

## The Habisfern Setting

*In the 33rd year of his reign, Cerdic, brother of Oswulf, son of Centwine and the King of Lanuch gave to the priest Embryt of Haltan the charge of recording the doings of the people of Lanuch, and to write them down such that they become a true history for the grandsons of the grandsons of the royal line.*

-- *The Habisfern Scrolls*

It has been five years since Queen Behrith received the Kingdom of Weidany from her sister Godrun the Red. Both she and her sister were put on the throne by the *Cult of Neya the Oathkeeper*, just as all previous Queens before them have been. It was the same cult that, 200 years ago, foretold disaster for the Kingdom if ever a man sat on the throne again. In that time, the royal line of the House of Aethlfryth has remained strong, and the Kingdom has grown in strength and size. The nobility of the other Houses may plot and scheme to weaken the power of the Daughters of Neya and their chosen Queens, but without a disaster to break the popularity of the Queen, they can do little.

When they first came to this land, ten centuries ago, the People of Rorn were fleeing the death of their god. Betrayed by his own brother, the Moon God was slain and his killer took his place as first amongst the gods. The Five Kingdoms fell into ruin and despair, and the Wizard King of Bealurwic marched his dark armies across their ruins.

Fleeing destruction, the People of Rorn came to the land named Weidany, where another people already dwelt under the cruel grip of the Druids. So the People liberated, conquered, raped, pillaged and finally built new Kingdoms out of the ashes which they could call their own. Barbarians came, which they fought off. Blood thirsty cults of the Goddess of War arose, which were put down. The Druids and their dark allies tried to reclaim what was once theirs, but they were defeated. For now. All of this is recorded in the history of the People, which is known as the *Habisfern Scrolls*.

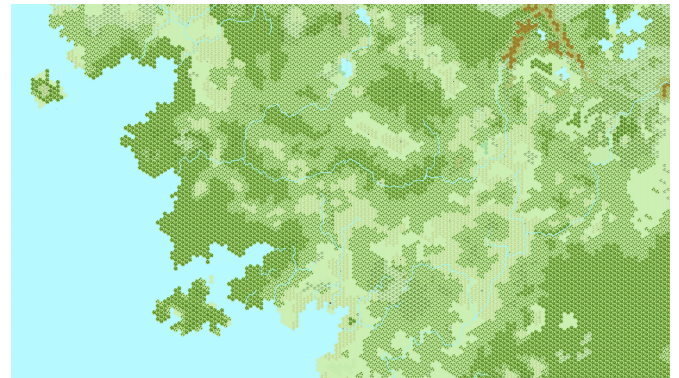
But through it all, there lurks one enemy that cannot be defeated. The one that drove the people here to Euressa in the first place. One foe whose breath is felt every Winter from a time which pre-dates the Five Kingdoms and the Old World before that. It is the Northern Enemy, the Ice, and what it seeks is the extinction of all life.

This is the world in which the *Habisfern Campaign Setting* is set.

## The Lands

The Kingdom of Weidany, also known as the Kingdom of the People of Rorn, is a large fertile region in the northwest of the Euressa peninsula. Euressa is almost 600 leagues east to west, and at times has been thought to be an island since the land

bridge that connects it to the Old World was for a long time blocked by ice sheets. Large tracts of it are unexplored, or at least have not been explored in living memory.



The Kingdom considers itself to be the most civilised nation, and views its neighbours as barbarians which need to be tamed. This viewpoint isn't completely wrong, but in reality is greatly oversimplified.

## Bryteland

*Seven ships land at Wercester from Bryteland, bringing many fighting men. They burn their ships on the shore, and under the cover of fog, raid coastal settlements. Except for a few small battles, the invaders hide in the woods rather than fight.*

-- *Habisfern Scrolls, 909*

What they know of is their neighbours. Further north and west are the barbarian kingdoms of Bryteland, who send raiding ships down the coast every autumn. They are a proud and warlike country, constantly threatened by the followers of inhuman gods on their own borders.

Bryteland is not a single kingdom, but five, and there is constant friction between them. To them, kin is more important than King, a fact which has made the lands difficult to unify. To fight bravely in battle, to give generously of your goods and to fulfil your obligations to your kin are the important morals of Brytish society. Most other things are optional.

## Cadwold

*There is war between Cadwold and the shire of Strathby. Many men of the Kingdom are killed, but the Cadwoldic tribes are driven back, and forts are built within their borders from where the Queen's forces can enforce the peace.*

-- *Habisfern Scrolls, 1217*

Until recently, Cadwold was controlled by the Druids, but an invasion by Weidany drove out the Druids and brought the land their under the control of the Kingdom. Since then, Cadwold has rebelled, and is now claiming independence. A war is still being fought over who has control over the country.

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Though Cadwold is mostly known for its Druids, and the influence of the Elder gods which they worship, it is also home to the Waezgerat, a secret order of wizards that fights against both the Druids and the Queen, and which is said to hold the secrets of Dragon magic, which can be used to shape (or unshape) the world.

## Midlaen

*Ten ships sail south from Stowell under the command of Hilda Blackstone, and land at a place called Brenthold. The people here are not willing to accept the law of the Queen, and there is fighting until they are forced to accept her rule. The lands about are explored, and claimed as a new shire for the Kingdom.*  
-- Habisfern Scrolls, 1148

Midlaen is a realm to the south of the Kingdom, and once bordered onto the Five Kingdoms. However, it was forgotten for many centuries until the Queen sent on expedition down to in in the 12th century, and began to claim it for her own. Midlaen was too far, too large and had too much of a thirst for independence however, and even before the 12th century was finished, Midlaen had once again claimed its independence.

By now however it had far greater ties into the trade of the northern coasts, and settlers from both the Kingdom and Bryteland had swelled its population. It is now a far more formidable foe, and is unlikely to fall to the Kingdom once more.

Much of Midlaen is barely explored wilderness, and the southern reaches of it borders onto lands filled with dangerous creatures and wild magics. Those places which are heavily settled are dens of pirates and thieves, the most famous of which is Blackbay in the north.

## Nailand

*Aidan sends men into Nailand during the autumn, to loot cattle and kill the short folk. They are driven back empty handed, suffering many losses. The short folk follow them back into their lands, burning villages and killing women and men alike.*  
-- Habisfern Scrolls, 748

Nailand is a vast grassland inhabited by the barbarian culture known as the short folk. It stretches east and south of Weidany, and few have much experience of its reaches. Constant border wars are an attempt to tame the barbarians, and to claim more land for the Kingdom.

## Campaigns

The **Habisfern** setting lends itself to a number of different campaign types, which define the sort of adventures that characters will have, and which also affects the type of characters that will have those adventures.

## Mercenaries

War and bloodshed can be common even within the Kingdom, where the various noble houses vie for control over land, resources and prestige. Most threats come from outside the Kingdom though. Raiders from Bryteland in the north can hit anywhere along the coast. The barbarian Short Folk, a different breed of human, makes raids across the Kingdom's eastern borders. In the north, the Kingdom fights an ongoing war with the Druids of Cadwold.

All these threats require men to take up arms and fight with sword and shield. Whilst the bulk of these men are taken from the *fyrð*, the standing army of freemen, there are also mercenaries who will fight for any lord who pays them. You are such mercenaries, selling your sword to whoever agrees to provide you with a hot meal and coin for your pocket. How careful you are in your choice of employer is always up to you.

## Merchants

There is wealth to be made in the trade that flows up and down the west coast. There is danger too, since there are plenty of those who see quicker profits in just taking what they want. You are merchants who ply your trade along the coast, where dangers can sometimes be more subtle than a simple boat full of vikings.

The ports of Gilmutha and Blackbay in the south are great places to find adventure and excitement if you seek it, and the rewards for safely shipping cargo to the far north can be just as great.

## Outlaws

Not everyone lives within the law, and the term 'Outlaw' means someone who lives outside of the law. They are not bound by the law, but they are not protected by it either. Anyone is permitted to slay them without fear of retribution, indeed, seeking retribution for the death of an outlaw (even if they are a relative) is itself a crime.

Outlaws live on the fringes of society. Most often, they have been banished due to crimes or ill fortune, and turn to banditry or thievery to survive. A few may even decide to live off the land, away from civilisation.

You are a band of outlaws, most probably criminals who have been banished from the Kingdom for your (real or imagined) crimes. Maybe you wish to seek retribution against those who banished you, or you desire to clear your name and seek evidence of the real criminals. The shire of Aidan is a good place to start for such a campaign. Not only is it on the borders of civilisation, it is also ripe with corruption, so there are plenty of opportunities for a band of honest freemen to be framed for a crime they did not commit (or at least, were not entirely responsible for).

## Nobles

Not all are born equal, and some are born with the blood of one of the noble houses within them. The most powerful people of the Kingdom are those who are members of the thirteen great noble houses.

As a noble, you have a manorial estate which supplies you with food, labour and coin. The safety of this estate is also your responsibility, and you may be required to take up arms to defend it.

There is also the threat of politics, for not everyone is happy with your position in the world. Nobles of other houses (or even those of your own house) may use intrigue to gain power over you. Often, such threats cannot be met with force of arms - at least, not in any way that will be apparent to others.

## Religion

There are many religions throughout the land, with each religion having its own gods, cults and beliefs. Some of the gods are considered to be the same, but with different names or maybe a slightly different view of them. Others are unique to a particular pantheon.

The gods of the Kingdom of Rorn are the Rornic pantheon, which was once ruled by the god Rorn the Wanderer. He was god of the Moon, and led his people west away from the Ice to the promised land of Tarvallah. After the fall of the Five Kingdoms, both he and his priesthood were slain, and his position taken by the god Haltan.

## Primary Gods

Though all the gods are venerated to some extent, and most people pay their respects to multiple gods, there are only a few which have large organised cults within the Kingdom.

### Ashek

*It was in this year, in Solmonath, that priests of the god Ashek came to Stowell to speak to the Queen. For twelve days did they sit in council, and in that time no attacks were made on our people by the Merkians.*  
-- Habisfern Scrolls, 1057

The god Ashek, often known as the Mad God, came from nowhere in the 11th century. Barbarians who at that time lived in the land between Weidany and Bryteland began an invasion of the Kingdom, led by priests of a new god. In time, an agreement is reached and the land of Merkia becomes another part of the Kingdom.

His priests claim that Ashek is all gods, and that the other gods are merely reflections of his fractured personality. The only way to understand the Mad God is through insanity.

There are not many within the Kingdom that give worship to Ashek, for he does not offer much that is of interest to commoners. However, those of a magical nature sometimes give payment to him, for he is said to be the god of magic.

### Haltan

Haltan was brother to Rorn, whom he killed (some would say murdered) in single combat. He is the god of Law and Order, strength of arms and honourable combat. He is now considered to be King of the gods. His wife is *Asabeth*, the goddess of bloodthirsty battle.

Only men may be priests of this cult, though anyone can worship. Most towns will have at least a shrine to Haltan, along with a priest who can lead the townsfolk in prayers and festivals. There is a close alliance between the priesthood of Haltan and the nobility. The latter ensure that the priests are well funded, and the former lend divine authority to those that rule.

You may wish to be a Knight of the *Cult of the Lawmaker*. These knights uphold the law of the Kingdom, both through strength of arms but also through their knowledge of the law. They can be welcomed by local nobles who cannot spare their own men to look into local trouble, but there are also sometimes viewed as trouble makers who can sometimes find in favour of the lower classes.

### Neya

*Aethelwulf goes to Holbury to ask for the blessing of Neya for the Kingship of the three Kingdoms, but is refused. Neya proclaims that no son of Brihtric's line may take a throne because of his father's breaking of the oaths of Neya.*

-- Habisfern Scrolls, 977

Neya is the goddess of peace, serenity and marriage. However, she is not a pacifist, for peace and serenity can only be gained through strong defence, and protection of your family can also require force of arms.

She is also known as the Keeper of Oaths, and is the patron goddess of the Queen of Weidany. After the bloody battles of the 10th century which preceded the formation of the Kingdom of Weidany, the priestesses of Neya proclaimed that only disaster would follow if a king took the throne, and so Aelfthryth became the first Queen of the Rornish People.

Only women may be priests of her cults, though anyone can worship at her ceremonies. If you wish to dedicate your life to Neya, then there are two options open to you.

The first is to become a *Daughter of Neya*, and take up the study of law and politics. The Daughters are the lawyers of Neya, and it is their duty to witness oaths and contracts between others, and to advise and enforce where necessary.

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The second option is to join the *Shields of Neya*. This cult of warrior women is greatly respected, both for their skill at arms and their devotion to their Queen.

## Yagma

Yagma is the goddess of creation, and is the most popular god amongst the common people. She is the Earth Mother, and also the Goddess of the Birth, Life and Death. She brings the seasons, and is crucial to the lives of those that live off the land.

## Other Gods

There are many other gods known in Weidany, but not all have extensive cults dedicated to them. Some, like *Pel* or *Bis* have no priests, though these gods will be venerated by the common folk at suitable times. Some, like *Asabeth*, are far less popular now than they used to be.

**Asabeth:** Asabeth is the wife of Haltan. She is a violent goddess of battle, rape and vengeance. All of her cults have been female only, though few remain today.

**Bis:** God of the sun and summer, he is also the god of forges and fires and so is venerated by blacksmiths.

**Pel:** Pel is the god of physical and mental perfection. He can be venerated when one wishes to try crafting something of outstanding beauty, but has no priesthoods.

**Rim:** Rim is the god of the underworld, and it is he who guides souls to their final place after death. Cremation is nearly always performed on the dead, since this frees the spirit from the body and allows it to head to the underworld.

**Thot:** The raven god who acts as a messenger for Haltan. There is one organised cult of Thot known as the Black Ravens, who work for the Queen of Weidany.

**Walgi:** Walgi is the goddess of the wild. She is mother to animals, especially wolves. She does not have a great love for humanity except where they are willing to give up their civilised ways in order to live free as a wild animal.



## Building your Character

Your choice of character role within the world of *Habisfern* is a crucial part of determining the rest of character creation. However, your role defines your past, not your future. The only constraints on what you do next are those of politics and your own will.

### Roles

You must chose a role which defines your place in society. In *Habisfern*, where people stand in the general order of things is of great importance, and defines how others will react to you. Pretending that you are someone who you are not is a great crime, often punishable by disfigurement.

However, your social standing is not fixed. A poor farmer can become a lord over many men, though such a change in standing must be earned, and your new status is only bestowed upon you after gaining the respect of your superiors through actions and deeds.

As well as your social status, your gender also determines how people view you. The land of *Habisfern* is not an egalitarian society. Women have their role, as do men. However, a Queen does sit on the throne of the Kingdom, and the most feared warrior cults are those that are open only to women.

Each role will specify a list of free skills that you receive for taking that role. They are generally skills which you (as a player) wouldn't select because they aren't useful to a heroic adventurer, but which you should have because they fit that background.

A role may also specify a *social status* and *blood*. If specified, then taking this role means that you are limited to these options when selecting your priorities later. They each range from A (highest) to E (lowest). Selecting a role which provides you with a high social standing, or great magical ability, will limit your other options later.

### Bard

You are a member of the elite lineage of lore masters, storytellers and guardians of law known as Bards. Though you can entertain with stories and song, you are not an entertainer. Instead, your purpose is to advise on matters of law, politics and history. As a bard, you are both outside of and above the law, which provides you with a great deal of protection.

However, you are expected to remain neutral in the affairs of others, and provide aid and advice to all who require it.

**Social status:** Privileged (C)

**Minimum age:** 30

**Skills:** Law 4, History 4, Heraldry 4, Astrology 4, Area lore 4, Teach 2, Current affairs 2, Perform 2

### Brigand

You are an outlaw living on the fringes of society. The quality of life of such a person can vary considerably, depending on how successful you have been. The social status that you select defines whether you are scrounging for a living (E), living reasonably well (D) or are at the top of a highly successful band (C).

Being outside the law has definite disadvantages, and anyone can slay you without fear of retribution. But you also don't have to pay taxes, or do what anyone says - except of course there's often a bigger band of outlaws that insist that you pay them, or do what they say.

**Social status:** Privileged (C), Free (D), Unfree (E)

**Skills:** Survival 3, Scrounging 2

### Farmer

You are a farmer, living by farming the land. You may live in a village owned by a thegn, or you may be a freeholder living alone on your own land. If you are a freeman (a *ceorl*), then you have enough land of your own to support yourself and your family.

As an unfree, a *kotsetla*, you farm another's land in return for support to keep you and your family fed.

**Social status:** Free (D) or Unfree (E)

**Skills:** Farming 4

### Fyrdman

The *Fyrd* is the mobilised army of freeman that is raised to defend home and shire during a time of war. Though all freemen are required to serve their lord in such times, some chose to neglect their duties and pay a fine of 30 shillings instead. Others, such as yourself, welcome the excitement and challenge presented by a war.

Though you have not been a professional mercenary, you are well trained in the arts of warfare, and are always amongst the first chosen by your lord to be called to battle. You have your own arms and armour, and know how to use them.

When you aren't fighting in the fyrd, you have your own land just as any *ceorl* does, though you may pay others to work it some of the time, using money gained from loot on the battlefield.

**Social status:** Freeman (D), or Privileged (C)

**Skills:** Farmer 2, Heraldry 2

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**Equipment:** Broadsword, Round shield, mail

## Lady

You are the wife or daughter of either a nobleman or freeman. You may also be a widow, who has inherited her husband's lands. As a lady of the Kingdom, you are expected to know how to sew, spin and cook. However, you are also expected to be able to manage the affairs of the household, and be able to take over your husband's role when he is away.

As a widow you would have the most authority and freedom, since the ownership and running of your husband's lands will have fallen to you until you re-marry. Of course, when (if ever) that is, is your decision since you are now the head of the family.

As a daughter, you have fewer responsibilities but you are also expected to obey your father.

Though women are not expected to fight, a woman who can defend herself and her household is also respected. You may have been taught to use a knife, or even a sword. You are never expected to go to war, but if the war comes to you, then a lady who is willing to stand at the gate with sword in hand is a fearsome, and respected, one indeed.

**Social status:** B (Noble), C (Privileged)

**Gender:** Female

**Skills:** Handicraft 4, Steward 3, Cooking 2, Trade 2, Law 1

## Merchant

You are a member of that class of people that is relatively new to the Kingdom - those who make wealth by the trade of goods, rather than by the sword or the careful management of their land.

You may be well travelled, and may also know how to use a sword (not all your customers are willing to pay you). How successful you are depends on the social class that you take. You must however be a freeman, since an unfree man subservient to another will not have the freedom to roam as they please and purchase goods.

**Social status:** Free or better (D+)

**Skills:** Trade 4

## Monk

You are a monk, a priest who has removed themselves from the affairs of the world and taken to the pure study of the Mad God. Unlike the priests of other gods, you do not work amongst the common people, though you may be commanded to leave your monastery from time to time, in order to carry out tasks for your order.

Some monks are also sent out to 'walk in the wild', to take a chance to seek understanding of your god through observing the world that He has created. The chances are, that one of these monks is you.

**Social status:** C (Privileged)

**Gender:** Male

**Skills:** Cult lore (Ashek) 4

## Priest

You are a priest, a member of a cult of one of the many gods that are worshipped across the land. Priests are respected (or feared) members of society. Cults can be peaceful or warlike, and though the gods do not reward the dedication of their followers in open ways, they do help in more subtle ways, through the secret skills that cult members are taught.

**Social status:** Privileged (C)

**Skills:** Cult lore (Rornic) 4, Law 1

## Thegn

You are the lord of a village, having been given charge over it by the authority of the Queen. You will keep your position until your death, at which point another will be chosen - it is not guaranteed to be one of your descendants.

In return for this authority, you also have responsibility. You are responsibility for keeping the law in the lands around, and for carrying out the Queen's justice. This may require both your sword and your diplomacy. Most of those you govern are freemen, ceorls, not your servants.

**Social status:** Noble (B)

**Skills:** Steward 2, Law 2, Farming 1

## Vagabond

You are an itinerant wanderer with no place to call home, or anyone to call family. Though you are beholden to no man, you are viewed with less respect than the poorest serf or slave since you have no place in society.

**Social status:** Unfree (E)

**Skills:** Streetwise 2, Scrounging 2

## Wise Man

You are a wise man or woman, gifted from birth with the ability to see things others cannot, and to know a little of the *Words of Power*. You are not a full wizard though, and your skills at magic are limited. Instead, you rely on the fears of

others to gain power over them, and your knowledge of the world to earn their respect.

Because of your fey nature, you may take one fey disadvantage, which counts normally towards the total you are allowed to take.

**Blood:** Half-fey (B)

**Skills:** One Word of Power (choose between Earth, Water, Spirit, Air, Fire and Iron) at level 2. Also, you start with any two lore skills at level 2.

## Wizard

The blood of the unnatural runs strong within you, something which was clear from an early age. You can see things that others cannot, but you also know the *Words of Power*, and can command the world to shape itself as you please.

You must take the *Air of suspicion* disadvantage, which does not count towards your normal number of disadvantages, and does not grant you any bonus advantages. You may take any other fey advantages or disadvantages as well.

**Blood:** Fey (A)

**Skills:** One Word of Power (choose between Earth, Water, Spirit, Air, Fire or Iron) at level 4, and the two neighbouring ones at level 2. You also start with *Faerie lore* at level 2.

## Steps to Character Generation

### Choosing Priorities

The first step in character generation is to choose how to prioritise your character's features. You have five things to decide upon - *Blood*, *Status*, *Attributes*, *Experience* and *Advantages*. Each must be given a priority from A to E, with A being the highest (best) priority, and E being the lowest (worst) priority.

Category	A	B	C	D	E
Blood	Fey	Half	Human	Human	Human
Status	High	Noble	Privileged	Free	Unfree
Attributes	+6/6	+3/5	+1/4	0/4	-1/3
Experience	60/6	50/5	40/4	30/4	20/4
Advantages	7	5	3	1	0

Unless you are wanting a special social rank, or wanting magical ability, you should set *Blood* to be the lowest (E) and *Status* to be the second lowest (D), with the other three being arranged as desired.

### Blood

Most people in the campaign world are humans, born of mortal parents with very little that is strange about them. If you want to be human, then simply put *Blood* as priority E.

If you wish to be non-human - a Fey, born of the realms of magic - then you must take *Blood* as priority A. This can provide certain benefits, but does mean that you can't choose the best options in other areas. You must take *Blood* at A if you want to be a wizard.

If you take *Blood* as B, then you are half-fey - one of your parents was mortal. You have some of the abilities (and looks) of the Fey, but you are not a pure blood. You may take some faerie traits, and you also have the option of taking magical abilities.

### Status

*Social Status* is a measure of where you are in society. Indirectly, it is also a measure of wealth. In *Habisfern*, only the nobility are truly wealthy. Anyone who comes into wealth who is not a noble, will either have their wealth taken away, or be made into a noble.

It is assumed that you will begin the game as a free man, with a priority of D. If you wish to be a low ranking noble, then you need to take this as priority B.

A *Privileged* status (C) is required by some backgrounds (such as bards and priests). If taken without such a background, it represents a moderately wealthy or highly respected freeman.

If you begin as *Unfree* (E), then you have no wealth or possessions of note, and are subservient to another. Since this may affect what you are permitted to do, and where you are permitted to go, you should determine exactly what your obligations are before the game begins.

Slavery exists within the Kingdom, and in most of the lands around it. However, slaves are rarely the focus of interesting stories.

### Attributes

Attributes define your primary, raw, abilities. Though attributes can be changed during the game, they change only slowly, generally over a period of years.

There are eight primary attributes - *Strength*, *Health*, *Agility*, *Dexterity*, *Perception*, *Intelligence*, *Empathy* and *Will*.

Each of them defaults to a score of three, though you have the option of modifying them between two and six.

An attribute of 2 indicates that you are significantly worse than the average in that attribute. Conversely, an attribute of 4 represents noticeably above average ability, and 5 or more is exceptional ability.

The cost of attributes is as the table below, using the *standard* column for most characters.

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Score	Poor	Standard	Good
2	-2	-1	-1
3	0	0	0
4	+1	+1	+1
5	+4	+3	+2
6	+7	+5	+4

The priority you gave to *Attributes* governs how many extra points you have to spend on raising attributes, and also the maximum score an attribute can be. If you want to have an attribute of six, you must give *Attributes* priority A.

## Strength

With a high strength you are able to carry more, move faster and hit harder than other people. Strength is useful for warriors.

## Health

With a high health you are able to continue going for longer, shrug off the effects of poison or fatigue, and stay alive after being badly wounded.

## Agility

A high agility allows you to react quicker and move faster than other people. You are also better at dodging, wrestling and brawling, as well as being a good climber and jumper. Agility is also used when sneaking.

## Dexterity

High dexterity provides you with natural ability at filching and lock picking, but also with the use of swords and other melee weapons. Dexterity is useful for both warriors and thieves.

## Perception

Perception is a measure of your ability to notice the world around you. A high perception means you are more likely to spot ambushes, notice a pick pocket or find a place to hide.

## Intelligence

A high intelligence provides you with wits, memory and reasoning ability. Since you have a better memory, you can make better use of knowledge you have read or been taught. You are quicker at learning, and less likely to be confused by people.

## Empathy

A high empathy allows you to understand the emotions and motivations of other people. If you so wish, you may use this to get on with them better. Fast talking, seduction and oratory all use empathy.

## Will

A high will enables you to keep control of your mind in times of stress. You are less likely to be tempted or fooled, and are able to keep cool in times of stress.

## Skills

Skills represent training and experience. There are eight basic skills (called talents) which every character has, plus a multitude of other skills which characters will not have unless they are bought specifically.

When a skill check is made, you roll your attribute multiplied by your skill + 1d20. This is compared against a target number, and if you equal or exceed the target, then you succeed. A moderate task is one which a professional would have a good chance of succeeding at, but still find challenging. Such a task has a target of 20.

## Choose Advantages

*Advantages* are an inherent part of you that sets you apart from other people. Many affect how well you can do things, or what you look like (such as being particularly large, or beautiful). Others affect things that have happened in your background, such as great wealth or powerful friends. You have a number of points to spend on buying advantages based on the priority you gave to them.

Along with advantages are also disadvantages. These are bad things which have affected your character, either due to circumstances or luck. Buying disadvantages allows you to purchase more advantages. You can always buy one disadvantage, plus an extra one for every three full points you are to spend on advantages.

You cannot buy advantages and disadvantages during the game - they are a one chance option to give you something special. For advantages which give you material things, such as wealth or friends, then such things can be obtained in the game through roleplaying, but you cannot just buy the advantage to get them.

## Skills

The priority you give to your skills determines both how many skills you may purchase, and the maximum level to which you can raise them. A professional level of skill is 4, so you probably want your best skill to be at least this (which costs 10 points).

Your *minimum* starting age is also based on your skill choice, and is equal to 10 + 1 per 5 points of skills that you start with. If you take skills at 'D' (30), your minimum age is 16, if you take it at 'A' (60), your minimum age is 22.



## The Finishing Touches

The last part of character generation is to finish off your character's background and personality (most of this may have come out of previous selections), and finally to choose a name for your character.

Examples of names are provided in the Habisfern Encyclopedia, though any Saxon (or Saxon sounding) name will do.

## Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages and disadvantages help you flesh out your abilities and backgrounds. They give you bonuses which make you better than everyone else, or add limitations which restrict you in some way.

### Virtues

The first thing that you can do with your points of advantages is to modify your *Virtues*. There are five virtues: Bravery, Chastity, Discipline, Sanity and Temperance. They all default to four, but you can buy one up by +2 with 1 point of advantage, or drop one by -2 for 1 point of disadvantage.

Alternatively, you can raise one by +1 by dropping one by -1. In either case, no trait can start higher than six or lower than two.

Virtues may come into play during times of stress, when the actions of your character may not be what you, the player, want them to be. If a huge troll charges out of a cave at you, you may wish to stand and fight but whether you do or not may depend on your *Bravery* virtue.

A high virtue allows you to dictate your character's actions freely. A low virtue means that your character is more likely to give in to their base instincts and act as the GM decides. However, acting without passion is viewed negatively in Habisfern. The *Ice* seeks to destroy all human emotion, so those that always act through reason and logic may be viewed with suspicion.

Virtues may go up and down during play, and do so by gaining or losing experience points. Losing experience on a virtue does not drop it a level as soon as excess experience drops below zero. Instead, a virtue can have negative experience against it. As soon as the negative experience *exceeds* half the current value of the virtue, it drops a level.

For example, you start with a Bravery of 3. You gain one point of experience in Bravery due to your actions, giving a Bravery score of "3, +1 xp". You then perform some cowardly acts, losing 2 experience in Bravery, so your virtue becomes "3, -1 xp". If you lose another point, then it becomes "3, -2 xp", but since 2 is greater than half the current score (1.5), your trait drops to "2, +1 xp".

### Bravery

A measure of your bravery when facing things that could do you harm. A high bravery is required for warriors and those that put themselves in harms way. New experiences are more likely to cause fear than threats that you have encountered before, and the level of the threat is also relative - a brave

peasant may run from a large man with a club, but a less brave warrior, who is highly skilled and has a sword, may well not consider the brute a threat.

A high bravery is considered a good feature of a person within the Kingdom.

### Chastity

Sex is something that many people desire, but it is not always a good time to pursue it. Your chastity is a measure of your ability to resist temptations of the flesh, and not to be turned by a soft word, a gentle caress, or the sight of naked flesh.

If you have a low chastity then you are more likely to be distracted when others flirt with you, but you will also be more comfortable when you wish to flirt with others. A high chastity will mean you are not easily tempted, but you will be more uncomfortable when you do wish to seek the pleasures of the flesh.

Whilst a low chastity is frowned upon, so is a high chastity. Sex is an important part of life, and an interest in it is considered healthy and normal for both men and women. Lack of passion is a sign of the Ice, and may be viewed with suspicion.

### Discipline

Discipline measures your ability to keep your calm when more exciting things call for your attention. It prevents you from losing your temper when an enemy hurls an insult at you, or from killing a hated enemy who has offered his surrender.

A high Discipline means that the bards and skalds of the enemy will not be able to draw you away from your shield wall. But it can also mean you are viewed as a coward if you do not respond to insults when they are given, or as a inhuman killer when you fight without passion.

### Sanity

There are things in the world that can tear your mind apart just by your looking at them. Sanity is a measure of how well you are grounded in this world, rather than the world of the Dreamlands. A sane person has a higher resistance to the effects of magic and the faerie folk. An insane person can learn magic faster, and has a greater ability to deal with the fey and similar creatures.

A high sanity is always considered good, unless you want to use magic yourself. In that case, sacrificing your sanity is a fast way to gain power, though a low sanity can be dangerous to you and those around you.

### Temperance

As chastity is to the pleasures of sex, so Temperance is to the pleasures of food and drugs. There are times when not succumbing to drunkenness is definitely a good idea but, as

with chastity, avoiding pleasure when there is no reason to is considered a bad characteristic for a person to have.

If you have a high Temperance, then you will have a reputation of not showing respect to your host, for both the giving of food and drink and partaking of it, are considered an important part of society. However, a low Temperance is a sign of poor self control.

## List of Advantages

### Common Advantages

#### Allies (+3):

You are allied with a small group of people who will sometimes aid you when asked. The smaller the group, the more likely they are to aid you. Aid may be in the form of information, or direct physical involvement.

#### Ambidexterity (+1):

You suffer no penalty for performing actions with your off hand.

#### Animal empathy (+1):

You have a natural ability to get on well with animals. All animals react well to you, and have their reaction shifted to one better category.

#### Beautiful voice (+2):

You have a clear and pleasant voice which other people find attractive to listen to. When singing, you never fumble and can always take 10. For all social activities where the sound of your voice can work in your favour, you may always roll twice and take the highest roll. This will not help you when trying to convey complex information (e.g. teaching) or when not being nice (e.g., commanding or intimidating). It may help with *Perform*, *Charm* and *Guile* skill tests.

#### Charisma (+3):

You are good at getting on with people, and gain a +1 bonus to *Empathy* when trying to befriend or persuade a person.

#### Commanding presence (+3):

You are more than capable of making yourself heard when you need to take charge of the situation. When giving orders, people always pay attention (though they may ignore you). You never fumble *Leadership* or *Intimidation* checks. When organising teams, on a success you add your *Leadership* to people's skill checks.

#### Contacts (+1):

You have friends in powerful places, who may do you favours on occasion. They will rarely intercede directly on your behalf, but they may provide information, or introductions.

Choose a group of people to have the contacts in. It may be the underworld, a noble house, a city, a profession.

#### Dreaming (+3):

Like many other people, you dream about the future. Unlike most others though, your dreams are a reflection of reality. You can't control what your dreams are about, but they tend to be events that will affect you. They don't necessarily show what will happen, but what could happen if certain decisions are made.

A dream will occur when an important event is due to occur. Often, this will be once per adventure, though may vary depending on the structure of the campaign. It will give hints as to what is going to happen, showing something that could happen. Though they aren't always clear, they should generally be useful. Their focus tends to be on what is important personally though, rather than what is important globally. However, they will sometimes foreshadow future events that are far in the future.

#### Educated (+1):

You begin the game having had an education, being both literate and counting as being *Educated*. In a setting where education and literacy is the norm, then this advantage does not need to be purchased and is the default for everyone.

You are automatically able to read and write any language that you can speak.

#### Eidetic memory (+3):

You are very good at remembering things. The target difficulty for trying to remember something you have seen or heard is halved. You may be able to remember an image or piece of text perfectly for a period of time, but such recall does not often exceed a few hours.

#### Experienced (+3):

You have led an eventful life up until this point, and have more experience than others your age. You may start with an extra 10 experience points which may be spent on *skills* and *techniques*. You may only take this advantage once.

#### Fit (+1):

*Cannot take: Unfit.*

You have one more fatigue level than you would normally have from your *Health*.

#### Good looking (+1):

*Cannot take: Ugly.*

You are extremely good looking, and can use it to your advantage in your dealings with anyone who finds you sexually attractive, or in a situation where being smart and presentable would be an advantage. Gain a +1 bonus to whatever attribute you are using (normally *Empathy*).

Being *good looking* has the side effect of making you easy to recognise.

#### Graceful (+1):

*Cannot take: Clumsy.*

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You are graceful in your movements. Whenever you are trying to impress people with athletic feats, then upon a success you gain an extra level of success that goes towards making you look good. This covers dancing, gymnastics or even sword play. This has no effect on the practical outcome.

## **Heavily built (+1):**

*Prerequisites: Strength 4.*

*Cannot take: Small.*

You are heavily built, being tougher and broader than normal. You get one extra level of *stun*, plus a +1 bonus to *Strength* for purposes of resisting knock-down, or being tripped.

## **Iron constitution (+1):**

You have a particularly hardy constitution, and gain +2 to your *Health* to resist all forms of poison, disease and other forms of illness.

## **Keen hearing (+1):**

*Cannot take: Poor hearing.*

You have exceptional hearing, and gain a +2 bonus to your *Perception* when making hearing checks. When fighting in total darkness in close combat, your *Perception* has a minimum of 1.

## **Keen vision (+1):**

*Cannot take: Poor vision, Missing eye.*

You have exceptional vision, and gain a +2 bonus to your *Perception* when making vision checks. It does not grant a bonus for ranged attacks.

## **Large (+3):**

*Prerequisites: Strength 4+.*

*Cannot take: Small.*

You are very large, being both tall and heavily built. You have a bonus of +1 to your *Size* (raising it to 6 for humans), which provides you with an extra level of wounds and stuns. You also have extra reach, and any reach 0 melee attacks are instead considered reach 1. You may not have a *Strength* below 4.

## **Linguist (+1):**

You have knowledge of other languages. You may start with another language at 4. You may take this advantage as many times as you want, each time with a different language.

## **Long lived (+1):**

You are more likely to live a long life compared to others, and gain a -3 to any ageing checks that you make. This will only benefit you in the long term - if you live a life full of adventure and excitement, you are unlikely to have to worry about dying of old age.

## **Luck (+1):**

You are lucky, and have one extra point of luck. You may take this as many times as you can afford.

## **Lucky (+1):**

You are lucky, and receive a +1 to luck checks. Once per session, you may re-roll a single die roll that you make, and take the best of the two rolls. You may choose to permanently spend you *luck*, in order to get out of a deadly situation, or cause an act of serendipity in your favour.

You may take luck multiple times, to get a bigger bonuses or more re-rolls each session. Only one point of luck may be spent on a single roll however.

## **Multi-cultured (+1):**

You start the game with knowledge of other languages and cultures. You may take this advantage multiple times, and each time it gives you up to three languages or area lore skills you may start with a score of 4 in.

If you are *Educated*, then you automatically also know the written forms of each language as well, otherwise you must take each alphabet as a separate language.

## **Musical talent (+1):**

*Cannot take: Can't sing.*

You have a natural talent with music, and gain a +2 bonus to *Empathy* or *Intelligence* when playing a musical instrument, or composing for one.

## **Need little sleep (+1):**

*Cannot take: Heavy sleeper.*

You don't need as much sleep as other people. You recover fatigue twice as quickly when sleeping, and only need 4 hours sleep to count as having a full night's rest.

## **Night vision (+1):**

You have particularly good night vision. Except in total darkness, any penalties to your *Perception* are halved (round down) when either making vision checks, or when your *Perception* is used to cap other attributes.

## **Owed a favour (+1):**

You are owed a favour by a powerful and influential person. They will not be willing to risk their life and reputation for you, but they will provide aid and influence - once.

## **Reflexes (+1):**

You have a +1 bonus to *Agility* for purposes of initiative. See the combat rules for a description of how initiative works.

## **Reserves of strength (+1):**

You may tap into reserves of strength at any time, allowing to perform feats not normally possible. At any time, you may have +1 or +2 to your *Strength* for a single activity or a round of actions, though you gain one point of fatigue per point of bonus for doing so.

You must have a *Strength* of at least 4 in order to take this advantage.

## **Rich (+5):**



*Cannot take: Poor, Wealthy, Very rich.*

You are rich, to the point that you could comfortably live the rest of your life without needing any income, though you'd probably have to live carefully. You have very good property, excellent clothes and equipment and plenty of savings.

In a modern setting, your total net worth is several tens of millions of pounds, and you will have a reasonable income from investments.

In a low technology setting, you will have a large estate, many servants, horses and fine and exotic equipment and furnishings. You probably support a few warriors as well.

## **Second sight (+3):**

You can see creatures and places of the *Otherworld*, which are normally hidden to sight. Spirits, hauntings and echoes of the past are readily visible to you, and can sometimes be hard to discern from 'reality'. Otherworldly things will be attracted to you, for good or ill, due to your ability to converse with them. You can also sometimes see paths that lead to these realms, and can lead others there.

Your sight will have probably marked you out as being different from an early age, and you will have a reputation of seeing and hearing things that others cannot. People who know you may distrust you, but will also recognise your ability as being potentially useful.

## **Sexy (+3):**

*Cannot take: Ugly, Good looking.*

As well as being *good looking*, the way in which you walk, talk and dress comes across as very sexy to anyone who would be sexually attracted to you. Others will tend to flirt with you given a chance, and you may gain +2 to *Empathy* in such situations.

## **Shapechanger (+3):**

You may take the form of an animal. You may only take the form of a single animal, and it must be roughly human sized - wolves are the most common form taken. When you change, none of your clothing or equipment will change with you, and the process normally takes about three rounds.

You may not take a form that can fly, though you may take that of a sea creature. Certain cults may allow you further control over this ability.

## **Strong willed (+1):**

You have a strong will, enabling you to resist temptation and weaknesses of spirit better than others can. You may raise any of your trait scores by up to a total of three points, to a maximum of eight. This three points may be placed on a single trait, or split between two or three.

You may take this advantage multiple times.

## **Tourist (+1):**

You do well when visiting foreign cultures or places, and pick up local language and information quickly. If your GM is using the *Background Experience* option for gaining XP, then you gain +10 bonus to the d20 roll to see if you pick up Language or Area lore skills.

## **Very rich (+10):**

*Cannot take: Poor, Wealthy, Rich.*

You are very rich, one of the richest people in the land. In a modern setting, you have a net worth in the low billions and probably have many complex business interests, several mansions, yachts and plenty of friends in high places.

## **Wealthy (+3):**

*Cannot take: Poor, Rich, Very rich.*

You are wealthy, and obviously so. What you own is of good quality, and you have significantly more starting money available to you (about five to ten times). You probably also own good property, and have no debts.

You cannot afford to just go out and buy anything, and you need an income to support your lifestyle. In a modern setting, you have a total worth of around a million pounds (including house, cars and savings). In a medieval setting, you will own a prosperous farm with healthy animals and a few servants and family members who help you manage the farm.

## **Wyrd (+3):**

At your birth, an omen was seen, or a prophecy made about you which will lead you into darkness, and cause pain and suffering for those around you.

The good news is that fate will try and ensure that the prophecy will come to pass. It is not guaranteed, but if something should happen to you that would otherwise prevent you from fulfilling your prophecy (such as dying), then fate will try to arrange things otherwise.

This can be similar to the effect of spending a luck point, but there will often be a darker twist to the method of your salvation.

## **Common Disadvantages**

### **Criminal (-1, -3):**

You have performed criminal acts in the past, and have been caught and punished for it. Depending on the setting, you have a reputation, criminal record or disfigurement resulting from this. People who recognise you for what you are will probably react badly to you.

The lower cost of this disadvantage is for petty crimes, such as small time theft. The higher cost disadvantage may include murder or other crimes.

### **Dark secret (-1):**

You have a secret in your past which would cause serious problems for you if it were found out. It may be a crime that

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you have committed, or a secret of your ancestry which you do not want others to know. Revealing the secret to the public would make your life very difficult. It should be something that will cause you to be rejected by your peers as well.

## **Enemy (-1):**

You have made (or inherited) enemies in the past, and they still have a grudge against you. Choose a single group or organisation as a long term enemy. The larger and more powerful the group, the less likely they are to send someone after you.

## **Favours (-1):**

You owe favours to a single person who will call them in at some point. Repaying the favours should not be a great hardship, but will create you an enemy (and maybe give you a bad reputation) if you fail to honour your debt. The favour may however cause you moral concern.

## **Major vow (-3):**

Everybody makes a vow of some sort, a few people will take a vow before the gods and dedicate their to keeping to it. You are one of these people. Choose a vow and a god, as well as a reason for having made the vow. If you ever break it, then you will suffer bad luck in your future endeavours (-5 to all luck checks) until you seek amends.

A *major vow* will either affect you much of the time, or is a great inconvenience. A vow to always offer to spare a foe (and to honour it), to never sleep under the same roof twice, to always honour an agreement.

Deliberately subverting a vow, unless it is done in a particularly clever and unique way (the gods can be easily amused it seems), is considered to be breaking it. Sparing a man's life, knowing your friend will then kill him is not clever. Completely replacing the roof of a house so you can sleep there the following night could be.

## **Minor vow (-1):**

Everybody makes a vow of some sort, a few people will take a vow before the gods and dedicate their to keeping to it. You are one of these people. Choose a vow and a god, as well as a reason for having made the vow. If you ever break it, then you will suffer bad luck in your future endeavours (-3 to all luck checks) until you seek amends.

A *minor vow* does not come up that often, or is not a great inconvenience (for the player, rather than the character). It includes such things as a vow of chastity, a vow to always share your meal, or never to wear red.

## **Poor (-3):**

*Cannot take: Wealthy, Rich, Very rich.*

You start the game poor. What you own will be of low quality, worn and probably second hand. You will have little or no spare cash initially, and in a modern setting you will probably be seriously in debt.

## **Weak willed (-1):**

You are weak willed, and are more likely to give into the temptations of flesh or spirit. You must drop your traits by three levels, to a minimum of two. This drop may be split between your traits in any way you please, as long as none are dropped below two.

You may only take this disadvantage once.

## **Weidany**

### **Cults**

If a character is a member of a cult, they may have access to some techniques. Techniques are purchased like advantages, however they are linked to a skill, and the skill must be at a given level before the technique can be learnt.

Some techniques also have prerequisites in that other techniques must be learnt first.

## Skills

### Skills by Groups

The following lists all the skills according to various groups. Skills which belong to more than one group are listed multiple times. When designing a character that you want to be good at some type of thing, these grouping can give an idea about which skills to buy.

#### Artistic

**Artist** - Painting and drawing.  
**Calligraphy** - Writing beautifully.  
**Dance** (Athletics) - Dancing with skill and grace.  
**Musician** - Playing musical instruments.  
**Perform** (Charm) - Oratory, singing and poetry.

#### Combat

**Bow** - Using all sorts of bows, including crossbows.  
**Brawl**(\*) - Punching, kicking, wrestling and dodging.  
**Melee** (Brawl) - Using a melee weapon in combat.  
**Tactics** - Knowledge of combat tactics.  
**Throw**(\*) - Using thrown weapons, and catching things.

#### Craft

**Cooking** - Preparing meals.  
**Handicraft** - Skill at various village crafts.  
**Scrounging** - Finding and fixing scrap.

#### Criminal

**Burglary** - Breaking and entering.  
**Forgery** - Forging credentials.  
**Gambling** (Guile) - Skill at playing card and dice games.  
**Sleight**(\*) - Sleight of hand.  
**Stealth**(\*) - Hiding and moving quietly.  
**Streetwise** (Guile) - Dealing with the criminal underworld.  
**Torture** - Making people talk.

#### Investigation

**Streetwise** (Guile) - Dealing with the criminal underworld.  
**Torture** - Making people talk.

#### Legal

**Law**(K) - Knowledge of the law.  
**Steward**(K) - Management of an estate.

#### Lore

**Dream lore**(K) - Interpreting dreams.  
**Faerie lore**(K) - Knowledge about the fey, spirits and elementals.  
**Rornic lore**(K) - Knowledge of the Rornic gods.  
**Rune lore**(K) - The casting of runes.

#### Outdoor

**Animal handling** - The training, handling and care of animals.  
**Farming** - Growing and harvesting of crops.  
**Mining** - Working in and locating mines.  
**Survival** - Living in the wilderness.

#### Rural

**Farming** - Growing and harvesting of crops.  
**Ride** - Riding horses.

#### Social

**Charm**(\*) - Being nice to people.  
**Gambling** (Guile) - Skill at playing card and dice games.  
**Game** - Skill at a board game.

**Guile**(\*) - Using and recognising deceit.  
**Intrigue** (Guile) - Social intrigue and politics.  
**Leadership** (Charm) - Organise people into working together.  
**Lip reading** - Understanding speech by reading lips.  
**Perform** (Charm) - Oratory, singing and poetry.  
**Teach** - The ability to teach people.  
**Trade** (Guile) - Bartering and other merchant skills.

#### Talents

**Athletics**(\*) - Jumping, climbing and running.  
**Awareness**(\*) - General ability to notice things.  
**Brawl**(\*) - Punching, kicking, wrestling and dodging.  
**Charm**(\*) - Being nice to people.  
**Guile**(\*) - Using and recognising deceit.  
**Sleight**(\*) - Sleight of hand.  
**Stealth**(\*) - Hiding and moving quietly.  
**Throw**(\*) - Using thrown weapons, and catching things.

### Skill Descriptions

#### Animal handling

Outdoor, Animal.

You have experience with dealing with animals. This is quite a broad skill, since it covers calming animals, training them and using them effectively. It does not however cover the riding of animals.

You are considered to be familiar with herbivorous mammals and domestic animals as standard. You need to buy familiarities, at 2 points each, for other animal types such as *Aquatic*, *Reptiles*, *Birds*, *Carnivora* or *Arthropods*.

#### Area knowledge (\*) (Knowledge)

Academic.

Knowledge of a given area, including geographical, social and political knowledge. The *Area knowledge* skill can be used to see if you have heard of a particular place or person, or to know common customs, such as how to use public transport or how much to tip a waiter.

There are multiple *Area knowledge* skills, each for a different area. This skill does not have specialisations, but each skill is its own specialisation in a given area.

How big an area the skill covers is up to you, and like a specialisation this affects how detailed the knowledge you get from it is. You could take *Area knowledge (London)*, *Area knowledge (UK)* or *Area knowledge (Europe)*, and this would give you varying amounts of knowledge about London for the same difficulty. For difficulty 10, you could know, in order, where a good restaurant is, what the major attractions are, and roughly where in England it is.

You will start with an *Area knowledge* skill for where you grew up. This can be as localised or as broad as you want.

#### Artist

Artistic.

The ability to draw or paint competently. Used with dexterity, or with intelligence to try and accurately draw some scene from memory.

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## Athletics (Talent)

Talents.

**Techniques:** *Lightly equipped, Running, Sprinting, Sure footed, Climbing, Acrobatic talent, Gymnast, Zero gravity, Swimming, Underwater swimming, Sport, Parachuting.*

This is a broad skill covering all forms of athletics, gymnastics and acrobatics. It is split into the following tasks.

### Running

Running represents a light jog which you can keep up for many minutes without too much difficulty. When running, you move a number of metres each round equal to your *move* score. A point of fatigue is gained every *Health x athletics* minutes you are running.

### Sprinting

Sprinting represents an all out sprint, moving as quickly as you can. You cannot do anything else whilst sprinting, and most people can only sprint for a few rounds before becoming exhausted.

When sprinting, you may move a distance in metres equal to *move x 2 + athletics* each round, and gain a point of fatigue each round.

### Jumping

Jumping represents both long jumps and high jumps.

### Climbing

Climbing things.

### Example difficulties

10 - Jumping onto a table

20 - Jumping over a table

## Awareness (Talent)

Talents.

**Techniques:** *Blind fighting, Light Sleeper.*

This skill is used by the character when there is a chance of noticing something which isn't obvious, such as someone trying to sneak around, people moving at a distance, or looking for a secret door. If the character is asleep, then any awareness rolls are quartered. If the character is only dozing (or day dreaming), then rolls are halved.

### Example difficulties

**perception x stealth** - See a hidden person

**agility x stealth** - Hear a sneaking person

10 - Hear people talking through a door

20 - Hear people talking through a wall

10 - Hear someone walking on gravel

15 - Hear someone walking on leaves

20 - Hear someone walking on grass

1/10m - See someone with casual glance

1/25m - See someone with careful look

x2 range - Vision during dusk

x4 range - Vision under moonlight

x10 range - Vision under starlight

## Bow

Combat, Missile.

You know how to use all types of bows, such as short bows, long bows and crossbows. As well as providing accuracy, you can use this skill to improve time to reload bows such as crossbows. Crossbows tend to be easy to use, but other types of bows can be difficult to master so to make most use of them requires also learning suitable techniques.

If you don't have this skill, then range penalties are doubled for standard bows, and reload times are doubled for crossbows. Also, the fumble chance is increased to 3 for standard bows.

## Brawl (Talent)

Talents, Combat, Melee.

**Techniques:** *Close combat, Unarmed combat, Out of reach, Disabling hold, Brute force, Hard to kill, Only stunned, Ignore pain, Tough, Combat reflexes, Reflex dodge, Opportunity attack, Improved damage, Multiple attacks.*

A general purpose combat skill covering dodging, punching and wrestling. This is covered in more detail in the combat section. It allows the use of small weapons such as knives and daggers, as well as improvised weapons such as stones, bottles, sticks and chairs.

A character may always use the *brawl* skill to dodge even if they are using a weapon, but they don't get any bonuses from the weapon if they do so.

## Burglary

Criminal.

You have experience in the various tasks involved in breaking into buildings. Opening basic locks, forcing doors and windows, and knowledge about how buildings are generally designed come under this skill.

### Example difficulties

10 - Very simple and basic lock.

20 - Typical key based lock.

30 - Good key based lock, typical combination safe.

40 - Excellent key based lock, good combination safe.

50 - Excellent combination safe.

10 - Most low tech unsecured doors and windows.

20 - Good quality mid-tech doors and windows.

## Calligraphy

Artistic.

**Tech levels:** 2+

The skill of writing in a way that produces a work of art, as well as a record of knowledge.

## Charm (Talent)

Talents, Social.

**Techniques:** *Seduction, Carousing, Etiquette, Intimidation, Fashion, High fashion, Scandalous fashion, Flirt, Hidden insult.*

*Charm* is all about appearing friendly and sociable, and can be used to make people like you and act favourably towards



you. It is nearly always based on *Empathy*, since you need to be able to react to how the other person is perceiving you.

At its simplest, a simple *Empathy x Charm* check determines what another thinks of you. As long as you get a *Very easy* success, then you'll get a *Neutral* reaction, assuming they have no other reason to dislike you. A *Moderate* success will give a *Good* reaction, and a *Difficult* success will give an *Excellent* reaction.

*Charm* can also be used to improve a second social skill test (such as *Guile*, *Trade* or *Perform*). Make a *Empathy x Charm* check against the *Will x 4* of the target to gain a +3 bonus for each level of success.

### Carousing

Used at parties and similar social gatherings. Can be used to find out information, flirt or try and talk to someone who might be otherwise difficult to talk to (such as a duke surrounded by hangers-on and aids who won't let anyone else near him, or just an attractive and popular girl similarly protected). Generally not resisted.

### Chatter

Mindless chatter to try and draw information out of someone, or to simply distract them. Generally not resisted, unless the target is being deliberately close mouthed about a subject.

### Seduction

Can try to seduce a person. Add appearance to *empathy* for purposes of seduction attempts, and resisted with the target's will.

### Persuade

If trying to change someone's mind by emotional arguments, resisted with the target's will.

### Example difficulties

- 10 - Not make a fool of yourself.
- 20 - Give a good impression.
- 30 - Be very likeable and understanding.
- 40 - Win friends and influence people easily.

### Example difficulties (Carousing)

- 10 - Survive a party without acting like an idiot or a boor..
- 20 - Make a good impression. Get to talk to someone important.
- 30 - Make a very good impression. People will remember you favourably. Get to talk to someone really important, or someone important who is avoiding you.
- 40 - Most popular person at the party. Get to talk to someone really important who is actively avoiding you.

### Example difficulties (Seduction)

- 10 - Bad circumstances. Target of attempt is busy doing other things, such as working or is tired.
- 20 - Inappropriate circumstances. Target is on guard, or doing something else important.
- 30 - Highly inappropriate circumstances.

### Cooking

Craft.

The preparing, preserving and cooking of food. Includes some knowledge of herbs.

### Dance

Artistic.

**Defaults to:** Athletics

**Techniques:** *Dancing* (\*).

**Familiarities (Dancing):** *Ballroom, Folk, Erotic, Disco, Ballet.*

With *Dance* you are able to impress people with your graceful dances. It allows you to know the common types of dances, as well as the ability to actually dance. With sufficient skill, you will be able to improvise new dances, and work with a partner to complement their improvisations.

The skill covers all forms of dancing, though you need to purchase a *familiarity* in order to know how to properly perform a particular style of dance.

When attempting to dance, choose how much you are trying to impress people (target difficulty). If you fail, then you've overstretched yourself, and you make mistakes.

### Example difficulties

- 0 - You are clumsy and obviously unskilled. You will give a poor impression to anyone who is watching.
- 10 - Nothing special, just a few simple repetitive moves. Nobody will pay to watch you dance.
- 20 - You dance with competence and some degree of grace. Your dancing will please most people.
- 30 - Very good dancing, which will impress most people. You get a +1 bonus to the reaction level of people who saw you dance.
- 40 - An excellent performance which will impress pretty much everyone. You can a +2 bonus to the reaction level of those around you. Probably a level of skill better than most people have seen.
- 50 - An outstanding performance of skill and grace. You gain a +2 reaction bonus, or +3 if asking someone to share a dance with you.

### Dream lore (Knowledge)

Lore.

The ability to interpret someone's dreams in order to foretell the future, or determine a haunting. Dreams are a reflection of a person's mind onto the fey realms, and so can tell you a little about the person and the realms they reflect onto.

If a person is willing to tell you their dreams, you can try to determine what they represent. Interpreting a dream is based on *Intelligence*.

### Example difficulties

- 10 - Determine if a person's dreams are because of interference from an outside agency, such as a spirit or spell.
- 20 - Determine a little knowledge about the state of mind of the person who's dreams you are interpreting. Their dreams may reflect their loves, worries and state of health.
- 30 - If a dream foretells the future, and you have the Divination advantage, you can try to divine the future that the dream represents.

# 18 Habisfern Characters



## Faerie lore (Knowledge)

Lore.

Knowledge of the Other World, of faeries, spirits and beasts of supernatural nature. Based on intelligence. Finding a Faerie road is based on Perception, and the difficulty is halved if you have *Second sight*.

### Example difficulties

20 - Find a major faerie road.

40 - Find a normal faerie road.

60 - Find a minor faerie road.

## Farming

Outdoor, Rural.

The planting, caring for and harvesting of crops, the care and feeding of animals such as cows, sheep and chickens. The majority of people in rural areas will of course be farmers and will have this skill to some level.

## First aid

Academic.

Provides care and treatment of wounds to stop bleeding and prevent infection. Once a wound has been successfully first aided, it may begin healing naturally. First aid checks are generally made with intelligence. First aid can also be used to treat stuns.

To treat a character's wounds, the base difficulty is 10. This is modified upwards by the total of the character's stun and wound penalties (a fatally wounded character (-15) would be difficulty 25 to treat). Success means that the wounds will begin healing naturally. If the roll was made by 10 or more, then one level of wound is also healed.

Stuns are a base difficulty of zero to first aid, again modified by total stun and wound penalties. Success heals one stun, and each 10 over that heals another level of stuns. Stuns do not need to be treated before they begin healing.

## Forgery

Criminal.

The skill of forging identity cards and the like. You know how to obtain the materials necessary for creating forgeries, can detect a forged document or card, and can create them yourself as long as you have the necessary information. Some forms of forgery will require modifying database records, which will require *Computer operation* and similar skills which *Forgery* does not provide, however it will let you know what databases need to be changed.

## Gambling

Social, Criminal.

**Defaults to:** Guile

**Techniques:** *Carousing, Etiquette, Intimidation, Fashion, High fashion, Scandalous fashion, Hidden insult.*

This is the skill of playing games of chance, such as card games or dice games. This is a generic skill, based around being able

to spot patterns, work out probabilities, bluff, cheat and basic gaming tactics.

A high skill represents a good, broad, knowledge of all such games, and so a greater chance of knowing how to play any given game, or at least knowing enough about a similar game in order to be able to play well.

## Game

Social.

**Techniques:** *Carousing, Etiquette, Intimidation, Fashion, High fashion, Scandalous fashion, Hidden insult.*

Knowledge of, and skill at playing a game such as Chess or Hnefatafl. As a start, this gives a broad knowledge of tactics and strategy which can be applied to any board game. Actual knowledge of a specific board game is covered with a technique specialisation, at a cost of 2.

The simplest way to find the winner for a game, is for both opponents to roll their skill, and the highest roll wins. If it is desired to play out the game in more detail, then proceed as follows.

Each opponent makes a skill check each turn of the game. If one exceeds the other by five or more, then they gain an advantage. Each advantage gained gives +3 to the skill check next turn. On gaining the fourth advantage, the player is considered the winner. If the player with the advantage loses a turn, then they lose a level of advantage.

## Guile (Talent)

Talents, Social.

**Techniques:** *Carousing, Etiquette, Intimidation, Fashion, High fashion, Scandalous fashion, Disguise, Misdirection, Cold reading, Hidden insult.*

*Guile* allows a character to use and understand social methods of deception, through lying, body language and actions. A character can lie by making an opposed *Will x guile* against the target's *Empathy x guile*. Success means that the target is fooled, though the attempt may be modified by circumstances based on how probably the lie is.

*Will* is generally used when trying to hide a character's own emotions, *empathy* to understand another's and *intelligence* to think quickly when inventing a believable story.

### Disguise

The character can disguise either themselves or another person by using *guile*. Make an intelligenceguile check.

### Fast talk

When trying to invent a plausible story quickly, then an *Intelligence x guile* check can often be called for, against the same for the target. If the target finds the story plausible, then opposed *empathy* and *will* checks may still be necessary in order to hide the lie.

### Taunt

Make someone mad. Opposed with *will*.

## Handicraft

Craft.

The making of baskets, embroidery and other similar village hand crafts not covered by other professional skills. It is generally seen as the province of women.

## Intrigue

Social.

**Defaults to:** Guile

**Techniques:** *Carousing, Etiquette, Intimidation, Fashion, High fashion, Scandalous fashion, Hidden insult.*

The skill of dealing with the intrigues of a political arena. With it, it is possible to find out relationships within the arena, and to obtain information from people, or even to spread information without it being obvious that the plotter is trying to spread information.

## Law (Knowledge)

Legal.

Knowledge of the legal system, including how it works, what the laws are and who is responsible for doing what. The Law can be a complicated subject, but most of the complexity doesn't come up in day to day affairs.

## Leadership

Social, Military.

**Defaults to:** Charm

**Techniques:** *Carousing, Etiquette, Intimidation, Fashion, High fashion, Scandalous fashion, Hidden insult.*

With this skill the character can organise people into working together effectively as a team. If two or more people are working on the same task, then as long as it's sensible for them to be able to work together, a *leader* can give them a bonus.

On a success, everyone gets a bonus equal to the most skilled person's skill score.

*Leadership* can also be used to take command in a situation, either to bluff or to raise morale.

### Example difficulties

**10** - Base difficulty for a leader and team who are used to working with each other.

**+10** - The team don't know each other.

**+10** - The leader doesn't know the team.

## Lip reading

Social.

**Techniques:** *Carousing, Etiquette, Intimidation, Fashion, High fashion, Scandalous fashion, Hidden insult.*

The skill of reading lips. Each 10 rolled gives an equivalent point of language skill. There may be penalties for distance, or partial visibility.

## Meditation

Occult.

*Meditation* is the ability to put your mind at rest, being able to relax and clear your mind of random thoughts. It normally doesn't serve much purpose, though may be useful to deal with fear or pain. You can spend a minute to try and overcome some fear. Every 5 points rolled on *Will* x *Meditation* gives you a +1 bonus to your next fear check.

*Meditation* may also help resist mental attacks in a fantasy/horror setting.

## Melee

Combat, Melee, Armed melee.

**Defaults to:** Brawl

**Techniques:** *Combat reflexes, Reflex dodge, Opportunity attack, Improved damage, Multiple attacks.*

This is the skill of fighting with melee a weapon. It can be used with pretty much any standard weapon type, including blades, spears, shields and clubs. Particularly exotic weapons may require *Techniques* to be able to use them effectively. *Melee* is normally used with *Dexterity*. Small or improvised weapons such as knives and daggers use the *Brawl* skill.

## Military affairs (Knowledge)

Military.

**Defaults to:** Administration

With this skill you have knowledge of how a military operates, how to recognise the various ranks, and the correct etiquette to use when dealing with those ranks. When dealing with military bureaucracy, it may be used instead of *Administration*.

Generally, most enlisted personnel will have 1 or 2 levels in this, any more is unnecessary unless you are wanting to game the system, or try and second guess how military operations are planned.

## Mining

Outdoor.

Covers being able to locate new mines, and to construct and work them safely. There will be familiarities for different types of mines, but these aren't covered here.

## Musician

Artistic.

**Tech levels:** 1+

The skill of playing musical instruments, whether they are a drum, a flute or a harp.

### Example difficulties

**15** - Play without sending people running for cover

**20** - Play in tune with others

**30** - Play very well

# 20 Habisfern Characters



## Perform

Social, Artistic.

**Defaults to:** Charm

**Techniques:** *Carousing, Etiquette, Intimidation, Fashion, High fashion, Scandalous fashion, Hidden insult, Passionate speaker, Poet.*

A skill which covers many forms of social skills, including oratory, poetry and singing. It may be used to rouse a crowd, invent some poetry on the spot, or remember a poem or song well enough to recite or sing it.

The mood of the audience can be affected with either song, poetry or oratory. The performer matches their skill roll against the will of the audience. If the audience can be treated as a *crowd*, take the average will and roll once for the whole audience (a vocal few will tend to lead the silent majority). Success by the performer will mean the crowd listens to what the performer says, and will think about it, though their opinion isn't shifted greatly. For each full 10 the performer beats the will of the crowd, the crowd's mood is shifted one category.

When singing or reciting poetry, the mood of the audience can be shifted, sometimes considerably. This can be done subtly, though it takes an evening of performance to carry it out.

A more direct way to sway an audience is through oratory. This is quicker and more direct than by choice of song, but is also pretty blatant.

### Example difficulties

- 10 - Sing without inflicting pain on listeners. Less than this may get the character forcibly removed from the stage.
- 20 - Sing well enough to impress the audience, though not in a way that will be particularly remembered.
- 30 - Sing very well. The singer will be well received, and probably kept around for more of the same. The mood of the audience can be shifted subtly.
- 40 - The singer will be spoken of for months to come, and people will be most eager to please. The mood of the audience can be shifted noticeably.
- 50 - All others will be compared (probably unfavourably) to the singer, who will be heralded as a master of their art. The singer pretty much has control over the mood of the audience.

## Ride

Rural.

The ability to ride, normally a horse. A different skill is needed for different types of animals (horses and ponies would be the same skill, a Griffin another skill). As well as enabling you to remain mounted, it grants a bonus to combat skills when mounted if the relevant techniques are known.

## Rornic lore (Knowledge)

Lore.

You have studied the lore and legends of the gods of the Rornic people, and know their names, stories and details about the cults which follow them. If you are a member of a cult, then you will also have at least one technique that specialises you in that cult.

## Rune lore (Knowledge)

Lore.

This skill grants the knowledge of runes, and how to use them in magic and the telling of fortunes. With this skill you can craft and read runes and determine their meaning. You are also able to use them in the telling of a person's fortune. You can only actually foretell the future if you have the *Divination* advantage.

Casting runes for a person, in order to determine their future, can be performed with *Empathy* and requires no special magical talent. It is effectively a cold reading, based on what is likely to be believed.

Generally, when performing divination attempts, the example difficulty will provide minimal information. A good success will provide more information, and an excellent success will provide quite detailed information.

### Example difficulties (Faking it)

- 10 - Fake a mediocre horoscope about a person's future.
- 20 - Fake a decent horoscope about a person's future.
- 30 - Fake a highly believable horoscope about a person's future.

### Example difficulties (If you have Divination)

- 10 - Determine if a person has a great event in their past or future. The nature of the event, whether good or bad, can be known.

## Scrounging

Craft.

Being able to turn useless scrap into something useful. Used with intelligence. Covers finding, planning and building, though skills such as *carpentry* or *blacksmith* may be needed as well.

## Sleight (Talent)

Talents, Criminal.

**Techniques:** *Juggling, Legerdemain, Pick pocket.*

Sleight of hand, from filching items on a market stall, to picking someone's pockets. Can also be used for anything which requires a great deal of fine dexterity.

## Speak language (Language)

Language.

The ability to speak a language. Every character starts with a score of 4 in speaking their own language. This skill is rarely rolled, but instead gives an indication of the character's grasp of a language.

## Stealth (Talent)

Talents, Criminal.

**Techniques:** *Ambush, Combat ambush, Sudden death, Silent running.*

Moving quietly, hiding, and generally not being seen or heard. Based on agility for moving quietly, or perception for finding somewhere to hide.



## Steward (Knowledge)

Legal.

You have the knowledge and experience necessary to manage an estate. You have basic knowledge of the legal requirements of an estate, knowledge of managing finances and also know how to plan for the future - how much food needs to be put aside for the winter, and how it must be stored.

A steward is needed by every estate, and they generally answer only to their thegn - when the thegn is away, it is they who are principally in charge. The steward is often a trusted retainer of the thegn, but they can also be their wife or eldest daughter.

## Strategy

Military.

Unlike *Tactics*, which is concerned with small scale skirmishes, military strategy provides knowledge and experience of running a war, including making most effective use of troops, logistics and knowledge of large scale tactics.

## Streetwise

Criminal, Investigation.

**Defaults to:** Guile

**Techniques:** *Shadowing*.

*Streetwise* is similar to *Politics*, though is more suited to life amongst the criminal classes. With it, comes knowledge of how to survive on the street, how to gain the trust of those who live on the wrong side of the law, as well as how to find them in the first place.

## Survival

Outdoor, Military.

With this skill, you are capable of surviving on many different types of terrain by foraging and hunting. There is a single skill, which covers all terrain types, though a number of techniques are needed to survive in harsh environments without penalty. *Survival* also covers tracking, finding shelter and travelling safely and quickly.

On coastal lands (where it is possible to fish), plains, woodlands and low mountain regions, the basic skill will suffice. In desert, Arctic or jungle environments, then a technique is required. High mountains may count as Arctic, swamps may count as coastal or jungle, depending on the exact environment.

### Foraging

When foraging for food, it takes four hours for each roll. Each five over the difficulty allows enough food to be found for another two people. If more food is found than is needed, then the forager has the option of stopping early as soon as enough food has been found. Assume that food is found at a consistent rate through the time period.

### Hunting

Similar to foraging, it takes four hours for each attempt to hunt game. Success indicates that suitable game has been found, and relevant combat skills are required to actually

kill the animal. In this case, game is large game animals, such as deer.

### Navigation

Anyone with any survival skill can navigate by use of the sun and stars. This is unaffected by the terrain type and difficulty of surviving in that terrain. When attempting to navigate, use the character's highest survival skill.

### Tracking

Survival can be used to track others by their footprints and other signs. It is possible to estimate the type of animal, their number and how long it has been since the tracks were made. Of course, it can be used to track people as well.

## Example difficulties

**10** - Base difficulty for woodland, plains or coastal regions.

**20** - Base difficulty for mountain, swamp or jungle.

**30** - Base difficulty for desert or Arctic regions.

**+0** - Find a suitable shelter

**+0** - Forage for food for one person

**-10** - Good conditions

**+10** - Poor conditions

**+20** - Very poor conditions (e.g. winter)

**15** - Accurately determine direction, time of day or night according to the position of sun, moon or stars.

## Tactics

Combat, Military.

**Techniques:** *Surprise attack, Tactical move.*

Tactics, strategy and leadership when planning and fighting a battle involving small groups. It can be used to choose a suitable site for battle, to determine weaknesses in the enemy's strategy and defences, and to plan the logistics of travel and supply.

## Teach

Social, Academic.

**Techniques:** *Carousing, Etiquette, Intimidation, Fashion, High fashion, Scandalous fashion, Hidden insult.*

The ability to teach another person, and train them in the use of a skill. See the Campaign section for details on training.

## Throw (Talent)

Talents, Combat, Missile.

This is the ranged attack equivalent of the brawl skill, and is used for throwing rocks, spears, knives, axes etc at distance targets. The talent is perception based. For hurled improvised weapons, short range is considered to be four times strength, medium twice this, and long range twice medium.

This skill can also be used to catch items. When trying to catch an item, throw is dexterity based.

## Torture

Criminal, Investigation, Military.

This is the art of applying pain to someone in order to get them to cooperate.

# 22 Habisfern Characters



## Trade

Social, Business.

**Defaults to:** Guile

**Techniques:** *Carousing, Etiquette, Intimidation, Fashion, High fashion, Scandalous fashion, Hidden insult.*

Covers a multitude of skills involved with trading, including bartering, and having some clue as to the value of goods.

## Luck

*Habisfern* is a world where fate and destiny are seen to be a very real part of everyday life. For some people, Fate will guide them towards their goal, for others, Fate may try to drag them down to their doom. In *Habisfern*, whether Fate has an interest in a character is represented by the *Luck* and *Cursed* traits.

The GM may at certain points in an adventure call for a Luck check. Some checks can be determined to see how many guards are on duty, if a window has been left open etc. If the character succeeds, then things work out in the character's favour.

Chance	Circumstance
5	Likely. Event is very likely to happen unless the character is particularly unlucky.
10	Evens.
15	Unlikely.
20	Improbable.

## Using Luck

Luck may also be used to cheat death. At any point, a character with at least one point of *Luck* may spend it, losing it permanently, in order to remain alive after a death result.

Instead of being dead, the character is left in a state of being stable but fatally wounded. It cannot be relied upon entirely - being only wounded after falling into a pit of lava still leaves you in a pit of lava.

## Experience Progression

The principle way for a character to improve their skills and attributes in Yags is through training and study. Since how this is done is described in the *Campaign* article, it is not discussed here. However, *Habisfern* also allows characters to gain experience from performing heroic deeds. Depending on how often a character has an *adventure*, such experience may be quicker or slower than training.

Normally, a character is assumed to gain about 2 points of experience per average game session. This normally assumes an evening of play. A particularly intensive session would warrant 3 points, a light session only 1.

If individual characters or players stood out during the session, then a bonus point may also be gained.

Experience may be spent in the following ways.

1. Any skill which currently has a score of 3 or less may have one experience point placed on it.
2. One skill of four or higher, or a single attribute, or a single trait may have one experience point placed on it. Only one of these options may be chosen for a single session.
3. Any number of points may be placed into any number of techniques, as long as the prerequisites for the technique have been met.

The GM may wish to enforce players only spending experience on skills that have actually been used during the session.

## Improving Skills

Skills can be raised with experience, at a cost equal to the level the skill is being raised to. Knowledge skills always require some source of knowledge available if it is to be raised.

A technique cannot be used until the full cost of the technique has been paid for.

## Improving Attributes

Attributes can be raised with experience, at a cost equal to three times the level the character is raising the attribute to. So an attribute of three will cost 12 points to raise it to 4.

## Advantages

It is not possible to buy new advantages after character generation. It may be possible to gain an advantage (or something similar to it) in play, but it does not need to be paid for.

Similarly, disadvantages cannot, or do not need to be, paid off. If the character starts with an Enemy, and manages to remove the Enemy in game, then they are no longer have an enemy. There is no requirement that they pick up a new enemy (though they may if there is an in-game reason to do so), or have to take a new disadvantage to replace the old one.

## Traits

Traits may be raised (or reduced) during the game, as long as the GM is happy that the character is being played in a way that corresponds to the direction the trait is going. A character with a trait of Valorous, who is being played as a coward, cannot have their Valorous trait increased. A character with Cowardice who was being played as a coward, but who showed signs that they were trying not to be a coward, could buy off their Cowardice trait however.

It costs 10 experience points to change a Trait by one level.