to sink a seax into a foeman while lying flat on your back might cause the attacker to suffer a -4 to hit. Let the GM judge these things; significant advantages or hindrances might inflict a +/-2 on the rolls, while very great influences might offer +/-4 on the roll.

*Shields block the first instance of Shock the bearer would suffer in a round. Total Defense blocks all Shock.*

**EVERY TRUE WARRIOR IS** expected to die at the side of his lord and in the company of his friends. The courage of a man or beast is measured by his **MORALE**, a score only NPCs have. Heroes such as the PCs never check Morale and never flee unless they choose so or an ignoble *wyrd* compels it of then.

## MORALE AND FLEEING

The first time an NPC sees an ally slain, he must make a Morale check to remain in the fight. He must make another check as soon as half his comrades are downed. If he passes both, he will continue fighting as long as honor and common sense demand. If he fails either, he will retreat in the best order he can, whether headlong flight as a mere ceorl or disciplined drawing away as a hardened gesith, or the surrender of a man who thinks it all he can do.

*To check Morale, an NPC rolls 2d6 versus their Morale score. If the roll exceeds it, they break away from the fight.*

To make a Morale check, the NPC rolls 2d6 and compares it to his Morale score. If higher, the battle is too much for him, and he must retreat. If equal or less, he may continue fighting if honor and sense require it.

Do not forget to test Morale in battle. Only the most courageous of men can stand to fight and die without fear; most warbands and common rabble will break and flee as soon as death seems a likely reward for their remaining.

**These actions below are** some of the most common a fighter may take in battle. Do not assume they are exhaustive, but merely use them as guidelines when heroes inevitably seek to do a thing you did not anticipate.

## COMMON COMBAT ACTIONS

**MAKE A MELEE ATTACK:** As a Main Action, attack an adjacent foe with a Readied melee weapon or your raised fists. Make your attack roll normally, and inflict damage on a hit or Shock on a miss as is usual.

**MAKE A RANGED ATTACK:** As a Main Action, hurl a Readied barbed spear, shoot a bow, fling a Readied stone, or otherwise make a ranged attack. If there is an enemy within melee range, you may not fire a bow or use another two-handed ranged weapon, as it is too easy for your enemy to interfere. You may still hurl a weapon, albeit at a -4 penalty to hit.

**MAKE A SNAP ATTACK:** As an Instant action, you hurry your blow to either *Make a Melee Attack* or *Make a Ranged Attack*. This attack is made at a -4 penalty to hit, but it is done instantly, even if it is not your turn. This action costs you your Main Action for this round, and you cannot take it if you have already spent your Main Action. Common NPC warriors and petty foes are not usually skilled or disciplined enough to use this maneuver.

**MAKE A CHARGE:** Using both your Main Action and your Move Action, you rush forward up to 60 feet and hurl your spear or dash your weapon upon a foe. You must run in a straight line and must be able to run at least 30 feet to build up sufficient momentum to matter. You gain a +2 bonus on your attack roll from the furor of your charge, whether melee or thrown, but suffer a -2 penalty to your Armor Class until the end of the round.

**LOCK SHIELDS:** As a Move Action you position yourself next to an ally within 30 feet and lock your shield with theirs. They must also perform this action on their turn before the shield wall can be formed. While the several of you end your turns adjacent to each other, you gain a +2 bonus to your Armor Class and are immune to all Shock damage. This benefit ends if you lose your shield, or move away from your companions, or if there are not at least three men in total remaining in the shieldwall. A shieldwall must face a particular direction, and attackers from the flanks or rear ignore the wall's benefits. A shieldwall cannot change its direction without each man performing this action again to alter it. A shieldwall can move together, but the men must all choose to do so in concert, spending their Move action on their turn but not actually moving until the slowest participant has his turn.

*There is no penalty for firing into melee, though grapples may be ruled differently.*

**TOTAL DEFENSE:** As an Instant action you throw up your shield and dodge your foes, concerning yourself with nothing but evading their spears and flashing blades. You become immune to Shock damage for the rest of the round and gain a +2 bonus to your Armor Class. This action consumes your Main Action for this round and may not be taken if you have already spent it. As an Instant action, you may decide to perform a *Total Defense* even after the foe has rolled their attack, thus perhaps turning a hit into a miss.

*A Total Defense does not require a shield, as wise as it is to have one.*

**FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL:** As a Main Action you deftly extricate yourself from a melee clash. You do not actually move away, but you may now take your Move action to leave the fray without drawing a free Instant attack from your melee assailants. If you merely stand there afterwards, however, you may be re-engaged on your foe's turn.

**USE A SKILL:** As a Main Action, use a skill you possess. You might use Int/Heal or Dex/Heal to bind a downed ally's wounds, or Str/Exert to overturn a mead-hall's table and block your foes, or Cha/Lead to rally your disheartened allies, or any other exertion of skill that could be done in a round.

**READY OR STOW AN ITEM:** As a Main Action, you may Ready a Stowed item in your pack or purse, or you may Stow a Readied item you have to hand.

**DROP AN ITEM:** As an Instant action you may let fall something you hold.

**PICK UP AN ITEM:** As a Move action you may scoop up a thing that is lying on the floor adjacent to you, provided you have a free hand to do so. It becomes Readied in your grasp.

**STAND UP:** As a Move action you may rise to your feet, gathering up any possessions you may have dropped next to yourself. A hero might take this action to regain his footing in battle after being raised from mortal injury by a Saint's holy prayers.

**GO PRONE:** As an On Turn action you fall flat, forcing ranged attacks to take a -2 penalty to hit you, or more if you fall flat behind cover, or perhaps making it impossible to hit you from afar. Melee foes may strike you more easily, however, granting them a +2 to hit you.

**HOLD AN ACTION:** By sacrificing a Move action, you may hold your Main Action for later in the round, waiting for an enemy to do a particular thing or an ally to perform a certain action. When what you are waiting for happens, you may spend your Main Action then instantly. If you act in response to a foe's action, your response is resolved before the foe can complete their act. If what you are waiting for never happens, you lose your held action. A GM decides what you might reasonably be able to wait for.



**SOMETIMES HEROES WILL ATTEMPT** to do certain things that are not common to battle, but are not overly unexpected, either. These guides tell you how certain matters might be managed at your gaming-table.

**SOME PLAYERS ARE HESITANT** in battle, and think only to throw the dice for ordinary attacks, never trying to do anything else in a struggle. Some GMs are uneasy with inventive warriors, and do not know how to judge any effort that is not written out in a book. Both should learn better, lest their battles be tedious.

## SPECIAL COMBAT MANEUVERS

When a player wishes to do something that is not written here, such as hurling a brazier full of coals at a foe, or hacking down a post which an enemy is climbing, or overturning a hall-table before a foe to drive him back, the GM should not disallow it out of hand. Instead, he should measure it so.

If the effort requires striking a foe with something, make it an attack roll. If it requires manipulating some object around the foe but not directly attacking him with it, let it be a skill check, usually Exert, and perhaps opposed.

If it succeeds, let injurious effects do the same damage as the hero's usual weapon damage, but +2 or +4 on the damage roll, because he thought of something clever in his fighting. If the effect is hindering rather than directly injurious, take away the enemy's Main Action, or Move action as they struggle to deal with the vexation done to them. Actions that both hurt and hinder a foe might do both, or lesser measures of both.

**IT IS OFTEN THE** wish of warriors not to slaughter outright their foes among men. There are many times when the law is not with them, or their foe's kinsmen are many, and it would be a difficult thing were they to owe man-price or the hate that comes with a heart's blood. Such a warrior may fight less lethally that they might preserve the life of their enemy.

## LESS LETHAL COMBAT

*Primus*, the warrior must be wielding a melee weapon. A hurled or bow-shot weapon cannot be controlled well enough. *Secundus*, he must declare that he is striking less lethally before he makes his attack roll. And *tertius*, he must accept any extra penalties he elects to soften the blow before he makes the attack roll. The attack roll is then made, any hit point damage is subtracted from the foe, and all goes on normally unless the blow reduces the foe to zero hit points.

If such a less-lethal blow has felled a man, the attacker may roll a Cha/Spear skill check against the foe's Morale score. If his roll is equal or higher than the foe's Morale, he has beaten him down without inflicting too terrible a wound. A limb is pierced with a spear blade, a head is struck senseless by a haft, a shield boss has battered the breath from a man, or the foe's heart has failed him before such a terrible enemy and he has surrendered. Whatever the circumstances, his foe is downed and helpless but not at risk of death or Scars. Such beaten-down allies may provoke Morale checks among his compatriots just as if he were slain, for few can tell the difference in the roil of battle.

If the roll is less than the foe's Morale, his enemy was too brave and too defiant, and they regain one hit point and may continue battling onward. If the foe has no name that the GM cares to remember, however, they might abandon all resistance even if the check is failed, if the GM thinks it mete.

A peaceful hero may temper his blows to improve his chances of sparing a foe's life. If he accepts a -2 on his attack roll, he may add +1 to his skill check. So also if he rolls his damage twice and takes the less, he may add +1 to the check. And if he uses a blunt weapon such as a club or a flat axe-poll, he may add +2 to the check. These bonuses shall stack together, but each can be applied only once.

Some battles are non-lethal by nature, such as wrestling or common fisticuffs. A man might be maimed or killed in such thing, but it would be an accident and a rare matter<sup>1</sup>. Commonly men brought to zero hit points in such brawls recover in ten minutes with one hit point and many aching bruises. Blows inflicted with the Smite skill never kill save that the brawler wishes to murder his foe.

Know also that for a Saint to beat a man almost to death is a Shame hardly less than if he struck to kill him. Do not imagine that a holy man may escape God's anger merely by taking up a club to crush the heads of men instead of a spear to pierce their bellies. Only an odious Northman would think God could be tricked by such a thing.

<sup>1</sup> English law will usually recognize a genuinely accidental death as a less serious crime than intentional murder. A small body of law, for instance, categorizes the various degrees of culpability a man faces when he accidentally pokes someone else with the spear he's carrying, varying the penalties depending on how carelessly he was holding it and how much fault the victim's own incaution accrued.

Death inflicted unintentionally as part of a sincerely hostile brawl, however, is every bit as much a murder as one done with a spear or sword. Few tribes will accept pleas of intent on the part of the guilty killer, and the full *wergild* will be exacted even if the assailant never intended to do such harm.

**Sometimes a hero will** wish to restrain a foe and prevent him from fleeing or keep him from pursuing an ally. To wrestle an enemy is a matter of Strength and the Smite skill. A foe may add their skill bonus to their opposed rolls if they are the sort of enemy to be good at such struggles. A hero must have both hands free to wrestle well and spend his Main Action to grapple his foe. To get so close is dangerous; if the foe has a melee weapon, claws, fangs, or other natural armaments they may make a free Instant attack on the wrestler before he can attempt to grip them.

## GRAPPLING AND HURLING

To gain the chance to grapple, the assailant must first hit with a Smite attack, doing no damage. To get a good grip, both assailant and defender make opposed Str/Smite skill checks. Grant creatures of exceptional size or strength a bonus on their roll; one significantly bigger than most men might have +2 on it, while wrestling something vast might be done with a +4 on the skill check. Some huge and woeful creatures cannot be wrestled at all.

A man can be an assailant in only one grapple at a time, though he may be the defender in several. It may be that a half-dozen men are hanging off his limbs, and he must shake off each to get free.

If the defender wins or ties the opposed check, the assailant's efforts are for naught. If the assailant wins, the defender is grappled, and remains grappled until he releases him or until the defender spends a Main Action repeating the opposed check and winning it. This opposed test is made against all men currently grappling him, so if three men hang from his limbs, a single Main Action allows him to struggle against all three.

Neither defender nor assailant can move from their current location while grappling unless one of them succeeds in forcing movement as below. Neither defender nor assailant can fight with any weapon bigger than a seax, albeit they can use their bare hands. As an Instant action, every assailant automatically does damage to the defender at the end of each round in which they are grappled, inflicting damage as if from a normal Smite unarmed attack. This damage is only ever lethal if the assailant so wishes; otherwise, the foe is simply subdued and helpless if brought to zero hit points.

If a assailant in a grapple wishes to move the defender, they must spend a Main Action to make another Str/Smite opposed skill check as before. On a success, the pair move five feet in any direction the participant wishes, or the defender is hurled ten feet in any direction, knocked prone, and freed from the grapple. On a failure, the grapple is broken and the defender is now free.



When a hero merely wishes to force another foe back or knock him down, he must hit them normally with a Smite attack, doing no damage, and then win an opposed Smite or Exert skill check against them. If he wins, the foe is forced back up to ten feet in any direction, or is knocked prone as the attacker wishes. If he loses, there is no benefit. It may be that a foe could be herded with a spear or other melee weapon if the GM thinks it reasonable, allowing the Spear skill in place of Smite for the attack and skill check.

## SHOVING AND FORCING MOVEMENT

Driving a foe of mighty form is more difficult than shoving aside a man. If the enemy is much bigger than the hero, grant him a +2 bonus to his opposed check. An *eoten*, or bull, or some other very vast or brawny enemy may earn a +4 bonus instead, and truly tremendous beasts such as *dracas* or great *seanitors* may not be wrestled at all.

If the herding drives a foe into an open hearth or a spiked wall or some other environmental peril, it usually inflicts about 1d8 damage, with more if the foe does not hurriedly move out of it. Cliffs, pits, consuming balefires, and other greater hazards may cause greater harm.

If a hero or a foe is made to plunge off a ledge or other high place, he will suffer 1d6 damage for every ten full feet he has fallen, and perhaps more if the fall is met with spikes or rubble or other cruel things at the bottom. If the hero leaps down from a height intentionally, with mastery enough to brace for the plunge, he may escape harm with a Con/Exert or Dex/Exert skill check against difficulty 6, +2 for each full 10 feet the hero descends.

Falling creatures suffer 1d6 damage per 10 full feet of fall.

*Eotens*, horses, great *nicors*, or other creatures much larger than a man suffer double damage from all falls, for their great size makes them fall more quickly, as Aristotle has shown us.

No. What in heaven's name are you thinking? How are you to stand in the shield wall with a seax in each hand, wagging them about like a *dimacherus* who has fled the arena? Perhaps you have read too much of these Eastern warriors of centuries past and think to ape their practice, but such ridiculous prancing is not for the brave warriors of the English. I will have none of it in my game<sup>2</sup>.

## WIELDING TWO WEAPONS AT ONCE

2 Brother Cornix evidently felt very strongly about the topic. If a GM wishes to allow a PC to dual-wield, whether for a PC foreigner or because the GM simply likes it, they can give the PC a -1 hit penalty and +2 to damage on a hit, but no extra Shock. The wielder must have at least level-1 Spear skill and can use either weapon to make the attack on any given round. Dual-wielding does not give extra attacks.

**Men die when men** fight, but more often they are merely left broken, bleeding, and scarred. In this section you will learn the consequences of being brought to zero hit points, the terrible Scars that can come of it, and the ways by which your life may be preserved.

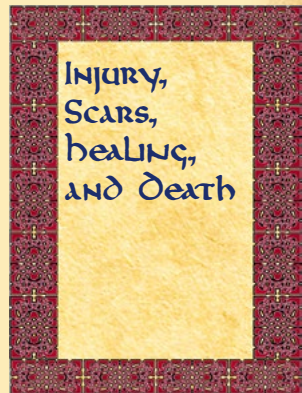
When a man or beast is reduced to zero hit points, they are rendered helpless, unable to do more than beg God for mercy upon their soul. A man reduced to zero hit points by spear or arrow or other lethal tool is left dead or dying. If he is an NPC so trifling that the GM does not know his name, he dies in moments at most. If he is a player character or an NPC of steel and consequence, he may linger

up to six rounds in pain and torment before he dies, unable to take any useful action. Such men are **MORTALLY WOUNDED**, and must perish quickly unaided.

If a victim is reduced to zero hit points by other means, such as fisticuffs, or the draining enchantments of a beguiling hag, or a magical despair in his breast placed there by a sorcerer's curse, then he is rendered equally helpless but will not die or become Mortally Wounded. He will be smitten, recovering ten minutes later with one hit point. It is the GM's judgment over whether a source of harm is sufficient to kill a man or merely defeat him utterly.

A Mortally Wounded hero will die at the end of the sixth round after his felling blow. A friend may spend a Main Action to bind the worst of his wounds and attempt to staunch the most terrible bleeding. If a friend does this, they may make an Int/Heal or Dex/Heal skill check to stabilize the downed victim. The difficulty of this check starts at 10 if the friend has no medicine bag or other healing tools, or at 8 if they have such helps. The difficulty increases by 1 after every full round since the victim has been felled. A friend can keep trying to aid an ally round upon round until he succeeds, or the effort becomes hopeless, or the victim dies.

A stabilized man remains at zero hit points and will die instantly if any further hurt is suffered. After ten minutes they awaken with one hit point and can move and act if desperately determined to do so, but they remain gravely injured and any further damage at all will kill them outright. They must receive extensive bed rest or holy healing to shake off this fragility and begin regaining their health. They will also suffer a Scar as a token of their loss if the hurt that felled them was a physical wound.



A frail man must spend a month in bed before he can begin regaining hit points naturally. At the end of the month, he must make a Physical saving throw, at a bonus equal to the Heal skill of the leech who has been tending him. On a success, he will be able to throw off his frailty in 1d4 weeks. On a failure, he must die within 1d4 weeks unless a Saint gives him miraculous healing, for the wound he suffered was too much for him to bear.

A man who heals normally, either because he has not been Mortally Wounded or because he has recovered from his frailty, will recover his character level in lost hit points after every full night of good rest. He must be adequately fed, warmed, and sheltered if he is to regain this strength.

**Some healing comes from** a miraculous source, such as the prayers of a Saint. Other mending is more sinister, being the work of pagan marvels or heathen objects of power. Such healing rapidly repairs the ruin of spear and sword.

### Miraculous healing

If a Mortally Wounded subject is magically healed in the very same scene in which they were felled, they are restored with as many hit point as the magic or miracle grants. They are not frail, they will not suffer a Scar, and they may act and fight normally thereafter.

If a Mortally Wounded subject is stabilized and healed by magic after the scene in which they were slain, such as only after a pilgrimage to a nearby minster, then the subject throws off their frailty and regains as many hit points as the power grants them. They can recover hit points normally thereafter, though any Scar inflicted by the wound remains.

If a subject who is merely hurt but who has not been felled is magically healed, the curative power simply restores lost hit points.

**A hero who has** been Mortally Wounded by some physical, tangible harm and was not magically healed before the end of the same scene must suffer a **SCAR**. These lasting wounds will not heal normally. Only the Saint's miraculous power can heal a Scar, or the heathen devices of Roman Artifexes, or the foul help of the devil and his cursed thralls.

### Scars of Battle

When a hero sees that he must suffer a Scar, he must roll on the table below to find out what it is. He may change the details of its appearance and nature to better fit the blow or injury that laid him low, but the mechanical effects of it remain the same. Thus, if he almost perished to a wyrm's terri-



ble fiery breath, a “Missing Leg” result may mean that his left leg was burnt away entirely by the blast. The hero may always choose whether it is the left or right limb that is affected by such Scars, unless the other limb is already lost.

Sometimes a Scar will subsume an older Scar. Thus, if a hero loses his left hand and then finds that he has lost an arm, he may choose to lose his left arm. The penalty inflicted by the former Scar is lost, as is the Scar itself, and the new penalty is used. If the arm is regrown by magic, the hand returns with it.

Scars cannot lower an attribute below 3, no matter their penalty. If an attribute’s score is changed by a Scar, its attribute modifier may change as well. If a hero’s Constitution modifier decreases, adjust their maximum hit points accordingly.

If the same Scar is rolled twice, and it cannot be applied to a different limb, then the hero is in luck; it is merely a flesh wound after all and makes no lasting Scar. The same Scar cannot be applied twice, unless it is to different limbs or organs and could be applied without killing the hero outright.

It is assumed that any hero determined enough to be an adventurer will find some way of managing with his Scars. A one-legged hero may carve himself a wooden foot, while a one-handed warrior may have his shield strapped to his stump. None of the Scars listed here will inevitably ruin a hero for the adventuring life, but they may make his task far more difficult. A gamesman may decide that a badly-torn hero is so crippled and maimed by his life that he is not apt for adventure any more. He may choose to put aside such a hero, and take up a new one to join the warband.

**A hero who has** not fulfilled their *wyrd* will not die. They may be reduced to being Mortally Wounded, they may suffer Scars from it, they may lose treasures and friends and kinsmen, but they will not die until every *wyrd* they possess has been expressed. If any result or effect would outright kill a hero who has not invoked all their *wyrds*, the hero is merely Mortally Wounded by it. A hero who ought to have died from an untreated Mortal Wound becomes stabilized instead, and will eventually awaken with frail weakness and two rolls for Scars instead of one.

## DEATH AND WYRD

A GM may force a hero to use their *wyrd* to escape death and Scars, if the GM thinks the hero is trying to hide behind their destiny and the *wyrd* is something applicable to the situation. For ignoble *wyrds*, the GM is always permitted to use them to save the hero’s life, if they fit at all, whether or not



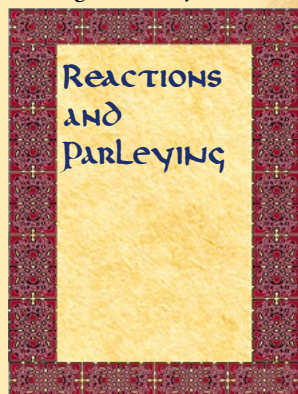
## 000 The Scar That is Suffered

- 1-4 **BLINDED EYE**, that what you hurl or shoot suffers -4 to hit
- 5-9 **BRAIN-BRUISED**, lessening Wisdom by 2
- 10-15 **BROKEN KNEE**, for -2 Dexterity and halved movement
- 16-19 **COLLAPSED LUNG**, losing you 4 Constitution
- 20-23 **DESTROYED NOSE**, -2 Charisma and you can no longer smell
- 24-37 **FLESH WOUND**, for by God's grace and mercy no Scar is suffered
- 38-39 **GUT WOUND**, miraculously you live, but lose 4 Constitution
- 40-43 **INCONTINENT**, oft stinking of piss, with -2 Charisma
- 44-46 **MAN-WOUNDED**, unable to sire heirs
- 47-50 **MANGLED FINGERS**, but a few, but costing your bow fingers
- 51-53 **MISSING ARM**, depriving you of its use for -4 Dexterity
- 54-57 **MISSING HAND**, lessening Dexterity by 2
- 58-59 **MISSING LEG**, hobbling at 10 feet a Move action and -4 Dexterity
- 60-64 **RIPPED MUSCLE**, worsening Strength by 2
- 65-68 **RUINED EAR**, so that you suffer -1 on all Notice checks to hear
- 69-72 **SHATTERED ELBOW**, costing use of an arm and -2 Dexterity
- 73-77 **SKULL-CRACKED**, worsening Intelligence by 2
- 78-81 **SMASHED RIBS**, worsening Constitution by 2
- 82-87 **STIFFENED SCARS**, costing 1 Charisma and 1 Dexterity
- 88-91 **THROAT WOUND**, unable to speak above a whisper
- 92-95 **TORN FACE**, unsightly to behold for -2 Charisma
- 96-00 **UNHEALING ABSCESS**, for -1 Charisma and Constitution

the hero wishes to invoke them. It is not uncommon for an English hero to do something shameful or wicked early in their lives, and spend much labor later to prove themselves better than such baseness.

When a *wyrd* is invoked, the player must explain how it causes his hero to survive his wounds, or overcome the foe, or escape the danger, or otherwise succeed where he ought to have died. The player may declare certain things true and certain actions taken by the NPCs, and the GM will allow them to be so if it does not seem outrageous. A *wyrd* is sufficient to overcome in battle any band the party might reasonably have hoped to beat fairly. Against stronger opposition, a *wyrd* can only save the user or grant him a partial victory.

**When STRANGERS MEET IT** may be a peaceful thing, or it may be a season for spears. Oftimes the GM has no doubt about how matters will go; a demon fresh from Hell will not be cozened by pleasant speech, and a war-band ordered to slay the heroes will not reconsider their duty for mere words. Yet often matters are not so clear as this, as the GM must decide how friendly or foesome the meeting may be.



*Roll 2d6 plus the greeting PC's Charisma mod when encountering strangers. A high roll means they're well disposed and a low roll means they're more hostile than would be expected.*

When the heroes meet someone, roll 2d6 and add the greeting hero's Charisma modifier. A very low roll means that they are hostile, angry, or ill-disposed toward the heroes, as much as is reasonable in the situation. A very high roll means that they are feeling generous and well-pleased with the heroes, more so than the situation would usually call for. You may decide for yourself why it is that the NPC feels this way. Perhaps the PCs have merely met him on a very ill day, or he thinks they are his enemies, or by chance he is a kinsman.

The results below apply to the reasonable range of reactions for a meeting. If it seems to you reasonable that the NPCs would like the PCs, but a low roll is made, then their liking is very much less than it would have been. If a band of outlaws rolls a very high reaction, then perhaps they do not try to rob the PCs and instead feel inclined to benignly pass them by. A low roll does not mean instant bloodshed, nor a high one instant love, but only the worst or best disposition likely for that circumstance.

It is from this base that the heroes must bargain, negotiate, or persuade. If the reaction roll is very bad, the PCs may need to make good arguments and fine gifts just to make the other tractable. If violence and spear-play is a plausible result for the meeting, a low score may make the NPCs willing to fight the PCs unless given a good reason to refrain.

2D6	The Reaction Toward the Heroes
2	Bitter enmity, as much hostility as the situation allows
3-5	Dislike, a willingness to hinder, do harm, or be little help
6-8	Wary, no more hostile or friendly than the situation expects
9-11	Modestly friendly, inclined not to hurt and to give small help
12	Very friendly, as kind and helpful as is at all reasonable



**ALL MEN UNDERSTAND WELL** the meaning of gold and jewels on a warrior's limbs. A brightly-mantled hero is one who has been given many gifts by his liege and earned many treasures with his courage. To wear great finery is proof of a man's courage and prowess, for how else could he have possibly gotten such treasures?

This is **SPLENDOR**, the measure of the glory of a warrior's panoply. The more magnificent their harness, the more heartened they are in war and the braver they are to strike courageously in battle.

Splendor is measured in points. Each piece of exceptional equipment or splendid jewelry or fine garb is worth one or more points of Splendor based on its value. The hero decides what fine harness he is wearing, totals up the Splendor, and compares it to the table below. Each level allows him so many combat rerolls during each gaming session.



A reroll may be used to roll again a missed attack roll, or roll again a bad damage roll. In both cases, the better of the two rolls is used. A Splendor reroll may be used only once on any given attack roll or damage roll.

The rerolls listed are the total allowed for a single gaming session. If a hero exceeds this limit due to losing or giving away a piece of his wealth, he can make no more rerolls that session.

TOTAL SPLENDOR	REROLLS
0	None
1-5	One
6-10	Two
11-15	Three
16 or more	Four

A hero may count no more items toward their Splendor score than their total character level. Thus, a novice hero of first level who has both a beautiful embroidered cloak and a fine sword he won in battle may get Splendor from only one of these things, while a grizzled legend of tenth level may get good from ten different items. The hero must be wearing and displaying the items to gain Splendor, and it must make sense that he should be wearing or bearing all these things at once. A hero with two tunics or two cloaks wrapped around his chest will be thought a mere clown.

*Only use this table if the item itself doesn't say how much Splendor it's worth.*

Value	Splendor
0-15 pence	None
16-60 pence	1 Splendor
61-240 pence	2 Splendor
241-960 pence	3 Splendor
961 or more	4 Splendor

The mead-hall is the heart of the hero's days and nights. It is in the mead-hall that he sits with his brothers in arms, that he boasts of deeds he has done and wins the praise and camaraderie of his fellows. It is there that he shares food with his lord and receives the rich gifts that bind a man to his liege. He sleeps by its hearth if he has no hall of his own and in the morning rises when the day's duties begin. Every settlement has a mead-hall for its lord's use, and to burn a settlement's hall is a symbol for destroying it entirely.

Within a mead-hall there are two kinds of meals. The lesser is simply a *geborscipe*, a "drinking party" where gifts are not given and vows are not made, but

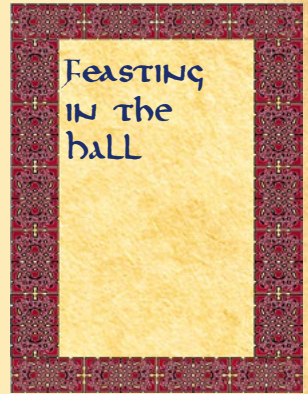
merely the lord and his friends and guests sit and eat and drink, playing the harp and singing old lays and enjoying both friendship and faith. Such meals are taken by a lord every evening, so that his followers may eat and be glad.

The greater and graver meal is the *symbol*, the feast proper. A feast is a serious thing, a ritual to be honored by all who participate, and no one may treat it lightly. It is at feasts that a warrior's Glories are praised and his Shames remembered, and it is there that gifts are given and great vows made.

A *symbol* is held whenever the lord receives an important guest, or has won a victory, or received some good fortune, or wishes to hearten his followers with gifts and praise, or when a serious matter must be discussed by all. While the song and companionship may last all day, the heart of the feast is the evening's drinking and eating.

The mead-hall is divided in two parts for a feast. At the upper end sits the lord upon his high gift-seat, and beside him the hall-mistress who presides over the drinking, and at his feet the trusted *thyle* who is to question the guests. By the lord also is the guest of honor. At tables nigh to the lord are the senior warriors among his followers, the trusted men who are sought for counsel and wisdom. At the lower end of the hall are the tables for the young and unproven warriors, and any who care to join in the feasting, though they do not receive gifts or special notice.

A feast is begun with a horn, to call all to the mead-hall. The guests enter, put aside weapons, and clean their hands with water and a fine towel. They stand waiting until the lord enters and appoints each to his proper seat, the favored to the upper hall and the lesser to the lower tables.




All then sit save for the cup-bearers and hall-guards who are entrusted with ensuring the good order and safety of all as they feast. When all are seated, the hall-mistress enters bearing in her hands a splendid cup or drinking-horn, as fine as the lord possesses. The hall-mistress may be his wife, or his daughter, or other noble woman who is trusted with the grave duty of ensuring a sweet and harmonious gathering.

The hall-mistress then greets all the gathered, praising their honor and lifting their hearts. She gives the first drink from the cup to her lord, pronouncing a blessing upon it, whereupon the lord drinks and wishes health to his faithful friends at the feast. The hall-mistress then greets the guest of honor, praising his deeds. If the guest is corporate, such as an adventuring band, she praises them together and remembers their glorious labors.

Then comes danger. For the guest so praised must then answer with a vow, swearing to do something noble on behalf of the lord, a thing that brings honor to the one who does it and thus reflects honor upon the lord who hosts him. If the guest is speaking for an adventuring band, the band as a whole is bound to perform this single vow, to win honor or disgrace by it.

*The hall-mistress is in charge of the running of the symbel and keeping the guests from quarreling.*



**halls are where heroes** will most often meet with lords, whether in the grave business of a *symbel*-feast or the simple bargaining over some deed to be done or favor to be granted. Yet they are not private places. Even a king's hall might have only two separate rooms on either end, and few lords will wish to attempt any secret business in such places.

A lord who has dark work for a man will speak to him alone in the weald or meadows, out riding on a hunt or on his way to the next *feorm*-gathering place. His trusted men will be close enough to ride up at a shout, but distant enough that none can overhear. It is easier to see eavesdroppers in a pasture than in a darkened hall.

For deeds that absolutely must not be traced back to a lord, one of his trusted friends will be used as a go-between. Only one who truly loves his lord will consent to be party to such things, and it is not unknown for such men to turn their knowledge to their own profit in time.

In all cases, heroes must remember that the deals they make are with men, not books. Trying to hold a king to some arid term of law or trusting in the power of parchment alone will seldom prove sufficient if a lord's own best interests are at stake. After all, who will gainsay him?



See page 74 for examples of Fitting Gifts.

A hero who wishes to be cautious may merely vow to give some gift to a minster, or to give gifts of friendship to the lord's followers to enrich them on his behalf, or to do some other thing that they know they are capable of doing. A single Fitting Gift appropriate to the guest's wealth or the highest-leveled hero in an adventuring band is sufficient for this, as poor men are expected to give less than the rich. Such vows are not splendid, but they are respectable.

A hero who wishes to be bold may vow to perform some adventurous labor for the lord, smiting his foe, or rooting out a sorrow on his lands, or daring a Roman ruin to bring him back a rich token from its darkened halls. Such a vow must be serious enough to require a proper adventure to complete, not merely the giving of treasure or calling on favors. This daring pledge has the chance of winning a man Glory if he succeeds in it.

Thyles say things too rude or controversial for the lord to say himself, but that need to be said anyway.

Once the vow is made, the lord's *thyle* speaks, testing the resolve of the guest. The *thyle* is a trusted and wise retainer, who is expected to prove out the words of guests, recalling to them past failures and Shames, and obliging them to prove the seriousness of their spirit and determination to do the deed. He may be rude, mocking, or impertinent in doing so.

If the guest grows angry and answers his words with heat or sharpness, he will suffer in the eyes of his peers and be thought too hot-blooded and untempered in will. If he replies with calm reason, a due defense for past Shames, and a plausible explanation for why his words are not mere empty braggartry, then he passes the test of the *thyle* and brings honor to his name.

Yet in the end, the guest must fulfill his vow within a reasonable time. To break a vow or prove unequal to it is a grave disgrace, and all involved suffer a Shame. Saints who suffer a Shame this way do not need to atone it and do not lose access to their miracles, for their disgrace is purely secular.

If a major vow is fulfilled successfully, roll 2d6 versus 9 to win a Glory, with bonuses for great deeds.

If he succeeds in a modest vow, or one carefully fenced with words so that there is little chance of strictly failing it, then he gains only the due respect of a man who fulfills the ritual of the *symbol*. If he succeeds in an adventurous vow, one which demanded he risk peril or great loss, then he and those who participate with him may possibly win a Glory for it.

Let the GM roll 2d6 against a difficulty of 9. On a success, the deed was sufficient to win an additional Glory for those who participated, aside from any Glory the adventure itself earned. To this roll, add a bonus if the adventure was very perilous or taxing, from +1 to +3. A further +1 to +3 may be added if the guest's vow was very pertinent to the lord's need, and cured some woe he was suffering in the way a good friend would.

Once the vow is spoken and the *thyle* has tested the guest's words, the hall-mistress takes the horn from guest to guest, circling the hall sun-wise to give every guest at the upper tables their drink. Warm words are spoken to each man or noble woman, cheering and heartening those who receive them. Men talk of the affairs of the domain and the lord's deeds, praising right actions, shaming evil deeds, and giving counsel in times of need. Again and again the horn circles, filled by the cup-men and borne by the hall-mistress long into the night. One who fears the shame of becoming drunken and loose-spoken may decline the cup when it comes.

All the while, a scop will sing sweetly of heroes and great deeds, while warriors shall take turns chanting old lays or singing their own songs. All are expected to participate in this, and to have a fine singing voice is a proper ornament of a great warrior.

From time to time during the feast, the lord may call a man to him and give him a gift. A good weapon, a fine cloak, a ring from his hand, a horse to ride, or any other gift proper to the recipient's station may be given. It is at this time that gifts are given to those who have done good service to the lord as well, such as the rewards due an adventuring band for their help. A single Fitting Gift is given to such bands, equal to their most accomplished member. A GM may find what gifts are proper in the gifting section, on page 74.

At long last, the lord declares a final weapon-cup. After each man drinks this time, they are handed their weapons and go from the hall, or if they have no hall of their own in the settlement they make their beds around the mead-hall's hearth, there to sleep long and well.

When all is done, the GM may roll on the table below for each guest, to see what matter transpired during the feast and what came of it the next day. If the guest spoke ill to the *thyle* or otherwise took the questioning badly, subtract 10 from the roll. If they defended themselves well and plausibly, add 10 to the roll. If they made trouble at the feast or otherwise were disagreeable, subtract 10, while if they gave uncommonly good entertainment with a fine voice or sweet words or a splendid lay, add 10. Apply like modifiers as you see fit, if the hero has done particularly well or ill at the feast.

Sometimes a man may say something reckless at a feast, vowing something when drunken or agreeing to some bargain when he is not his own master. While it is shameful to take advantage of a drunken man this way, such a luckless one must keep his words and fulfill his promises, whether they were spoken drunk or sober. Let him learn, and be more temperate in future times.

*A symbol without song is not worthy of the name.*

*Gifts to followers imply a duty of service. Gifts to guests imply a duty of friendship.*



**200 What Befalls the Guest at the Feast**

- 1-5** Your head thunders; save versus Physical woe or be at -1 to all skill checks and -2 to hit for the rest of the day.
- 6-10** You said a thing that could be interpreted amiss; the hall-mistress thinks you admire her beauty perhaps too much.
- 11-15** Another guest there was angered by a thing you said, taking it as mockery or an insult for some action he once did.
- 16-20** You accidentally promised a Splendid object you have to another as a gift, if you have anything Splendid at all.
- 21-25** A man there is convinced that you have made glances far too bold at his wife or daughter there.
- 26-30** If you had one, a Splendid object you were wearing was given away to someone else, who greatly appreciates the gift.
- 31-35** You carelessly consented to something that now appears as if it will cost you as much as a Fitting Gift appropriate to your rank.
- 36-40** In praising another guest's prosperity, your words were taken as slighting to the lord's own riches, and he is ill-pleased.
- 41-60** You kept your head, doing neither very good nor very ill things.
- 61-65** The *thyle* took a liking to your manner. The next time he questions you, he will speak lightly, and you will automatically be counted as having spoken well in answer.
- 66-70** The memory of the joy of the feast-hall lingers with you, granting you +10 temporary hit points for a day.
- 71-75** A noble woman at the feast admired your might or holiness, and you may get a favor from her. Some women may want to give favors they should not.
- 76-80** An enmity was muted at the feast. If there was someone there who disliked you but who was not a sworn foe, they have abandoned their anger toward you.
- 81-85** You were exhilarated by the pleasure of the feast. Your next skill roll may be made twice, and the best result taken.
- 86-90** Your manner and words were so fine that someone at the feast has taken a liking to you, and views you in a friendly way.
- 91-95** When the weapon-cup was passed, a friendly guest generously gave you their normal but well-made weapon to keep.
- 96-00** Someone was so well-pleased with you that you get a gift worth one Splendor point from someone at the feast.





**A DM who knows** his heroes will soon be feasting needs to make certain preparations for things to run smoothly. When you know a feast is in the future, make sure you know the names and particulars of the following NPCs, and are ready to introduce them. **PREPARING A FEAST**

You may make a few at a campaign's start just to have them ready.

**THE LORD**, the gift-giver and master of the *symbel*. Know who he is and know what he wants from the PCs, if anything. He will not speak bluntly or say anything recklessly unless he is brash or foolish, but his *thyle* and his hall-mistress will put any necessary points to the PCs, so any rudeness or flattery can be disavowed later if needful. If he will be giving gifts to the PCs out of friendship or appreciation for past services, use the gifting rules on page 74 to decide what he will give.

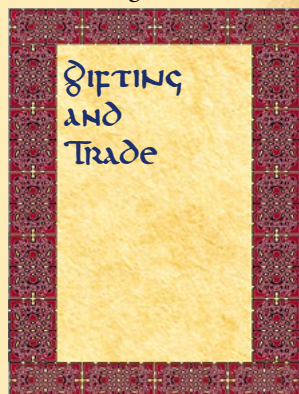
**THE HALL-MISTRESS**, who runs the *symbel*, brings at least the first round of the cup to the guests, and steps in with sweet words, flattery, and chiding if quarrels threaten to arise. She will be the lord's wife, daughter, niece, or some other nobly-born woman with reason to be loyal to him. She will know what the lord wants from his guests and encourage them to give it, using her honeyed praise to encourage cooperation.

**THE THYLE**, who sits at his lord's feet and tests the words of men. The *thyle* is a trusted companion to the lord. He will be rude, sarcastic, and probing, challenging the vows and words of others, reminding them of past failures, and being skeptical of their ability to do the work. His purpose is not to enrage, but to point out the ways in which words may not match deeds. For a man to take offense at a *thyle's* words is humiliating and suggests that he is too emotional and unsteady.

**TWO MALE GUESTS**, whether senior warriors of the lord, or youthful followers, or monks from a nearby minster, or anyone else affiliated with the lord. You need only give a few sentences of description about them and decide one thing that each wants, perhaps in contradiction to the lord's desires. You will use these NPCs for color at the scene, and if the PCs need a subject for some feast roll result, you can use one of them.

**TWO FEMALE GUESTS**, who may be wives of the warriors, or kinswomen, or spearmaidens in their own right. There are no unaffiliated women at a *symbel*, or anywhere else in a settlement. Like a man, a woman is always someone's spouse, kindred, follower, or liege. Adventurers from other lands, where loose women wander drinking-places, may be confused by this.

**Gifts are the blood** that flows in the veins of our kingdoms, the bright blessings that bind us and hearten our hands to work together. A hero who would prosper in our lands must understand the rules of gifting and the purposes they serve among our people



*There is no such thing as a casual commercial exchange in England. Almost every trade is a social exchange of gifts, with social significance to it.*

Gifts are ties. Gifts are given to those greater than you to earn their favor and aid. Gifts are given to those equal to you in order to receive friendship and help. Gifts are given to those beneath you that they might serve you loyally and labor for your aims.

Every gift must be repaid in equal balance, just as every crime must be avenged with equal cost and every insult answered with matching rebuke. Where there is no balance, there is chaos. Men no longer trust their lords, lords no longer protect their men, friends cannot be sure of mutual aid and evils fly about without constraint. Everything must have its mete match, and gifts are the tools of this end.

Many gifts are very informal in nature. Families in a settlement will do many small things for each other, and help in many shared toils, and work often to aid each other on tasks where many hands are needed. They will not ordinarily allow each other to starve or freeze or die miserably if anything can be done. No one keeps a roll of these gifts, tallying off a spear-head given here against a month's herd-help there, but you can be most certain that every man and woman in that settlement will know by sundown if some man among them shirks his debts.

Other gifts are more particular. The rich treasures given by a lord at a *symbel-feast*, the particular exchanges made with foreign merchants or English artisans, or the trades that bring land into a man's possession all involve more overt and public exchange. Such matters will be watched and measured.

Every English soul knows perfectly well the comparative value of things and will know what a proper trade would be. Because foreigners do not understand these things, the items listed on page 117 all have a value in coins attached to them, measured out in silver pounds, shillings, and pence. The gamesman can use these values to see what sort of gifts he should be offering if he desires a particular thing. If the sum total of what he offers is equal or greater to the price of what he wants, the giver will usually grant it, unless there is some reason why he desires more or is loath to part with the thing.

There may be some reason why the giver is reluctant to make the gift. What is offered may not be quite enough, or it may be something useless to him, or he may dislike the asker, or he may have some other reason to refuse. In such case, a Cha/Gift skill check is required to persuade him. Let the difficulty by 7 plus the number of reasons he has to refuse. On a success, the giver will make the exchange, while on a failure the asker must sweeten the offer or resolve the reasons before the trade can be made.


*Accepting a gift is to accept an implicit social relationship.*

There are many times when a man must give another a gift, either because he is a loyal follower, or has done a great favor, or has performed a great deed on the giver's behalf. For convenience, such a thing is called a **FITTING GIFT**. Whenever a man is expected to give something to another, something that is proper to their station and displays due respect for them, they must give a Fitting Gift. Minor services might earn only half a Fitting Gift, while great deeds might earn two or even three times this sum.


For PCs, the value in pence of a Fitting Gift is usually based on the recipient's level, as listed on the table below. A giver may give any single object worth at least that sum or any collection of objects worth at least twice the whole sum. Favors, services, and aid also count as a Fitting Gift if the GM decides so.

*Symbol feasts and other socially demanded gifts can use the giver's level, not the recipient's.*

For NPCs, the value of a Fitting Gift can be based on their social position. Common ceorls count as level 1, monks or young unproven warriors as level 2, veteran companions as level 3 or 4, abbots and lesser lords as level 5, bishops and great ealdormen as 8, and kings as 10. The GM may estimate as he thinks fit and advise the giver accordingly.



Recipient level	The value of the gift in silver pence
1	5, or a favor of no real expense and a day or less of labor
2	20, or a favor as above but against family wishes or interest
3	30, or a favor of minor cost and a week's work or less
4	120, or a favor as above but against family wishes or interest
5	240, or a favor that exposes the giver to considerable danger
6	300, or a favor that requires exercise of a lordly right
7	360
8	420, or a surrender of some precious asset or right
9	640
10	720 for a lesser kingdom's lord, 960 for a great king



*A Fitting Gift can be one item equal to the cost given, or several items worth at least twice as much in total.*

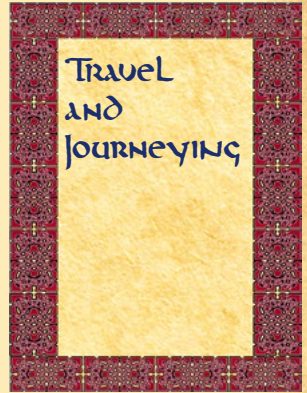
*1 pound is 60 shillings, 1 shilling is 4 pence.*



**MEN TRAVEL THE PATHS** and the whale-roads three seasons of the year.

Winter is a time of cold and misery, where a man risks death to go far from his hearth, but the other months of the year are fair enough to journey in. When heroes wish to venture on some far pilgrimage or seek out some distant Roman ruin, they may use these rules to find how long their journey must be.

This game includes for the convenience of the GM a map of the English lands divided into hexagons of six miles in diameter. The hexagons have been made by inking a honeycomb and impressing it on the map, so that the even spacing should be reproduced properly and distances measured easily.



Each hex has a predominant type of terrain. Decide what it is and look to the table below to see how many hours it takes for a man to cross it. A rider on horseback will not commonly travel long distances any faster than a walking man, but he will be able to briefly chase or flee others as he requires. If he takes pack-horses with him, he can carry a heavier burden too<sup>1</sup>.

A band can travel up to twelve hours a day if they are pushing vigorously and need not pause to hunt their food. Thus, a single party can cross 24 miles of clear land in a day, or 12 miles of trackless Sussex weald, or 12 miles of rolling, lightly forested hills. If they follow a Roman road they may halve their travel time, while crossing a river doubles the time it takes to cross a hex if no

TERRAIN	TRAVEL
Clear	Three hours
Light Forest	Five hours
Deep Weald	Six hours
Marshy Fen	Six hours
Hills	Add an hour
Mountains	Twelve hours
A Road Exists	Half the time
River Crossing	Double time

bridge stands there any more.

Heroes who must find food along the way can each make a Wis/Hunt skill check for every six hours of hunting. The difficulty is 8 most places. For every point the hunter succeeds by, meat for one man for a day is caught. Each day of hunting the same hex increases the difficulty by 2. On a natural roll of 2 or 3, some danger or trouble has befallen the group, not least likely the discovery of the band by the angered owner of the land, who may think very ill of poachers.

<sup>1</sup> Anglo-Saxon horses were very small, and unlikely to be able to bear much more than a single armored rider with little or no baggage.

**Water travel is sung** of often by the scops, but done little by the English. We have no treasures to carry over the sea to the land of the Franks, and no ships so great as the old Roman galleys. **Sea Travel AND ships** The craft that ply our waters now are small, sailed boats sufficient for a dozen men at most, undecked and dragged up on the shingle each night before camp is made.

There are few fishermen and scarce any English sea-traders. If a ship is to be found on the coast, it is like to be either an Irish raider or a continental merchant, come to trade rich wares for humble grain, hides, and thralls. So it is that heroes will likely only be traveling by sea if they befriend a foreign merchant or persuade him to carry them to a place.

If the boat goes by the coast, it travels a six-mile hex every two hours, and twelve hours are generally safe and lit for sailing before the ship must be pulled up on the sand or risk anchoring. If a boat journeys by river, it follows the river's path by a hex every two hours downstream, or a hex every six upstream.

A ship that dares the open sea must have a skilled captain. We had many in the former days, when the Romans built fortresses along the coast to keep our fathers back, but now few Englishmen know the ways of far waves.



**When a hero performs** sufficient Glories to earn greater power, he advances his character level. All heroes begin at first level, and through brave labors and great deeds may advance to the utmost glory of tenth level. A character advances in level after the adventure in which he earns the final Glory necessary for his promotion.



A hero must earn a total number of Glories equal to the number given in the table below before they may advance a level. These numbers are cumulative; a hero who would reach second level must earn two Glories for that, and then earn two more to reach the four required for third level.

Shames subtract from the hero's Glories. Thus, a hero who has earned two Glories but also one Shame must earn one Glory more before gaining second level. Shames cannot be effaced, even if a Saint atones for a sin, or a Warrior earns forgiveness from a wronged lord.

A Shame unknown to anyone but the hero's friends does not so penalize the PC, however, provided he is not a Saint under the all-seeing eye of God. Only if all witnesses are silenced or complicit can the Shame be stifled. If it is discovered later, it applies anew against the hero's Glory total.

Shames committed against the hero's band-mates may be concealed if the other PCs choose to hide the failing and the culprit is not a Saint. Such is the loyalty of spear-brothers, and while godly men may disapprove of such covering, all understand why it would be so.

Character Level	Total Glories
1	0
2	2
3	4
4	8
5	12
6	18
7	26
8	36
9	48
10	62

Heroes who suddenly incur so many Shames that their balance is no longer sufficient for their level do not decrease in power. A third-level hero with four Glories who suddenly earns two Shames in a dire night of deeds does not therefore become second level.

Heroes who lose a character level somehow, such as a Saint invoking a *Divine Intervention* miracle, only regain lost benefits when they regain their level.

Once a hero advances to the next level, he gains certain benefits.



he **gains more hit** points. For this, he rolls 1d6 for each of his character levels, or 1d6+2 if a Warrior or an Adventurer who is a Partial Warrior. He adds his Constitution modifier to each die, **gain hit points** though a penalty cannot reduce a die below one point. If the total rolled is greater than his current maximum hit point total, it becomes his new maximum. If equal or less, his maximum hit point total increases by one.

Thus, a third level Saint with 13 hit points and a Constitution score of 14 who ascends to fourth level rolls 4d6+4 for his new hit point total. If the total is more than 13, it becomes his new hit point total. If equal or less, he now has 14 hit points as his maximum.

he **gains more skill** points. Each level, a hero gains three more **skill points** to spend improving their skills. They may save these points for later or spend them immediately to gain new skills or increase the level of those they already possess. **gain skill points**

The table below lists the cost for buying a particular level in a skill and the minimum character level required to do so. Thus, a third level hero can have no skill higher than level-2, even if they are willing to pay the expense of raising a skill to level-3. One without this veterancy lacks the experience and focus to master the skill more perfectly.

A hero who wishes to buy a higher skill level must have all earlier levels first; thus, if you would buy Perform-2 skill, you must buy or have Perform-0 and Perform-1 skills first. A hero with no talent at all for song and tale would first have to spend 1 skill point to buy level-0, then two to buy level-1, and then three to buy level-2.

Some Foci grant a bonus skill. When taken during character creation, this simply counts as a skill pick. If earned later in a hero's career, treat it as a bonus of three skill points applied to the skill. This might raise it to a level otherwise disallowed to a hero, being the only way to gain such untimely might.

New Skill Level	Point Cost	Min. Level
Level-0	1	1
Level-1	2	1
Level-2	3	3
Level-3	4	6
Level-4	5	9

A hero may choose to save skill points for later use, or if they wish to raise a skill later that requires more skill points than they presently possess.

No skill can be raised above level-4 by any means. Such is the limit of human art and prowess, beyond which is the skill of angels and devils alone.

**A SAINT HAS ANOTHER** use for skill points, however. Instead of spending them on skills, he may spend them to master certain miracles as are described on page 90. A mastered miracle is more easily invoked with Holiness and less taxing upon God's patience. If the Saint spends due hours in prayer, holy labor, and discipline, he may sacrifice the skills they would otherwise learn for the better love of God.

**GAIN  
MIRACLES**

To master a miracle, a Saint must spend one skill point for a Minor miracle, two to master a Major one, and four to master a Great miracle. A Saint must be able to invoke the miracles they master, so they must be at least fourth level to master a Major miracle and seventh to master a Great one. A Saint may save up their skill points to purchase mastery later, if their desired wonder is too costly for a single level's points.

**ALL HEROES MAY CHOOSE** to focus their time and effort on improving their own attributes instead of their skills. They may spend skill points to boost an attribute score by one

**BOOST  
ATTRIBUTES**

ATTRIBUTE BOOST	POINT COST	MIN. LEVEL
First	1	1
Second	2	1
Third	3	3
Fourth	4	6
Fifth	5	9

point, perhaps improving its modifier. An attribute may not be raised above a score of 18. Any penalties applied by Scars are applied to this modified score. A hero must be a certain minimum level to improve their scores a third, fourth, or fifth time.

An attribute boost can be performed no more than five times, with the cost increasing each time. Thus, to boost one's Strength score by +2, three skill points must be spent. Increasing Dexterity by +1 afterwards will then cost another three points, and the hero must be at least third level to do so.

**AT CERTAIN LEVELS THE** hero may pick an additional Focus from those listed in the character creation chapter. At levels 2, 5, 7, and 10 a hero may learn the first level of a new Focus, or increase an existing Focus by one level. Some Foci may only have one level; these cannot be raised. If the Focus grants a bonus skill, credit that skill with three points worth of advancement, even if it raises it to a level otherwise impermissible to the hero.

**GAIN  
A NEW FOCUS**

**LASTLY, A HERO BECOMES** better-able to endure misfortunes, suffering, and perils. Their saving throw scores are adjusted, each one decreasing by one point and making it easier to roll equal or over it when tested. Each saving throw is equal to sixteen minus the hero's new character level, modified by the appropriate attribute score. Physical is modified by the better of Strength or Constitution, Evasion is modified by the better of Intelligence or Dexterity, and Mental is modified by the best of Wisdom and Charisma.

## **INCREASE SAVING THROWS AND ATTACK BONUSES**

If the hero is a Warrior, remember also to note down their increased attack bonus. A Warrior may add their level to any attack roll they make, unlike other classes. If your hero is an Adventurer who is a Partial Warrior, they may add half their new level, rounded down, to which they add +1 at first level and another +1 at fifth. Thus, a seventh-level Partial Warrior may add +5 to their attack rolls.

**IT MAY BE THAT** a hero suffers such terrible wounds that he is no longer fit for brave adventuring. While a Saint's blessings can cure many Scars, it may be that the hero has no friends among the holy, or too many Scars to be so mended. It may even be that a hero has done such wicked or foolish things that all England rises against him, or he has done something to make his play joyless. In such a case the player may retire his unserviceable hero and make a new one.

## **RETIRING CHARACTERS**

This new hero is introduced with a Glory score equal to the least necessary to be one level lower than the lowest-level other PC in the group. He may begin play with whatever gear he wishes, provided it is no better than what his former hero had, and no part of it is magical, and the GM does not think his choices unreasonable.

Let players be encouraged to do much with their heroes before they take up a new role. For every *wyrd* the old hero fulfilled, the new hero may replace one of their attribute scores with one possessed by the former hero, unmodified by Scars. Thus, if a fallen hero had a Strength of 16 before Scars lessened it, the new hero may choose to replace their own rolled Strength with 16. If the former hero has actually perished, and done so in a way befitting an English hero, the new PC also gets a free Focus level as encouragement.

In some cases, a player may wish to recover a retired PC, such as after a year has passed and the Saints are more able to cure their Scars. This is permissible, albeit the recovered PC might not return with all their former wealth.





**OUR WORLD IS ONE** of earth and sky, of Heaven above and Hell below and the steel of men between. There are secrets in this world that foolish men are greedy to learn, and wondrous miracles granted by God's grace to those worthy to wield them. These are matters beyond earthly knowing, yet some among your heroes may have use of them. It is a certainty that many of their enemies will.

The magic practiced by the English is called **GALDOR**, the song that has power. Galdormen work their wonders chiefly by chant and wondrous words, accompanied by the use of herbs and tokens and prayers scratched on little trifles. Few men have the desire to master such things, and fewer still are so careless of God's favor as to seek this knowledge. Galdormen are not loved by their neighbors nor welcomed by the Church, though many fear to be entirely without their help in times of need.

The wonders granted by God are called **MIRACLES**, intercessions by which Christ and the saints in heaven aid the saints on earth. Only a man or woman of true holy fervor and the special grace of God can call on such help with any hope of success, though the powers they wield are mighty against evil. Alas, the devil has black saints of his own, slaves to damnation who may call upon terrible curses and blights. Even a formerly holy saint may fall into Satan's clutches if he gives way to the temptations of the world.

These marvels are not the only wonders of the world. The sinister *dru*-craft of the old Celtic priests that men called druids may be found in the wild western hills, as can the mysteries of the Roman *Artifexes* who worked tremendous labors with their sorcery of bronze and stone. The magic of *eotens* and monstrous *fifel*-kind defies human understanding, and the strange arts of foreigners cannot be guessed. Ours is but a little light in a vast and dark weald.

For galdor is not a thing of systems, and reason, and Roman rationality. It does not have laws or schematics or patterns. One learns a mystery, and then another mystery, and then another still, and there is no reason to connect any of them. Every wonder must be drawn from the dark by itself, and any Galdorman who claims that there is a rational connection between them all is a liar as well as a backslider. Do not look for clean patterns in the weavings of wizards.

In this chapter you will learn of magic and miracles both, and how they are enacted, and the powers of a Galdorman or a Saint among your heroes. Read carefully and understand what you can of it.



**GALDORMEN LEARN THEIR ARTS** from others of their kind, masters who take pupils to toil for them and ease their old age. **BECOMING A GALDORMAN** It is sad to say that many English know a charm or two, or mutter prayers as they paw little tokens of bone, or teach their children to chant the names of saints to keep bees from swarming untimely, but such trifling magic is nothing compared to true galdor.

*Galdormen are rarely trusted by neighbors, but their help is sometimes needed.*

Galdormen are not loved by their neighbors, and some are quick to blame them for evils a settlement suffers. Yet when sorcery plagues a village or some evil thing is in the woods, the villagers swallow their fear and ask for help. They dare not drive the Galdorman out or cut him off from their dealings, but they are reluctant to grant him too much help. So it is that he will take an orphan or a troublemaker or a boy unloved by his parents and teach him his secrets so that the boy may tend his herds and plow his fields and help him with the things he has no help for. Sometimes a Galdorman can find a woman so careless of her soul that she will be his wife, and he will have sons and daughters of his own, but no woman longs to be a wizard's wife and endure the cold manner of her neighbors.

*Minor Galdormen sometimes live in a village, but great ones are often driven to live in the weald.*

It takes years to learn a Galdorman's arts, and often he has not taught everything he knows by the time he dies. His apprentice must decide to either remain as a villager or seek some place better elsewhere, where he will be more loved. Often such apprentices are weary of the suspicion and dislike of their neighbors, and go seeking kinder folk elsewhere. They seldom find them.

In the end, the greatest and most grimsome of Galdormen go into the weald, dwelling apart from others in the forest. Some mistake them for saints, and go to them to beg aid. Others know their true nature, and come seeking less holy help. They give it or deny it, grant it or withhold it, as the pleading man's purse and persuasion may decide. There they have peace from the suspicion of their neighbors, though often they are troubled by Hell.

*The Church hates pagan magic, but it is not entirely certain that galdor is wholly pagan.*

Clerics object to Galdormen not out of ceorlish suspicion and fear, but because it is impossible to tell how much of a Galdorman's arts are mere natural philosophy and how much are the works of demons. The nonsense-chant of a charm might be mere empty syllables or it could be the name of the demon who grants the power. The saints they number and utter are not always those known to scholars. The signs and symbols and tokens they use are not all affirmed by the Church. It is dangerous to meddle with such powers, for all wise men know that demons do help certain sorcerers, and who would risk his soul for mere earthly advantage?



**To get miracles from** God is a simpler path, but it is harder and narrower by far. Any man or woman may be a Saint, whether they are in a minster or out of it, provided they keep a holy man's strict rules. Not every man who keeps to celibacy, obedience, prayer, and labor is a Saint, however, and many monks and nuns of spotless faith are not given the grace of miracles.

## BECOMING A SAINT

This does not make these others less holy, nor less loved by God, and good clergy are yet called "saints" by common men. As Scripture instructs us, God grants to some miracles, to others wisdom, to yet others holy speech, and among them a multitude of graces as His purposes see fit. A Saint who wields miracles is merely God's tool for that end, to work out His plans with faith and obedience to right. Many are the abbots and bishops with no grace of miracles at all, but whose faith and wisdom are a light to all who behold them.

So it is that Saints are chosen by God and not made by special faith. Most come to suspect their election when they beg God's aid in some hour of need and are answered. Of course, a miracle can be given to anyone, holy or base, who cries out in true penitence and need to God. Yet when the Saint asks again for a miracle, he will receive it again, and so by this confidence and expectation of answer is a Saint of miraculous power known.

Saints will naturally favor the miracles most in harmony with their nature and their past doings. A Saint who has prayed often for the healing of the sick will come to do so easily, comforted by his assurance. Yet in dire need a Saint may ask for other things from God, even miracles he has not requested before, and have good hope of being answered. Provided a Saint does not grow too proud and rely too entirely upon God's gifts, he may be confident that help will be given when he asks.

It must also be admitted that there are those men and women who are not satisfied with the portion that God has given them. They wish to have the grace of miracles as well, yet it is not God's will that it be so. They often seek to perform the rites and prayers described in the Scripture known as the book of Pontius Pilate, the great Roman wizard, in hope of being given the gift of miracles. The Church teaches quite plainly that the powers granted by Scripture this way are not licit for use by those not taught and licensed by the Holy Father in Rome, and so copies of this Scripture are kept away from all but the most learned and pious of scholars, lest it be misused by the proud and discontented. I will speak no more of it here, and counsel all other men from seeking out knowledge unfit for their role in life.

*Those with the gift of miracles are not considered any holier than those without. Their gifts are more obvious, but not superior to other charisms.*

*"Learned" gifts of miracles seem possible, but are not discussed in this book.*

**MAGICAL POWERS ARE DIVIDED** between **SPELLS** and **MIRACLES**. Galdormen and other sorcerers use spells, while Saints use miracles. Spells are complex songs and rituals learned by careful practice and the imparting of secret lore. Miracles are simple prayers for divine aid, without special phrases or magical incantations. A Galdorman must be taught his spells and practice them carefully, while every Saint need only pray humbly.

All magic is divided by magnitudes. **MINOR** spells and miracles are the simplest and smallest effects. **MAJOR** spells and miracles require an experienced Galdorman to learn or cast them or a well-seasoned Saint to invoke them. **GREAT** spells and miracles can be invoked only by the mightiest Galdormen or Saints.

Any Galdorman or Saint can learn Minor spells or miracles. To learn Major spells or miracles requires a fourth level hero, and to learn Great spells or use Great miracles requires a seventh level hero.

An Adventurer who has the powers of a Partial Galdorman or Partial Saint does not gain such abilities so quickly, and never masters Great spells or miracles at all. They may use Minor arts from first level, but are not able to learn or use Major arts until sixth level, which is as great as their powers ever become.

Every Galdorman begins the game knowing a number of Minor spells equal to two plus their Magic skill level plus the better of their Intelligence or Charisma modifiers. To learn more they may get instruction from another Galdorman or read a book of spells, rare as the latter thing is.

To learn a spell from a book, the Galdorman must make an Int/Magic skill check against a difficulty of 8 for a Minor spell, 10 for a Major spell, or 12 for a Great spell. If he learns it from another Galdorman, his teacher may add his own Charisma attribute modifier and Magic skill to the pupil's roll, for his understanding helps his student. If the roll is failed, the Galdorman cannot learn the spell from that book or that teacher. Learning a spell takes a day for a Minor one, a week for a Major, and two weeks for a Great one.

A Saint needs no teacher to master a miracle, but may do so by expending skill points as described on page 80. One point masters a Minor miracle, two grants mastery of a Major one, and four allows a Great miracle to be perfected. As with Galdormen, a Saint cannot master a miracle too great for them to invoke, but there is no chance of failing to master it if the toll is paid.



*Spells and miracles rank as Minor, Major, or Great.*

*PCs get minor powers at 1st level, major at 4th, and great at 7th. Partial Saints and Galdormen get them more slowly, and never get Great powers.*

The spells and miracles described in these pages are explained in but brief fashion, with certain limits and rules mentioned but not elaborated every time they appear. Know now the limits of the wonders your heroes may work.

## LIMITS OF MAGIC

Some arts affect only a target visible to the hero. The hero must be able to see the target with his unaided natural vision, or else know his position perfectly enough that he could strike him with a hurled spear if he had a sure hand to heave it. A known foe crouched behind hanging cloth is not hidden from such spells, but one lurking in a darkened chamber may be. If the barrier between the caster and the target is too thick and sturdy to be pierced by a thrown stone, it is too thick to target the foe.

Some arts affect only a target known to the hero. The hero must have seen the one they would affect, drawn close enough to know the color of his eyes, no more than five paces distant. Subjects beheld from afar are not known well enough to direct the energies of the power as they should be aimed. Yet if the hero should get a possession of importance to the target, or a smear of his blood, or a lock of his hair, then they will be able to wield the power against him even if they have never met.

Some arts affect the target's mind, beguiling them or forcing them to think as the hero would have them think. For miracles, all men know that it was God who moved their heart so, and will dare not complain of it. For spells, a target affected by such a spell will not realize that it is magic that moves him, not even if the Galdorman was just intoning a spell to his very face. He will conjure reasons in his head to explain why he does a thing, and persuade himself that it is his own wish that it should be so. Only if he successfully resists the power or if the spell is broken by another art will he realize that he has been ensorcelled. Mind that other onlookers will not be so baffled, and a Galdorman who magically seduces a maiden before her kinsmen will get her brother's spear in his belly, however the girl may protest the sorcerer's innocence. Yet ordinary men are not Galdormen, and they will not commonly understand the limits or nature of his magics, nor will they often have clever wards and protections for staving them off.

Some arts add the hero's skill level to an effect, such as increasing the amount of damage that is healed by the Galdorman's Heal skill, or augmenting the number of subjects affected by a Saint's Pray skill. These powers simply add the skill; if the skill is level-0, then nothing is added, level-1 adds one, level-2 adds two, and so forth.



**To wield a spell** a Galdorman must expend **SORCERY** points, and to invoke a miracle a Saint must expend **HOLINESS** points. These are measures of a Galdorman's magical power or a Saint's holy favor, and will grow as the hero advances in skill and mighty deeds.

A Galdorman begins with a Sorcery score equal to one plus their Magic skill plus the highest of their Intelligence or Charisma modifiers. Thus, a Galdorman with the Magic-0 skill, an Intelligence of 14, and a Charisma of 5 would begin with two Sorcery points. As they improved their Magic skill or trained their Intelligence, their Sorcery score would rise with it.



A Saint begins with a Holiness score equal to one plus their Pray skill plus the highest of their Wisdom or Charisma modifiers. This is tallied just as a Galdorman's Sorcery score would be, albeit holy miracles have nothing to do with a Galdorman's dubious charms.

When a hero expends points from these pools, they go away until the hero has had time for an evening's rituals or prayer. In the morning, assuming the Galdorman has been able to conduct their small rites and ceremonies, or that the Saint has been able to spend at least an hour in prayer, any expended points are regained. The power cannot be refreshed earlier, even if the hero pauses to rest mid-day. Only in the morning are they renewed.

To cast a spell, the Galdorman must take as long as the specific spell requires. Some may be cast as a Main Action, or even as an Instant action. Others require six full hours of muttering over charms and tokens and bubbling pots. The Galdorman is assumed to have all the trifles and herbs he requires for his work, unless he has been stripped of his belongings, and can renew them if lost with a day or two of gathering. If the Galdorman's ritual is not interrupted by physical damage, or the scattering of his paraphernalia, it activates as soon as the action or ritual is complete.

Casting a spell as a Galdorman is obvious to any fool. The mighty songs of magic prick the ears of any who hear them, and the incantations over fires and tokens and herbs are plainly works of magical might. Any onlooker can tell that the Galdorman is casting a spell, and most spells are obvious in what they are to do, for the song says it plainly. Yet if someone is too far away from the Galdorman to hear him singing they may not realize a spell is being cast.

When the spell activates, the Galdorman must expend the amount of Sorcery required by the spell. Many lengthy spells require no Sorcery points at all, and may be performed as often as the Galdorman has time to conduct the long ritual. Others require one, or two, or even three points of Sorcery to bring into being. If the Galdorman lacks the Sorcery required, the spell fizzles uselessly.

Once the spell is cast and paid for it takes effect. Some spells permit the victim to make a saving throw to resist the effect. Otherwise they simply come to pass, unless some stronger magic is used to quash them.

A Galdorman can cast only the spells he knows. Surpassingly great Galdormen might be able to devise entirely new spells, but this is far less likely than to find some heretofore-unknown incantation upon the lips of some old heretic in the weald or to find a book of magic from the time of Rome.

For a Saint to invoke a mastered miracle is much simpler. All miracles take no more than a Main Action to pray for, if not On Turn or Instant actions, and they cannot be disrupted by injury or distraction. Most prayers are uttered aloud, but a Saint may pray silently within his heart. Once the action is taken, the Saint spends the required Holiness for the mastered miracle and it takes place. A Saint can only invoke a miracle if he has enough Holiness to pay its price.

## INVOKING MIRACLES

If he has not mastered a miracle, it costs an extra point of Holiness, and may perhaps not be answered. The Saint must make a Wis/Pray or Cha/Pray skill roll against a difficulty of 8 for a Minor miracle, 10 for a Major one, or 12 for a Great miracle. If the roll fails, the prayer is not answered and the Holiness is not expended. The Saint may not again attempt to ask for that same miracle for the same specific circumstance, even if later they master it. Any action spent to attempt the failed miracle is wasted. Thus, if the Saint prays in vain for a miracle to heal his companion's Scar, his powers may never afterwards mend that same Scar. If a different Scar is inflicted, or a different hero needs healing, then his powers may prove to be enough.

A Saint can attempt to invoke any miracle within the compass of their ability, whether or not they have mastered it. Thus, a first level Saint may attempt to invoke any Minor miracle, a fourth level one may attempt to invoke any Major miracle, and a seventh level Saint may attempt to invoke any Great miracle. A Partial Saint can invoke Minor miracles at first level, but must be sixth to attempt Major ones, and can never obtain Great miracles.

**These are the most** frequent of the miracles of the English, those known best by the students of holy lives. Other miracles may be added by the GM, or may be requested by a Saint if the GM decides it fits very well both the hero and the holy purpose of God. These additions should be discussed and added only between sessions; do not let the Saint merely plead for anything in particular at a moment of need, or else he has the benefits of the Great and holy miracle of *Divine Intervention* without needing to pay the stern price.

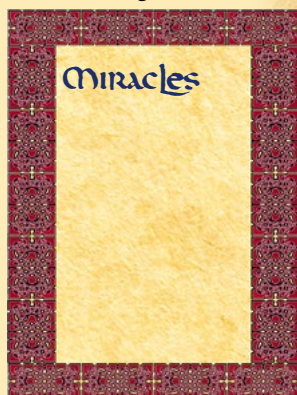
Some miracles may result in the death of a man, such as *Rebuke the Wicked* when used during a battle. Such loss of life is not considered a Shame or a blot on the Saint, for it is God who judges such things. Deaths caused or permitted by miracles are considered the righteous doom of the Lord.

Some miracles cannot help the great among men. They can give no aid to kings, or queens, or bishops, or abbots, or abbesses, or ealdormen, or other great lords and high noble ladies. These are “miracles denied to the great”, wonders that God does not see fit to give to the rulers of men. Some say it is because any man who attains such high state must be so burdened with sin that God will not favor him. Others say that it is because the great have their lands and lords and larders to sustain them, so God lets them live without His help. Whatever the reason, no king can be cured of his sicknesses by miracles, nor will dead ealdormen be called back from the grave-grasp. When a matter is uncertain, let the GM decide whether a man is a great lord or no.

Know that a hero who becomes an ealdorman, or abbot, or king, or other high lord will also be denied these miracles so long as he remains so.

God’s ways are not the ways of men, and sometimes it will seem as if a miracle has done something amiss or brought about some tragic end. Most of the time, this is because mere mortals cannot understand the ways of the Lord, and cannot see the deeper purpose behind such things. Other times, however, the Saint who does such things is no friend to God, but is a fallen man, a Black Saint of Hell, one who has abandoned Christ and given his loyalty to the devil. Satan sends terrible marvels to mimic the holy help of God, but in the end the father of lies seeks only to confound, betray, and damn others as he was first damned.

Know then the true miracles of the English.



Very rarely, a great lord can be healed by a miracle, usually one granted by God's own unkennded grace. And sometimes such an event is used as an explanation for darker methods of succor.





MINOR MIRACLES	Time	Cost	Effect
Blessed Swiftness	On Turn	1	Give an ally a Main Action
Bring Forth Nourishment	Main Action	1	Find food and drink
Divine Sanctuary	Main Action	1	Target is ignored in combat
Light of the Blessed	Main Action	1	Emit bright light
Pray for Clean Healing	Main Action	1	Boost nightly healing
Pray for Insight	Main Action	1	Glimpse action outcome
Prayer for Brother Wolf	Main Action	1	Disperse natural animals
Rebuke the Wicked	On Turn	1	Gain smiting for the scene
Spare the Fallen Friend	Main Action	1	Stabilize and heal the downed
Turn Sinner	Main Action	1	Disperse hostile humans

### MAJOR MIRACLES

Beg for Divine Protection	Main Action	2	Miraculously escape peril
Defy Sorcery	Instant	1	Dispel infernal sorcery
Miraculous Healing	Main Action	1	Heal wounds and Scars
Pray for a Cure	Main Action	2	Cure diseases
Pray for Wisdom	Main Action	2	Gain a clue toward a goal
Scorn the Furnace	Instant	1	Resist heat and flame
Scourge Hell	Main Action	1	Smite Infernal foes
The Gift of Tongues	On Turn	2	Sweetly speak any language

### GREAT MIRACLES

Blessed Counsel	Main Action	3	Ask yes or no queries of God
Divine Breastplate	Main Action	3	Be unseen while harmless
Divine Intervention	Instant	All	Ask for anything at great price
Prayer of Protection	Instant	1	Negate an ally's injury
Prayer to Forfend Evil	Main Action	2	Prevent an event happening
Revive the Dead	Main Action	3	Call back the slain



**Blessed Swiftness**                      **ON TURN**                      **I HOLINESS**                      **MINOR**

This prayer may be uttered swiftly, though it can be used only once per round. The Saint asks God to hasten the hand of an ally within sight. That ally immediately gains another Main Action which they may instantly choose to use as they wish. The Saint may not bless himself with this miracle.

**Bring Forth Nourishment**                      **MAIN ACTION**                      **I HOLINESS**                      **MINOR**

A prayer for sustenance is answered with food and drink. Within ten minutes after making this prayer, the Saint will find sufficient food and drink to sustain one person per character level plus the Saint's Pray skill level. This may be the discovery of a honey-filled comb of beeswax, a little spring in a rock, a fruiting tree, or more overtly miraculous provenance such as beasts bringing loaves of bread. This sustenance cannot be stored overnight. It is for the day only.

**Divine Sanctuary**                      **MAIN ACTION**                      **I HOLINESS**                      **MINOR**

The Saint begs God's help in preserving their life or the life of an ally within sixty feet from the blades of furious foes. Enemies will instinctively avoid attacking the target or using hostile powers upon them. Foes with more hit dice than the Saint has character levels may make a Mental save to ignore the compulsion, and it will shatter instantly if the protected target performs some hostile action against another. It lasts for 1d6 rounds, plus the Saint's Pray skill level.

**Light of the Blessed**                      **MAIN ACTION**                      **I HOLINESS**                      **MINOR**

A prayer brings light in dark places and unquenchable radiance in shadowed halls. The Saint fills the air around him out to a distance of sixty feet with a clear, clean light. This radiance follows the Saint and persists for one hour per character level. It may be temporarily quenched or drawn in during that time as an On Turn action, should stealth and prudence recommend it.

**Pray for Clean Healing**                      **MAIN ACTION**                      **I HOLINESS**                      **MINOR**

The Saint tends a wounded companion, praying to God for help in clean and certain healing. If the companion can receive a good night's rest, he rises in the morning with 1d8 hit points healed, plus 1d8 more for each level of the Saint's Pray skill, in addition to any normal healing he would get from the rest. Thus, a miracle with the Pray-2 skill would grant a bonus of 3d8 hit points to the ally when he woke in the morning. This healing banishes any frailty from a recently Mortally Wounded target, though it cannot prevent the risk of Scars.

**PRAY FOR INSIGHT**

MAIN ACTION

1 HOLINESS

MINOR

The Saint prays to God for help in perceiving the right path to take. The Saint describes a course of action he or his comrade contemplates taking within the next fifteen minutes. He will then receive a divine sense of whether the most likely immediate outcome from that course of action will be perilous woe, pleasing weal, neither, or both. The outcome must be a clear consequence that will come within a half-hour of taking the action; opening a door will give a clear answer, while choosing to negotiate a peace treaty will not. The GM decides with their own judgment whether the outcome is likely to be weal or woe.

**PRAYER FOR BROTHER WOLF**

MAIN ACTION

1 HOLINESS

MINOR

The Saint swiftly prays for peace against the dangers of wild beasts, rolling 2d6 and adding his Pray skill level. That many hit dice of normal wild beasts immediately cease attacking or stalking the Saint and his companions, and will depart in peace unless attacked. Supernatural beasts that have been tainted by magic or Hell may make a Mental saving throw to resist this enforced peacefulness.

**REBUKE THE WICKED**

ON TURN

1 HOLINESS

MINOR

The Saint invokes God's anger against a sinful foe, empowering his rebuke with a terrible force. For the rest of the scene, the Saint gains the option to *Rebuke* as a Main Action. A Rebuked target must be a visible creature within sixty feet. To *Rebuke*, the Saint rolls a Wis/Pray or Cha/Pray skill check against a difficulty of 9. On a success, the terrible force of his anger adds 1d8 + Pray skill hit points of damage to the target the next time it suffers damage during the scene, such as when the Saint's ally smites them. This damage can stack, accumulating until an ally lands a successful hit on the rebuked target to trigger it. Demons and supernatural foes take double damage from a *Rebuke* and suffer it immediately, with no need for someone else to harm them.

**SPARE THE FALLEN FRIEND**

MAIN ACTION

1 HOLINESS

MINOR

The Saint prays fiercely for God to spare the life of an ally who has fallen. When invoked over a Mortally Wounded ally who is within 30 feet, the target immediately stabilizes and will rise at the end of the scene with 1d10 hit points healed plus the Saint's Pray skill level. If this miracle is invoked in the same scene in which the friend was struck down, there is no risk of a Scar from his wounds. This miracle is no help if his friend has been slain in some wholly final fashion, such as being beheaded, torn to pieces, or burnt to cinders.



**TURN SINNER**

MAIN ACTION

1 HOLINESS

MINOR

A stern word of chiding and instruction abashes the sinful and wicked who hear it. When this miracle is invoked, roll 2d6 and add the Pray skill level. That many hit dice of human beings chosen by you who can hear you will be made abashed and fearful of the Saint's anger. They will not attack him or his companions unless attacked first, and will depart from the Saint unless compelled to stay by bonds of loyalty or duty. A target can only be affected by this miracle if they have equal or fewer hit dice than the Saint has levels. This miracle does not work once battle has begun and it may be performed only once per scene.

**BEG FOR DIVINE PROTECTION**

MAIN ACTION

2 HOLINESS

MAJOR

Encircled by peril and certain doom, the Saint begs God for His help and divine protection. By some miraculous chain of events, the Saint and his immediate companions are spirited out of whatever dangerous situation they find themselves in, and placed in a position of at least temporary safety. The Saint or one of his companions must be in imminent danger of their lives to use this miracle, and it never provides victory or success, only escape. Nor does it revive or restore allies slain or wounded. The Saint must spend a week in fasting and thanksgiving prayer before he can use this miracle again, or two if it is used unmastered.

**DEFY SORCERY**

INSTANT

1 HOLINESS

MAJOR

A swift prayer drives back a spell cast by a sorcerer or a power of Infernal magic. This miracle will not protect against all magical powers, but only the incantations of Galdormen or other human wizards, or the dark powers of a Hell-born foe. If the foe or evil spellcaster has equal or fewer hit dice than the Saint, the magic has no effect at all. If the foe is greater, the Saint must make a Wis/Pray or Cha/Pray skill test against difficulty 10, resisting the magic on a success. This miracle may only be used once on any given instance of magic, and it may not be used to protect anyone but the Saint. Nor may it dispel such magics as do not directly affect the Saint, nor banish enchantments that are permanent and woven into a thing or place.

**MIRACULOUS HEALING**

MAIN ACTION

1 HOLINESS

MAJOR

The Saint prays earnestly for the wondrous healing of a crippled or wounded friend, laying hands upon him and uttering this prayer. One Scar of the Saint's choice is healed, even if it requires the wondrous restoration of a lost limb or organ. The subject is also healed for 1d8 hit points per two levels of the Saint,

rounded up, and 1d8 more per level of Pray skill they possess. A given target can have a Scar healed by a given Saint only once per year. If he has more limbs to be mended, he must find a different Saint to heal them. As with *Pray for a Cure*, this miracle cannot help kings, queens, lords, high clerics, and other men of great standing in the world, for it is denied to the great.

### **PRAY FOR A CURE**

MAIN ACTION      2 HOLINESS      MAJOR

Holy prayer scourges sickness from a man, banishing diseases that the subject may be suffering from and ensuring that a man frail from being Mortally Wounded will survive his recovery period, if perhaps not without Scars. This miracle can also drive out demonic possession if the Saint makes a Wis/Pray skill check at a difficulty of the demon's Morale score plus two. A failure means the Saint cannot drive out the demon. This miracle does not cure deformities, Scars, or other lingering woes, but it does cure fevers, poxes, augues, and all their unhappy consequences. This miracle cannot help kings, bishops, abbots, ealdormen, or others of high station and lordly rule in the world, for it is denied to the great. The great have their lands and their lordships and their storehouses to sustain them, but the poor and humble have none to rely on but God.

### **PRAY FOR WISDOM**

MAIN ACTION      2 HOLINESS      MAJOR

The Saint asks a question of God in earnest prayer, and receives in turn a vision of where or who he should seek in order to find the answer. Note that this miracle does not give the answer; it only shows the Saint where he should look for it. A man may require further persuasion to give the truth of a thing, and a location may require careful search and consideration of what is found in order to discover the answer.

### **SCORN THE FURNACE**

INSTANT              1 HOLINESS      MAJOR

Just as the furnace of an evil king could not consume the loyal servants of God, the Saint wards himself or a chosen ally from the bite of flame and the stifling of smoke. For the rest of the scene, the chosen target has all fire or smoke damage they suffer reduced by twice the Saint's character level, down to zero perhaps.

### Scourge hell

MAIN ACTION    1 HOLINESS    MAJOR

An Infernal thing born of Hell, be it demon or some other supernatural beast of Infernal nature, is scathed by the terrible holiness of the Saint. The hero must be able to see or perceive the devil, but it must make a Physical save or suffer  $1d8+2$  damage for every two levels of the Saint, rounded up. On a successful save, it suffers only half damage, rounded up.

### The Gift of Tongues

ON TURN    2 HOLINESS    MAJOR

Like the apostles on Pentecost, the Saint briefly begs the gift of tongues from God. For the rest of the scene, the Saint or a chosen companion may read, write, speak, and understand all human speech. So sweet are the chosen subject's words that he gains a +1 bonus on all skill checks involving speech, regardless of the language.

### Blessed Counsel

MAIN ACTION    3 HOLINESS    GREAT

In need of God's guidance, the Saint implores Him to send a sign by which the right path may be known when the way forward is dark and dismal. The Saint may ask yes or no questions regarding a particular topic that will be answered unerringly. If the GM does not know the answer, or the question is too profound for mortal understanding, or the question is actually irrelevant to the player's interest, then no answer is given and the question is wasted. The Saint may ask one question freely; each additional one requires a Wis/Pray skill check starting at difficulty 9 and increasing cumulatively by 1 for each question after. On a failed skill check the Saint is overwhelmed by the power of this Miracle and cannot again use their Miracles for one day per question answered. *Blessed Counsel* may not be used more than once per week.

### Divine Breastplate

MAIN ACTION    3 HOLINESS    GREAT

The Saint prays a mighty prayer to protect himself and his companions against all evil and every foe. So long as they remain together and do nothing to attack, or disturb, or draw special notice from those around them, they may move unseen and unnoticed by all others, who will see mere ordinary animals, or deer, or nothing at all. This miracle will not work if the Saint and his companions have already drawn someone's notice or made them hunt intruders. This miracle ends at the end of the scene, or the first time the Saint or someone with him visibly manipulates an object, opens a door, or otherwise engages with coarse matter in a place where other men could perhaps notice the act.



**DIVINE INTERVENTION**

INSTANT

ALL HOLINESS GREAT

In an hour of desperate need the Saint may beg a miracle of God, asking for whatever favor they choose. This uses up all the remaining Holiness they possess, though no minimum is required. God will answer the plea, but will do so as He sees fit, not to the glory of the Saint and his companions, but to the satisfaction of His righteous plan. This may not be to grant victory, but it will always grant something. It comes at a price, however; the Saint immediately loses a character level, and is left with only the minimum Glories required for the start of their prior level. If this miracle has not been mastered, two levels are lost.

**PRAYER OF PROTECTION**

INSTANT

1 HOLINESS GREAT

When the Saint or an ally within sight is about to suffer hit point loss from some source, the Saint may cry out to God for protection as an Instant action. The blow or injury is completely negated, doing no harm at all to the subject. This prayer may be uttered only once a round.

**PRAYER TO FORFEND EVIL**

MAIN ACTION

2 HOLINESS GREAT

The Saint names a particular single event, like the arrival of reinforcements, or the collapse of a crumbling bridge, or the use of a particular dark power by a foe. If there is any remotely plausible way that the event does not come to pass, it will not happen, at least not until after the end of the scene. If the miracle requires that a thinking creature choose not to do a thing, the creature may make a Mental saving throw to resist this prompting and act as they meant to act. Only one event may be forfended in any given scene.

**REVIVE THE DEAD**

MAIN ACTION

3 HOLINESS GREAT

This great prayer beckons back a life that has fled its bone-cage. The corpse must be at least half present, less than a month dead, and must not have yet received proper funeral rites to usher the soul onward. The Saint must utter a fervent prayer, after which he rolls a Wis/Pray or Cha/Pray check against a difficulty of 6 plus the deceased's hit dice or level. If the check is failed, the Saint immediately loses a level and is reduced to the minimum Glories needed for their prior level, losing all benefits from the lost experience. Two levels are lost if this miracle has not been mastered. Whether the check succeeds or fails, the subject will rise again at dawn, alive and whole with the Scars they bore in life. This prayer is denied to the great, and also to those who died with gray hairs upon their head. Such people have had their share of life and may have no more.

A Galdorman's spells will have been taught to him by his master as payment for the boy's labor and loyalty. While the essential parts of each are brief enough, there are innumerable tricks of herb-gathering, amulet-etching, the boiling of liquids and the intonation of subtle songs that make it impossible to easily learn the Galdorman's arts. A sorcerer can tell you the words and ingredients of a spell before a mead-horn is emptied. To understand the methods that give that wisdom power is the work of ten years.

Some spells are cast quickly, needing only a Main Action, or sometimes even an Instant action to sing out its power. These spells all cost one or more points of Sorcery to invoke. None will ever

mistake them for anything but magical incantations, but if a man's normal speech would not be prominent enough to draw notice, then it may pass.

Other spells are cast very slowly, taking minutes or hours to complete. The Galdorman is presumed to have with him all the herbs and tokens and amulets he requires for such complex spells, assuming no man has robbed him, but he must be left undisturbed and untroubled while he chants and works his arts. If he is struck or suffers meddling while so casting, the spell is spoiled and must be begun anew. Yet these spells, so lengthy in their casting, often require no Sorcery points at all to invoke and may be used whenever the Galdorman has the time to perform them.

Unlike the Saint, the Galdorman need not spend skill points to learn new spells, nor may he cast spells he has not yet learned by mere effort of prayer. He must learn new spells from other Galdormen, who may teach him any spell they know that he is wise enough to be able to cast, as explained on page 86. Lacking a teacher, he may instead learn spells from old grimoires of deep arts, though such books are few. Churchmen dislike them, finding them full of dubious wisdom and perhaps Infernal influences. Yet so long as a Galdorman finds one to teach him he may learn as many spells as he is able.

I am told that some wizards of distant lands must prepare their sorceries like their evening's meal, packing them away in their head as a plowman stores a cheese for his noontime repast. If he does not prepare a spell, he cannot cast it later. Perhaps that is how such wizards use their arts, but an English Galdorman can cast any spell he knows, should he have the Sorcery for it.



**AGAINST POISON**

MAIN ACTION

I SORCERY

MINOR

A swift application of this charm can save a poisoned creature. The victim gains a new Physical save at a bonus equal to half the caster's level, rounded up, and if successful, any poison they suffer is driven out. On a failure, this spell cannot help them.

**AGAINST WEARINESS**

FIVE MINUTES

I SORCERY

MINOR

The caster gives herbs in water to an ally and says certain words over them. That ally will not be wearied walking nor his horse wearied by riding nor by any otherwise laboring until the sun next rises or sets, granting him twice the travel speed or labor achieved in that time as another man would do. If he sits guard at night he will need no sleep, and if he chooses to travel a full twelve-hour day he may also hunt that day, as described on page 76.

**FOR A SWARM OF BEES**

MAIN ACTION

I SORCERY

MINOR

The caster gains command over a swarm of bees, if one is within sight, and may make it meek and docile to him, or bid it pain a foe, who will suffer a -4 penalty to all attack rolls while they remain, and who must flee unless he succeeds in a Morale check. The command lasts for the rest of the scene. A Galdorman looking for a wild hive to beguile will find one on a Wis/Hunt check against difficulty 9 in most wild places with an hour of searching.

**FOR SPEAKING WITH BEASTS**

MAIN ACTION

I SORCERY

MINOR

The Galdorman can ask a question of any nearby animal, which will answer him in human speech. The animal can only answer questions about the things it plainly sensed, and can make no conclusions nor describe any speech it overheard. The Galdorman may ask one question for every three caster levels they possess, rounded up. The animal will always answer truthfully, but it only answers questions and cannot do favors or converse freely with the caster.

**TO BE AS A PHYSICIAN**

ONE HOUR

I SORCERY

MINOR

The caster sings a soothing song above a wounded ally. At the end of the spell, the subject regains  $1d6 + \text{Magic skill}$  lost hit points for every two hit dice or levels the subject possesses, rounded up. If used upon a Mortally Wounded subject they must still make a roll for a Scar before rising from their bed of suffering, but they may read the dice either way; a roll of 8 and 2 may be read as 82 or as 28.



**To Blight the Harvest**      SIX HOURS      0 SORCERY      MINOR

A wicked Galdorman may curse a man's fields. This spell must be sung at nightfall, though it may be done in the Galdorman's own house, away from prying eyes, and before dawn breaks the Galdorman must go to the land he would curse and bury four small, evil tokens in four corners of the field. Once they are buried, the land is cursed even if the tokens are taken away. While the curse lingers, the land will yield only  $1d10 \times 10\%$  of its usual crop, less 10% per level of the caster. A Galdorman can curse twice as many hides of land as they have levels or hit dice with one use of this spell, and it lasts for one year per caster level.

**To Blunt the Sword Edge**      MAIN ACTION      1 SORCERY      MINOR

The caster dulls the blade-edges of as many visible weapons as the caster has character levels or hit dice. Dulled weapons roll their damage twice and take the worst result. A Galdorman cannot dull the teeth of beasts or enfeeble the fists of men, and this spell has no power over magical weapons or those that are not sharp to begin with. The dulling lasts until the blades have had a half-hour of resharpening.

**To Close the Mouth**      FIVE MINUTES      1 SORCERY      MINOR

The Galdorman must know the target, and they must be within a mile per level of the caster. When this song is sung, the Galdorman must choose a single event or topic; the target must then make a Mental save or they will be unable to speak or write about that matter, even if they yearn to do so. They may act as they wish, but they cannot hint of the matter, or gesture about it, or talk in round-about ways to point to it. This curse lingers for a day for every level of the caster.

**To Cure Sick Cattle**      FIVE MINUTES      1 SORCERY      MINOR

A sick or injured animal may be cured by this spell. Once it is complete, any mundane sickness is lifted from the beast and any wounds will heal safely and cleanly in no longer than a week. If a sickness is magical in nature, however, this spell can give no help.

**To Dazzle Flying Ones**      MAIN ACTION      I SORCERY      MINOR

Useful to quell the power of flying sorcerers as well as other evil winged things, this incantation must be aimed at a visible flying foe. The target must make a Physical saving throw, or else they are blinded and stunned, unable to do anything but land. For the rest of the scene, they can see and act normally only while they are standing on earth or are immersed in water.

**To Enchant a Maid**      SIX HOURS      O SORCERY      MINOR

By means of this spell the caster wins the earnest devotion of a virginal maid or unbedded boy they have met before. The subject gets a Mental saving throw to shed the spell and ever afterwards be immune to it, but if they fail, they will admire and delight in the caster, and be their friend and more. Yet if the subject ever ceases to be a virgin, that enforced devotion will instantly fade, and they will treat the Galdorman as his own actions toward them have earned.

**To Find a Lost Object**      MAIN ACTION      I SORCERY      MINOR

The Galdorman must have seen the object he seeks, or have it described by someone who has seen it, and it must be a particular thing and not a mere kind of object. When the spell is cast, the Galdorman gets an idea of its location, accurate to within a tenth of the distance between the Galdorman and the object. The spell can find objects no further away than half a mile for every level of the caster. If the object was intentionally stolen or purposely hidden away, the caster must succeed in an opposed Wis/Magic check against the thief's Int/Sneak, or this spell cannot find the thing.

**To Improve the Fields**      SIX HOURS      O SORCERY      MINOR

A Galdorman may break curses that have been laid on a field or make ill-growing land produce better. This ritual can cure twice as many hides of land as the Galdorman has levels or hit dice. If it is cursed, the Galdorman makes a Mental saving throw with a bonus equal to his level or hit dice and a penalty equal to the curse-caster's hit dice or level; if successful, the curse is broken. If a failure, he cannot lift this curse with this spell. If the curse is lifted or if the land was never cursed to begin with, the soil there will grow crops half again as well as any good farmland for a year and a day thereafter, even if it is sere and unprofitable earth. This spell is wearisome, and can be cast only once a week. Good Christians may shy from calling upon it, but a man in need may not have such qualms.

**To Know an Uncanny Wise**    ON TURN    1 SORCERY    MINOR

The caster calls up wisdom when seeing a mysterious magical effect or a plainly supernatural foe. He may make a Wis/Magic skill against a difficulty of 8 to learn a sentence or two of description about what the mysterious effect does or the nature of the supernatural foe. This lore will warn of a creature's most terrible magical power and hint at any special measures needed to slay or harm it.

**To Obtain Favours**    FIVE MINUTES    1 SORCERY    MINOR

The caster makes special letters which must be given to someone else to wear beneath their clothing. The next time the bearer seeks to persuade someone to grant them a favor or a benefit, they may make any applicable social skill check or reaction roll twice and take the better roll. A subject can carry only one such set of letters at once, and they lose their virtue after their first modified roll.

**To Quench the Blaze**    MAIN ACTION    1 SORCERY    MINOR

The caster may crush out a burning fire, causing it to quench instantly as if drowned in water. A first level caster may quench a bonfire, a fourth level caster may stifle a burning hall, and a seventh level caster may snuff out every flame within a hundred paces. A fire can be re-lit, but fresh flame must be brought.





**To Safeguard the Geoguth**    MAIN ACTION    I SORCERY    MINOR

This magical blessing may be placed only on a visible man or woman younger than the caster, such as young *geoguth* warriors often are. The caster must name a specific kind of weapon, such as a spear, or a fang, or a claw, or a sword, or an axe. For the rest of the scene, any such weapons must roll their hit and damage rolls twice against the blessed subject and take the worst result. The caster may have only one instance of this spell active at a time.

**To See the Spell**    MAIN ACTION    I SORCERY    MINOR

For the remainder of the scene, the Galdorman can see things of magic as if they glowed with light. Cursed or enchanted people, magical objects, *Arx* entrances, and other spells are plainly visible, yet their specific meaning is not shown.

**To Staunch Bleeding**    MAIN ACTION    I SORCERY    MINOR

The caster uses great knowledge to quell the bleeding of wounds, provided the subject is still strong enough to stand. This spell is of no use on a Mortally Wounded ally, but one who has not been felled yet is cured of four hit points of damage for each caster level. The force of the magic stuns the recipient and leaves them unable to do more than walk for five minutes after the spell is complete, however. The strain this healing inflicts is such that this spell may be used only once a day on any given target.

**To Sing the Consuming Flame**    MAIN ACTION    I SORCERY    MINOR

The Galdorman utters a song of fire, charming a single open flame within spear-cast, whether it is small as a candleflame or large as a burning hall. So long as the Galdorman keeps singing as an On Turn each round, the flame cannot be put out by anything short of complete immersion, total smothering, or the complete consumption of its fuel. A man somehow set alight will be sung to death by this spell unless he can first kill the Galdorman or make him cease his song.

**Against a Dwarf-Curse**    SIX HOURS    O SORCERY    MAJOR

If a victim be cursed by a Fae creature or an angry Galdorman, but not an Infernal thing or some divine anger, then this spell may lift the curse from him. He must be cooperative or immobilized for the ritual, and at the end he may make an appropriate saving throw with a bonus equal to half the caster's level, rounded up. On a success, the curse is broken, but on a failure, this Galdorman cannot lift it with this spell.

**AGAINST MISCARRIAGE**      SIX HOURS      0 SORCERY      MAJOR

A charm against the loss of a child in the womb, this spell will ensure that a pregnant woman will bring forth her child in health if she lives to bear it. Many are the good Christian women who would be glad of this charm, and many the husbands who would look aside from it to be sure of having sons and daughters.

**AGAINST THE BITE OF AN ADDER**      INSTANT      1 SORCERY      MAJOR

A swift charm against a venomous or malignant bite of any kind, this spell prevents the beast from being able to inject its poison or inflict its unholy curse. The caster must be able to see or know the beast has bitten or clawed someone. Any hit point damage is inflicted normally, but no poison is applied, and if some other baleful magic would be inflicted on a bite or claw attack it is negated. This spell cannot aid against envenomed weapons, only venomous bites or claws.

**AGAINST THIEVES OF GOODS**      FIVE MINUTES      2 SORCERY      MAJOR

The Galdorman takes earth from the footprints of stolen animals, or sings charms outside the walls of the house from which a thing was stolen. He knows what direction the stolen thing lies in, and that knowledge remains accurate for one hour per level of the caster. If the animals or thing were merely lost or killed rather than stolen by someone, the spell leads in a random direction.

**FOR A CHARM AGAINST DEVILS**      MAIN ACTION      1 SORCERY      MAJOR

The caster wards a subject against the powers of devils, sorcerers, and Fae. Until the next sunrise or sunset, they may make any saving throws to resist magical mental influence or possession from any source twice, taking the better result.

**OF A LOVE CHARM FOR WOMEN**      MAIN ACTION      2 SORCERY      MAJOR

This spell binds the heart of a woman to the caster, or the heart of a man if the caster is a Galdorwife. The target must be one visible to him, and she may make a Mental saving throw to prove herself immune to this spell and impervious to it forever afterwards. If she fails, she will desire the caster and treat him as she would a lover until he treats her badly or otherwise proves unworthy of her care. This spell has no power over a monk, nun, or other person pledged to God.

**OF A MIGHTY DWARF-SONG**      MAIN ACTION    1 SORCERY    MAJOR

The caster sings a Fae song of praise for someone other than himself. For the rest of the scene, that ally is greatly emboldened, and may roll his hit rolls twice, taking the better, and gain a +1 bonus on all skill checks.

**TO BREW ELF-SALVE**      SIX HOURS      0 SORCERY    MAJOR

A small pot of enchanted unguent is fashioned that has the power to ward a recipient against the anger of the Fae. If a subject is anointed with this salve as a Main Action, all Fae suffer a -4 penalty to hit them, and the recipient gains a +4 saving throw bonus against their powers and +4 bonus to hit rolls against them. The recipient may also see through Fae illusions and concealments while so anointed, and perceive entrances and exits to Faerie. Because of his magical nature, the caster cannot use this salve personally. Only one pot of salve may be kept fresh at a time, and it is good for only one use, lasting a single scene.

**TO CHARM A SHIELD**      MAIN ACTION    1 SORCERY    MAJOR

The caster blesses a number of shields no greater than their character level. The next time that scene the bearer is harmed by anything the shield could perhaps block, whether weapon or physical peril, the shield will magically preserve him unhurt. This charm lasts for the rest of the scene, and a subject can benefit from it only once in a scene.

**TO DISPEL A WARRIOR'S HATE**      SIX HOURS      0 SORCERY    MAJOR

The caster names two men, both of whom they know and both of whom must count themselves warriors or fighters. Each makes a Mental saving throw. Those who fail lose all hatred or anger toward the other, and if they have grudges or crimes to avenge, they take no joy in doing so. They do not love each other, but they get no pleasure from wrath until fresh cause is given for it.

**TO GO WITHOUT TRACE**      MAIN ACTION    1 SORCERY    MAJOR

The caster charms the footsteps of himself, up to a dozen companions, and up to twenty cattle or horses per caster level. These footfalls will leave no trace on earth, however soft it is. Any who try to track their passage must go by disturbed vegetation and other signs, applying at least a -3 to all pertinent skill checks if it is possible at all. The charm lasts for half an hour per caster level.



**TO MAKE THE HOLY DRINK**      SIX HOURS      2 SORCERY      MAJOR

A draught of charmed water is made by this rite which must be immediately drunk by a recipient. It grants them an immediate Physical save to throw off any diseases that might plague them. If it fails, the caster's holy drink cannot help their affliction.

**TO OPEN BONDS AND FETTERS**      MAIN ACTION      1 SORCERY      MAJOR

By this loud-sung charm, audible a spear-cast away, the caster undoes a binding or lock, causing ropes to fall away, locked chests to leap open, or chains to drop from fettered limbs. The binding must be visible, and the spell affects only things that are locked and tied, not barriers that are merely impassible. Thus, a barred door would be cast open, but a doorway blocked by heavy stones would not. Unbinding a magical seal like that of an Arx requires a successful Int/Magic skill check against difficulty 8 or more, or the spell is useless for that purpose.

**TO PUT AWAY AN ACCUSATION**      SIX HOURS      0 SORCERY      MAJOR

If the caster should be accused of any crime or evil action, the caster may withdraw and perform this spell, provided he has seen his accuser. Once complete, his accuser must make a Mental saving throw or he shall find his own certainty shaken and unsettled. If he fails the save, he will come to believe himself mistaken in the caster's guilt, however clear it was, and will refuse to be persuaded otherwise. If he succeeds in the save, this spell cannot affect his certainty. This spell cannot efface a known Shame from lessening a man's Glories, but it can spoil legal proceedings or other official punishments for the act.

**TO SLOW THE ARROW'S FLIGHT**      INSTANT      1 SORCERY      MAJOR

As quickly as the Galdorman can look upon it, an arrow can be slowed to a crawl in mid-air. If its target has any power to move at all, they may easily ensure it misses its mark. This spell has power only over arrows, not spears or other flung weapons.

**TO TURN THE BLADE BACK**      INSTANT      1 SORCERY      MAJOR

If struck at by a sword or spear or other weapon in a man's hand, the Galdorman may make it twist and turn like a serpent in the wielder's grasp. The assailant must make an Evasion saving throw; if failed, the caster is left unharmed and the wielder is injured as if struck by their own weapon. If the saving throw succeeds, the original hit roll stands, to harm or miss the caster as it originally did.

**AGAINST THE DEVIL AND MADNESS**    SIX HOURS    2 SORCERY    GREAT

Draughts, charms, and songs are used to drive out madness from an afflicted soul and scourge out the devils or witchery that plague them. At the ritual's end, the subject may make a Mental saving throw at a bonus equal to the caster's level and a penalty equal to the hit dice of any possessing devil. If successful, they are cured of any insanity caused by devils or dark sorcery and freed of any demonic possession. The subject must usually be captured and bound for the spell, as no devil will willingly allow it to be done. If the save fails, the caster cannot cure the affliction with this spell.

**FOR A SAFE JOURNEY**    FIVE MINUTES    2 SORCERY    GREAT

A charm is sung against peril on a journey. Until the end of the day, whenever a dangerous random encounter or environmental peril such as storms, mudslides, or the like would befall the caster or his companions, there is a 50% chance that they do not happen after all. This charm does not work if the caster is intentionally journeying to a dangerous place, such as an outlaw camp or a haunted ruin. If fleeing a pursuing foe, such as during a cattle raid, the caster's warband gains a +3 on all skill checks to escape.

**FOR MAKING THE HANGED WALK**    ONE HOUR    0 SORCERY    GREAT

The caster may take the corpse of a man or woman who was hanged and draw upon it runes of many colors, conjuring it to rise and walk. The corpse cannot fight, but it can speak and remember its life, and answer questions put to it by the caster, and obey all commands with human intelligence. The corpse will walk for a number of nights equal to the caster's level before it falls to filth and bones. A corpse that has been buried with Christian rites cannot be raised by this spell.

**TO ASCEND ABOVE**    MAIN ACTION    1 SORCERY    GREAT

The caster is gifted with a temporary grace of flight. For one round per caster level, they may travel freely through the air at their usual movement rate, remaining suspended when they are not moving. If the spell ends while they are still aloft they will fall like Simon Magus did, who is called Simon the Druid by the Irish.

**To Calm Weather and Seas**      MAIN ACTION    3 SORCERY    GREAT

By great charms and adjurations, the caster quells storms, silences great winds, and soothes the wrath of the seas. For an hour afterwards per level or hit die of the caster, the weather within a mile of him is calm, clear, and bright as befits the season, with no more than a mild breeze where once there was a gale.

**To Curse with Ruin**      SIX HOURS      0 SORCERY    GREAT

A dreadful curse is laid down on a man or woman whom the caster has seen before with their own eyes. The victim is blighted, such that they must make every attack roll twice, every saving throw twice, and every skill check twice, taking the worst roll each time. This curse lasts as long as the Galdorman wishes, but such awful misfortune torments him as well, and the same curse affects the caster as long as the spell persists, for as long as one day per caster level. Only one victim may be cursed this way at a time, and if the curse is broken or ends it cannot be laid on the target again. This spell cannot affect a Saint.

**To Prevent Theft**      ONE HOUR      0 SORCERY    GREAT

A chest, cabinet, bag, or other container must be charmed by this spell. Once it is complete, anyone who opens it with the intent to take from it without the caster's leave will think it empty, and be unable to see or touch the objects within. Only the caster or one permitted to do so may take anything out of it, for to everyone else it is empty. A caster may charm no more containers against theft than they have character levels, but may keep these containers charmed indefinitely with this art, or until they perish.

**To Sing a Doom**      MAIN ACTION    3 SORCERY    GREAT

The Galdorman sings a doom upon a man or woman he can see with his own eyes. The Galdorman may name any act or purpose the subject must do or follow and a particular situation, time, or event that will trigger the doom. When the trigger comes to pass, the victim must immediately make a Mental save or carry out the doom for the remainder of the scene. If the doom would compel them to do something horrible, they may make a Mental save after each round of action to end the spell's power over them. A subject may bear only one such doom at a time, and no sorcerer's doom can force them to slay themselves or act in a way certain to bring about their immediate death.



**It is no surprise** that a Galdorman might wish to devise a new magic to help himself and his allies. This is not an easy matter, but it is not an impossible one. Let the GM see now how it is done.

The Galdorman's player first tells the GM what he wishes the spell to do. If the GM does not think it unacceptable, he gives it a ranking: Minor, Major, or Great. The Galdorman must then undertake an adventure to locate a teacher who can help him perfect the spell, or a Roman book that can show him how it might be done, or a relic that has some scrap of vital lore carved on it, or otherwise some other quest by which the necessary art is achieved. The player may make suggestions, but the GM decides in the end what the quest will be. Most often, it should



be a task that is apt to take one session of play to complete. If it is done successfully, the Galdorman has perfected the spell and learns it.

When deciding whether a spell is acceptable, however, the GM should keep a few matters close in mind.

***Do not make it so good in combat as a sharp spear.*** If the Galdorman may smite and hew as well as the Warrior, what use is the latter? A spell should not normally do damage in battle. If the Galdorman wishes to kill, let him take up a spear.

***Do not give non-combat spells a quick casting time.*** If the spell is not meant to be used in combat, give it a casting time of a few minutes, if it is to be used whenever the Galdorman wishes, or of some hours, if its use is not to be when the group is in some place of danger like an Arx.

***Be slow to grant categorical problem-solving spells.*** If the spell erases an entire category of challenges, such as controlling social outcomes, or eliminating wandering monster checks in an Arx, or making the caster immune to certain perils, it should be denied or sharply restricted in scope.

***Do not let spells create easy magics.*** In some lands, I am told, every wizard coughs sorcery from dawn until dark. In England, magic is a thing uncommon and remarkable. Do not let it become a petty and trifling thing, used to accomplish minor ends with little care or labor.

***Be prepared to reverse your approval.*** This little book cannot guess at every peril a spell may present to your game. Be forgiving in what you first approve, but if the spell turns out to be sour revoke it or change it fittingly.

Minor Spells	Time	Cost	Effect
<b>Against Poison</b>	Main Action	1	Allow a poison save
<b>Against Weariness</b>	Five minutes	1	Make a subject tireless
<b>For a Swarm of Bees</b>	Main Action	1	Summon and master bees
<b>For Speaking with Beasts</b>	Main Action	1	Talk with animals
<b>To Be As a Physician</b>	One hour	1	Heal 1d6 per 2 subject levels
<b>To Blunt the Sword-Edge</b>	Main Action	1	Dull enemy weapons
<b>To Cure Sick Cattle</b>	Five minutes	1	Animal disease/injury cure
<b>To Dazzle Flying Ones</b>	Main Action	1	Force down flying foes
<b>To Enchant a Maid</b>	Six hours	0	Charm a virgin
<b>To Find a Lost Object</b>	Main Action	1	Locate something lost
<b>To Improve the Fields</b>	Six hours	0	Improve yield or break curse
<b>To Know an Uncanny Wise</b>	On Turn	1	Identify a supernatural foe
<b>To Obtain Favors</b>	Five minutes	1	Aid favor-seeking skill check
<b>To Quench the Blaze</b>	Main Action	1	Extinguish visible flames
<b>To Safeguard the Geoguth</b>	Main Action	1	Protect a younger target from a type of weapon
<b>To See the Spell</b>	Main Action	1	Detect magic visually
<b>To Staunch Bleeding</b>	Five minutes	1	Heal a still-mobile ally
<b>To Sing the Consuming Flame</b>	Main Action	1	Make a visible fire impossible to extinguish
<b>To Close the Mouth</b>	Five Minutes	1	Make something unspeakable
<b>To Blight the Harvest</b>	Six hours	0	Curse someone's fields
<b>Major Spells</b>			
<b>Against a Dwarf-Curse</b>	Six hours	0	Lift a non-infernal curse
<b>Against Miscarriage</b>	Six hours	0	Ensure a healthy birth
<b>Agnst. the Bite of an Adder</b>	Instant	1	Prevent a beast's poisoning
<b>Against Thieves of Goods</b>	Five minutes	2	Track stolen goods
<b>For a Charm Agnst. Devils</b>	Main Action	1	Boost Mental saving throws

<b>Of a Love Charm for Women</b>	Main Action	2	Charm a target of the opposite sex into false love
<b>Of a Mighty Dwarf-Song</b>	Main Action	1	Boost an ally's attacks
<b>To Brew Elf-Salve</b>	Six hours	1	Gain bonuses against Fae
<b>To Charm a Shield</b>	Main Action	1	Augment allies' shields
<b>To Dispel a Warrior's Hate</b>	Six hours	0	Extinguish mutual anger
<b>To Go Without Trace</b>	Main Action	1	Prevent others from tracking him
<b>To Make the Holy Drink</b>	Six hours	2	Save to throw off a disease
<b>To Open Bonds and Fetters</b>	Main Action	1	Undo locks, bindings, and seals
<b>To Put Away an Accusation</b>	Six hours	0	Shake an accuser's certainty
<b>To Slow the Arrow's Flight</b>	Instant	1	Block a fired arrow
<b>To Turn the Blade Back</b>	Instant	1	Reflect a melee attack on him

### Great Spells

<b>Against the Devil and Madness</b>	Six hours	2	Cure demonic possession or infernal madnesses
<b>For a Safe Journey</b>	Five minutes	2	Avoid hostile encounters
<b>For Making the Hanged Walk</b>	One hour	0	Make a hanged corpse rise and talk of what it remembers
<b>To Ascend Above</b>	Main Action	1	Fly for one round per level
<b>To Calm Weather and Seas</b>	Main Action	3	Ensure calm winds and weather
<b>To Curse With Ruin</b>	Six hours	0	Curse both target and caster
<b>To Prevent Theft</b>	One hour	0	Make a container theft-proof
<b>To Sing a Doom<sup>1</sup></b>	Main Action	3	Force a <i>geas</i> onto a target

1 The list of spells given here closely matches known Anglo-Saxon incantations and magical workings, though a few represent abilities not recorded in the available texts. Readers will notice the considerable focus on topics of critical importance to the English: healthy fields, sound cattle, safe childbirth, protection from hostile witchery, and managing relationships with neighbors and lords.

Few of these spells are directed toward plainly martial or adventuring ends, and Gal-dormen will clearly need to set up situations in which their specific powers are useful rather than trusting to chance. Even so, many abilities they have are tremendously valuable to English lords and ceorls alike, and they can earn much for their help.





**he ways of the** English are apt to be strange to you, reader. Whether you are a Frank, or a Roman, or a Persian, or a gamesman of far Tang, your laws and lives are not like our own, and your land and your loves are different. Yet if you read closely and listen well, you will understand what you must to play an English hero. In this chapter you will learn of the manner of our coming to Britain, the kingdoms in which we dwell, the form of settlements where we abide, and the troubles that burden our days.

The first section of the chapter is a brief overview, saying only what is strictly necessary for a gamesman to know in order to play in England. If you have no patience for anything, or if you are the GM and need something brief to show your careless players, then use these two pages and no more.

After that a list of equipment and treasures are given, describing the cost and qualities of those things that adventurers are greediest to get. This is placed toward the front of this chapter because it will be often referenced.

Only after that are deeper and longer explanations made of the ways in which we English live, of our laws, customs, and faith. The GM is advised to read all of these parts, but a player may read only such portions as they find interesting, to gain a better understanding of his hero's people and their ways.

GM, be careful in how you present the information in this chapter to the players. They will have many assumptions and expectations, ones they do not even know they have, and many times they will go ahead and act on those assumptions. When they do so, do not be too quick to correct them. If you tell them that they are wrong every time they get a small matter amiss, they will grow hesitant and frustrated, not knowing where to put hand or foot without rebuke. Let them be right about small matters, even if it is contrary to the truth of things. Only correct them when it is important.

And what is important in our ways? They are the things that mean most to us; friendship between a lord and his followers, faith in Christ and the Church, loyalty to our kinsmen, and the getting of the things a poor people need to live. Correct the players when a mistaken understanding would lead them to act in a way deeply contrary to our dearest truths, not merely when they mistake what we eat for our meals or what clothes we would wear.

The best way to show the players what the English are like is to let the NPCs and others demonstrate it by their actions, speech, and harness. Show them what the other people do and say, and all but the dullest and most indifferent gamesman will soon see how things should be done in England.



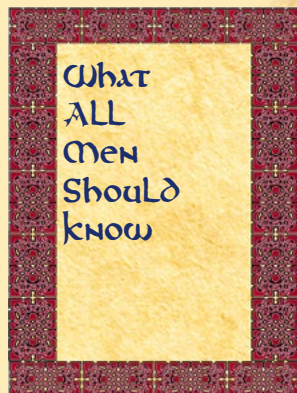
**You and your companions** are an adventuring band. You have only the status of common ceorls, mere ordinary freemen and free women until you do great deeds. Even so, lords, abbots, and others of importance will deign to speak to you about tasks they need done. Do them well and you may win honor and friendship from them, receiving lands and wealth in return for your labors. In time you may even become a lord yourself.

**Friendship is magic to make men great.** No man in England is loyal to a mere name. They are loyal to their beloved lord or their faithful followers. Men fight and die for their lords, and not for the golden rings they have received from him. They received those rings because they are their lord's friend, loved and trusted by him, and it is for love that they endure even death. Friendships are consecrated in shared battle or great deeds done for each other. Claims of friendship cannot mean anything unless something precious was done or given in proof. A king or lord is only ever so strong as his friends.

**The English are poor.** Even kings and ealdormen must ride from one royal villa to the next so they may eat the *feorm*, the food-rent that has been gathered there by their subjects. Kings and ceorls alike live in thatched halls, and oftime the only great difference is that a king may drink and eat his fill more often, but even then not always. Every man must labor hard to even find food and weave cloth and fashion implements for his own survival. The rich treasures of gold and silver and gems that lords give to followers are got by trade with foreigners, or won in battle, or were given to them as gifts in turn, or are fashioned by the few fine artisans among the English.

**England is divided into several large kingdoms** and more petty ones. The people of each live mostly alike, in the same ways and with the same Christian faith. A man of one kingdom may journey peacefully in the others, unless he is a special enemy of the people there. The three great tribes of English, the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, each have several kingdoms. The kings quarrel constantly, each always seeking to become foremost among the rest, the *bretwalda* of all England. They often seek adventurers to do deeds they can later deny.

**England has no cities**, nor any great towns. The common English village has perhaps a hundred souls living there, each family in their own thatched hall, going out to their fields in the morning and returning with the dusk.





There are no shopkeepers, inns, taverns, nor nearly any man who makes his living without doing some farming in turn. Four great trading-wics on the coasts host foreign merchants who bring their rich wares for English grain, metal, and thralls, and these may have two or three or even four thousand souls in them, but they are all merely passing by there and there is no sense of a city to these great camps. Much wickedness goes on there, and adventurers are sought for grim deeds and the reckoning of cheats and wrongs.

***England is Christian.*** The great walled minsters where priests and monks and nuns live under the rule of an abbot or abbess are the most cultured and richest places in all England. They alone have stone buildings, and skilled artisans of gold, and learned scholars there. The priests journey out to hold Mass and give services to the villages around them. There are some pagans remaining in the deep forest, and damnable heretics hiding in the wilderness. The devil sends them aid in the form of sorcery and demons to plague and pain the pious. Adventurers are often needed to rebuke these wicked souls.

***Roman ruins litter England,*** the *caesters*, pronounced “casters”, that are places of crumbling stone buildings and broken walls. The English avoid such places. They are nests of bandits, heretics, pagans... and worse besides. The Roman sorcerers called *Artifexes* crafted hidden doors there that lead to cysts beneath the skin of the world. Monsters and long-trapped Britons escape from them at times to do evil in the world. Yet adventurers oftimes seek out these “Arxes” and the ruins to plunder them for Roman treasures to give as gifts to lords and friends. Minsters are often built near Roman ruins so that God may help guard men from their evils, and many abbots will have work.

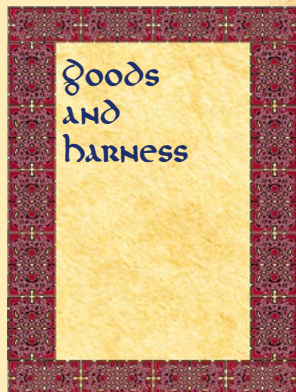
***Hostile Wealth kingdoms are in the west and north,*** their kings hating the English and their bishops cursing us for our father’s conquest of their lands. They are a too-learned race, more clever than brave. They dwell in the ruins of their lost lordship, mere faded remnants of Rome and what was lost. Some Wealth can be bargained with, but none can be trusted. Adventurers are often needed to negotiate with them, or to punish them for their raiding.

***As an adventurer, you have little in life.*** You are not content to live as a simple ceorl, or to seek the customary warrior’s path of slow service and gradual increase in friendship and wealth. You and your friends seek to do great and daring deeds, to plunder Arxes, to aid troubled lords, to succor abbots in need of strong arms and to defend England against its many perils. This is the adventurer’s path that all men recognize. Most adventurers will find only death. Mayhap your fate will be a finer one.

Here are listed common values for goods, services, weapons, and harness of war. These prices are set by custom, and most men know a fair measure of what they may expect.

The abbreviations stand for "librae", "solidi", and "denarii" after the Roman measures.

Cost is measured in silver pounds, shillings, and pence, marked "l", "s", and "d". These are mere measures of reckoning, for many a ceorl goes his whole life long without seeing a single coin. Men use them only to calculate fair exchanges or the sum of goods due in *wergild*. A few kings are presently making silver *sceatta* coins equal to a shilling in value, in mimicry of the Arab coins the Frankish traders sometimes bring, but these are things of art and kingly pride rather than coins for common trade. When



coins find their

#### Rates of Exchange

1 pound is 60 shillings

1 shilling is 4 pence

way into England their worth is measured by their metal and weight, with a little extra perhaps for the beauty of their striking.

Some of the tables that follow generate treasures, often with a very great value in pounds or shillings. Treasures are splendid things for gifts and the showing of favor, and a man will be joyous if he is given such a thing, but do not think that a fine golden ring can easily be exchanged for a cartload of grain from any farmer who has it. Any object that is a treasure may or may not be accepted in trade, depending on how well the other man can afford to trade useful goods for splendid adornments. It may be that he has more use for his grain than for a golden ring, and a trader must speak honeyed words and have a good Gift skill to make a bargain at any price.

So it is that an ealdorman may walk with a hundred pounds worth of treasures mantling his neck and arms and fingers, but he cannot presume to trade them for even ten pounds worth of wheat. He may use them to pay *wergild* for his crimes, however, or give them as rich gifts to his loyal friends, and if he finds some prosperous settlement where the harvest has been uncommonly good his wife may be able to persuade the richest ceorl to exchange some spare portion of his reaping for a fine silver torc.

More useful goods are more easily traded. Any man will trade for cattle or grain or cloth, for such things must be had if they are to live. Even then, however, no man will trade away what he needs to survive another season.



Goods	Cost
Arrows, 5	1d
Bed, fine	60d
Blanket, Woolen	10d
Boots, good	10d
Cart for two oxen	120d
Cloak, common	5d
Cloak, embroidered	20d
Cloth, silk, 1 yard	240d
Cloth, wool, 1 yard	4d
Clothes, fine, 1 set	60d
Clothes, silk, 1 set	2,400d
Clothes, slave's, 1 set	10d
Clothes, splendid, 1 set	240d
Clothes, woolen, 1 set	30d
Common artisan's tools	30d
Cowhide	8d
Healer's pouch	4d
Iron ingot, 1 pound	5d
Iron kettle, small	20d
Plow, heavy iron	120d
Prybar	10d
Quiver	5d
Rope, 25 feet	5d
Sack, Leather	5d
Satchel, Leather	3d
Sheepskin	2d
Shoes, common	5d
Tinderbox	3d
Toil, a day's hired labor	1d
Waterskin, 1 gallon	3d
Wool, 175 lb. wey	120d



Most of these common goods are simple enough, but a few bear more careful words. All the portable items listed here can be assumed to count as one item of Encumbrance.

**Carts** cannot leave the old Roman roads or clear paths, and each need two oxen for pulling. They can carry a hundred items of Encumbrance, more or less.

**Cloaks** are worn by nearly all in cold weather, and the brooches used to fasten them are ways to show wealth. A fine embroidered cloak grants one point of Splendor.

**Clothes** are costly. Fine clothes grant a Splendor of 1, splendid ones grant 2, and those fashioned of the marvelous silk of Tang grant 4 Splendor. A hero felled in battle will spoil his clothes and need them mended.

**Common artisan's tools** are hammers, saws, tongs, vats or other such things sufficient to carry out the ordinary work of a smith, or leatherworker, or other who has a task more complex than simple weaving or hewing.

**Sacks** and **satchels** are how men carry weights. Without some way to bear a burden a hero may find it cumbersome to haul all his possessions, regardless of their Encumbrance.

*Women mend clothes without a skill check. Men will need Craft to do so.*



A ceorl's wergild is 200 shillings, or the price of 40 cows. It might take ten common families to afford such a man's life.

Livestock	Cost
Cow	20d
Goat	2d
Horse	120d
Ox, Trained	30d
Pig	10d
Sheep	5d
Slave, female	120d
Slave, male	240d

Harness	AC	Cost
No Armor	10	-
Broad Shield	15	25d
Heavy Shield	14	25d
Helm	-	240d
Mail Shirt	16	480d
Roman Armor	18	4,800d

Foodstuffs	Cost
Ale, 2 gallons	1d
Barley, 12 pounds	1d
Beef, fresh, 1 pound	1d
Cheese, 2 pounds	1d
Common food, 3 meals	1d
Dried rations, 1 day	1d
Feasting food, 1 meal	4d
Good bread, 2 pounds	1d
Hard bread, 4 pounds	1d
Mead, 1 gallon	4d
Mutton, fresh, 3 pounds	1d
Salt, 1 pound	2d
Vegetables, 8 pounds	1d
Wheat, 8 pounds	1d
Wine, 1 quart	5d

The war-harness described here is of greatest interest to most adventurers, so it is worth noting certain qualities of this gear.

PCs who are artisans can forge ordinary harness and weapons for a quarter of their price in materials, if they can get them. It takes a day for weapons or shields and a month for mail shirts.

**Broad shields** are large, fashioned to give the best protection. The bearer has an Armor Class of 15 plus their Dexterity modifier, or a +1 bonus to their Armor Class if they already have a better rating through some other means.

**Heavy shields** are the same as broad ones in their bonus, except they have an uncommonly thick boss to batter a foe in melee. The bearer's base Armor Class is only 14 instead of 15, as the shield is more clumsy, but they add +2 to all melee damage rolls while they bear a heavy shield.

**Helms** are rare and costly things to crown the brows of mighty warriors. They grant no Armor Class bonus, but are worth 2 points of Splendor.

**Mail shirts** are the best armor that English smiths can fashion. The wondrous steel of the Roman Artifexes persists, however, and the suits of plated **Roman armor** they made with it can sometimes be found, immune to the tooth of time. Such armor grants a base Armor Class of 16 or 18 respectively, modified by the wearer's Dexterity and gaining a +1 bonus if they carry a shield. Roman armor is worth 2 points of Splendor to the bearer.

Weapons	DMG	ATTRIBUTE	Shock Damage	COST
Axe	1d6	Str	2 points/AC 13	15d
Barbed Spear	1d6	Str/Dex	2 points/AC 13	15d
Bow	1d6	Dex	None	25d
Broad Spear	1d8	Str	2 points/AC 13	15d
Club	1d4	Str	1 point/AC 13	Free
Hatchet	1d4	Str	1 point/AC 13	10d
Knife	1d4	Str/Dex	1 point/AC 15	5d
Seax	1d6	Str/Dex	1 point/AC 15	20d
Staff	1d6	Str	2 points/AC 13	Free
Sword	1d8	Str	2 points/AC 13	240d

English axes and hatchets are less effective than spears as weapons of war, but can serve as useful tools.

The weapons listed above are those most common to the English, and those tools such as hatchets and knives most likely to be snatched up in desperate battle. While most are plain enough, some have special graces.

**Barbed spears** may be hurled up to sixty feet. They do no Shock damage when thrown, but if an NPC or beast with one hit die is struck by a hurled barbed spear they will be mortally wounded regardless of the damage rolled unless they have a name that the GM cares to remember.

**Seaxes** are great war-knives as long as a man's forearm, often carried by huntsmen who must joint out prey in the forest. Many a wealthy warrior will have one at his belt in case his spear is lost in battle.

**Staves** and **clubs** are naturally less lethal weapons, as explained on page 58. One who would wield a staff must do so with two hands.

**Swords** are tokens of natural dignity and prowess, and even the worst of them grants 1 point of Splendor to its bearer. They require a month to forge.

Aside from these notes, a hero may lay hands upon a **fine weapon**. A fine weapon gains a +1 bonus to all hit and damage rolls, and adds an additional point of Splendor to the bearer. The usual worth of a fine weapon is equal to the ordinary price of it, plus an additional 240 pence. Uncommonly fine weapons may be worth even more, and grant still greater Splendor. Getting one is difficult, however, for only a master smith or a PC with at least Craft-3 skill can make one, and it takes a full month of labor to do so.

A hero may carry many weapons if he thinks it wise, but he must remember that no man can get Splendor from more belongings at once than he has character levels.

All the weapons listed here count as one encumbrance item. All but staves require only one hand to wield.

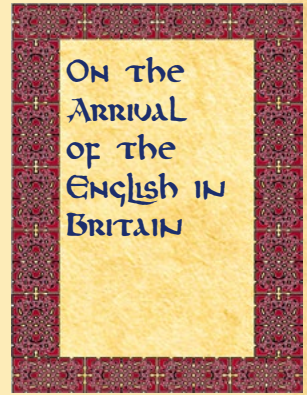
**EIGHT OR NINE OR** ten generations past, long before the Romans fell, our fathers were beckoned to British shores by the Emperor's men. The citizens of Rome had grown soft and idle and scorned to take up a warrior's life. Their great men were keen to keep the laborers that worked their vast fields, and persuaded the Emperor to refrain from compelling the recruitment of their clients. So it was that Rome had her legions, but she had few Romans to fill them.

To bolster their numbers, many were the barbarian peoples recruited for service as auxiliaries. While they were not Roman citizens, nor counted true legionaries, nor were they richly rewarded for the blood they shed, they were permitted to dwell in Roman lands and prosper under Roman law. Our fathers were among these warriors and came over from the German lands to live on Britain's shores and fight the foes of Rome.

We killed Wealh and Picts and Irish and pirates of our own kin. We dwelled in our own settlements outside the Roman caesters and lived by our own ways, always loyal to Rome. We were good soldiers then, as we are good soldiers now. Yet Rome faded, and the Britons who aped Roman ways faded with them. Usurpers and pretenders and claimants to the Emperor's seat rose up in Britain and Rome and the East, while barbarians poured in from the north and west and east and south.

For four hundred years Britain had known Roman rule and the sweet, soft pleasures of Roman law. Luxury and abundance had jeweled its shores, with marbled baths and tall basilicas and the splendor of white-walled caesters. So many were the Britons in these cities that they were like blades of grass, unimaginable in their multitudes, thousands upon thousands. And yet when Rome called home its legions at last, bringing them back to fight in futile causes, these Wealh did not well know what to do.

The Picts in the north and the Irish from the west harried them sorely, and so did pirates from the German lands, and reavers from among the Franks. The land was full of lamentation and the spaces between the caesters grew dark and perilous. Rich villas were abandoned to brigands and marauders, and Roman towns were left empty that their inhabitants might seek shelter behind a caester's walls.





The Wealh were weak men. They did not stand together to drive back these harriers, but fought among themselves, each magnate declaring himself rightful master of all he could grasp. Tyrants arose, each ruling from his city and seeking to overcome all his rivals. They wore the tatters of Roman glory and the faded colors of Roman office, but they were but shadows of the splendor that had gone before. Their care was greater to defeat each other than to defeat the raiders that so oppressed them.

Yet because the Wealh were weak, and because they had forgotten the spears their fathers had borne against the Romans, they had need of soldiers. The tyrants sought English men to fight for them, and we who had once been the auxiliaries of Rome became mercenaries for the Wealh. In their desperation and ambition, they promised us much, and swore that we would lack for nothing if only we conquered their foes.

At this we called over the sea, back to our home in the German lands. The land was little there, and the mouths many and multiplying, and the sea was rising year upon year to drown the villages on our shores. Many Angles and Saxons and Jutes were glad of the chance to come over the sea and fight for British tyrants, and our numbers swelled greatly. The Britons rejoiced at our labor, for they had become ungodly as well as weak, and delighted in the killing of their rivals and the destruction of their brothers.

Yet when we had fought for our lords, our lords closed their hands against us. They forswore their promises and kept their treasures and denied us our rightful due. Were we not mere barbarians? Were we not simple savages, fit only to live in our huts by the sea and eat the bread of slaves? They were Rome, these tyrants. They were Rome and glory and dignity, the mantled bearers of a thousand years of splendor and rule. They were the kings of Britain.

They were judged by God, and for their sins we were the wolves of His judgment. Betrayed, we bore no mercy in our hearts or in our hands. Our chiefs called us to war and revenge, and our spears made a forest to march against the caesters. The Wealh lords tried in vain to halt us, hurling their remnants and rag-ends at the wall of our shields and dying swiftly upon our steel. We burnt their cities and killed their kinsmen and took their land and women for our own. We were cruel as godless men are cruel, and many among us earned the Hell of our heathen ways by what we did in those days.

All the while, we called more of our people from over the seas. The Wealh were many, but they were weak, and we took what we wished of them. Many among them became our slaves or gave up their land to our lords, and many

were the Wealh women who bore English sons. So it was that in some places the Britons melted away like snow in spring, their blood mingling with our own, their ways abandoned for our ways, until nothing was left of them but a few names for men and for places.

In other places we killed. Where the Wealh would not bend to us, we slew them, man and woman and child. We killed until none remained to work the land, and places where a thousand men had once farmed now were empty of all but the crows. Never will the Wealh return to such lands, and the homes they held since Babel's time will now be ours forever, or until we grow godless in turn and are judged in the Lord's just time.

Such was the terror of the Britons that they fled west, into the unwelcoming hills, and north, into the lands of the Picts. Yet not all dared to leave their walled caesters. These most wretched ones hid themselves away within the magical Arxes the Roman Artificers had built, the other-worlds they had forged within the walls of temples and basilicas and great estates. These wondrous places were greater within than they were without, and had many marvels inside them, and great works of magic. They thought to hide in these places, sealing them fast against us, and wait until Rome or their kinsmen could rescue them from our spears.

We could not force the entrances, for we had no Artificers among our number. Those trapped within could not get out unless they too had an Artificer to unlock the Arx they had sealed. It was useless to merely tear down the building where the Arx was hidden, for the magical doorway could not be broken by artless hands. So it was that the Arxes remained sealed for generations, those trapped within forced to subsist upon strange meats and suffer the touch of the Arx's otherworldly energies.

We feared the Arxes and had no use for Roman caesters. We did not live in houses of stone, but in good wooden halls, close beside our fields. We withdrew from the cities we had conquered, leaving them and their Arxes to the dead, and made our settlements by rivers and in other good lands for farming. Every so often an Arx would crack open and those within would emerge, seldom much in the seeming of men. When we turned Christian, we raised minsters on the outskirts of the caesters, so the holy men within them could be a bulwark against the devilish sorcery of the Arxes. Even now, we shun the caesters as places of danger and demonic power, even if the treasures of old Rome are rich within their walls.

UNTIL FOUR GENERATIONS AGO we English were a heathen race. Our cruelty was great against the Wealh, so great that even their bishops and priests cursed us and refused to share the Gospel with us. Even now their clerics shun us and follow their own prelate, loyal to Rome but despising the archbishop at Canterbury. They left us to the pagan gods of our fathers, glad of the Hell that awaited us.

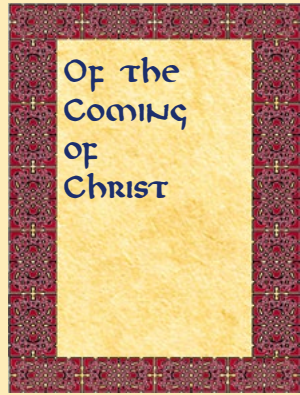
It was Roman pity that saved us from the fire. In the year 597 of Our Lord the holy Saint Augustine was sent to us by the Holy Father in Rome, that we may be snatched from the flames by the word of God. He taught our kings, and made many followers of Christ, and raised up a minster at Canterbury. By the pope's leave he put bishops in London and Rochester, and made schools for priests and monks. It was not more than three or four generations until all England was a Christian land.

The devil was not so easily cheated of his prey, however, and many kings were slow to embrace Christ. In Sussex, the Saxons there accepted the Lord only in my grandfather's day, and there are old men yet living who remember when the heathen gods were honored in the deep Sussex weald. But now all of England is mantled in minsters where monks and priests dwell, and every stretch of English land knows what bishop rules the Church in their domain.

Yet remnants remain. Deep in the forests and hills, far from the minsters where Christ's servants labor, there yet remain pockets of bitter pagans and cursed heretics. The devil sends them promises and demons to help them, creatures that don the faces of our ancestral gods and assure the foolish that triumph and glory await them if only they remain true to Hell.

The worship of false gods is forbidden among the English. Those who take up evil ways must pay a forfeit to the minster in charge of their souls and make penitent recompense for their crimes. Exile is visited only on those evildoers who repeatedly refuse correction, but I rue to say that great men with many friends may laugh at the reproofs of bishops.

We English are not a subtle race in our faith. We do not hunt down heretics or send monks to sniff for secret pagans, like Wealh bishops might with their heads full of too-cunning doctrine. We fight only against sworn heathens and bloody-handed heretics. Let a man swear to his love of God, his hate of Hell, and his obedience to the Church, and he will be pious enough.





**IN THIS, THE YEAR** 710 of Our Lord as brother Bede would reckon it, there are four great kingdoms in England and more that are of lesser might. Kingdoms are chiefly measured by kindred, so that all men of a particular kinship or tribe should share the same kingdom, but wars and conquest have mixed the borders by a measure. The trading-wic of Londinium is under Mercian masters, for instance, even though men count it part of Essex. So too within most great kingdoms there are under-kings of lesser peoples and smaller tribes, who yet have strength enough that the high king cannot ignore them. But so it is through all of England that no lord can command any other lord lightly save that he has strong spears to encourage the reluctant.



**WESSEX** is the sole Saxon land among the four great kingdoms, but it is great enough for any people. Wise King Ine has ruled in Wessex for more than twenty years, having given to the land a book of laws in which the good old customs of his nation were recorded. To the west, King Ine has just this year slain King Geraint of Dumnonia, breaking that old Briton kingdom and scattering its lords. Even so, he has not the spears to master the furious Wealh of that land, and it remains in chaos. In the east, the king holds King Nothhelm of Sussex as his friend and follower, and the two kings of the East Saxons must also listen to his words. Wessex is strong, but her warriors have spears turned in many directions, and to keep the other Saxon tribes loyal and the Dumnonians in retreat is a thing to tax any king.

**EAST ANGLIA** is ruled by cunning old King Ealdwulf, who for fifty years has been lord of the land. Many are the minsters and holy places in East Anglia, such as the hermitage of holy Saint Guthlac in the Crowland fens and the double minster at Ely founded by saintly Queen Ethelburga when the king was a youth. Once East Anglia was greater, and mighty King Raedwald was *bretwalda* over all England a century ago, but now it has dwindled. Ealdwulf has kept his throne by his many dealings and bargains with his hungry neighbors and by the aid of God at his many minsters. He is a cunning-minded king who will do whatever he must to ensure his people remain free.

**MERCIA** is a great but blighted kingdom, an Angle land ruled by young King Ceolred. He is scarce more than a boy, but already he has a man's eagerness for evil. He outrages nuns and steals the belongings of the Church and

feasts shamefully on God's portion. His father and elder brother both went to Rome to be monks and die in holiness, but young Ceolred seems swift to do enough evil for all three. The lords of Mercia quarrel and fret, some faithful to the boy king, others wishing a better lord, each striving against each other. If they all moved as one Mercia may be the mightiest of all the English kingdoms, but they cannot combine. To the west, the Wealh kingdoms seethe in bitterness, and Mercia's western border is scorched by British fires.

**NORTHUMBRIA**, too, is an Angle kingdom with a cruel boy for a king. King Osred is a child of twelve winters, until last year ably guarded and guided by Saint Wilfrid, who himself was lord of a veritable kingdom of minsters. Northumbria lies, as the name says, north of the River Humber, and once it was the greatest of the English kingdoms. It was forged in the joining of the old kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia, and was rich in wisdom, strength, and many minsters, and I myself dwell at the Northumbrian minster at Jarrow. Yet Northumbria is tired now, harried hard by the Picts to the north and the Wealh kinglets to the west, and there is turmoil and doubt among its people from the wickedness of their boy-king. It has little to do with the nations south of the Humber, and its lords wish mostly to manage their own troubles than wrest lands from their southern kin in Mercia or East Anglia.

Of the remaining English kingdoms there are but three of any consequence. **SUSSEX** is a Saxon land of the deep, trackless weald that shields England's southern coast. Until my father's time they were pagans, and only the fierce holiness of Saint Wilfrid and other pious men brought them to their present faithfulness. Even so, their King Nothhelm must sometimes struggle against heathen reavers hiding within the great forest. **ESSEX** and the East Saxons are a weakened people, for their paired kings Swaefheard and Swaefbert must spend their hours mediating between the demands of the Mercians and the will of King Ine of Wessex. Their great trading-wic of Lundenwic and the fruits of its trade are now almost wholly in Mercian hands.

And at the southeast of the island, Jutish **KENT** is under the rule of King Wihtried, who paid *wergild* to King Ine for the death of his kinsman Mul, who ruled Kent until the people burnt him and his men alive for their evil. Once Kent was the richest and most splendid of English lands, getting much trade from the Franks, but it has faded now with the rise of the trading-wics. The Kentishmen love churches and minsters, for it was in Kent that Christ's word first came to us, and even now a bishop's oath in Kent is as strong as that of the king.

Aside from these English kingdoms, there are also the nations of the Picts, and the Irish, and the Britons. The Picts dwell in the far north, beyond the borders of Northumbria, and fight the English there when the hour is ripe. They are not subtle, and have little learning, though they were made Christians by the Irish and have been so for generations. Their King Nechtan of **PICTLAND** is counted a wise man, and my holy Abbot Ceolfrid has but recently sent him a letter urging him to leave off the error of the Irish Easter and accept instead the calculations that Rome uses for the holy day. The Picts will fight Northumbrians when there seems good profit in it, but so too they will wed their daughters to Northumbrian lords if that seems a better thing.

The **IRISH** keep mostly to their own island, save when their raiders come to scathe the shore-lands, or their holy saints come to bring better tidings. They are a famously learned and holy people in their own land, and the Wealh owe their own faith to Irish saints and teachers. There the abbots are so great that even the Irish bishops bow before the masters of the great minsters. Yet while they keep chiefly to Ireland, they have on our island a kingdom in **DAL RIATA**, north and west of Northumbria. This kingdom is in great turmoil, being much oppressed by the Picts even as it swears its obedience to Northumbria's king. King Dunchad is the best lord that Dal Riata has right now, ruling in Kintyre on the coast and fighting back the Picts as best he can.

The Wealh kingdoms are falling, one by one. **DUMNONIA** in the south was broken by King Ine. Kingless, its people now struggle to drive out the reavers of Wessex. Yet in the land men call Wales, four other kingdoms yet survive.

**GWYNEDD** stands under King Idwal, last of the true Roman lands. They love Latin there, and the memory of Rome, and they sing songs of the glories they knew before we came upon them. Yet they live much as their brethren do, in thatched huts, gripping spears, without even wheels to throw their crude pots. They hate us for what we made them give up, for the good things they had to forget, and they cherish the faded remnants of their fathers.

In **POWYS** their King Gwylog rules stubbornly from within the old Roman caester of Viroconium, though men say that the evils within its walls will soon force him to flee elsewhere. **DYFED** is under the hand of King Rhein, who is sore pressed by other Wealh kinglets who have hammered Dyfed for sixty years or more. King Morgan of **GWENT** is the last of the great kings of the Wealh, and in his land they yet have Roman walls to their settlements, and capricious war for the Mercians to the east. In all these lands there is much poverty, yet remnants of Roman arts can sometimes be found in unlikely places.



**WHILE I CAN SCARCE** understand the reason for it, it may be that your gamesmen desire to be Wealh warriors rather than stout English heroes. I am no callow oblate to think that I may wean such men from their minds with mere words, and I know that they will do this thing with or without my counsel. Rather than do it badly, I give you this grudging help.

## PLAYING AS WEALTH HEROES

Among the Wealh, their word for themselves is *Cymry*. They do not have tribes as we do, but concern themselves only with their own bloodline and kinsmen. This is of great importance to them, for a man's worth is measured by his birth and his role among them taken together. A man's father means little to us, but to them it is a grave matter, and their lords are taken as a matter of course from lordly families, and they care even more than we that their kings all be of kingly kind. Their ceorls are kept in great subjection to the lord of the land they occupy, and are called *gwas*.

*The British doubtless had their own gaming tradition, but Brother Cornix is clearly not the man to have participated in it.*

They have minsters as we do, though they detest our own monks and priests and honor only the bishop of St. Davids as their primate and the pope in Rome as their chief. They have villages, called *trefi* among them, and their heroes help minster and hamlet alike as ours do. They even suffer from the Arxes as English peoples do, for the mad ones issuing forth can rarely tell Wealh from Englishman and oftimes care little if they can.

Wealh heroes come together to seek glory, to find a profitable king or lord to serve, and to win wealth and honor for their families. Their kings are constantly at war with each other and with us, quick to steal cattle or plunder treasures, and they do not trust their spear-brothers as we trust ours. A band of heroes may work for one king, and then another, and then a third, and be loyal to each only insofar as gifts can buy their love. They can be given great offices of service by kings and so increase their station, but they must do tremendous deeds if they are to overcome the contempt of a lowly birth.

For character creation, use the rules as given for English heroes. The ceorl is a *gwas*, and the gesith is a Wealh warrior who sells his spear to willing buyers. If a hero is the son of a Wealh lord, then his family has been ruined by their constant wars or otherwise made unhelpful to him, though even then the common folk will fear to offend a lordly-born man lest their own lords take offense at such impertinence.

Wealh galdormen and Saints use the rules as the English do. I have heard that some Roman Artifexes still hide in distant places there, and even some cursed druids of old, but I know not their ways, and cannot tell you better.

ENGLAND IS DIVIDED UP into many tribes of our people. The Angles, Jutes, and Saxons are the three great divisions, but each of these races has their own subsidiary peoples and tribes, ones distinguished by the land they inhabit or the bloodline they claim. There are so many of these small divisions that only a scholar may name them all, and there are proud folk who hold themselves as a nation when they have not five hundred men to bear spears.

Each of these peoples are ruled by a king, or two kings, or sometimes three. Four I have not counted, and five is out of right measure. Most often a people has but one chief king, with the strongest following to serve him. If there are other men too great and important in the same land to be denied, they may claim titles as sub-kings. It is not uncommon for the sub-king and the chief king to disagree as to who is which, and many are the bloody quarrels fought over who is to command and who is to obey.

Even when the distinction is clear, however, it is never a simple matter for a great king to command a lesser king. Every command that is not welcomed must be enforced with steel, and a king has only so many men to order to war, and so much strength to wield. A king must judge carefully whether he will gain enough in glory and awe by forcing his rule to earn recompense for the loss of men he will incur.

Only men of royal families may become kings. Every English king can trace his lineage back to one of the heathen gods of our ancestors, and this ancient blood is counted a necessity if any man is to claim the king-helm of a people. Yet to be of royal blood, while necessary, is insufficient for rank and glory. A fool whose father was a king is but a fool, and men will mock him as one. It may be that he will go and seek friends among the Wealth lords, who will help him press his claim to rule so that the English may fight amongst each other and they may laugh at our dying.

Those who are not kings but who are great in the country are the ealdormen, the magnates who are good friends to their king and great lords to lesser ones. The ealdormen are all heroes and mighty warriors, leaders of strong warbands and doers of great deeds. No man may become an ealdorman by mere birth; his sons must do great things if they are to earn the respect of their father's friends, though their sire may aid them in finding ways to show their



mettle. Yet it is not enough that an ealdorman be strong in war. He must be wise in counsel as well, versed in the friendship of men and the giving of good words. A hero who is hated by his king and few in his friends will never be an ealdorman, no matter how mighty his deeds.

Ealdormen have rights over much land, granted to them by the king who rules over all the lands of his people. They may eat of the *feorm*, the food-rent offered up by the inhabitants of the land, and enjoy the fruits of the earth, and take the tribute that custom and law allows them to take from all who dwell on the land. They ensure that the tribe's law is honored in their domains, and that good judgment is given to those who do evil. Not least, they protect the Church and guard the minsters on their lands.

This land is given only for the life of the ealdorman. If he dies, he is no help to his king and he has no power to maintain his royal friend's rule. If he has a worthy son who has proven his mettle, it may be that the king will allow him to take up his father's lands, but more likely it is that they will be parceled off among other ealdormen or used to reward a good friend of the king who can be expected to maintain the law.

Some little portion of the land may be made "bookland" by the king's permission, and this bookland may be kept by the owner and sold or given to whomever he chooses, without asking the king's leave or gaining his permission. This bookland is most often given to a minster or used as a foundation for a new minster, but some men trade it amongst each other for wealth or favors. The king is not eager to make bookland, but knows that such a rich reward is a good way to buy the friendship of wavering ealdormen and great heroes.

A careful reader who has attended to my words may now wonder what becomes of the lesser lords and loyal friends who have been given land by an ealdormen when that ealdorman dies. Do their lands also go back into the king's hands, to be given to other men? They do not. You see, every gift of land that is not bookland must have the king's leave and permission. So it is that it is like the king himself giving the land to that man. The ealdorman, once he grants it, cannot take it back; so too when he dies, it is not reclaimed. When the tenant himself perishes the land commonly returns to the ealdorman, to be given to another good friend, or it goes back to the king if the ealdorman is dead. If the ealdorman dies first, the tenant renders up his lawful tribute to some other lord as chosen by the king, or to the king himself.

These lesser nobles are the spine of English rule. Not so great as ealdormen, not so humble as the ceorls, they ensure that the settlements in their



scope are lawfully ruled and that all things are done as custom and law require. Just as any brave man may become an ealdorman, so may any man become a noble. He needs only do great deeds and win the great friendship of an ealdorman or the king. If he is strong, and wise, and prudent of counsel, he will be given charge of land and bade tend it well. He will fight at his lord's side and feast at his table and enjoy the gifts of an open-handed liege. He will be a friend to his lord, for it is impossible that any man should be sworn to a man who is not his friend.

He will keep this land so long as he does his duty and keeps his faith with his lord. It can be taken away only for evil deeds or a failure of faith. When he dies, his sons will be considered for his replacement, but they must be good sons, useful and loved by their lord, or else he will give the land to some man who can do him better help.

Below the lords are the common ceorls, the free men of England. The spears they bear are token of their freedom and rights, for no thrall is permitted weapons, and even a king must fear the anger of his people. They must give up the *feorm*, the food-rent, in exchange for the use of their lord's land. When rule of the land changes, they yet remain; only the recipient of the *feorm* changes. Their lord cannot dispose of their land or drive them out, for they are the means by which he is fed, and they will kill him and burn his hall if he tries to rob them so. And what use is untilled earth, that the tillers should be driven away? One family of farmers is much the same as any other, so there is no reason to chivvy them about like sheep in the fields.

A man receives the use of a piece of land by permission of his lord who has rule of it, and then decides who among his sons or kinsmen is to have use of it when he dies. He may have much land or little, great wealth or small, but he may divide it and apportion it as he wishes, so long as his kinsmen do not object. It is a great fool who acts to earn his kinsmen's anger, for who shall protect him in his need if they reject him? So it is that a ceorl is sometimes surer of his son's future than is a lord, who knows that when he dies his sons must be found worthy to get any land at all.

Beneath the ceorls are the miserable thralls, men and women taken in war and put to labor. Most are of ceorlish stock, unhappy and unfortunate in being taken in war-raids or as losers in battle. Few were true warriors, for fighters who surrender in war can expect to be killed out of hand, and there are more than a few stories of warriors who feign ceorlishness so as to be made thralls instead of corpses.

Why are warriors captured in battle slain while ceorls are let free or made thralls? Because a warrior is expected to be the loved friend of a lord and dear companion to his brothers in battle. How can he be trusted with a thrall's labor when he must hate his friend's killers so bitterly? Will he not seek vengeance if allowed to go free? So he must die if he is captured in war. A common ceorl, on the other hand, fights only because he is obliged to, and cares little who his lord may be. If he is taken in battle he will liefer labor for his captor than seek a vengeance that must end in his death.

A thrall is a slave until he dies or his master frees him, which he may do at any time. Many are the lordly houses that have slaves, for they are the ones who fight wars and get the spoils thereof. Some are sold to wealthy ceorls, some are ransomed back to their people, and some are merely freed and told to go, for there is not bread enough to feed them nor untilled land enough to work. Loyal thralls are often given their freedom in time, that they should be honest ceorls in service to their old lords.

A thrall has rights as a Christian and may not be slain out of hand, and to be cruel to them is an affront to God. Adultery and fornication are forbidden by the Church, but alas, many are the thrall women who are made to give unrighteous service to their masters. Only the shameless and brutish dare flaunt such things with open concubines, and only a lord or great man may be plain in such things without suffering the anger of his wife and her kinsmen, for they are willing to swallow his sins that they might enjoy his gifts.

The child of a thrall is a thrall as well, yet many are given their freedom that they may be better servants to their lords. Thralls do bad work as a rule, and must be minded carefully, and are troublesome to keep for most. They must be fed and clothed and shod as a ceorl need not be, and they spend all their hours close enough to steal their lord's grain and other property. Lords keep thralls enough to see to their house-service and the tending of their infields, but they are a luxury and a mark of standing rather than a thing that makes men wealthy.

Whether thrall, or ceorl, or lord, or ealdorman, or even king, a man in England is worth what his deeds have earned. Even a thrall may be an ealdorman some day, if he is mighty in war and wise in words. Blood means little. If your father is an ealdorman you may have a fine sword and good harness and much wealth on your back, but you will get nothing from the king until you show that sword's worth. Lords need strong friends to help them, and they care little for such a man's past.

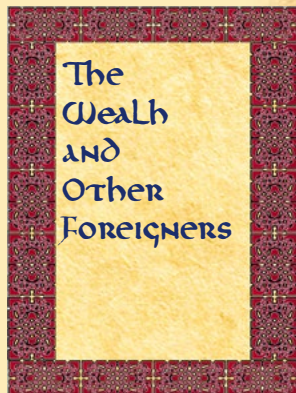
**The Wealh ruled ALL** England once, long ago in the Roman times. Kinsmen to the Gauls and the Franks, they had dwelled in this place since Babel's time, bowing to foreign masters after the mighty emperors of Rome broke their kings, but they never departed from their lands. Roman governors and generals came and went with their legions and their traders from afar, but the people of this land were ever the same.

The northern Wealh are a fair race, given to blond or ruddy hair and big frames, while the Wealh of the southwest are swarthy, with curly black hair like the men of Hispania. The Picts of the far north are of mixed kinds, some like to their Briton neighbors, others darker-haired and leaner, but they have wed often with Irish and Briton alike.

In the days of the Romans the Wealh were like them. While some dwelled as their fathers did in villages of huts, many resided within the walls of Roman caesters or within market-towns such as we English lack. They ruled their cities in the Roman fashion, with councilors to decide their governance who dressed in the Roman toga and spoke the Latin tongue. Men whose great-grandfathers had stained their naked bodies with woad and fought from wooden chariots now prided themselves upon the excellence of their Latin and the perfection of their taste. They were weak men, but their weakness was hidden beneath Rome's cloak.

When the wars of the Wealh tyrants ended and the walls of Britain fell and our fathers rushed in as the tide, all these things were lost. First the Roman villas were abandoned as rich men could no longer dare to live outside the walls. Then the market-towns were emptied, for none had anything more to sell, and Rome sent no more coins to pay the legions she had taken back. The cities fell last, for there was space within the walls to grow crops, and the Britons had killed each other so boldly that there were fewer yet to feed.

Yet the caesters fell. Those within were slaughtered, or made slaves, or locked themselves in their Arxes and prayed for Christ's mercy. They could not stand forever against us, and deprived of hope and help they were but food for our spears. Nowhere in all Britain remains a Wealh city living as they once did. Only the villages and hiding-places in the mountains and the wastes were shelter to the Wealh who remained.





And in these places they live as we do. Ragged kings and hungry warriors, crouched by fires as their eightfold-fathers once did, remembering what they once had and what we took from them. They speak their Wealh tongue amongst themselves, though their learned men cherish Latin, and they fight each other in the Wealh lands for the scraps of their past that remain. Their priests and bishops remember all the teachings of Rome, but they hate us root and branch, and refuse to obey the archbishop at Canterbury, having their own primate at St. David's minster who is obedient yet to Rome.

A few Wealh still cling to remnants of their old glory, struggling in vain to keep the pride of Romans. Gwynedd's king still counts himself the last of the Roman lords, and in Powys their king rules from the ancient caester of Virconium yet, despite the peril of the Arxes there. There are yet said to be Artifexes among the Wealh, ones cunning in Roman sorcery, and their bishops and monks are learned in the doctrines of Christ. Too learned, perhaps, for more than one heresy has leapt from over-clever British tongues.

There are Wealh in many parts of England as well, heirs to men enslaved by our ancestors or to those lords lucky enough to be allowed to be friends to our kings. They melt with the years, their ways now lost beneath our own and little left of their Wealh-ness beyond their names. There are even English lords with Wealh princesses or war-prizes as grandmothers or former kin.

In their own kingdoms the Wealh seethe. The ride from the western mountains and northern wastes to raid the borders of our kingdoms and take what they can. Our kings thrust into their lands, even as King Ine of Wessex has recently killed Dumnonia's king, and we tear away what we might. Yet the Wealh are cunning in their hate. They will give aid to our usurpers and pretenders, helping them in their cause in hope that they might become kings indebted to them, or at least that they might get more English killed. A careful English lord can strike bargains with Wealh kings, but never safely.

Of other foreigners in England there are but few. Traders from Frankish lands draw ships up on our shores, but seldom do they linger. Truly, it is said, only the most desperate or foolish would seek the far land that is Britain. Picts come down from the north at times, and the Irish have sent many monks in former days, but only a scant handful of others can be found here. They may travel peacefully in English lands so long as they heed our laws, or at least as peacefully as any man may hope to travel our roads. So too there are some few men with far-foreign fathers brought hence by Rome in former days, but they live as their mother's kin do, and have no remembrance of foreign things.

The **LAWS OF ENGLAND** are not written in books. It is true that our kings may write some of them down, as King Ine of Wessex has done of late, but such writings never rightly compass all our laws. The dooms by which an Englishman lives are those accepted by his kinsmen and his people, and a king can do little to alter such things unless he may persuade all the lords in his kingdom to consent to the change.

There are many small laws among us, about how a man may plow his land, and how tithes and soul-scot are to be gathered in a hundred, and how *feorm* is to be delivered and at what time and place, but such small laws are of little interest to foreigners and I pass over them in silence. If in your play you have need to know such a thing, merely make a law that

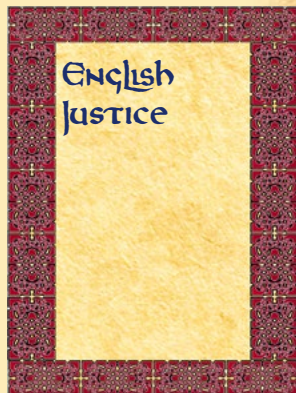
sounds good to you, and pretend it is ours. So too are our full ways of judging complex and subtle, and so I give you something simpler here.

Crimes are repaid with *wergild*. This is a sum in money or in goods that must be paid to the victim of a crime, and also perhaps shared with his lord if the crime touched upon his lord's rights. If the victim is dead, then *wergild* must be repaid to his nearest kin. If a man refuses to pay *wergild*, he is named an outlaw, and any may take his goods and kill him if they find him, and his kinsmen may not protect him or avenge his death. When *wergild* is levied on a man, the price is commonly so great that his kinsmen must come together to pay it for him, if they think him worth the price. If they refuse to help him in this, then clearly he is a fool and a burden, and they will not be too angry if he is killed.

*With enough oath-helpers, a lord would rather find a questionable accused innocent than run the risk of open violence he can't handle.*

Trials are before the lord of the land, be he ealdorman or lord or abbot. If the evidence is not beyond dispute, the accused may come before the judge with oath-helpers to help him swear that he is innocent. Minor crimes may be denied with five helpers of the same rank as the accused, serious crimes may be denied with ten, and crimes as bad as murder may be denied with twenty. The true measure is more subtle, but let these simple numbers serve.

Do not think us such fools as to imagine that mere words can turn a villain into an innocent dove. Oath-swearing is a proof that the accused has men ready to fight his accusers. If enough men gather to pledge their oaths as to his innocence, then it becomes a greater misery to punish him than to let him go free. What lord will risk the anger of ten good ceorls just to punish a man



for stealing a sheep? Let God give the evildoer his punishment and scourge those who give false oaths, for He is a sure and terrible judge.

If the accused does not have friends enough to make up the needed oath-helpers, the lord must judge for himself whether he is guilty or innocent of the crime. So too, if a man is caught red-handed in his crime, he is not permitted to seek oath-helpers but must suffer the lord's judgment. So also if he is accused several times of the same crimes, such that the lord grows wrathful and the people accept among them that he is a bad man who must be punished.

If the man is found innocent by the lord or by his oath, he goes away unharmed. If any man should kill him or beat him or otherwise avenge his wrongs on him then the culprit is punished as a criminal, and there is no forgiveness or oath-helping. If such things are not punished quickly they may become a feud and the whole settlement may be convulsed with man-killing and ruin.

If the man is guilty, he must pay a *wergild*, commonly before six months have passed, though longer if he can show how it is to be paid in that time. This *wergild* is paid to the victim, or his next of kin. If the crime is also against the protection of a lord, the *wergild* is shared with the lord as well. So it is that to kill a ceorl in the forest is a crime against the ceorl, but to strike a man in the lord's own hall is both a crime against the man who was struck and the lord whose house-protection was broken.

If a man does not pay this *wergild*, or cannot pay, and his kinsmen refuse to help him pay it, then his lord declares him an outlaw and any man may kill him or take his goods. Because his kinsmen disliked him enough to refuse to help him make up the *wergild*, they will have no heart to avenge his death. Such outlaws must flee into the weald, there to lurk with brigands and heretics and die alone in cold places, or else they must seek a life in another land.

Foreigners may ask whether there is justice for the great as well as the small in England, and whether lords and ealdormen must answer as common ceorls do. For this, know that it is the strength of the king that determines whether the great may do evil or not. If the king is weak, or the lord is too strong, or the crime is too small, then there is no one to punish him for his wrongdoings or compel him to accept a trial, for who will bring his army against a lawless lord's warriors? If the king is strong and just, then even ealdormen must answer for doing evil. If he is wicked or weak, then the great may do as they like and think nothing of any *wergild*. I sorrow to say that many of the kings in England are not so strong nor so good as they should be.

*A man caught red-handed must be punished or else the lord risks losing his legitimacy as the lawkeeper, as is the case if the man is a persistent annoyance to his neighbors.*

*PCs are usually too far away from their kinsmen to expect their help in paying any wergilds they may incur.*



**The great laws are** few and simple. The punishments and price vary from place to place, and fine shades of meaning are different between kingdoms, but here I harmonize them, and give you simple rules that even a foreigner can understand. Note well that every man has his *wergild*, and a woman's *wergild* is the same as that of her father or her husband, whichever is greater.

*The wergild by rank in shillings.*

King: 1,200  
Lord: 600  
Abbot: 600  
Gesith: 200  
Ceorl: 200  
Monk: 200  
Nun: 200  
Thrall: 60

*Wife-price is commonly a quarter of the woman's wergild in worth, paid to her.*

Crimes are listed with the number of oath-helpers of the accused's own social rank that are required to clear the accused of the crime. These oath-helpers are not allowed if the culprit was caught red-handed in their evil or if they have been accused many times.



**ADULTERY:** One caught defiling their marriage bed

must pay their sinful partner's *wergild* to their partner's spouse, or to the king for an unwed sinner. If a man lies with a wedded woman, he must also pay to get the offended husband a new wife. One who beds their thrall must free them as well and pay them their *wergild*. *Twenty oath-helpers to clear.*

**ASSAULT:** If men fight in a minster or holy place, they must pay 120 shillings to the minster's abbot. If they fight in an ealdorman or lord's house, they must pay 60 shillings to the lord and 60 more to the king. And if it is in a ceorl's house, they must pay 120 shillings to the ceorl's lord and 6 to the householder himself. But if men are drunk and quarreling, then only 30 shillings are exacted in all cases, and none to those who do not join the fight. *Five oath-helpers, or ten for a lord's peace, or twenty for a king or bishop's.*

**DISOBEDIENCE:** For refusing a lawful demand from your lord he may take back what he has given you. You can only be disobedient to your own direct lord. The king or your lord's lord may make requests of you, but it is only prudence or courtesy to obey, not law. *No oath-helpers may clear this.*

**FALSE WITNESS:** A man who bears false witness before a bishop or repudiates a vow he has made to another must pay 120 shillings to the one wronged. *Ten oath-helpers to clear this, if it is not unanswerably obvious.*

**MURDER:** Of a king, no *wergild* will be accepted save by grace. Of an ealdorman or bishop, 1,200 shillings and 120 more to the king. Of a lord or abbot, 600 shillings and 80 more to his lord or bishop. Of a ceorl, monk, or nun, 200 shillings and 30 more to his lord. Of a thrall, 60 shillings to his owner. These are the *wergilds* for each rank of men. *Twenty oath-helpers to clear.*

**PAGANISM:** One who goes to perform pagan rites in the weald must pay 60 shillings to the king and forswear the devil's service. One who denies the Church and refuses obedience to holy teaching must redeem himself with his *wergild* or be made outlaw. *Ten oath-helpers to clear this.*

*The English are not heretic hunters. Only open and blatant defiance of the Church is punished.*

**RAIDING:** For raiding and marauding with a band of eight to thirty-three men, a fine of 120 shillings to the king. For marauding with more than thirty-three men, a fine equal to the man's *wergild*, for to go with an army is a greater crime than to go with a band of marauders. If less than eight men, they are only thieves, and subject only to the fines for thievery. There is no *wergild* for killing a thief or raider in the field, and if you find a man off the roads who neither calls out nor blows a horn to make his presence known, you may kill him as a raider if you choose. There is no fine for raiding only the enemies of your lord, for he will like to see them hurt. *Ten oath-helpers to clear marauding, or twenty to clear joining a raiding army.*

**RAPE:** For insulting a woman or taking her clothing from her, a fine paid to her equal to her murder. If she cries out and is heard, her friends and kinsmen may kill her assailant and pay no *wergild* for it. *Twenty oath-helpers to clear.*

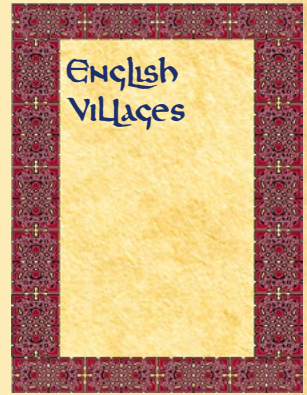
**THEFT:** If caught in the act, he may be killed without *wergild* in turn. If he is not killed he must pay his own *wergild* to the victim's lord or die for his theft. If one not taken in the act is convicted of theft, he must return the price of the goods to the victim and 60 shillings more to the victim's lord. If a man steals alone he may pay the fine, but if his wife and family help him then all must be put into penal slavery, for they are a nest of robbers. A child of ten may be held culpable for thieving and enslaved with the others, but not those younger than that. *Five or ten oath-helpers to clear, as fits the magnitude of the theft.*

**THRALL REBELLION:** If a thrall kills a man or does another evil thing, his owner must give him up to the victim to be punished as the law says or buy his life with 60 shillings or the crime's price. If he does neither, the master must set the thrall free, and the thrall's kinsmen must pay the *wergild* or fine for his crimes. If he has no kinsmen or they refuse to pay, the thrall is outlawed. If a thrall flees his master he shall be beaten and returned, but a man made thrall for his crimes who runs away must die for it. *No oath-helpers may clear this.*

**TREASON:** For doing selfish hurt to your lord, forfeit all he has given you in land and gifts unless he chooses to forgive your wrong. For aiding his enemies against him or putting him in their power, death alone is deserved. *No oath-helpers are allowed to clear this most terrible crime.*

**There are no cities** in England as a Roman would count them, and there are no towns by Roman measure either. There are only four trading-wics in England that can number even two or three thousand souls at any given time, and those who dwell there chiefly do so as sojourners, pausing only long enough to barter their goods with foreign traders before departing. Instead, the English people dwell in small settlements, each numbering no more than eight to ten households and each household having perhaps five to ten members counted among them.

Every English family dwells within a thatched wooden hall, with father, mother, and children all together. If grandparents yet live they may share a hall with their children and grandchildren, but few



are the souls in England who live to grow gray. A hall rarely has more than two generations living beneath its roof. When a son is prosperous enough to wed, his kinsmen will help him raise a hall of his own for his family to inhabit.

A common hall is perhaps eight paces wide and twice as long, with doors in the middle of each longer side. These doors are thrown wide to let in light and air, for there are no windows in a hall as there are in a church. The hearth is in the center of the hall, and the open doors help the breeze come through and banish the heavy smoke. At one end of the hall may be a room set aside for the master and mistress to sleep and to keep their precious goods therein, but otherwise the interior is undivided. Tables and benches are lifted up and taken down as need requires, and pallets are unrolled around the hearth.

Aside from the halls where men live, a prosperous settlement will have its mead-hall, the heart of the settlement where the people may gather to feast and rejoice together on great days. All share in its building and its proper keeping, and use it at the leave of the lord when he has no need of it himself. When strangers come and have no kinsmen to take them in, they may sleep by the mead-hall's hearth if they are seemly and gracious in their manners.

Beside these thatched halls are the "sunken huts", little shelters no more than four or five paces square dug a man's height into the earth and roofed over with a thatched ridge. These huts hold timber or other such things, or are used for weaving or smithing or other labors that require more space and concentration than can be found within a hall. There are commonly two or three or four huts near each hall, used by those who dwell there.



The last thing to be found in most villages is its cross, finely-carved and painted and standing taller than a man in a good open space. Churches are not in villages, but only in minsters, so when the priest comes from the minster each week he will preach and instruct and give Mass by the village cross. A rich settlement will pay a minster artisan to make for them a cross of carved stone, but most are content to raise wooden ones.

Kings live in halls just as other men do, though theirs may be larger and more splendidly painted, and may even have a room at both ends instead of just one. Yet such is the poverty of our land that a king cannot live in only one place, nor can an ealdorman with his wide lands. Such men must roam forever from royal hall to royal hall, there to gather in the food-rent from their surrounding lands and feed their loyal companions. Were they to stay in the same place for a week, they would eat hunger for their bread. So it is that royal halls are scattered widely throughout every land, each a place where men may bring the food-rent when it is their time to render it up. Seldom does a king stay more than a brief while in any particular hall. Around these royal palaces are other halls and hearths, so that the king's companions may have room when there are too many to sleep around the palace hearth, and trusted keepers may dwell to preserve the royal villa between visits. There are never many such supplemental halls, for no king can afford to ride daily with an army at his back. A king may go forth with one or two-score companions and kinsmen unless he is gathering men for a purpose.

There are no merchants in English villages, nor artisans who earn all their bread from their skill. There are no resident traders, no usurers, no men of rare and cunning arts. If you desire a thing in an English village, you must find a man there who has the art to make it, and gift him something suitable to persuade him to fashion it for you. If you have goods to trade in a village, you must bargain with all there, trying to get the best price you can for what you offer. Only in the great trading-wics are there rich foreign traders from over the sea, who can afford to give great gifts in exchange for great sums of grain, or leather, or metal, or thralls.

Men in need of rare and delicate work must often go to a minster to find an artisan-monk who can make such a thing. Those who desire fine armor and beautiful weapons and other things that are sinful for monks to make must find masters where they dwell in England, and hope their gifts are fine enough to win their work. More likely, such seekers will get them from a generous lord, gifts earned by faithful service to his cause.

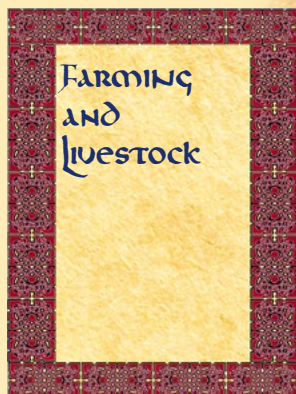
**ALL ENGLAND LIVES BY** beef and bread, when we can get it, or by grain alone when we cannot. Every English man and woman knows well the work of the fields, and even those few who do not make their living from the land know the commonplaces of pasture and planting like a Roman knows his churches. A nobly-born boy or girl or a choir-monk sworn to God from youth on might not know the work well enough to do it rightly, but they will see it being done every day and hear talk of it every night around the hearth.

Every man and his family works the land which is their own. This land lies beside the village halls, and when there are too many people in a village for lands within an easy walk to sustain, then a new village is founded in some waste place by a lord eager for laborers. In truth, with every able man in the village out in the fields from dawn until dark, one may say that the fields are the village, and the halls merely resting-places.

Lords and abbots and great men own much farmland, but rarely is it all in one piece. An abbot may own his minster-land, and a grange an hour away, and have rights to the *feorm* of a few villages nearby, and have a great patchwork of land to be farmed. So it is that they must always have reeves and men of those places charged with seeing that all is done well and the due rents are gathered for their masters.

Men grow wheat and barley to sustain their lives and brew their ale. Wheat is the better grain, finer in flavor and better-loved by lords, but it does not grow well in England and takes much care to get good crops. Barley is the staff for the common folk, for it is easier to grow, though less pleasing to eat and more troublesome to bake. Field beans are grown for more nourishment, and peas for the sick and dainty. Green herbs are grown in gardens tended by women near to the hall, and every farmer's boy and girl knows how to gather wild pot-herbs from the weald and water-margins.

To this bread is added cheese, made from the milk of cows or sheep. It is how most milk is used in a family, for the cheese keeps well and gives a fatness to a meal that lean meat or dry bread oftentimes lacks. Sometimes some butter will be made if there is an abundance, but more often a family will use pig lard instead to smear their bread and fry their foods. Meat or fat of any kind is a great delight among the common folk, for they do not taste such things



*A common  
ceorl's meal  
is barley  
bread,  
cheese, and  
vegetables,  
with ale  
to drink.  
Bread or  
gruel alone  
might be  
had by the  
poor, while  
the rich  
always have  
meat.*

over-often. Even so, even a thrall may expect to fill his belly with meat a few times a year, and have a milk-cow for his support, while a lord or an abbot will not be without a joint of beef to eat save that their *feorm* fails them.

Men plow with oxen and haul their carts with them. A common family is counted tolerably well-supplied when it has at least one cow for milk, two oxen for labor and later beef, and a half-dozen sheep for meat and wool. Even a poor man may be fortunate enough to have a horse, but men do not use horses for labor, for they cannot pull carts or plows well. Instead, they are for riding or pack-carriage where carts cannot well go. Pigs are often kept as well, for they can be sent into the forest to fatten on mast in the autumn, guarded by swineherds who will bring them in before winter. Many families keep chickens and other fowl, for they need little minding, and though they give little meat their eggs and feathers are of use. Goats are not kept unless the land be so poor that not even sheep can find food upon it.

A family's livestock is not penned up save to manure the fields. Because fodder is difficult to acquire, and land growing grass cannot grow grain, the animals are led out to pasture and brought back in afterwards. Most villages will pasture their animals all together under the watchful eye of herdsmen and their dogs, that thieves and beasts may be driven off. Some pasture-circuits are short, and the animals come home every day. Others may be out in the fields for days on end, roaming the wild places to find fodder. Some villages send women out to pasture the cattle in summer, when the weather is good and the war-season is far away. There they may make a milking-camp and make cheese for the year to come.

Every animal is branded with its owner's mark and their ear clipped fitly, so that all may know who it belongs to. No man may butcher a cow except in the presence of two trustworthy witnesses, and even then he must keep the head and the brand for three days to prove it was his cow he slaughtered. When cows are stolen they must often be taken far from their original place so that none will recognize the brand, or else traded to one who dwells beyond the justice of the victims' lord.

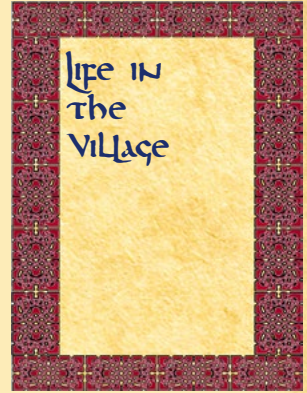
Cattle are the joy of a man's wealth, and the best of goods. Leather, milk, beef, and plow-labor are given by them, and a man with many cattle need never fear hunger or privation. A trader will never have difficulty trading a fat milk-cow for goods or labor, and a well-trained ox can always be exchanged wherever there is something to buy. Let rich men guard their herds carefully and well, and ensure their herdsmen are strong and loyal kin.

*A decently prosperous family might have a dozen cattle. The main limit for them is access to fodder, as the excess must be slaughtered before winter.*

*In summer the folk are too busy taking in the harvest to go raiding.*



**IN A SETTLEMENT ALL** men live mostly the same, except perhaps for the lord if he lives there. All farm for their bread, either with their own hands on their own land or by helping another tend his. Before the sun they rise from their beds and go out to the fields and the sunken huts, there to plow, or plant, or reap, or weave, or hew, or do the other things that all ceorls must do to live. Women most often remain in the settlement to weave, cook, mend, tend the beasts folded nearby, and do all the labors that do not require great strength, while men go out to distant fields and roam far pastures with the herds, where danger may easily find them.



Kinsmen and neighbors work together in a settlement. Men aid each other with their reaping and plowing and pasture their beasts together under shared eyes. Where one family falters, their kinsmen will help them, and will expect the same aid in turn. Agreements are made as to what land shall be worked in what time, and what help will be given in what season. A man hated by his neighbors, one who incurs their anger and distrust, is sure to starve or perish without help sooner or later, even assuming his neighbors do not conspire to drive him away or kill him.

Every ceorl must know the common business of living. He must know how to farm, and how to keep beasts, and how to build his hall and fashion such instruments as he needs for his living. Every woman must know how to weave and embroider, how to birth infants and how to bake bread. A common ceorl may be no fine artisan, but man or woman alike must know how to live without help from skilled hands.

True artisans are few in the settlements, though there may be men especially cunning at leatherworking, or women uncommonly artful in their embroidering, or smiths who can make more than a knife or a spear-head or such tools as every man must have. Even these men are farmers, however, because there is rarely enough demand for their services to feed their families otherwise. An adventurer who needs some rare skill or some fine gift made may have to journey for days to find one able to do such work.

There are no shops in English settlements. Not even at the trading-wics are there buildings where particular goods are always to be sold. A buyer must go to where a thing is made or brought by foreign traders if they are to get it.

Peddlers and traders sometimes roam from settlement to settlement, trading small goods, but more often they arrange trades between farmers who cannot afford to go roaming half a day just to find someone who wishes to trade grain for calves. Such traders make circuits of habit between familiar settlements, finding out what is needed in one place and arranging for it to be provided for a fair price elsewhere.

Many ceorls will go their whole lives without seeing a coin. While some kings mint silver *sceattas* and foreign coins from Frankish lands can be found at places, most measures of money are only for reckoning purposes. The price of a cow is counted as being worth so many shillings, and so a *wergild* of so many pounds may be paid with so many cattle, even if no coins ever trade hands. I am told that foreigners in other lands “make change” with coins, ensuring that nothing extra is ever given over the cost of a thing. That is unknown in England, though a man who gets much for what he gives may throw in a little more out of a virtuous generosity.

**I AM TOLD THAT** in pagan times the English sometimes liked to burn their dead, and so that is why the custom is hated in the present day. Instead, we bury our fallen in the good Christian way, placing them in cemeteries hallowed by the Church on the outskirts of our villages. Sometimes the grieving mourners put tokens of wealth in the grave, spear-heads or cloaks or brooches or treasures the dead one cherished in life, but this custom smells of heathenry and it is not much encouraged these days.

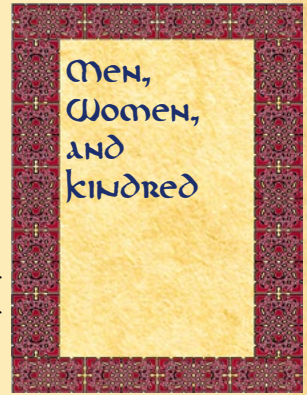
## DEATH IN THE VILLAGE

Around the ruins of the caesters are many cemeteries, for the Romans forbade anyone to be buried within a city. So their dead would not be forgotten, they put their burying-places alongside the roads entering the place. The old monuments and mausoleums there can sometimes be perilous.

The Wealh bury their dead as Christians do now, but in the ancient days, before Rome came to conquer them, they raised great barrows of earth to hold their kings and lords. Upon these long mounds they performed rites to their false gods and conducted much uncanny *dru*-craft, and within them they laid their kings to rest in chambers of stone. Men say that sometimes great stone doors are unearthed in these barrows, and the spaces within are larger and stranger than they should be, and the works of Hell are strong in them. Even so, sometimes brave or foolish English warbands will delve an old barrow seeking the treasure that the ancient Wealh left with their dead lords.

**Men and women have** different roles in life as our people reckon them, each with the duties they must do if any are to live to see another year. It is for men to rule, to fight and to toil far from home. It is for women to nourish, to birth, and to toil close to the hearth. Neither are better-loved by God, nor dearer in His sight, and the *wergild* for the husband is no greater than that for his wife.

Every man desires a wife, and he cannot think of himself as fully grown until he has one, however gray his beard may be. Yet even if he has enough wealth to pay the bride-price for one, a quarter of her *wergild*, his choice may reject him as unfitting if he is not such a man as seems good to her. He must be strong, and provident, and careful, and of good standing among his kindred if he is to win her approval.



Every woman desires a husband, and she will never have a house of her own until she gets one. When she has found a man who finds her beautiful and gentle and capable in the keeping of a house, she may receive her bride-price from him and join with him in marriage. Custom says that she is mistress of all matters beneath the hall-roof, the keeper of the keys to all chests and coffers, and her husband may no more dismiss her will beneath the roof than she may command him in the field. She oversees all female thralls personally.

They shall remain wed until one or the other shall die, or unless the man is proven impotent, or until a partner is carried away into slavery, or until one or the other defiles the marriage bed with the sin of adultery. It is a great insult to a spouse to be an adulterer, whether it is the man or woman who sins. The sinning spouse must pay their wicked partner's lawful mate a fine equal to their partner's *wergild*, and if he is a man, they must pay him the bride-price of a new wife of his station. If they sin with an unmarried man or woman, they must pay their partner's *wergild* to the king instead.

I grieve to say that some great lords and kings do not honor the matrimonial bed, and some warriors going afar do evil things contrary to their marriage vows. Where these things are kept hidden or shrouded by war they may escape earthly rebuke, yet where the lord is so great that he may have many open mistresses, his wife will often swallow her anger so that she might continue to enjoy the pleasures of being a great lady. This is shameful for both, and God will answer them for their evil appetites.



Among the great, a noblewoman's duties are more burdensome than those of a ceorl's wife. The daughters of great lords are expected to be peace-weavers among men, to be wed to old enemies or new friends that they may strengthen old bonds or ease old hates. A lord's wife must manage the great *symbol*-feasts and speak sweet and persuasive words to those her husband would enlist.

It is not the custom for women to do men's work, or men to toil at a woman's task. Yet some women yearn to pick up the spear or go forth into battle, and have the strength and prowess to do so. These are unhappy souls who get no joy from the good things appointed to their sex, who are determined to die as wretchedly as men die and kill as miserably as men kill. Most think them more than a little mad, and they are oft said to be the *waelcyrige* who are seers of victory and appointers of the slain. We of the Church do not welcome this. It is bad enough that men kill. Must mothers seek spear-glory as well? Better those women who must have glory should seek it in God, and become the holy nuns and venerated abbesses that even kings fear to offend.

A man and his wife share their belongings, though a wife always retains her bride-price to be used exclusively as she so wishes. If her husband dies, all that is his goes to her, and if a wife dies, her bride-price returns to her kinsmen. When the last parent dies, all the movable property is apportioned among the children, and all the land is parceled off to them as custom, good use, and their parents' wishes would have it.

Kindred are the stout staff that sustains every man and woman in England. When crops fail, when sickness strikes, when *wergild* is owed or enemies threaten violence, a man appeals to his kindred for help and will get it so far as his brethren can aid him. It is dangerous, then, to leave a region where your brethren live and go to dwell far away, where you may have no kindred close enough to help. If you do this then be wise and wed someone there who may bind you into their own kinship, or be such a good friend to them that they desire your well-being. For adventurers who wander over all England their lot is more perilous still, for any family they have will be distant.

A strong kindred, with many good marriages and clever peace-weavers and sweet-voiced friends in counsel, is a blessing to all who are part of it. To betray a kinsman is unthinkable to all but the most damnable men and women, though I tremble to think how often the king-helm has passed to new wearers after awful kinstrife. The ceorls are better in this, God be thanked, and a humble farmer would seldom think to do such terrible things as a king's brother might often contemplate.

**I**T IS IMPOSSIBLE TO understand the English if you know not the works of Christ. Without understanding of our minsters and our monks and our Church, we will seem only barbarians to you. We will look like mere wild men living in mean hamlets of thatched halls and miserable huts, killing each other for the sake of a stolen cow or a sullen word. Yet as hard and bitter as our lives can be, they would be unfathomably worse without Christ. Without God and His Church we would be utterly lost to Hell.

I am told by far wanderers that not all peoples cherish their gods, and that there are men in far countries who think less of their deities than they do of their dogs. The lack even the faith of our pagan fathers, who were at least convinced that their gods existed, even if they were oft useless. These men cannot understand how anyone would be so foolish as to believe in anything that cannot be touched and seen and known by human thoughts.

Stranger, you must understand the bitterness of my people before the word of God came to us. Our deities were indifferent names, dwellers in crude huts adorned by bones, served by pagan priests who could burn offerings for half a month and still not save their own children from sickness and death. We served these empty names as best we knew, pouring out or treasure for them, yet each generation lived as miserably as the last, all as poor, as bloody, and as wretched as all their Hellbound fathers. Even our heroes could hope for no better fate than to be remembered in a drunken scop's song.

Christ saved us, drawing us as a brand from the burning. The holy saints sent to us by Rome and by the Irish taught us of the true faith and gave us hope for something better than the endless seasons of empty killing. The Church taught us to stay our spears and love brotherhood and mercy as our pagan gods never did. Oftimes we fail in this, yes, but at least we realize now that we sin. Even a thrall may hope of Heaven now, and of a God who knows his name and loves him enough to die for his salvation. Is it any wonder that our sons do not even know the names of their grandfathers' gods? Even the dullest ceorl can see that the works of Rome and of its mighty faith are greater in their littlest part than the finest things a pagan *bretwalda* could offer. God seeks to give His children treasures both in this life and the next.

It may be, stranger, that you care nothing for our God. Even so, you will not understand our people if you presume that we care as little as you. Read these pages, then, to learn the essentials of the true faith, the minsters in which our clergy pray and labor, and the place that English heroes have among them. May it profit your soul as well as your gaming.





**MINSTERS ARE HOLY COMMUNITIES** of monks, or sometimes both monks and nuns. They are ruled by an abbot, or by an abbess if nuns are present there. Lay folk are not permitted to live within a minster's walls, but many come and go from these places on pilgrimages, or to seek blessings from the monks, or to give gifts, or to seek favor with them by doing tasks they require.

Minsters have stone buildings, and a wall, and several churches and chapels, and dormitories, and workshops for artisan-monks, and a host of things unknown outside of their walls. Even the kings of England sleep in wooden halls beneath thatched roofs, but in minsters there are stone buildings wrought by cunning craftsmen.



***Adventurers seek minsters to earn an abbot's friendship.*** An abbot commonly has much wealth at his command, from all the tithes and scots owed by the ceorls around the minster, and from land owned by the minster and worked by its monks. He may dispose of this wealth as he wishes, provided it is in accordance with God's will. A band of adventurers who aids the abbot may expect rich rewards and the friendship of a powerful cleric. Moreover, any man may honorably help an abbot without incurring the enmity of a secular lord, who may grudge adventurers who help their earthly rivals.

***Minsters provide holy miracles.*** It may be that a hero has suffered a terrible Scar or a dire curse or some other woe that earthly help cannot heal. If they have befriended an abbot, they may hope to get the benefit of his holy aid, either personally, if he is a Saint blessed with miracles of healing, or through his connection with those monastics who are so graced. Saints blessed with healing powers are few, but almost every minster of respectable size will have a few with such powers, regularly engaged in healing petitioners and curing pilgrims.

It will be expected that the adventurers show the sincerity of their need, however. No true Saint would ever trade healing for mere gifts, and so bless a rich man's purse before a poor man's empty hands. Yet if a rich man comes to him and is unwilling to put any of his treasures toward God's work, then clearly he cares more for his silver than his soul. Those who have no wealth may show their sincerity through labor for the minster. For a ceorl, this may be field work. For an adventurer, this may be more a daring deed.

***Minsters are where all clerics live.*** Whether monk or nun or priest or bishop, all clerics live in association with a minster. Monks and nuns are not allowed to leave it without permission of the abbot, who might send them forth for some particular duty or to go to the aid of some other abbot. Priests go out to give Mass to the ceorls, give last rites to the dying, and to hear the confessions of their sins. Some preach as well, if they have that gift and if the bishop thinks it fitting. Yet at the end of the day the priest returns to the minster, and few are the churches outside a minster's walls.

Minsters own land in many places, and so it often is that monks cannot work the fields there and return to the minster every night. These farms are called granges, and may be well-appointed with dormitories and a chapel for the monks that they may have a place to pray. These granges are often far from the minster's walls, and may face perils that require strong hands to put down.

***Minsters guard against Hell and unsealed Arxes.*** Demons and other powers of Hell fear the holy might of a minster, and the sound of sacred bells and sacred words can drive them far away. Wherever there is black sorcery or damnable power, there also should be a minster to defy Satan and all his lieutenants. While any upright Christian may call upon Christ for aid against infernal powers, the holy lives and pious hearts of the Saints are most mighty in repelling the powers of darkness. Even so, there are times when mortal men who love Hell may seek to attack a minster and slay the monks within, and then strong warriors for Christ must rise up to repel them, for monks are not meant to contest with enemies of the flesh.

Aside from demonic powers, minsters are oft placed outside the ruined cities of the Wealh, for within them are many of the cursed cysts called Arxes. These sealed hollows beneath the skin of the world were bound shut by Roman Artifexes in times of old as refuges against the reaving of our fathers. Yet with no one to rescue the inmates within, they grow curdled and twisted on old, sour magic and damnable energies, and are oftimes made less than men. The seals that shut the Arxes must wither away in time, and so these desolate places are often cursed with monstrous abominations and works of foul sorcery. The minster's monks stand guard against such things, with their prayers to drive back the Hellish abominations and the strong right arms of their friends to smite more carnal foes.

For these reasons minsters are of great importance to adventurers. There is almost always some work there in need of hard hands to attain it, and many are the gifts and helps that can be had there and nowhere else.

**Our Church is the** strong fortress of the English people, and our ministers the towers that guard her mighty walls. Though we be Angles, or Saxons, or Jutes, or others, we are yet Christians, and the Church binds us together where the swords of the tribes would cut us apart. I cannot expect every reader of this book to be a follower of the right faith, and so I explain its most important truths here, so that the gamesmen of Tang or the players of Persia may know what an English hero believes.

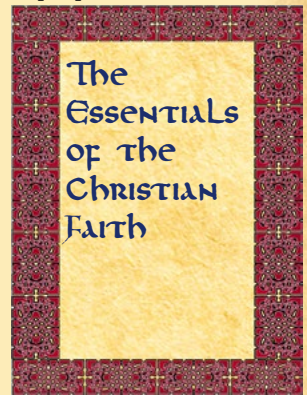
***There is but one God,*** the maker of heaven and earth, and all other gods are lies or devils. God is in three *personae*, the Father, the Son who is Jesus

Christ, and the Holy Spirit. These are not three different beings, but three faces and roles of the same eternal Creator, just as a man may be a father to one man, a son to another, and a husband to his wife. We may pray to saints who have died to intercede for us with God, but these saints have only such power to aid as God sees fit to grant them, and they are worthy only of honor such as pious men get and not the worship that is for God alone.

***God has heavenly angels to serve Him,*** but at the beginning of all things some portion of these angels defied Him and were cast down into the flames of Hell. There, their leader Satan yet vainly seeks to despoil and ruin all of God's creation. God permits him his hour of freedom, but at the end of time he and all who follow him will be thrown down and burn for all eternity. All who serve false gods or do wicked deeds serve the devil's purpose in truth, and the devil is the one who aids them.

***God created man and woman*** and placed them in Eden, which was a garden of perfect happiness. Yet the first woman disobeyed God and persuaded the first man to do the same, by which pain and suffering and evil entered into creation. We of the human race are thus wicked by nature, unable to do good, always doing evil and seeking to harm God and our fellows both. We deserve only death and Hell, and by our own efforts we will never get anything else. Only with God's help can we do good. The Briton Pelagius said otherwise, but that is the way of the Wealh, to make tangles of straight paths and darkness of the true light.

***God mourns our sins and desires our eternal life,*** and so during the rule of emperor Tiberius, God sent to men His Son, Jesus Christ. He was born





of the virgin Mary in the land of the Jews, and he was both wholly God and wholly man. He taught the blessed apostles and the multitude of believers, and for his teachings he was crucified and put to death by the malice of the Jews and the hand of the Roman sorcerer and procurator Pontius Pilate. Yet it was necessary that Christ die so that we may be absolved of our sins and make recompense for the evil that we have done. God is just, and our sins demanded *wergild*, and so God Himself paid it for us out of His own holy blood.

Three days after Christ was laid in the tomb, he appeared alive to the believers, and showed them that God's word was true and Death was conquered, that all who died in Christ would live again. Before ascending into heaven he charged the apostles with spreading the true faith to every corner of the earth, and making believers of all men. So they have done, for I know that even the wave-swept Irish are great scholars of Christ now, and I have heard that Christian shrines are raised even in the far lands of the Tang.

***Now all Christians must obey the teachings of Christ.*** If they do so to their best ability, and truly repent and grieve over their sins, then they will be permitted to enjoy life eternal with Christ upon the day of judgment. Those who scorn the laws of God and do not sorrow over their sins will be judged and cast down into Hell, there to burn forever with their lord Satan, the devil.

For a common believer in Christ, it is necessary that they do not murder, do not steal, do not lie, do not fornicate, do not covet another's goods, do not toil on the sabbath day, and do not honor false gods. They must pray to God alone, give to the Church the tithes and scots to which they are lawfully obliged, and believe what they are taught by the priests. They must be generous to the needy, merciful to the penitent, and brave before the threats of Satan. Let them treat all men with love and kindness, yet allow no evil to come in under color of soft lenience. This is what a Christian man must do if he is to gain heaven. A monk or nun must do more besides.

If he fails in any of these things, and he must fail at times because he is only a sinful man, he must heartily repent of his evil, confess his failing to his priest or to his fellow if no priest can be found, and then do penance for his crime to show his true contrition. If he makes such amends as he can for his wrong, and does all he ought to repent of it, then God shall put it out of His mind on the day of judgment. Yet even a penitent man must suffer the penalties of this world for his sins, so that weak men should not be tempted to do evil, thinking they may wail of it afterwards and be spared the pains of earthly punishment.

**Some men and women** are set apart from the common people, for they are meant for the service of God. These clergy are deserving of honor and respect, for they are servants of the Most High and have given over the joys of the present world for the far sweeter delights of the world to come.

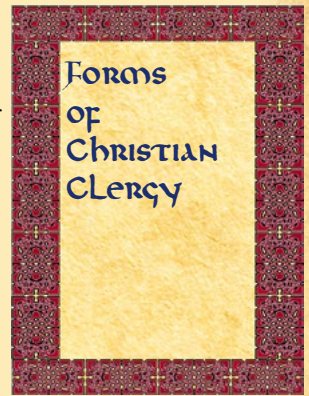
Clergy are subject to certain laws of the Church. They may not take wives or husbands, or lie with others, or bear or beget offspring. They may not shed the blood of other men or take human life. They must obey their superiors in the Church in all ways acceptable to God. They may not be kings or ealdormen or other secular lords. And lastly, they may not partake of the secular pleasures of hunting, or feasting to excess, or other frivolous things unbecoming to their dignity.

In some lands clergy must wear special clothes as well, though in England a cleric wears the same dress as other men, splendid or simple as his wealth allows, and the top of a clergyman's crown is kept shaven. Some Welsh and Irish clergy still cling to the old Celtic tonsure, where the hair is cut differently, but such practice has been forbidden by the English Church for years now.

Only men may be monks or priests or bishops, for that is the law of the Church and the holy scriptures. Women who yearn to serve God wholly may become nuns and dwell in a double monastery apart from the world. Where there are nuns, there must be an abbess, so the holiest among them are placed in charge of such minsters. Nuns do not act as priests and monks do, but they are no less holy for that, and good Christians fear to offend them.

Of all the servants of the Church, the greatest is the holy father, the bishop of Rome, whom men call the pope. By his great wisdom he guides the Church and, with the counsel of the bishops, determines those things that a good Christian should believe and do. Beneath the pope are the other bishops, who are priests and monks of much experience and wisdom elevated to the role. The bishops are placed in charge of the many domains of Christendom, each called a diocese. The pope appoints the bishop for each diocese, though he may graciously consent to consider those worthy candidates suggested by the secular lord who rules in that place.

Some among these bishops are honored as archbishops, supervisors over the other dioceses of a province. In England, there is only the archbishop of



Canterbury, the holy Berhtwald, who was abbot at Reculver minster and who journeyed to Rome to receive his pallium of office from the holy father's own hands. All the bishops of England are subject to the decisions of Archbishop Berhtwald, though he is a judicious man and does not direct in small causes. The Wealh kings despise Berhtwald as an Englishman and heed only their bishop of St. David's minster, Gorgan, who is loyal only to Rome.

Each bishop is a shepherd over his diocese, and beneath him are the abbots and abbesses of the minsters in his episcopal see. Yet the bishop does not choose these men and women. Instead, each minster is the property of a family or a king or a bishop, and each minster has rules by which a member of that kindred or a candidate acceptable to them is made abbot or abbess. Sometimes it is a particular heir who is to have it, and other times a monk of the minster who is suitably holy may be chosen by the owning kindred, so long as whoever is to receive it is or becomes a monk or a nun.

Beneath the abbot or abbess are the priests, monks, and nuns of the minster. The priesthood is a special grace granted to certain men, those who must give the holy sacraments of Mass to their brethren and the lay folk. The bishop has discretion over which monks are to be granted the priesthood, but the abbot decides who shall be allowed to become a monk there. Humble men with strong backs and sincere desire to serve God are permitted entry as low monks, to labor in the fields and folds. Those of high birth or great capacity are enlisted as choir monks, to pray, labor skillfully, and teach. Both are equally loved by God, yet different in their customary duties.

Nuns are most often of noble blood and come with a rich dowry for Christ, for nuns cannot labor to feed themselves as monks can. The minster must have land and gifts to support its nuns, though it is true that many weave marvelously skillful cloth and fashion fine garments from it. Strong arms are needed for the toil of field and farm, so it is that monks are always found at a minster if there are nuns. Yet even so, an abbess is always chosen to be mistress over both, for an abbot cannot well manage women.

All clergy are expected to dwell within a minster's walls. Nuns and monks never leave, save by special need or when sent forth by the abbot. Priests go out to give Mass in the villages and teach the common people of God's will for them. The bishop too dwells within a minster, though he journeys throughout his diocese, and is expected to visit every settlement in it at least once each year so he may confirm the baptized and correct the errors of the people. Alas, not all bishops are so diligent as they should be.



I say in all honesty that the clergy of England are mostly worthy men, honest in their faith and earnest in their desire to serve God. They fail from time to time, falling prey to greed, or lust, or fear of secular wrath, but the ceorls expect the clergy to behave well, and the clergy seldom disappoint them.

They are not without blemish, however, and the greatest of their flaws is a favoring of the habits of the world. There are clergy who keep wives or concubines, going out from the minster to bed them of nights in their homes. It is a scandal that the common folk too seldom object to this, and that they overlook it oftimes if the cleric is good in other

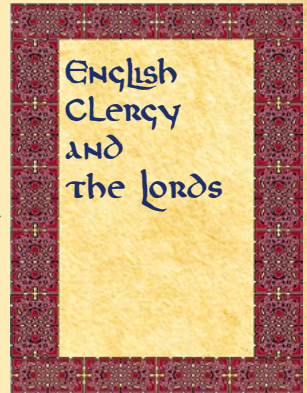
ways and keeps his mare as if she were his wife. There are other clergy who feast too well, or who hunt as an ealdorman would, or who would rule their minsters and their ceorls as if they were a king. These clerics love the world's ways.

Nuns have sins particular to their own condition. Seldom do they fall prey to lust, and the miserable scandal at Coldingham minster not long ago was a shock to all. This is because they cannot leave the minster so easily as men do, and so they have fewer occasions to fall. Yet their vice is quarreling and contention. Not content to rend the peace and harmony of the minster, they conspire against the enemies of their families and would use the minster's name to afflict their foes in this world. A good abbess permits no such scheming.

When a cleric does evil, either a secular crime or a rebellion against his Church superiors, he must be judged by the Church. He may be stripped of his possessions if he has any, or confined to a place, or deprived of privileges and dignities, or sent to do hard labors for God, depending on the nature and gravity of his crime. In the worst cases, he may be stripped of his place in the clergy and exiled from the minster, to wander friendless and outlawed. Men fear to kill a cleric, even a wretched one, and so it is better to drive them out.

The Church is strong in England, but the kings together are stronger. This is just, for the Church is of the kingdom of Heaven and not of earth. Bishops direct their diocese and abbots are masters of their minsters, but both must have a care for the king and the lords. There are three reasons this is so.

*Primus*, the bishop is most likely a kinsman to the king, or to another king, or to some noble kindred. The greatest clergy in England are commonly relatives of the greatest nobility, and so they have no desire to anger their kins-



man. Even a little minster's abbot is most likely a son to some ealdorman or a nephew of some king. There is a sameness of heart among them, and they are given to see things the same way.

*Secundus*, the nobles are the font of land and gifts by which a minster grows. All that a minster gets, it gets from the hand of the secular lords. The grants of land cannot even be made without the king permitting the land to be made bookland in the first place, that it may be given forever to the minster. If the bishop desires a new minster to be founded, he must endow it out of his own personal property or persuade some noble to give what is needed. A cleric who makes himself obnoxious to the lords will get nothing.

*Tertius*, the nobles have steel. Only a most vicious and depraved lord would dare to send warriors against the walls of a minster, yet it is precisely such a lord who is most likely to annoy and vex a bishop. To God's grief, it is not unknown that men should slay the clergy of a minster and plunder its riches, or that they should molest the clerics under threat of steel. Both bishops and abbots always remember that in the end, the king bears a sword and they do not. They govern their words accordingly.

And yet the bishops and the abbots are not without their own defenses, and they have means by which they may repel lordly abuses.

*Primus*, they may rebuke the king and declare his conduct unlawful and unjust. This gives license for his enemies to rise against him, and men who might support him against such rebels will stay their hands and look away. Many are the great ealdormen who would like to be king, and many are the kingly neighbors seeking an honorable excuse for war.

*Secundus*, the bishop may excommunicate particularly heinous men, or even whole kingdoms if the crime is grave enough. Those under excommunication may receive no Mass, no unction, and no Christian burial. No man may share fire or water or word with them. They are beasts and foes of all mankind, and their possessions and kingdoms are no longer theirs by right. This is a terrible rebuke reserved only for such crimes as all men see as horrid, and a bishop will not do this unless all hope of peaceful resolution is lost. Only by abject repentance and recompense may a man be released from excommunication.

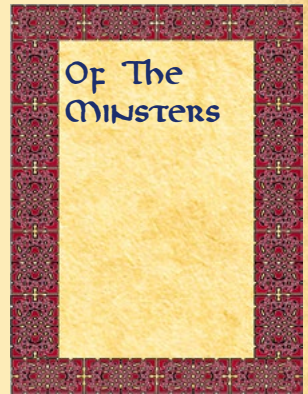
*Tertius*, and most powerfully, the clergy may pray to God for deliverance from their suffering. Many are the miracles that God gives His servants in an hour of need, and no king's steel or dreadful wrath can turn aside the anger of the Lord. If God sees fit to scourge a king in this life instead of the next, then he shall be punished sorely indeed.

**MINSTERS ARE STRONGHOLDS** of the Church, built for the habitation of priests, monks, and nuns and as a place where they may pray and work. They are spread throughout both England and the Wealh lands, even if the Christians of the Wealh honor the bishop of St. David's minster as their chief rather than the archbishop of Canterbury. There are hundreds of minsters throughout the land, great and small, and few are the regions where one can journey half a day and not meet a minster along the way.

Minsters are built not merely as monuments to the faith, but as places of work and prayer. Sacred services are conducted night and day in the churches, and pilgrims are received who seek the blessings of the monks, the sight of their holy relics, and the delight of gazing on such remarkable things as can be seen nowhere else in Britain. There is hardly a building raised by English hands in Britain that is not of wood; only at minsters are stonemasons employed, oftentimes brought from the Frankish lands over the sea to lend their arts.

And as monks must pray, so also must they work. The "choir monks" of the minster are those learned and dignified in their wisdom. They pray the sacred hours, copy pious manuscripts, offer healing to sick petitioners, and perform other tasks proper to men of knowledge. The "low monks", while consecrated to a holy life as well, are not burdened with duties beyond their knowledge or skill. They labor in the fields, and tend the herds, and do such humble labor as is needful in the minster. God loves both kinds of monk equally well, though it is for the monks of the choir to direct the monastery's affairs.

The work done at minsters is more than mere sowing and reaping. Minsters require fine goods of glass, and iron, and silver, and gold when gold can be had. They must have sacred vessels for the altar, splendid weaving for vestments, rich pins and brooches and crosses and all the other marvelous works that show even simple eyes a hint of the glory of God and the magnificence of His Church. And because minsters must have these things, monks must make them. They cannot be acquired from common ceorls, and foreign merchants demand dear prices to bring them, so the minsters draw artisans and fine crafters to them, and encourage their monks to learn delicate arts that common men have no spare wealth to need.





Minsters are places of peace. Even men who might be mortal foes may meet together at a minster without expectation of violence, and pilgrims may come to pray who would not be welcome elsewhere in the region. To shed blood recklessly at a minster is a grave sin, and to attack the minster and its monks itself a heinous crime against God... though alas, to God's grief, it is not a thing unknown to happen.

**MINSTERS ARE MADE WHEN** someone grants land to a holy-hearted man or saintly woman, asking them to be abbot or abbess over a new minster. Anyone may endow a minster, but they must be very rich to afford to give away so much land as is needed to begin the work. Most often they are the gifts of kings or ealdormen, and a hundred hides of land is considered a good and kingly gift to start a small minster.

## FOUNDING A MINSTER

Minsters must be founded with bookland, that is, land especially exempted by the king. When a lord dies, all the common folkland that the king gave him goes back into the king's hand. So it is that the lord cannot permanently give land to anyone unless the king consents that it be made bookland. Sometimes a king will generously make a gift of bookland to a great friend, but more often he will only consent when it is to be gifted to a minster.

Minsters are often founded by other minsters, with land given to one used to endow the other. These daughter-minsters forever afterwards owe fealty and obedience to their mother houses, and so also do their daughters in turn. The holy Bishop Wilfrid in this way endowed many minsters under his rule, enlisting thousands of monks, until it was said that his was a kingdom of minsters.

Bishops commonly use the founding of a minster to stretch their influence, planting them in far kingdoms or distant episcopal sees. Such minsters may be respectful to the local bishop, but their true obedience is always to their founder's see. Even if he later ceases to be a bishop, or is moved to a different diocese, his minsters will remain his own, for he made them.

This is a thing to be carefully understood; *a minster is property*. It belongs to the man or kindred that endowed it. It is the founder who chooses the first abbot, and the founder who decides how future abbots are to be chosen. The bishop or the monks may object to a wholly unsuitable choice, but the minster does not belong to them, and they may not control it. Almost always, future abbots are chosen from the kinsmen of the founder or from men obedient to their wishes.

Now I admit that there is a bad founding of minsters as well. There are times when a lord desires to enjoy the produce of his lands without taxes or duties to kings, or when he wants peace and idle ease, or when he wishes to have glory and esteem. Then he gives land for a minster and makes himself abbot, or a pliant man abbot, and then rules it as if it were a household and not a minster. He sets up his wife as an abbess over nuns, but he lies with her at night and gives her children. His monks he gathers from fugitives, servants, and cast-off clerics, that any man who would give him a tonsured head and obedience should be his monk. He spends lavishly to make his minster look splendid and rich, and sometimes he will even take pains that everything be done just as it is in a true minster, but his heart is not for God, but only for his own satisfaction.

These rotten minsters are not common, but they grow more so with each year. Men see the glory of a minster and the riches it brings, and so they found them for their own ends. They say they serve God with them, and some even believe it, but they are not true abbots and their minsters are not true houses of God. Yet the bishop cannot prevent this from being so, for it is not his minster to rule, and only if the abbot is a scandal to others can shame move him much.

**MINSTERS ARE BEST BUILT** on a hill near water, oftimes with the south and east sloping down to a river or the sea. Or else they are built on a peninsula, like the great minster at Lindisfarne, or a jutting spur of earth easily kept apart from the world. If they are built in Roman ruins, they are put in the corner of the city wall or Roman fort, such that two of the minster walls may be the old masonry and only two new ones must be raised from the salvage and spoil.

### The Structure of a Minster

Every minster is built around two stone churches, a larger one in honor of an apostle or saint, and a smaller one dedicated to the Holy Virgin or to Jesus Christ. These are built in an east-west line, a little off from the center of the minster. More churches will be built in time as the minster grows richer, but these two are counted the least that proper dignity requires.

These churches are always of stone, and their windows should be of glass, whether white or colored. On its altar should be an altar-cloth of gold, and a chalice of gold and jewels, and everything done as richly as possible for the glory of God. Simple men must see with their earthly eyes the splendor of Christ, for they have not the spiritual eyes to see the deeper things. Only a

very holy man may have heart to praise God with simple things. Most are emboldened better by bright treasures.

Each minster also has a wall of some kind, be it stone, or earthworks, or wooden posts. It describes a square, or rectangle, or sometimes a circle, commonly about 150 to 300 yards across. The land within is of the minster proper, and strangers are not welcome there without a monkish escort or the special leave of the abbot.

Within this walled space the other buildings of the minster are built, always of stone where that can be done. There are dormitories for the monks, and mausoleums, and chapels to this saint or that saint, and monuments such as the great stone crosses that rich nobles like to build for their houses. There are workshops for the artisan-monks and storehouses for great wealth.

Outside the walled space are often places for visitors and pilgrims to rest, when they are not being admitted into the minster to pray at the churches, revere the relics, and honor the graves of the saints. In prosperous or old minsters, these buildings are often joined by other houses of ceorls and minster-servants, making a little settlement outside the minster gate.

A decently prosperous minster will have perhaps a hundred monks. The great minster of Jarrow in which I am honored to serve has three hundred of its own, and another three hundred across the way in its sister-minster of Wearmouth. All of these monks labor, either in prayer, in tilling the minster's fields, or in doing such work as learned men might do. What we do not get from our own labor, we get from the food-rent owed us by our land-holders.

**MINSTERS DO NOT KEEP** warriors as a general matter. The Saints within are fearsome defenders against supernatural foes and the lord of the land is expected to guard against godless men. As a practical matter, however, some minsters associate with pious ceorls or gesith who interest themselves in the defense of the minster, or commission the help of adventuring warbands to deal with particular troubles.

## **MINSTER Defenses**

Why, you ask, are rich minsters not often plundered? Because God will scourge those who reave His flock. Do not smile at this, stranger. The restless dead shriek of Hell's flames and Saints bring marvels to men; only a fool could imagine Hell does not await for sinners. Sometimes men are mad enough to persuade themselves that it is right and just to rob the Church, and sometimes men think that the devil or their pagan god shall protect them, but in the end all will be made to reckon on what they wreak.



**MANY A GAME IS** best begun at a minster, for it is a good place for bold heroes to meet and find tasks worthy of their courage. There are more people at a minster than at most settlements, and there are better services, more cunning craftsmen, and greater riches to be won from service there. The heroes may be pilgrims to the minster, or merely bold men seeking to be of good service to a godly abbot.

Unproven adventurers will be dealt with by the gatekeeper of the minster, or some other monk charged with dealing with common pilgrims. Such a man is always one wise to the ways of adventurers, and not to be tricked or cozened lightly. If there is

work for warriors, he will give it out, and he will reward those who do it well and in a way acceptable to God. Such unproven adventurers will dwell outside the walls, in the guest house or in a camp of their own making. They will get no more than a meal or two from the minster until they have proven their value.

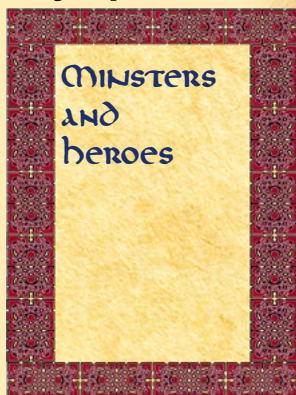
Adventurers of good name or proven use will be admitted into the minster and permitted to speak with the abbot himself. More delicate tasks will be given to such men, ones requiring discretion and wisdom as well as courage. They will be permitted to barter with the artisans of the minster, exchanging gifts, and with time and good evidence of their faithfulness they may even be permitted to dwell within the walls.

It is not permitted for an abbot to have a household, and so an abbot will never take warriors into direct service<sup>1</sup>. Only monks and priests and other clerics may become pledged to a minster. Yet warriors of proven use will be friends to an abbot, and may rely upon him as friends do. It is a good thing to be an abbot's friend; his word will open the doors of many friendly minsters and his wish may earn a warrior an audience with a king. A hero must remember to keep the friendship well, however, and when gifts are given, the abbot's minster must not be forgotten.

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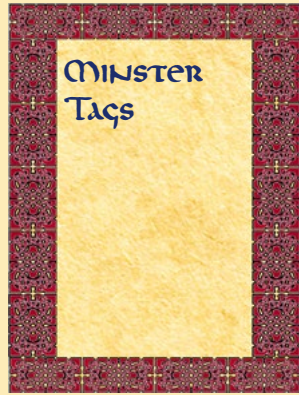
1 Brother Cornix may be somewhat optimistic in this assessment. Attacks by raiders and hostile lords on minsters were not unknown. Monks could also be killed as collateral damage during local wars, such as during the battle of Chester in 639. Still, such attacks were unusual enough to be scandalous and worth recording.

Even so, it's likely that the abbot or abbess has very specific understandings with the local lord about providing adequate security for the minster and men to punish thieves and raiders. It's not at all unlikely that local heroes could be among them.



A **MINSTER IS OFT** the heart of a new-made band's adventuring, the secure base from which they venture forth to do mighty deeds and achieve great ends. If the place is to be anything more than a name on a map and a few particulars diced out by the GM, however, it needs more of interest to be added to it. Minster tags permit the GM to blend together a mix of engaging elements.

Each tag entry that follows describes one particular trait the minster might possess. After the description, there are listed examples of appropriate abbots to rule the minster, woes that might complicate its doings, graces that give it strength



**220**      **MINSTER TAG**

**1**      Aberrant Discipline

**2**      Artful Production

**3**      Autonomous Impunity

**4**      Bulwark Against Evil

**5**      Curative Powers

**6**      Damaged Structures

**7**      Decaying Glory

**8**      Deprived of Land

**9**      Double Monastery

**10**    Favored by Lords

**11**    Heretical Beliefs

**12**    Impoverished Minster

**13**    Incompetent Abbot

**14**    Learned Monks

**15**    Litigious Temper

**16**    Martial Monastics

**17**    Oppressive Masters

**18**    Pilgrimage Center

**19**    Rotten Minster

**20**    Terrible Reputation



to manage its troubles, and goals.

To use these tags, roll twice on the adjacent table, rerolling duplicates. Then take two tag entries and blend them. Thus, a minster with *Curative Powers* and *Learned Monks* might blend an “Utterly unworldly saint-abbot” with “Abbot is a famous scholar” to get a minster where an abbot of mighty holiness and famous learning is helplessly unworldly.

The same is done with Woe, Grace, and Goal entries to blend together a specific trouble the monastery faces, a particular strength it has, and a greater ambition it seeks. These facts may then be used as grist for adventures, particular benefits the heroes might win by gaining the abbot's friendship, and greater purposes that the abbot might seek heroes to pursue on his behalf.

While a GM can always pick and choose, even the most unlikely pairings can sometimes spark new ideas. Do not shun strange mixings out of hand, but give them a little thought at least.

## ABERRANT DISCIPLINE

The minster does not follow the rule of St. Benedict in its life, but instead has peculiar, perhaps-improper customs that it clings to despite all rebukes. Its monks and nuns do not live as monks and nuns do elsewhere, and either relax what should not be relaxed, or demand more than should be demanded of the monks.

- ABBOT** Eccentric saint with his own ideas, Charismatic “reformer”, Indolent voluptuary, Gravely-flawed saint
- WOES** Undisciplined monks are committing crimes, The bishop is furious with them, Their ways are infecting other minsters and upsetting abbots, People no longer give gifts to such a dubious minster
- GRACES** The monks use their resources with ruthless pragmatism, They’ve impressed an important abbot with their non-standard holiness, They’re being supported by a secret heretic or pagan, A lord is finding them a politically cooperative ally
- GOALS** Spread their new practice to other minsters, Enhance their wealth and pleasures, Destroy their most vocal critic, Found a new minster with their customs

## ARTFUL PRODUCTION

The minster has an uncommon number of rare craftsmen, working in gold, glass, stone, and perhaps even silk. Things can be fashioned here that can be made in few other places in England. The minster may receive many requests for the services of its monks, often from other minsters in need of their works, or from kings who desire rich things to give their loyal followers.

- ABBOT** Abbot enamored with beautiful art, Foreigner who brought the artists, Artisan-abbot of a traditional line, Canny trader beneath abbot’s robes
- WOES** Thieves seek to plunder the riches, Lords are coercing gifts of rare goods, A crucial ingredient is difficult to obtain, The art is being made with unholy aid
- GRACES** The gifts the monks can give are very precious, The monks are needed by an important lord, The monks have a storehouse of great treasures, The monks have many allies influenced by gifts
- GOALS** Recover a stolen treasure, Erect a wondrous work, Persuade a great craftsman to join, Spread their skills to another minster



## AUTONOMOUS IMPUNITY

The minster is so strong and its king so weak or averse to interference that the abbot may do as he wills with no concern for the king. Everyone knows that the king's law will extend only so far as the abbot permits it to. Perhaps they may have some secret leash on the king, or have forced his compliance by other means.

- ABBOT** Close royal relative being kept out of the way, Abbot with an awesome reputation, Ruthless political kingmaker with much blackmail, Critical supporter of the king
- WOES** The minster is claiming more than its due, The minster is protecting a notorious criminal, The minster persecutes a specific enemy lord, The minster is ignoring its duties
- GRACES** It has access to a strong force of warriors, Local lords don't even try to fight it, It has an impregnable physical location, It's allied with a powerful neighboring king
- GOALS** Expand its sphere of control, Compel the king to obey its will, Punish a lord who trespassed on its autonomy, Dissuade a meddling bishop

## BULWARK AGAINST EVIL

Some dread evil is being bottled up by the minster. Perhaps it acts as a seal on an Arx, or is a guard-post against monstrous incursions from a Roman ruin, or monitors a region infested by infernal forces or pagans. The monks themselves are forbidden to shed human blood, so if the foe is a mortal man they will need warrior defenders to aid God's holy work.

- ABBOT** Grizzled once-warrior abbot, Ascetic saint obsessed with containing the evil, Exhausted and despairing veteran of endless struggle, Secret pawn of the evil who seeks to aid it
- WOES** The evil is seeping through the minster's guard, The evil is twisting the minster itself, Allies are neglecting their duty to help the minster, The evil has suddenly become much stronger
- GRACES** The monks are fiercely holy in their duties, The minster has martial allies close to hand, The minster has a sacred relic to aid them, The minster is owed many ancient pacts of aid
- GOALS** Extinguish the evil once and for all, Further entrench the defenses, Discover the current plans of the evil, Destroy a collaborator with the evil

## CURATIVE POWERS

Every true minster has among its numbers a Saint able to utter a modest prayer of healing or two, but this one is famed for the strength of its curative blessings. Holy springs, sacred relics, blessed ground, or an exceptionally holy abbot might be responsible for this renown. Numerous pilgrims are sure to be found seeking its special graces.

- ABBOT** Utterly unworldly saint-abbot, Pragmatic manager of a sacred resource, Scholarly healer-abbot, Shameless trader in holy miracles
- WOES** The curative powers are fading, An important person was not healed, Another minster is trying to take control of the healing source, Pilgrims are being prevented from coming somehow
- GRACES** The curative powers maintain the monks in fierce good health, The local lords owe the minster many healing favors, Pilgrims have given the minster rich gifts, Many wise healers labor for the minster
- GOALS** Protect and encourage pilgrims, Heal a gravely-ill important lord, Glorify the healing source with new construction, Defend the healing source from accusations of paganism

## DAMAGED STRUCTURES

Some critical part of the minster has been physically damaged; church, saint's tomb, holy monument, or some other edifice that does not admit of easy repair. The damage is substantial and may have been caused by men, divine rebuke, or infernal meddling.

- ABBOT** Wicked abbot abhorred by God, Abbot exhausted by vain repair efforts, Fumbling replacement for an abbot who died in the event, Abbot squeezing all resources for repair
- WOES** The damage is worsening, The repairers are secretly incompetent, The devil is interfering with repairs, Until a secret sin is uncovered and punished the damage always reappears
- GRACES** Pilgrims are bringing aid to repair it, The damage has uncovered a treasure, A sympathetic king has given a gift of land, A foreign artisan is interested in helping
- GOALS** Persuade a critical artisan to aid the minster, Get vital repair materials, Punish the one who caused the damage, Rebuild it bigger and better

## Decaying Glory

The minster was once far richer, more famed, and more holy than it is now. Remnants of the glory remain, but the place speaks of loss, decay, and apathy.

**ABBOT** Drunken sot of an abbot, Zealous reformer of discipline, Hidebound manager of slow devolution, Overmatched heir to too great a challenge

**Woes** Mere decay is turning into active evil and sinfulness, The outside world still expects the minster to do its great duties, The minster's glory was based on a dark secret that is coming due, The minster's land is being peeled off by jackal-lords

**GRACES** It still has a trove of mighty relics, Old agreements grant it great theoretical liberties, A few monks are still fiercely loyal to the old glory, It still has ties with important noble houses

**GOALS** Get more sufficiently-holy monks to join, Destroy the force that caused the decay, Recover a lost relic crucial to the minster's glory, Fulfill a great duty that taxes its capacity

## Deprived of Land

Some lord or circumstance has deprived the minster of lands rightfully owed to it. Perhaps a terrible beast has driven its ceorls from their homes, or a ruthless lord has revoked a grant, or a king has found the abbot guilty of a grave crime. The minster may also have leased its lands for up to three lifetimes to another man's sire who now refuses to give up his grandfather's fields.

**ABBOT** Cowardly abbot who dares not protest, Reprobate who's earned his punishment, Political enemy of the culprit, Fool who traded away the land

**Woes** The monks go hungry for lack of the land, The ceorls are angry at losing the minster's lordship, The minster's obligations go unfulfilled now, The land held some crucial holy place or site

**GRACES** The monks are tightly unified by the loss, A new prospect for land has been found, An under-exploited resource is being opened up, The minster calls down curses on the thief

**GOALS** Punish the thieving culprit, Obtain new land to replace the old, Get a king to force the land's return, Persuade the bishop to anathemize the culprit



## DOUBLE MONASTERY

This monastery includes both nuns and monks, rather than the strict male membership of other minsters. Such double monasteries are always run by abbesses. Discipline is strict, separation is customary, and scandals are few... but they are not unknown. While uncommon, it's not unknown for some of the local nuns to much prefer a secular life, and run away with lovers in ways embarrassing to both the abbess and her bishop.

**ABBESS** Abbess is an excess princess, Abbess is famed for her holiness, Abbess is a widowed noblewoman, Abbess is ungodly but cunning

**WOES** There is a secret scandal with visitors or monks, A new noble nun is being intolerable to the sisters, The minster needs to be enlarged for more nuns, The minster needs more monks to do heavy labor

**GRACES** The nuns have noble kinswomen throughout England, The abbess is a figure of awe, The minster weaves wondrous textiles, The minster has many gifts from the families of nuns

**GOALS** Drive back a martial threat to the minster, Quell rumors of ungodliness in the minster, Found a daughter-minster to take up excess nuns, Convince a widowed queen to join

## FAVORED BY LORDS

The minster has special favor in the eyes of the king or of the local ealdorman, either due to long family ties with its abbots, special service offered in the past, or possession of crucially-important land. Whatever the abbot does will be viewed kindly by the lords.

**ABBOT** Abbot of royal blood, Abbot is a retired war-companion of the lord, Abbot is a Machiavellian political schemer, Abbot is a puppet of the lord

**WOES** The bishop is jealous of the abbot's influence on the lord, The minster is hated by the lord's enemies, The abbot is impoverishing the minster with his aid to his patron, The minster is resented by other monks for getting all the best gifts

**GRACES** The lord gladly does the abbot's bidding in many things, The minster is rich with the lord's gifts, The minster has many monks and ceorls in its service, The minster knows all the secret affairs of the nobility

**GOALS** Advance their patron's interests, Quash a rival minster that threatens to win over their patron, Construct a magnificent edifice honoring their patron's saintly ancestor, Bury a truth that would turn their patron against them



## heretical Beliefs

The minster is influenced by heretical ideas. If the beliefs are blatantly pagan or infernal, they must keep them hidden from others and carefully screen new members. If the beliefs are heretical in a way that only other clerics can understand, then they may yet have secular support despite enmity from the Church and learned men.

**ABBOT** Secret pagan or infernalist abbot, Sainly abbot who maintains unacceptable beliefs, Abbot nurturing the remnants of a defeated heresy, Abbot bewitched by a persuasive heretic monk

**WOES** The monks are turning their evil upon each other, A greater heretic is seeking to compel their alliance with him, They are widely scorned and rebuked by learned men, God has cursed them with misfortune

**GRACES** The minster has access to dark sorceries, Local secret heretics support the minster, Pagan forces are supporting the conflict, The heresy has secret or open lordly support

**GOALS** Spread the heresy to the lords, Destroy a bishop preaching against it, Plant heretical monks in other minsters, Coerce a bishop into supporting it

## Impoverished Minster

Alas, the minster lacks the land it needs to keep its monks properly, or some calamity has ruined their farms or plundered their wealth. The monks neglect their holy duties simply to get enough to eat. In this land, poverty is not so much a matter of lacking gold as it is a lack of necessary food, clothing, and shelter.

**ABBOT** Spendthrift abbot, Abbot who cares only for feeding his monks, Abbot who has made unrighteous bargains to get needed food, Abbot who seeks to get a different and more profitable minster

**WOES** Some monks extort bread by threats or force, The minster has many dependents it dares not cut off, The minster must complete some hard task to win the gift of land it needs, The minster's ceorls work badly because of some conflict

**GRACES** The only monks left are those grimly faithful to the minster, The minster has made unconventional allies in an attempt to get food, The minster has a precious treasure it cannot part with, The minster has the sympathies of the bishop

**GOALS** Convince a lord to give a gift of land, Recover unused land from the beasts or marauders who hold it, Acquire a treasure that can get them more land, Persuade someone to give a regular tithe of food

## Incompetent Abbot

The abbot or abbess is a fool. They may be a holy fool, too saintly to be removed no matter how incapable they are of running a minster, or they may be a common fool, put in their position due to blood, familial ownership of the minster, or as a favor they were owed by its owner. They cannot be removed without trouble, but they bring much suffering to the monks.

**ABBOT** Abbot who has gone slightly mad, Abbot obsessed with impractical piety, Abbot who demands every whim be obeyed, Abbot who is trying hard but simply unequal to the task

**WOES** The abbot has enraged an important lord, The monks are in semi-open revolt against the abbot, A new policy of the abbot will beggar the minster, A faction is trying to force the abbot out despite the chaos it would cause

**GRACES** The abbot has many allies among the great, The abbot has great talents in some respects, A stupid choice of the abbot has miraculously worked out very well, There are no conceivable replacements to be found for the abbot

**GOALS** Push through an ill-thought project, Purge the minster of the abbot's foes, Persuade a bishop to help cement the abbot's rule, Fix the woes caused by a grave mistake the abbot made



## LEARNED MONKS

The monks of the minster are exceptionally well-educated, and it's possible that they even measure up to the very high standards of the Britons or the Irish. They doubtless possess the answers to many puzzling mysteries and can give sage advice to those who seek their wisdom.

- ABBOT** Abbot is a famous scholar, Abbot is Irish or Briton and brought the tradition with him, Abbot is a charismatic collector of scholars, Abbot trucks with dark powers for secret lore
- WOES** The monks seek dangerous knowledge, A precious book they have has been stolen, Their best scholar is semi-heretical, They are more concerned with mundane wisdom than godly truth
- GRACES** Their scholars know many practical and useful truths, People implicitly believe what the minster tells them, They have ties to many scholars in other minsters, They have troves of foreign lore
- GOALS** Acquire a priceless book that is now in perilous hands, Convince another minster's best scholar to join them, Seek out artifacts and records from a dangerous place, Build a magnificent library of almost a hundred books

## LITIGIOUS TEMPER

The minster is constantly bringing cases before the king and the ealdormen, pushing their rights to the very utmost to browbeat and coerce others into granting them land, rights, or revenues. Some are purely avaricious, while others are convinced that they litigate for God.

- ABBOT** Abbot is a grasping legalist, Abbot is convinced the minster's profit and God's will are synonymous, Abbot is a wastrel who constantly needs more wealth, Abbot is naturally quarrelsome
- WOES** Their wealthy neighbors hate them and their suits, The king is growing angry with the constant suits, They've enraged a litigant who wouldn't be above violence, They risk losing a very critical counter-suit
- GRACES** They've bribed many allies with the wealth they took from others, They have superb negotiators and legal minds, The common folk favor them for their light exactions, They have the solid support of the bishop
- GOALS** Acquire a piece of land held by a great lord, Reclaim land they legally won but is de-facto held by an armed foe, Acquire documentary proof of a claim, Persuade a king by extra-legal means

## MARTIAL MONASTICS

Clergy are categorically forbidden from fighting human beings, but this minster has ready access to military forces unbecoming their nature. It may be that many of the monks are insufficiently-peaceful former warriors, or the ceorls on their land may be unusually warlike and obedient, or they have a local lord's military forces at their disposal.

- ABBOT** Abbot is a former martial hero, Abbot is kinsman to a warband leader, Abbot is a military genius, Abbot is a naturally savage bully
- Woes** The bishop is infuriated by their martial habits, They have a bad reputation with the local lords, They've gotten in a fight too big for them, They've killed someone important with many kinsmen
- GRACES** Their warriors are made fearless by faith, Their warriors are deniable assets, They have a large store of weapons and shields, The minster is extremely well-fortified
- GOALS** Break an enemy warband that dares to fight them, Convince the bishop that they're not responsible for a fight, Persuade a third party to fight on their behalf, Find rewards for warriors who expect gifts for their help

## Oppressive Masters

The monks of the minster are cruel and demanding toward their ceorls, and the soul-scots and tithes they exact are harsh. They demand more than custom expects and grant less than tradition would require of their charity.

- ABBOT** Abbot is a greedy miser, Abbot needs the money for a great work, Abbot scorns ceorls as mere human cattle, Abbot is fiscally incompetent
- Woes** The ceorls are building up to a tax revolt, Some monks are embezzling wealth for a third party, The king is concerned with the unrest being caused, An outside party is taking advantage of the unrest
- GRACES** The minster is very wealthy, The minster is ruthlessly efficient in its oppression, The ceorls are beaten down and resigned, The king approves of the extra gifts he gets from them
- GOALS** Suppress a rebel leader among the ceorls, Recover a stolen tithe shipment, Strengthen ties with the secular lords of the land, Show the bishop that the ceorls are merely greedy complainers

## PILGRIMAGE CENTER

All minsters attract their share of pilgrims to pray at their churches, revere their relics, and receive the blessings of the monks, but this minster is an especially strong draw. It has some famous relic, or a place of holy miracles, or a famed history to it.

- ABBOT** Abbot is a skilled promoter, Abbot is of a family that has always guarded the site, Abbot is a faker who simulates marvels, Abbot wishes fewer interruptions in the minster's orderly life
- WOES** The monks grow indolent and careless on the wealth of pilgrim gifts, Some trouble is pinching off access to the minster for pilgrims, A rival minster seeks to take control of the site, The holy relic or some precious gift has been stolen
- GRACES** Many pilgrims bring rich gifts with them, Lords feel obligated to the minster for past miracles they received, The minster is very large and well-built, Local lords guard the minster against interference or trouble
- GOALS** Acquire a new relic for the site, Alleviate some threat to the relic or the holy ground, Persuade a rich lord to come on a pilgrimage, Guard the pilgrims from some new threat

## ROTTEN MINSTER

This minster is "rotten", having been founded as little more than a tax dodge by some noble who promptly named himself or a lackey as abbot and now enjoys all the land's fruits for himself. Some monks there may be genuine, but many are no more than house-servants in tonsures.

- ABBOT** Abbot is a selfish lord, Abbot is a mere puppet, Abbot is well-meaning but totally unclerical, Abbot has newly inherited the minster and is trying to reform it
- WOES** The bishop is disgusted with the lack of clerical discipline, The king is angry about the transparent tax evasion, The "monks" don't know the first thing about their role, The ceorls are unimpressed by their supposed duties to the minster
- GRACES** The minster is unencumbered by clerical limits in its activities, The abbot has many secular allies and kinsmen, The minster is very rich, The minster is actually the lord's personal household
- GOALS** Persuade the bishop that their clerical discipline is acceptable, Get the king's permission to add more land to the minster, Find a replacement abbot who can whip the place into shape, Build a splendid monument to the owner's enjoyment



## TERRIBLE REPUTATION

The minster is shamed and disgraced in the eyes of others, either for a recent scandal or a widespread present suspicion. Few give gifts to it, the ceorls accept its ministrations reluctantly, and the bishop is always eager to have eyes on its discipline, though he may yet be torn between reforming it and disbanding it.

**ABBOT** Abbot is an open degenerate, Abbot struggles fiercely to redeem the minster, Abbot merely pretends to reform, Abbot is newly-appointed and hard-pressed

**DOES** The sin or evil habit is threatening to rise again, The bishop wants to disband the minster but cannot yet do it, Monks refuse to join such a place, Dark practices persist at the minster

**GRACES** The minster profited greatly from its past evil, A powerful lord is allied with it as he thinks it a pliant tool, A rich reformer seeks to help the minster correct itself, Evil powers help the minster

**GOALS** Spread their dark ways to other minsters, Convince or stifle the bishop, Build some great edifice to redeem the minster, Make recompense to the lord or land it grievously harmed

To create a proper minster, a GM need but follow the instructions given here. Take in hand a die of every kind, rolling them as the tables below indicate, and you will have a sketch of a minster suitable for use in your campaign.

As with every tool in this book, it is a GM's right to choose rather than let the dice decide. Even so, do not neglect the value of surprise that lies in an unlikely-sounding roll. Perhaps there is some subtle reason for it to be as it is, some complication that will add interest to the place. When you get a seemingly nonsensical roll, take a moment to consider how it might be made reasonable before you cast it off.

First, begin by rolling to discover the age of the minster, and how long ago it was founded. Especially youthful minsters might yet have the founder still among the living.



**d4**

**Age of the Minster**

- 1 It was founded in the past few years; *-1 on the population and size rolls*
- 2 It was founded a generation ago, and its founder passed only recently
- 3 It was founded a century ago and is well-famed in the area
- 4 It was founded in the sixth century, among the first and oldest of minsters; *+1 on the population and size rolls*

Next, determine the number of monks who dwell within the minster. Roll 1d6 for this, modified by the age or youth of the minster as needed, and consult the table below. A minster with fewer than a hundred monks is considered to be a small minster. Most of the monks will be laborers in the fields and granges of the minster, with perhaps a quarter as choir monks.

**d6**

**Population of the Minster**

- 1- Only the abbot and a dozen hardy monks dwell there. *-2 on the size roll*
- 2 The abbot has a few dozen monks in service. *-1 on the size roll*
- 3 Sixty or seventy monks labor here, modest in number but strong in faith
- 4 More than a hundred monks pray within its walls, a respectable showing
- 5 Two hundred monks labor here, an impressive minster. *+1 on the size roll*
- 6+ Three or four hundred man this great fortress of God. *+2 on the size roll*

At this point, it is time to roll two minster tags as were recounted in the previous page. These tags will serve as touchstones for your imagination, provoking you to think of ways in which it might be interesting to the heroes.

Roll or choose twice from the list below. Take an element from each tag and each category and blend them together to make yourself an abbot for the minster, a trouble that besets it, a grace or benefit that it uses to pursue its ends, and a goal that its monastics pursue.

Thus, if one roll is *Deprived of Land* and the other is *Artful Production*, you might take the “Political enemy of the culprit” and mix him with the “Foreigner who brought the artists” to create a Frankish abbot who brought many craftsmen with him yet displaced the favored abbot-candidate of the local lord. The angered lord then unlawfully took land from the minster and now resents the encroaching foreigner and his Frankish ways.



### 220 MINSTER TAG

- 1 Aberrant Discipline
- 2 Artful Production
- 3 Autonomous Impunity
- 4 Bulwark Against Evil
- 5 Curative Powers
- 6 Damaged Structures
- 7 Decaying Glory
- 8 Deprived of Land
- 9 Double Monastery
- 10 Favored by Lords
- 11 Heretical Beliefs
- 12 Impoverished Minster
- 13 Incompetent Abbot
- 14 Learned Monks
- 15 Litigious Temper
- 16 Martial Monastics
- 17 Oppressive Masters
- 18 Pilgrimage Center
- 19 Rotten Minster
- 20 Terrible Reputation




Some tags already imply troubles and woes for the minster, yet there is no reason not to pile on more, for afflictions make good work for heroes. Thus, that same minster might blend “The minster’s obligations go unfulfilled now” with “Lords are coercing gifts of rare goods” to see that the perfidious lord is not content with taking land, but now demands rich gifts of fine craftsmanship from the monks because they can no longer satisfy their *feorm*-dues and other services for lack of the land he took. Alas, the Church can defend only so much, and a foreign abbot must lack kinsmen to help defend his cause. Surely he will want the help of heroes.

Repeat this process for Graces and for Goals to learn more about the minster and its circumstances. Keep always in mind the need for adventure; there ought to be something about the minster that the heroes will find useful, profitable, or interesting if your work is to be worth your labor.




Now reveal the physical size of the minster, and how richly-appointed it is in buildings and churches. A populous but poorly-equipped minster might have its monks packed tightly together in rough wooden halls, while a grand minster with but a handful of monks may have them laboring fiercely merely to hold off the woes of weather and decay.


The bigger the minster, the more special services it can provide. Each roll indicates how many such special graces might be found there.




∅8	MINSTER SIZE AND BUILDINGS
1-	Nothing built in stone, only ruins or new foundations are to be had here. <i>No special services are available at the minster.</i>
2	A ditch, a stone church, and a few wooden buildings. <i>No services.</i>
3	An earthen berm for a wall, two churches, and a dormitory. <i>One service.</i>
4	A berm, the churches and dormitory in stone, and a few wood buildings. <i>One service available.</i>
5	A low stone wall, a third or fourth small church as well as other buildings. <i>Two services available.</i>
6	It has a sturdy stone wall, several churches, a half-dozen other stone buildings, and one or two monuments or mausolea. <i>Two services.</i>
7	It has a sturdy stone wall, more than a dozen stone structures within, and even some structures outside the wall are stone. <i>Three services.</i>
8+	It is almost like a Roman city in miniature, with a score of stone buildings, many fine monuments, and works outside the wall. <i>Four services.</i>



Yet while a minster may be populous and large, is it prosperous? Even a great minster may be brought low by God's displeasure or men's folly.



∅10	THE PROSPERITY OF THE MINSTER
1-2	The minster can hardly keep its own monks fed, and all is tattered. <i>One fewer service.</i>
3-4	The minster is poor, its tables lightly-laden and its monks clad poorly against the cold.
5-6	The minster has sufficient wealth, without ostentation but without lack.
7-8	The minster is prosperous even by Church standards, with fine clothing and rich adornment on the buildings.
9-10	The minister is rich and all can see it. Everything is grandly done. <i>One more service.</i>





Now determine which particular special services may be had at the minster, and what skills the monks claim that ordinary men do not know. If the heroes need special work done, they would do well to befriend the abbot. If the same service is rolled twice, reroll, or decide that it is especially fine.


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### SPECIAL MINSTER SERVICES


- 1 Goldsmithing and the working of precious metals into ornaments
- 2 Jewel-polishing and the setting of precious stones into adornments
- 3 Glassblowing, skilled in making windows, mirrors, and fine vessels
- 4 Winemaking, able to produce the rare and precious vintage
- 5 Weaving, a particular skill of nuns, along with fine embroidery
- 6 Bookmaking, scribing and the magnificent illumination of holy texts
- 7 Architecture, gifted in masonry and building splendid structures
- 8 Blacksmithing, able to forge war-harness discreetly for good friends
- 9 Horse-rearing, with herds of fine horses to sell and trade
- 10 Scholarship, teaching, and the answering of difficult questions
- 11 Sculpture and painting, making statues, carvings, and adornments
- 12 Trading, being able to make contact with Frankish merchants

Next, roll upon the table below to discover the most recent event of matter at the minster. You may change this as time goes by and the heroes come and go, but it provides a matter that might engage them on their first visit. Do not hesitate to weave it into the minster tags you have already rolled; perhaps it is a consequence of some trait you have decided.

Lastly, choose for yourself a good name for this minster. The simplest name is that of the founder, such as Ealdwulfminster or Hrothgarminster. So also it may be named by the nearest place, such as Selseyminster or Yorkminster. Given the lazy tongues of men, these may be cut down in time, to make Ealdminster, Hrothminster, Selminster, or the like. And lastly, the minster may be near no habited place, and so suffer no confusion if it should have its own name, like my own Lindisfarne. That done, your minster is complete.



<b>ð20</b>	<b>Recent Events</b>
<b>1</b>	A building is in dire need of difficult, costly repairs
<b>2</b>	A disturbing omen recently happened
<b>3</b>	A great criminal has just sought sanctuary there
<b>4</b>	A high-born monk or nun just recently joined
<b>5</b>	A minster project is missing a crucial resource
<b>6</b>	A monk has been accused of a grave crime
<b>7</b>	A monk is causing trouble with the brethren
<b>8</b>	A new relic has just been installed in the minster
<b>9</b>	A sickness is spreading there or nearby
<b>10</b>	An impressive miracle was wrought recently
<b>11</b>	Food-rent is late and stores are low
<b>12</b>	It has an important noble or king as a guest
<b>13</b>	It recently received a very fine gift
<b>14</b>	It's in a law dispute with a neighboring lord
<b>15</b>	It's just annoyed the bishop with some action
<b>16</b>	Its location has just become militarily important
<b>17</b>	Outlaws or its enemies recently dared to raid it
<b>18</b>	The abbot is sick and unable to rule properly
<b>19</b>	The abbot is trying to reform or change the discipline
<b>20</b>	The ceorls on its land have been upset by a thing it did

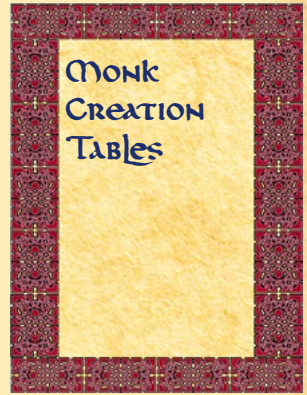




If the heroes are to deal with a minster, then they must deal also with its monks. These tables I give to you, that you might more easily fashion the monastics who are to give heroes their tasks and to listen to their earnest beseechings.

Monastics come to the minster by two roads. Some are pledged young by their parents. It may be that the child plainly has the marks of godly wit and devotion, or the parents may have wealth to share with the minster in exchange for giving their child a place in it. If the child is a boy, he may be accepted even without gifts or graces, for he has a strong back that will serve God better than his head.

Aside from those given young, many monks and nuns come to the minster after a long life of secular labor. Even rulers are often known to put aside the king-helm to seek the peace of God, and no less are wearied warriors and bereaved widows inclined to it. So first discern whether the monk is to be young or old.



#### 04

#### Age of the Monastic

- 1 Young, barely out of his or her novitiate
- 2 A monk of mature adult years and experience
- 3 Aged and well-versed in minster life
- 4 Roll again; they're of that age, but have just joined the monastery


If the monk was given to the minster as a boy, roll below to see who his father might have been. If he came to it in maturity, use the table to see what his own past life has been.

#### 06


#### The Background of a Monk

- 1 A ceorl's son, originally meant to tend the farms and fields
- 2 A gesith's son who turned away from battle and blood
- 3 A noble's son, unneeded by the family for other roles
- 4 A priest's son, technically illegitimate, but too capable to turn away
- 5 A slave's son, first accepted simply as a humble low monk laborer
- 6 An orphan, taken in by the minster

A nun does not come to the minster as a monk does. Even a poor monk can at least feed himself with the hard labor of field and herds, but few are the women strong enough to drag a harrow or hew out a hall. A nun may labor usefully at the loom or the hall-garden, but she must have monks to do the harder tasks. So it is that nuns are accepted only with gifts to support them, and so most are of wealthy kindred or noble blood. The table below may suggest a past for these holy women, one they may not have wholly renounced.




D6	The Background of a Nun
1	A gesith's daughter, sent to safety in the minster
2	A high noble's daughter, being groomed as a future abbess
3	A noble's daughter, unnecessary to her kin
4	A rich ceorl's daughter, able to afford her minster-dowry
5	A rich widow, seeking peace in the minster
6	A foundling orphan, taken in by the minster




Whether monk or nun, all must work within the minster, for God hates sloth. A learned choir monk may be charged with assisting the Mass, singing psalms, copying books, illuminating manuscripts, maintaining the minster's accounts, or other work suitable for the learned. A lay monk may toil in the fields each day, or hammer iron, or clean and mend the minster's belongings, or do other such tasks of honest simplicity. The table below may be used for this.

It is right and necessary that labor be apportioned so, between the high and the low, so that the world may have peace and order. Yet a high place in this world means little in the next, and God loves kings no better than thralls.



D8	The Chief Labor of the Monastic
1	Artisan work in the workshops, or weaving for nuns
2	Labor in the fields, or tending poultry and gardening for nuns
3	Oversight of the brethren. Monks only ever rule monks, nuns rule both.
4	Prayer in the chapels, being one of the choir monks dedicated to it
5	Repairing minster property and maintaining it in good condition
6	Servant to a more important monk or nun, doing menial labor for them
7	Tending the minster books and treasures, perhaps a scribe or illuminator
8	Toiling in kitchen and sickroom and tending to bodily needs




Now that you know how old the monastic is, and how they came to the minster, and what their chief labor is there, discern what special grace they have that helps them do their work or carry out their desires. It may be the heroes will have need of this special grace in some affair of their own.



### DI0 The Special Grace or Strength of the Monastic


- 1 A favorite of the abbot or abbess, who thinks they can do no wrong
- 2 Cunning as a serpent and twice as persuasive, easily snaring their brethren
- 3 Fiercely and exceptionally holy, such that the others fear their displeasure
- 4 Has blackmail on other monks, and those monks may already know it
- 5 Has significant personal property that they may use as they see fit
- 6 Their family is nearby and helpful to whatever purposes they have
- 7 They know discreet ways to steal minster wealth undetected
- 8 They know everything that's going on, open and hidden both
- 9 The other monastics all like him or her very much, and will help as able
- 10 They are mighty of body and fearsomely intimidating to their brethren



As a monastic has a strength, so too do they have a desire. They may seek to get the heroes to help them carry it out, or be angry with them for thwarting it in some way. If the heroes want the monastic's help in a matter, they may need to first give aid of their own.



### DI2 The Monastic's Dearest Desire

- 1 Avenge an insult delivered by a brother or sister against them
  - 2 Become a holy hermit in the wilds, untroubled by human cares
  - 3 They desires to perform great ascetic marvels of suffering and faith
  - 4 They dream of becoming abbot of a minster, perhaps this very one
  - 5 They needs wealth to repay a debt, pledge, or a *wergild* they owe
  - 6 They seeks to serve a famously holy saint, winning his favor
  - 7 They want to be made a priest, if a monk, or made an abbess, if a nun
  - 8 They wish to be an excellent monk or nun and admired by their brethren
  - 9 They wish to make amends for a recent grave sin or mistake
  - 10 They wish to show that a brother they despise is unfit to be a monk
  - 11 They want to advance their family's interests and strike against rivals
  - 12 They yearn for the pleasures of the flesh, whether lustful or gluttonous
- 



Lastly, touch up this monastic with a trait from the table below, or one you conceive of your own. This should be something obvious on short acquaintance, vivid and memorable, so that the heroes may more easily remember your monastic and distinguish him or her from their brethren. Give to the monastic a name, and your work is done.

As a general rule, it is not needful to assign statistics to monks and nuns, or worry about their prowess in combat. Only a rare few monks will be Saints with holy miracles to give, usually no more than a few at any one minster. The rest will be simple men and women of God, no mightier in war than any ceorl and in any case pledged to shun the shedding of human blood.

Even so, many are the minsters with numerous weary warriors who have taken tonsures. It may be the gatekeeper is a simple ceorl's son, or it may be he has killed thirty men before seeking God. Wise strangers test him not.



∂20

### PARTICULAR TRAITS OF THE MONASTIC

- 1 Acts with total contempt for his comfort and scorn for personal pain
- 2 Aggressively simple and dull-colored clothing, unlike worldly monks
- 3 Always having vague, "prophetic" dreams he shares
- 4 Always muttering prayers under his breath
- 5 Bottomlessly cynical air about him, whether bitter, resigned, or amiable
- 6 Cheerfully confident of God's kindness regardless of events
- 7 Completely fearless due to conviction of heavenly security
- 8 Constantly hinting about the virtues of gifts to the minster
- 9 Constantly touching the crucifix he wears
- 10 Crippled in a limb from sickness or old wounds
- 11 Full of questions about outside affairs
- 12 Has to keep reminding himself to act like a monk
- 13 Has visibly keen eye about pretty or handsome sorts
- 14 Nun's head is shaven or the monk's tonsure is growing in
- 15 Old battle-scars are visible
- 16 Plainly dislikes talking to secular people
- 17 Praises God almost convulsively over everything
- 18 Seems to always rather be back at his work
- 19 Stinks with ascetic lack of bathing
- 20 Very thin from stern fasting practices





**THE FELL AND TERRIBLE** foes within await every hero worthy of the name, and in this portion of the book you will learn their names. Herein are the monstrous beasts that may yet reave the life from the warband and the shining treasures that await those who succeed in their slaying.

Let the GM take the foes in this chapter as types and examples, sources of inspiration and guides on how foes might be fashioned. Every GM worth his dice has in his heart the urge to make new horrors now and then, and you should always feel yourself free to forge beasts and enemies your players can find in no book. It is not wise for heroes to presume to understand the world of monsters too well, for Hell has more inventions than man can ever ken.

Though many of the beasts written in this chapter are implacable foes of men, not all are beyond reason and persuasion, and even those who despise Christians might be moved to parley or pause in their murder. The rules for the **REACTION ROLL** on page 66 will help a GM see whether the chance-met creatures or dubious strangers on the road are friend or foe.

Even after battle is joined, few are the foes who will stand stalwart after half their number lie weltering in their gore. The **MORALE CHECK** is the means by which the GM sees if the enemy has the bravery to bear the blows that the heroes level upon them, or whether they instead turn to flee or beg pardon for their lives. Read well its rules in the Systems chapter on page 55.

Yet once the battle is won, what prizes should go to the victor? Herein the **TREASURE TABLES** provide guidance to the GM, showing what different manners of enemies ought to have in their hoards. So also one may come to know what treasures a lord might keep in his hall, and what prizes a patron may offer to those heroes who do good work on their behalf.

Remember also that for all the terrible Hell-spawned beasts and wretched creatures of sorcery within these pages, the foes most likely to pain the heroes are men like themselves. For every valiant name dragged down by a *fifel* or a *haeg*, a hundred heroes perish on the spears of mortal men. Though we sons of Adam may lack the uncanny might of monstrous things, *wyrd* never lacks for human hands to help it when men must die.

So behold here, maker of games, such creatures as await your brave players. Let them battle wisely, shunning careless strife and shying from spears when there is no good to be gained from it. Yet when their hour comes, when there is nothing at need but the strength of brave hands and bold hearts, let them war as true heroes ought.





**The common rules for** Reaction Rolls and Morale checks are given in the chapter of systems, on page 66 and page 55. A GM must heed these rules carefully and take pains to use them, even if he imagines it unnecessary. I advise this to you, gamesman, because foreigners and reckless youth oft have little understanding of how battles are fought among the English.

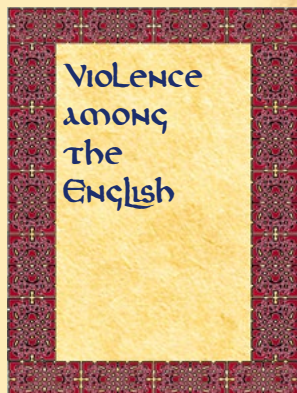
Too often have I sat at a hearth-table, listening to some band of young ceorls portray clash after clash with human foes, their heroes' spears ever wet with the blood of foemen while their bellies are ever hewn by the blades of many battles. It is not so much an English hero's life that they play out, but that of an English madman. It is no marvel that they should die like flies in winter when they are constantly crossing spears with every dour-eyed stranger that meets them upon the path.

Yet this is not wholly the fault of the gamesmen, for the GMs are complicit in this. They fashion crowds of outlaws and legions of wicked lords and presume battle is a common outcome whenever two bands of armed men should meet. They do not understand how the tools of violence are used among us, having been charmed too much by old stories and songs, and by their misunderstanding they make less terrible and uncanny the savage ways of true monsters.

***Violence is not done recklessly.*** Every time a man lifts his spear against a foe he must know that he may die. The only reason to fight is if the thing he fights for is worth the peril to his life, and a fool who cannot judge such things well will die with his beard half-grown. Men thirsty for battle are wild and dangerous creatures, *werwulfs* or worse, and other men will shun them as companions who are like to bring them death.

So it is that every armed band of men judges two things when they decide whether or not they are to attack: they measure the superiority of their strength over their foe, and the worth of a successful battle. If a GM is to properly show the way of the English in such things he must think carefully in these terms.

Only a band of lunatics will attack a foe that seems stronger than they. Numbers are most important, for ten men will consider a fight with five, but an even match will be shunned as too dangerous. Circumstances matter as well, and an open clash is always more feared than a safer ambush.



So too, men will not fight unless the cause is worth the peril. The sweeter the gain, the greater the risk they will run, but they will not run it mindlessly. They will watch, judge, and place themselves in the best position to get what they desire before they open their hostilities.

So too, when the battle turns against them and loved companions lie bleeding upon the ground, they will often cry for peace and ask leave to end the battle rather than to fight to the bitter end. In open war there is no mercy of this kind, and the defeated gesith must flee or be executed after, but in raids and quarrels it is always better to end a fight quickly, before greater losses are had. The beaten foe will offer ransom in gifts to be left in peace, and few are the warriors so greedy as to risk their own deaths to get a little more still.

Monsters do not fight like men, and that is one of the things that makes them so horrible. Sometimes they speak the tongues of men, and some among them even think in ways akin to human thoughts, but they are often so fired by the hates of Hell that they will do violence and risk perils that no sane Englishman would dare, if only to bring us misery and death.

Worst of them all are the shades of the dead or the mindless automatons fashioned by the ancients. No parley and no peace is possible with such things, and woe betide the English hero who finds himself outmatched by them.



**Every creature is described** with a set of statistics that the GM may use to represent their might in battle. These are the meanings of these abbreviations.

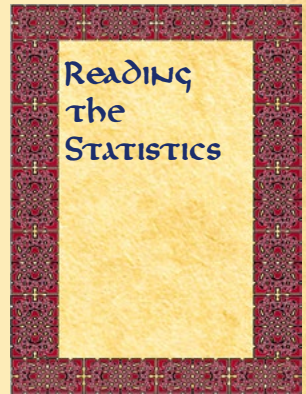
**HD** stands for “hit dice”, the number of d8 dice that the creature rolls to determine its hit points. Most common men have one hit die, rolling a single d8 to measure out their strength from 1 to 8 hit points. Veterans, heroes, and monstrous beasts may have far more. For some creatures, a range of hit dice are given, showing that some of them may be weaker or stronger than others.

**AC** is Armor Class, the number which a foe must equal or exceed to hit them with an attack rolls. The AC for men includes their common equipage in shields or hauberks, while those for beasts and monsters reflects their steely hides or tough pelts. **SAVES** is the number the creature must equal or exceed on d20 when rolling a saving throw, whatever the type. Heroes have three different saves, but others have only a single number to match.

**SKILLS** marks the bonus that the creature applies to all skill checks that it would reasonably excel at. A wolf would be splendid at tracking foes and chasing prey, so it would add its skill bonus to such rolls. An aged counselor may have no art for swift chase, but would add his skill bonus to cunning speech and careful notice of treacherous intent. The GM decides what a creature or human would naturally be skilled in, given their nature and past.

**MOVE** is the number of feet the creature may move with a single Move action. Some creatures might fly or swim swiftly as well. **MORALE** is the foe’s courage, whether it be the 2 of a total coward, the 9 of a brave warrior, or the 12 of a mindless automaton that fears no death.

Finally, **ATTACKS** is the bonus the creature gets on its attack roll and the damage it does on a successful hit. For many men and mannish creatures, the damage will be the same as usual for the weapon they wield. A creature carrying a seax will do 1d6 damage on a hit, for example. Strong creatures may get a bonus to this, such as a fell orc warrior who rolls his weapon die plus 2 for damage. Some exceptionally fearsome creatures might even get multiple attacks with a single Main Action, allowing them to attack the same or adjacent creatures more than once in a round. A terrifying orc lord gets two attacks a round, for example, so he may smite the same hero twice or split his







death-dealing among two foes in his reach. Some frenzied beasts might even get three blows in a single round.

Aside from these statistics, uncanny creatures are described as having certain kinds of powers. Rather than give every *dru* the same gifts of Hell, or every *nicor* the same manner of watery wiles, the GM should assign such foes magical powers appropriate to their type. Lists are given at the end of this section of twelve example powers for each type of evil grace. The first eight on the list are relatively weak powers such as lesser creatures might have, while the last four are great grim gifts that powerful beings of darkness may wield. Let the GM decide how many such gifts a creature should have, whether none or one for a weak being, two or three for a stronger one, or three and a potent gift more for some fell foe.

These gifts are not the total sum of all things the creature's evil magic may be able to do, they are only those things most immediately likely to be important to the PCs. A *dru* will weave Hell-magic, a *haeg* will inspire mad war, and other creatures will do such things as their nature and goals allow them to do. These other gifts are usually too slow or subtle to be relevant in an immediate struggle, but they may set up uncanny situations for the PCs to face and untangle.

Every true  $\mathfrak{Q}$  will yearn to fashion their own horrors sooner or later. Let these guides aid you in fabricating enemies worthy of your needs.

*Primus*, set the creature's hit dice. A normal ceorl or young warrior will have one hit die. A veteran gesith will have two hit dice. Beyond that is the realm of heroes, powerful beasts, and uncanny creatures. Mighty foes will have eight hit dice, and fearsome kings and lords will have twelve or more. A creature's hit dice affects its other statistics as well, so the higher the hit dice, the more fell its might.

*Secundus*, set its saves, armor class, and attacks. Its saving throw target is fifteen minus half its hit dice, rounded down. Thus, a foe with 3 HD would have saving throws of 14+. Its attack bonus is usually equal to its hit dice, perhaps with one or two more points added if it is skillful in war. Its damage is either equal to the weapon it wields, if it is man-

nish, or to the peril of its claws, fangs, or foul fists. A damage score of 1d4 is suitable for small talons and teeth, 1d6 for larger bodily weapons, 1d10 for fearsomely powerful claws or jaws, and 2d6, 2d8, or even 2d10 for more otherworldly blows. If the creature is very skilled, such as with 5 hit dice or more and a gift of battle, it might gain a second attack as well. For Armor Class, a thick hide is worth AC 13, uncanny resilience or speed might be AC 15, and supernatural hardihood might earn AC 18 or even more. Do not set the AC over-high unless the foe's defenses are a specific strength for it; common men will often have nothing better than their shields, and no other armor at all.

*Tertius*, set its skills and Morale. Most commonly-skillful creatures will have a skill bonus of +1. If it is heroic or remarkable in its talents, grant it a +2, and truly masterful adepts or gifted prodigies might have a +3 skill bonus. For Morale, assign creatures no braver than a common English ceorl a Morale of 8. A Wealth man might have a Morale of 7, while veteran warriors and battle-hardened companions would have a Morale of 9. Heroes and fearless foes might have 10 or 11, but scores of 12 should be for madmen and the dead.

*Quartus*, choose one or more spheres of magical gifts it ought to possess out of the categories given afterwards, or make suitable ones up on your own. Creatures with fewer than 6 hit dice seldom have the strongest powers, but those with more than 8 rarely are without at least one. Lastly, give your new-made creature a fit goal, so you may know how to play it in parleys and talks.



**how is a game** Master to discern a matching challenge to the warband? Listen here to learn how you are to manage such things.

Remember first that this game is not a school-boy's lesson, where no challenge is given that the pupil is not expected to best. As the GM, your only obligation is to put foes and perils where they ought logically to be, in such numbers and strength as they reasonably ought to have. All warbands must learn very early that some foes cannot possibly be overcome by direct force and that if they encounter a seemingly unbeatable enemy then it means that they will be beaten if they fight it directly.

Yet even the most rigid and ruthless of GMs will want to be able to tell when a given challenge is likely to murder the heroes and when a particular group of foes might reasonably be overcome by their spears. It is difficult to guess how the turn of battle might go, but there is a crude guide you may use to inform yourself.

Total up the hit dice of all the foes, and the number of dice of damage they would do if half of them hit successfully, rounded up. Thus, a band of ten ordinary warriors might have 10 total hit dice and do 5d8 damage if half their spears struck home in the round. Against this, compare the total levels of the heroes and the number of dice of damage they would do if half of them struck successfully in a round, rounded up. Thus, a warband of five first-level heroes would have 5 total levels and do 3d8 damage if their own spears flew true.

Now subtract the number of dice of PC damage from the hit dice of the foes, taking away the number of enemies that would be slain by the injury. The PCs would take away three hit dice of enemy warriors, slaying three of them. Their foes would now do only 4d8 damage in a round with their lessened numbers. This number of dice is then subtracted from the PC hit dice, and the process is repeated in turn, each side whittling the other round by round.

The result shall give you a general hint as to how the battle might play out if the PCs win initiative and no special abilities or Foci are involved. By this, you can plainly see that a band of five novice heroes will almost certainly be slain by ten warriors if they lose initiative or if they cannot break their foe's Morale with a swift killing. Do not trust this method to give you a *waelcyrige's* foresight, but it can tell when you a foe is hopelessly overmuch or woefully outmatched by the PCs.





**WHAT TREASURES SHOULD BE** clutched in the hands of slain foes, and what wealth ought to be found in the hands of the defeated?

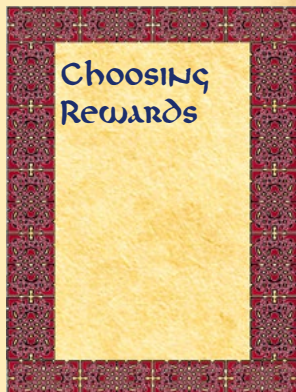
Distinguish first between those treasures carried on an enemy's person and those kept back in its lair. Only the most nomadic of foes will carry all their wealth on their backs. Most will keep riches such as cattle or grain safely at home, and carry only such things as they need for their work. So it is that foes fought randomly in the field will seldom have much worth taking, save for the weapons, armor, and any Splendid accoutrements they chose to wear. The chart on page 231 shows examples of what various kinds of trifles human foes might carry with them.

Treasures kept in the creature's lair will be much greater, if that lair can be found. The chart on page 227 shows example troves for various manners of enemies, along with suitable plunder for lost ancient treasures and hidden stores of wealth.

Aside from cattle, grain, cloth, and jeweled adornment, the fortunate hero might even discover a magical item such as were crafted by the Artifexes of Rome or some gifted Galdorman. A selection of such items are described at the end of this section. Remember that creatures will use wondrous items in their own defense, if they realize what they are. Magical blades will be bared by war-chiefs and enchanted mail-shirts will be worn by those who own them.

I have heard that some games have a Frankish merchant's care for money, measuring out precisely how much gold a hero ought to have at such-and-such a level, or counting the number of wondrous items that ought to dangle at his belt once a certain number of levels are obtained. That is not so in this game. Even a stripling might stumble across a mighty relic, and even a veteran hero might have an empty purse and lonely cowshed if he has not been lucky and prudent in his search for gold. Do not concern yourself over whether a treasure is appropriate for the party. Think only of whether or not it is appropriate to the situation and location in which it is found.

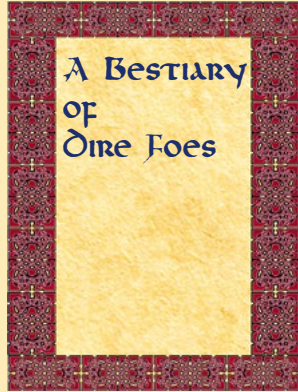
Remember that even arms aching under the weight of golden treasures can do deeds no greater than those of bare limbs. Mere wealth does not make a hero stronger, and mere gold cannot get you more war-might. If the heroes stumble across great treasure, they will need to gift it to others if it is to do them any practical good, and this gifting is the seed of good adventures.



In the pages that follow the reader will be given examples of the vile beasts and grim foes that they may encounter in the wilds of Britain. Some are uncanny monsters, touched by Hell or Faerie and fearsome to any mortal man. Others are mere outlaws, or common warriors, or beasts such as any child may think to find in the forest. All can kill a man if he be careless or unlucky.

When placing these foes in your adventure, remember that only the most blindly savage will be immune to reason or parley. A reaction roll is fit for almost all these creatures, and even a most damnable creature might think to try to use the heroes for advantage before using them for food. These beasts each have their own goals and purposes, and engaging in useless battle and risking their miserable lives pointlessly is little desired.

So also, these beasts will value their own lives. They will not fight unless they think they have the better of it, and when death seems likely even a successful Morale check will not lead them to die uselessly. Those with human minds will reason as humans do, and will not spend their lives in vain.



## ARXBORN

	PLEBEIAN	PATRICIAN	CONSUL
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	1	4	8
<b>Armor Class:</b>	10	14	18
<b>Saves:</b>	15+	13+	11+
<b>Skills:</b>	+1	+1	+2
<b>Move:</b>	30'	30'	30'
<b>Morale:</b>	8	9	10
<b>Attacks:</b>	+1 / by weapon	+5 / by weapon+1	+9 x2/by weapon+2

*Arxborn who look like humans are treated as humans for the purpose of a Saint's forbiddance against killing. GMs should warn Saints if they are about to strike a human foe.*

Wretched half-men and hateful monsters alike, the Arxborn are heir to those luckless refugees who fled into the Arxes built by the Artificers of Rome. Over long ages the strange laws of those half-worlds warped them and their progeny, leaving them mad, misshapen, or worse. Some Arxborn cannot even be named men any more, being bestial abominations with no human thought remaining to them. Even those who retain human shapes are oftimes ill-formed and commonly mad with strange delusions.

Those that retain a little reason ape the Rome of their ancestors, granting themselves Roman titles as magistrates, generals, and even emperors betimes. They rule over wretched citizens who make mimicry of a fallen age, issuing forth from the Arx to kill and rob all they encounter, whether English or Wealth or those of another Arx, for they think the whole world is English. Sometimes they use their savage kindred as war-beasts or mounts. Some groups fear to leave their Arx even after the seals fail, dreading the world outside

A few might not even be wholly consumed by their bitterness toward the English and be capable of reasoned parley. It is not impossible for intruders to strike deals with Arxborn, even if their lords think only to betray them later, and there are stories of unseemly lords who make bleak bargains to send the Arxborn against their English foes rather than risk their wrath against their own people.

Arxborn desire to kill the English, to steal new food, new slaves, and other things that they cannot get within their Arx, and to reclaim their ancestral cities and the lands thereabout. Some among the man-like Arxborn may retain Artificer secrets, and powers of Forging. The bestial among them may have gifts of Might or Ruin. They often possess Roman treasures of fine craftwork, cherishing them as tokens of authority.



## BEAST

	BEAR	WOLF	BOAR
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	4	1	2
<b>Armor Class:</b>	14	13	12
<b>Saves:</b>	13+	15+	14+
<b>Skills:</b>	+1	+1	+1
<b>Move:</b>	40'	40'	40'
<b>Morale:</b>	7	8	10
<b>Attacks:</b>	+5 x2 / 1d8 x2	+3 / 1d6	+4 / 1d8

England yet has great packs of gray wolves, and the occasional hunger-mad bear, or a long-tusked boar who fears not our spears. These creatures shun men in groups and will rarely trouble them, yet a lone traveler must fear wolfpacks, and any beast may become murderous if it is sick, hungry, or bewitched. Fell and uncanny forest-spirits like to use them as warriors.

Beasts desire food and the protection of their territory. Those that are not wholly mundane may have powers of Might or Wilderness. Rarely do they have any treasures, though their pelts may be worth something, and bears and boars are both good to eat.

## BURGRUNE

<b>HD:</b> 10	<b>AC:</b> 16	<b>Saves:</b> 10+
<b>Skills:</b> +2	<b>Move:</b> 30'	<b>Morale:</b> 10
<b>Attacks:</b> +10 / 1d10, wielding curses that kill		

The burgrunes are spirits in the shape of comely women, dwelling atop hills or other high places and possessed of terrible sorcerous powers. They yearn for mastery and rule over their wild domain, and make courts of beasts and poor wretches who have trespassed. Some fools make bargains with a burgrune, offering her tribute and queen-honor in exchange for her aid, yet such gifts only sharpen her hungers. In time, she will demand more than her petitioner can offer and punish his failure with some terrible fate.

Burgrunes desire the reverence of subjects, the unfettered mastery of the lands around their rune-carved halls, and the suffering of their subjects as proof of devotion. Often they possess gifts of Beguiling, Cursing, Wisdom, and Wilderness. They scorn battle unless driven to it, leaving their subjects to defend them.

## DEMON

	lesser	greater	lordly
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	4	12	20
<b>Armor Class:</b>	14	18	20
<b>Saves:</b>	13+	9+	5+
<b>Skills:</b>	+1	+2	+3
<b>Move:</b>	40'	40' / 40' fly	40' / 60' fly
<b>Morale:</b>	8	8	9
<b>Attacks:</b>	+5 x2/1d8 x2	+12 x3 / 1d10 x3	3 auto-hits for 1d12 each

It is the custom of common ceorls to call every uncanny thing a demon, but that is not so. Only those who were once angels of God can presently be demons, having been cast down at the dawn of the world for their treachery toward their lord and their vile oathbreaking. All demons dwell by nature in Hell but some rise up to middle-earth through the beckoning of sorcerers, the evil deeds of men, or the unknowable plan of God.

Yet though they rise from Hell, Hell remains in their hearts, and they suffer forever the torments of the damned. Their hates consume them, and their envies and lusts and longings, and the good things of this world are unendurable rebukes to them. The bestial and stupid among them destroy these things directly, while the cunning and mighty despoil them in subtler ways. Yet simple or subtle, they hate, and hate moves their every act.

Demons are found in myriad shapes, yet may be divided into three measures of power: lesser, greater, or lordly. All demons are hideous and frightening in their true form, but those with powers of Deceit or Beguiling may hide it.

Demons desire the damnation of mortals and the defilement of all good and godly things in the world. To make a mortal commit some grave sin is better than to kill him outright, but the more savage demons will satisfy rage before subtlety. Demons of bestial aspect often have gifts of Might or Ruin. Those that blandish and corrupt favor gifts of Beguiling, Forging, and Deceit. Those that seek to encourage pagans and lead heretics have powers of Beguiling, Might, and Wisdom. And in all cases, a demon may have powers unexpected in nature, provided they suit its role in the world. Demons seldom carry treasures of their own, but will gather the belongings of their victims so as to use them for fresh evils.

## DRACA

**HD:** 12

**AC:** 18

**Saves:** 9+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 30' / 50' fly

**Morale:** 9

**Attacks:** +12 x2/1d10 claws. Once per two rounds, a vile breath that does half its current hit points to all foes within 30 feet of its mouth

The draca, called dragon by some, is a terrible fiery worm and a loathsome creature of Hell. Even so, scholars dispute with each other over whether it is a demon itself or merely a thing molded and defiled by damnable arts. Some say that dragons were men once, misers who laid down upon their bed of gold and could not bear to let death take them from it. Others say that they are devils of greed who pile up treasures to inflame the lusts of men and lead them to die in seeking to claim it. All agree that dragons heap up great mounds of gold and know the place and particulars of every last ring of it.

Dracas dwell in waste places, or places that become wastes soon enough under their baleful eye. They fear to rob minsters or other places where holy saints may be there to oppose them, but they will eagerly slay wayfarers and destroy villages for the few trinkets they may take. They dig into the earth with their great claws of iron, and draw out hidden things from long-forgotten caches, and bring forth treasures forgotten by men that they might have riches to hoard. Some fools seek to make bargains with dracas, offering rich treasures in exchange for their aid or their dark cunning. If their help will bring loss and suffering to another, the draca may choose to accept such offers, or they may merely devour the reckless petitioner.

Dracas desire to obtain treasures, devour men, rob others of their most precious things, and tempt greedy fools to die in seeking their gold. Most dracas have the fiery breath of Ruin to scourge their foes, and many have poison for blood that splashes those that wound them, or great wings to take to the air, or awful powers of destruction in their fangs and claws. Yet they also see many things that others do not, and oftimes have an awful and insinuating voice. Powers of Ruin, Might, and Wisdom are common to them, and they may also show gifts of Cursing or Beguiling.



## Ðru

**HD:** 8

**AC:** 12

**Saves:** 11+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 30'

**Morale:** 9

**Attacks:** Blasting curses that invariably hit for 3d6 damage

Galdormen may wield ungodly arts, but they swear in honest belief that none of them are of Hell. They claim that their ways are mere hidden secrets placed by God in the world for the wise to enjoy, and that Satan has nothing of their work. Monks dispute this, but most count Galdormen merely foolish rather than wicked. It is not so with the hated *dru*.

A *dru* is a Hell-sorcerer, one who gladly works the devil's will in exchange for his secrets and his powers. He may use galdorcrafter in his work, but much of his might comes from the unclean pacts he makes with Hell and his service to damnable powers. Many *dru* think themselves priests of old pagan gods, or claim to follow teachers that other men call heretics, but all their powers come from Hell in the end, and all their lords are devils.

*Dru* desire to serve their masters, scourge all true Christians, extend their unclean faiths, and obtain further magical powers. *Dru* have the arts of a Galdorman of a level equal to half their hit dice, rounded up, and know whatever spells the GM pleases. Yet their chiefest powers are the magics given them by Satan, arts which are often very unlike those of a Galdorman. Abilities from any of the categories might be chosen to reflect these dark gifts, with Cursing, Beguiling, and Wilderness particularly favored for their arts.

## Ðweorǵ

**HD:** 6 to 10

**AC:** 15

**Saves:** 12+ to 10+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 30'

**Morale:** 9

**Attacks:** +10/by weapon +2. Dweorgs always use fine or magic weaponry.

A dweorg, called "dwarf" by some, is a creature like a man misshapen, like a cripple or one plagued with old sickness. They oftimes have a stunted look, and bear tumors and swellings, and yet they are stronger than men and know no weariness. They dwell in deep and hidden places, where they craft beautiful things of wood and cloth and sometimes metal. They have no wives and lust greatly for the women of men, though they appear to have no sons or daughters either. They seem to live forever, and none know from whence they come, yet it seems sure they will find Hell when they are slain.

Dweorgs like to bargain with men who seek their help and their fine treasures, often asking for hard things to give or shameful favors. If everything is given as promised, no matter how terrible the bargain, then the dweorg is pleased. Yet if the smallest part of the trade is left unfulfilled they become full of rage and will visit horrible punishments on the one they think has cheated them. They are known for their mastery of plagues and keep a hundred sicknesses on their tongues to unleash on those who anger them. So it is that men sometimes seek them out for cures as well, though these they are much more miserly in granting. They serve lords they do not talk of, and sometimes a dweorg will spread disease and suffering for no reason they will explain.

Dweorgs desire women, and to bargain away the dearest possessions of men, and to serve their dark masters with the infliction of plagues. They have powers of Forging, Health, and Wisdom as common things, yet the wonders they shape may grant them other graces.

## EARTHWIGHT

**HD:** 5 to 10

**AC:** 18

**Saves:** 13+ to 10+

**Skills:** +1

**Move:** 20'

**Morale:** 12

**Attacks:** +Hit Dice/1d12 crushing blows

No man understands the things called earthwights. They are like men and beasts, yet shaped of stone, earth, wood, or other unliving matter, wrought like Pictish carvings and yet walking like living things. They are guardians of places, whether old entish ruins or empty glades that seem to have no special virtue. A trespasser who enters into the place an earthwight guards will be slain by it, or pursued until he flees far away. They act as if with the wisdom of men, yet they do not speak, nor do they communicate in any other way. Some men have learned secret signs or utterings in entish tongues that make an earthwight peaceful toward them, and a few claim to have mastered these creatures with such hidden lore.

Earthwights desire to kill all intruders who trespass into their appointed domain. Their unliving forms are so obdurate that only weapons that might reasonably harm their substance can do them any hurt; an axe for a wooden earthwight, or a hammer for a stone one, or the like. A magical weapon of any kind can injure them, however. Aside from this power, they commonly have gifts of Might, and sometimes one will be found imbued with some terrible gift of Ruin to aid its warding.

## EIDOLON

**HD:** 2 to 6

**AC:** 16

**Saves:** 14+ to 12+

**Skills:** +1

**Move:** 30'

**Morale:** 12

**Attacks:** +Hit Dice/by weapon+2 or 1d8 unarmed

Whereas the earthwights are creatures of natural substances, eidolons are forged of metal or stone or sometimes the living flesh of condemned slaves, crafted by Roman arts and by the Roman Artifexes of old. They are most commonly fashioned in the shape of men, to be most useful, yet those in the shape of lions, wolves, bears, or other fearsome beasts are not unknown. They are found most often in Arxes, old relics of masters now long dust. They understand the Latin tongue, though their wisdom varies greatly. Most have the minds of very stupid men, able to reason only in simple ways. A few have greater cunning, however, and some handful are as wise as their makers, bearing the imprint of living minds now dead for ten generations.

Eidolons were all built for particular purposes, whether guardianship, craft-help, companionship, or counsel. It is in their nature to continue this purpose even after their master is gone, and stupid ones will persist in it even when it is plainly useless. Wiser ones will yet maintain their end unless given potent reason to do otherwise, or cleverly argued into thinking that some other course is really the best way to achieve their purpose.

Eidolons desire to fulfill the purpose for which they are made and to serve their master or those who have authority over them. The common kinds that are made often have no special powers at all, but those who do have them commonly take them from Might. Ones enchanted for different purposes may have different gifts imbued into them by their creators.

## ENT

**HD:** 12

**AC:** By armor

**Saves:** 9+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 40'

**Morale:** 10

**Attacks:** +12 x 2 attacks/By weapon+4 or 2d6 unarmed

Great were the ents of old, both in stature and in skill. An entish man is half again as tall as an Englishman, finely-formed and handsome, yet melancholy with the sorrow of a race whose hour has passed. They are clad in magnificent harness and bear wondrous fine weapons of their crafting, yet their houses are all in distant places of mountains and hills and they do not welcome strangers. Entwives are few, and children are not known among them. Their ruined



stone halls and fastnesses are found scattered throughout the land, yet these are cursed places ripe with plagues and monstrous things, lairs of eotens and worse. They are not friends to men, but their great hatred is for the dweorgs, whose plagues ruined their race and brought it to this fading hour. Ents live alone, or in small households, and it is a brave man who dares parley with them in their lonely places.

Ents desire to slay dweorgs, to recover the sentimental relics that moulder in their abandoned ruins, and to remain untroubled by the outside world. They are broad-shouldered and often have gifts of Might, and their great skill as builders and wrights is shown in Forging arts.

## EOTEN

**HD:** 12

**AC:** 12 or by the  
armor worn

**Saves:** 9+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 40'

**Morale:** 9

**Attacks:** +12 x 2 attacks/By weapon +4 or 2d8 fists and teeth

Hateful giants infested with sorcery, the eotens are a breed of ill-formed ents made mad by bitterness and resentment. Where their cousins are resigned to their race's doom, the eotens refuse to admit that their rule of this land ever fell. They dwell in the abandoned ruins of their people, miming lordship and playing at dominion, forcing strangers to serve their strange whims and wielding ancient entish arts against their foes. All eotens are sick with a dwarf-plague that disturbs their solid form, causing them to shift from one shape to another. Sometimes these are small changes of seeming, but an eoten can adopt any shape larger than a dog and smaller than a wagon when it chooses to do so, provided it holds the same shape no more than a day at a time.

Eotens are always quarreling with each other, and seldom are more than a few found in any one place. They may force men into obedience for a time, but they are such cruel and hateful masters that only monstrous beasts and Arxborn are mad enough to serve them long. Such is their skill and long-kept lore that they may often foresee what will befall them or provide answers to questions unkenneled by men.

Eotens desire to undo the ancient fall of their people, to devour or enslave all they encounter, and to be surrounded by riches and splendor befitting their rule. Aside from their shapeshifting, they may have powers of Might, Wisdom, and Deceit.

## Fifel

**HD:** 4 to 10

**AC:** 13

**Saves:** 13+ to 10+

**Skills:** +1

**Move:** 30'

**Morale:** 9

**Attacks:** +Hit Dice/By weapon+2 or 1d10 unarmed

Ogreish and vile, the *fifel* is a hulking man-thing that favors fens and watery wastes, hiding amid the rushes and lurking beneath the boughs of black trees. They are fashioned from oathbreakers and kinslayers and other damnable men, cursed like their cousins the werwulfs. An evil man who flees to the fens and wilds to escape his sins may be found there by those deeds, and grow tall and swollen with evil. He will live forever there amid the cold mud and loneliness, devouring men because he can think of no other thing to do with them, forever forsaken from all happy companionship and warm hearth. Such is a *fifel's* suffering until it is slain and goes down to Hell for ever.

*Fifels* wish to devour men, to despoil all human joys, and to torment those who dare be happy. Their powers may be found among those of Might, Sea, and Cursing.

## Gast

**HD:** 10

**AC:** 13

**Saves:** 10+

**Skills:** +1

**Move:** 30'

**Morale:** 11

**Attacks:** +10/2d6 freezing touch; Physical save on hit or be frozen a round

When a proud and ambitious man dies unshriven and unrepentant, raging at being cheated of his fair portion of fame and glory, he may rise again as a wretched gast. These creatures are fashioned of darkness and cold, no more than an airy shadow of the man they once were. They seek out the sinful dead who perished priestless and unblessed, dragging their restless spirits up as orcs to serve them. They force them to inhabit once more their rotting corpses, making of them a court and a warband to reclaim what death has taken from them.

Gasts desire to claim lordship or kingship or some other place they think was stolen from them, and to raise more corpses to serve them, and to slay men so as to make slaves of their carcasses. They may raise as many orc thralls in a day as they have hit dice, though mighty dead may be made orc warriors instead. Gasts cannot be harmed by non-magical weapons that have ever shed the blood of men. Aside from these powers, gasts are known to have arts of Deceit, Beguiling, Ruin, and Cursing.

## haeg

**HD:** 8

**AC:** 15

**Saves:** 11+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 40'

**Morale:** 12

**Attacks:** +8 x 3 attacks/By weapon +2 or 1d6 unarmed

She-spirits of fury and martial wrath, the dreaded *haegs* are harbingers of war and ruin. They bear the shape of comely women bearing bloody weapons, and will seek out warbands, groups of brigands, or other bands of armed men. Most mistake them for spearmaidens, or *waelcyrige* at most, few realizing that the *haeg* is nothing born of woman.

A *haeg* will bring war-blessings to the group she is with, adding 1 hit die to all members and improving their hit rolls by half her own hit dice, rounded up. Yet every time the group or its members engages in battle, its members must make a Mental save or be goaded one step further toward habits of blind violence and eager murder. A member who fails three saving throws loses all human mercy and will seek to kill all who are not fellow warriors of the band. Such war-mad slaves must obey the *haeg's* every command, and her delight is in useless battles and senseless killing. Only by forsaking the band and leaving its company can a man avert this doom, and once they are wholly enthralled by the *haeg* only her death can free him, or perhaps the arts of a Galdorman or blessings of a Saint.

*Haegs* desire battles between bands of warriors, the death of men by the spear and sword, and the slaughter of the weak and helpless. They have arts of Might, Wisdom, and Beguiling among them, and no man who bears a weapon can surprise them in ambush.





## helrune

**HD:** 8

**AC:** 12

**Saves:** 11+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 30'

**Morale:** 10

**Attacks:** +4 / 1d6 unarmed blow. Helrunes scorn to bear weapons.

The *dru* are detestable sorcerers, but they are at least mortal men. A helrune is a witch-spirit born of infernal realms, one that has come up to middle-earth in the shape of a comely woman. She wields dark sorceries to oppress and torment Christian folk, leading them into damnation and slaying those who dare oppose her. Yet she is not satisfied with ordinary curses and blights, but commands the spirits of the dead to serve her awful ends.

Helrunes oftimes have a guard of glamored and bewitched men about them to fight on their behalf, or slaves forced to obedience by terror of her anger. Helrunes prefer to incite men by fear or greed or lust rather than bind them by sorcery. She keeps free-willed sinners far from the consolation of minsters and confessors, that they may never beg God's pardon for their failings but must die and be damned in their sins. These damned souls she then raises up to serve her for all eternity as orcs or spectral objects of torment. When she dies they will plunge down into Hell with her.

Helrunes desire to damn Christians, to torment those who will not follow her dark lord, and to impart foul knowledge to *dru* and other sorcerers. They have the magical arts of a Galdorman of their hit dice, but have many other infernal powers as well, often taken from Cursing, Beguiling, Wisdom, Wilderness, or Health.

## Illmade

**HD:** 8

**AC:** 12

**Saves:** 11+

**Skills:** +1

**Move:** 40'

**Morale:** 8

**Attacks:** +8 x 2 attacks / 1d10 claws or bite

The Illmade are those creatures spawned from the uncanny laws of an Arx, strange beasts born of ancient Roman sorcery and curdled magic. Many of them are stranger than any cynocephalus or mermaid, existing in such violence to God's will that they cannot survive outside of an Arx, but wither and perish in mere days when forced to leave it. They commonly have the shape of beasts, often admixed in uncanny ways, or bear faces like men with bodies of unseemly form.

Most Illmade have only the minds of beasts, and they are perils to be slain before they devour those they encounter. Others have an almost human reason, and may perhaps be mistaken for terribly-altered Arxborn. Most Illmade are singular in kind, though brave explorers have reported similar creatures in widely-scattered Arxes, either the product of the same Artifex's eldritch architecture or born of the same unearthly flux.

Illmade commonly desire to devour men, to behave in ways like that of their constituent beasts, and to protect the lairs that nourish them with sorcerous force. They usually possess gifts of Might, but other powers may be possessed based on the nature of the beast, such as Sea, Wilderness, or Ruin.

## MAN

	CEORL	ðESRTH	HERO	KING
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	1	2	5	10
<b>Armor Class:</b>	10	14	16	18
<b>Saves:</b>	15+	14+	13+	10+
<b>Skills:</b>	+1	+1	+2	+3
<b>Move:</b>	30'	30'	30'	30'
<b>Morale:</b>	8	9	10	10
<b>Attacks:</b>	+1 / by weapon	+2 / by weapon	+6 x2 / by weapon+1	+10 x2 / by weapon +2

What is there to be said of men? All readers know both the miserable wickedness of the human heart and the great good and holiness that it may attain with labor and God's grace. The entries for Men in the tables above provide common degrees of prowess for varying kinds of humans, and may be used when the GM needs to know the strength of those people who opposed the heroes.

Men do not commonly have magical powers, nor do they have the particular gifts of a PC hero. Remarkable NPCs may have powers alike to a Galdorman or Saint of a character level equal to their hit dice, but it is rarely profitable or proper to draw them up as if they were PCs. Rival heroes of exceptional prowess may have special gifts of their own, however, and wield them accordingly.

## Merewife

**HD:** 6

**AC:** 12

**Saves:** 12+

**Skills:** +1

**Move:** 30' / 60' swim

**Morale:** 9

**Attacks:** +6 / 1d6 unarmed. When near water, +8 x 2 attacks/1d10 claws

Cold and hungry in the depths of the fen, the merewife is a spirit of water and famine. On land, she takes the guise of a well-favored maid with a voice as sweet as summer and the girdle-keys of a married woman. Once within the fen or the stream, however, she shows her true guise, standing half again as tall as a man, mantled in rushes and river-mud, with terrible grasping claws.

A merewife lures lustful men to the rivers and damp fens, intending to couple with them but always falling prey to her own terrible hunger before the sin is consummated. Maidens she will ignore, but married women and mothers she can smell, and will seek to murder out of spite and jealousy. She also seeks children who carelessly play by watery places, snatching them up to carry them back to her lair amid the reeds, to play at motherhood with the terrified children until her cruelties and carelessnesses must kill them.

Merewives desire to eat men, to steal children, and to slay wedded women and mothers. Their dark powers are drawn from Might, Beguiling, and Sea.

## Nicor

**HD:** 2 to 10

**AC:** 12

**Saves:** 14+ to 10+

**Skills:** +1

**Move:** 20' / 60' swim

**Morale:** 9

**Attacks:** +Hit Dice/1d6 claws. Great nicors do +Hit Dice x2 attacks/2d10 bite or claw

Most men think nicors are sea-serpents who seek to devour swimmers, but in truth the name is apt for a whole legion of terrible sea-things, manlike and bestial both. It is because of nicors that only brave men dare sail the waters about England, and it is nicors who are most often culpable for the deaths of those who dare deep lakes and dark rivers. They have many shapes, whether that of fish-scaled men, or serpents as long as a hall, or eels with legs and hungry lamprey mouths. They share a great hatred of all who breathe air and walk on solid ground. Those with legs will sometimes venture a little way out of the water to murder and spoil the works of men.

Nicors seek to eat men, to destroy ships and all structures touching water, and to torment fishermen and sailors. The vast ones have powers of Might and Ruin, but all have powers of the Sea, and the bestial have those of Wilderness.



## Orc

	Thrall	Warrior	Lord	Hellking
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	2	4	8	12
<b>Armor Class:</b>	14	14	16	16
<b>Saves:</b>	14+	13+	11+	9+
<b>Skills:</b>	+1	+1	+2	+3
<b>Move:</b>	30'	30'	30'	40'
<b>Morale:</b>	9	10	10	11
<b>Attacks:</b>	+3 / by weapon +1	+5 / by weapon +2	+10 x 2 / by weapon +4	+12 x 2 / double weapon dice

Orcs are wretched and miserable creatures, being human corpses animated by the spirit of a damned soul. Whether through a helrune's beckoning, a gast's dark command, or the cruel pleasure of Satan, a soul is brought up from Hell to be imprisoned within a rotting carcass fashioned by the devil. Such is the torment of Hell that this prison is an improvement upon their lot, yet it only fills them with hatred and resentment toward the living, who yet have hope of Heaven when they have only the surety of eternal fire.

Orc thralls have no reason left to them, their minds having been broken by the agonies of the damned. They stand silent, or perform some act over and over, attacking only when living creatures are noticed, or in obeying the commands of their stronger brethren. Even when they obey, they obey like stupid men might. Orc warriors retain something of their living identity and awareness, and will hideously mimic the habits of living men and women in a vain desire to recapture something of life. They will feast and drink and raid and do more horrible things still, and God help those who fall alive into their power. Worst and most terrible are the orc lords and monstrous Hellkings, who have been given gifts of Hell to torment the living and have the cruel cunning of great warriors and grim princes.

Orcs desire to drown the memory of Hell by playing horribly at living deeds, to serve the power that brought them forth, and to devour, torment, and punish the living for having not yet fallen to their own miserable lot. Orc thralls have no powers that an animate corpse has not, and seldom do orc warriors have special gifts, but greater orc lords are often armed with powers of Might, Ruin, and Cursing by their damned masters.



## Pukkel

**HD:** 1

**AC:** 12

**Saves:** 15+

**Skills:** +1

**Move:** 30'

**Morale:** 8

**Attacks:** +1 / 1d6 with small clubs, spears, or knives

Vile little men with twisted bodies and twisted hearts, the pukkel is a goblin of the forest and wilds. They are seldom found alone, but go with little bands of their own kind, prowling the weald in search of careless shepherdesses and incautious wayfarers. The women they catch they abuse, while the men they kill and devour. Forest bandits, pagans, and other damnable souls may sometimes bargain with pukkels for their help, trading prisoners to them for their aid. No man has ever seen a pukkelwife or a pukkel child, but only the wizened and hateful little men.

Pukkels desire to rob and devour men, to avoid or placate foes that may slay many of them, and to abuse women. Most pukkels have no special powers or abilities, but the oldest and wickedest among them may have magical arts of Wilderness, Wisdom, or tricksome Beguiling.

## Shuck

**HD:** 8

**AC:** 13

**Saves:** 11+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 40'

**Morale:** 10

**Attacks:** +8 x 2 attacks/2d6 bite. A shuck can breathe blue hellfire once per scene, doing 4d6 damage to all within 20 feet of its mouth. These unholy flames burn only living flesh.

A fearsome hound of Hell, a shuck has the look of a dog as tall as a man at his shoulder, with fangs full long as a man's thumb and eyes shining brighter than hearth-flame. It is sent up from Hell by the devil to goad on a sinful man, the better to ensure that he does not repent his evil and seek the shelter of the Church. The shuck always appears first to the evildoer in some lonely place, speaking in a voice like a man to tell the wicked sinner that he belongs to the devil now, and may live only so long as he pleases his lord.

Thereafter the wretched fellow must ever be doing fresh shames, or the shuck will come to him and drag his blackened soul down to Hell. If he ever dares journey toward minster or church, so too will the shuck seek to slay him before he can find shelter behind holy walls. Whenever the shuck is ill-pleased by his indolence, the beast will slay his kinsmen or destroy his belongings or torment him in some way. It knows every moment where its victim may be found and is cunning as a man in its cruelties.

Such is the wicked cleverness of the shuck that it will never make plain to others just who the man it hunts truly is, but will slay others and cause such misery that none can tell who the damned soul among them might be. The shuck will vanish if its prey is slain and sent down to Hell, so there are times that frightened villagers may make murderers of each other trying to drive off a shuck that torments them by robbing it of its prey. So too can a shuck be dispelled if its victim heartily repents of his sins and makes confession to a priest, yet the shuck will know at the instant if he begins to do such a thing, and will kill the priest if it is not fended off. Even if the absolution is successful, the shuck will seek a raging vengeance for its lost prey.

A shuck desires to cause damnation, murder, and anguish among men. It always knows the location of its chosen prey and may appear thirty feet away from its victim whenever it wishes, so long they do not stand on consecrated ground. The shuck will invariably appear if it senses that its prey is seeking absolution from a priest or his fellows, and will seek to kill all who dare thwart Hell of its prey. It cannot be hurt by unenchanted weapons. Aside from these powers, it has arts of Might, Ruin, Cursing, and Wilderness.



## Thyrs

**HD:** 12

**AC:** 13

**Saves:** 9+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 40'

**Morale:** 10

**Attacks:** +12 x 2 attacks/by weapon +4 or 2d6 unarmed blows

The entish race has among it not only the mad lords of the eotens, but also the bitter anchorites who are called thyrses. They dwell in fens and waste places, far from men, and they bear shapes that are larger and more beautiful than any mortal might bear, or seemings so hideous that a demon would dread to behold them. They are all full of sorcery and curses, able to work wonders with their dark knowledge even as their mighty limbs crush those who would defy them. Some hate the world which has forgotten their rule, while others despise men as weaklings and fools, and a few are so wearied with the waning of days that they will even parley with men for the sake of new amusement. Even these brooding giants are notorious in their hungers, however, and neither handsome man nor comely maid is safe in their dark halls.

Thyrses are unlike ents, in that they are not content to dwell apart from the world in sad solitude. They are not like eotens, in that they are not plagued by the dwarf-curse of shifting flesh, nor do they dream of restoring their lost dominion over the land. Their hearts are rotten and soured things, wanting only revenge against a bitter world and seeking the tools of sorcery by which this vengeance can be gained.

A thyrs most often can be found in an old Roman hall, whether a villa or a great house in some crumbled caester. From this place they conduct their researches and studies, seeking out treasures of old and gathering them to them to advance their purposes. They often want to cause disasters and calamities for others, whether ent or man or especially dweorg, cursing God and the devil alike for all they have had taken from them. A cunning speaker can sometimes focus the thyrs's hate, giving it a special interest in immiserating a particular enemy for some crime of unseemly happiness or mocking joy, but such tricksters are often the next target of the bitter giant.

Thyrses desire to swell in sorcerous power, to avenge themselves on the world for having forgotten them, and to slake their terrible thirst for pleasures and earthly distractions. They have a common supply of sorceries equal to that of a Galdorman of their level, and two or three other great marvels of sorcery they know readily how to do. Beyond that, they often have powers of Might, Wisdom, Cursing, and Forging.

## Werwolf

**HD:** 4 to 8

**AC:** 12

**Saves:** 13+ to 11+

**Skills:** +1

**Move:** 40'

**Morale:** 11

**Attacks:** +Hit Dice/by weapon +2. Great werwulfs are +Hit Dice x 2 attacks/by weapon +4. Those with wolfish shapes bite and rend for 1D10 damage instead.

Some men have too much of the wolf in them, their hearts awakened to evil urges and their thews strengthened by the devil. A werwolf is one such man, one both cursed *wearg* and wicked warrior, two-legged yet jawed for jealous slaughter. Some can take the form of wolves, while others swell up into bestial shapes when the fury is upon them, and some can be told from other men only by the frenzied joy they take in the blood of their foes. They are terrible warriors who walk always alone, unable to bear the sight of other men for very long. They feel no warmth around the hall-fire and they taste no sweetness in mead and get no joy from anything in life except the suffering of those they hunt and kill.

A man may become a werwolf in several ways, and only a Saint's blessing and a true desire to make amends will save him from the devil's grasp. Some are made werwolf by a habit of killing, so soaked in the blood of men that they sicken without it, always eager to kill and oftentimes eat their own brothers. Others are cursed by the devil's servants, witched into wickedness and wretched with their fate, unable to fight it save that God and good courage be found for them. Some few are fool enough to ask it as a boon of Hell, gaining a gift of murder in exchange for their obedience to some black and terrible name.

Some foolish lords willingly employ werwulfs, giving them opportunities to wreak horrible slaughter among the lord's foes and rewarding them in unclean ways. So long as such lords give them occasions to kill and torment innocents, the werwolf will usually refrain from slaughtering their masters, but one can never trust them to restrain their lusts forever. Werwulfs hate each other no less than they hate men, and only a brutal overlord and much sweet killing can force them to cooperate for any length of time.

Werwulfs desire to kill, despoil, and torment, and can bear to share human company only so long as it gets them their desires. A werwolf cannot be harmed by wrought weapons, save that they are enchanted. Most can transform into wolfish shapes when they wish, and all have powers from among those of Might and Wilderness.

## Wraith

**HD:** 8 to 12

**AC:** 15

**Saves:** 11+ to 9+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 40'

**Morale:** 10

**Attacks:** +Hit Dice x 3 attacks/by weapon +2 or an unarmed touch that forces the target to make a Mental save or become paralyzed with terror for 1d4 rounds and be unable to act. The wraith can so touch only one target a round.

Fell shadows of men, feared and detested, a wraith is a shade of a hellbound king of old. The devil permits their spirit to linger in the upper world, tormented by the knowledge of their inescapable damnation and fearing to do anything that might hasten Satan's hand to drag them down to Hell. Their terror and despair clings to them like a shroud, until it grows so thick that men can see them with mortal eyes. They are dressed like the great kings of old, of the time of Rome and before Rome still when the Briton kings were lords upon this land, yet they have a thin and maddened look to them and glow with a deathly light. They often have a guard of orcs about them to serve them and remind them of all the horrors that yet await their soul below.

Wraiths are found most often in hidden halls beneath the old grave-barrows of the Britons, raised in the days before Rome, or under the mausoleums of Roman rulers. At times a wraith will ride at night with his guards on spectral steeds, ravaging all he encounters and doing such things as he thinks Hell would savor, but he must return to his barrow before dawn for the touch of sunlight must destroy him. Because a wraith cannot bear the dawn he will seldom be found far from his barrow.

The barrows of a wraith are strange within, twisted like Arxes and full of hollow echoes of glory. They have rooms like dead palaces of old, and orc-servants and wretched human thralls, and such things as distract the wraith from its damnation. Many old treasures can be found within, and fearful thralls of the wraith spread rumors of them to draw in foolish adventurers to die.

Wraiths desire to please the devil and to find distraction from their terrors. They cannot be harmed by unenchanted weapons, and their touch steals strength and courage from those they caress. A victim so reduced to zero hit points by their touch will fall into anguished nightmares until their sleeping body perishes or they consent to serve Hell as a new orc in the wraith's guard. Even the strongest soul must perish in a month's time from these nightmares, if not rescued and healed by the light of the sun. Wraiths have powers of Ruin, Wisdom, Cursing, and Beguiling.



## Wuduwose

**HD:** 5

**AC:** 12

**Saves:** 13+

**Skills:** +2

**Move:** 30'

**Morale:** 10

**Attacks:** +5 / 1d8 club

A wuduwose is a bestial forest spirit in the shape of a man or woman, clad only in their hair and bearing crude weapons of stick and stone. They are pagan and lawless, knowing no decency, and satisfy all the hungers of men with no thought for righteousness. Some think that the wuduwooses are nothing more than holy hermits driven mad by the devil, or outlaws so long from human hands that they forget all but the forest, but others say the wuduwooses have devilish gifts to help them slake their hungers. They are always found alone, for they quarrel easily with each other. Men can bargain with them if they bring much meat or mead or women for them to enjoy, though they cannot be trusted to keep their vows or help their friends. They have no patience with subtle requests.

Wuduwooses desire to satisfy their lewd and gluttonous hungers, to hunt wild game, and to roam free in the forest. Some wuduwooses have no powers beyond human measure, but others have gifts of Wilderness, Might, or bitter Cursing.



## Ylfe

	Goblin	Beast	Warrior	Lord
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	1	4	3	14
<b>Armor Class:</b>	13	12	15	18
<b>Saves:</b>	15+	13+	14+	8+
<b>Skills:</b>	+1	+1	+1	+3
<b>Move:</b>	30'	40'	30'	40'
<b>Morale:</b>	8	9	10	11
<b>Attacks:</b>	+1/1d6 spear	+4/1d8 bite	+5/by weapon+1	Three inevitable hits for weapon+4

Called elves by some, the ylfe are a strange race of many disparate kinds, from little goblins and crawling beasts to great and terrible elf-lords mantled like the Roman kings of old. It is said by some that ylfes are all fashioned of those angels who neither obeyed God's will at the dawn of the world nor chose to march against him with Satan. Forbidden from Heaven, yet not wholly deserving of Hell, they were cast into a middle space to dwell there forever. The truth of this I cannot say. They lair chiefly in their strange home, but sometimes they come forth to trouble the lands of men with their fell hunts and cruel games.

Ylfes dwell in Faerie, which is a land both close and far from England, like the lining of a cloak is close to the outer embroidery it bears. A man may slip into Faerie unknowing by taking the wrong path, or passing beneath a twisted tree-limb, or entering into a cave that was not there before. Once within Faerie, he is in the power of the ylfes, and he never will get free unless he is clever and brave and can persuade the ylfes to permit him to return. This he can seldom do unless he can trick them, for the ylfe have neither love nor pity in their hearts, but make games of men's lives until they perish or fall mad. They will set their prisoners to impossible tasks, or bid them do impossible deeds, and take pleasure in the desperation of their efforts. Yet if the deed be done all the same then the ylfes will keep their word and give all that they have promised for success. A ylfe will never break a bargain, for to do so makes them the slave of the one they forswore, and they must serve him helplessly until he dies. Let men take care, for the same law applies in return to those who make bargains with ylfes.

Ylfes pantomime human lives, finding amusement in playing at mortality. Many find it strange that the ylfes should be so like us in their ways, but some sages say that it is not so, that what we perceive as the ylfes are merely those shadows our minds conjure for us, seemings that we can understand and deal with. The true ylfe are so strange and terrible that our minds cannot bear to perceive them, and so we hear and touch and see them as if they were like fair and awful men, or twisted goblins, or fearsome eldritch beasts. So also Faerie is to us like Britain but more awesome, for we cannot see the truth.

Ylfes desire to be amused, to enact grand tales of horror and splendor, and to make entertaining bargains with men. Their implements are all of bronze, or enchanted glass, or other strange things, for the touch of common iron burns them as if it were hot from the forge. Iron weapons ignore all enchantments that they may have to protect them and do double their usual damage. Enchanted iron weapons do not have this benefit, for to seek to kill a ylfe with an enchanted weapon is to desire to drown a fish in the sea. Ylfes commonly have powers of Beguiling, Deceit, Forging, and Wisdom, though any ylfe may have powers suitable to its seeming and role in Faerie.



**IT IS NOT FOR** mortal men to think as ylfes do, so it can be a hard thing for a GM to portray their plans and schemes. When a creature seems mad or whimsical, how is a GM even to know what amuses them, and how are heroes to respond sensibly to their plots?

For a GM, the easiest way to mime the madness of the ylfes is to give each a particular role they mean to play; a Faerie beast might wish to be a ravaging monster that devours hapless men, a great lord in bronze armor may wish to be a Roman consul bending barbarian kings to the yoke of the Emperor, or a terrible seductress may wish to be queen to two kings who die in battling for her love. Always the role is dramatic, and always the role brings conflict, struggle, and woe among men.

And these ylfes care nothing if their role brings them to destruction, so long as they carry it out well. If their story is such that the beast must inevitably attack the maiden who dared make herself its bait, or that the consul must lead his Faerie legions against the rebel king's army, or that the seductress must not raise hands against her lovers, then that is what they will do, even if any fool can see that it must ruin them. Wise heroes will thus use a ylfe's story against it, and bind it to paths it must follow.





**JUST AS SOME MONSTERS** as listed as having powers of certain kinds, this section gives you specific suggestions for what those powers may be. In all cases they should be taken merely as general ideas rather than an exclusive list of what can be.

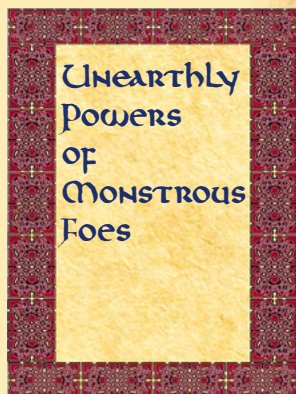
So also they are divided into minor powers and major ones. The first eight in each list are minor gifts such as any monstrous foe might have, and the last four are powerful dweomers to be possessed by important or mighty supernatural foes. You may roll them separately with a d8 and a d4 if you so choose.

Some are marked with (P), (M), or (E) at the end. This means that a successful Physical, Mental, or Evasion saving throw may be used to negate the power's effect. Some are marked "(P) for half" or the like, meaning that a successful save merely halves the resulting damage or effect, rounded up.

Some GMs may fret and worry about whether a power is "balanced" or "fair" or "seemly in God's eyes". Do not worry overmuch about that. These are monsters and fell Fae-kind, creatures beyond the ken of men with terrifying and uncanny powers. They are not *meant* to be fair and just and suitable to the warband's prowess. If lords could tally up the number of warriors that they firmly expect could slay a helrune and dispatch them as they might to harry a troublesome outlaw there would be small glory in slaying such beasts.

Yet in the same vein, do not force your heroes into the teeth of such uncanny foes. Give them fair chance to parley, or scout out their presence, or retreat from their terrible might. A warband of sensible caution and sound-minded preparations ought to be able to disengage from such foes and draw back from their anger without being whipped on into battle by an impatient GM's lust for blood.

As with all things in your world, concern yourself first with reason and logic, and only second with what is "balanced". Men can follow logic. They can predict consequences and surmise events if they progress reasonably, and they can deal with even the most terrible perils if those perils are reasonable for their location and situation. When every foe they fight is one "balanced" for them, and every peril is one designed specifically for them to overcome, they lose the use of their wits and cannot predict the consequences of their actions fairly. Do not deprive them of this in service to some "balance".



**Beguiling powers bend** the mind or senses of the targets, tricking them with strange compulsions. When beguiled, a creature will act normally according to their nature, but with the enchantment dominating their actions. A target sorceled to kill someone will kill them in their most accustomed way, for example. Beguiled creatures do not normally realize they are beguiled, however unnatural it is, unless the charm is broken or resisted.

## Beguiling Powers

ROLL	POWER
1	Tell a creature a lie which they must believe until it is conclusively disproven (M)
2	Appear so fair and bewitching that none can harm them in a scene until they strike a blow or do harm (M)
3	Request a favor of someone which they must do unless it causes them Shame or physical harm (M)
4	It is so entrancing that the first physical blow every foe aims at in a scene always misses
5	Fulfills a deed or favor requested by someone, whereupon they must do its next bidding to the best of their ability or it will know it. Such ingrates cannot save against its powers or avoid its attacks for a year and a day afterwards.
6	Do an act, and regardless of the circumstantial evidence only heroes or NPCs with more hit dice than it can possibly believe that it did it unless they were personal witnesses to the act
7	Bestow joy and ravishing pleasure upon a target in its company. While this has no mechanical consequence, few can bear to give up such happiness
8	Sing so as a Main Action as to transfix any who hear it, leaving them incapable of anything but self-defense so long as it sings (M)
9	Touch a target, requiring a hit roll if they are resisting, and bind their will utterly to its service until it releases them or it is slain (M)
10	Any foe that levies a physical attack against it automatically suffers its hit dice in damage in the form of regret at opposing such enchanting grace or unutterable majesty, inflicted before the attack is rolled
11	No one can bear to strike it with fist or weapon until it has successfully attacked or used a magical power against them
12	It need merely silently will a visible target to think or desire a thing, and they must immediately think accordingly until it releases them (M)

**Curses can be laid** on any visible target as a Main Action. Powerful creatures may also be able to lay a curse using a target's blood, hair, or important personal possessions. The existence of a curse is not always obvious. Unless noted, a creature's curses will last until it is killed or chooses to lift the curse. Some may instead specify a not-impossible condition that will lift the curse; if this is done, even killing the creature cannot lift the doom, as only completion of the condition can do so. If a target successfully saves versus a curse attempt, they cannot be cursed that way again during the scene.


## CURSING POWERS

Roll	Power
1	The target has terrible war-luck, suffering -4 on all hit rolls. (M)
2	The target is diseased with a foul illness causing -2 to hit and -2 to all skill checks. They can make a Physical save each day; on a success, the disease passes 1d4 days later.
3	The target is enfeebled, their maximum hit points halved for one day per hit die of the creature. (P)
4	The target is plagued with terrible luck in one specific act or activity. The next time they attempt the relevant action, it's an automatic failure. (M)
5	The target suffers the loss of some valuable item, weapon, or harness as it is broken, stolen, burnt, or ruined that instant. (E)
6	The target's wounds suppurate and weep. They can be stabilized and brought up to one hit point, but they cannot heal damage otherwise until the curse is lifted. (P)
7	The target's crops or livestock wither and perish over the next week. A particular herd or field loses 1d4 * 10% of its produce, plus 10% per two full hit dice of the creature. (M)
8	The target becomes repulsive and detestable to their neighbors and strangers, suffering a -2 on all Charisma skill checks and a -2 penalty to all reaction rolls when they are present. (M)
9	The target is struck down by horrible diseases or afflictions that will not kill them any time soon but will utterly incapacitate them. (P)
10	If the target ever performs a particular act or type of act, some horrible calamity of the creature's choosing will befall them, including death. (M)
11	The target will forever fail at a particular type of activity, whether it is combat, rulership, seeking the love of a woman, or the like. (M)
12	The target will die before the next new moon. Only one such target can be affected at a time.




**Powers of Deceit involve** the use of illusions, imperceptible lies, and false seemings. Illusions can inflict hit point damage on believing targets through fear and delusion, but they can't do more than make them fall unconscious with terror.

## Deceit Powers



ROLL	POWER
1	The creature can turn invisible, appearing only just before it attacks or performs some vigorous physical act. Invisible creatures are immune to ranged attacks and apply a -4 penalty to all melee blows against them, assuming the attacker is in the right general area to fight them
2	The creature can adopt the seeming of a human being, including the face, voice, and clothing of any known to them. It changes back when slain
3	Once per scene, the creature can take something and no one present will notice the theft or claiming. They get a Mental save against this blindness if they have equal or greater hit dice than the creature
4	The creature can pass through doors and open portals silently, whether or not they are locked. If there are guards at the portal, they must make a Mental save to notice the creature or its passing
5	The creature's trail or tracks are impossible to detect without magic
6	The creature can make any object look and seem like any other object, often using this gift to make trash seem precious
7	The creature can conjure a false image with sight, sound, and scent at any point within sight. These images have no substance but act and appear just as the real thing.
8	The creature can cause hallucinations in a target, making them see and hear whatever they wish. (M)
9	The creature's lies are inevitably believed by all who hear them unless they have equal or greater hit dice than the creature. PCs get a Mental save to resist this.
10	The creature can assume any shape no larger than an oak tree nor smaller than an acorn. It retains its usual statistics in these forms, and may always move at its normal rate even if the object is usually immobile.
11	The first time it is reduced to zero hit points each day, it reveals that the slain creature was only a false image, and it is really elsewhere within 30 feet with half its maximum hit points
12	Once per scene as an Instant action the creature can undo the effects of the entire prior round, for it was all a delusion created by the creature. It gets a free round of action when it does so, for it acted while everyone else was in the grip of its deceit.



A **BEING OF CRAFT** and delving, the creature has the power to create or extract something, whether a specific type of thing or structure or anything appropriate to its nature, and “objects” noted in the powers **FORGING POWERS** below refer to such things. It doubtless has fashioned whatever it can for its own use, but might also trade its favors to other monstrous foes, or even to strangers who are willing to aid it in turn.

Most creatures are limited in their forging to such objects as they might reasonably be expected to be proficient in making. An ent may be mighty in the forging of war-harness and the building of stone halls and the weaving of wire like cloth, but a mere smith-goblin of the Ylfe may be more narrow.

RoLL	Power
1	As a Main Action, ruin an object it can see. An Evasion save can preserve held or worn objects
2	It can make any single object in a night appropriate to its nature, whether harness or a hall
3	The things it makes are almost unbreakable by mortal means. Armor it makes grants a +2 AC bonus, but not shields
4	It can tell exactly who made an object and how it has been used in the past year, as if it had watched it being used
5	It can make treasures out of mud, wood, and common things, fabricating a shilling's worth per hit die per day
6	It can dig in earth and natural stone with ease, creating a tunnel eight feet high, wide, and deep with each Main Action
7	It can make appropriate objects out of nothing, requiring no raw materials for their crafting
8	It can see and hear through any object it has made with a Main Action of concentration on the particular thing
9	Whatever it makes is magnificent. All weapons and armor are treated as +1 magical objects and everything grants at least 1 point of Splendor to its bearer
10	It works astonishingly quickly, and in a day can do the work of twenty men for every hit die it has
11	No object formed or shaped by human hands can harm it
12	Objects it has made obey it utterly, even moving under their own power. Treat most objects as common men for attack and damage purposes if they assault someone

**Diseases inflict varying penalties.** Usually, a minor sickness inflicts -2 to hit and -1 on skill checks, while a major one inflicts -4 to hit and -2 on checks. Similar woes might be used in place of these. If afflicted with a minor sickness, the victim can make a Physical save each night to throw it off, recovering a week after the save is made. Major sicknesses allow a Physical save once per week, recovering a month after the save is made. An Int/Heal skill check can be attempted once per week for either at a difficulty of 8 for minor and 10 for major; success grants an immediate Physical save opportunity or halves the remaining recovery time.

**health  
powers**

ROLL	Power
1	It can cure a disease in a man or beast if the petitioner performs a favor
2	All near it must make a Physical save once per scene or instantly be struck by a minor sickness, if it so wills
3	It can induce weeping sores as a minor sickness, making it impossible for the target to recover hit points until it is cured
4	Old scars throb while it is near, inflicting a -1 penalty on hit and saving throws for every Scar a visible foe has
5	It can take away all the symptoms of a disease, making a target feel fine. The sickness remains in abeyance until the creature allows it free rein again
6	It can infect an object or place such that anyone who handles it or goes there must make a Physical save or suffer a minor sickness, or a major one if this is taken as a major power
7	It can bless a creature with tremendous vigor, such that it is immune to disease and heals one HP every ten minutes. This blessing lasts for one day per hit die of the creature
8	It can bless or curse a single field or herd so that nine of ten parts die by the season's end, or it doubles in size or yield in the same time
9	It can strike a visible creature with any illness it wishes, causing any results from mild inconvenience to instant death. (P)
10	Sick creatures must obey its commands or suffer excruciating pain, taking -4 to hit and -2 on all skill checks. (P) to defy it for a scene.
11	It can cure any sickness, whether by glance, potion, charm, or petition.
12	It can smite whole villages or fields with major sickness, killing a tenth of them each week, or doing less fatal harm if they so wish



**Might is a common** trait of monstrous foes and dire enemies. Beings imbued with Might have powers that strike fiercer blows than ordinary men could deal, whether through simple brawn or through irresistible war-skill. Such creatures are invariably potent in battle and an unusual danger to those who engage them. Special powers of defense and protection also fall under the rubric of Might.

## Might Powers

At its simplest, a GM might simply increase the damage die or hit bonus of a being of Might, causing it to hit harder and more surely than its brethren. Optionally, special penalties might befall victims of its blows, or it may deal wounds that add extra hindrances to those who suffer its hate.

All creatures with a major Might power are impervious to non-magical weapons, albeit not to bare-handed strikes or grapples. Some lesser enemies also have this trait, but in such cases it is a matter of the GM choosing to add it as a special power of the creature.

Roll	Power
1	It is immune to non-magical weapons, though unarmed strikes can still harm it
2	It is strong as a bear, rolling damage twice and taking the better result
3	It strikes with terrible keenness, gaining +4 on all hit rolls
4	Its swiftness is terrible, always winning initiative in combat and doubling its movement rate
5	It is frenzied by pain; whenever it takes hit point damage, its next attack roll is always successful
6	It is tremendously hardy; it rolls its hit dice with 1d4+4 instead of 1d8
7	Its hide sheds blows, granting it a +4 bonus to its armor class
8	It has an unquenchable vitality, regenerating half its hit dice in hit points at the end of each round, rounded up, until it is slain
9	It has titanic strength, doubling the damage it rolls and lifting, breaking, or throwing anything it can fit its arms around
10	Its blows are inexorable, missing only on a natural 1
11	It is terrifying to behold, forcing all NPCs to make a Morale check at a -2 penalty upon seeing it and afflicting PCs and those who resist with a -2 penalty on all hit rolls against it
12	It can only be reduced to zero hit points by some special tool, means, or blessed object

**Powers of Ruin** might be fiery breath, a blasting curse, a ball of searing flame, or some other power that directly smites a foe, usually exercised as a Main Action. Where “ruin” is noted below, simply replace it with some effect, substance, or power appropriate to the creature. Creatures are immune to damage from their own forms of ruin, so a fire-breathing *draca* need fear little from being bowled into a bonfire.

## Ruin Powers

Roll	Power
1	Its weapons or blows are infused with ruin, adding its hit dice to all damage rolls.
2	It can hurl bolts of ruin as a normal ranged attack out to 300 feet, doing its normal weapon damage plus its hit dice.
3	Once per scene, it can summon up a wall of ruin up to ten feet long per hit die. Those who cross the wall suffer 1d6 damage per two hit dice of the creature. (P) save for half.
4	It can destroy visible structures and unattended objects with ruin, consuming up to a 10 foot cube of such things per Main Action
5	It bleeds ruin when harmed, injuring melee foes who hit it for 1d6 damage plus its hit dice.
6	It can create a pool of ruin within 100 feet, 2 feet in radius per hit die. Creatures that end their turn in the pool or move into one suffer 1d6 damage per two hit dice of the creature. (P) save for half.
7	It can cause impending eruptions of ruin at points within 100 feet, being 2 feet in radius per hit die. The eruption detonates at the start of its next round, inflicting 1d6 damage per hit die of the creature. (P) save for half.
8	Constant batterings of ruin around it inflict 1d4 hit points of damage on all foes within 30 feet at the end of each of its rounds
9	Once per scene, cast a wave of ruin in a cone 10 feet long per hit die and as wide at the far end, doing 1d6 damage per hit die. Evasion save for half damage.
10	Once per scene, cause a burst of ruin within 300 feet with a radius of three feet per hit die. It does 1d6 damage per hit die. (E) save for half.
11	Wreath their person in ruin as an On Turn action, doing 1d6 damage plus half their hit dice, rounded up, to any foe in melee range. Damage is applied at the end of the creature's round.
12	As a Main Action, smite a visible foe with ruin, inflicting 1d6 damage per two hit dice, rounded up. (P) save for half damage.

**Sea powers are generally** restricted to aquatic beings like mer-wives, nicors, or sometimes shore-dwelling *fifels*, and aren't normally much use unless the creature is in or near water. Such beings will tend **Sea Powers** to set up situations or traps that rely upon their own watery abilities, arranging situations where foes are at a severe disadvantage in facing them.

The English of this era are poor seamen as a rule. Their ancestors were sailors enough to come over from the continent and prey as pirates on Roman ships, but in the absence of such large volumes of trade and the lack of any major coastal communities until recently has decayed those talents. The existence of monstrous foes with Sea abilities does nothing to alleviate this lack, and many nicors and other sea-beasts are more than capable of shattering the small, undecked English boats and leaving their crew to drown wretchedly.

Because Sea powers are relatively limited in scope, it's often possible to make them stronger or more effective than other abilities. Most PCs should be very careful about confronting sea-monsters in their own lairs.

Roll	Power
1	It's invisible while at least partially submerged, becoming immune to ranged attacks and forcing a -4 penalty on melee blows against it.
2	It can flow through even the tiniest holes without slowing its movement.
3	It can make water flow in any direction, up to a man-deep stream's worth.
4	It gets a bonus Move action while at least partially submerged.
5	Piercing and cleaving weapons do only half damage to it, rounded down.
6	As a Move action, it can teleport up to its movement distance while in ankle-deep water.
7	It can find and bring forth any submerged object within a quarter-mile.
8	It can gaze into water to see anything reflected by water within a quarter-mile.
9	It automatically hits any foe who's in at least ankle-deep water.
10	It cannot be harmed as long as it's at least half-submerged.
11	It can drown an adjacent foe as a Main Action, doing 1d6 damage per hit die with a Physical save to halve it.
12	Foes within visible range are slowed as if trudging through fen-pools, halving their movement rate.



A **Deep Wilderness covers** almost the entire island, though this wilderness is made up as much of abandoned Roman-era fields and desolate meadows as it is of deep forest stands. This kind of **Wilderness Powers** post-apocalyptic terrain is just as valid a Wilderness for purpose of these powers as is the midst of the Sussex weald, though these abilities are not generally applicable to places and objects within a ruined Roman caester.

Wilderness powers relate not only to the forest and field itself, but also to the traditional qualities of savagery, beasthood, and desolation. They might grant animal qualities to the possessor, allow shapeshifting, inflict some penalty on anyone who confronts it in the wilderness, or gain supernatural insight into intruders in its realm. This sphere of powers also relates to control over the savage, animalistic denizens of the wilderness.

Roll	Power
1	It cannot be tracked by mundane means.
2	It can call forth a bear or 1d6 wolves to serve it.
3	Weapons made at least partly of wood twist to avoid it, forcing a -4 penalty on attack rolls.
4	It can pass through even the thickest brush or boggiest ground unhindered and without trace.
5	It poisons those it strikes, forcing a Physical save to avoid taking 1d6 damage per hit die of the creature.
6	It can curse all visible foes with confusion, causing them to be unable to find their way in the wilds for 2d6 days. (M)
7	It can entangle a visible foe. The target cannot move from their place until they make a Str/Exert skill check against difficulty 10 as a Main Action. (P)
8	It's invisible in the wilderness until it takes a Main Action, after which it is visible for the rest of the scene.
9	Within a particular grove or wild location, it cannot suffer damage.
10	All the wild animals within the surrounding wilds are its servants and spies.
11	It has some supernaturally monstrous beast as a loyal slave, and can share its senses.
12	As a Main Action, it can disappear and reappear anywhere within its wild domain.

**Wisdom powers can be** more demanding than some to manage in play because they rarely have any immediate use in combat or other conflict situations. Wisdom powers give the creature knowledge it would not otherwise possess, and it has to act on that knowledge with its existing abilities.

## Wisdom Powers

Creatures with Wisdom powers will usually use their insight to set up situations to hinder enemies, either by feeding their weaknesses or current problems to other hostile creatures or by providing their foes with temptations and baits that they know will lead them astray.

Other creatures will often be allied with Wisdom-possessing entities, trading their services or help in exchange for the creature's sight. It's usually not long before the creature has enough blackmail and insight on their patrons to control them readily, even if they don't fully realize that they're being manipulated. PCs might even have occasion to seek out such creatures in order to get answers they need, however dear the price.

Roll	Power
1	It always wins initiative, foreseeing any peril.
2	Once per scene, it gets a bonus Main Action as it knows exactly what to do.
3	It can spy upon a place within two miles per hit die via scrying rituals.
4	It always knows the exact location of a thing or person it seeks.
5	Once per day, it can give supernaturally perceptive advice as to how to accomplish some purpose.
6	It always knows exactly what any visible person truly desires and truly fears.
7	It knows the darkest, most shameful secrets of any person it sees.
8	Once per scene, replay the turn it just took as it foresees the undesirable outcome.
9	It always recognizes lies or deceit, whether spoken or written.
10	Once per day, it can answer any question, if the truth is known by some living human.
11	Anything the gamblers say or write at the table, it knows by its arts. Plans made by implication and gesture elude it.
12	Once per petitioner, it can prophesy an answer to a question that will inevitably come to pass, if perhaps in metaphorical ways.

The powers listed in this section are merely a selection of the possible choices for a GM, and should not be taken as the whole of what an uncanny creature might be able to do. It is inevitable that a GM will wish to create their own eldritch powers for their beasts sooner or later.

The simplest way to do so is to lift powers from other creatures from other, similar games to these. One may readily open those old books and pull out abilities that suit, adding them on to your own creatures and substituting the closest equivalents in saving throws or damage dice. Do not hesitate to re-color the powers in other ways to suit the special nature of the creature you are creating. A power that traps a foe in a mesh of sticky webs might be re-colored as the ability to freeze water and mud around a foe's feet, trapping them there in the same way until they can break free. Such a power might well suit a sea-nicor or a cold-handed gast in a half-flooded tomb.

A slightly more demanding way is to imagine some wondrous trick the creature might be able to perform and then just give that trick a suitable game definition. That ice-bound gast might have a breath of winter to him, for example, freezing metal so hard that it shatters like glass when used. Once the image of such a power comes to mind, the GM can simply write it down in whatever game terms sound useful; perhaps the effect is automatic and causes metal weapons to shatter when they hit something near the gast, unless the PCs come equipped with some great blaze of heat to fight it off.

Do not be overly concerned with "game balance" when assigning uncanny power. Take care only that the power will not kill or defeat the PCs instantly on their first encounter with the foe. If the heroes have a chance to see that they are overmatched or understand the nature of the power, then they can yet escape and return when they are better-prepared, or snare the foe in a trap that counters its uncanny arts. A power that debilities, hinders, or weakens the PCs is less dangerous in this than a power that simply inflicts a great deal of damage on the heroes.

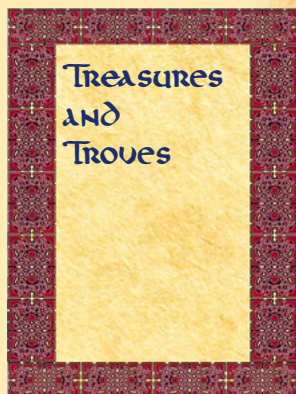
Do not forget the existence of non-combat powers as well, and the fact that the creature will use them to the best of its ability. Powers that grant it secret knowledge, loyal servants, or mastery of its lair's environment are all going to be used in preparation for any perils the creature might face.





A hero who slays monsters must expect mighty wealth for his war-arts. This section will reveal to you the proper sum of golden goods to be given to those heroes who overcome evil, along with such degrees of wealth as befit lords and common men, so you may know how much they may be able to reward help rendered to them.

Understand, however, that not every trove is gripped in the grasp of a terrible foe, and not every wonderful thing is to be gained only by the spear. Many treasures may be hidden away by those long dead and forgotten, or there may be riches that can be snatched away by cunning thieves, like an ill-fated cup spirited away from a *draca's* hoard. If you force the heroes to wet their spears for every brooch and pair of boots they would find, then they will either be longly poor or shortly dead.



The table on the adjacent page gives a list of troves and their owners. Pick the category that best fits the treasure you have in mind. First given is a total value, which may be used as a quick short-hand to estimate how much wealth to give them if you care nothing for details.

If you wish to roll randomly instead of using this base value as a guide, then roll on each of the columns beside it. These are percentile chances for small, large, and vast troves of both common and rich goods, and the chance for jeweled treasures, and the odds that some magical item might be in the trove. If none of these rolls come out, and what ought to have been a great trove turns out to be little or nothing, then such is fate; perhaps some swifter reaver reached it first and took away all that was good in it.

Roll separately on each column and for each result. Some results are automatic; a minor lord will always have one small trove of rich goods. Others are percentile; that lord has a 50% chance of also having a large trove of rich goods. Roll the types of these troves separately on the table.

When using these tables to judge a lord's wealth, that you might guess how much he is able to reward his helpers, take the base value column and halve it to find how many shillings or pounds worth of goods he has to spare for rewards. He could give the whole sum if he is desperate, but usually he will part with no more than half, or a quarter for smaller but still important labors. These rewards will usually be in items of rich Splendor.

Source	Wealth	Common	Rich	Jewelry	Magic
Humble Ceorl	60s	25% small	5% small	10% one	1% 1 item
Prosperous Ceorl or Gesith	360s	1 small 50% large	25% small	one item 25% +1d4	5% 1 item
Minor Lord or Poor Abbot	3,600s	1d4 small 1 large 50% vast	1 small 50% large	1d4 items 50% +1d6	25% 1 item
Rich Lord or Prosperous Abbot	18,000s	1d8 small 1d4 large 1 vast	1d4 small 1 large 25% vast	2d6 items 50% +1d10	one item 25% +1d2
Ealdorman or Poor Bishop	36,000s	2d10 small 1d10 large 1d4 vast	2d6 small 1d6 large 1d4 vast	4d6 items 50% +1d10	1d4 items 50% +1d4
King or Rich Bishop	60,000s	2d12 small 1d20 large 1d8 vast	2d10 small 1d10 large 1d8 vast	4d10 items	1d8 items 50% +1d6
Small Cache in a Ruined Caester	120s	-	1 small	1 item 25% +1d4	10% 1 item
Loot found with Roaming Warband	240s	1 small 50% +1d4	1 small	50% 1 item	5% 1 item
Plunder Kept in a Bandit Lair	720s	1d4 small 50% large	1 small 50% large	1d4 items 50% +1d4	25% 1 item
Minor Hoarding Monster's Riches	1,800s	1 small 25% large	1 small 50% large	1d4 items 50% +1d4	50% 1 item
Treasury of a Dead Roman Magistrate	7,200s	-	1 small 50% large	1d6 items 50% +1d4	1 item 25% +1d4
Magical Tools of a Dead Artifex	7,200s	-	25% small	1d4 items	1d4 items 25% +1d4
Arxborn Chieftain's Treasure Room	10,800s	1d6 small 1d4 large 50% vast	1d4 small 1 large 1 vast	4d6 items	1 item 50% +1d4
Lost Roman City Treasury	60,000s	-	3d6 vast	4d10 items	2d4 items

dJO	Treasure	Value
1	Torc	120d
2	Finger ring	40d
3	Bracelet	80d
4	Girdle	80d
5-7	Brooch	40d
8	Crucifix	80d
9	Arm ring	80d
0	Chain	40d

*A king is a ring-giver, but the rings of the scop's song are not finger-rings, but heavy arm or sword-hilt rings.*

dJO	Metal	Mult.
1	Iron	x0.25
2-4	Copper	x.5
5-6	Bronze	x1
7-8	Silver	x4
9	Gold	x16
10	Strange or wondrous work; roll twice and take highest	

*Remember, there are 4 pence in a shilling and 60 shillings in a pound.*

dJO	Qualities	Mult.
1	Engraved	x1.5
2	Gemmed	x4
3	Enameled	x2
4	Simple	x0.75
5	Intricate	x1.5
6	Damaged	x0.5
7	Near-ruined	x0.1
8	Large	x1.5
9	Roll twice on d8, apply both	
0	Roll thrice on d8, apply all	

These tables show the relative worth of treasures that might be given as gifts or earned through bold plunder. When a GM needs a piece of plunder for a hero, he may roll or pick first from the treasure table adjacent. Each type of treasure has a base value in pence given beside it.

Next, he shall roll on this table to see what its predominant metal may be. Multiply the base value by this metal. Thus, an iron bracelet is worth 5d, and a golden chain is worth 160d. If the metal is strange or marvelous, think of what it might look like and roll twice, taking the best result for its worth.

Then he will roll upon this table to see what special qualities the item may have, whether one, or perhaps two, or even three. Thus, that golden chain may also be gemmed, thus becoming worth 640 shillings, or that iron bracelet may be almost ruined, making it worth tuppence. See page 67 to find an item's Splendor.

As ever, the GM should merely take these tables as guidance. If a particular treasure is wanted at a particular worth, you need but make it so.



The table below gives entries for common types of plunder that might be found in bandit lairs, the storehouses of abbots and lords, or in the ruins of Roman caesters. Each item of loot generally counts as one item of encumbrance, and the value in pence given is for each item. Particularly bulky items, such as grain baskets or mead casks, may count as two or even three encumbrance items apiece.

## COMMON LOOT ITEMS

D00	MUNDANE ITEM	VALUE	SIZE OF THE FIND		
			SMALL	LARGE	VAST
1-4	Animal fat	1	1d10	2d10	3d20
5-8	Bronze ingots	10	1d10	1d20	4d20
9-12	Carved artwork	3	1d4	2d6	4d6
13-16	Carved furniture	5	1d4	2d6	2d12
17-20	Carved housewares	2	1d6	2d10	2d20
21-24	Cattle	20	1d6 animals	2d10 animals	3d20 animals
25-28	Cheese	1	1d10	2d20	4d20
29-32	Copper ingots	8	1d10	1d20	4d20
33-36	Finished clothing	30	1d4	2d8	2d20
37-40	Good pottery	2	1d10	1d20	2d20
41-44	Grain	0.5	1d20	1d100	2d100
45-48	Hard bread	1	1d10	1d100	2d100
49-52	Horses	120	1 animal	1d6 animals	2d10 animals
53-56	Iron ingots	5	1d10	1d20	4d20
57-60	Iron tools	8	1d10	1d20	3d20
61-64	Leather	10	1d4	2d6	2d20
65-68	Linen cloth roll	40	1d4	2d8	3d10
69-72	Mead casks	20	1d4	2d6	2d20
73-76	Metal housewares	4	1d4	2d8	4d6
77-80	Pigs	10	1d8 animals	3d10 animals	4d20 animals
81-84	Salt	2	1d10	1d20	4d20
85-88	Sheep	5	2d6 animals	2d20 animals	5d20 animals
89-92	Tin ingots	8	1d10	1d20	4d20
93-96	Unfinished wool	1	1d10	1d100	3d100
97-00	Wool cloth roll	30	1d6	2d10	2d20

**When a TROUPE OUGHT** to contain something more precious than barley or salt, then the table below can give a result. As with **Rich Loot Items** common goods, each item generally counts as one item of encumbrance, with the value of each in pence given accordingly. Very small items such as coins might have no encumbrance at all, while beautiful furniture of inlaid woods might be too heavy to move without a cart or two strong men.

While more valuable than common loot items, these goods can be harder to actually barter. Any man needs a cow, after all, while far fewer will die without a silk tunic. They are best used as gifts and means of winning the friendship of lords and followers rather than as a means of common exchange.

D20	PRECIOUS ITEM	VALUE	SIZE OF THE FIND		
			SMALL	LARGE	VAST
1	Beautiful furs	40	1d6	2d8	3d10
2	Books	120	1d4	2d6	3d8
3	Brocaded cloth	150	1d6	2d10	2d20
4	Exotic spices	300	1d4	2d6	3d8
5	Fine clothing	60	1d4	2d6	3d10
6	Fine leather goods	40	1d8	2d10	3d12
7	Foreign artwork	120	1d4	2d6	3d10
8	Frankish wine, gallon	40	1d6	2d8	3d10
9	Glass housewares	240	1d4	2d8	3d10
10	Gold ingot	1,200	1d4	2d6	3d10
11	Honey cask	40	2d4	2d8	3d10
12	Musical instruments	80	1	1d6	2d6
13	Rare Perfume	120	1d4	2d6	2d10
14	Roman housewares	80	1d6	2d10	3d12
15	Sceatta coins	1	1d6x10	2d10x10	1d100x10
16	Silk cloth roll	4,800	1	1d4	2d6
17	Silk clothing	2,400	1	1d6	2d8
18	Silver housewares	120	1d6	2d10	3d12
19	Silver ingot	80	1d10	3d10	4d20
20	Splendid furniture	160	1d4	1d8	2d10

**It may be that** you are not certain what manner of goods a man might keep on his person, and when the heroes go to plunder the corpses of their foemen they may ask you what sort of riches they find. The table below offers some suggestions on the matter, allowing you to roll a d20 and a d6 together to find an item of loot.

## Petty Personal Goods

The greatest treasure on a warrior is usually his weapon and shield, or his armor if he is rich enough to have a mail shirt. The weapons and harness of monstrous foes and hellbound *fifels* are abhorrent to Godly warriors, however, and few will want gift of such ill-omened iron.

Most of the items below are too petty to have more than a shilling or two of value, if any at all, yet any ceorl or humble man would be pleased to get most of them as gifts. Some might suit even richer men's tastes.

d20	Petty Goods (1-3)	d20	Petty Goods (4-6)
1	Good pair of boots	1	Silver brooch or bracelet
2	Small well-wrought knife	2	Embroidered cloak
3	Cheap brooch or bracelet	3	Jewel-hilted belt knife
4	Plain but sturdy cloak	4	Small book of psalms
5	Piece of cheese	5	Satchel of Frankish spices
6	Loaf of bread	6	An unset gemstone
7	Leather satchel	7	Small silver saint's image
8	Ass-wiping moss	8	Small wrought metal cross
9	Small carved cross	9	Glass goblet
10	Bundle of seasoning herbs	10	Flask of perfumed oil
11	Loose spearhead	11	Jug of good mead
12	Bone hair comb	12	Tooled leather belt or boots
13	Handful of dried meat	13	Small fine-quality weapon
14	Good whetstone	14	Little silver mirror
15	Pouch of salt	15	Carved Roman statuette
16	Well-worn hatchet	16	A few silver coins
17	Herbs wrapped in a charm	17	Well-fashioned hand harp
18	Animal-tooth necklace	18	Brightly-dyed shirt
19	Warm wool blanket	19	Piece of fine folded linen
20	Carved wooden cup	20	Silver tweezers and nail-picks



**OBJECTS OF MARVELOUS POWER** are not common among the English. While the old books speak much of the wonders of the Artifexes that aided Rome in her conquest of all the world, these old marvels have long since been lost to time, only ragged ends and remnants remaining to the present day.

More than this, items of magic are mistrusted by men who love God. The Artifexes were all too often pagans in their practices and users of unclean knowledge. So it is that things of magic are forbidden to Saints and shunned by the godly and pious among our people.

Yet adventurers of other stripes often find it needful to dare what decent men might shy from doing, and so they take up old relics and strange elixirs in service of their ends. So too, lords and kings are known to put by some store of these goods, the pious saying only that they would keep them secure from unlawful hands, and the pragmatic keeping them back for their own needs. Such lords are known to sometimes make gifts of them to adventurers as tokens of favor for services well-performed. Even abbots have been known to pass off these goods to adventurers as gifts, if only to have them taken far away from the minster.

**MAGICAL WEAPONS** in particular are favored by heroes, and it is no strange thing that a lord might have a sword of giantish make or a spear once favored by an Artifex's art. Sometimes these weapons are cursed with old and terrible fates, and drag their wielders with them to ruin, but such is their power that men dare that evil risk. How can they do otherwise, when there are some supernatural foes that cannot even be harmed by cleaner steel?

**ELIXIRS** are the product of old arts, kept stoppered in vials of pale glass or flasks of bronze. A Galdorman may puzzle out their purpose with the right spell or patient time, and the wisest among them might even learn the formulas for brewing more of such things.

**RELICS** are such things as are neither elixirs nor sorceled blades, such old tools and tokens as have survived the long years since Rome's fall. They are the most unpredictable and unusual of items, some trifling in their power, others terrible in their work. Even the pettiest ones are still rare wonders, however. I have heard tell of some lands where every village has a magic pot or an ever-burning torch, but such a thing is not the case with us.



**These objects are relics** of Rome or of her Artifices, though some are the handiwork of cunning Galdormen or sinister *dru*. Most can be used more than once, though a few have limited utility before their power is exhausted or their substance used up.

## Relic Items

Most are clearly magical in nature, or at least uncanny in seeming, though it may take a Galdorman to discern the particular details of their function.

It is generally forbidden for a Saint to directly willingly use any of these items, though they may lawfully tolerate their use by others or benefit indirectly from their employment. The GM should not be too particular on this point, but merely keep mindful not to let the Saint himself be lax.

**BAG OF THORNS:** Joint-long thorns of oily black wood fill this small satchel.

When cast on the ground at a point within thirty feet, they form a circle of perilous ground five feet in radius around the target point. All creatures within the area or those who attempt to move into or through it must spend their Main Action avoiding the thorns or suffer 2d6 damage from their venomous bite. If the area is lit only by torchlight or worse, a foe must make a Wis/Notice check at difficulty 10 to even notice the thorns. The thorns lose their special virtue at the end of the scene, but an empty Bag of Thorns refills with fresh barbs each day at midnight.

**BITTER LOAF:** A Bitter Loaf appears as an unappetizing, half-eaten loaf of grayish rye bread, albeit one that produces a peculiar tingling on the skin of those who touch it. The loaf is extremely tough and difficult to chew. Indeed, a diner never manages to eat more than half of it before they find the heel is completely dry, hard, and inedible.

Ⓓ20	Relic
1	Bag of Thorns
2	Bitter Loaf
3	Brass Clavis
4	Brazen Limb
5	Broken Blade
6	Changing Hide
7	Curse-Box
8	Dwarf-stone
9	Eoten's Axe
10	Everlasting Lamp
11	Faerie Jewel
12	Gills of the Nicor
13	Haeg-Hair Noose
14	Horn of the Victor
15	Perspicacious Speculum
16	Red Cement
17	Roman Armor
18	Roman Vexillum
19	Scarred Shield
20	Stick of Storms

The half they ate is sufficient to sustain them with no additional food for the day, however, and the next morning the loaf regrows to its former half-eaten condition. Those who eat of the loaf automatically lose one Splendor reroll for the day they might otherwise be allowed; even if others can't see it, they know they've supped on miserable and uncanny fare.

**BRASS CLAVIS:** A heavy key of molded brass and iron, the Brass Clavis has been sorceled by the Artifexes to open seals and locks. When it touches a closed object or magical ward, it attempts to force it open. Mundane locks and portals are automatically opened, while magical ones force the bearer to make a Mental saving throw to successfully break the ward. On a failure to open a magical ward, a Brass Clavis has a 2-in-6 chance of being ruined by the attempt. In all cases, the Brass Clavis makes a thunderous booming noise as it attempts to open the object, alerting all within bowshot of the bearer and forcing an immediate wandering monster check if within an Arx or caester.

**BRAZEN LIMB:** Roman Artifexes fashioned these splendid brass limbs for the sake of wealthy centurions or gladiators who had lost important extremities. The Roman veterans who colonized British cities brought many of them hence. They affix themselves magically to the stump or body of the injured subject, healing no hit point damage but allowing them normal sensations of touch and normal use of the limb. Scars that would destroy or damage the limb they replace have even odds of destroying the brazen limb; if not, the Scar is ignored. To determine the limb's type, roll 1d8: 1-2 is an arm, 3-4 is a leg, 5 is a hand, 6 is a nose or ear, 7 is an eye, and 8 is some rarer organ. If distinction must be made between male or female, roll 1d6: 1-5 means it was made for a man, 6 means it was for a maimed woman. A similar roll can be used to distinguish between left or right limbs, with 1-4 being a right limb and 5-6 being left. A brazen limb can be removed from its owner only through death or an amputation which renders them Mortally Wounded. It is not considered flagrantly un-Christian to use a brazen limb at need, but very pious souls will shun the use of them as ungodly.

**BROKEN BLADE:** Found as a shattered spearhead, broken sword hilt, cracked seax-blade, or other fragment of a weapon, the Broken Blade is always carefully wound around with silver wire and small charms. When carried next to the skin, non-magical weapons of that type cannot harm the bearer, though any such weapon of that type that they attempt to use will never successfully hit, either. A man can benefit from only one Broken Blade at a time.



**CHANGING HIDE:** An enchanted beast-skin, often that of a stag or bear. One who wraps himself in the hide will transform into the corresponding animal until he ends the effect as a Main Action. While transformed, he retains his usual attributes and statistics, but gains the natural attacks and movement of the beast. If a wearer is Mortally Wounded while in a transformed shape, he reverts to his true form and the hide is ruined.

**CURSE-BOX:** Magnificent engravings adorn this small box, depicting many matters of consequence to Galdormen. One who performs a spell or ritual may, at the moment of its completion, cast it into the box instead of casting it normally. Any Sorcery used to fuel the spell is not recovered until the box is opened once more as an On Turn action and the spell is released. Targets and other details of the spell's direction are chosen when the box is opened. It is dangerous to carry multiple filled Curse-Boxes; if one is opened, there is a 2-in-6 chance that all the others burst open as well, all automatically targeted at the bearer in the most inconvenient ways possible.

**DWARF-STONE:** These black, oily stones are the size of a child's fist, smelling of decay and putrescence. One who bears the stone may suffer a thousand plagues and sicknesses, but will show no signs of any of them so long as he carries it next to his skin, though he remains contagious to others. If the stone is removed the bearer immediately suffers the full effects of the sickness at whatever stage it would naturally be in at the time until the stone can be recovered. Use of these stones is considered pagan and reprehensible.

**EOTEN'S AXE:** These magnificent axes are huge and unwieldy, requiring two hands for a human wielder. They do 1d10 damage and have a Shock value of 2/AC 15 if used as a weapon, but their chief virtue is in hewing trees or lumber, carving through wood with effortless ease. The bearer can chop a hole as big as they are in a wooden barrier as a Main Action and can cut through vines or other plant obstructions as an On Turn action. Any carpentry-related skill checks employing the axe gain a +1 bonus.

**EVERLASTING LAMP:** Appearing as a terracotta Roman lamp engraved with intricate sigils, the Everlasting Lamp's flame provides no heat, but will consume no oil. It casts light out to a twenty-foot radius around the bearer and requires a free hand to carry it. If it is dropped or treated roughly, there is an even-odds chance of it shattering.

**FAERIE JEWEL:** An ornament of unearthly make, fashioned of ice, or wind, or frozen fire, or some other impossible thing. It adds two Splendor to the bearer, yet the greatly pious will not wear such an un-Christian and per-

haps cursed artifact. The bearer may shatter the ornament as a Main Action to unleash its substance against a visible foe, inflicting 5d6 damage against them with a Physical save for half damage. Some jewels may have other effects, however, such as turning a foe to stone, enrapturing them with love, or otherwise doing something to reflect its uncanny substance.

**GILLS OF THE NICOR:** These enchanted, withered black fronds of a sea-nicor's gills may be bound around the wearer's throat as a necklace. So long as they are worn, the wearer cannot drown, and sees through water as if it were well-lit air.

**HAEG-HAIR NOOSE:** A sinister noose woven from the hair of a *haeg*, this enchanted snare can move of its own volition to catch and strangle. When cast on the ground, it becomes the equivalent of a monster with 10 HP, an Attack bonus of +5, a movement rate of 20', and an AC of 15 that seeks the nearest foe. When it attacks a standing man-sized creature, a hit will do no damage but will knock the creature prone. When it attacks a prone creature, it inflicts 1d6 damage from strangling on a hit, and will automatically continue to strangle each round until the creature is dead or it is destroyed. When it's strangling a creature no weapon larger than a seax is nimble enough to hack at it without maiming the victim. Nooses return to their user on command but cannot be repaired, and are destroyed at zero hit points.

**HORN OF THE VICTOR:** A cow horn that summons a magical drink, the Horn of the Victor has been enchanted to fill with magical mead once per day. If a warrior drinks this mead immediately after a battle in which they fought, regardless of their success in it, they will receive 1d6 hit points of magical healing. That warrior must make a Physical saving throw to avoid mild drunkenness, however, suffering a -2 penalty on hit rolls and -1 on skill rolls for the next hour. The mead loses its magical properties if it is stored in any other container.

**PERSPICACIOUS SPECULUM:** This speculum is a magnificent Roman mirror of polished silver or gold. Within it, an ensorceled person or magical object is shown with a faint glow of color limning them. If the subject is a shape-shifter, a dim shadow of their true appearance is echoed in the speculum. The mirror is polished metal, and so the reflection is too dim to be effectively interrogated unless viewed from within six feet of the subject.

**RED CEMENT:** An enchanted Roman cement that appears ruddy in hue, Red Cement may be mixed with water and hurled as a Main Action at any point

within sixty feet. When it lands, it immediately forms a shape desired by the user, provided the shape can fit within a fifteen-foot cube, and hardens almost instantly into a tough gray stone. Basic architectural shapes may be formed but more delicate work is beyond the material. Creatures within the area of effect must depart it by the end of their next turn or they will be trapped in the rock. Once hardened, the substance is as tough and obdurate as any other stone.

**ROMAN ARMOR:** While the legions of Rome marched in segmented steel that has long since turned to rust, some of their suits were enchanted by Artifexes to resist the tooth of time. This superior armor grants an AC of 18 and bestows two points of Splendor on the bearer. There is a chance the suit was enchanted to even greater strength for the benefit of some rich centurion; 20% of these suits grant an AC of 19, and 5% bestow an AC of 20. Such potent harness is always extravagantly ornate and wrought with splendid bronze adornments.

**ROMAN VEXILLUM:** One of the splendid insignia of the Roman legions, these smaller banners were not so honored as the great legionary aquilla, but were still potently enchanted by the Artifexes to bring victory in war. When a vexillum is presented during battle, all allies of the bearer can ignore the first failed Morale check of the fight. If the enemy captures the vexillum, however, all allies must immediately make a Morale check. The bearer of a vexillum requires two hands to hold it but is immune to non-magical missile weapons. The staff itself is a weapon with 1d8 damage and no Shock.

**SCARRED SHIELD:** A shield that assuages its bearer's sufferings, the Scarred Shield automatically absorbs into itself the most troublesome of the bearer's Scars. Uncanny phantom limbs or organs are created as necessary to alleviate the wound, so long as the shield remains within twenty feet of the bearer. If the same sort of Scar is suffered again by the bearer, however, the shield shatters into pieces.

**STICK OF STORMS:** An ash branch as long as a man's forearm, carved with small runes of binding wind and lightning. When broken in two, a terrible tempest roars forth in the direction the user is facing, forming a column thirty feet wide and a hundred feet long. All creatures of man-size or smaller in the area are thrown to the ground and suffer 3d6 damage from lightning, hail, and drenching rain. The gust has a 2-in-6 chance of knocking down even a hall, and will inevitably topple over lighter constructions. The stick is useless once broken.



**ELIXIRS OF MAGICAL POWER** require a Main Action to apply, assuming the vial is Readied and close to hand. While they often glow, shimmer, give forth a strange heat, or otherwise indicate their uncanny nature, some are so subtle that only a Galdorman's arts can pick them out. Each vial contains a single dose of the elixir.

## MAGICAL ELIXIRS

Many elixirs are relics of old Roman craft or the work of aged Galdormen long dead. It is not considered especially Christian to use elixirs, and Saints are forbidden most of them, but as with other magical items it is not generally considered an act of outright pagantry.

To drink an elixir requires a Main Action and that it be Ready to hand.

**ADRAMELECH'S PISS:** Fetid and thin, this oil is spread upon a person or object.

For the next hour, no mundane flame will burn them, nor will any smoke choke them. If magical flame would harm them, they may make a Physical saving throw to resist it, and suffer only half damage even on a failure.

**ANTIQUÉ GARUM:** Magical fish-sauce grown only more potent with the years, this liquid renders anything it is poured upon both edible, nourishing, and soft enough to be masticated. The flavor would be celebrated by a Roman epicure, but is most horrible to English palates. A single flask can soften up to a man's volume of non-magical matter. If hurled as a weapon, it shatters and forces all non-Romans within ten feet of it to make a Physical saving throw or be debilitated with nausea for 1d4 rounds, unable to do more than move and defend themselves.

**AQUEOUS HUMOR:** The drinker of this clear, gelatinous elixir gains a brief, sharp vision of their immediate sur-

020	ELIXIR
1	Adramelech's Piss
2	Antique Garum
3	Aqueous Humor
4	Artifex's Oil
5	Balm of Gilead
6	Berserker's Blood
7	Draught of the Consul
8	Elixir of Maiden's Refuge
9	Faerie Wine
10	Flask of Night
11	Honey of Mercy
12	Liquid Manna
13	Mason's Unguent
14	Mead of the Raider's Lamp
15	Mead of Wisdom
16	Scop's Draught
17	Silphion Resin
18	Vial of Allure
19	Vile Poison
20	Werwolf's Philtre

roundings out to fifty feet in radius, gaining an impression of any creatures, objects, or passageways that the GM thinks would interest them. The vision remains in memory for no more than five rounds, but that time is enough for most to draw a competent map of what they have seen. Fine details cannot be perceived with this elixir, but only a sentence or two about any creatures or objects of note.

**ARTIFEX'S OIL:** Strange golden oil that repairs and restores what it touches.

Broken objects and damaged non-magical devices can be fixed by a vial of this oil, provided at least half the components are present, even if they have been burnt to ash. It has no effect upon living creatures, though it instantly cures all damage in man-sized magical constructs. A single flask of this oil can restore any object no larger than one a man could lift.

**BALM OF GILEAD:** Randomly cures one Scar, causing damaged tissue to regrow.

If this elixir is used more than once per month, the user must make a Physical saving throw or permanently lose one point from a randomly-determined attribute as they are debilitated by the stress of the healing.

**BERSERKER'S BLOOD:** Causes immediate berserk rage in the drinker. If facing foes, the hero may roll all attack and damage rolls twice, taking the better roll, and ignores four points of damage from each source of injury he may suffer while the elixir has him in its grip. Each round, he must make a successful Mental saving throw if he does anything not immediately related to killing someone in melee or moving to where he can kill someone in melee; on a failure, he can do nothing but pursue his bloody end. To end the berserk he must spend a Main Action and make a Mental saving throw; on a failure, he instead uses that Main Action to seek the death of the nearest living creature, friend or foe. When the elixir ends, for each round the hero spent berserk he suffers 1d4 points of damage. This strain may Mortally Wound him. The berserk never lasts longer than a scene.

**DRAUGHT OF THE CONSUL:** These flasks of sorceled Falernian wine were luxuries of great magistrates in times when vigor was needful. When imbibed, the user instantly becomes bathed, well-coiffed in the Roman style, and their clothing is cleaned and mended of all mundane harms. Drunkenness and exhaustion are banished and 1d4 hit points of damage are instantly healed. Such is the user's imposing appearance that they gain one point of Splendor until the effect fades, either when they are smirched with grime or the next sunrise comes.

**ELIXIR OF MAIDEN'S REFUGE:** The drinker falls into a state indistinguishable from death, having apparently perished from poison. Their flesh chills, their body stiffens, their skin is blotched with foul colors, and they exude a repulsive stench that causes even monstrous creatures to shun their corpse as inedible. They remain aware of all that transpires in their presence, and may end the imposture and rise again whenever they wish. The elixir lasts no longer than twelve hours in any case, though for six rounds after the elixir's effect ends, the imbiber may dig through up to five feet of loose earth or cairn-stones per round if circumstances so require.

**FAERIE WINE:** A wine of Faerie that brings that far realm disturbingly close. When drunk, for the remainder of the scene the hero may pass through the borderlands of Faerie with their normal movement. They appear to instantly vanish from one place and appear in the other without passing through the intervening space, assuming there is room to receive them at their destination. There is probably nothing in the corresponding area of Faerie inclined to harm them. The wine is very strong, however, and the drinker must make a Physical saving throw or be rendered slightly drunk by it, suffering a -2 penalty to hit rolls and a -1 penalty to skill checks for the rest of the scene.

**FLASK OF NIGHT:** When hurled upon a hard surface, the flask will break and plunge all within thirty feet of the impact into blackest night, impenetrable by non-magical illumination. The one who broke the flask can see through this darkness. The effect lasts for the rest of the scene. If drunk, the hapless imbiber vomits darkness for 1d4 rounds, creating a haze of wispy blackness around him and rendering himself unable to do anything else for that time.

**HONEY OF MERCY:** Heals 1d6+1 lost hit points of damage via magic, including stabilizing and reviving the Mortally Wounded. This blessed honey has been known to be made by certain Saints, and so it is not offensive to a Saint's Shame to benefit from it or personally use it upon others.

**LIQUID MANNA:** Milky and sweet, this thick liquid banishes hunger and thirst for a week in one who drinks it, heals 1d6 lost hit points, and renders them impervious to poisons for the next hour.

**MASON'S UNGUENT:** A thick paste that softens stone where it is spread. There is enough unguent in a flask to soften five ten-by-ten foot cubes of stone, allowing them to be shaped as if they were soft clay or dense mud. The effect of the unguent lasts for the rest of the scene before the stone hardens once more. A determined burrower can pass through five feet of softened



stone in a round, if making a hole is their only concern, and create a sixty-foot-long tunnel with a flask before it runs out. Shaping stone within an Arx is relatively safe within its bounds, but attempting to pass outside its perimeter this way is either futile or fatal.

**MEAD OF THE RAIDER'S LAMP:** An enchanted mead that causes the drinker to cast a special light. The radiance they exude extends up to sixty feet from them but can only be seen by them and their chosen allies. All else see only the ordinary light of the place. The radiance lasts for an hour.

**MEAD OF WISDOM:** A sweet golden elixir that gives the drinker good counsel. The first puzzle, mystery, or conundrum contemplated by the drinker after they have quaffed the mead must be answered by the GM with the best course of action the GM thinks the hero could take toward unraveling the truth, given their goals and the facts of the matter. The mead will not entirely reveal secrets, but will always point the hero to where the truth of such things may be found. More than one flask of the mead cannot assist with the same puzzle.

**SCOP'S DRAUGHT:** Sweet mead is enchanted with pleasing words. Those who drink it gain a +2 bonus on all social skill checks to charm, persuade, or beguile another for the rest of the scene. The honeyed temper it grants is ill-suited to war, however, and the imbiber must roll all attack rolls twice and take the worst while under its effect.

**SILPHION RESIN:** A Roman specific against pregnancy enchanted to greater effect. The man or woman who consumes it will be rendered sterile for three months, and any child within them at the time will die. If it is taken again during those three months, they will be made sterile forever, barring a mercy from God. This elixir is even more reprehensible in the eyes of the Church than most Roman sorcery, and has been known to be used to cruelly cut off hopes of heirs by certain wicked poisoners.

**VIAL OF ALLURE:** This liquid is intended to be cast upon some nearby surface, causing it to exude a fragrance irresistible to beasts or monsters with bestial minds. The creatures must make a Mental save or they will flock to the place the vial was broken, snuffling about and ignoring all else save actual physical attacks for ten minutes until they are convinced nothing pleasant awaits them there. One who drinks this liquid becomes the invariable target of all beasts that are present, who will seek to devour him even if otherwise placid and herbivorous. If no beasts are immediately present, the GM may make a wandering monster check to see if any come hurrying to the scent.

**VILE POISON:** A terrible concoction of sinister juices, this sorcerous poison forces an imbiber to make an immediate Physical save or fall dead on the spot, with no hope of survival. If mixed into food or drink it adopts the color and taste of the food. If smeared upon a weapon and used to strike a creature it forces a Physical save to avoid death, though it is worn away after the first successful hit. On a natural hit roll of 1, the wielder has nicked himself and must save or perish. Whether on a weapon or in a cup, the poison goes stale and harmless after an hour.

**WERWOLF'S PHILTRE:** Transforms the imbiber into a beast, most commonly a wolf if some other animal is not clearly imagined by the user when the elixir is drunk. They retain the mind of a man and all their attributes, hit points, attack bonus, and other capabilities, but gain the natural weapons, movement speed and manner of whatever beast they have become. The elixir cannot transform a subject into an unnatural or monstrous creature. The philtre's effects last until the next dawn; it may be ended early by focused concentration, but such forestalling requires a minute of uninterrupted attention. If the hero is Mortally Wounded, they return to their true form instantly.

**UNLIKE MOST OBJECTS OF** sorcery, the brewing of elixirs is not unknown among English Galdormen. Some few Saints have been known **BREWING**  
to fashion marvelous potions, but such is a special gift of God **ELIXIRS**  
seldom given to any, and PC heroes are unlikely to be the gentle and wise hermits who are most likely to receive such blessings.

For a Galdorman, it is necessary to know the recipe for an elixir. This must be learned as if it were a Major spell. Petty Galdormen are not wise enough to learn such arts, and finding a teacher who knows such a formula may be difficult. Thus, some must be found in ancient books of lore, or puzzled out as if the Galdorman were devising a new spell.

Once the formula is obtained, the Galdorman must spend an adventure gathering the necessary ingredients, going into some perilous weald or fetching some monstrous ingredient to make the magic, the whole effort of a difficulty and duration that seems appropriate to the GM. If all the needful things are gathered, a single dose of the desired elixir can be made.

This may seem a niggling reward for such a great effort, but such is best. If a Galdorman may remedy a Scar with an evening's boiling or fashion a wine-skin of healing draught with a week's labor, much will go awry with a game.

**ALL SCOPS SING LONG** of the shining swords of old, of the great blades borne by the mighty and the giant-wrought harness of heroes. Finding such relics is an uncommon thing, but they do yet remain to be found by the bold and the brave of hand.

## MAGICAL WEAPONS

Magical weapons have a bonus of +1, or seldom +2, or in the rarest and mightiest of occasions, even +3. This bonus is added to the Shock, attack rolls, damage rolls, and Splendor value of weapons. Weapons that do no Shock to begin with, such as bows or hurled spears, do not gain any in this way.

Magical armor and shields do exist, as noted in the Relics section of this book, but they seldom are enchanted in ways that merely improve Armor Class. Most often they have special powers or unique blessings of your devising.

Magical weapons and armor are impervious to rust and decay, albeit not intentional destruction, and so they often stand out by their excellent condition even before their splendid workmanship is noticed. Many magical weapons date back to the time of *eoten*-rule, for they are great smiths, or to the wondrous work of Roman Artifexes, or even to an English smith blessed by talent beyond mortal measure.

To determine the nature of a magical weapon, roll upon the tables below, first to find the manner of the weapon, then the strength of its enchantment, and then if needful upon the list of special powers. A GM should feel free to devise his own unique graces for mighty weapons of old, or to borrow the magical weapons of other gaming traditions that please him. Remember too, however, that a foe who knows the worth of steel will wield it for himself.

D10	Weapon	D100	Bonus	D10	Weapon	Special Power
1	Sword	1-50	+1	1		Glow like a torch when drawn
2	Sword	51-64	+0, Special	2		Returns after being thrown
3	Sword	65-79	+1, Special	3		Can cut stone like wood
4	Spear, Broad	80-89	+2	4		Treats all foes as AC 10 for Shock
5	Spear, Broad	90-94	+2, Special	5		Cries out before an ambush
6	Spear, Barbed	95-98	+3	6		Shatters to save the bearer's life once
7	Axe	99-00	+3, Special	7		Adds +2 to damage rolls on a hit
8	Bow	<i>Roll or pick from the adjacent table for Special powers.</i>		8		+1d8 damage to supernatural foes
9	Seax			9		Bearer ignores flames
0	Knife			0		Cursed; user dies if Mortally Wounded



**I**T IS TO BE expected that foreigners should know little of English ways and be puzzled at how they may perform great deeds. Therefore in this portion of the book, I explain for the GM the ways in which they may entice their gamesmen to adventure and how they can construct splendid circumstances for deeds of daring courage.

In all of this, it must be remembered that this game is built upon a sandbox style of gamesmanship. While individual adventures may be found, or specific circumstances in need of mighty aid, there is no great epic planned beforehand for any of these heroes. Perhaps they will prosper, or it may be they will find a miserable end beneath Wealth spears or the talons of some Arxborn monstrosity. They do not have their hero-tale written until after they have earned it, if they even live to do so.

May it be written here now how I deplore “saga gamers”, who must have for every one of their heroes a tale laid out before them and a song in which they are to play a particular part. Some even go so far as to put aside the dice and resolve their gaming by mere turns of telling, or unseemly and deplorable use of mead-horns, whetstones, and other objects unsuitable for true gaming of old. They are not content to discover their hero’s tale through long evenings of play, but must know half the story before it is even told, and the other half they tell only to adorn it. I know not what they think to accomplish by such things, but by Saint Chad it is no true gaming. You will find none of it here in my book.<sup>1</sup>

Instead, stranger, I bid you embrace the strangeness and wonder of your tale, that you should find freshness in your deeds and marvel mightily at what becomes of them, You may know nothing of what will befall your band in the next session of play, and that very shadow will sweeten what comes of it. What joy is there for a GM who knows already how his story is to unfold? Better that it should come to him as a wonder, with his plans cast lightly upon the future and ever ready to turn to new ends.

Thus, attend now to the business of running this game and how you and your gamesmen are to manage its affairs.

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1 Brother Cornix leaves a frustrating lacuna here as to the existence of alternate gaming traditions in the eighth century, ones perhaps less represented in the monastic milieu of which he was part. Further description of these methods would have been highly pertinent to the discoveries made in the ruined forum of Eadwardsmipbe and their remarkable implication that the *Beowulf* poem may have been a transcript of an actual Northumbrian campaign.



**This is a way** to begin your work. It is not the only way, nor necessarily the best way for every band of gamesmen, but it is a way that works well for many and a way you may wield when no better method comes to your mind.

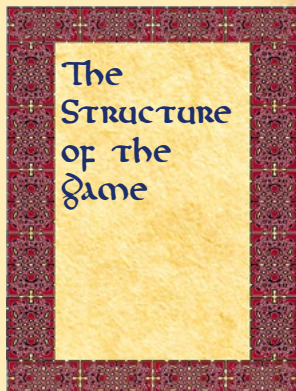
*Primus*, you must create an initial adventure for your heroes to introduce them into the world. This need not be a complex matter, and indeed, it is best if it is a little affair that you expect will be resolved in a single session. The purpose of this adventure is to introduce the gamesmen to the setting, the rules of the game, and to the other PCs. You must do this work before the first session of play.

*Secundus*, your gamesmen must create their heroes. It is best if this is all done at once as part of the first evening's play. Perhaps it is a different matter in your land, but in England a gamesman is loath to read too much of rules, if he can read at all, so do not presume your players have mastered the whole of the matter or have read everything you think they should have read. Merely make certain that every PC has some reason to trust the others. The warband must be one of friends, for no English warrior would ever be so mad as to willingly risk his life alongside men unloved by him.

*Tertius*, you must run the adventure for the heroes. Perhaps some will fall; do not hesitate to let replacement heroes enter in as quickly as possible, even if it strains the tale a little. It is rueful enough that a gamesman's hero must die, it is altogether worse indeed if he then cannot even play anew for a long while. Also, do not concern yourself with making the adventure go "correctly". If the gamesmen are finding pleasure in their sport, then it does not matter if they do as you expected they would, or even if they succeed by any mortal measure at all.

*Quartus*, at the end of the adventure, ask the gamesmen what they intend to do next. Your adventure should have held out a handful of further hooks to catch their interest and matters that might draw their attention. If they miss these, point them out bluntly as things they might pursue. If they pick on something you did not expect, then so be it; all that you need from them is a general idea of what manner of deeds they seek to pursue next.

*Quintus*, you must prepare materials for the next session, using what they have told you to plan out a new adventure related to their bold ambitions. You





need only create as much as you think will be needed to keep them occupied for their next session. If you have reason to suspect that their plans will miscarry greatly, or what they think will be a hard task will actually be done swiftly, you might make up a little diversion or encounter to eat up the extra time or distract them while they think of something new to pursue. If this turns out to be needless, then put your work aside and use it later when it is needed, perhaps with a change of names or details to make it fit your need then.

Notice what I have not written. It is not needful to plan out a whole campaign before you begin, nor to map half of Wessex for a game beginning in a minster there, nor must you marshal an army of lords, abbots, ceorls, and outlaws all arranged and settled upon the map for your heroes to encounter in their roamings. The only thing you must have for your heroes is enough material to manage the very next session, and nothing more than that.

Of course, GMs being as they are, you might take great pleasure in plotting out these things, and arranging your world neatly upon parchment so that you have such things to mind. There is no sin in this, and if you are taking genuine pleasure in it, then you may go on to do so. But remember that every poet has only so much inspiration, and so every GM must come to the end of his strength sooner or later. If you waste it on trifles you neither need nor delight in making, you will not have the strength to create what you truly need.

Thus is the law; ***if you are neither enjoying your work, nor will you need it for your very next session, then put down your quill.*** Stop before you exhaust yourself and waste your might in vain things. Concern yourself always with what you know you will need for the very next game, and let all else be done only so far as you are refreshed by the work.

Remember also to always keep your specific gamesmen in mind when crafting your work. You are not writing a book for all England to read, but only a game for some few specific souls. An adventure that would be splendid for most might fall dully on their ears, and the things they love best might be tedious or strange to the common run of players. You are not trying to make good fun for strangers, but for your own well-known friends and companions.

Thus, do not hesitate to change things and alter arrangement to best suit the needs of your specific players. If a rule is hateful to the group, then change it. If an English custom or habit is burdensome to them, then do not hesitate to alter it. Keep in mind always *why* you have chosen to play this game, and do not sacrifice this purpose to small conveniences, but do not quail from making the game your own in the ways that matter to you.

**Who among the English** has need of a band of heroes? Who will seek the aid of the PCs and offer them rich rewards for their assistance? If the gamesmen know little of English ways, they may be uncertain where it is they can even find a task worthy of their spears. Know these common patrons.

**Abbots and abbesses of minsters** are among the easiest patrons to engage. Any man might have reason to go to a minster to pray or seek the blessing of the monks, so the occupants are not surprised by new faces nor unaccustomed to far strangers. A half-dozen unlike heroes might all reasonably meet at a minster and resolve to seek glory there, much as the ancient gaming books speak of Roman heroes meeting together at a *taberna* to seek patronage from the

mysterious freeman who ever lurks in the corner. As a powerful man of land, wealth, and stern duty, the abbot will oftimes have much work for strangers.

**Lords and ealdormen** also seek help with such things as they dare not send their own men to do. Sometimes the matter will be a secret thing that cannot afford to be followed back to his hands, while other times the affair will be important enough to require action, yet not so grave as to demand a close friend be sent. Ealdormen and their score of followers must always be journeying through their domains in order to eat the *feorm* gathered there, so heroes could encounter them almost anywhere within the region. Lords and other men of substance will be reluctant to hand great affairs to strangers, but they will often be quick to give them small but bloody tasks to winnow out the fools from the war-wise. Those who do well will be trusted with greater things.

**Rich ceorls and other men of wealth** need strong spears too. They may not have the cattle or silver of a lord, but they have land and kinsmen enough to make it worth a warband's while to aid their purposes. Aiding a ceorl is not so glorious a thing, but it is also not so perilous; a lord may look darkly upon a warband that aids his rival, but he will care little about a ceorl's love.

**Kinsmen and good friends** of a hero may also call upon him and his allies to aid them. A GM must be careful about such patrons as these, as no honorable Englishman would ever turn a blind eye upon a peril to a kinsman, and a hero will feel a very great urge to aid them in their need. The gamesman may resent such tugging upon his hero's heartstrings, and be annoyed that he must give aid or be scorned by his own kin.



*Hermits and anchoresses* also have been known to petition strangers for aid against earthly woes. While these holy men and women need fear little from the devil, the troubles of men can sometimes reach them. Such persons are often powerful Saints, gifted with might to mend the wounds of others and blessings to lift baleful curses. A pious band of heroes might often be moved to extend what help they can.

These five kinds of patrons are perhaps the most common varieties to engage the help of adventurers. When you go on to build the body of your adventure, keep mindful of them as potential means by which to ensnare the heroes in the situation you have prepared for them.

**AN ADVENTURE IS BUILT** around a situation of conflict. Somewhere in England, there is a circumstance where forces are in contention, and the heroes are either drawn in or step forward to assist in resolving its end. There are times when the conflict is internal to the PCs, such as with the greed and glory-lust of heroes who seek to plumb an ancient caester's secrets, and there are times when the conflict is external, such as the wrath of rival lords seeking to better each other in their ealdorman's favor. In all these cases there are desires and things that thwart those desires, and the heroes are there to resolve the matter.

## CHOOSING A CONFLICT

As the GM, it is your duty to prepare situations in which the conflict is engaging to the heroes. Something must be going on that they care about, that they are willing to risk shame or death to partake in. It does not matter how finely-crafted your adventure is if nothing in it calls to the hearts of the heroes. You must use your own knowledge of your gamesmen to prevent this, and you must know the kind of things they like and those they detest. You must listen carefully to their plans at the end of each session so you may make adventures that speak to their ambitions. And if your gamesmen are so sluggish or confused that they cannot think of any ambitions on their own, you must hurl some before them like bait before beasts.

In this section I describe certain basic conflicts that can serve as the bones of your adventure, the essential element that is causing a clash of hearts, and perhaps of spears as well. These are common conflicts among the English, and many of them can be found almost anywhere we reside. If you desire a simple adventure, then pick only one of them, but if you want to baffle and perplex your heroes and weave a more subtle circumstance, then pick several and mesh them together.



**A CAESTER IS AN** abandoned Roman city, one where the Wealh went to die when our fathers roared forth from the foaming sea. The least-hidden treasures of these places were plundered long ago, but their dead citizens may have hidden some things yet, and so greed can drive a warband within the ancient walls to search the crumbling houses of stone. So too do outlaws and fearsome beasts oftimes lair within these empty halls. Honest Englishmen have little use for these places, for houses of stone are unhomey and fields too far for working.

**CONFLICTS  
IN  
CAESTERS  
AND  
ARXES**

Yet it has been so long since our conquest that the sealed Arxes of those ancient times are now falling open once more, and the twisted Arxborn and wretched remnants of those days now crawl out into the English air. They come out most often by night to prowl the stony streets, yet no hour of the day is wholly safe within the walls of an Arx-plagued caester. Heroes must go into these Arxes and slay or seal away the foes within if the city is to be made safe once more and the raiders no longer range out at night to harry English villages.

As much as Arxborn horrors, however, there are also perils of mortal kinds. Outlaws and renegades prosper in a caester, for the stone buildings are easily defended, and the twisting streets and tumbled halls make it a dangerous thing to pursue them. Many bands of thieves and vagabonds lair in empty caesters, roaming forth into the countryside to plunder English villages and waylay cattle. Some even pretend to be lords and chieftains, making a mockery of honest courts in their ruined palaces. Sometimes they can be dealt with by wary heroes, but other times the only words they understand are those writ in iron.

It is a common thing for a minster to be raised within a caester, commonly in the corner of the old city walls so that the old construction may serve for two of the minster's own walls. These bastions of holiness wield prayer to hold back the dark powers within a caester. Their abbots are almost always glad to see strangers willing to take spears into the ancient streets, to drive out with iron the things that must be driven. The minster may serve as a place of refuge and safety for such adventurers and a base to return to after each venture.

The woes owed to caesters are also sometimes found in the lands surrounding them. Mighty Beowulf's tale is rare in its splendor, but not in its circumstances. The wilds are grim and fearsome, full of fell creatures. Some are mere beasts, lurking in the weald to devour all that they can find, while

others have a terrible intelligence in mockery of men. They plan dark purposes and make bargains with fools, all that men should be confounded and slain.

A village has little recourse against a truly terrible monster. If the men go in great numbers, the beast can easily evade them, while a little band must surely perish before its talons and sorceries. Many intelligent abominations are wise enough to torment a hamlet only so much as it can bear, stealing and killing only enough to cause anguish and despair without driving the populace to desperate resistance. Some use the promise of mercy as a tool to bind poor wretches to their will, bidding them trade their souls and the promise of Heaven for the sake of a little peace on earth.

Each creature will have its own purposes. Some desire only to eat the flesh of men, while others seek to be honored as lords, or to win service to Hellbound gods, or to drive all mortals from the land they count their own. Some even desire no more than to be left alone in their solitude, and strike back savagely against any who would profane their loneliness. Some creatures can be parleyed with and persuaded to turn their anger away, but others respect only the spear.

Adventurers are commonly needed to deal with such enemies. They are strong enough to have a hope of defeating them in battle, yet they are few enough that they can creep up on an enemy unawares and deny them the chance of flight. They have a courage uncommon in ordinary ceorls and an eagerness for glory that can persuade them to undertake such doings. And if the worst comes to pass, their deaths will bereave no one in the village, nor require any great number of tears.



**A caester-crawl** is a good, simple adventure for players who know nothing of the English and are uneasy with our customs and ways. While many players may feel awkward over the proper behavior toward a king in his hall or an abbot in his minster, most know perfectly well how to delve into mysterious ruins and smite monstrous foes.

If you think your players may be uneasy with England, make sure to have at least one small caester ready to put before them. You can easily change its name or alter its location as the campaign requires, throwing it in when your players decide they wish to explore such a place. This is not like to an already-planned *fifel* who will appear no matter their road, for this caester will be drawn forth only when the heroes choose to seek it.



I **GRIEVE TO WRITE** it, but England is a land of troubles and quarrels. Every lord is a rival to his neighbors and every king is eager to be *bretwalda* over all the rest. The Wealh hate us in the west for what we have done, and the Scots in the north are seldom friends to us, nor are we over-loved by their neighbors the Picts whom we war with at times as well.

## CONFLICTS OF POLITICS

The scops sing much of war between lords, but it is not so simple as that. A strong king might marshal a mighty host of hundreds of warriors, an army to make the mountains ring, but such grand numbers come at bitter cost and leave scores of villages stripped of their best warriors. Even if he is met by his rival in the field, the battle may decide little unless he dies in the fighting or breaks his enemy so ferociously that his foe must admit his overlordship. Great armies oft make little change.

So it is that much dueling between lords is in smaller matters with surer results. Cattle raids, aid to their enemies, stirring up monsters within their domain, and even worse deeds of treachery, oathbreaking, assassination, and even kinslaying are all undertaken to topple an enemy lord. Good friends are suborned with silver or threats, and rivals are lent aid from mysterious hands.

In these bitter deeds, adventurers are often used as catspaws. If a wild band of outlaws should slay an ealdorman while he is out hunting, who can blame a far-distant lord? If ruffians should plunder a king's treasure-house or burn down his palace or carry off his wife and children, then that is plainly the work of damnable renegades and not the secret bidding of a rival ruler.

Prudent lords will not entrust a band of adventurers with truly delicate matters or shameful wickednesses until they are convinced of their trustworthiness and competence. Many would-be patrons will put them to tests at first, bidding them clear out an Arx to show their battle-prowess, or conclude a marriage agreement between one of their men and a rival's daughter as a show of their cunning, or some other tasks to sound out their skills. Only after they are proven will they be given work that might prove shameful to the common eye, or ruinous to the lord if it fails. Success in these things will bring silver, cattle, and the friendship of a lord. Some might even be elevated to sit in his hall as his loyal men, though adventurers often prefer a life less burdened by duty to one man alone.



**Every ceorl knows that** this is a fallen world, where the devil sends countless miseries to men and innumerable woes upon the righteous. Every year there is some fresh torment to afflict our people, and few are the villages that can go a twelvemonth without some grave pain to trouble them. These woes come in several kinds.

## CONFLICTS OF DISASTER

First and common are woes of famine. Perhaps the rains do not come in good season, or come overmuch, or the barley rots in the field, or the wheat is eaten up by vermin. In England, no man is ever wholly secure in his food, and even kings must ride from palace to palace if they are to find bread for their men. A village afflicted by famine is in a dire state, and a band of adventurers may be needed to undertake the dangerous deeds or speak the honeyed words that are required.

Also there are the miseries of plague. Sickened, unable to work the fields, shunned by their neighbors, a plague-stricken village needs strong heroes to bring them the sustenance they require if they are not all to perish, or drive out the *dweorgs* or vile monsters that are bringing the plague upon them.

There is also fell war to torment the ceorls. The Wealh creep always from the west, coming out of the hills and mountains to slay Englishmen and rob them of their goods. The Scots and Picts in the north are much the same, sometimes friends and sometimes reavers. And the armies of lords care little for the safety of their enemy's ceorls, and will burn villages and plunder herds with cheerful carelessness of the suffering they so inflict. There are times when heroes are needed not to turn back an army of fivescore men by their own steel, but merely to convince their masters to turn aside from some luckless village. When that cannot be done, heroes may be needed to escort precious supplies or defend a war-wounded hamlet from the raiders that might greedily pick their bones.

Last but not worst of all there is the righteous judgment of God upon the wicked. When a lord is too terrible or a people too sunk in sin, He sees to it that they are scourged by misfortunes and calamities, miraculous woes that lash the iniquitous and those who aid their evils. No human hand can avert these punishments, but if the wicked are reformed and brought to repent of their evils, they may yet save their lives and souls. At times adventurers are needed to discover the source of these divine displeasures and bring a righteous rebuke to those who incur them.

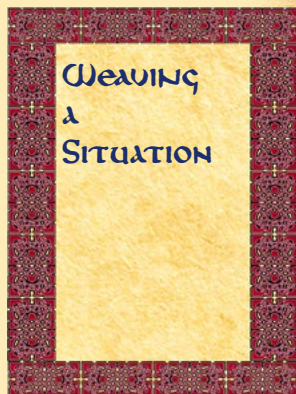
With one or more essential conflicts chosen as the pattern for your adventure, you must weave together several threads to make it suitable for play before the hearth. You must identify the people involved, the places that will matter, the perils that must be overcome, and the progress that may be expected from the situation if the heroes do not intervene.

Remember that you are building a situation, not a story. The aim is not to have a graceful plot such as Aristotle would admire, but to give your gamesmen an exciting circumstance where their prowess is useful and their participation is important. By watching it play out at the table, you will have the pleasure of surprise in seeing how the story ends and the excitement of watching your bold gamesmen navigate perils in ways you never would have expected. But first, you must assemble the pieces of this situation.

For **PEOPLE**, look first at the conflict and identify those people that the heroes are likely to encounter. If it is a political conflict between lords, you must name and detail both lords and any of their hall-companions that you expect the heroes to encounter, or perhaps the lord's good ladies if they are involved in the peaceweaving. If it is some woe that a minster wishes resolved, you must create the abbot or the monk who deals with the heroes. Even for a caester-crawl or a delve into an Arx, there may be some outlaw chieftain or mad Arxborn lord who must be slain or parleyed into peace.

For each of these people, give them a name, a sentence describing their appearance and manner, a goal or thing they desire and a gift or threat or blandishment they can use upon the heroes. If it seems possible that they may cross spears with the heroes, then give them combat statistics as well from the bestiary chapter, suitable to their prowess and nature.

When they interact with the heroes, keep in mind their goal, for it will be that goal that drives their actions and offers to the heroes. Their gift or blandishment will be used to induce cooperation from the adventurers as a temptation or a threat to them, if the person thinks that the heroes could be of use in getting their ambition. Every person must have a goal they desire, or else you will not know how to play them before the heroes, nor will you be able to think of what they might do on their own initiative. These desires may change with time, but have *something* in mind to drive them.



For **PLACES**, you must identify those locations that are likely to loom large in the adventure. If the adventure revolves around exploring a ruined Roman caester, then you will need to make a caester map as described later in this chapter and stock it properly with perils as explained below. So too with an Arx, where every passage and chamber might hold perils to freeze a hero's heart in his chest. Yet for a political struggle, or a matter of quarreling within a village, you may need nothing more than a name and a few words of description for the hamlet. Every English hall is much the same as every other, after all, and there is nothing difficult or subtle about the scattering of halls and dug-out huts that make up every village. The place matters as a location for events, but the details of its construction and the locations of specific families do not matter the same way as would the stocking of an Arx.

For journeys into the wilderness, you may rely upon a hex map, commonly at a scale of a mile or six miles to the hex. There may be interesting locations within that wilderness, usually no more than one for each hex, and there may be more random perils that could assail heroes who venture into those untamed lands. Individual sites of interest might merit a map, but many of them will be nothing more than a single interesting glade in the weald or a high hill-peak or a small cave beneath some rocky brow. Do not bother to map these things, for they can be described well in mere words.

For **PERILS**, you must decide those hazards which are natural and proper to the situation. If the conflict is an outlaw band scourging a village, then one of the perils will be the band itself. Within an Arx, it might be some slaving monster, or a curdled patch of old sorcery that inflicts a dire curse, or some magical artifice that has gone sour and strange and now behaves in a perilous way. Within the halls of a corrupt minster, the peril might be the evil heart of the abbot, which moves him to secretly slay all who dare oppose his iniquities. Perils are any situation or thing that might hinder or harm the heroes.

Know well that in a sandbox game, it is not important to have "balanced" perils. The heroes are not supposed to be able to smite every foe they might encounter, or overcome every danger they might choose to face. Perils are not placed by whether or not they are suitable for the heroes, but by whether they make sense for the situation. An outlaw warband might have a dozen men because it makes sense that a warband should have that many. It doesn't matter that so many foes will surely slaughter a small band of novice heroes in open war; it is for the heroes to recognize their peril and choose a different way of dealing with such enemies. So too a dire artifice of sorcery in some



benighted Arx might be death to confront directly. The heroes must devise a way around such perils rather than assuming that every challenge is one that can be beaten with direct assaults.

By this token, however, you as the GM must take care not to force these dire perils on the heroes. If some random roll or situation declares that a score of bloodthirsty raiders are in the path of the heroes, you must ensure that the PCs have some way to refrain from plunging directly into battle. If they are facing insurmountable woes, it must be because they *chose* to face those woes, either directly or as an accepted risk of some failed plan. A death from his own mistakes and flaws is an acceptable and worthy end for an English hero. To perish to some unknowable and unbeatable danger is mere frustration. Every dead hero's gamesman should feel that his death was due in some part to his own choices, and not entirely a matter of cruel *wyrd* or careless dice.

Lastly, consider the progress of the situation. What will happen if the heroes do not intervene? What outcomes are most likely for those involved in the matter? In some cases, there may be little change at all. An Arx that has no raiding inmates may stay the same for generations if the heroes do not seek to plunder it. A caester with no particular plunderers issuing forth may remain ignored and quiet for years whether or not the heroes seek to loot its hidden treasures. Indeed, even a tense social conflict may remain in stasis for quite some time without the hands of the heroes to hurry it.

But in most cases, there will be some outcome to the conflict. Perhaps one side wins, or perhaps both are bloodied sorely by their conflict, or perhaps some small peril grows to be a devouring scourge. Innocent ceorls may be slaughtered by an unslain beast, or a village might be rendered desolate by an unhelped plague. Think of what the most likely outcome is and note it down. When the heroes have finished their work, or have decided the situation is not for their meddling, you may compare their actions with this outcome and adjust it accordingly.

The consequences of such things can then form the seed for new adventures, as the ghost of past deeds returns to haunt the heroes with new enemies who seek revenge or new friends in need of help. These events that call back to prior deeds are an important part of every campaign, for they add a feeling of weight and meaning to the choices the heroes make. Hearing of the outcome of their strivings encourages them to have a care for what they choose and feel as if their actions matter in the world. Such substance is one of the chiefest pleasures of a long-running campaign.

With the conflict drawn, the patron found, and the situation properly prepared, now you must decide how the victorious heroes will be rewarded. What will they gain for their labors, and what prizes await the victorious? Some may come from treasures taken from the slain, while other rewards can only be conferred by the gratitude of their fellow Englishmen.

## REWARDING THE HEROES

*Primus*, look at the situation and ensure that each hero in your warband has the chance to obtain at least one Glory from its successful resolution. This need not be obvious from the start, but it should be made rapidly clear how a hero can increase their name and honor. This is the most crucial element of reward, for a hero who gains no Glory will never amount to anything worth a tale. It may be that the heroes create new opportunities for Glory during the adventure, finding new ways to grow in honor and fame. This is perfectly acceptable and to be praised.

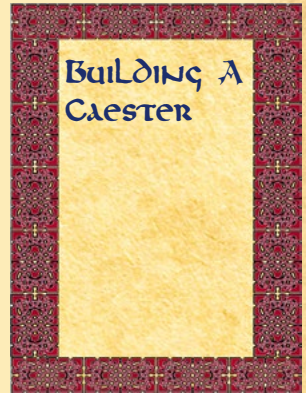
*Secundus*, place troves in the hands of foes in your adventure. Bandits shall have the treasures they stole from their victims, caesters will have relics of Roman splendor, Arxes will have unearthly things of eldritch beauty, and monstrous foes might have any marvel hidden away in their lairs.

You may hesitate at this work, wondering if you give too richly or too meanly. Perhaps you fear that your heroes will not find these troves in their adventuring, or you worry that they may find too many and thus become too rich. Do not be afraid. In England, wealth of itself means little. It is a tool for rewarding friends, pleasing God by gifts to minsters, and forming bonds between proud men. A Midas with a man-weight of gold on each limb cannot buy a joint of meat if there is no meat to be had where he is, and he cannot get a wondrous sword if he knows no smith who can forge such a thing. Let each trove be placed with such wealth as fits the importance of its keeper. It is not your concern beyond that how the heroes might find or overlook it.

*Tertius*, decide what the patron will give for the resolution of the conflict. Use the scales in the Bestiary section to decide how much free wealth the patron might reasonably command, and then decide how much of it they would be willing to part with in gifts should the matter be settled to their liking. A small but important task might be worth a tenth part, while a great deed might win a quarter, and a mighty act for their salvation might win half or more. They give these gifts not only out of gratitude, but out of prudence. If they are close-fisted to those who help them now, then who will come to their aid when they need help again?

**FOR THE MANNER OF** adventure that gamesmen call a “caestercrawl” it is first necessary to have a caester diagram for the heroes to explore. Make this for your own use, but conceal it well from their eyes; unless they have a wise guide who has carefully explored the place to aid them, they must make their own marks and memories to find their way within. It is not as if fine maps are made in England, to show every place of consequence in a region.

It can be the temptation of a GM to feel obligated to every pace of land within a caester’s walls, to etch out every road and carefully mark each crumbling hall. That is useless vanity and must exhaust the creator. Instead, you must think of the caester not as a mesh of streets and buildings, but as a web of interesting places and situations. Your job is not to ensure that the caester is drawn perfectly, but to ensure that there is something worth finding for the heroes within.



Begin with a simple sheet of gridded parchment drawn into squares. Decide the dimensions of the caester in squares; if you wish a small caester, make it four squares by four. A grand city such as Londinium or Verulanium might be worth eight squares by eight. You might also mold and shift the grid to match the shape of the city, such as making Londinium a long strip as it lies on the north bank of the Thames. Now number each square so you may refer to it later in your records. What are the actual physical dimensions of these squares? It matters little, but you may say for simplicity’s sake that each are two hundred paces square.

For each square, roll on the table in this section to find the most interesting thing it contains. More than a few squares will have nothing interesting at all; there is nothing there but tumbled stones and empty streets and well-rotted wreckage. This is good and proper, for a caester completely packed with things would be exhausting to properly fashion. The thing you roll or choose, in any case, is the most obviously interesting thing in that square.

If the dice or your will should decree that there is something interesting in a square, you must create a *landmark* for that square, a structure or thing which is distinct and unique to it. It may be a particular building, or evidence of some great calamity, or the remains of a recent battle, or something else to distinguish this square from its neighbors. This is of course not the only



building in the square, and indeed it may not even be the only landmark, but it is a particular place that can serve as the locus for whatever interesting thing is present. It is where the foe dwells, or the treasure is hidden, or the situation is happening.

Now that you know the landmark and the general point of interest, you must marry the two into a suitably interesting encounter. It may be that you need a more detailed map of the location, if the event is apt to involve exploration of a structure or a combat in which location and placement are crucial. If you make a map for such things, save it for later use as well; the Romans liked to build in similar fashions, and a theater in one caester is apt to be much like a theater in another. You must provide combat statistics for likely foes, and think about how they might or might not parley with intruders, and how the PCs may most likely deal with what they find. The tables in this section give suggestions for these things that you might pick or roll to find.

At the approximate center of the caester, you must place the forum. The forum is a great square, commonly four hundred paces in width and breadth or thereabouts for a great city, wherein are raised monuments to splendid leaders and plaques of noble remembrance. At the north side of the forum will be the great stone basilica of the caester, where the city's officials once labored, and all around the perimeter will be shops and stalls where goods were once sold to those who came to bargain or to do business with the city's masters. You may give the forum a single square on your map if you wish, or make it a great landmark occupying a two by two block. It is very likely that *something* of note is to be found there, for the grand basilica is so tall that it is apt to be seen from any street in the caester.

The basilica itself was once the place from which the city was governed, and will have many small offices and chambers within. Many basilicas were remade during the waning years of the Wealh, private chambers fashioned and secure rooms made for the magistrates and their officers, that they might have better safety. It availed them nothing in the end, but their bones remain.

Finally, you should place any Arxes you see fit within the caester's walls, locating them in the ancient buildings that once housed their entrances. So too you may add a minster to a square in one of the corners of the caester as a base of operations and secure stronghold for those heroes who dare the exploration of the place. The inmates within may be able to give vague directions and warnings about the caester's contents, but we English do not have fine maps to mark exactly the place of every peril we know.



## ၁၆ Square Contents

- 1-2 There is nothing of particular interest in this map square.
- 3-4 There is a landmark in this square worthy of mention.
- 5-6 There is both a landmark in this square and a point of interest related to it.



## ၁၂၂ Landmarks

- 1 **MONUMENTAL ARCH**, carved with figures of victory
- 2 **THEATER**, semicircular with many-tiered seats
- 3 **BATHHOUSE**, with large bathing pools within
- 4 **TAVERN**, whether street stall or dedicated hall
- 5 **BROTHEL**, oft lewdly painted and tiled
- 6 **CHURCH**, whether of Christ or a pagan temple
- 7 **MANUFACTORY**, in which slaves and others labored
- 8 **TENEMENT**, a several-storied apartment block
- 9 **HUMBLE HOME**, of no more than a few rooms
- 10 **FINE DOMUS**, rooms around a central courtyard
- 11 **FIELDS**, inside-wall crops once cultivated by the Wealth
- 12 **SHOP**, where goods were once gathered and sold



## ၁၂၂ Points of Interest


- 1 **ABANDONED BATTLEFIELD**, where some of the dead yet lie
- 2 **ANCIENT WONDER**, such as an aqueduct or a still-working bathhouse
- 3 **ANGRY GHOSTS**, unliving things furious at the English who slew them
- 4 **ARX**, a cyst within the world anchored on a particular doorway. Generate it with the tools later in this section.
- 5 **CAMPSITE**, where creatures are pausing during their journeying. They may be human or otherwise.
- 6 **GRAND LANDMARK**, a building of remarkable preservation, size, or splendor
- 7 **LOST ONES**, helpless victims or wounded adventurers dreading some peril
- 8 **PERILOUS STRUCTURE**, a dangerous place that can maim or trap those who enter into it
- 9 **SEALED BUILDING**, one that may yet contain treasures
- 10 **SORCEROUS EFFECT**, a standing magical effect born of ancient curdled spells
- 11 **STRONGHOLD**, a hall or fastness where creatures guard their home
- 12 **STRUGGLE**, with two or more groups contending desperately with the other





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### Types of Natives in the Caester

- 1 English outlaws and renegades who have sought refuge within the walls
  - 2 Wealh raiders who have moved in to use the caester as a base
  - 3 English warriors from an enemy kingdom who are sheltering there
  - 4 Arxborn who long ago left their Arx to inhabit the caester
  - 5 Orcs and other undead remnants of the caester's original folk
  - 6 Monstrous Illmade creatures that haunt the streets and buildings
  - 7 Vile *fifels* or other monsters of the wild now lair in the ruins
  - 8 Pagans and heretics seek refuge within the safety of the walls
- 



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### how do they survive there?

- 1 They farm open spaces within the old caester walls
  - 2 They secretly exact protection payments from surrounding hamlets
  - 3 They are being supported by an enemy to the local people
  - 4 They have access to Arx-food, strange and unnatural as it is
  - 5 They cruelly plunder and reave the surrounding villages
  - 6 A local lord secretly pays tribute in exchange for their cooperation
  - 7 They offer some good or service that the locals desperately need
  - 8 They are in a desperate plight, their former means now lost
- 



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### What do they do to the surrounding folk?


- 1 They raid far-distant places so as to avoid drawing local reprisals
  - 2 They viciously slaughter any who dare go to close to the caester
  - 3 They remain hidden from the surrounding English folk
  - 4 They carry off the careless to force them to join or to devour them
  - 5 They try to force English villages to acknowledge them as lords
  - 6 They have a special hatred for a particular lord or community
  - 7 They are actually cooperative, though their ties are kept secret
  - 8 They brutally raid the locals who pay them the least in tribute
- 






## Ꮤ8 ABANDONED BATTLEFIELD POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Fragmentary remains of a battle from the city's original fall
  - 2 Bloody remains of a recent clash between groups of natives
  - 3 Crude Christian cemetery or mass grave from the fall of the city
  - 4 Grim remnants of the last stand of an English adventuring band
  - 5 Vile sorcery is being employed upon the unhallowed dead here
  - 6 The dead and their valuables are buried or blocked by collapsed structures
  - 7 Natives and English intruders litter the ground, their corpses abandoned
  - 8 Roll again, but dangerous beasts feast on the dead now
- 



## Ꮤ8 ANCIENT WONDER POINTS OF INTEREST<sup>1</sup>

- 1 A working Roman bathhouse and its guardians yet remain here.
  - 2 A fountain is fed by a still-working aqueduct.
  - 3 A Roman manufactory is full of vast amounts of ancient handcrafts.
  - 4 A great plaza is paved in many-colored stones and has fine pillars.
  - 5 There is a hidden Roman temple to a pagan god inside the landmark.
  - 6 A strange engine of magical artifice performs a function still.
  - 7 A magnificent domicile has animated servants yet functioning within.
  - 8 Animated actors yet perform in an empty Roman theater.
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1 Brother Cornix speaks a great deal of the wonders of the Artifexes, but these marvels don't seem to have left any perceptible trace on Anglo-Saxon society. For whatever their reason, the learned men of the English seemed unwilling or unable to adopt these Roman arts, and even those feats of engineering that involved no sorcery whatsoever were left to decay, untouched and largely unexploited by the English.


Some investigators have hypothesized that the Church was categorically against such magical workings, but this does not seem to match other gaming documents from this era. The papal licensure of official theurge-cardinals is attested in numerous cases, and the "gospel of Pontius Pilate" is a known deutero-canonical occult manual. The Church clearly permitted some forms of Roman magic to the spiritually elect.

Others suggest that the Roman magic itself was no longer functional. For unknown reasons, the spells and magics that had operated so well for so long were no longer reliable or reproducible. They may have relied on resources that were no longer available with the fall of the empire... or experience may have shown them to be too dangerous for continued usage.



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### ANGRY GHOSTS POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Ancient Wealth ghosts seek to kill all English intruders.
  - 2 Roman specters slay any who behave barbarously.
  - 3 A dead English hero is lost to despair and mad visions.
  - 4 Hellbound ancient English raiders plunder here still.
  - 5 Ghosts reenact a terrible slaughter and kill all who intervene.
  - 6 A bitter ghost tries to bait intruders into a deadly place.
  - 7 Shades of a dead English warband wander confused and lost.
  - 8 Rival ghosts forever slay each other, only to rise again.
- 



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### CAMPSITE POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Successful native hunters butcher prey here.
  - 2 The place is deserted, but clearly was recently used.
  - 3 Wounded natives recuperate here after a battle.
  - 4 Natives hide here, trying to avoid a dangerous foe.
  - 5 Brash English adventurers rest here.
  - 6 Adventurers have made a small forward base here.
  - 7 Bodies litter a brutally ravaged campsite.
  - 8 Scouts lurk here for its commanding view.
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### GRAND LANDMARK POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 The structure is perfectly preserved.
  - 2 Rich and valuable adornment covers the structure.
  - 3 The building is at least twice so big as it should be.
  - 4 Some complicated working inside still functions.
  - 5 It is remarkably tall, looming over all nearby.
  - 6 It goes deep into the earth with its passages.
  - 7 Vast as it is, it was only partly complete.
  - 8 It is one enormous tumbled maze of wreckage.
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### LOST ONES POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Wretched thralls are being guarded on their way to a dreadful fate.
  - 2 The last survivor of a slaughtered English warband hides and bleeds.
  - 3 A monk or nun has overestimated their power to cleanse the caester.
  - 4 A brave ceorl has ventured into the caester to save a taken kinsman.
  - 5 Wounded adventurers hide as the foe that nearly slew them prowls near.
  - 6 Natives of the caester nurse terrible wounds from a foe within the walls.
  - 7 An escaped thrall has fled into the caester and now dreads death.
  - 8 A caester native hides from foes who seek his death.
- 



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### PERILOUS STRUCTURE POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 The paved street crumbles down into a chamber below.
  - 2 The landmark threatens to collapse at any moment.
  - 3 The landmark's entrance is trapped to seal in intruders.
  - 4 The landmark is being used as an ambush site.
  - 5 The landmark is cursed with a dangerous magical effect.
  - 6 The landmark is a front over some darker structure.
  - 7 The landmark is jealously watched by natives.
  - 8 The landmark has a treasure in a precarious location.
- 



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### SEALED BUILDING POINTS OF INTEREST


- 1 A monstrous foe bars the way into the structure.
  - 2 A great tumble of stones blocks entrance into it.
  - 3 The only entrance is a well-hidden tunnel.
  - 4 The entrance threatens to collapse on any trespassers.
  - 5 Several seeming entrances are perilous dead-ends.
  - 6 The only entrance is on the roof of a tall structure.
  - 7 The structure is buried beneath other fallen things.
  - 8 Yawning sewer-pits have fallen open around it.
- 





∂8


### SORCEROUS EFFECT POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 A dire curse befalls any who shed blood here.
  - 2 Dangerous gusts of eldritch energy sweep the streets.
  - 3 Space is curdled, leading to strange caester locations.
  - 4 A magical blight bars the way into the landmark.
  - 5 Animated foes are fueled by decaying artifice.
  - 6 The dead cannot rest here, but are slaves to the magic.
  - 7 The landmark is twisted and made perilous by magic.
  - 8 Vile sorcerers seek to tap a place of great power here.
- 



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### STRONGHOLD POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Natives have made a home out of the landmark.
  - 2 A broken stronghold lies plundered by its foes.
  - 3 A hidden stronghold lies beneath the landmark.
  - 4 New owners are clearing out a foe's former home.
  - 5 A stronghold is convulsed by internal struggles.
  - 6 English adventurers have laid claim to the landmark.
  - 7 A splendid fortification is being fought over by rivals.
  - 8 The stronghold totters from an undetected danger within.
- 



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### STRUGGLE POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 English adventurers are losing a battle to some menace of the caester.
  - 2 A horrible beast is presently slaughtering natives of the caester.
  - 3 A warband is quarreling violently over some great treasure they found.
  - 4 Natives slew English intruders, but are now set upon by a third foe.
  - 5 Two strong natives fight for leadership, the others gathered to watch.
  - 6 A fire, flood, or magical calamity threatens a group struggling to escape.
  - 7 Two English warbands are fighting each other over a great treasure.
  - 8 A lone brave warrior struggles against a foe they cannot hope to best.
- 

**When you have filled** the caester, you must then create a table of random encounters, most often of six entries like the one exemplified in the Arx section of this chapter. Every time the heroes enter a new square, roll a random encounter check on a single d6. If a 1 is rolled, then something is encountered, and another roll is made on the random encounter table. If the heroes sleep a night within the caester, make a similar check.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

*A random encounter occurs on a 1 in 6 each time they enter a new square. Roll 2d6x10 to find the initial distance in feet.*

If a random encounter is rolled, roll 2d6 and multiply the result by 10 to find the distance in feet at which the encounter occurs. This is the first point at which the two parties may notice each other. If the entities of the encounter are loud or careless, then the PCs will hear or see them first, assuming they are behaving with common prudence and being careful in their exploration. If the creatures they meet are hunting or wary for foes, then let them make an opposed Wis/Notice versus Dex/Sneak skill check against the lead PC's skill and the foe's own powers of stealth. The winner is the first to sense the other.

Most caester encounters will take place on the still-open street. Almost anywhere within the caester walls there will be an abundance of ruined buildings, crumbling alleyways, and rotting side paths that heroes may dart down or foes may emerge from. You may choose to draw up one or two small maps of random areas within the caester that you can then use as battle maps, or you may simply decide something on the moment.

*Don't forget to roll a Reaction Roll to see how the encountered creatures react.*

Remember that not every encounter will be a matter of immediate bloodshed. Use the Reaction Roll described in the bestiary for any foes that are not immediately and mindlessly hostile. It may be that outlaws are inclined to amity at the moment, or terrible beasts are sated with flesh when they are encountered. Remember also that prudent heroes may see fit to flee a battle they are not ready to face, and large numbers of foes will be noticed from a much greater distance than a small pack of enemies. If every encounter ends in spearplay, then either your heroes are a bloodthirsty lot or you are pressing too much violence upon them.

Remember also that these random encounters must be peopled by the denizens of the caester. If the heroes slaughter, befriend, or affright some band of them, it may be that they will cease to roam the caester any more, and their entry in the table might be removed. With sufficient labor and the sealing of dangers, the caester may become safe to navigate, at least until new foes move in to replace the old.

heroes commonly enter the caester through one of the city gates, most often placed halfway along at least two of the walls of the caester. Rents in the old city wall may allow access at other places as well. Safely climbing over an old Roman wall is something all but a cripple can manage easily with fifteen minutes of effort. If haste is needed, it can be done in three rounds, but an Exert skill check at difficulty 8 is needed to avoid a fall of twenty feet or more.

## EXPLORING THE CAESTER

Exploring a square well enough to discover any landmarks and interesting qualities within will take an hour, for the heroes are assumed to be very quiet, wary, and cautious in their goings. If the heroes do not take this time then they will notice only the most obvious of landmarks there, and have no real chance of discovering subtle points of interest or any foes that are not eager to meet intruders.

*Exploring a square takes one hour.*

Moving from one square to another takes half an hour if it is done carefully, with stealth and caution. If the heroes move brashly, walking in the main streets and clambering over piles of rubble rather than staying to the bypaths and shadows, they may do it in ten minutes, but then the encounter check will produce a random encounter on a roll of 1 or 2 instead of merely 1. Heroes may move to any adjacent square, cardinal or diagonal, but they may move but one square at a time between random encounter checks.

*Moving into a square takes 30 minutes, or 10 if they hurry.*

Handling any encounter or dealings within a square will take an amount of time assessed by the GM, usually no less than ten minutes if the time needed to bind up wounds, secure equipment, and search the dead for wealth is taken into account. Exploring a carefully might take far more.

*Random encounters happen on a 1 in 6, or 2 in 6 if they hurried into the square. They usually take at least 10 minutes to resolve.*

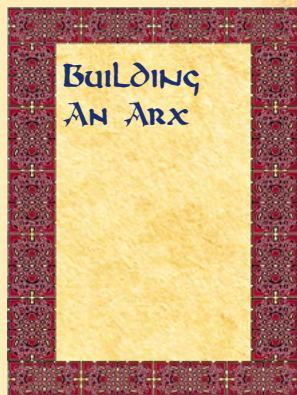
Betimes a natural feature shall make it impossible to move certain directions from a particular square. A river may bar passage for those who have no boats, or a high wall may block the way for those who cannot climb over it, or a terrible tangle of ruins may be impassable without long and laborious digging. The GM may draw these barriers where sense suggests they ought to be.

Minsters might often serve as bases of operation for the warband. The abbot within is apt to desire regular patrols of the caester involving the careful exploration of a dozen or more squares, or whatever other portion seems reasonable. Even cleared areas are apt to become tainted anew with outlaws, beasts, and vile things, so a place that was reported secure last month may have become a nest of devils now. Accomplishing such quests may earn Glory if the difficulty is a worthy challenge for the heroes, and they will certainly win favor and gifts from the abbot if they are done well.



**The heroes must Leave** the sunlit streets of a caester in time to delve into the shadows of the Arxes hidden within the fallen city. Elsewhere, they might chance to find an Arx in the shell of some Roman villa, or locate a well-hidden passage Elsewhere beneath the boughs of some pagan tree. Something has been said before of Arxes and their nature, but this section of the book will instruct you on how you might fashion one for the benefit of your heroes.

*Primus*, decide why it was that the ancient Artifexes built this Arx. An Arx is a cyst in the skin of the world, a hollow in which the Artifex may construct their own little world and appoint it to his liking. The effort and expense to create these places was never trifling, and so they were only made when it was necessary to have a space apart from the world that could be secured.



**D8**      **WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF THE ARX?**

- 1      A pagan temple from before Rome was Christian.
- 2      A pleasure-villa of some great Roman patrician.
- 3      A secret prison for terrible sorcerous investigations.
- 4      A hastily-forged refuge for Wealth during the invasions.
- 5      A pleasant park or fabricated vista for frivolous play.
- 6      A damnable shrine to the devil, carved by infernalists.
- 7      A place for gathering magical power between worlds.
- 8      It was only discovered, not forged by any man's arts.




The table above offers certain suggestions as to why it was constructed. You may roll randomly among them, or it may be obvious from the circumstances which one best applies. It may be you will roll twice, wherein an Arx built first for one purpose was later changed to suit another.


*Secundus*, decide how large the Arx should be. Most Arxes were relatively small, their whole space easily fit within a square of two hundred paces on a side. This room was all that was required for them to fulfill their purpose, and so their makers labored no more than was needed. Other Arxes, however, could be much larger. I have heard tell of vast Arxes in the Wealth caesters that were a mile or more in breadth, built by desperate Roman wizards when it

seemed that all the world would perish under Saxon spears. Such a vast labyrinth might be hidden within a simple country villa.

Many Arxes have tricks to look larger than they are. If the Arx is not wholly self-contained within sealed passages and chambers, it might be encircled by a pleasant vista of the ancient British countryside or some lost sight of the caester in which it remains. Those who try to leave the boundary of the Arx, however, will find themselves turned inward once more, and things hurled beyond the limit will merely fall vainly to the ground. Ancient books warn that it is most disastrous to push beyond the limits of an Arx, and that piercing these boundaries with foolish sorceries may cause a catastrophic eruption of ineffable horrors into the place.



how large is the Arx?	
1	Very small, a dozen rooms or locations and one group of inhabitants
2-4	Small, about two dozen locations and one or two groups
5-7	Large, forty or fifty locations and two or three groups
8	Vast, perhaps a hundred locations and three or four groups



The table above offers choices, but you should be quick to choose a particular size based on your own needs at the gaming table. Do not try to stitch together a gigantic labyrinth if your play needs no more than a little villa.

*Tertius*, you must map the Arx and give its locations each a purpose. There are different ways of doing this, but if you are so blessed as to have the use of ancient Roman gaming-books, you may copy the maps out of them and use them for your own Arxes, merely changing the contents to suit your need. So it is that many gamesmen draw Arx-maps for their own pleasure, and you may borrow the use of them as you require.

In each room or space, discern its general purpose in the Arx. By knowing its purpose, you may specify it more particularly. Thus, if the purpose is “Eating”, you may decide it is a kitchen, or a dining-hall, or a hideous feasting-place for some vile monster within the Arx’s boundary. It is not necessary to elaborate it beyond this point at this stage of the Arx’s construction. It is enough that you know the general purpose of the place.

Remember that the laws of the world within the Arx are not steadfast as they are in middle-earth. Creatures that would surely perish of hunger or thirst in an ordinary world might be sustained by the magics of the Arx, or there may be places where food and drink well forth from the magics there.

Relying upon sorcerous means for survival is a dangerous thing, however, and many creatures that are forced to subsist too long on magic may become twisted or mad from the energies they imbibe. It is not a prudent thing to eat of Arx-meat if anything else can be had. Even the denizens of the Arx itself know that it is so, and that is one more reason that they venture forth to rob and slay that they may have better bread.



**D12                    WHAT KIND OF USE DID A GIVEN LOCATION RECEIVE?**

- 1        EATING:** kitchen, cenaculum, refectory, feast-hall, feeding ground
- 2        REST:** dormitory, private bedchamber, barracks, sickroom
- 3        ART:** gallery, sculpture-hall, mosaic hall, fanciful architecture
- 4        FABRICATION:** workshop, laboratory, craft-hall, forge, weaving-room
- 5        PLEASURE:** drinking-hall, debauchery chamber, theater, recital room
- 6        INTERSTICE:** plaza, court, crossroad, stairway, meeting of ways.
- 7        MARTIAL:** guardhouse, training field, practice room, armory
- 8        GROWING:** garden, field, arboretum, greenhouse, fungus-cave
- 9        BODILY NEEDS:** latrine, bath, physician's chamber, fountain
- 10      KNOWLEDGE:** library, schoolroom, illustrative statuary, scriptorium
- 11      ROLL AGAIN ON ID10:** this use originally, but since intentionally ruined
- 12      ROLL TWICE ON ID10:** the former use was remade to the latter



*Quartus*, supply the Arx with inhabitants. It may be that they are the descendants of the Wealth driven into the cyst by our fathers, or even those very Wealth themselves, preserved by the power of the magic and almost certainly mad beyond reason. These ancient wights must surely die if they leave the Arx but they can be terrible foes within their cursed prison. Other inhabitants might be fell Arxborn or Illmade, twisted and misshapen by the ill-tended powers of the place.

Yet others might be wholly normal humans, Wealth or English who have fled into the Arx and use it as a stronghold against their enemies. So long as they can control the entrance, others cannot get in to harm them, and most Arxes have some means of sustaining their inhabitants if they are not particular about their meat. Some of these interlopers are innocent of evil, but most are raiders, outlaws, pagans, and sorcerers who have no home in decent lands.

Consider carefully the motivations of these inhabitants. Arxborn will likely wish to rob and slaughter those outside their clan, though some might



be sane enough to listen to reasoned words. Human dwellers will have their own purposes, whether that is refuge, study, or plunder of those outside.

Mind that there may be more than one faction of inhabitants, or there may be several small groups that have nothing to do with each other. If the Arx is large enough or if there are enough separate sources of food, these factions may be able to hold each other at spear's length. They may be isolated due to quarrels over leadership, or some mad delusion, or because they entered at different times and for different purposes. Take care that you do not stuff the Arx so full of inhabitants that the heroes cannot possibly enter it without putting the whole cyst into frenzied alarm. There will usually be bands of unoccupied space between groups, buffers to allow them better security from each other.

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### Who are the Main Inhabitants of the Arx?

- 1 Outlaws who lair in the Arx, whether English reavers of Wealth raiders
- 2 Pagans, heretics, or devil-servants use the Arx as a stronghold
- 3 Arxborn who are native to the caester or place still hold it
- 4 Illmade monsters forged by the Arx crawl and creep through its halls
- 5 Exiles or desperate refugees from the outside world huddle here
- 6 Monsters who have entered it as a lair, such as *fifels* or a helrune
- 7 Eidolons and Artifice-crafted entities still stand watch in their duties
- 8 Orcs and wraiths and other dead things infest the shadowed halls

These inhabitants may not be the only creatures in the Arx, but if it is so large as to have more than one true faction of inhabitants, the table below offers suggestions on how they might relate to each other.

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### How do the different groups interact?

- 1 They recently fought, and both now lick their wounds.
- 2 A tentative alliance against the outside world has been formed by them.
- 3 They avoid each other if at all possible, out of fear or mutual agreement.
- 4 They await a moment of weakness to kill each other
- 5 An alliance exists, but one side plans treachery at the first opportunity
- 6 Genuine sympathy exists between them and they cooperate honestly
- 7 One group is the cowed slaves of the other, obedient but hating them
- 8 One group admits the others as their superiors, and dutifully obeys

**Now that you know** the purpose, size, and general inhabitants of the Arx, it is time to stock it with foes, treasures, marvels, and perils to dismay and test your bold English heroes. For each location in the arx, **STOCKING THE ARX** use the tables below to fill it with something worthy. Some locations will be empty of anything of interest, so as to provide a pause for breath and pacing. Do not feel as if you must stuff each one full.


D6		STOCKING	D6		TREASURE IS PRESENT?
1-2	There is a foe here.		1	Yes, there is treasure here.	
3	There is a peril here.		2	Only if a foe or peril is here.	
4	There is a marvel here.		3	Only if a foe is here.	
5-6	Nothing of special interest.		4-6	No, there is none.	

First you must roll on the stocking section to see if there is a foe or other creature present in the location, or a peril, or a wondrous marvel, or nothing of particular interest. Then roll on the adjacent table to find out if there is any treasure of worth in the place. This trove is likely what belongs to the creatures who dwell here. You may place individual items as suit you, or use the trove examples in the Bestiary chapter as guidance.


Foes are likely drawn from the Arx's inhabitants. The tables that follow show the likely numbers of inhabitants for small, large, and vast hordes of enemies in a given Arx. Any foes parceled out for room inhabitants should be subtracted from these totals, and you may choose to throw in some choice monsters, intruders, or random Illmade to add novelty to the enemies. Foes in a room may not necessarily be hostile, given Reaction Rolls and sense.

D8		WHAT PERIL IS IN THE LOCATION?
1	A part of the structure is crumbling and unsafe	
2	Poison, whether as a trap or as something within	
3	A loud noise might be triggered somehow, alerting the foes	
4	Something risks explosion or swift, perilous ignition	
5	A great wind or dank mist may extinguish torches or breath	
6	The way back can easily be rendered inaccessible	
7	Something precious-looking is cruelly trapped	
8	A snare can plunge the warband elsewhere rapidly	

Perils should be related to the location's purpose. Something has gone wrong with the place, or the place itself is dangerous somehow, or the inhabitants have set snares and woes there for the unwary. The examples in the table above are mere suggestions. When perils do damage, they will most often inflict 1d8, or 2d6 for dangerous things, or sometimes even more for truly fearsome hazards. Sometimes a saving throw can spare a hero from such doom.




d8	WHAT MARVEL IS IN THIS LOCATION?
1	A physical law is twisted or inoperative here
2	A mundane object behaves in a dangerously marvelous way
3	Senses are distorted or hindered somehow here
4	Something present is an illusion or conceals worse
5	A thing that shouldn't speak can do so here
6	A doorway or passage leads to a distant location
7	A magical construct harms or rewards those who manipulate it
8	A magical service or function has gone perilously askew here




Marvels are almost always magical in nature and have to do with the sorceries laid upon the Arx by its creators. These magics were often intended to make the location's purpose function more perfectly, but in the long generations since the Arxes were sealed, they have often gone dangerously awry.

Lastly, you must make up a random encounter table for the Arx. The template below shows how you might arrange things. You will use this table when the heroes explore the Arx, rolling on it every so often to see whether they encounter inhabitants about their business there. Of course, if the heroes make a great uproar in the Arx and the inhabitants are sane and clever enough to organize, they may face far more than these few foes as they are hunted.



d6	A RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE TEMPLATE
1	1d6 normal foes of a local group's type
2	1d6 normal foes and one strong one of the local group
3	An Illmade monster generated by the Arx
4	Pick an occupied room; its inhabitants are passing through
5	An interloper into the Arx, whether human or monstrous
6	Roll again; the sounds of them nearby, but they pass by





A NOVICE GM is often fretful over stocking their Arxes, uncertain of whether the heroes have any fair chance of victory, or whether they might find it too simple a task to challenge their courage. This is a fair and reasonable worry, but it may be managed with a few wise words of counsel.

## BALANCING ARX CONTENT

*Enemy hit dice equal to PC levels makes for a hard fight.*

Understand that a band of four to six heroes may be expected to find a group of foes of equal hit dice to their levels a sharp challenge but one they will probably overcome. Their advantages of Foci, *wyrds*, and often better armament will be enough to probably give them victory. Groups of half the warband's hit dice may wound them and deplete their resources but will probably fall without issue. Groups of more than twice their hit dice will probably slay at least one of the heroes, if not all of them, unless the warband is surpassing lucky or clever in setting up the battle.

*Don't create situations where combat is forced and inevitable.*


In this measure, do not play the foes as more battle-wise than they are. Beasts and unintelligent foes will seldom bother to fight anyone but the foe most plainly before them, and even trained warriors may not have the wit to focus all their attacks on a wounded hero rather than spreading them out among many foes. Nor should you forget to use Morale checks, because only mindless beasts or crazed fools will pour out their lives without fear.

Nor should you design locations to be inevitable, inescapable battles to all who enter. Cautious heroes who scout carefully, think wisely, and do not act with recklessness should be able to avoid almost any fight. If you compel or expect your warband to raise their spears a dozen times on every adventure into an Arx, they will soon be slain or crippled beyond help.

*Arx inhabitants are generally unable to post guards constantly right on top of the entrance.*

One particular consideration is the defensive measures of the inhabitants. Fortunately, the entrances of Arxes are seldom very defensible. The constant eldritch interplay of uncanny energies between the real world and the Arx can create subtle miasmatic curses and afflictions, and so it is not well to linger too long too close to an Arx's entrance. Indeed, some Arxes have multiple entrance points, or their entrances slip slowly from one location to another, connecting to different places within the Arx. This means little to adventurers, but to the inhabitants it means that their guard-posts or watchmen must stay somewhat back if they are to remain hale.

Use this fact to explain why the inhabitants are not waiting with raised spears the moment the heroes step through the arcane door. Persistent raids upon intelligent and sane-minded foes may provoke organized preparations to receive new raiders, however.



## FOES WITHIN AN ARX AND THEIR NUMBERS

### Outlaws

- Small** 2d6 ceorls, one gesith leader
- Large** 2d20 ceorls, four gesith leaders, one hero leader
- Vast** 1d10 ceorls, eight gesith, two heroes, one king

### Pagans, Heretics, and Cultists

- Small** 2d6 ceorls, one gesith or hero leader
- Large** 3d6 ceorls, two gesith/heroes, one *dru* leader, possibly a lesser demon
- Vast** 5d10 ceorls, 2d6 gesith/heroes, 1d6 *dru* leaders, possibly a greater demon

### Arxborn

- Small** 3d6 plebeians, 1d4 patrician leaders, possibly an Illmade beast
- Large** 2d20 plebeians, 2d6 patricians, 1d4 Illmade beasts, one consul leader
- Vast** 4d20 plebeians, 2d12 patricians, 2d6 Illmade beasts, 2d6 consul leaders

### Illmade

- Small** 1d6 Illmade beasts, possibly a Small group of servitors or cultists
- Large** 2d10 Illmade beasts, 1d6 stronger beasts, possibly a Small cult group
- Vast** 2d20 Illmade beasts, 1d10 stronger beasts, possibly a Large cult group

### Exiles

- Small** 2d6 ceorls, one gesith or hero leader
- Large** 3d6 ceorls, one hero leader
- Vast** 5d10 ceorls, two or three gesith, one hero or king leader


### Monsters

- Small** One monstrous entity and a Small group of its servitors or minions
- Large** One monstrous entity and a Large group of its allies
- Vast** 2d4 lesser monsters, one monstrous ruler, and a Large group of minions

### Eidolons

- Small** 1d6 relatively weak eidolons
- Large** 2d6 weak eidolons, 1d6 stronger ones, one dominant director
- Vast** 4d6 weak eidolons, 1d10 stronger ones, one dominant director

### Orcs and Wraiths

- Small** 2d6 orc thralls or similar entities, one orc warrior or weak wraith
- Large** 4d6 orc thralls, 1d6 orc warriors, one wraith or orc lord
- Vast** 5d10 orc thralls, 2d6 orc warriors, one wraith, orc lord, or Hellking
- 

These are the specific rules for venturing through an Arx, or through other mazy places where peril lurks around every corner and reckless steps promise doom. They are very old rules, and some bands may think them foolishly particular and rigid. This may be so, but they produce a particular kind of game, one where time is precious, the Arx itself is a real peril, and gamesmen are forced to think carefully about how best to navigate the place. You may choose to abandon any part of them if your group decides they are no pleasure, but I would counsel you to at least try them as written and see if they show you some pleasure once unknown to you.

*One turn is ten minutes.*

Time in an Arx is measured in turns of ten minutes. Most things that the heroes will wish to do will take a turn to accomplish, taking into account the packing and unpacking of gear, the need to listen carefully while working, and the desire to do all things quietly and carefully.

*Cautious movement is 120 feet per turn.*

There are three modes of movement in an Arx. Cautious movement is at a speed of forty paces per turn, or a hundred and twenty feet. At a Cautious pace the heroes are pacing out distances, making a map, checking carefully for any features of interest around them, and doing all this as quietly and stealthily as possible. Swift movement is at thrice the speed, three hundred and sixty feet per turn. Heroes moving Swiftly are merely reading their map as they venture through an area they have already explored and are making no effort to examine the areas they pass through. They are maintaining some quiet, but are not so careful as a Cautious party. Running heroes race madly at top speed, and can generally reach any location in most Arxes with ten minutes of running. Even so, they may not consult their map, and must simply tell the GM which turns they take and passages they venture down. They must halt for the remainder of the turn when a door must be opened or a barrier overcome, and then rest will be needed if they are not to be wearied.

*Swift movement is 360 feet per turn.*

*Running movement is indefinite, but reckless.*

*You must rest one turn in six when exploring.*

Heroes must rest after daring battle or wearisome exploration. A band must rest from their searches for one turn in every hour or else they become wearied. Heroes who spend any time in Running movement must rest for a turn immediately after each turn of doing so. Those who engage in battle must also immediately spend a turn afterwards resting. Those who do not rest suffer a -2 penalty to skill checks and a -4 penalty to hit rolls until they spend a turn recovering.

*You must rest a turn after each fight or turn of running.*

Many Arxes have ancient lamps that still glow within their halls. Others, however, are dark either wholly or in part. A proper pitch-laden torch casts



usable light up to thirty feet from the bearer and lasts for three turns, while mere random sticks and billets of wood are no practical use for carried illumination. An oil lamp with a full flask of oil will burn for an hour, yet cast light only ten feet. Heroes bearing light sources can never surprise foes who lurk in the darkness.

Surprise is a great peril of Arx explorers. When one group comes suddenly on another, there is a chance of surprise. Adventurers in Cautious movement cannot be surprised unless the foes leap on them from ambush or otherwise have some great advantage in concealment. Those in Swift movement risk surprise whenever their movement carries them into an occupied place. Those in Running movement are always surprised whenever they encounter others.

If surprise is uncertain, let the concealed or discovered party's most stealthy figure make a Dex/Stealth skill check and the discovering party's most keen-eyed member make a Wis/Notice skill check. If the concealed party beats the discovering party, then they surprise them. It is conceivably possible that both groups might possibly be surprised in some situations. In that case, let both groups make Wis/Notice checks against a difficulty 9, and any who lose are surprised.

A group that is surprised loses a full round of action to their ambushers. Once their foes have taken a round of action, Initiative is rolled as normal and the encounter progresses. Let the GM not forget the Reaction Roll for encounters, but remember that a hungry foe who has won surprise on the heroes may be that much more inclined to leap immediately into the fray.

Random encounters are rolled two turns within an Arx. The GM rolls a d6, and on a result of 1 then there is some encounter with an inhabitant of the place. Perhaps it is some wandering beast haunting the halls, or the occupants of a particular room on their way to another. The encounter begins at a distance of  $2d4$  times 10 feet. If the intruder is heard approaching and there is a convenient place to hide, the heroes might be able to conceal themselves before they are discovered. The GM may decide to omit a random encounter check if the PCs are staying out of the corridors of the Arx or are in some very seldom-occupied corner of the structure. Conversely, they may increase the odds to 2 in 6 or even 3 in 6 if the heroes have made great tumult and trouble in the place or if they have been Running recklessly.

Mapping should be done by one of the gamesmen on a finely-gridded board with a well-sharpened stick of charcoal. As each corridor or room is entered, the GM should give a description of it and its approximate dimen-

*Torches last 3 turns and cast light 30 feet.*

*Lamps last six turns and light 10 feet.*

*You might use a die to track light, turning its faces as needed.*

*Surprised groups lose one round of actions.*

*Random encounter checks are made every two turns, with a 1 in 6 chance of an encounter.*

*Running or loud action increases this chance to 2 or even 3 in 6.*

sions, if the heroes are exploring Cautiously. It is for the mapper to ask questions when there are uncertainties; do not correct his errors unasked. One square is commonly ten feet in most maps, though sometimes it is only five if the structure is small. When the heroes move about the Arx, they must consult their map to find the way back to the entrance or back to those places they wish to revisit, assuming they have light enough to read it and are not Running in fear of their lives. Arxes are oft saturated with space-bending sorceries and twists of distortion; some of them can be very difficult to map and very easy to go astray in.

Why is the map important?<sup>1</sup> Because the map is the means by which the heroes move quickly and efficiently in the Arx, giving fewer opportunities for wandering foes to find them and less cost in torches and time spent resting. A game master may dismiss the map entirely and simply assume that the heroes keep a correct one, but they will make such explorations that much easier for the warband. Still, if none of your gamesmen take any pleasure in mapping after giving it a fair try, you may put it aside without spoiling the game. In its place, you may add a 1 in 6 chance each turn for a torch or lamp to burn out prematurely to compensate for this mercy.

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1 These specific and detailed rules for exploration may appear unusual to modern gamers. Many present-day campaigns tend to gloss the details of site exploration and use the space of the site itself as a simple canvas for exciting setpiece battles or locations of significance. This is a perfectly good way of doing things.

Even so, Brother Cornix's age placed much more importance on the mechanics of exploration, including the constant pressure of light and resource attrition and the danger of sudden hostile encounters. Tracking time was very important because every turn spent in the Arx was a further cost in torches and the risk of wandering monsters. Finding efficient paths through the Arx, maintaining a clear idea of the way back to the entrance, and identifying relatively safe areas for rest and recovery were all crucial.

For the English, the idea that it simply wouldn't *matter* how many torches you had was something very difficult to reconcile with their daily lives. Almost every English man and woman lived a life of poverty and privation largely unimaginable to modern players. If an English gamesman didn't have a sewing needle, he couldn't simply go to the needle-merchant and buy one, he had to find someone who could make a serviceable needle out of metal he'd smelted from the earth or bone from an animal he'd killed. Acquiring the basic goods for continued life and civilization was never effortless and never to be assumed, not even for kings and their *feorm*. In a situation of desperate danger, these small details would doubtless have loomed even larger to the players.

Even so, it's up to your own play group as to whether these concerns should be equally valid for you, and whether the play they produce is the kind of fun you want to have. The mindset of a dirt-poor English warrior-farmer may be fun to inhabit, but it may be a bridge too far to take up his anxieties as well.

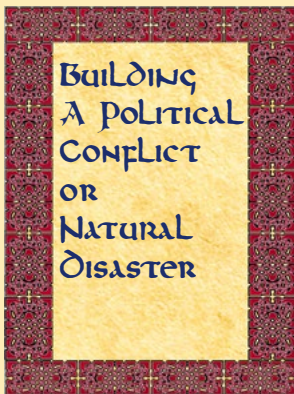
**Not every moment of** danger and excitement may come to pass within a caester's walls or an Arx's dark hallways. Many adventures may have their root in the quarrels of men, or the afflictions sent upon us by God and our own sins. In this section I will tell you how you are to make good adventures of such things.

Both political conflicts and natural disasters focus upon a want, a thing that is desired by one or more participants in the situation. For a political conflict, this may be mastery over a piece of land, possession of a fine herd of cattle, ownership of a splendid treasure, the hand of a beautiful bride, or anything else men may crave. For a natural disaster, this want is a consequence of the woe; food in a famine, health in a plague, warmth in a merciless winter, or anything else that men need but cannot get due to the hard circumstances.

When choosing a want, take care that it is something the heroes may influence in its getting. If the heroes have no possible way to find food for a starving hamlet or win the favor of a young noblewoman for the lord who desires her, then you do not have a want, you have a trifling piece of exposition. Whatever you choose as a want must be a thing the PCs can help gain or deny to someone.

With a want in mind, identify the ones who desire it. Who seeks the maiden's hand? Which lord thirsts for revenge over a lost giant-sword? What village is suffering under the scourge of a ruined harvest? Choose people that matter to the heroes for this, or those they might expect to soon care about. A random lord in Wessex who seeks a bride means little to a band of East Anglian warriors, but the lord they befriended two adventures ago may have a sharper tug on their attentions. So too, a friendly hamlet that helped the heroes once might expect more answer if they are found to be faint with hunger.

Now decide for yourself why those who want the thing cannot have it. Does another lord have a better claim on the bride's heart? Is a neighboring hamlet too bitter with resentment to part with their stored barley? You need not plot out perfectly the way in which the heroes might solve this obstacle, but you should think for yourself of a way or two in which it might happen. If you have no idea how the warband may weave victory in this circumstance, then your heroes might end up equally perplexed.





Finally, think for yourself what may come to pass if the want is satisfied, or what may happen if the want is desired in vain. The heroes may, after all, choose not to lend their assistance, or they may find some other person a more worthy recipient of the wanted thing, or they may fail in their labors and find their work wasted. It may be that they simply seek the thing for their own profit and pleasure, and no one else gains it at all. What will become of those involved in the matter, and how might they respond to their saviors or their cruel scourges?

Rewards for successfully obtaining a want will vary with the wealth of those who desire it. An impoverished village may be able to offer nothing but their friendship and a place by the mead-hall fire. A king may feast the heroes mightily and burden their necks with gold for the same deed.



ᚩ8 POLITICAL CONFLICT WANTS

- 1 LAND, either yet to be given by a lord or given to a rival
- 2 SPOUSES, with a particularly eligible bride or groom being sought
- 3 CATTLE, either stolen by someone, owed by someone, or wanted by one
- 4 TREASURE, being a physical or emotional relic of priceless value
- 5 REVENGE, for a crime unsatisfied by *wergild* or law
- 6 FRIENDSHIP, persuading someone to accept a particular new friend
- 7 LOYALTY, with conflicting duties owed to different people
- 8 BLESSINGS, wherein men struggle to gift or do a thing pleasing to God



ᚩ8 NATURAL DISASTERS AND THEIR WANTS

- 1 WAR, leaving too many dead to do vital labor and too much ruined
- 2 CROP FAILURE, with insects, curses, or weather despoiling the fields
- 3 WINTER STORMS, destroying stout halls and exposing men to icy death
- 4 ARSON, with the burning of halls or storage-huts and their contents
- 5 BEASTS, with many wild beasts driven to mad violence and fury
- 6 FAMINE, for their food was stolen, extorted, rotted, or wasted
- 7 FLOODS, with the drowning of fields and of men
- 8 DIVINE ANGER, with curses until the dire sin is revealed and punished



- 1 A lord's daughter has been stolen away by a rival who wishes to make her his son's wife. It may be that the daughter is more eager for this alliance than the son, or other subtle reasons exist to complicate matters.
- 2 A new-made abbot is proud and unreasonable, harrying a lord with demands and imprecations. Only the bishop can rein him in, but how is a lord to persuade the holy man of the justice of his cause?
- 3 A lord is being ill-used by a reckless or foolish king, and has been commanded to do a thing impossible for him. He will give great gifts to any heroes who can help him in his need.
- 4 A man's master is enemy to another lord, yet this man and the other are old friends, having fought bravely beside each other in former days. He aches to mend this strife before he must raise his spear against a friend.
- 5 An abbot struggles to overcome the folly of his predecessor, who recklessly allowed a lord to all but seize the minster with his encroachments. The interloper must be pushed back onto his own land.
- 6 A desperate lord with a just and worthy cause has made alliance with pagan powers for strength against his wicked foe. If it is discovered he will be ruined, yet without help he must surely be unjustly destroyed.
- 7 Flooding has drowned a lord's fields, and his ceorls will starve unless their neighbors give aid. Yet the lord is despised by those near to him, and no help will be given without great cause or bloody strife.
- 8 A great wind and terrible hail has wounded the herds and beaten down the grain of a wicked lord. Men are convinced that unless he is made to repent his evil, God will scourge his lands without end.
- 9 A plague among the cattle has culled the herds of many ceorls and lords, and without oxen the fields will go unplowed and men will starve. There are more to be had, but only with great treasures or bitter fighting.
- 10 A curse sickens every child in a village, their bodies wracked with uncanny evils. The people are desperate for some help against this, and are making awful bargains to win some power's aid.
- 11 Drought has scalded the fields, and men agree that it is the work of some occult evil. They cannot decide who or what is responsible, however, and there is a risk of terrible violence against suspected sorcerers.
- 12 Flood or wind or drought has hammered down on a lord, impoverishing him and his ceorls. Rivals are eager to seize his land, yet they cannot decide who is to have it, and so are presently fighting each other for it.



**These then are the** kingdoms of the English, their lords, their minsters of great repute, and the affairs that presently occupy them<sup>1</sup>. Mention is also made of the Wealh kings and of the lords of the Picts and the Dal Riatans, for such men may as oft be foes as they are friends to the English.

No listing is made of the thousand little hamlets or minor minsters that scatter over England, for no man knows how many of such places there are. A GM may justly put one anywhere he pleases and none can prove him wrong in his wish.

One who reads of these kingdoms must remember at all times that there is not one of them so carefully mastered as the emperors of Rome once mastered their lands. Every king is wholly dependent upon the aid and service of his friends, and betimes those friends decide to do things that do not please the king. They may raid a tempting neighbor, or avenge themselves on some slight, or make bargains that would anger their king were they to be known. Thus, it is not possible to say, for instance, that Northumbria is at peace with Mercia, or that Mercia fears nothing from Gwentish spears. The best that can be said is whether or not a king wishes to make war on a neighbor or not.

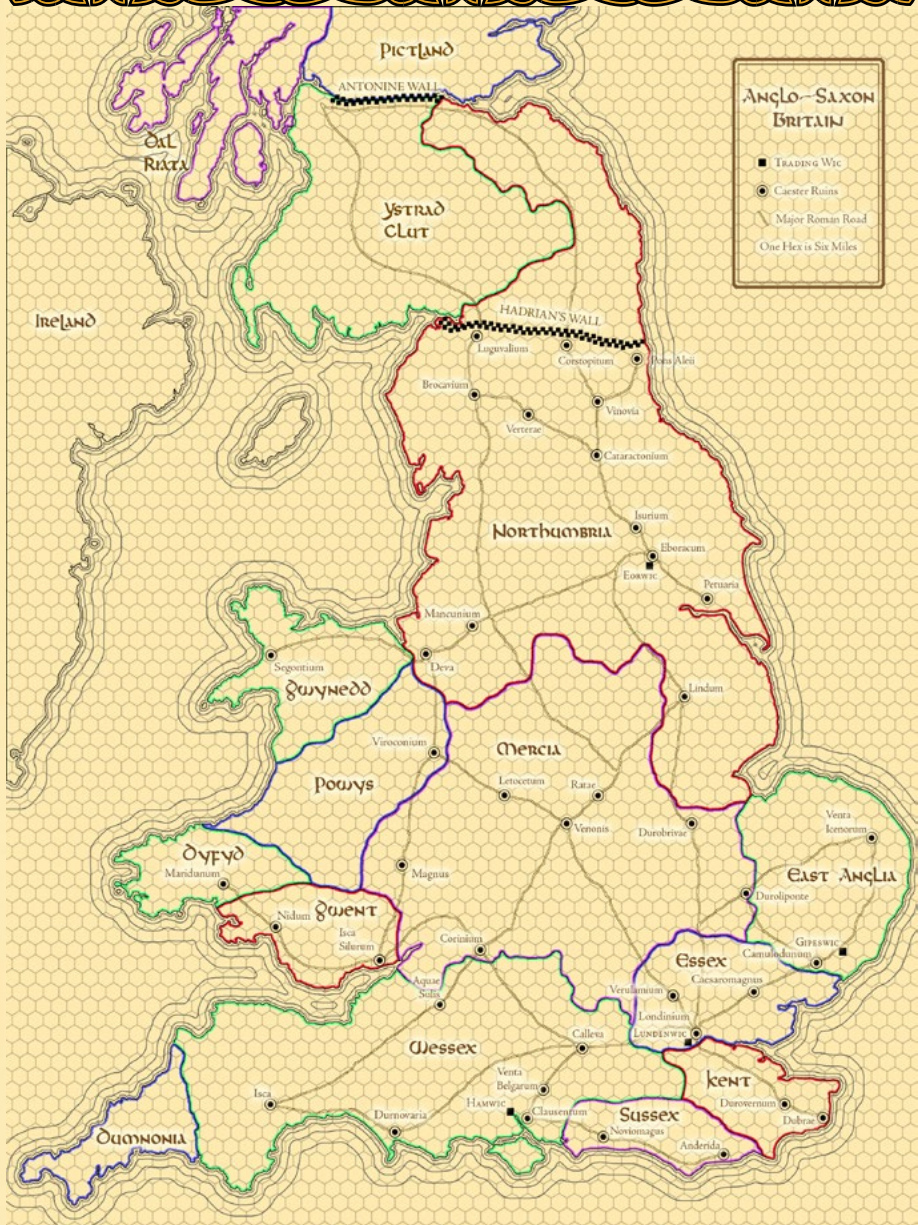
Because of this, heroes may well be asked to do tasks that would not please the king of the kingdom they are in. So too, they may face unexpected raiding bands, or men marching in reprisal, or sudden friendly meetings where friends were not to be looked for. Every meeting between men of different lords must be handled carefully and politely, and seldom can heroes expect to find sure friends or inevitable enemies in any land. A wise band of heroes will venture out into England and find what is there with their own eyes, trusting no monk's book more than they do their own clear sight.

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that Brother Cornix may not have had a clear idea of affairs even very close to his monastery. In an age before any sort of coordinated long-distance communication the most egregious errors of fact could be maintained by authors a few score miles away from the location in question. Expecting a Northumbrian monk to know of affairs in the Sussex weald would be highly optimistic.

Even so, Cornix appears to have shared gaming sessions with the Venerable Bede, and so might be expected to have shared in the news that Bede received from his wide-ranging array of correspondents. Of course, the accuracy of the information passed on by those correspondents may also be open to debate, and it's quite possible that Cornix elected to "spice up" certain matters for the benefit of his readers.







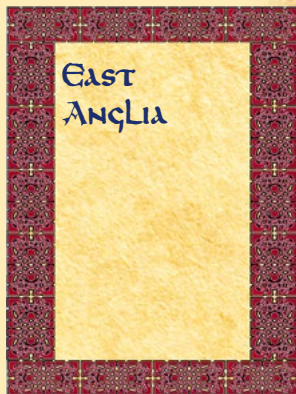
**A CENTURY APO THERE** was no kingdom greater than that of the East Angles, and their folk were mightiest of all the English. Glorious King Raedwald was *bretwalda* over all the tribes south of the Humber, and though he was a heathen he did not deal unkindly with Christ's servants. Yet those old war-glories are fast in grave-grasp now, and the men of the eastern shore must take care if they are to keep their own kings.

Their ruler Aldwulf is a good man to do this work, for he has cunning king-craft. For almost fifty years he has ruled over the East Anglians, mending their quarrels and warding their foes with his wise words and sound choice of friends. His head is white with age now, but no less keen, and it is said he knows at a glance all that a man is worth in war and counsel.

He needs this wisdom, for he plays two spears against each other. Both Mercia and Wessex wish to master his folk, and both of them have more might than the East Angles. The king temporizes between them, aiding first one, then the other, or sending spears to help their foes as he did when the West Saxons marched on Kent. He gives shelter to usurpers and renegades, and when the Mercians complain of his harboring of Aethelbald, he points to the West Saxon pretenders that the Mercians are glad to see him guard.

Like King Ine of Wessex, King Aldwulf has seen the wisdom of wealth won through barter. The trading-wic of Gipeswic has been established at the mouth of the river Orwell to receive Frankish merchants and traders from afar, men bringing wine, gold and silks to trade for English cattle, grain and slaves. The shores teem with men at Gipeswic, a thousand and more, and the king's reeve is sore-pressed to keep order amid all the comings and goings of strangers. Yet so long as Aldwulf gets his gift of the trades made there he is inclined to look but little at the ones who bargain.

East Anglia is a land of peaceful men in the main, for King Aldwulf chooses well his friends and the lords to whom he would give land. Yet many are the minor Roman caesters within his land, and many are the lairs of evil things in the dank fenlands, and so monstrous foes are more common in his domain than in others. His ceorls fear less the spears of raiders or far-off Wealth, and dread more the hunger of bestial things in the dark. Many are the heroes who would go forth to aid them, but alas, fewer are those who return.





<b>Ruler</b>	King Aldwulf, old and cunning	<b>Size:</b> 20,000 hides of land
<b>Great Men</b>	Aethelbald, a Mercian man of royal blood forced to flee by King Ceolred. He dwells with Guthlac, aided subtly by the East Anglians who wish to see him crowned in Ceolred's place. He is hard, ruthless, and surpassing clever. Guthlac, the holy hermit of the Crowland fens, mighty in war in his youth as a Mercian noble, and now mighty in his service to God. Ealdorman Ecgbert, manager of those affairs the king wishes done but does not wish to make public. He seeks out men to do work that cannot be traced back.	
<b>Minsters of Note</b>	<i>Ely</i> , a double minster perched upon the isle of Ely amidst the swampy fenlands, potent not only as a holy place but as a strongly-defended fastness. <i>Cnobheresburg</i> , founded within an ancient Roman fortress by the Irish monk Fursey who did much to make East Anglia Christian. The monks of the minster stand vigil against the many troublesome Roman shades there. <i>Domnoc</i> , seat of a bishopric, this minster is in the corner of a caester that is being eaten by the sea, fragments of it falling away each year as the land crumbles away. Many are the terrible sea-nicors that trouble the place.	
<b>Matters to Interest</b>	Ealdorman Ecgbert needs reliable men to do secret work on his behalf, slaying some, aiding others, and defending some that other kings would kill.	
<b>Heroes</b>	Aethelbald has many friends in Mercia who would like him to be king, but they dare not contact each other directly. He needs agents to carry messages. East Anglia is a land much troubled by monsters, and the king is careful about spending the lives of his friends. Hired adventurers are less dear to him.	

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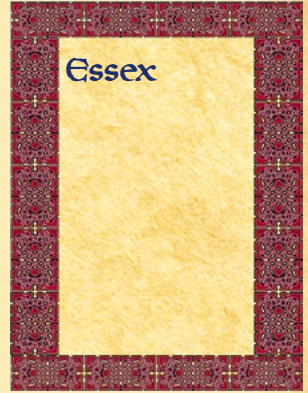
POSSIBLE EVENTS OF NOTE IN EAST ANGLIA

- 1 King Aldwulf has taken gravely ill, and his friends despair for his life. King Ine of Wessex and King Ceolred of Mercia now both prepare themselves to plunder his land when he is gone, unless some strong heir can prove his worth before the king dies.
- 2 The devil has wearied of Saint Guthlac's holy stubbornness, and has sent forth a swarm of monsters and woesome beasts to drive him out of the Crowland fens. The creatures can do no hurt to the saint, but much torment the fenland hamlets.
- 3 Aethelbald has decided the time is ripe to overthrow Ceolred and gathers an army now.
- 4 A good friend of Ealdorman Ecgbert has gone into a caester but has not come out, and the lord needs brave heroes to go, find him, and complete his secret task.
- 5 A boil of Arxborn have erupted from a villa or minor caester and is causing much woe.
- 6 King Ine or King Ceolred is furious over some friendship Aldwulf has made with a renegade. The king would have a good deed given to the offended ruler to soothe them.
- 7 Domnoc crumbles further into the sea, and the bishop is full of fear. Splendid craftsmen must be found to build a new seat, but there are few such in the kingdom.
- 8 King Aldwulf knows one of his lords is disloyal, but cannot punish him without better proof that he has. He must get heroes to seek service with him and then find proof.



**LAND OF THE EAST** Saxons, Essex is a hard-pressed kingdom. There are two great kings within the land, King Swaefheard and King Swaefberht, and they love each other not. Each would gladly see the other dead, but they know that open quarrel must bring ruin from their hungry neighbors, and so they endure each other as they must.

Swaefberht is the nominal master of the rich trading-wic of Lunden and the surrounding lands, while Swaefheard holds the loyalty of the northern lords. Yet both must bow their heads to the demands of King Ceolred of Mercia, and much of the merchant-tribute of Lundenwic flows into Mercian hands. Swaefberht burns with resentment at this but dares not offend Ceolred, for the Mercians are men who would burn a rebel's fields even if they too must starve for it.



Lundenwic itself lies outside the dismal caester of Old Londinium, once the greatest city in all Britain. The great stone walls of the caester still stand, and encircle a broad band of ruins and tangles on the north bank of the river Thames. Lundunwic is to the west of it, close to the walls, where merchants may drag up their boats on the shore and bargain with those who bring cattle or grain or thralls to trade. The merchants dwell in crude halls thrown up by the shore where they may shelter their men and goods while awaiting English sellers, and they always have work for idle hands. Mercia's reeve, the man Godwine, tries to keep order in the wic but the traders come and go so quickly that the evils they do are seldom punished. Most are Franks, or men of Hispania, or Northmen, but I have heard tell of stranger folk coming from time to time.


Old Londinium is a mighty caester and many are the heroes who journey thence to test their steel against its perils. They can gift their finds for bread and beef from the merchants who dwell in Lundenwic and the holy cathedral of Bishop Waldhere, stands near the gates to succor them. The grim outpost of Allhallows Berkyngeschurch is deep within the caester, standing watch over some of the old Arxes that still are found anew there. Brave men are often asked to guard the food-shipments carried into the caester to help those monks and their warrior companions stay fed. Berkyngeschurch's abbot Ingwald will feed and succor adventurers who plumb the caester's ruins, but such petitioners must prove their worth to him if they are to have his bread and his aid.

<b>Ruler</b>	King Swaefheard, together with King Swaefberht his kinsman	<b>Size:</b> 7,000 hides of land
<b>Great Men</b>	Waldhere, the bishop of London, who has great care over the many Arxes and terrible things within the walls. Godwine, reeve of King Ceolred in Lundenwic, who is loyal to his cruel lord more out of grim duty than due to love. Dodo, a rich Frankish merchant of wines and rare goods who has little honor.	
<b>Minsters of Note</b>	<i>Lunden Cathedral</i> , seat of the bishop of Lundenwic <i>Berkyngge Abbey</i> , a double minster under the stern rule of holy Ethelburga outside Old Londinium <i>Allhallows Berkyngchurch</i> , an outpost-minster deep inside Old Londinium founded as a bulwark against the caester's evil by Ethelburga	
<b>Matters to Interest Heroes</b>	The two kings seek deniable hands to raid and plague the lords and friends of their rivals. The reeve of Lundenwic is aware of Swaefberht's resentment and desires agents to uncover the king's schemes against Mercia. Bishop Waldhere is angered at the carelessness of the lords, who spend all their hours scheming and warring and will not help him and his monks contain the great perils and ancient evils within Old Londinium. A foreign merchant at Lundenwic seeks guides to take him inland to an English lord, that he might negotiate a trade of cattle for fine goods. His rivals seek trouble for him, either at the heroes' hands or those of their own friends.	



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POSSIBLE EVENTS OF NOTE IN ESSEX

- 1 Proof has been found that King Swaefheard has bought the loyalty of one of King Swaefberht's ealdormen, but no one can tell who it may be. Swaefberht can trust no one in his hall until the traitor is uncovered.
  - 2 Reeve Godwine schemes to have the two kings fight each other, leaving them helpless when Mercia abandons all pretense and seizes Lundenwic entirely for its own.
  - 3 A holy abbot is seeking to make a loving peace between the kindred kings.
  - 4 The foreign traders in Lundenwic are doing vile things, but neither Godwine nor Swaefberht care so long as their tribute comes unhindered.
  - 5 Something horrible boils forth from Old Londinium to scourge the trading wic.
  - 6 A rich Frankish lord is buying friends among both kings' followers and bringing kinsmen over from the continent, perhaps to lay his own claim to land in Essex.
  - 7 There is a stranger from an impossibly distant land who has come to Lundenwic, perhaps from Araby or far Tang, and he has wonderful marvels to sell. Yet he will not sell them save for some treasure out of Old Londinium.
  - 8 Allhallows Berkyngchurch is struck savagely by the work of the devil, and is in desperate need of help from some quarter if it is not to be overrun.
- 

**Alas for Kent, mother** of the true faith in England. Where once it was a peaceful land much blessed by its minsters, now it suffers under the rise of the trading-wics and recent hard war. Even so, it remains a rich land by English measure, and much worked gold yet hangs on the limbs of Kentish lords.

Until the trading-wics were first established a generation ago, the Frankish merchants would always come to the Jutes of Kent, for they were nearest to the Frankish land. Those who sought their treasures would have to come to the Kentish lords and barter with them, or risk the long journey overland through their domain and the perils that come of it. For this reason the Kentishmen have always been rich, though this is much more so in the east than in the poorer domains of the west. Through these trades the Jutes made many friends among the Franks, and even among farther merchants.

But now the trading-wics have come, and many Frankish merchants go there instead to find new buyers. Harder still, King Ine's kinsman Mul had only a few years past conquered all of Kent with much slaughter and broke their pride with West Saxon spears. Yet Mul was so overbearing a king that the people barred the doors of his hall and burnt him and his friends alive there, for which King Wihtried had to pay *wergild* to Ine. Yet since then Ine has sent no new men to Kent, for perhaps the ceorls would burn them, too.

King Wihtried's son Ethelbert is king in the west of Kent, ruler over the poorer lands and harder-pressed places. He cannot give land without Wihtried's leave, and cannot do many other things a king must do, and he chafes at his father's law. He thinks Wihtried does not credit the danger from Wessex still, or the perils of raiders from Sussex, and will again lose his country if he does not let his son rule what he has given him. Wihtried in turn fears his son will act rashly and buy for Kent a burden that he himself must then bear.

At least the Kentishmen have the mercy of God to console them. Ever since St. Augustine landed at Thanet, there have been many marvelous works of God done in Kent and many great minsters raised there. Alas, thirty years ago Rochester cathedral, minster-seat of Bishop Tobias, was ravaged by King Ethelred of Mercia before that king found godly shame. Even now the minster is plagued by troubles and sudden poverties, and men say that Ethelred stirred up something dark below with his terrible deeds there.






<b>Ruler</b>	King Wihtred, though in the west is King Ethelbert, his subordinate son	<b>Size:</b> 15,000 hides of land
<b>Great Men</b>	Tobias, bishop of Rochester, a holy man afflicted with troubles Berhtwald, archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England Mildred, abbess of Thanetminster with many Frankish family ties	
<b>Minsters of Note</b>	<i>Canterbury Cathedral</i> , seat of the archbishop, heir to St. Augustine <i>Rochester Cathedral</i> , seat of Bishop Tobias and constantly plagued by misfortunes and troubles since its ravaging in 676 by a Mercian king <i>Thanetminster</i> , which receives many Frankish traders and visitors due to its abbess' kinsmen there. Some say it is more a wic than a minster. <i>Martinsminster</i> , dedicated by King Wihtred outside of the old Roman fortress at Dubrae to help contain the Arxes of that cursed place	
<b>Matters to Interest</b>	Bishop Tobias desires brave men to search out the adjacent caester of Dourobrivis for the source of the misfortunes plaguing his cathedral	
<b>Heroes</b>	King Ethelbert needs men to punish raiders, for he has not loyal gesith enough to defend all his father would have him keep. Abbess Mildred desires that agents should assist Frankish merchants who are kinsmen of hers, but does not wish to hear talk of their less-pious deeds. Archbishop Berhtwald often must send letters to distant kings and lords, and is always seeking trustworthy men to go out and return with their replies.	



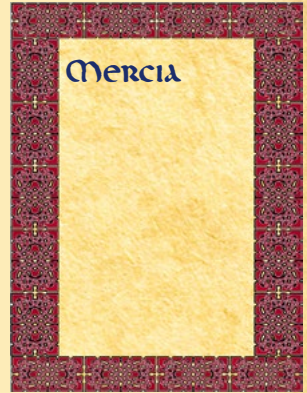
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POSSIBLE EVENTS OF NOTE IN KENT

- 1 A Frankish merchant is taking his trade in luxuries from Kent to the East Anglian port at Gipeswic. If he is not persuaded to relent by some means King Wihtred will lose many fine gifts from his hands.
  - 2 Abbess Mildred's Frankish kinsmen are causing trouble with their greed and boastfulness, yet no one dares offend the abbess by demanding a reckoning with them. Only outsiders can hope to do so, those who will not linger to face the abbess' anger.
  - 3 Bishop Tobias has got a fine treasure to give in gift to the ones who lift his seat's curse.
  - 4 Kinsmen of the former king Mul and his men are plotting to ravage Kentish land, for they do not believe a king's life could ever be recompensed by *wergild*. Many agree.
  - 5 King Ine is pushing too hard on Kentish herds, taking too many riches as compelled gifts to help fund his push to the west. If he is not dissuaded there will be open fighting.
  - 6 Bishop Tobias is being plagued by some devil in his cathedral minster, and all his prayers cannot get it to go away. Men blame the curse upon the place for its doings.
  - 7 Pagan raiders from Sussex are striking into King Ethelbert's lands before vanishing.
  - 8 A very sensitive letter was sent by Archbishop Berhtwald to King Ceolred of Mercia's priest, yet it was intercepted by plundering outlaws. Discreet men must retrieve it.
- 

**Mighty Mercia wars with** Wessex to the south over the overlordship of the English lands. These two kingdoms are the strongest of all, but they are ruled much unlike. King Ine of Wessex is a wise and honored ruler, but King Ceolred of Mercia is scarce more than a foolish boy, even if he has the evil appetites of a man fully grown.

Mercia's kingship has always been strongest over its middle regions, where its Angle lords have had the most kin. Surrounding these Angle lands are a dozen or more other half-kin tribes, each with their own petty king. They have been made part of Mercia only through war, and only through war are they kept obedient. It is because of this that the Mercians have become very cruel in battle, slaughtering many



ceorlish prisoners, burning fields, and doing damnable iniquities to those who dare rebel against their rule. The *symbel*-feasts of Mercian lords are not merry, but full of watchful eyes and careful words.

So too does wicked King Ceolred not hesitate to wring the minsters of his land of their wealth, commanding that they give him gifts, and not even hesitating to lay unclean hands upon fair young nuns. Many are his lords who resent this, but none dare to be the first to move against him. If he is deposed, all Mercia might collapse into tribal war and kinslaying, and King Ine to the south would sweep over them all.

And if not King Ine, then the Wealh to the west. In prior years Mercia made bargains with the Wealh to share battle against Northumbria, when Northumbria was great. Mercia's spears broke the pride of the north in battle at the river Trent in 679, and now those bargains have ended. The Britons raid deep into the marches for which Mercia was named, praising peace in the winter and sowing spears in the spring.


And yet in all seasons King Ceolred and his lords struggle with King Ine to the south, each seeking to be master over Kent and the southern tribes of Sussex. King Ine suffered a great rebuff when his kinsman Mul was burnt by the Kentishmen, and King Ceolred now is eager to exploit that turn. Yet it may be his lords will not obey him as he wishes, for few are the men at his table who truly love him. The king may need to seek other hands to do his work in Kent, or it may be that the lords will find some suitable band to do what loyal men could never do to their lord.

<b>Ruler</b>	King Ceolred, young and riotous	<b>Size:</b> 30,000 hides of land
<b>Great Men</b>	Sub-King Wigstan of the Pecsætan, the Peakmen who dwell around Repton. Sub-King Mildfrith of the Magonsæte, fighting the Wealh of Powys Sub-King Eanhere of the Hwicce, near Worcester	
<b>Minsters of</b>	<i>Wenlockminster</i> , a double minster under Abbess Mildburh. A monk there has had visions of the king's damnation; many fear evil will come of it.	
<b>Note</b>	<i>Reptonminster</i> , a double minster long tied to the Mercian royals, where Abbess Ermelida is thus far successful in keeping her nuns from Ceolred's hands. Holy St. Guthlac received his tonsure here thirteen years ago, and even as he dwells in the far Crowland fens his name still brings fear to Repton's foes.	
<b>Matters to Interest</b>	King Ceolred wishes to extort obedience from Kent, but dares not demand too much from his restive lords.	
<b>Heroes</b>	Abbess Mildburh is being tormented by royal demands and greedy minions, but lacks the strength or the daring to openly defy them. King Mildfrith is struggling with the Wealh of Powys, who raid and are raided by the Maegonsæte tribe each year. He seeks to subvert the Wealh nobles of Powys with English gifts and persuade them not to come to their king's help.	



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## POSSIBLE EVENTS OF NOTE IN MERCIA

- 1 King Mildfrith is furious over a raid from Powys and has cast too many men at a reprisal that has punished too few. Now the other Wealh are over the border and many herds are stolen, with Mildfrith calling to Ceolred for help.
  - 2 King Ceolred has eyes for a beautiful young nun and has his men watching her. Brave souls must spirit her away to safety in Wessex, yet such are Ceolred's vile minions that they might prefer her dead than beyond their young king's grasp.
  - 3 One of the Mercian sub-tribes chafes at the demands Ceolred is making, and their men are within a blade's edge of rebelling. Some of their elders think it must be done regardless of the cost, while others will betray their own to escape Mercia's punishment.
  - 4 Ceolred has been cursed by God with a foul and monstrous disease. He demands a cure for it but refuses to amend his ways, and so his men send forth agents to seek the most unlikely and perhaps even un-Christian of remedies.
  - 5 Ceolred's ealdormen are making bargains with the Kentish kings, promising them help in resisting Wessex's demands. The Kentishmen demand proof of their sincerity.
  - 6 A foul abbess is pandering to Ceolred's hungers, and some say she practices *dru*-craft.
  - 7 Mercia has scoured a rebel tribe's lands, putting them in terrible hunger and driving their surviving warriors into outlawry and brutal banditry.
  - 8 A rebel lord seeks Ceolred's overthrow, but he is being funded by King Ine's malice.
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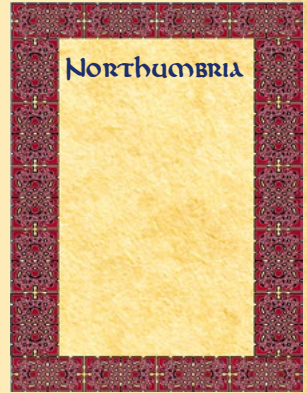
**NORTHUMBRIA HAS FALLEN FROM** its old glory, the might of Angles who dwell north of the Humber now dwindled. Two generations past, it was instead two different kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira, like in kin but deep in distrust. King Oswiu of Bernicia was the greater, and by his courage and power he broke the teeth of the Mercian lords and made himself their master. So it was that King Oswiu was counted *bretwalda*, greatest of the lords of the English, overlord even of the Pictish kings.

His son Ecgfrith bound up Deira and Bernicia into the kingdom of Northumbria, yet he died miserably at Nechtansmere, when King Bridei of the Picts slew him in battle. In dismay, Northumbria's lords called over the water to Ireland, where Oswiu had got a bastard on an Irish princess, and so his son Aldfrith was made king.

Aldfrith was a man of mighty wisdom, learned and judicious, and he drove back the Picts and bound up the wounds of his kingdom. If it was less than it once was, at least it was whole, and learning flourished under his rule. My own minster owes much to this king, and brother Bede loved him well. Yet Aldfrith died as all men must, and the villainous lord Eadwulf seized the throne, for Aldfrith's son Osred was too young. The lords rose against him, and in a year's time he had fled to Pictland, where he seethes still. Osred then received the king-helm, though hardly thirteen winters of age.

Osred is a monster. Coelred of Mercia is a vicious boy, but Osred is far worse, for thirsts for evil and delights in doing wrong. He would have been done away with by now for his kingdom's sake, but the mighty ealdorman Behrtred and Abbess Aelfflaed threaten dire harm to any who rebel. Behrtred is practically king himself, for he amuses Osred with evils and acts in the young king's name. Aelfflaed thinks to redeem the boy, for she loves him, as he was her brother Aldfrith's son and the adopted son of holy Bishop Wifrid after Aldfrith died. More than that, Oswiu's royal line has no other male heir.

The lords of Northumbria merely seek to preserve what they have from the Picts in the north, the Irish of Dal Riata to the west, the Britons of Ystrad Clut, and the hungry Mercians to the south. They are sworn enemies to none of these tribes, trading even marriages with them from time to time, yet weakness must always bring woe from them. So long as Osred confines his evils to the weak, his great men have no heart to risk the chaos of kinslaying.




<b>Ruler</b>	King Osred, young and cruel	<b>Size:</b> 20,000 hides of land
<b>Great Men</b>	Ealdorman Behrtred, a greedy man who amuses the king and wields his power Eadwulf the usurper, in exile in Pictland. His royal blood is in dispute, but many whisper he would be a better king than Osred all the same. Abbess Aelfflaed, a holy woman famed for healing-skill and her love of Osred	
<b>Minsters of</b>	<i>Gillingminster</i> , founded by King Oswiu in penance for his slaying of King Oswine of Deira. It is said Oswine's shade is yet restless in its fury.	
<b>Note</b>	<i>Whitby</i> , a double minster ruled by Abbess Aelfflaed and a place of much miraculous healing and mortal skill at medicine. <i>Lastingham</i> , once the minster of St. Chad, that most brotherly of bishops, who brought the Word to the heathen Mercians in the time of Oswiu.	
<b>Matters to Interest Heroes</b>	King Osred wills much evil, and Ealdorman Behrtred is the only man who can humor him and turn aside his passions. Behrtred requires fine gifts for this kind service. Abbess Aelfflaed is convinced that demons or sorcerers are the cause of Osred's evil will, and desires men to find these wrongdoers and reveal their sins. King Nechtan of the Picts is a sage and learned king, and pious enough to hate Osred. He would be glad of the boy's death, and perhaps gladder still of the chaos it would bring to Northumbria as Oswiu's line comes to an end.	



## 08

### POSSIBLE EVENTS OF NOTE IN NORTHUMBRIA

- 1 Aelfflaed is convinced a particular holy relic can cure Osred's evil heart, yet it has been stolen away by Arxborn from its minster and carried off deep into a caester.
  - 2 Eadwulf the usurper has found friends in men displeased by Osred's wickedness, but he needs agents unknown to Aelfflaed and Behrtred to carry the words of his intrigue.
  - 3 King Nechtan has pronounced his anger towards Osred for his evil ways, and is marshaling the Picts north of the wall to bring Godly punishment to Northumbria.
  - 4 The petty kings of Ystrad Clut are helping both Osred's loyal men and those who seek his downfall, several among them seeking to become kingmakers in the North.
  - 5 Osred has done something horrible, and the few witnesses to it have been sworn to silence on their lives. Yet the curse of it lingers in the place, and a monster is born of it.
  - 6 Ealdorman Behrtred plans to plunder a minster to get gifts to support Osred's loyal men. If the abbot resists, he will be called a traitor, and if he does not, Behrtred will simply say that his treachery was discovered before he could act on it.
  - 7 A holy saint seeks to reclaim an old minster-site once lost to war, but its fine buildings are still blighted by the monstrous curse that fell upon its destroyers.
  - 8 A kingly usurper from a collateral line is fomenting rebellion from Ystrad Clut.
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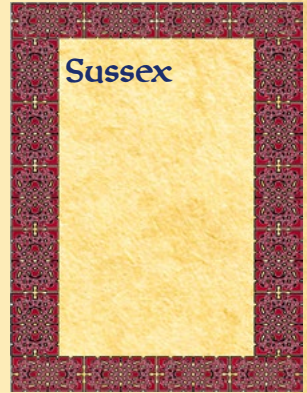
**Sussex is NOT much** of a kingdom, in truth, for it Saxon folk are few and more than a little pagan still in their temper. They came to the Church only twenty years past, and while open paganism is not to be found among their lords, there are many tales of villages that yet keep empty huts that are not storehouses and who go into the Sussex weald to do evil things. Honest South Saxons despise such things as weakness and foolishness, but even they may think some charms harmless to mutter or mark.

Sussex's master is King Nothelm, such as it is, for he shares dominion with the kings Osric and Aethelstan, who also have lords sworn to them. And together all bow their heads to their kinsman King Ine of Wessex, for in my father's time Sussex's liberty was taken by King Caedwalla of Wessex. King Nothelm is a hard and fearless warrior, even this year fighting beside Ine to crush the Wealh king Geraint of Dumnonia to the west, and he is a good friend to the Church.

The great part of Sussex is the great southern weald, a mighty forest that stretches into Kent in the east and westward through much of the kingdom. It is not a good place to live, neither in the time of the Romans nor in our day, for there are many things deep within the weald that do not love men. It is said that doors to Faerie are many in the weald, and things come out of them to hunt and to play, and those who go in do not come out again. To leave the old roads and trusted paths through the weald is no safe thing.

Yet there remain Saxon settlements within the weald. It is safe from men, if perhaps not from other things, and few seek to raid cattle there when bringing them out is so uncertain. So too there are old roads and Roman caesters within, built by men too strong or too foolish to fear the forest, yet the greater part of minsters and villages are found outside the woods, most often on the southern shore of Sussex.

Rumors speak of a heathen force within the weald, of villages hidden from the reeves of kings and places sealed away from unwanted eyes by galdor and pagan prayers. It is said that sometimes these heathens send forth warbands of their own, disguised as Christian men, to scout the lands around and bring home wealth for their gods. Aside from these mysterious pagans, none can argue that bandits and outlaws love the weald well, for few wish to chase them there. If the forest does not slay them, they may prosper in solitude.






<b>Ruler</b>	King Nothelm, obedient to King Ine	<b>Size:</b> 7,000 hides of land
<b>Great Men</b>	Abbess Nothgyth, the king's sister, who tries very hard to be a pious nun and wishes to go pilgrimaging. Alas, she has a <i>waelcyrige's</i> love of war. Ealdorman Eadfrith, a man of Nothgyth who has much weald-land that gives him many woes and little profit. The One-Eyed King, a bandit lord within the weald who serves the devil well	
<b>Minsters of Note</b>	<i>Aldingbourne</i> , gifted to Abbess Nothgyth by her brother the king. It is not well-run, for the nuns are like their abbess and much given to ungodly fighting. <i>Steyning</i> , the port-minster at which Abbot Cuthman worked to convert the South Saxons twenty years ago. They seek out pagans with zeal. <i>Alfriston</i> , a small minster raised in memory of St. Lewinna, martyred by her pagan kinsmen in 670, when Sussex was still wholly in the devil's grasp	
<b>Matters to Interest Heroes</b>	The weald sends forth monsters to vex all near the forest, and the villages that surround it sometimes turn to unclean powers to win protection, rather than trust in God and the prayers of the minsters. King Nothelm has little power, the small wealth of Sussex divided up between him and his kinsman-kings. He has much land to give helpful men, but that land is wild, dangerous, and unpopulated. The minsters of Sussex deal with pagans far more often than the minsters of other kingdoms. All men recognize the superiority of the True Faith, of course, but they have evil habits of adding on charms and rites to Christian practice, as if more added were to make better work.	



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POSSIBLE EVENTS OF NOTE IN SUSSEX

- 1 A minster has gone badly astray, its abbot led into darkness and heathenry and its monks infected with those evil ways. It is too deep in the weald to be easily punished.
  - 2 A hamlet within the weald no longer answers, and those who go seeking it do not return. None can guess what evil might have befallen it, deep within the forest.
  - 3 King Nothelm quarrels with his co-kings, for they think he spends too much of his labor helping King Ine's conquest of Dumnonia and too little dealing with the troubles of Sussex. While they fail to act together, outlaws and worse grow more troublesome.
  - 4 The One-Eyed King has the impudence to declare himself ruler of all Sussex, and now King Nothelm must destroy him or be greatly shamed.
  - 5 A faerie village has appeared within the weald, like and yet unlike those of the English. Men say that wondrous gifts can be got there by those who know how to ask for them.
  - 6 A minster is being overwhelmed by raiders. Some say they are pagans, while others say they are only common thieves who pretend to pagantry to excuse their unholy acts.
  - 7 An ealdorman vows to cut open a Roman road long since closed by the sinister weald.
  - 8 King Nothelm has been slain in the west of Wessex while suppressing Wealh rebels. The other two co-kings have flown to arms to decide who is to be Sussex's master.
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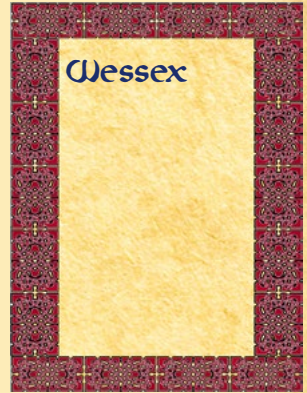
**Mighty Wessex Thrives Beneath** the brave hand of its king, Ine of the royal house of Gewisse. Many are its quarrels with its neighbors, but few are those who have stood against its spears. Yet within Wessex there are many troubles that have come from that very king's own might.

Wessex is overlord over Sussex, and claims lord-right over Kent as well. Yet since the king's kinsman Mul was burnt by the Kentishmen this claim has had little force, though King Ine does not slack in his efforts to wring obedience from Kent.

In the north, Wessex strives always with Mercia, the two kingdoms being the greatest of the present age. The savage cruelty of Mercian spears makes this struggle more terrible than most, and many are the sad slaughters along the border. In the east, it spars with the East Anglians of King Aldwulf, who has been known to harbor enemies of King Ine while yet seeking something of peace with Wessex. Most gloriously, the King has but this year broken the power of the Wealh kingdom of Dumnonia, slaying its King Geraint and driving its warriors from the field.

Yet this very victory has brought troubles to the land, for while the king has men enough to break the Wealh lords, he has not enough to tame the Wealh ceorls. His law is held lightly among them and his lords dare not go where they will there. This is compounded yet more by the many Wealhmen who live in the western reaches of Wessex, sons of an earlier conquest who love the king no more than they must by law. If the king dares put too much of his strength into mastering Dumnonia, the Mercians will have his halls for their own. So it is that the king is willing to give men of little name lordship over Wealh lands if they seem able to hold them, for they will need do many brave deeds there to win the fruits of the land and have peaceful possession of its feorm.

Against these troubles the king has sought help from foreign merchants, making for his profit a trading-wic at the mouth of the Itching, called Hamwic. There a great host of men come from all over Wessex to trade English wares for foreign treasures. There are thousands there at any one time, passing through as they bring their goods, and wonders can be found there that are seldom seen in England. The king's reeve there takes a portion of each trade in exchange for law and protection, and so the king is made prosperous by other men's labors.




<b>Ruler</b>	King Ine, glorious in law and war	<b>Size:</b> 30,000 hides of land
<b>Great Men</b>	Bishop Daniel of Winchester, dear friend of brother Bede. He is a man of holy austerity and great scholarship, and is insatiable for lost books and histories. Abbess Cuthburh, the king's sister and the widow of old King Aldfrith of Northumbria, most holy and pure, yet unwelcome in Northumbria for the woes she caused when she chose to be chaste with her husband. Ealdorman Wuffa, the nominal lord of the king's Dumnonian conquests, yet a man much taxed by the task and with insufficient strength to tame the Wealh.	
<b>Minsters of Note</b>	<i>Wimbourne</i> , under Abbess Cuthburh, where a great many books are kept and answers may be found for obscure questions. <i>Glastonbury</i> , a mighty minster of the Wealh taken by Wessex in 658, wherein many monks are yet Wealh and favorably disposed to the Dumnonians. The King must handle it carefully lest he enrage the Wealhmén of his lands.	
<b>Matters to Interest Heroes</b>	The Wealhmén of western Wessex are grudging in their obedience, often communicating with the Dumnonians and giving subtle aid to their kinsmen. Their schemes oft need unraveling without disturbing the peace of their obedient brethren. The king's Dumnonian conquests are much unsettled, and strong lords are needed to bring the masterless lands into obedience to the king. Many foreign merchants hasten to Hamwic to trade and seek English agents for their own ends, many of which are not wholly lawful.	



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## POSSIBLE EVENTS OF NOTE IN Wessex

- 1 King Ine has been captured by the lords of Dumnonia after a lucky raid, and they want all the land back to Sussex's western border for his life. His men cannot decide what to do, but if he is not rescued soon or some good answer given, he will surely die.
  - 2 Foreign traders at Hamwic are treating the English badly, demanding too many gifts and too much patience in exchange for bringing their goods to the new trading wic.
  - 3 Outlaws are raiding the roads to Hamwic, plundering the herds and belongings of those who seek to trade with the foreigners there.
  - 4 March-lords in the west are treating with the remnants of Dumnonia's nobles, selling their help to them in exchange for avoiding Wealh raids.
  - 5 King Ceolred of Mercia is sending help to the Dumnonian remnants, the better to bleed Ine from the west as well as the north.
  - 6 A Wealh lord has despaired of defeating Ine, and has thrown himself and his lands on the king's grace. His compatriots want him dead for his treachery, but Ine wants him prosperous as proof of the wisdom of his choice.
  - 7 A rebel to Ine has sought refuge with King Aldwulf, and Ine wants him dealt with.
  - 8 A lord in the north is desperate for help after Mercian raiders burnt over his lands.
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I know less of the western Wealh than I do of English lands, for Englishmen are not welcome there lightly. Any band that ventures west of the Mercian border must have a Wealh noble or other trusted man among them to vouch for their peacefulness, or they may expect attack.

Gwynedd is northmost of the kingdoms, beneath the hand of old King Idwal. It is proud of its Roman past, and all its nobles trace their blood to one or another Roman magistrate, general, or official. Heirlooms of mighty Roman sorcery are kept by the noble houses, signs of their legitimacy and implements of power, and it is said that even a few true Artifexes can be found within the hills of Gwynedd, reclusive and receiving only those they find useful to their purposes.



Yet Gwynedd is no richer than any other part of Wales, the old Roman cities having given way to humble villages not unlike our own, and the ancient legions are no more. In their place are mere tribal warriors, like among the other Wealh. Life among the Wealh kingdoms is too perilous to leave war to the work of a few, and so every man must bear a spear as the English do.

King Gwylog is lord of the kingdom of Powys, and unlike other kings he yet dwells within the high stone walls of the old caester of Viroconium. The great Roman road of Watling Street ends at Virconium, having begun far away at the eastern tip of Kent, and once there was much trade all along its length, but now only well-armed men dare tread it through the many kingdoms it traverses.

King Gwylog is yet jealous of the glory of dwelling in a Roman basilica within a Roman caester, but his time there may not be long. Arxes are bursting open in many places within the walls, and he has not monks enough nor spears sufficient to ward them all. He is loathe to leave the place, and desperate enough to strike bargains even with Englishmen if they can save him his house.

Dyfed is hard-pressed under its King Rhein. I have heard that a northern king, perhaps Idwal, has lately invaded his country and dispersed his nobles, leaving him struggling desperately to hold what land he can from the invader's march. This has been the case for two generations now, if not this invasion than another, for many are the kings that thirst of Dyfed's land and see weakness in its lords.

The greed for this land perhaps comes from the nature of its bishop, the head of the see of St. David's minster. This bishop, whomever he may be, is counted the chief priest of all the Wealh, wherever they may be. They scorn honest Archbishop Berhtwald in Canterbury and will heed only this bishop. So it is that other kings would like to be master of his minster.

Last of the four Wealh kingdoms of note is the southmost land of Gwent, the kingdom of mighty King Morgan. The Wealh of Gwent have always kept much to their own ways, remembering well the customs of their fathers before the Romans came. This did not dissuade them from the Roman caesters, however, and there are many Roman dwellings there that are still used by those in Gwent, both villas and walled towns, for they are glad of the protection from the sometimes raids of the Mercians to the east.

King Morgan is the strongest of the Wealh kings, for he has prospered from his land's old truce-alliance with Mercia against Northumbria. This prosperity has given him the strength to take land from his neighbors, for that is always the way of the Wealh. When one grows strong, he strikes his brothers, until his brothers band to beat him down once more. Even now, Morgan sends spears against Mercia whenever it seems good to him, caring nothing for old pacts now that profit may be had. He and his kinsmen may yet rue it.



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POSSIBLE EVENTS OF NOTE IN WALES

- 1 The devils of Virconium have finally burst out of the Arxes and overwhelmed King Gwylog, slaying him and leaving his kingdom in chaos.
- 2 A great Roman artifact in Gwynedd has somehow gone amiss in its use, and is now creating a terrible effect that is blighting a portion of that land.
- 3 A Wealh abbot is talking of accepting Archbishop Berhtwald as his primate, but needs strong men to see him safely to the archbishop if he is to survive his kinsmen's anger.
- 4 Dyfed has suddenly repulsed its invaders and is driving now into Powys. Men say that King Rhein has made bargains with Arxborn horrors to send terror and death ahead of his raiding bands.
- 5 A Gwentish lord has unearthed a mighty artifact of Rome and is using it to rebel against King Morgan. The king would have the artifact and the traitor's head both.
- 6 Mercia wearies of the raiding of the Wealh, and they are pushing west into the mountains to burn and kill all they encounter.
- 7 A bold Wealh lord seeks to rebuild a ruined villa and make it the seat of his rule, but he can find only strangers willing to help him clear it and make it whole again.
- 8 A charismatic abbot seeks to bind the Wealh kings together in united vengeance.



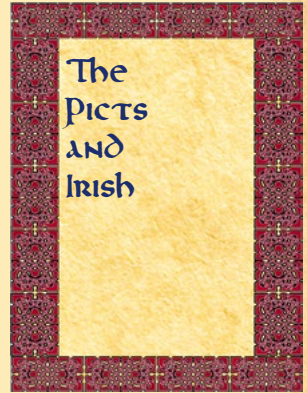
**The Wealth have been** driven from the Old North they once mastered, their lords broken and their lands undone by the old kings of Deira and Bernicia, and only in the northwestern portion, south of Dal Riata, do the petty kings of Ystrad Clut still cling to their small rules, sometimes warring upon their northern neighbor, sometimes standing beside it in battle against Pict or Northumbrian. They are the last of the Britons of the North and their lands are wide but bitterly poor.

Instead, the masters of the far northern regions of the isle are the Picts, who have never been stronger than they are in this day. Ever since the battle of Nechtansmere twenty years past, they have been united beneath the kings of the Waerteras among them. and their tribes do not quarrel so greatly as they once did. They save their labors for harrying the men of Northumbria and bringing rue to Dal Riata in the west.

The Picts are a Christian people, taught by the Irish of old, but they live hard and meagre lives, with little of books or gentle things. They work much in stone for their adornments, carving fine works and setting up pillars and monuments that they alone understand rightly. Their present king Nechtan is the brother of the King Bridei who broke the Northumbrians at Nechtansmere, and he is famed for his piety and learning. He is industrious in mending the customs of his land's minsters and correcting the errors of the monks. Not but a few weeks past has my holy abbot Ceolfrid sent to him a letter of advice and counsel on matters of the faith.

Under King Nechtan the Picts are presently at peace with Northumbria, and while there is raiding now and then it is the work of greedy men and not royal will. The Picts have sometimes been good friends to the English, such that more than a few of their kings have been sons to English lords, and they have sometimes been scourges to our tribes, making joyful war. They are a wild and perilous folk and none may treat them carelessly in safety.

The other land beyond Northumbria is that of Dal Riata, claimed by the Irish tribe called the Scotti. Their kings rule the northwestern coast of Britain and their folk are all great seamen. In times past their long ships lashed the English coast and lit the Wealth shore with the light of their spears, and even now their islands teem with little craft.





- 1 A series of mutual kinslayings have cast the petty lords of Ystrad Clut into chaos, and their lands are now ripe for the taking by bold men.
- 2 The Dal Riatans again go west to war for the Irish kingship, and they are eager to add whatever bold men will go with them.
- 3 An evil *dru* hates King Nechtan's pious heart and has called up devils in the north to plague the good king's lands.
- 4 Irish raiders are scourging the west and south, plaguing the Wealh lands and gnawing at the shores of Wessex and Sussex.
- 5 A most holy saint of the Irish has established a minster in English lands, but refuses to follow the Roman ways. Archbishop Berhtwald desires he be persuaded.
- 6 A charismatic leader has arisen in Ystrad Clut, and the petty kings now are coming together beneath his banner to threaten both Dal Riata and Northumbria.
- 7 A Northumbrian rebel in northern exile has found a friend in Pictland or Dal Riata or Ystrad Clut, and is plundering Northumbria to pay for his friend's aid in gaining rule.
- 8 An ancient and holy minster of the north has fallen to some nameless woe, and men are in terror of the evil that could overcome such a pious place.

Yet their glory is faded now from the splendor of old, ever since their double loss two generations ago at the terrible battle of Moira in Ireland and the loss of their fleet at the Mull of Kintyre. Now their kings no longer rule their ancestral Irish lands and are driven back to dwell on the British shore. They have a sore custom of favoring losing claimants to the king-helm of all Ireland, and oftimes do they bleed in vain.

Dal Riata has to its honor the island minster of Iona, where holy Saint Columba came over from Ireland a hundred and fifty years ago to give the true faith to the Picts and to my Northumbrian fathers. The monks of Iona are stubborn in favoring Irish ways of faith instead of Roman customs, but all men must yet fear and honor their holy hearts and earnest longing for God. Many are the Irish minsters of the land, whose loyalty is pledged to Iona or to mother-houses on their ancestral isle.

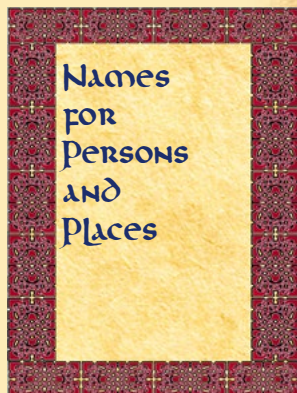
The Dal Riatans are like the Picts in that sometimes they are friends to the English and sometimes their hard foes. Their foremost king is named Dunchad, who holds rule from the rich peninsula of Kintyre. His attention is oft absorbed in Irish affairs and their endless king-quarrels, but he is pressed also by the Wealh of Ystrad Clut to the south. He has much work for strangers and cares little if they be English or Picts or Wealh, so long as they are useful.

**ENGLISH NAMES ARE MADE** of two parts, a former and a latter. Each has their meaning, but I will not write them here, for it is too long. Instead, merely choose one of each part and put them together.

A second kind of name is sometimes used consisting only of a first part followed by “-a”, such as Cutha for Cuthgils. Sometimes this is all the name a man has, but other times it is used as a familiar diminutive in place of a given name.

A third kind is made by the pattern letter-vowel-letter-a, such as Cyda, Bola, Ada, Uba, or the like. Use what pleases you, for many letters will do.

Names of places are built in much the same way, with a former and latter part. The list below gives common pieces of place names that you may put first or last to make a name. Oftimes, though, the first part of a place name is the name of its founder, or of its people, thus Beortun, or Adaholm, or Saxingas, or Offaminster or something of that flavor.



### PLACE NAME ELEMENTS AND MEANINGS

<b>Acs</b>	Axe	<b>Foss</b>	Ditch	<b>Moss</b>	Swamp
<b>Ash</b>	Ash tree	<b>Frith</b>	Brushy land	<b>Ness</b>	Headland
<b>Ast</b>	Easternly	<b>Glind</b>	Enclosed land	<b>Nor</b>	Northerly
<b>Beck</b>	Stream	<b>Haeg</b>	Enclosed land	<b>Shaw</b>	Woodland
<b>Berg</b>	Hill	<b>Ham</b>	Settlement	<b>Shep</b>	Sheep
<b>Bex</b>	Box-tree	<b>Hay</b>	Hedged land	<b>Stan</b>	Stone
<b>Brad</b>	Wide	<b>Hirst</b>	Forested hill	<b>Stead</b>	A place
<b>Burg</b>	Strong place	<b>Holm</b>	Island	<b>Stoc</b>	Grange
<b>Burn</b>	Stream	<b>Hythe</b>	Boat-landing	<b>Stow</b>	Mass-place
<b>Caester</b>	As it says	<b>Ing</b>	A place	<b>Sud</b>	Southerly
<b>Cot</b>	A little hall	<b>Ingas</b>	<X>'s people	<b>Swin</b>	Pig
<b>Denu</b>	Vale	<b>Lang</b>	Long	<b>Tun</b>	A home
<b>Don</b>	Hill	<b>Law</b>	Barrow-hill	<b>Weald</b>	Forest
<b>Ey</b>	Island	<b>Ley</b>	Wood-clearing	<b>Wes</b>	Westerly
<b>Field</b>	Open land	<b>Mere</b>	Lake	<b>Wic</b>	Settlement
<b>Ford</b>	Crossing	<b>Minster</b>	As it says	<b>Worth</b>	Enclosed land

*Enthusiasts are directed to the online Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England at [pase.ac.uk](http://pase.ac.uk), or to the classic Onomasticum of William Searle, published in 1897.*

Names are much alike between men and women, except some latter name parts are more common to women, though to foreign ears these may not sound especially womanly. If you need make a name quickly for an Englishwoman, you may take a masculine or common name below and simply add “-u” to its end. Foreign ears will not know to call it ill-made.

English Names			Foreign Names	
000	Former	Latter	Wealth	Roman
1-4	Aelf	aelf	Beli	Agrippa
5-8	Beo	brand	Cadafael	Appius
9-12	Beorn	culf	Cadwallon	Decimus
13-16	Ceol	fast	Cyngen	Faustus
17-20	Cyne	frith	Elisedd	Gaius
21-24	Don	gar	Gwylog	Gnaeus
25-28	Eofor	geard	Madog	Julius
29-32	Frith	grim	Maen	Lucius
33-36	Gar	helm	Morgan	Marcus
37-40	Gild	mund	Myrddin	Numerius
41-44	Gund	ric	Owain	Paulus
45-48	In	stan	Pyll	Publius
49-52	Leof	wig	Rhun	Servius
53-56	Lind	wine	Selyf	Tiberius
57-60	Mod	wulf	Urien	Titus
61-64	Noth	burga*	Angharad*	Aula*
65-68	Os	burh*	Ceinfryd*	Caesula*
69-72	Pend	flaed*	Ceridwyn*	Gaia*
73-76	Run	fleda*	Efa*	Octavia*
77-80	Swith	gifu*	Ffion*	Postuma*
81-84	Theod	hild*	Ffreuer*	Prima*
85-88	Tun	run*	Gwenddwyn*	Procula*
89-92	Ulf	thryth*	Heledd*	Septima*
93-96	Wild	wen*	Meisir*	Servia*
97-00	Wulf	wyn*	Rhiannon*	Titia*

*Remember that each letter in a name is pronounced, even the final -e, as “eh”, and the final -h like a Scottish “ch” in “loch”.*

\* These elements or names are generally female in use.



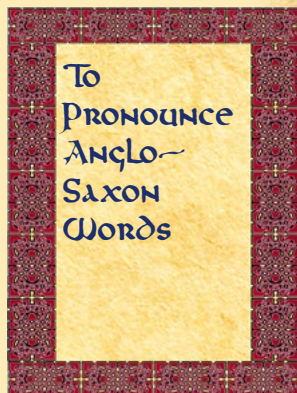
herein I give you some little rules for making the sounds of our words. They are not complete, for I cannot instruct you in the different dialects of Wessex or Kent or my own good Northumbria, but give you only a few common rules.

**Pronounce all letters.** If a consonant is doubled in a word, pronounce each letter separately, like “ridden” is to be said rid-den.

**Stress is on the first syllable.** This rule is a simplification of the truth, for if a word is made up of two nouns, the second has a little second stress upon it, but it is enough for foreigner’s tongues.

**Diphthongs are one syllable.** *Eoten* is not “ee-oh-ten”, it is eo-ten, like yeo-man. If you see two vowels put together, pronounce them as one syllable, not two sounds apart.

**Three letters we have that you lack,** being ‘eth’, ð, ‘thorn’, þ, and ‘ash’, æ. You will not see thorn or eth in this book, that you might not be confused, and ash you will find when names have the letters a and e together, like Aelf-helm. Pronounce these things as the table below directs.



LETTERS AND THEIR PRONUNCIATIONS			
æ, a	as in ‘hat’ or ‘lad’	s	At front or back of a word,
e	as in ‘wet’ or ‘mate’	f	pronounce as usual. Between voiced
i	as in ‘bin’ or ‘been’	ð	letters, s is as z, f is as v, and eth and
o	as in ‘cough’ or ‘ho’	þ	thorn are as th in ‘clothe’. Thus <i>sittan</i>
u	as in ‘pull’ or ‘fool’		is sit-tan, while <i>hlafas</i> is hla-vas. The
y	much the same as i		ge- prefix counts not for this end.
		h	At word-front, pronounce as ‘help’,
ea	like e and a at once		else say it as is said ‘loch’.
eo	like e and o at once	c	Before a, o, u, y, it is as k, else before
ie	like i and e at once		e and i it is ch, as in <i>churl</i> .
		g	Before a, o u, y it is as in ‘get’, else
ð	th as in ‘cloth’		before e and i it is y as in ‘yet’
þ	the same as ð	sh	as in ‘sheen’
		cg	as in ‘hedge’

When speaking words strange to you, do not concern yourself overmuch with matching the made speech of our men. Foreigners never get such things wholly right, and it makes men smile to listen to Frankish traders slur our words. Even among our own kind, the tongue of the West Saxons is not spoken just as the Northumbrians do, nor are either alike to the Kentishmen's way of speech. Yet all of us can make sense of each other for we are all English tribes.

While it is not a matter of Anglo-Saxon speech, I make room here to boast of our Latin, for if it is not our native tongue, it is well-spoken here by learned men. Over the sea, it is said that it grows worn and smoothed by over-careless tongues and the clatter of common speakers, but here in England it is preserved pure and clean from vulgar admixtures. Our fathers got it from holy Saint Theodore when he came to us, and from the very wise and learned saints of Ireland who came to give us Christ. Even now it is said that a learned man may go to an Irish minster and be fed merely so he can study as he will.

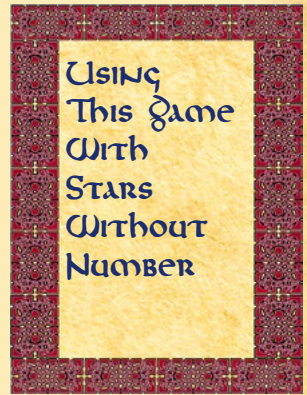
The Latin of our learned men is famous over the sea for its sweet subtlety and splendid ornamentation. Brother Bede has spoken admiringly of his friend Abbot Aldhelm, saying that so wonderful was his Latin that it was scarce possible for the commonly learned to understand what he was saying.

#### WORDS AND NAMES AND THEIR PRONUNCIATION

<b>Arx</b>	arks	<b>Nothelm</b>	Nawt-helm
<b>Bede</b>	Bee-dah or Beed	<b>Orc</b>	ork
<b>Caester</b>	caster	<b>Osred</b>	Oz-rehd
<b>Ceolred</b>	Chyol-rehd	<b>Scop</b>	skop, short o
<b>Ceorl</b>	churl	<b>Swæfheard</b>	Swaf-hard
<b>Ealdorman</b>	awlder-man	<b>Symbel</b>	sim-bel
<b>Eoten</b>	eo-ten, like 'yeoman'	<b>Thyrs</b>	thirs, like 'thirsty'
<b>Feorm</b>	fyorm, one syllable	<b>Waelcyrige</b>	wal-ky-ri-yeh
<b>Fifel</b>	fih-vel	<b>Weald</b>	wald
<b>Fyrd</b>	furd	<b>Wealh</b>	walh or walch
<b>Geborscipe</b>	ye-bor-ship-eh	<b>Wergild</b>	ware-gild
<b>Gesith</b>	ye-seeth	<b>Wic</b>	wick
<b>Haeg</b>	hag	<b>Wyrd</b>	weird
<b>Here</b>	heh-reh	<b>Ylf</b>	ilf, singular
<b>Ine</b>	In-neh	<b>Ylfe</b>	il-feh, plural

**READERS WHO WANT TO** mix *Wolves of God* with *Stars Without Number* can blend the two together, with a few tweaks to account for the very different setting presumptions of the games.

**CHARACTERS** from this game can be converted directly into *Stars Without Number* campaigns and vice-versa without much issue. The skill lists are somewhat different, reflecting the different default campaign settings, but you still simply roll whatever attribute and skill pairing makes most sense for a challenge. An English Galdorman might roll Cha/Gift to make a deal while the Expert rolls Cha/Trade. If the rules specify a specific skill for a given roll and a character has one that seems a fair match then they can substitute it with no further effort.



Barbaric English warriors may lack some everyday skills or context that sci-fi freebooters take for granted, and vice-versa. If the *Wolves of God* rules are being used to emulate savage lostworlder PCs, they may not know how to operate firearms, work computerized devices, or drive civilian gravcars. The GM might handwave a certain familiarity with these things after enough time has passed, or they could require a flat no-skill check with a relevant attribute against a suitable difficulty to avoid some hilarious error of use. Conversely, the average English barbarian is inured to a great deal that would horrify or harm a high-tech space citizen, and their Survival checks might be ignored.

**FOCI** available to heroes in this game include a number not found in the *Stars Without Number* core book. Some of these Foci are considerably stronger than the ones in the older game, but they're written with the assumption that the PCs have access only to English levels of weapons technology. Other PCs can take them, but they're limited to the kind of weapons the English would have used and their advanced melee weapon equivalents.

As a general rule, a GM can feel safe allowing PCs to pick Foci from either the *Stars Without Number* core book or this game. Combat-related Foci in this book, however, can only be used with low-tech weapons or their advanced analogues. *Manslayer* works only with spears, swords, axes, and similar low-tech weapons and their advanced melee equivalents, *Strongbow* works only with bows, whether primitive, advanced, or conversion bows, and so forth.

**WYRDS** are borne by heroes because their cultural context expects them to have them, and because they give a certain margin of hope to heroes who



might otherwise quickly perish in a brutal world of minimal medical capacity. If you're using this game in a *Stars Without Number* campaign you can drop *wyrds* without causing game balance issues, as Lazarus patches and quick biopsionic healing can often save what bark poultices and prayer couldn't help. If you want to keep *wyrds*, you should let *Stars Without Number* PCs roll them as well if they choose to do so, or make up appropriate new ones.

**SCARS** are effectively unknown so long as TL4 medical care is available and used to stabilize the mortally wounded. A GM might still decide to roll them, however, and force PCs who lose a limb or organ to get cyberware or find a TL5 source of effective cloned replacement parts.

**MAGIC** can be imported whole-cloth from *Wolves of God* for those PCs who are Saints or Galdormen. People may argue over the "true nature" of these powers, or you might cast them as unique psychic arts, but mechanically they can function normally if you decide to allow them. Imported supernatural foes might be reskinned as psychic aliens, malevolent robots, or inexplicable organisms with unknowable alien powers.

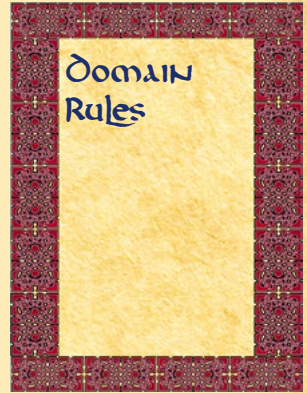
In all cases the Metapsionic discipline would apply its detection powers and saving throw modifications as usual to these abilities, but specific techniques such as *Psychic Static* or *Impervious Pavis of Will* would not apply to magic or miracles unless the GM specifically allowed it. In campaign settings where these practitioners were common, there may be additional Metapsionic techniques specifically designed to counter their abilities.

**CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT** in matters of Shame and personal glory are closely interwoven with English society, and sometimes a hero is utterly removed from that setting, or never had any ties to it to begin with. The simplest alternative is to simply have heroes use the same character advancement rules as in *Stars Without Number*.

The exception in this case should be the Saint class, as it's fundamentally about maintaining a difficult social role in exchange for their miraculous powers. Even if the Saint is not a Christian or is being reskinned as a votary of some other power, they should have three taboos that they must not violate on pain of the usual penalties for a Saint's failure to behave well. These taboos should not be so tight as to preclude the kind of adventuring the group goes on, but they should limit the Saint's ability to choose certain ways of resolving problems. This ban might be on violence towards humans, in the case of a Christian Saint, while other faiths might bar other kinds of behavior. These taboos should not be the sort to bind other party members, but only the Saint.

**These are the rules** by which a hero or warband may receive land and become lords. Land is only ever given to Warriors or Saints, the one to become loyal battle-companions to the giver and the other to form a basis for a holy minster in which they will be abbot or abbess. Galdormen are never given land, for what ceorl would ever tolerate being the man of a half-Christian sorcerer?

All land is either *folkland*, to be disposed of by the king as he sees fit, or *bookland*, which is land held by right by its owner, which he may dispose of as he desires. Bookland is almost always owned exclusively by minsters, though a king may make gifts of bookland to especially worthy friends or those he needs to reward greatly.



To make a domain, the king or a lord grants rights to the fruit of so much folkland or some parcel of bookland to another. A lord can grant land only with the king's permission, and he may make bookland only with the king's costly and uncertain approval. A king will often consent to make bookland some parcel which the lord means to give to a minster, for God will favor this generosity, but seldom will he allow it in other cases. The great majority of all lordly land is folkland held from the king.

Land is measured in *hides*, which is an amount of land sufficient to feed a family of ceorls. In some places it is forty acres, in others a hundred, and in some only ten. The harsher and sourer the land, the more of it must be used to make up a hide, but this matters little for most reckoning. Each hide must produce so much food-rent as *feorm*, and provide so much service, and this amount is standardized in a domain.

A lord or abbot who has rights over hidage has rights to its customary fruits and to guard the law among the land's inhabitants. He gets a portion of the *wergild*-fines and is expected to be the strong arm that enforces custom. He does not have the right to go against law and custom; if he makes demands that are beyond the bounds of memory or that defy the proper way of things, his ceorls may refuse him, or perhaps even slay him. If the lord or abbot wants what custom will not give him, he must win it by threats, gifts, or sweet words.

When a lord dies, all his folkland is given anew to whomever the king thinks can best serve him. His sons may be first considered for such things, but that is not guaranteed, and if they are of no use they may get only a little

land to keep them from hunger, and so must prove themselves anew to get better fields. Bookland may be given to anyone the lord wishes, and passes down to his heirs as he sees fit. Bookland held by the Church is always kept with its minster, and never traded away save in direst need.

**IN THIS CHAPTER THE** sizes of each kingdom have been given in terms of hidage. As a rough rule, a quarter of this land is held directly by the king and administered by his reeves. A quarter more is divided among a few great ealdormen who are best-loved or most-placated by the king and the handful of great minsters within the kingdom. The remaining half is parceled out among many petty lords and minor minsters.

## The Size of Domains

As a common measure, 200 hides of land makes a small lord or little minster, a thousand hides of land makes an ealdorman or great minster, and holdings larger than that may be found among famously old and honored minsters or the best-loved companions of a king. For little kingdoms, halve these sums, and for great Mercia or Wessex, perhaps double them.

**FOR THE SAME'S PURPOSES,** domains have two statistics to track: hidage and wealth. Every domain can be roughly described by these two measures, and its fortunes and sorrows can be followed by watching these numbers.

## DOMAIN STATISTICS

**HIDAGE** is simply how many hides of land are under its lord or abbot's rule. This hidage may be scattered throughout the kingdom, in parcels here and there, but it is all tracked together here, and seldom is it too far for the lord to reach it in a day's ride, else he could not defend it. If some of it is bookland, then make a note of it, for that land may be given to friends or minsters if it is held by a secular lord. Minsters commonly have all bookland, but never trade it away unless in desperate straits.

**WEALTH** is measured in shillings, and describes the general store of cattle, grain, cloth, iron, tools, and all the other practical things that men need to live that are owned by the lord. This wealth is scattered throughout the domain wherever the lord has a hall or a loyal servant, but it is reckoned here together. It is not necessary to divide it up into so many cows and so many shirts; it is assumed that any ordinary thing can be found in it. When the lord needs something, he may subtract its cost from his wealth and assume that it is available somewhere nearby.



Of course, the ceorls have much wealth of their own that is not their lords, and a rapacious master might seek to plunder them, but that is a different matter. The wealth of a domain is the lord's right property and he may use it for gifts and useful implements as he desires.

Note that the lord may also desire treasures such as silver torcs or silken shirts or cloaks woven with golden thread. Unless he somehow has the services of an artisan, such as an abbot of a well-learned minster, he cannot draw these things from his wealth. He must plunder them from other men, or go out and find an artisan to make them, or buy them from Frankish traders. By the same token, he cannot simply take a golden ring, throw it into his hoard of wealth, and draw out its worth in a dozen oxen. Only common and useful goods can be poured into a domain's wealth, and only the same kind of goods can be taken out. It is an abstraction of convenience, not a magical transmuter.

**A LORD WITH LAND** will have need of loyal gesith, and an abbot must have dutiful monks. Some of their land's benefit must be given over to their support, and the ceorls who work it made to give their due tribute to them. He must also feed his own family, and a portion of the *feorm* must go to the bellies of his bride and children. The rest he may use as sources of wealth, taking the fruits of their toil and transforming them into useful goods and services.

## MANAGING THE DOMAIN

***A lord, his family, a nun, or a gesith require ten hides of land*** each for their support. Thus, a lord with a wife, two children, and eight loyal gesith at his table must have 120 hides of land if they are to live decently. If they have less than this, they may not starve, but they will have to spend so much time seeking their own sustenance that they will have no time for other work. Nuns require considerable land to support them for they have not the strength to plow and reap of their own.

***A choir monk, a servant, a messenger, or another minor attendant requires five hides of land*** if they are to eat properly. They do not require such luxuries as a gesith might, but they still have too much work to do for the abbot or the lord to spend every hour of their time farming their own plot.

***A low monk or slave needs only a hide of land*** to support him, along with his family if he is a thrall. These men are accustomed to humble living and will spend a good part of their time toiling in the fields. Still, they will have their share of simple work to be done for their lord, and so land dedicated to their support cannot produce wealth like unpledged land would.

Most lords begin with no *gesith* or choir monks or lay monks or any other servants save what few they bring with them into lordship. They must recruit such men to their service, as is explained later.

All the rest of the land that is not pledged to the support of a follower may be used to generate wealth from its ceorls. This wealth is collected at the start of each following season. At the start of winter and summer, two shillings are earned for each hide. At autumn's beginning, three shillings are earned, and when spring comes, only one. Thus, the lord mentioned above who has 200 acres would put 120 to supporting himself and his *gesith*, and leave the other 80 to produce wealth. He would get 160 shillings at the start of winter and summer, 240 at autumn's beginning, and 80 at the start of spring.

A lord also gets his share of the *wergild* for crimes done within his domain, for it is his strong arm that must enforce the laws and customs. Rather than track every cow-theft and breach of house-peace that goes on, this amounts to a shilling for every ten hides within the domain each season, whether or not it is a hide pledged to someone's support. Thus, the lord above would get 20 shillings every season from his 200 hides.

The wealth of a domain is used most often to gift its *gesith*, to support allies, to repair losses in raiding, or to do great works as befits a lord. The manner of these things is explained below.

**Each season a Lord** or abbot begins a new **DOMAIN TURN**. First, he collects the wealth he is due from his hides and his law-right, collection the season's profit and the *wergild*-share that he is due.

## The Domain Turn

Next, he gifts his loyal *gesith* and followers, each with two Fitting Gifts appropriate to their rank and prowess. He may do this with treasures out of his personal riches gained amid adventures, or from useful goods he has acquired personally, or from wealth earned by the domain. The gift itself need not be gold or silver or other fine things; a fine cloak or a healthy cow are gifts no ordinary *gesith* would consider mean. Abbots do not give gifts to their men as lords do, but their choir monks require many costly or well-wrought things to do their holy offices, and so they must also spend wealth or give supplies equal to two Fitting Gifts for each choir monk or other person of importance within their minster.

If a lord cannot or will not give these gifts, there will be trouble. The first time a season's gifting is insufficient in a year, the *gesith* or follower must make a Morale check. If he fails, he will leave, seeking a more open-handed lord. He

will give back his land but he keeps any movable property he holds, and no man will blame him for going. If the Morale check passes, he will be patient a while longer. The second time a season's gifting is sparse in a year's span, the gesith will surely go. If the reason the gift is not given is because the lord is genuinely impoverished, then the first check may be ignored out of love, but the second will not, for the gesith must go to a lord who can help him.

Monks and other minsterkind never leave for lack of gifts, but they cannot do their work if they are not supplied, and so minster services reliant upon them may fail until refreshed by proper generosity.

Next, the GM rolls an event for the domain. This is a thing that happens some time during the season when the GM thinks it mete. If it is a good thing, the benefits apply at the start of the next season. If it is a bad thing or trouble, the lord must resolve the situation before the season ends or the penalty is applied at the start of the next season.

How does the lord resolve it? He gathers up his friends, or engages a brave warband, and then goes out to do what he thinks best for solving the problem. The GM may run an adventure to manage the matter, or he may let a skill check make do, or however else he wishes. He may choose to ignore it if the problem is small enough or he has too much else to mind.

Lastly, once wealth is gathered and gifts are given, the lord may choose to perform a domain action, which is the main thing he wishes to accomplish that season. Many small things can be done quickly and easily at the GM's discretion, but complex or burdensome tasks take up the whole of the domain action, and only one such action may be performed each season for each domain. Following this text is a list of example domain actions, though the GM may add others or the lord may do other things as they think fit.

**ONE OF THE CUSTOMARY** rights of lords is the right to military service by the able men of his domain. Abbots and abbesses do not have these rights; their ceorls may rise to protect the minster against raiders, but they cannot demand such service or order the ceorls to fight elsewhere. So this section applies only to secular lords.

## The Fyrd AND WARFARE

A lord may call out the fyrd of all free men for up to thirty days in a year. He may do this in spring or in autumn; in summer the fields must be tended and in winter the weather is too cruel for marching. If the fyrd must defend against invaders or other pressing peril he may call it out even in those sea-



sons, but if he calls them in summer he loses his autumn wealth-gain of three shillings on the hide due to hunger at lost planting. If he calls them in the winter, twice as many men will die after a battle than would otherwise, taken from those who would otherwise be merely wounded.

A lord gains one fighting ceorl for every ten hides of land. He gains more than this, of course, in pure numbers, but the rest must be used to carry and gather supplies, do labor for the army, and make the campaign possible. Thus, only one effective fighter can be gathered for every ten hides. To this number the lord adds his personal gesith and his loyal companions.

It takes time to gather the fyrd, time that counts against the thirty-day limit. The first day after the call, the lord has his gesith, his companions, and a tenth of the ceorls. The fifth day he has half of his ceorls and the tenth day he has all of them. These ceorls will be gathered at any point within the lord's domain that he wishes. By the fifth day, however, it will be known to all his neighbors that he has called out his fyrd, if not even sooner than that. For this reason, lords who go raiding often choose to raid only with their gesith and a few trusted ceorls.

A fyrd that is smaller than the customary army size, that is, thirty-five men or fewer, will travel at the usual pace of overland movement as given on page 76. A fyrd of thirty-six men or more is an army, and can move no faster than ten miles per day.

As an army moves any lacking ceorls will come to join it. Thus, a lord may call out his men in a place one day and then spend five or ten marching, gathering half and then all of his ceorls along the way. So too he may engage in a dire battle on the fifth day, be driven back in defeat, and replenish his numbers with the other half of his ceorls by the tenth day.

A lord may entrust portions of his fyrd to beloved companions, bidding them be used to raid elsewhere or fight a different foe, but once the fyrd leaves the lord's sight, he will know nothing of what becomes of it. It is a chancy thing to even find a band of thirty or forty men in the English weald after they have marched a day, and messengers cannot go to and fro unless they know where their recipient is to be. The lord must trust to God and his general.

At the end of the thirty days, the fyrd will depart home. If an invader yet pillages their homes and herds, they will fight longer, but the mere quarrels of kings will not keep them from their halls. The *feorm* is set by custom, so one lord is much the same as any other, so long as he keeps torches from their fields and is not so hateful as to make men risk death to defy him.

**ANNEX LAND:** A lord of surpassing power or ferocity may seize land owned by an enemy of his king, taking it and accepting no tribute to give it back. This is a matter too grave to be resolved with mere dicing; the lord must kill or drive away the rival lord, all of his allies who would stand with him, and perhaps even the royal army of his king. It is several adventures worth of challenges at least to get so far, so it is rare that land should ever pass by annexation. Most often, a raider who will not leave is offered tribute or promises of obedience for a time in order to make him depart.

## COMMON DOMAIN ACTIONS

**RAID AN ENEMY:** The lord calls up the fyrd or gathers his companions and raids a neighboring enemy. His king may or may not approve of this, especially if the target is another lord loyal to him. The fyrd is gathered as explained in this section, and the enemy lord may or may not also call out his fyrd to repel the foe. Any battles are conducted as explained in the section on Mass Combat starting on page 324.

For each day the fyrd ravages the foe's land, the lord gains wealth equal to two shillings for every man in his army. The raid ends when the lord chooses to return to his land, is driven out by the enemy's fyrd, or the domain's wealth has been depleted below zero for the past seven days. This plundered wealth is subtracted from the enemy domain's store. If the store is reduced to less than zero, then it accrues a debt that must be repaid with income from the domain before any excess wealth is produced for the lord. The ceorls must rebuild their halls, restock their herds, and replant their fields before anything more than the barest necessities can be given their lords, and desperate masters may be forced to go raiding in turn to afford gifts for their gesith.

While it is not impossible to raid a minster, God will punish the evil man who does such a thing. His neighbors will hasten to rebuke him with steel and his king will likely strip him of his lands for such impiety... unless he, too, is a godless fiend. Few are the ceorls who will dare march in such a fyrd, though alas, gesith and companions may be more loyal to their lord than their God.

**RECRUIT GESITH:** The lord seeks strong spears to rest at his hall table and drink his mead. The lord spends the season seeking trustworthy men, and at its end rolls 1d6 and adds his Charisma modifier and Lead skill. That is how many candidates respond to him. Each must be given four Fitting Gifts and ten hides of land for their support, and then they will be loyal. More impressive followers than these can be found, but recruiting them takes a full-fledged adventure to find them and persuade them.

If a lord wants more than these few men, he may show his generosity to attract yet more. If he gives eight Fitting Gifts to each gesith, he may roll 2d6 plus his Charisma modifier and Lead to find how many answer him. If he gives twelve to each man he accepts, he may roll those 2d6 twice and take the higher sum to find his candidates. More than this will not help, for there are only so many worthwhile warriors to be found who have no master yet.

**GATHER MINSTERKIND:** Just as a lord gathers gesith, an abbot may gather monks. He may have as many lay monks as he wishes to support with land, for there are always strong, simple men willing to work for God and the abbot. For choir monks or nuns, however, provision must be made and suitable candidates found. To find choir monks, he rolls just as a lord might to find gesith, and pays the same price in pledged hidage and Fitting Gifts to outfit the choir monk for his duties. To find nuns, an abbess need only offer them the support of ten hides apiece, and gains in return gifts from the nun's family equal to 1d4 pounds times the abbess' Pray skill, for wealthy families know they must make provision for their daughters and widows who would be nuns. Mind also, however, that there is room enough to lodge these monks and nuns properly.

**BUILD STONE BUILDING:** The monks of a minster gather together with skilled stonewrights to raise a church, or a mausoleum, or a dormitory, or a wall, or any other fine stone building needed by the minster. Each 10-foot cube of stone building construction costs one pound, so a church twenty by forty by twenty feet high would cost 16 pounds. Halve this price for plain walls, and double it for truly fine stonework. The abbot must pay this full sum in wealth to acquire the materials. To do the work, one lay monk can do a penny's worth of work each day. Choir monks do not labor on such tasks, but one skilled overseer is necessary for every twenty pounds the final building is worth or else the work will not be done aright. If the local choir monks do not have skill in stoneworking, then the abbot must find others to oversee it. Nuns do not labor on such things, nor do they become stonemasons. When enough work is done to have used up all the materials, the building is complete and may be used. In theory, a secular lord may seek to raise stone buildings as well, but few see any point in such extravagance for a merely mortal cause.

**BUILD HAMLET:** The lord decides to construct a new settlement or a royal villa. He chooses any location he thinks good and by the end of the season there will be a small hamlet there with halls enough to sustain a hundred souls and a mead-hall sufficient for his own use. To do this, he must spend sixty



shillings on all that is needful, though the ceorls who wish then to live there will do the work for him. At the GM's discretion, this new hamlet may open up new hidage to cultivation, adding to the lord's land, but usually there is some reason why it cannot easily be done. If the lord and his companions overcome whatever challenge is making the land unprofitable, then he may roll 1d6 plus his Reeve skill, multiplying by 10 to gain new hides for himself.

**OVERCOME TROUBLE:** If the lord cannot be bothered to resolve a domain event personally, and there is no other domain action that compels his attention, he may simply choose to *Overcome Trouble* and hand the task off to a gesith or gifted helper to settle. The lord must pay one shilling for every ten hides of his whole domain and then roll a skill check for whomever is chief in resolving the problem. The difficulty is up to the GM, depending on who the lord has sent and how intractable the problem is; a fairly good match of means and trouble might be against difficulty 8, while sending your grinding-slave to rebuke a Wealth raider might be 13. If the roll succeeds, the problem is solved as the GM thinks most likely. If it fails, it fails, and the lord must attend to matters personally that same season if he does not wish to endure the loss.

**ESTABLISH SERVICE:** This is a matter for minsters, as secular lords do not have the facilities to supply and sustain crafts more sophisticated than blacksmithing and the hewing of wood. An abbot or abbess may attract cunning artisans or gifted scholars to their minster, adding to it one of the minster services listed in the Minster chapter of this book. To do so requires the services of ten choir monks or nuns dwelling in the minster and a successful roll by the abbot of Charisma/Gift against a difficulty of 10. On a success, a suitably pious artisan has been found to dwell at the minster. They will require four Fitting Gifts as befits a 4 HD subject to consent to be enlisted. If the number of choir monks or nuns ever drops below the minimum required to support the service, then its use is lost until the lack is made up.

A minster may support more than one special service, but each new service requires additional choir monks or nuns equal to twice the last. Thus, the second requires 20 more, the third 40, and so forth, so that a minster that offered three different services would need 70 choir monks or nuns to support the work, and seven hundred hides to support these minsterfolk.

A minster that provides a special service may translate any reasonable amount of wealth into treasures and artworks appropriate to that type of service. Thus, one with a goldsmith may turn sixty shillings of wealth into a golden ring worth sixty shillings, suitable for gifting to a worthy companion.

As the GM, a domain is meant as a reason for adventures. The constant need to gift *gesith* and companions is a drain upon the domain's wealth, and the more men the PCs gather, the higher the price in gifts and land to keep them. Even so, these followers can guard the PC's wealth, protect them from rivals, and provide services and assistance in their adventuring. Saints who found minsters can use them as convenient ways to gain access to arts and crafts that cannot be had elsewhere in England.

## DOMAINS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Adventures can usually serve as replacements for domain actions. If a hero wants to recruit *gesith*, he can either use the domain action or set out on an adventure to find those same men. If the group agrees, they simply tell the GM that that's what their next session will be about, and the GM prepares a suitable challenge or situation by which they might win the approval of some loyal spearmen if they succeed. By the same token, if skilled stonemasons are needed to build a church, the heroes might go on an adventure to find some Frankish craftsman who can oversee the work.

It is very likely that only some of your party will be interested in domain play. Do not allow it to eat up too much time at the table, lest the disinterested players grow fretful and bored. A domain can be a source of friends, faithful companions, and political entanglements, but such things cannot be allowed to smother the fun of players who desire more direct adventures. Let affairs in the domain provide reasons for adventures, so that all players may get something for their time.

**TO GENERATE A DOMAIN** event each season, roll on the table below first to find out what manner of event it is. If the lord has done something offensive to God within the past season, apply a -2 penalty to the roll. If he has done something especially pious, such as gifted a minster some significant sum of wealth, add a +2. “Significant” means a gift great enough that he will sharply feel its giving. If he has done something truly splendid, such as endowed a new minster, then grant the roll a +1 bonus for all checks for the next 1d4 years, to stack with any specific godly gift he may make in a year.

## DOMAIN EVENT TABLES

Once the weal or woe of the event is known, roll on the table to find out whether it is an external, internal, or natural event. External events have to do with political figures outside the domain, internal ones reflect internal troubles or blessings, and natural events are matters of weather or natural chance. Each has their own set of tables that follow.

Some events and acts are marked as “Major”, and others as “Minor”, indicating whether or not they are a grave matter or a lighter one. If a harm says it is “Minor”, then roll for its effects on the Minor Harms table, while “Major” calls for a roll on the Major Harms table. The same applies in turn to helps.

By these tools you may randomly generate an event and the cost or benefit it brings to the domain. It is up to the GM, however, to make the event make sense within the context of the campaign. If you have in mind a particular rival lord, then you might swap him into a hostile external event, while a faithful ceorl known to the PCs might be a figure in a helpful internal event.

The helps and harms tables give a random penalty or benefit for a given event. If that makes no sense, you may change it, or you might think of some circumstances where it does turn out to be a reasonable outcome.

The domain’s lord has until the end of the season to resolve harmful matters, assuming it can be resolved at all. Some political difficulties may be smoothed over with a kind word, whereas a drought has no mercy, nor can it be remedied except perhaps by a galdorman’s field-blessing magic or the prayers of a Saint.

2d6	EVENT?	1d6	TYPE OF EVENT
2-5	A negative, hostile event	1-2	An external event
6-8	No important event	3-4	An internal event
9-12	A positive, friendly event	5-6	A natural event



**EXTERNAL EVENTS ARE THOSE** pressed upon the heroes by circumstances and the actions of beings outside the domain. For a GM, the chief use of these events is to more sharply characterize the domain's neighbors and rivals, many of whom will have their own history of relationships with the lords of that land. This history may not always be a flattering one for the domain.

**EXTERNAL  
EVENTS**

When choosing actors for an external event, it is well to re-use figures. An abbot who is constantly making trouble for the heroes invites a band to seek him out to soothe him, if not attempts to persuade his bishop to rein him in. So too, a friendly lord who is often being kind to his neighbor might inspire their valiance if he finds himself in some dire trouble.

As such, once you have established a troublemaker or friend with the tables below, you might wish to substitute him later in place of a random roll.

∅∅	This political figure...	...Because of...
1	A neighboring or nearby Wealth chief	The PCs' last adventure
2	A lord who shares the same king as you	Someone's persuasive words
3	A lord of a different neighboring king	A past adventure of the PCs
4	An abbot or abbess of a nearby minster	An old enemy or friend's doings
5	An ealdorman, yours or another king's	A recent reckless deed of the PCs
6	A bishop, perhaps your own	Their own evil appetites or generosity
7	Your king or liege	Their own self-interest motivated it
8	A king of a neighboring domain	An old, grim grudge or old favor owed

∅∅	...Does this hostile Act	...Does this Friendly Act
1	is raiding or supporting raiders. (Major)	feasts you gloriously. (Minor)
2	has occupied some of your land. (Major)	sends you great gifts. (Major)
3	is denouncing you. (Minor)	sends others to aid you for a time. (Minor)
4	has taken offense. (Minor)	moves to counter a foe of yours. (Minor)
5	has seized some of your feorm. (Minor)	aids your loyal servants. (Minor)
6	is threatening your loyal servants. (Minor)	gives way in a dispute. (Minor)
7	is inciting your ceorls to rebellion. (Major)	lends use of some lands. (Major)
8	claimed your earnings. (Minor)	shares a great success. (Major)

**INTERNAL EVENTS ARE OFTEN** born of the heroes' own deeds, either for good or for ill. If they have been careless with their people, failing to give them good protection and the generous gifts of a lord, then they might later reap the sorrow of wrathful ceorls and sullen gesith. If they are good lords, open-handed and good friends to their own, then they might win loyal companions who labor long to do them good in turn.

## INTERNAL EVENTS

It is a lord's sorrow, however, that men are not simple in their hearts, to always give good for good and evil for evil. More than one lord has been bedeviled by perverse or selfish companions, who swallow up their gifts and then rage that they are not greater. Other times a ceorl might plot evil for his own gain, or a gesith give way to furious anger. Truly, a lord must be cunning as a serpent to bear the strange turns of men's hearts.

ð8	This Domain figure...	...Because of...
1	A respected elder among the ceorls	A deed done by the PCs
2	A reeve of the lord	The stirrings of their own heart
3	A trusted companion's wife	A custom broken or kept well
4	One of the lord's gesith	Incitement by an outsider
5	A hermit within the domain	Their own mistake or inspiration
6	A galdorman half-trusted by the people	The way it serves their own purposes
7	A fearsome outcast or vagabond	A sense of gratitude or bitterness
8	The most beautiful maiden in the domain	Dashed expectations or rich reward

ð8	...Causes this hostile Act	...Causes this Friendly Act
1	Stirs the ceorls to unrest (Major)	Heartens the gesith in their service (Minor)
2	Sows disorder among gesith (Major)	Soothes troubled ceorls (Minor)
3	Stops collections in the area (Minor)	Finds a new source of wealth (Major)
4	Diverts gathered wealth (Minor)	Solves an old grudge among men (Minor)
5	Defies settled custom (Minor)	Wins praise from a great lord (Minor)
6	Lays claim to something great (Major)	Saves a dear companion's life (Major)
7	Antagonizes an ally (Minor)	Confounds a troublesome foe (Major)
8	Usurps a lordly right (Minor)	Uncovers a hidden crime (Minor)

**NATURAL EVENTS ARE SENT** by God, or are scourges which He permits Satan to send, or are at times mere natural circumstances induced by the exhalations of the earth as the ancients have explained to us. No sweet worlds or golden gifts can turn aside their consequences, nor can they be called forth by feasting mortal men. Instead, a lord must pray to God for help against their hardships, or give godly thanks when they are good to the land.

## NATURAL EVENTS

Some scourges can be mitigated by the strong arm of a hero, such as slaying terrible beasts that might prowl about the village, or by the prayers of a Saint to cure the sicknesses that sweep over men. Others can only be eased indirectly, by finding friends to send grain when the crops are lost, or marshaling many strong allies to swiftly rebuild a hamlet that has been blown down by a winter wind. Let the GM think carefully on what help would be best.

∞∞

### harmful NATURAL EVENTS

- 1 Dire rains or snows scour the domain and harm its people (Minor)
- 2 A drought leaves the skies naked of rain (Major in spring or summer, harmless elsewhere)
- 3 A fire sweeps through the lord's dwelling (Major)
- 4 A great wind blows down buildings and scatters flocks (Minor)
- 5 Sickness has stricken many people in the domain (Minor)
- 6 Vermin devour crops in the field and the storehouse (Minor)
- 7 A murrain kills the cattle and pigs (Major)
- 8 Maddened wild beasts prey upon luckless men (Minor)

∞∞

### helpful NATURAL EVENTS

- 1 A neighbor's crops were so ample they gift them cheaply to us (Minor)
- 2 Huntsmen have been exceptionally successful of late. (Minor)
- 3 Sweet rains and fine weather improve all crops (Major, but does nothing in winter)
- 4 A wild crop of edible herbs has prospered this season (Minor)
- 5 Fair weather has allowed much useful work to be done (Minor)
- 6 The cattle and herds multiply very well (Major)
- 7 Good pastures have been found for the cattle (Major)
- 8 The grain and other foods have kept exceptionally well this season (Minor)



These **degrees of help** and harm are given as guidelines and examples of what kind of trouble or help a random event may grant a domain. Sometimes they do not make good sense; for some grand domain, a sorrow that kills half their gesith would be a hecatomb of bloodshed, but for a minor domain the death of a dozen warriors could well be the outcome of a single sad encounter. Let the GM adjust the outcome to best fit good reason.

## Degrees of help and harm

Let them also add outcomes that fit the thread of events. If a particular neighbor has been laying claim to their land, and his last attempt was foiled, then perhaps this next trouble with him will also involve a peril to the heroes' hidage. Let these attempts linger until the heroes deal decisively with their foe.

DS	MINOR HARMS	MAJOR HARMS
1	Lose half of the <i>feorm</i> this season	Lose all the <i>feorm</i> this season
2	Lose 20% of your domain's stored wealth	Lose half of your domain's stored wealth
3	Fyrd can't be raised for 1d4 seasons	Fyrd can't be raised for a year
4	Give a Fitting Gift to each gesith and companion or risk a Morale check for each to keep them	Lose each gesith or companion you can't give a Fitting Gift to by the season's' end
5	Lose use of 20% of your hidage for the season if the event isn't resolved	Lose 10% of your hidage permanently if the event is not resolved
6	A tenth of your gesith die, rounded up	1d4 x 10% of your gesith die

DS	MINOR HELPS	MAJOR HELPS
1	Gain 50% <i>feorm</i> this season	Double <i>feorm</i> this season
2	Gain 10% of your stored wealth	Gain 25% of your stored wealth
3	Gain 1d6 gesith if you give them Fitting Gifts and land	Gain 3d6 gesith if you give them Fitting Gifts and land
4	Gain +2 on your next <i>Overcome Trouble</i> domain action within a year	Automatically succeed on your next <i>Overcome Trouble</i> action within a year
5	Gain wealth equal to a Fitting Gift	Gain wealth equal to a Fitting Gift for the lord and up to four companions of his choice
6	Gain double <i>wergild</i> -share income next season	Gain quadruple <i>wergild</i> -share income next season

**Beorthelg and his friends** are lords in Wessex, a band of adventurers entrusted with the keeping of a of a considerable domain in newly-conquered Dumnonia. Four hundred hides make up the grant, but the coffers are empty of wealth after the hardships of war. They arrive on the first day of spring to the lord's hall in the hamlet of Axmouth, nigh to the sea.

## An Example Domain Turn

Because they have not ruled the land, no *feorm* is set aside for them from last season's work, nor is there any share of *wergild* to take for laws they have not upheld. Thus, the earnings for the season are not gained.

Next, they would commonly need to gift their followers, but they have none yet. They must hew their own wood and draw their own water and do all their own labor, which is no pleasant thing.

Thereupon an event is rolled by the GM. The dice say that it is a negative event, and could say more, but the GM decides that it makes more sense to say that a Wealth lord driven away by Ine is fomenting unrest in the domain and cursing its new masters. A roll for the consequences say that all next season's *feorm* will be lost if he is not dealt with.

After, they must choose their domain action for the turn. It is plain that they need to get *gesith* and enlist servants. The latter is a simple matter of gifting, and requires no real labor, but the former requires either a domain action or an adventure to find worthy friends. The group decides to use their domain action on it, for they will adventure to deal with the Wealth lord.

They are loaded down with treasures from their adventuring, so they decide to have their most lordly roll 2d6 and add his Lead and Charisma modifier to it, getting 8 candidates. To each the band gives eight Fitting Gifts, each gift worth 20 pence, or five shillings. Thus, the whole costs 320 shillings, a vast sum, yet one heroes can afford.

Then they give ten hides apiece to these warriors to sustain them. Ten servants to run errands and do labor each need five hides apiece. The five heroes of the warband are all wed, of course, though none are yet with children, and so a hundred more hides must sustain them. All told, 230 hides of the 400 are given over to sustaining lords, *gesith*, and servants.

Next season, at summer's start, the lords may expect to earn 340 shillings from the 170 hides yet unencumbered, plus 40 more shillings from the *wergild*-share. From this they must gift their *gesith* to keep them. Of course, if they fail to suppress the vengeful Wealth lord, they will get none of this, and they must trust to their own purses to keep their friendships secure.

**The LAWS OF KING** In the name any armed band of thirty-six men or more as an army, and even great clashes might not occupy more than a few hundred men on either side. The following rules will help a GM run these battles and involve PC heroes in the blood-sodden fray.

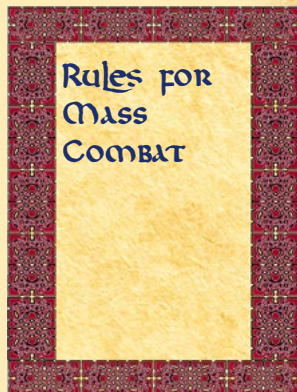
Each army must be divided into units of eight men, each of the same general type. An army composed of ceorls, gesith, and a lord's loyal companions may have units of ceorls, units of gesith, and units of companions. If there aren't enough men to round out a full unit they can make up a partial unit, or fight individually on the battlefield. PCs or other particularly powerful figures may fight individually.

Each unit has hit points equal to eight times the constituent creature's hit dice. Thus, a unit of 1 HD ceorls would have 8 hit points, while a unit of 3 HD lordly companions would have 24. If there are fewer than eight creatures in the unit, decrease its hit points proportionally; thus, if there are only four companions in the former unit, it would have 12 hit points instead of 24.

Each unit has the same hit bonus, Morale, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, and other statistics as its constituent creatures. Its movement rate is multiplied by 10 to fit the larger scale of mass battlefields. Lone heroes or solitary combatants keep all their usual statistics, though their movement rate is also multiplied by 10.

**BEFORE A BATTLE STARTS**, the GM finds or sketches a rough map of the battlefield, usually at least three times as wide and long as the fastest unit's movement rate. Important features such as streams, wooded areas, cliffs, and steep slopes should be marked out, along with any buildings. Precise scaling is not critical but the map should be good enough to track unit movement.

The GM then decides which of the sides reached the battlefield first, for hardly ever do two armies clash on the march. They fight where they are brought to battle, at the best place they can find. That side first there is the defender, and any others are attackers. The defender picks one edge of the map and can position their units or heroes anywhere they wish on that side, provided these positions are no more than one-third of the way across the map.





The attacking general then positions his own units and troops anywhere he wishes along the opposite side of the map, again so long as they remain within one-third of the map width on that side.

A common unit of eight men takes up a rectangle thirty feet wide and ten deep, or twenty feet wide and ten deep if they are together in a shield wall.

It is at the GM's discretion whether any of the units are so stealthy as to be able to be secretly hidden on the map. Individual heroes might be able to manage it, but most units are too obvious to be concealed without good cover to hide behind.

Once all sides have placed their units, the defender takes the first turn. Then the attackers take their turns, and the process repeats until one side's general gives up and calls a retreat, or until the GM thinks the battle is clearly decided.

**UNLIKE THE SIX-SECOND ROUNDS** of conventional combat, a mass combat turn usually takes considerably longer. When in doubt, **The Mass Combat Turn** assume that ten minutes pass for each round, though the specific timing might vary based on the situation. Regardless of the duration, each turn is divided into two parts, moving and attacking.

During movement, the side's general moves all the units or loyal heroes he wishes to move. They can move up to their adjusted movement rate, 300 feet for an ordinary human. If units encounter a barrier such as a stream or cliff, they must stop for the rest of the turn. If they pass through difficult terrain such as a steep slope or thick woodland, such movement costs twice as much. If they begin the turn at the base of a cliff or on one side of a stream, they may be able to climb the obstacle or cross the water, either spending their entire movement doing so or perhaps being forced to make a skill check by the GM to succeed at it.

If a unit comes within thirty feet of an enemy unit, the two units become engaged, and must remain next to each other until one side is slain, or makes a *Fighting Withdrawal* action, or flees with broken Morale. Making a fighting withdrawal requires the unit's whole movement for a turn, and puts them sixty feet away in a direction that is away from the foe and not past them. A unit can simply flee an engagement at its full movement rate, but in that case all engaged enemy units or heroes get a free attack on the unit as it flees.

For lone heroes, they may move on the battlefield just as PCs normally move, climbing walls nimbly or crossing shallow streams with no more dif-

ficulty than a PC normally would. PCs need not obey the orders of generals unless they wish to do so. They do not need to halt when near enemy units unless they wish to do so, but they must make *Fighting Withdrawals* if they want to pull away from a fight once they have so engaged.

During a turn's attack phase, each unit may attack any unit or lone hero they have engaged or that is within range of their thrown or shot weaponry. Usually no more than one unit can crowd in to attack a lone hero, but up to four units may gang up on another unit if they're able to attack from different sides. Mind well their facing, if they are in a shield wall.

When a **UNIT ATTACKS ANOTHER UNIT**, it rolls a normal attack roll against the target unit's armor class and rolls damage as usual if it hits, or inflicts Shock damage on a miss if applicable. When a unit takes damage, it loses men. When the damage done is equal to the constituent creature's hit die, a man is lost. Thus, for a unit of 1 HD ceorls, each point of damage kills, drives off, or incapacitates a ceorl. For a unit of 3 HD companions, every three points of damage does in one warrior. These losses do not decrease a unit's attack roll or damage roll, but they can force Morale checks. A unit that loses all its hit points is destroyed as an effective force, its men scattered or slain.

When a **UNIT ATTACKS A LONE HERO**, up to four of its constituent creatures can crowd in to attack a single man-sized target. These assailants roll normal attacks and do normal damage against the hero, just as if the foe were fighting a mob of normal enemies. If the unit is throwing spears or shooting bows, it may be that all eight of them can target the same lone warrior.

When a **LONE HERO ATTACKS A UNIT**, they fight normally, just as if they were attacking a group of normal creatures. If they manage to kill one or more of them, the unit loses hit points equal to the slain warrior's hit dice. Thus, if the lone champion manages to kill a companion that had 3 HD, the companion's unit loses 3 hit points. This, too, can force Morale checks just as any other battle loss might.

When **TWO LONE HEROES FIGHT**, they engage normally and fight just as they would during any usual combat. If there are too many men between a lone hero and his prey, however, such as a lord guarded by a unit of his faithful companions, the GM might rule that the hero must thin out the pack somewhat before he can reach his chosen foe.

In place of an attack, a unit may make a different action that seems appropriate to the GM. In particular, most English units will perform the *Lock Shields* combat maneuver early in battle, its members linking their shields to

protect each other from head-on assailants. Multiple units will often form a line, each one using *Lock Shields*, with companions and gesith units anchoring the flanks and ready to charge into gaps formed in the line.

GMs should remember that a general's command is imperfect, and the discipline of ceorls is not always the best. Intricate orders may require a Cha/Lead skill check from the commanding general, and apparently suicidal instructions may call for a Morale check from the recipients, assuming they do not refuse it outright.

**Few armies fight until** their own utter destruction. When a unit suffers damage or sees a dramatic reverse on the battlefield, it must check Morale and risks becoming hesitant or panicked. PCs never need to check Morale, and individual heroes and warriors will check it only at the GM's discretion, when it seems reasonable.

## MORALE IN BATTLE

Units must make Morale checks under the following conditions. If more than one condition applies to the same event, then more than one Morale check must be made.

- The unit first takes damage during the battle, and is not made up of professional warriors such as gesith or companions.
- The unit takes damage that drops it below half its maximum hit points.
- The unit engages a supernatural or overwhelming foe for the first time in that battle.
- An adjacent allied unit is destroyed or routed.
- Half their allied units are destroyed or routed.
- Their side's leader is slain.

The first time a unit fails a Morale check, it becomes Shaken. Any time it tries to do anything but make a *Fighting Withdrawal* or move further away from an enemy unit, it must make another Morale check. On a success, it performs the action, while on a failure it instead does nothing that turn.

If a Shaken unit is forced to check Morale again and fails a second time, it becomes Routed. Routed units can do nothing but flee toward the nearest map edge, and will do so regardless of the foes they are engaged with. A Routed unit is not disciplined enough to make a fighting withdrawal.

Companion units can become Shaken, but they cannot be Routed so long as their beloved lord still lives. If their lord is killed, the unit must make an



immediate Morale check. On a failure, they flee, carrying his body and protecting it with their lives. On a success, they gain a Morale score of 12, a +4 bonus to their attack rolls, a -4 penalty to their Armor Class, and do double damage for the remainder of the battle as they are overcome with reckless grief and fury at the loss of their dear lord.

A general or heroic leader may attempt to rally a Shaken or Routed unit in place of their attack for the round. The rallying leader must be visible and audible to the fleeing unit, and makes a Cha/Lead skill check. If the check beats a difficulty of 10, then a Routed unit becomes Shaken and a Shaken unit regains normal morale. If the check beats a difficulty of 12, even Routed units instantly regain their normal courage. A leader can rally only one unit per turn.

**AFTER THE BATTLE, CESITH** and companions who have been captured by the foe may expect a swift death unless they can persuade their captors to accept a great ransom from their kinsmen. Captured ceorls will not be slain, but will either be enslaved or plundered and driven away. For those felled during the battle, their fate depends on whether their side won or lost.

## **AFTER THE BATTLE**

Of the losers, half of the casualties have fled but suffered no great injuries, a quarter lie dead upon the field, and a quarter were captured because they fell into the foe's hands or were too badly wounded to flee. Among the winners, a tenth of those felled have died of their wounds, a quarter live but are too badly hurt to be any use in war any time soon, but the rest are not too badly used to be good for fighting once more with a day or two of rest.

Losing armies will usually flee to a point five or six miles distant before they gather once more, with whatever remnants of the force that still cling to them. It will be 1d4 days before their casualties who escaped or fled the battle find their way back to them, assuming they have any trust remaining in their general or any desire to continue the fight.

**IT IS A STRICT** rule of the faith that Saints and other clergy should not participate in battles between Christians. A monk may pray against an evil Christian lord from his minster or his church, but to march on the field like a soldier and call God's wrath on the wicked is a step too far. If he does so, it is a Shame of disobedience to the Church of a magnitude that will vary with the circumstances.

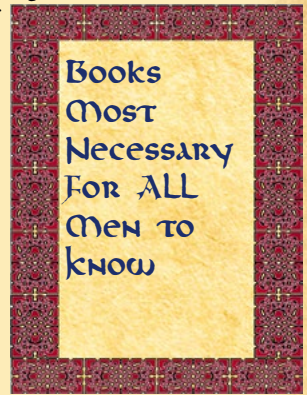
## **SAINTS AND GALDOR IN BATTLE**

Against pagans or supernatural foes, however, it is permitted for a Saint to stand with lords and kings and pray for God's aid against the heathen. All Christian units will be heartened by the holy man's presence and gain a Morale bonus of +1, or +2 if the highest-level Saint present is seventh level or higher. Battlefield miracles will have an effect at the GM's judgment, and direct divine intervention may completely decide the battle if the GM thinks it a godly cause and the correct Miracle is invoked.

The enchantments of galdorcrafft are too narrow to affect whole armies, but they might aid specific heroes or smite particular enemies on the field. There are legends of mighty Artifexes and terrible druid-sages who could bewitch entire battlefields with their arts, but the galdormen of the present day have no such arts. Most lords will be reluctant to openly enlist magical aid for fear of God's anger, but few will object if it is done discreetly or wielded by allied heroes.

**Included below are** a list of some books that might be useful for a GM with an appetite for more detailed reading. Most of them are fairly accessible through online booksellers or a good university library.

One caveat; this field of study is unencumbered by anything resembling firm scholarly consensus. Many details of Anglo-Saxon history and their relationships with native Britons are obscure at best. A certain degree of humility is in order about assertions made of this period, and readers are advised to look more for good arguments in the books below than absolute certitudes.



**These volumes provide** a basic overview of Anglo-Saxon life and contain a number of short articles on various topics that are apt to come up in play. While the information they provide isn't in-depth, it's enough to let a GM extrapolate something plausible. Take care, however, to note the differences between late Anglo-Saxon England and the early eighth century depicted in this game.

**General Topics**

Crawford, Sally. *Daily Life in Anglo-Saxon England*. Oxford: Greenwood World Publishing, 2009.

Hill, David. *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981.

Frantzen, Allen. *Anglo-Saxon Keywords*. Somerset, GB: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Lapidge, Michael, Blair, John, and Keynes, Simon. *Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England (2e)*. Somerset, GB: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

**These works can be** useful in understanding the historical background of Britain and the English kingdoms. As mentioned above, **history** the conclusions drawn in some of the earlier works have been disputed by later researchers, as in some cases the actual facts are almost unreachable. Given the ambiguity, a GM might just pick a historical theory that sounds fun and run with it.

Kirby, D. P., *The Earliest English Kings*, rev. ed., London: Routledge, 2000.

Salway, Peter. *Roman Britain*, The Oxford History of England, vol. 1a. Oxford: OUP, 1984.



Myres, J. N. *The English Settlements*, The Oxford History of England, vol. 1. Oxford: OUP, 1986.

Yorke, Barbara. *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England*, London: Routledge, 2002.

**THESE BOOKS GIVE MORE** or less detailed descriptions of the Anglo-Saxon Church and its relationship with minsters, along with details of gods, monsters and sorcery of use to GMs. **RELIGION, MAGIC AND MYTH**

Blair, John. *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*. Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2005.

Hutton, Ronald. *Pagan Britain*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Knowles, David and Hadcock, R. Neville. *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales*. London: Longman, 1971.

Pollington, Stephen. *The Elder Gods: The Otherworld of Early England*. Ely: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2011.

Storms, Godfrid. *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948.

**GIVEN THE TOMB-RAIDING AND** caester-crawling habits of adventurers, the books below will give some hint as to what Roman and English structures might have looked like during this period. For the latter, it's important to keep in mind that the period of this game predates the burgh-building and other town development that occurred later in English history. **STRUCTURES AND TOWNS**

Fernie, Eric. *The Architecture of the Anglo-Saxons*. London: B. T. Batsford, 1983.

Lepage, Jean-Denis. *British Fortifications Through the Reign of Richard III: an Illustrated History*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2012.

Russo, Daniel G. *Town Origins and Development in Early England, c. 400-950 A.D.*, London: Greenwood Press, 1998.

**GMs INTERESTED IN ADDITIONAL** period-correct NPC names or details on the Anglo-Saxon language can profit from the books below as a very brief introduction. **LANGUAGE**

Baker, Peter S. *Introduction to Old English*, (3e), Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Searle, William George. *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum: A List of Anglo-Saxon Proper Names*, Cambridge: CUP, 1897.

To be filled on receipt of the survey information, which allows for backers to put alternate credit names here.







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