



Knights of the Hidden Sun

Chapter 5, Pre-Edit

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What you should know about this: This chapter is in a *developed but unedited state*. That means that its game systems and structure have been largely finalized, but it hasn't undergone a final proofreading pass for typos and fine-tuning of the language.

Find Out More about Knights of the Hidden Sun!

Check out the following links:

- <http://www.mobunited.com> – Game design studio link.
- <http://www.mobunited.com/mobunitedmedia/mobworx-creator-owned-rpgs/knights-of-the-hidden-sun-interstellar-fantasy/> – official game page. Update links at bottom.
- <http://taoofchall.wordpress.com/> – creator blog and links to storytelling radio show.
- **Knights of the Hidden Sun** uses the **Ready 2 Run** system. Check out Stew Wilson's **Æternal Legends** to get a taste of the core rules – it uses the same basic system. Publisher game page at <http://www.mobunited.com/mobunitedmedia/mobworx-creator-owned-rpgs/aeternal-legends-modern-fantasy-roleplaying/>

Chapter Five: Character Creation

Let's step out of in-character mode and talk about game systems, starting with the rules for making a character. This chapter focuses on making a Knight of the Hidden Sun, freshly trained to join the Seventh Watch. Knights are warriors, mystics and problem solvers who pledge their souls to the Rhea, the Original Darkness. They have free will and the power of mystic *Devotions* inscribed on their spirits. Rhea (and the Hidden Sun as a whole) hopes they'll use their power to protect the vulnerable, resist tyranny and counter the influence of Arcath, God of War.

Terminology

Knights of the Hidden Sun uses many common tabletop RPG terms, but it also uses some new and modified definitions.

Aptitude: A game statistic that represents a set of related abilities. They are Charmer, Crafter, Pilot, Rogue, Scholar, and Warrior

Attribute: A game statistic that represents a character's basic capabilities. They are Body, Mind and Presence.

Edge: A minor advantage that isn't an Attribute, Skill or Trait.

Expertise: A narrow field where talent and/or training gives the character a special advantage.

Flaw: Think disadvantage, drawback or limitation. The opposite of an Edge a Flaw limits a character in some way.

Guide: The person who plays Minor Characters and Named Characters, describes the universe around the Main Characters, develops the seeds of storylines, and helps decide what happens in play by adjudicating rules decisions and negotiating what could happen. Other games call this position the Game Master.

Main Character: The most important characters in the Tale, portrayed by Main Characters. Also **Player Character** or **PC**.

Minor Character: An NPC with a minor background role in the story – generic guards, shopkeepers and so on. Minor characters might “graduate” into other types of characters depending on the story.

Named Character: An NPC with an important, recurring role as an ally or foil.

Non-Player Character (NPC): A character portrayed by the Guide to help inspire story events.

Player: Someone who portrays a Main Character, decides what he or she does, and manages most of records and game systems associated with that character.

Saga: A collection of Tales that involve the same Main Characters.

Skill: A game statistic that represents specific task the character is especially good at.

Tale: A single adventure that takes place over one or more game sessions. The Tale generally ends once there's a significant break in the story's continuity that represents a “rest period” or denouement.

Trait: A game statistic figured from other game statistics. Many of these are spent in order to

perform or enhance a character action. They are Conviction, Initiative, Health, Revenue, Wits and Will.

Character Types

Knights of the Hidden Sun classifies characters into three categories: Main Characters, Named Characters and Minor Characters.

Main Characters

Created and portrayed by the players, Main Characters are the heroes of the Saga, at the heart of its ongoing story. This book assumes that the Main Characters will be a band of Hidden Sun Knights, but it is possible to play characters who aren't Knights – they just won't be as powerful.

Example: *If Knights of the Hidden Sun was “Legends of the Sherwood Forest,” Robin Hood and Little John would be Main Characters, portrayed by players.*

Named Characters

Named Characters are important to the Saga as allies, mentors and major antagonists. They're the “frenemies,” and “Big Bads,” who help or hinder the players' Knights throughout the game. They're portrayed by the Guide.

Example: *King John, King Richard and the Sheriff of Nottingham are all important to the “Legends of the Sherwood Forest,” because they're foils for Robin Hood and his Merry Men. That makes them Named Characters.*

Minor Characters

Minor Characters are “set dressing,” lesser obstacles, or members of the general population that Main Characters encounter. Minor Characters are usually less powerful than Main or Named Characters.

Example: *The Sheriff's men, the average Merry Man, the nameless poor, and castle guards are all Minor Characters in “Legends of the Sherwood Forest.”*

Main Character Creation

This game is designed with the following assumptions:

- You're playing a Knight of the Hidden Sun.
- Each Main Character is part of the same band of Knights.
- Each Knight in a band has a different background, skills and powers, but is uniquely suited to be part of that band – the members form a natural team.

Being a Knight is not what defines a Main Character; it's what unites him with the others. Even when these assumptions hold true, they don't force your characters to share a worldview or even be friends. Rhea brings bands together to demonstrate strength through flexibility. Forcing a disparate group to act in lockstep is Arcath's way.

See Appendix A for sample Main Characters. Players can use them to step right into the game, or the Guide can use them as Named or Minor Characters.

Step One: Concept

Before character creation the Guide and players should have chat about the kind of Saga they'd like to play through. Think about the following questions:

- If you don't know the other players that well, ask if there are any themes, character types or story events that might make or break the game for them. Be careful with this, however – dwelling too hard on possible problems and “triggers,” is a great way to doom the game by giving it a negative vibe.
- What kind of tone do you want? Will it be gritty, a pulpy space opera, or a theatre of sarcasm?
- How much combat and action do you want to experience. How much problem solving? How much interpersonal drama do you want? The exact proportion will affect the characters you want to play.

Don't think of the answers as ironclad restrictions that you have to build into characters or the game ahead. They're just waypoints to help bring the Saga and Main Characters together.

This initial chat will probably end in one of the following ways:

- The players and Guide develop a strong position about the type of Saga they want to play. In some groups, the Guide is completely responsible for outlining the Saga, but in others, the whole group builds the basic idea.
- The group decides it wants the characters to determine the shape of the Saga. Players make their characters, and the Guide uses that as the basis for story hooks and events in play.

Each approach has strengths and weaknesses. Don't approach your chosen structure with strong biases, or assume that you belong to an unchangeable “gamer type” that you should always argue for. Above all, develop your ideas with an eye toward entertaining the rest of the group.

Once you know what kind of characters would suit the Saga and the general vibe of the group, think about the following questions. You don't need to know the answers to all of them right away, but you should figure them out eventually.

Where did you grow up?

A Knight can come from anywhere in Roaa – and even unexplored, primitive worlds. Chapter Two outlines a number of possible locales. Feel free to make up your own if none of them fit – just check with the Guide before you invent a world to come from.

How old are you?

This is one question you *should* know the answer to up front. Most characters start the game between the ages of 18 to 35, just after completing five years of training. The Lords won't train anyone younger than 13, and if they find one of Rhea's chosen who's over 30 they'll usually invite him to become a Journeyman instead of a Knight because they don't want sage slowing him down midway through the Watch.

There are exceptions. A small number of humans reach physical, mental and emotional maturity very quickly, and a few age slowly, or are extraordinary athletes who can overcome their biological age. Naturally, Golems *never* get too old, though a few are too young. In any event,

Main Characters never suffer any penalties for being a particular age. Even if they're especially old or young, they're considered exceptional enough to avoid the problems inherent to youth or age.

A character's age affects how he sees the Galaxy. Here are typical outlooks by age group.

- **Teens to Twenties:** Path and League are music and fashion styles, unless you belong to one of those activist groups – the ones the Bureau calls “gangs.” Sometimes the fight on the street, and they're always recruiting. It's not hard for them to find new members, since almost everybody's a payday from living in Edge mud – if they're not there already.
- **Thirties to Forties:** The differences between the Path and League mean almost nothing. They're quaint holdovers from a forgotten time, unless you're a bigot or a rebellious kid. The real problem is piracy. Your taxes float up to the Archonate, so you hope they're using them to deal with it. What else could be responsible for the decline in your standard of living?
- **Fifties to Seventies:** It was hard to grow up between the forcibly united the Path and League. You enjoyed some good years without rationing and street violence, but the Black Fleet's ruined that. It's time to mind your savings and stay close to your family.
- **Eighties to the Very Aged:** The differences between the Path and League are stark and irredeemable. Current galactic problems seem bad, but they're nothing compared to what the Second War wrought. Even an uneasy peace is peace enough, but you know that the Archonate can't truly unite its two cultures. The best you can do is hope for tolerance.

We recommend that no Main Character be over 100 years old at the start of the game, to preserve some of the distortion and secrecy that the passage of time brings to the setting's history.

What do you look like?

This is another question you need to answer at immediately. “Humans,” in Roaa can look like *homo sapiens* could have scales, wings, pointed ears . . . virtually anything. Peruse character Edges (p. XX) for some sample physical features that deviate from baseline assumptions. Most humans have two arms with fingers and opposable thumbs, two legs for bipedal motion and binocular vision. One quick way to think of a suitable look is to select a science fiction or fantasy species you like and add a few changes to make it your own.

Golems can be sculpted to look like almost anything. Note that Rhea only enters into the Pact with fleshly humans; Golems must have entered into the Pact before shedding their old bodies.

What is your relationship with Rhea like?

The Goddess is more than a story excuse for your Knight's powers. Rhea's a force of nature, the wisdom of the Galaxy manifest. Some Knights put the experience firmly in the past, as a critical memory, but others constantly feel Her presence, or continue to dwell on the meeting that led to their Pacts.

How did your Knight meet Rhea? Why did he accept the Pact? How does he deal with Rhea now? Is he devotional? Ambivalent? Irreverent? Terrified? Curious? Remember that your Knight has free will – he can hate Rhea and even plan to betray the Hidden Sun. (Just remember that

some of these options won't endear you to your band-mates, and might disrupt the game!)

How did the Hidden Sun find you?

Who approached the character and how did she test him for knighthood? This question might be best answered with the Guide's help, as she might have specific Named Characters in mind to provide interesting plot hooks for the Saga to come.

What was your training like?

Get help from the rest of your group to answer this. During training, your Knight learns about each member of his band. The Guide might introduce specific events that occurred during their training, or even run a prequel Tale that takes place during training.

What's your Expertise?

This is the last question you need to answer immediately, and that's because it concerns a specific game system. Think about your Knight's niche. While the band shares many skills in common, there should be one task your character is particularly good at. Each member of the band needs to have a different focus.

In **Knights of the Hidden Sun**, we call this focus an *Expertise*. Despite the name, it can come from natural talent as much as training. The Expertise is a game statistic, and as mentioned, *no two Main characters may possess the same Expertise*. This is a hard and fast rule. An Expertise also requires a somewhat narrow focus – not “Fighting,” but “Swordsmanship,” for example.

Detailed rules for Expertise can be found later in this chapter. Get a rough idea of what each character's Expertise is now, but don't be afraid to tweak them before you start playing.

Step Two: Attributes

Attributes determine how strong, fast, healthy, smart, cunning, wilful and charismatic your character is. They're very broad, generalized characteristics, based on a mixture of natural talent and upbringing. Attributes are the fundamental statistics that determine your ability to perform various tasks, so they're the first game statistics you assign.

The three core Attributes are Body, Mind and Presence. Golems also possess Golem Attributes: Manoeuvrability, Structure and Speed.

Assigning Attributes

Assign Attributes based on whether you're creating a human or Golem character.

- **Human:** Start with a base score of 1 in Mind, Body and Presence. Split an additional 7 points between them, but do not increase any Attribute higher than 5. (Higher scores can be acquired by experienced characters.)
- **Golem:** Start with a base score of 1 in Mind and Presence, and 0 in Body. Split an additional 5 points between these three Attributes, but do not increase any Attribute higher than 5. (Higher scores can be acquired by experienced characters.) A Golem Knight has a base Manoeuvrability, Speed and Structure of 1 – and these *can't be increased* with the initial allotment of Attribute points, but can be increased with Golem Enhancement (see p. **XX**).

Attribute Descriptions

Body

A character's Body measures how strong, fast and healthy he is. Individuals who excel at physical activity have a high score. This Attribute is essential for athletes and warriors.

Mind

Mind represents a character's raw intelligence, instinctual cunning and perceptual sharpness. People who think on their feet or engage in constant study will tend to have a higher score. This Attribute is a prerequisite for talent in runecraft, marksmanship, academia and tactics.

Presence

Presence is the character's charisma, self-confidence and personal drive. People who deal with broad social networks or succeed in leadership positions tend to have high scores. Commanders, con artists and performers rely on Presence to succeed.

Golem Attribute: Manoeuvrability

A Golem's Manoeuvrability measures its body's agility and reaction time. A Golem "pilots" her body; her Body statistic represents a projection of her soul that animates her artificial form.

Golem Attribute: Speed

All Golems are capable of flying (including "skimming" the ground for rapid ground level movement) faster than an unassisted human can run. Speed determines the extent of ability. Note that Speed doesn't measure reaction time – that's a function of Body and Manoeuvrability. Furthermore, the speed generated by runecraft doesn't reliably convert into force upon contact with objects.

Golem Attribute: Structure

A Golem's toughness depends on how it's manufactured. Golems with a high Structure are made of especially durable, rune-reinforced materials. At lower Structure ranks, they're given the minimum stability necessary to support a soul and basic animation.

Attribute Scale

Body, Mind and Presence function according to the following scale:

Rank Description

- 1 Weak: immature or debilitated.
- 2 Typical: untrained or untalented.
- 3 Talented: professional or gifted, but unpractised.
- 4 Elite: Highly trained, or gifted and trained.
- 5 Planetary Champion: the best in a world.
- 6 Galactic Champion: one of the best of many worlds.
- 7 Best in the Galaxy: ability that inspires legends, seen once a generation

Golem Attributes

Golem Attributes scale a bit differently as they represent the ability to simulate or exceed human abilities via an empowering soul, or determine characteristics that depend on the Golem's artificial nature.

Attribute	Manoeuvrability	Speed*	Structure
1	Slow Motion	Flight 100 kph	Clay
2	Standard Ghost Reflexes	Flight 200 kph	Rune-Fired Ceramic
3	High Ghost Reflexes	Flight 300 kph	Soft Stone
4	Ghost Athlete Reflexes	Flight 400 kph	Hard Stone
5	Maximum Ghost Reflexes	Flight 500 kph	Rune-Reinforced Granite
6	Commando Class Posthuman Reflexes	Flight 600 kph	Advanced Rune-Reinforced Granite
7	Experimental Null Friction Runecraft	Flight 700 kph	Experimental Rune-Etched Diamond

* It takes one round to accelerate or decelerate one Speed rank.

Step 3: Edges, Flaws, Golem Capabilities and Golem Enhancements

Now, pick your character's Edges and Flaws, and if he's a Golem, note his Capabilities are.

An *Edge* is a special benefit, that's more limited in scope than the capabilities provided by a raw Attribute. Your character might be more agile than his Body suggests, or he might have characteristics that most humans don't possess, such as wings or natural armour.

A *Flaw* is a characteristic that would be a disadvantage for a Knight to possess. Again, this is a something that's a bit narrower than a core Attribute rating. The Knight might have poor vision, an allergy or hollow bones.

Golems may possess Edges and Flaws, but they also have innate *Capabilities*. These are the same for all Golems. Golems may also possess *Enhancements* to their basic Golem Attributes. Note a Golem's Capabilities and Enhancements at this stage of character creation.

Some of these characteristics add or subtract dice from an applicable dice pool. Others add or subtract points from a roll's total. **Knights of the Hidden Sun** notes dice modifier by using a capital D, so that +1D represents rolling one additional die. If the modifier is to a number of points, we don't use any special notation, so that +2 stands for two additional points added to a total. See Chapter Six for more information about how the game adjusts dice rolls.

Assigning Edges, Flaws and Golem Enhancements

Assign Edges, Flaws and Golem Enhancements as follows:

- **Human:** Human Main Characters start with three Edges and one Flaw.
- **Golem:** Golem Main Characters start with two Edges and one Flaw. You may convert one Edge to 3 Enhancement points, or both Edges to 6 points.

- **Optional:** Characters may select one additional Flaw to earn an extra Edge or 3 Enhancement points.

When an Edge or Flaw has a specific prerequisite, its entry places them in brackets, right after The Edge's name. Unless specifically noted, you cannot take the same Edge of Flaw twice.

Select Edges and Flaws from the list below, as permitted for your character type (human or Golem). See p. **XX** for more information about purchasing Golem Enhancements.

Golem Capabilities

All Golems have the following basic Capabilities:

- **Integral Strand Stone:** All Golems have a built-in strand stone, allowing easy connection with the Star Net. Note that Golems cannot transmit or copy their souls across the Star Net in any way.
- **Sensors:** Golems possess sensor-runes that allow certain sculpted sensory organs to act with more acuity than the real thing. This provides +2D bonus to Mind tests to see or hear.
- **Artificial Life:** A Golem doesn't require food, drink, air or a pressurized environment. Golems are immune to toxins and the effects of extreme environments as found on most human inhabited worlds. Golems can function in space as well, though they might be damaged by high temperatures.
- **Immune to Stun:** Golems are immune to all stun damage.
- **Requires Repairs:** Golems can't heal naturally. They must be repaired by runecrafting.
- **Inert Mode:** When a Golem suffers damage in excess of its Structure she stops moving, and the Golem loses consciousness. A Golem cannot spend Will to counteract this. Once in Inert Mode, the Golem is trapped his body until its crypt stone is transferred to a functioning body or destroyed (in the latter scenario, the Golem's soul haunts the area until captured).

Edges

Adaptation (Human Only): You have a physiology and/or the instincts to thrive in a challenging environment. The character earns a +4 bonus to rolls to alleviate hunger, thirst, an adverse temperature, or the effects of the elements in one of the following environments:

- Desert
- Forest
- Jungle
- Swamp
- Steppe
- Metropolis
- Mountain
- Tundra

You may take this Edge multiple times – once for each environment type.

Additional Sense: You possess one of the following senses:

- **Night Vision:** The character can see in low light conditions, but not absolute darkness.

He cannot read or make out fine details when he uses this sense.

- **Echolocation:** The character emits high frequency sounds and detects return vibrations through the air. This allows the character to sense the general size and location of objects even in total darkness.
- **Magnetoception:** The character can sense magnetic fields. This provides a +2D bonus to navigation on a planet's surface.
- **Soul Sense:** The character can see uncontained souls. They typically appear to be hazy, distorted images of the person they belonged to.
- **Ultraviolet Vision:** While this sense does *not* grant the ability to see in the dark, it gives objects sharper outlines. This provides a +2D bonus to ranged combat rolls and other tasks where silhouette perception is an advantage. The character can also see natural and artificial markings that reflect ultraviolet light.
- **Wide Frequency Hearing:** The character can hear sounds that register above or below the baseline human frequency. This allows secret communication in high or low frequencies. Furthermore, runecraft items emit infrasonic vibrations, so the character can hear active runecraft items in the immediate area.

Agile (Human): You're especially nimble. This Edge grants a +1D bonus to any Body task requiring physical agility, such as running or leaping across rooftops. It also adds +1D to both Melee and Ranged Defence, but not to attack rolls.

Amphibious (Human): You can swim skilfully, and breathe both air and water. The character cannot drown, enjoys a +2D bonus to swimming rolls, and swims twice as fast as humans without this Edge.

Armour: You have a thick hide or armour plates on your body. The character gains +1 Armour. This bonus stacks with other armour, including integral Golem armour.

Attractive: Your appearance, voice or general manner is more appealing than most people's. The character gains +1D to any Presence-based task where the character's looks or superficial demeanour make a difference.

Brave: You shrug off doubts more easily than others. Your character gains +1 Will.

Chameleon: Your body can change colour to match your surroundings. This grants a +2D bonus to conceal your character.

Coordinated: You have excellent fine motor coordination. This Edge grants +1D bonus to any task requiring manual dexterity (or in some bodies, the close equivalent) rather than full body coordination.

Deceiver: You're good at tricking other people. This Edge adds a +1D bonus to any attempt to outfox someone with deceptive words or actions.

Elite Manoeuvrability (Golem; Prerequisite Manoeuvrability 5): Your Golem body possesses exceptional Manoeuvrability. Increase Manoeuvrability from 5 to 6.

Elite Structure (Golem; Prerequisite Structure 5): Your Golem body possesses exceptional Structure. Increase Structure from 5 to 6.

Extra Arms: You have more than two arms. In this case, an "arm" is considered any limb that can hold and manipulate objects, including flexible tails and tentacles. A character can have as

many arms as the Guide allows, but regardless of the number, this Edge grants a flat +2D bonus grapple attack and defence rolls, and other tasks where multiple arms would be useful, such as climbing. Note that if you want your extra limbs to function as both arms and legs, you must take both Extra Arms and Extra Legs.

Extra Legs: You possess more than two legs. For the purposes of the Edge, a “leg” is any limb that can easily move or balance the character’s full weight. A character can have as many legs as the Guide allows, but regardless of the number, the Edge grants a +2D bonus to any roll that involves balance, or any situation where the Guide rules having multiple legs would be useful. Note that if you want your extra limbs to function as both arms and legs, you must take both Extra Arms and Extra Legs.

Healthy (Human): You’re exceptionally tough and vital. Your character gains +1 Health.

Intelligent: You’re smarter than your Mind score indicates. Your character earns a +1D bonus to any task involving reasoning or academic knowledge, such as history, law or runecrafting.

Keen Sense: One of your senses is exceptionally sharp. Add a +1D bonus to any Tasks involving detecting stimuli with that sense. You may take this Edge multiple times – once for each sense. To acquire senses far beyond the human baseline, take the Edge: Additional Senses.

Leaper (Human): You can jump exceptional distances. A character with this Edge triples all jumping distances.

Natural Weapons: You possess claws, fangs, or other natural weapons. You may inflict +1 Wound damage in unarmed combat, but you can stick to less lethal fighting and forego the damage bonus at any time.

Orbital Speed (Golem): You can fly at Orbital Scale speeds. Transitioning to this speed requires five rounds of travel in a straight line. After that, you may achieve 1 boom. You may further accelerate 1 boom each round, until a maximum number of booms equal to the character’s Speed. While flying at Orbital Scale, the Golem cannot fly any slower than 1 boom without spending five rounds decelerating.

Quick-Witted: You’re a fast thinker. Your character gains +1 Wits.

Speed (Human): You can run exceptionally fast – three times the speed of a human without this Edge.

Strong: You are exceptionally strong. Humans with this Edge add a +1D bonus to any task that benefits from brute strength, including close combat attack rolls. Golems do not gain this benefit, but humans and Golems with this Edge may lift or push loads that are twice as heavy as usual.

Venom: You possess fangs, a stinger or another body part that secretes a lethal poison. When the character strikes and causes at least a Hit with his fangs or claws, the victim must make a Body + Athletics roll against a rank 5 wound Hazard. If the victim succeeds, the poison has no further effect. If she fails, she must make another Body + Athletics roll against a rank 4 wound Hazard the next round, then a rank 3 Hazard the round after that, a rank 2 Hazard after that, and finally a rank 1 Hazard. If the victim succeeds at any point, stop this process.

You may opt for this poison to inflict stun damage instead. If it does, the initial Hazard is a rank 6 wound, followed by rank 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 Wounds on successive rounds.

Wall Crawling: You may stick to hard surfaces and climb easily. You automatically succeed at

climbing unless it would involve a surface that, if horizontal, would be difficult to walk upon (in which case it would be as hard to climb as it would be to walk). You may climb as fast as you can walk or run. This ability is under conscious control and requires a second or two to “activate” by positioning spines, secreting an adhesive, or doing whatever else justifies this ability. You can’t accidentally get stuck to something, but you can’t use this to improve other types of grips (such as grapples) on the fly.

Wings (Human): Wings allow you to fly. The character possesses feathered or bat-like wings he may use these to fly at twice his running speed (as calculated before applying Edges that would allow him to run faster). You may only carry a quarter of what you could carry while running at full speed.

Golems may possess wings, but they don’t affect innate their flight abilities.

Flaws

Arrogant: You can’t conceal how superior you feel to everyone else. The character’s attitude inflicts a -1D penalty on any social rolls where arrogance is a disadvantage.

Awkward Size: You’re shorter than 1.3 metres or over 2.5 metres tall. The character suffers a -1D penalty on dice rolls when his size would make a task more difficult. Furthermore, the character may have trouble finding equipment that fits them. Note that Knights’ gear has been made to fit the character.

Clumsy: A terrible sense of balance impairs your actions. The character suffers a -1D penalty to any task where grace and/or balance are important, including melee and ranged defence. You may not take this Flaw alongside the Agile Edge.

Compulsion: You’re addicted to a drug or compulsive behaviour pattern. Examples include:

- A drug
- Star Net use
- Thrill-seeking
- A cause
- A field of study

Assume that in most cases, the character possesses a reliable way to indulge her compulsion. If she’s ever deprived of it, she suffers a -2D penalty on actions that are not focused on satisfying it. If she has near-constant access to the object, (such as Star Net access) continual use becomes a problem, imposing a -1D penalty to all Presence-based actions due to distraction, exhaustion and irritability unless the character takes a full day to “dry out,” or banish the distraction for a time through force of will. The character will eventually relapse – the Guide and player should determine when this happens.

Coward: You’re not as brave as your Presence indicates. The character suffers a -1 penalty to his maximum Will trait. You may not take this Flaw alongside the Brave Edge.

Dolt: You’re a slow thinker. The character suffers a -1 penalty to his maximum Wits trait. You may not take this Flaw alongside the Quick-Witted Edge.

Eccentric: You’re weird, in an off-putting way. The character dresses as a favourite dream-drama character, speaks almost completely using references to Path texts, or publicly entertains bizarre theories about life. The character suffers a -1D penalty to social tasks when his

eccentricity becomes obvious.

Fragile (Human): You aren't as tough as most people due to a thinner frame, hollow bones, or some other difference. The character suffers a -1 penalty to his maximum Health trait. You may not take this Flaw alongside the Healthy Edge.

Hearing Impaired: You have trouble hearing, or you might be fully deaf, but trained and equipped to work around the impairment. The character suffers a -2D penalty to tasks where hearing is important. You may not take this Flaw and the Keen Sense (Hearing) Edge.

Naive: You're a veritable babe in the woods who has trouble with deception. The character suffers a -1D penalty to any attempt deceive others, or detect deception. You may not take this Flaw and the Deceiver Edge.

Quirky (Golem): You were haphazardly built. Roll one die at the start of every Tale. On a 5 or 6, the Guide lowers a single Attribute by 1 rank. Roll a die and consult the following table to determine the affected Attribute:

- 1: Body
- 2: Mind
- 3: Presence
- 4: Manoeuvrability
- 5: Speed
- 6: Structure

This penalty is not cumulative across Tales.

Sickly (Human): You possess a weak immune system. This imposes a -1D penalty to resist disease and poison Hazards.

Shy: You don't do well in crowds. The character suffers a -1D penalty to tasks that involve socializing with a group, or with a single charismatic (Presence 4 or higher) character.

Unattractive: Others find your appearance or certain personal habits distasteful, even repulsive. The character suffers a -1D penalty in situations where first impressions or appearance matter. You may not take this Flaw alongside the Attractive Edge.

Uncoordinated: Your fine motor coordination is poor. This inflicts a -1D penalty to any Task that requires hand-eye coordination, such as piloting and ranged combat. You may not take this Flaw alongside the Coordinated Edge.

Visually Impaired: You possess poor visual acuity (you might be totally blind, but able to partly compensate for the disadvantages through special training and/or equipment). You suffer a -2D penalty to ranged attacks and defences against them, and a -2D penalty to any other task that especially relies on vision. You may not take this Flaw and the Keen Sense (Vision) Edge.

Weak: You're not as strong as most characters with your Body score. The character suffers a -1D penalty to any Task that requires physical strength, including close combat. You may not take this Flaw alongside the Strong Edge.

Freebies

Some “Edges” and “Flaws” have no notable game effects. Do you want to play a character who doesn’t age? That’s no problem, as long as aren’t exceptionally old at the beginning of the game (or who doesn’t remember much of her past . . .). If you want claws and fur that have no game effect, go for it. Humanity is endlessly diverse, but the rules are only concerned with features that affect the nuts and bolts of play.

Custom Edges and Flaws

The Edges and Flaws listed here are not the only ones possible. Feel free to create your own. Generally speaking, an Edge or Flaw should never modify dice rolls by more than 2D, or 1D if the modifier applies to very common tasks.

Golem Enhancements

If you’re playing a Golem, you may convert your Edges *Enhancement Points* at a rate of one Edge to 3 points. (If you take on an additional Flaw to gain an extra Edge, you may convert the extra Edge as well.) You may use these points to increase the Golem’s Manoeuvrability, Speed and Structure on a 1 for 1 basis. You’re allowed to increase Manoeuvrability or Structure to a maximum score of 5, and Speed to a maximum score of 2. The Elite Manoeuvrability and Elite Structure Edges allow you to increase their corresponding Attributes from 5 to 6, but you must use a full Edge in each case.

Giant Scale (6 Enhancement Points)

Adult Roaan humans stand 1 to 3 metres tall and weigh 50 to 500 kilograms. This is the Human Size Scale; most Golems are constructed in this range. If the Guide allows it, you may spend 6 Enhancement Points to increase your size to Giant Scale: 5 to 10 metres tall and 1 to 100 metric tonnes. This provides considerable combat advantages (see Chapter Six, p. **XX**) but it makes most socializing impossible – giant robots don’t fit in taverns. Most Golems with Giant Scale bodies possess a smaller body to wear in these situations. The character gains 3 Enhancement Points *solely* for the purpose of purchasing an additional body – they can’t be applied to the giant body.

Giant Scale automatically imposes the Awkward Size Flaw. This Flaw provides no additional Edges, but it doesn’t count against the two Flaws allowed to a starting character.

Extra Body (3+; See Below)

A Golem may possess multiple bodies. He must use Enhancement Points to purchase Golem Attributes (Manoeuvrability, Speed and Structure) in the new body, devoting at least 1 point to each. Unlike the first body, subsequent bodies start at 0 in each Golem Attribute.

Switching Bodies (No Cost; See Below)

A Golem who switches to a new body retains the same Mind, Body and Presence scores, as these are functions of the soul and self-image. The character keeps the same number of Edges and Flaws, but their type if the player and Guide determine they were properties of the Golem, not the soul within it. A Golem body affects all aspects of its inhabitant, including personality traits, so changing bodies provides a good excuse to adjust your character.

The Guide should ensure that any Golem character who’s reduced to using a GNAT or similarly weak Golem quickly finds a way into a body as powerful as the one she was using.

What if a Golem upgrades into a more powerful body? Golem characters require time to get used to increased capabilities – as long, in fact, as it would take to acquire character points to pay for these benefits. (NPC Golems take months to years to get used to new bodies.) Until then, the body operates at a reduced capacity, as if it were only as powerful as a Golem built using the character’s true character point total. Over time, the Golem “grows into” her new body, and can make full use of its abilities. The Guide may allow a Golem character to occasionally push past this limit by spending a point of Will and suffering some sort of complication – damage to the body, a crash, or a psychotic break are all possibilities.

Step 5: Determine Traits

Traits are derived from Attributes; like them, they measure a character’s innate strengths and weaknesses, but they are not typically used in dice pools. Chapter Six will explain the differences in more detail. Characters possess the following Traits:

- Human characters possess Health, Initiative, Will, Wits and Revenue. Runebearers (including all Knights) possess Conviction.
- Golem characters possess Initiative, Will, Wits, Structure Rating and Revenue. Runebearers (including all Knights) possess Conviction.

Conviction (Runebearer)

Conviction governs how much power a Knight can safely draw from the Goddess, or how much other Runebearers may draw from their patrons. Non-Runebearers do not possess this Trait.

- Main Character Knights begins with Conviction 3.
- Conviction always equals the character’s Runebearer rank.
- The Guide determines other Runebearers’ Conviction.

Health (Human)

Health measures a character’s resistance to physical wounds and ailments. When an injury is more intense than the character’s Health, she might be stunned, seriously injured or killed.

- Every human Main and Named Character has a Health score equal to Body +4.
- Human Minor Characters possess Health scores equal to their Body scores.
- Modify the above by applicable Edges or Flaws.

Initiative

Initiative measures how quickly the character acts in a crisis, or responds to the unexpected.

- Human Initiative is equal to the character’s Mind + Body
- Golem Initiative is equal to the character’s Mind.
- Modify the above by applicable Edges or Flaws.

Structure Rating (Golem)

Structure Rating (not to be confused with plain old “Structure”) determines a Golem’s material toughness and resilience of design. When a force exceeds a Golem’s Structure Rating, the threat might damage or destroy him.

- Every Golem Main and Named Character possesses a Structure Rating equal to Structure +4.
- Golem Minor Characters possess a Structure Rating equal to their Structure scores
- Modify the above by applicable Edges or Flaws.

Will

Will represents the character's confidence, focus and inner strength. It usually provides a temporary bonus to dice rolls, but can have other functions as well.

- Every Main and Named Character has a Will score equal to Presence +4.
- Minor Characters possess Will scores equal to their Presence scores.
- Modify the above by applicable Edges or Flaws.

Wits

The Wits Trait determines a character's reaction time and ability to think on his feet. This Trait controls how many actions a character may perform per round, and may boost her abilities when she concentrates on certain tasks.

- Every Main and Named Character has a Wits score equal to Mind +4.
- Minor Characters possess Wits scores equal to their Mind scores
- Modify the above by applicable Edges or Flaws.

Revenue

Revenue measures a character's wealth and general access to resources.

- The Hidden Sun grants all Knights a starting Revenue Trait of 6.
- The Guide determines Revenue levels for all other characters.

Step 6: Assign Aptitudes and Skills – and Finalize Your Expertise

Aptitudes, Skills and Specialties describe a character's learned abilities. All Knights undergo rigorous training with the goal of not only excelling individually, but filling a unique role in the band. Aptitudes are broad professions or lifestyles that encompass a number of individual Skills.

Choose each of the above with an eye toward your Expertise, since this is the stage in which you'll completely define it.

Assigning Aptitudes and Skills

Each Aptitude and Skill starts with a score 0. Assign starting characters the following Aptitudes and Skill ranks to give them greater ability:

- Main Characters (including Knights) start with 6 ranks to spread among Aptitudes. No one Aptitude can begin with a score above Rank 4.
- In addition to the above, all starting Knights possess Rank 3 in the Runebearer Aptitude. This cannot be improved at character creation.
- If the Guide wants to run a non-Knight game, characters usually start with 4 ranks of

Aptitudes – and no free ranks in Runebearer. If the character wants to become a Runebearer, the player should get permission from the Guide. Together, they'll decide on a God and make adjustments accordingly. Runebearer ranks come out of the character's 4 starting Aptitude ranks.

- All Main characters gain one Skill rank at each even-numbered Aptitude rank (except Runebearer; see page **XX**) and these ranks must be spent on Skills linked to the Aptitude that granted them. You may spend multiple ranks on the same Skill to specialize in a particular field.
- Minor and Named characters possess any Aptitude ranks the Guide desires, and may or may not possess Skill ranks – in many cases, it's easier not to bother with them.

Aptitudes and Skills

Aptitudes are broad professions or parts of the character's lifestyle that incline him to excel in a number of related fields. **Knights of the Hidden Sun** uses the following standard Aptitudes: Charmer, Crafter, Pilot, Rogue, Scholar and Warrior.

Each Aptitude possesses three *mandatory* linked Skills, and two additional, *elective* Skills chosen by the player. Each Skill is a facet of the Aptitude, so improving in the Aptitude makes a character better at any tasks the Skill covers. Characters can also devote Skill ranks to special training in that field. On the other hand, an Aptitude is *not* solely defined by its Skills. The Warrior Aptitude may well cover knowledge of weapons and tactics, for example.

Players and GMs can create other Aptitudes if they like by choosing a title and three linked Skills. This is often preferred for Named and Minor characters who don't need defined specialties as much as a good general description of what they can do. Call your NPC a Station Bureaucrat, or Ascetic, for instance, and be done with it!

Charmer

Charmers make their way through persuasion. A shopkeeper, back alley con and Speaker of the Star Court each use the Charmer Aptitude to succeed. Persuasion, deceit, entertainment, diplomacy and seduction are their favoured tools.

Mandatory Charmer Skills

Lie: A Charmer uses this Skill to deceive others with words or other means. A lie's particulars might inspire a course of action, but this skill doesn't influence others directly.

Network: Charmers keep track of friends, allies and other contacts with this Skill. A high rank makes it more likely that the character knows someone in a particular world or subculture – or even a specific individual. This Skill helps them find, track and get in touch with people, but doesn't help sway them to do anything – that requires other Skills.

Persuade: This Skill allows the Charmer to bring someone around to her way of thinking or perform certain actions through everything from reasoned argument to whining and shouting. This Skill isn't used to lie to others, however – that's the job of the appropriately-named Lie Skill.

Charmer Rank Descriptions (Based on Aptitude + Skill Totals)

Rank 1-2 (Novice): Big City Shopkeeper

Rank 3-4 (Practiced): Rural Politician

Rank 5-6 (Elite): Famous Diplomat

Rank 7-8 (Master): Jessica Ash of the Golden Crown

Rank 9+ (Legendary): Murah, Preaching the Path

Crafter

Crafters are good with their hands, with physical structures and machinery, and the natural logic of everyday cause and effect. They are carpenters, runecrafters, tinsmiths and stonemasons, or the architects and engineers of buildings, machines, and even dreams.

Mandatory Crafter Skills

Dreamcrafting: Use this Skill to create and manipulate dreams in the Star Net. See pp. **XX** for dreamcrafting rules. Note that this doesn't cover runecrafts that connect to the Star Net or otherwise interact with dreams.

Runecrafting: This is the Skill of carving Creation Runes, and understanding how to use runes to create desired effects. This Skill doesn't cover the repair and creation of stone, clay or other rune media, however – that's the Structures Skill.

Structures: This Skill covers building and repairing items made of the materials Roaans traditionally work, including wood, stone, bone, textiles and a number of metals (typically, not iron – Roaa without runecraft is a Bronze Age civilization). This might even include primitive chemistry. Minor characters with this Skill only know a few traditional crafts – they're weavers or carpenters, but little else – but Knights and many Named characters have a much broader understanding.

Crafter Rank Descriptions (Based on Aptitude + Skill Totals)

Rank 1-2 (Novice): Handyman

Rank 3-4 (Practiced): Journeyman Runecrafter

Rank 5-6 (Elite): Master Runecrafter

Rank 7-8 (Master): Emulos Chant, Inventor of the Crypt Stone

Rank 9+ (Legendary): A Galactic Visionary

Pilot

This Aptitude governs the ability to operate runecrafts vehicles and fly them to an intended destination.

Mandatory Pilot Skills

Planetcraft: Use this Skill to personally pilot Terrestrial Class vehicles and navigate planetary surfaces with their instruments.

Spacecraft: This Skill measures the ability to personally pilot Orbital or Galaxy class vehicles, and use their instruments to navigate star systems.

Capital Craft: Where the other Skills rely on personal control of a vehicle, Capital Craft

governs the ability to command a crew to pilot a vessel skilfully – a necessary ability on vessels like Fleet destroyers. The Skill also governs navigation through Jump Gate routes.

Pilot Rank Descriptions (Based on Aptitude + Skill Totals)

Rank 1-2 (Novice): Taxi Driver

Rank 3-4 (Practiced): Planetary Defence Fighter Pilot

Rank 5-6 (Elite): Hunter Fleet Ace

Rank 7-8 (Master): Bartholomew Deth, Master of the Black Fleet

Rank 9+ (Legendary): An Elusive Shadow in the Sky

Rogue

Call masters of the Rogue Aptitude thieves, special agents, emissaries or assassins, but most would rather you call them nothing at all. They specialize in slipping through obstacles unnoticed for profit, a cause, or survival's sake.

Mandatory Rogue Skills

Puzzle Master: Use this Skill to spot hidden objects, defeat locks and traps, and solve other physical puzzles such as complex knots, optical illusions, or strange machines.

Sleight of Hand: A Rogue uses this Skill to pick pockets, perform magicians' illusions and demonstrate other feats of fine motor coordination.

Stealth: This is the Skill of moving silently, hiding, camouflaging oneself and others, and shadowing people by "hiding in plain sight." The skill also includes the ability to remove traces of one's passage.

Rogue Rank Descriptions (Based on Aptitude + Skill Totals)

Rank 1-2 (Novice): Edge City Cutpurse

Rank 3-4 (Practiced): Professional Thief

Rank 5-6 (Elite): Archonate Special Security Operative

Rank 7-8 (Master): Wanted in 138 Systems for Larceny or Espionage

Rank 9+ (Legendary): Unknown; Never Caught

Runebearer

Only Gods can grant the Runebearer Aptitude – most characters can never acquire it. All Knights are Runebearers, and so are high ranking members of the other Secret Powers. A God inscribes Creation Runes on the character's soul, unlocking the potential for amazing powers called Devotions.

Unlike standard Aptitudes, Runebearer does not possess Skills and doesn't grant Skill Ranks. Instead, each Runebearer rank grants one Devotion for your character's use. See "Step 7: Pick Devotions," for more information.

Scholar

Whether they studied at formal academies or crammed in between shifts at a farm or mill, Scholars acquire a formidable education, from raw facts to the discipline of thought itself.

Unlike most Roaans, all Scholars are literate in the writing system used on their home worlds and the official script of the Archonate. Note that all Knights learn to read the Archonate script as well, whether or not they possess this Aptitude.

Mandatory Scholar Skills

Cultures: This Skill governs customs, laws and history across Roaa. The more ranks a character possesses, the more he understands each planet he visits. Knights are trained to understand many cultures, but other characters might only apply this Skill to a few worlds. The Cultures Skill includes local dialects and idioms; use this Skill to understand unfamiliar speech.

Logic: This is the Skill of pure thought: mathematics, enigmas, paradoxes, and general reasoning. Use Logic when your character needs to solve a problem when he already possesses all the necessary information.

Natural Philosophy: While Roaans rarely apply scientific thinking outside of experimental runecraft, they do have an intense curiosity about the observable universe. They compile their observations, share them, and speculate on the underlying principles. Natural Philosophy is the Skill of memorizing and sifting through this body of knowledge, which includes elements of biology, physics, chemistry and other fields.

One Speech

Ever since the Age of Divine Will, everyone has spoken one language, taught by the Gods. There are dialects and slang on every world, however, so the Cultures Skill might be necessary to understand someone from an unfamiliar planet. Truly foreign languages might develop on the most isolated Edge worlds, but the average Roaan can scarcely conceive of a different language existing.

Written language is another matter. There are many ways to write Roaan speech, some of which have been lost to the ages. The most common system is the Archonate script, which is loosely based on Creation Runes. Many Roaans are illiterate, and see older scripts as nothing more than pretty, archaic designs.

Scholar Rank Descriptions (Based on Aptitude + Skill Totals)

Rank 1-2 (Novice): Local Know It All

Rank 3-4 (Practiced): Archonate Administrator or Doctor

Rank 5-6 (Elite): Elder Professor

Rank 7-8 (Master): Lord-Librarian of the Red Fortress

Rank 9+ (Legendary): Channelling Rhea's Wisdom

Warrior

Anyone with this Aptitude is no stranger to combat. Warriors learn to survive and prevail in a violent galaxy. Characters trained in the Aptitude might be criminal enforcers, police or military

veterans.

Mandatory Warrior Skills

Athletics: This catch-all physical Skill covers endurance, lifting, jumping, running, throwing (including knives, stones, spears and other weapons that are launched without mechanical assistance) and general gross motor coordination. As such, it acts as the character's Ranged Defence, and can act as his Close Combat Defence if the player so chooses.

Close Combat: Unarmed and armed martial arts – and sheer up-close ferocity – belong to the Close Combat Skill. This Skill acts as the character's Close Combat Defence, if the player so chooses

Ranged Combat: The Ranged Combat Skill includes the ability to aim and unleash (but not defend against) both primitive and runecrafting ranged weapons unless one simply throws them – in that case, use Athletics.

Warrior Rank Descriptions (Based on Aptitude + Skill Totals)

Rank 1-2 (Novice): Local Bravo

Rank 3-4 (Practiced): Professional Soldier

Rank 5-6 (Elite): Veteran Soldier

Rank 7-8 (Master): Master of Arms at the Red Fortress

Rank 9+ (Legendary): Loh Vess

Elective Skills

Use the following Skills to fill the two remaining slots in each Aptitude you possess. Work with the Guide to create new Skills, if necessary. If any Skill is narrower in scope than a mandatory Skill, it should be slightly more effective than its counterpart.

Artist: Talent as a visual artist and the practical crafts of drawing, painting and sculpting.

Alertness: The ability to detect something out of the ordinary: a subtle clue, an item out of place, or an ambush.

Command: This Skill covers issuing instructions to teams so that they'll act effectively, and discouraging malingering and rebellion.

Gunnery: Proper techniques for using vehicle and building mounted weapons.

Law: Legal codes and the ability to use them to gain an advantage.

Lore (Type): Lore is the Skill of learning of a subject that lies outside the scope of general contemporary knowledge. Examples include the theologies of lost Gods, legendary forms of magic or particular Secret Powers. Each topic is a separate Skill, and the character's ranks may be limited by the information available to learn.

Medicine: The Skill of treating sickness and injury. Roaan medicine is very effective when practitioners have full access to runecrafting tools that guarantee a sterile environment. Roaans understand the germ theory of disease and other sophisticated concepts, but do not have counterparts to many medicines. Runecraft can kill germs, but can't do much to alleviate the symptoms of disease.

Metaphysics: This Skill plumbs the depths of mythology and runecraft to develop ideas about the occult, magical nature of the universe.

Perform: The ability to entertain a crowd with dancing, singing, comedy, drama and more.

Public Speaking: The ability to sway a crowd rather than individuals. This Skill engages its targets on a basic, emotional level – Command is necessary to give groups complex instructions.

Riding: This Skill covers travel on the backs of swift animals.

Sailing: Despite its name, this Skill covers how to handle both sail and row craft.

Scanning: Using runecraft sensors to locate anything they're capable of detecting. This is often possessed by pilots (for vehicle sensors), security personnel (handheld scanners and building sensors), and healers who use medical runecraft to find hidden maladies.

Streetwise: The character learns the secret codes of criminals, how to find them, and how to perform a number of crimes not covered by other Skills.

Survival: The skill of hunting, tracking, foraging, orienteering, shelter-building and other talents you need to live in the wilderness.

Finalizing Your Expertise

Once you select Aptitudes and Skills it's time to finish defining your Expertise. You may want to modify it in light of the choices you've made earlier in this stage.

An Expertise is a narrow label that applies to one Attribute + Aptitude combination, and only for actions covered by its description, but it may cover multiple Skills. For example, a character with the Swordsman Expertise may wield his blade in an acrobatic style, allowing the Expertise to cover Athletics as well as Close Combat, but without the sword, neither Skill earns special benefits.

Step 7: Pick Devotions

The Runebearer Aptitude measures a character's ability to store and manipulate divine power – the *theurgic channel* described in Romus Harse's writings. His Runebearer rank determines how many Devotions – magical powers – the character can use, at the rate of one Devotion per rank.

Chapter Six: Game Systems presents the rules for activating and maintaining Devotions. See pp. **XX** for details.

Assigning Devotions

Starting Knights are Rank 3 Runebearers, so their players must pick three Devotions. As a Runebearer strengthens her theurgic channel, she earns more Devotions.

The following Devotions are available to all Knights, but might not be available to followers of other Gods. A *Common Devotion* is available to all Runebearers, regardless of allegiance. An *Exclusive Devotion* is only available to followers of particular Gods.

Certain Devotions are often redundant if more than one Main Character possesses them, so you should check with other players to coordinate your Devotion selections. We note when a Devotion is more appropriate for one character in a band, though this is only a suggestion, not a hard and fast rule.

Crystal Skin

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Until dismissed.

Description: You solidify divine energy in your skin, lacing your hide with tough crystal. The crystal takes on a tint based on the character's patron God. Rhea's Knights turn into smoky quartz and onyx.

Effect: The character gains 2 Armour per Conviction point. This doesn't stack with worn armour. Instead, use the highest available Armour rank, +1.

Example: *While wearing Dark Hide, Dinnik activates Crystal Skin with 4 Conviction. While Dark Hide grants 4 Armour, Crystal Skin provides 8. His combined Armour Rank is 9.*

Divine Aura

Type: Common (appropriate for one character)

Duration: Until destroyed (see below) or dismissed

Description: Divine Aura generates a writhing semi-translucent dome of force around you and your allies, protecting them from many hazards. The dome's colour and exact shape is influenced by your patron God. Knights' auras resemble a shroud of smoke.

Effect: A Divine Aura requires a full round of concentration to summon or dismiss. For each point of Conviction, Divine Aura provides the following effects.

- A 3 metre radius, centered on the Runebearer (who may alter its size to be smaller, if he prefers)
- 3 ranks of Armour. If an attack penetrates this Armour, apply personal Armour ranks to the remaining damage.
- 1 hour of fresh air, pressurized at a typical sea level

In addition, the Divine Aura shields against radiation and toxic environments, including the vacuum of space. Once summoned, the Aura cannot be moved in relation to wherever the Runebearer stands. The Runebearer may not dynamically change its size, pass it through solid objects, or use it to push or otherwise attack other characters. A Divine Aura is a two way barrier, hindering attacks from within as well. If an attack breaches the Aura, the Devotion ends.

Example: *Riann spends 5 Conviction for a Divine Aura with 15 Armour. A starship fires upon her, inflicting 20 damage. The Aura absorbs 15 points of damage and collapses. Riann's Dark Hide absorbs all but 2 Mortal damage.*

Divine Awareness

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Until dismissed

Description: Your senses sharpen to a supernatural degree. There is no visible sign that this Devotion is active; it makes itself known in its effects.

Effect: The Runebearer gains +2D per Conviction rank to rolls to detect anything with her

natural senses. Furthermore, phenomena within 200 metres per rank of Conviction may be sensed as easily as if they were no more than 10 metres away.

Example: *Ven wants to take closely examine the bandits coming his way. He spends 5 Conviction and gains a +6D bonus to his roll. Furthermore, he hears the bandit chief whispering to his lieutenant as well, even though they're 500 metres away – within 600 metres, he can hear them just as if he was 10 metres away.*

Empower Runes

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Until dismissed.

Description: You channel divine power through a runecraft item – anything from a tool or weapon to a vehicle. The runes and energies of the runecraft take on your patron God's colour. A Knight turns them the deepest black.

Effect: Empower Runes grants one of the following benefits to runecraft items per Conviction point spent, where applicable:

- +1 damage to one weapon, including a vehicular weapon
- +1 Armour to one protective device or vehicle
- +1 to one vehicle Attribute
- +1 to one Golem Attribute

You may stack the same benefit more than once, to a maximum of +3 to any single benefit.

In addition to the above, Empower Runes protects the souls within from all forms of magical interference, including the Eternal Rest Devotion.

Example: *Illum spends 5 Conviction 5 on Empower Runes for his Tear fighter, adding +3 Armour and +2 to its rippers' damage. The ship's runes look as if they're painted with the blackest ink.*

Eternal Rest

Type: Exclusive (Rhea, the Creatrix; appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Instant; permanent effect.

Description: This Devotion forces a disembodied soul (that is, one without a living human or Golem body) back to the Creatrix. The soul immediately appears before the Runebearer, flashes in her patron Goddess' colour once, and vanishes, never to return.

While it's an effective way to disable equipment and get rid of enemies, the ethics of removing a soul from existence are questionable, at best. Some Knights argue that sending a soul back to the Creatrix forces it to its proper place, and that by comparison the fate of most Roaan souls is an abomination, but who knows what the Creatrix does with the souls in her care?

Some Gods do not grant this Devotion, but are said to possess other powers that condemn souls to realms of torment, or specially-prepared artifacts.

Effect: Eternal Rest's range is 1 metre per point of Conviction spent. It functions on souls powering runecrafts unless they're under the influence of the Empower Runes Devotion. Eternal

Rest automatically succeeds against such dormant souls. Golems and living humans are immune to Eternal Rest as long as an unoccupied, functioning body does lie within 10 metres of their souls. Once deprived of all empowering souls, a runecraft item becomes an ordinary object, bereft of supernatural properties.

Note that while Eternal Rest will not affect active souls inhabiting (or immediately nearby) functioning Golems, it will work on the dormant souls that *power* Golems. If the Runebearer eliminates every soul powering a Golem, it becomes a mundane object, and if the Golem's ruling, active soul can't find refuge within 10 metres, it may become vulnerable to attack with this power.

Against an active soul, Eternal Rest requires the Runebearer to achieve a Knockout result with a Presence + Runebearer attack versus the target's Will, defended by his Presence + applicable Aptitude/Command. Hit results have no effect. Such situations are rare however; active, disembodied souls belong to the recently dead, eldritch spirits that haunt forbidding places across the galaxy, or the cornered souls of destroyed Golems.

Success immediately sends the soul beyond known existence, presumably into the care of the Creatrix.

Eternal Rest does not affect souls within the Star Net, or those powering Jump Gates.

Example: *Ji activates Eternal Rest with 5 Conviction to eliminate the soul powering a pirate's rune-sword, 5 metres away. The soul flows screaming out of the blade, crackles with black energy and vanishes. The pirate's sword turns into a brittle clay stick. No roll was required.*

A Giant Class Golem knocks its useless pirate ally out of the way and attacks. Ji dodges out of the way and uses Eternal Rest on the first of three crypt stones powering the Golem. Once those souls are dismissed, the Golem comes crashing to the ground.

Ji now uses Eternal Rest against the Golem's now vulnerable ruling soul (there are no empty Golem bodies nearby to seek refuge in). Her player rolls Presence + Runebearer (dice pool 8; the Guide rolls Presence + the Golem's applicable Tyrant Lord (dice pool 5). Ji scores 6 more points than the Golem; this easily outclasses the Golem's 3 Will. The Golem's spirit howls as it falls into a black pit of Rhea's power, never to be seen again.

Note that if the Golem had used Empower Runes on his own body, he would have been immune to all Eternal Rest attacks.

Evil Eye

Type: Common (appropriate for one character)

Duration: See below

Description: With a glance, Evil Eye transmits toxic divine energy, inflicting an unnatural disease that will ravage the target until she dies, fights it off, the ailment runs its course, or the Touch of Benevolence Devotion cancels it out.

Under its influence of the Evil Eye, the victims' veins take on the colour of Runebearer's patron God, so those accursed by the Hidden Sun see black threads swell beneath the skin. A target feels as if she's swallowed glass, and often bleeds from the eyes, nose and ears.

Effect: To use this Devotion the Runebearer makes eye contact; her player and rolls a Mind +

Runebearer attack, defended by the target's Body + Warrior/Athletics. If it succeeds, the initial result manifests as Wound Damage. If the initial attack fails, then target suffers no ill effects.

On each successive round (and without the Runebearer needing to take any additional action) the target must resist a Wound Hazard with a rank equal to the Devotion's Conviction investment, -1 for each additional round after the first round in which the Hazard becomes a threat. If the target prevails against one of these Hazards, the Devotion does not cause further effects.

Whether she succeeds or fails, a Runebearer may only attempt to use this Devotion against the same target once every 24 hours.

Evil Eye has no affect on Golems.

Example: *Ven invests 5 Conviction on using the Evil Eye against a Swordsman of Murah, scoring 4 Wound damage on the initial attack. The next round, the Swordsman rolls to resist a Rank 5 Wound Hazard, and rolls a 4, suffering 1 Wound Hit. The round after that, the Hazard degrades to Rank 4. If he fails to resist this next Hazard, the Swordsman must survive a Rank 3 Hazard. If his misfortune continues, he must resist a Rank 2 Hazard, then a Rank 1 Hazard, unless he throws off the Evil Eye or dies first.*

Far Sight

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Until dismissed

Description: You throw back your senses to a place you concentrated on in the recent past. Your eyes glow in the colour of your patron God (matte black for Knights) as you visit that place once again in the form of an invisible, incorporeal spirit.

Effect: The Runebearer must concentrate on a location for a split second (and the player must write it down!) to revisit it with Far Sight. Once he uses this Devotion, he may instantly send his spirit to this place, no matter the distance, as long as the Conviction used with this Devotion is equal to or greater than the number of hours that have passed since he visited in person.

As a spirit, the Runebearer can use any sense but touch, and can wander up to (10 x Runebearer Aptitude) metres from the location, slipping through solid objects with ease. His spirit is completely silent, intangible and invisible, but can be detected with the Soul's Eye Devotion. The Runebearer cannot use Devotions to affect the area, and cannot be affected by Devotions.

If another Runebearer has used the Shadowy Mask Devotion, the Runebearer using Far Sight must use at least as much Conviction as that used for Shadowy Mask or the number of hours that have passed since the Runebearer's physical visit, whichever is greater. If Far Sight fails due to the Shadowy Mask, the Runebearer senses some non-specific interference.

Star Net dreams cannot be visited with this Devotion.

Example: *Hiding from Archonate guards, Illum (Conviction 3) activates Far Sight to see if his ship's under guard. He concentrated on the location just before he left two hours ago. He scouts a 40 metre diameter around his Far Sight point – the maximum allowed by his Runebearer Aptitude of 4.*

Gate of Worlds

Type: Common (appropriate for one character)

Duration: Instant; permanent effect.

Description: As your ship enters a Jump Gate, you will it to exit through the Gate of your choosing instead of following standard travel routes. A halo in the colour of your patron appears around your head. Knights manifest a black crown.

Effect: As a ship she's aboard passes through a Jump Gate Runebearer must spend 1 Conviction and visualize a Jump Gate she's previously visited. The ship will pass through to her chosen Jump Gate, regardless of the destination is "should" go to.

If multiple Runebearers aboard ship both use this Devotion, the character who bids the most Conviction determines where the ship goes. In case of ties, the Devotion has no effect; the ship travels to the next Gate in its ordinary route.

Gate of Worlds allows its bearer to choose where a ship he's on will go when it flies through a jump gate. All the Runebearer has to do is throw 1 Conviction at it and think of a gate he's been to before and the ship will appear there.

Example: *Illum stows away aboard a small ship that's been hijacked by a treacherous Squire. The Knight spends 1 Conviction, and instead of Ara's Jump Gate, the Squire sees the tumbling rocks surrounding the Red Fortress.*

Gods' Strength

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Until dismissed

Description: It manifests invisibly, but you can feel the divine power that gives you supernatural strength.

Effect: Each rank of Conviction grants the following cumulative benefits:

- +2D to tasks that rely on physical strength, including Close Combat (this stacks with the Strong Edge)
- The ability to lift 200 kilograms more than usual (this is not doubles by the Strong Edge)

Example: *Dinnik activates God's Strength with 4 Conviction and attacks a Giant Scale Golem. He adds +5 for his weapon and +8 for God's Strength to his dice pool of 8, for a total pool of 21 dice. He can also lift 1600 kilograms more than usual. He's strong enough to go toe to toe with a huge stone monster.*

Hallowed Swiftnes

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Until dismissed

Description: You run and strike with incredible speed. The blurring your enemies see is accented by lines the colour of your patron God, so that Knights leave black trails as they run and strike.

Effect: For every Conviction the Runebearer spends, he benefits from an extra point of Wits. These extra Wits points cannot be used to activate Devotions. Each point of Conviction also adds

100 kph to his running speed, though he must slow down to less extreme speeds to attack or interact with his environment, and cannot transfer the added momentum to strike harder.

Example: *Dinnik spends 3 Conviction on Hallowed Speed. His Wits increases from 6 to 9, and he can now run 300 kph.*

Measure of Worth

Type: Exclusive (Arcath, Rhea; appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Instant; see below

Description: You open yourself to whispers, visions and omens from your patron. When imagine certain criteria, your God will reveal to you how the target of your examination measures up. This Devotion has no visible manifestation, though it may guide Runebearers using mysterious symbols. Even in that case, the true meaning is evident to the Runebearer.

Effect: Measure of Worth possesses multiple applications. The Runebearer can apply it to an object or non-sapient creature by spending 5 Conviction and concentrating on one of the following criteria:

- Is it of acceptable quality or health for a particular task?
- Is it worth a particular price?
- Is it an authentic example of a certain craft or origin?
- Will the creature behave with the discipline to perform a function?

The Guide may allow other questions.

Through signs and visions, Measure of Worth will reveal to the character whether it badly fails, moderately fails, slightly fails, meets, slightly exceeds, or far exceeds the criteria the Runebearer set.

When using Measure of Worth on sapient beings, the Runebearer may ask the following questions:

- Is this person trustworthy to know or do a particular thing?
- Is this person mentally, physically or socially fit to perform a certain task?
- Is this person skilled at a particular activity?
- Can this person excel at a particular profession or calling?

Again, the Guide may allow other questions.

The Runebearer's player must spend 5 Conviction and roll Mind + Runebearer (task threshold 7). If the Runebearer communicates with her target, add +3D to the roll. If she succeeds, Measure of Worth will reveal to the Runebearer whether the target badly fails, moderately fails, slightly fails, meets, slightly exceeds, or far exceeds the criteria set for him.

Along with the answers above, the Runebearer's patron may provide one straightforward fact about the target, at the Guide's discretion, or an enigmatic hint of some kind above and beyond any other information.

The Runebearer may use this Devotion multiple times upon the same target, until she fails a roll. If that occurs, the Runebearer may not use Measure of Worth on that target again for 24 hours.

Example: *Riann spends 5 Conviction while examining a supposed Tyrant ring, activating*

Measure of Worth to determine its authenticity as a League artifact. She determines that the ring very much exceeds this criterion, and has a brief vision of old Ara, indicating that it's a pre-Second War object.

Riann now examines the shopkeeper to determine if he would be a suitable "true believer" in Tyrant League values. She chats with him amiably while her player rolls her Mind + Runebearer of 7dice, +3D for the conversation. She succeeds with 10 points and receives an answer of "badly fails," the criterion, and is suddenly transfixed by the shopkeeper's callused bare feet (the sign of a Path ascetic) and ripper scar, and determines that the man's a Path veteran, and the ring was probably an old spoil of war.

Mind Grasp

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Instant; see below

Description: You manipulate distant objects as if touching them. Move your hand, and the object follows as if you grasped it. You can even use this power to strike someone. Anything you target is distorted by a jagged haze, the color of your God – in the case of Rhea, rippling shadows.

Effect: For every Conviction point invested, the Runebearer generated 1 rank Telekinetic Body. Use this Attribute for telekinetic tasks within a range of 50 metres per Runebearer rank. For example, to wield a sword at a distance, roll Telekinetic Body + Warrior/Close Combat + the weapon's bonus. You must spend Wits separately on these actions and other actions.

Example: *Cornered by guard, Ven uses Mind Grasp to grab an ornamental shield behind his opponent and bash into her skull. He throws 5 Conviction into it so the attack roll will be Telekinetic Body 5 + Ven's Warrior/Close Combat of 4.*

One Mind

Type: Common (appropriate for one character)

Duration: Until dismissed

Description: You chain your mind to your companions' and bond them with each other. The divine gestalt renders your identities fluid, and you are able to share thoughts, abilities and bodies. There is no visible sign of this power.

Effect: One Mind links the Runebearer's thoughts with those of his allies across any distance – even targets on opposite sides of the galaxy could commune with one another. The Runebearer must have more than a passing familiarity with the person he seeks to link with the One Mind: an extended face to face history together. The Guide determines the exact requirements.

The Runebearer is the nexus; he connects himself with two allies per point of Conviction. Once they join the One Mind, they acquire several advantages:

- Members may telepathically communicate and share sensory information across any distance, with any other member of the One Mind.
- Members may engage in lengthy conversations or complex plans with incredible swiftness, even in the midst of combat. The Guide should let participants discuss their actions in some detail from one round to the next.

- Members may act in each other's bodies. This requires an expenditure of 1 Wits and the normal owner of that body must be willing. The "visitor's" Attributes, Aptitudes, Skills, and Traits accompany her, except for Body and Health – these remain the Host's. Furthermore, the visitor can use neither her own Devotions nor the hosts'. Edges and Flaws that do not depend on a character's physical characteristics also transfer to the new body. The host may automatically force the visitor back to her own body by spending 1 Wits. An unoccupied body gently falls to the ground and remains unconscious, as if taken by a sudden slumber.

Only willing targets may become part of the One Mind. Anyone who has never experienced it before will automatically resist unless the Devotion is explained to them beforehand. Anyone who falls unconscious drops out of the One Mind.

While it is impossible to use the One Mind to probe thoughts that participants wish to conceal, it is difficult to deceive fellow members; such attempts suffer a -3D penalty.

Example: *Luin invests 1 Conviction into One Mind to link with Dinnik and Ven. Each of them stands on distant worlds.*

When Black Fleet pirates attack Ven, Dinnik offers to take over and deal with them. Ven agrees; Dinnik takes over his ally's body. Dinnik can't use his Strength Edge, high Body or Devotions, but he can employ his superior Warrior Aptitude and Close Combat Skill.

Perfection

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Until dismissed

Description: You attune to the divine energies within you, and they inspire you to master your special Expertise.

Effect: Every Conviction spent on Perfection grants the Runebearer a +1D bonus to her Expertise rolls.

Example: *Ji's ship will break apart, unless the Knight succeeds at a Mind + Crafter/Runecrafting Task (target number 10) – and that happens to be Ji's Expertise, in the form of Runecrafting Shipwright, for which she possesses 8 dice. Investing 5 Conviction into Perfection grants a +5D bonus, increasing her chance of success.*

Shadowy Mask

Type: Common (appropriate for one character)

Duration: Until dismissed

Description: You erect a barrier of divine energy that blocks the flow of magical information. This Devotion has no visible effect.

Effect: Shadowy Mask covers a spherical area with a radius of (Conviction spent x 10) metres. In addition, the Runebearer must spend 2 Conviction to activate the power. The Devotion blocks all communication and sensor runecraft, including Chatters, Strand Stones and ship borne devices, from sending information in, out, or within the area. It also blocks all Devotions whose wielders possess a lower Runebearer Aptitude than the character using Shadowy Mask.

The Devotion is an indiscriminate effect, and blocks allies as well as enemies.

Shadowy Mask does not need to follow the Runebearer, who can attach to a willing person, an object or a location.

Example: While part of One Mind generated by a Runebearer 4 ally, *Ven walks into the Tsar's palace on a backwater world. The "court wizard," a powerful Runebearer, has covered the throne room in a Shadowy Mask. Ven loses contact with his One Mind after he enters.*

Shape Shift

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Until dismissed

Description: A shroud of energy in your patron God's colour (in the case of Knights, it's a black cloud) rapidly envelops you and dissipates, leaving you with a different body than before. You may use this power to disguise yourself, or acquire useful physical traits.

Effect: This power allows the Runebearer to change shape. Humans may change shape into other humans, but not Golems, and Golems may change into other Golems, but not humans. The effect is not an illusion; the character's body actually takes on the desired shape.

Changing any and all cosmetic features (height, weight, sex, colour, body plan) costs 2 Conviction unless the Runebearer wishes to look like a specific person, in which case the cost is 4 Conviction.

This cost does not include specific Edges and Flaws, so a disguise as a winged human will fail unless the Runebearer acquires that Edge. It costs 1 Conviction to add one physical Edge, remove one physical Flaw, or acquire any number of physical Flaws. The Runebearer can suppress his own physical Edges at no cost, as long as he invests at least 1 Conviction for any other purpose. The Runebearer may invest multiple Conviction points to acquire multiple traits in one new shape.

This Devotion may not be used to take on a non-Human Scale form, or by a Runebearer residing in a non-Human Scale body.

Example: *Ven takes the form of Var Weasel, Bartholomew Deth's loyal henchman. This costs 6 Conviction points: 4 to duplicate Weasel's general shape, 1 for Weasel's Agile Edge, and 1 for the majordomo's Awkward Size and Ugly Flaws.*

Soul's Eye

Type: Exclusive (Arcath excluded; appropriate for one character)

Duration: Until dismissed

Description: You can sense Devotions and other direct manifestations of divine power. There's no outward sign of the Soul's Eye, but a vision of the phenomenon you detect appears in your thoughts, in the colour of the God responsible for it.

Followers of Arcath cannot learn this Devotion, possibly because the God of War doesn't want his followers discovering that he plays both sides in conflicts.

Effect: The Runebearer can sense Devotions and signs of direct divine action (not runecrafts)

within (Conviction spent x 50) metres, if they manifest within his line of sight. She automatically identifies the origin of Devotions that come from allies she is familiar with (such as fellow members of a Knights' band). Even if the manifestation is behind a barrier but within range, the character senses that *something* is in that direction, but no other information.

The Runebearer automatically identifies any Devotion that she knows. If she doesn't, roll a Mind + Runebearer (task threshold 5) to discover what the power does.

Example: *Luin invests 4 Conviction on Soul's Eye, giving it a range of 200 metres. She automatically identifies Devotions from her band, but also sees threads of red and gold reaching out from a stranger. She recognizes the Evil Eye manifesting in an agent or Arcath by the colour and the face that she also possesses the Evil Eye Devotion.*

Soul Jump

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters) **Note:** Only Golems may possess this Devotion.

Duration: See below

Description: You subdue the intelligence of another Golem and seize its body. The possessed Golem's primary crypt stone (that holding its ruling soul) glows in the colour of the Runebearer's patron. When Knights use this power, shadows twist and concentrate around the stone.

Effect: Soul Jump can only be used by Golems on Golems, to a maximum range of 10 metres per Runebearer rank. (After making contact with the target, the Runebearer may command it beyond this range.)

Spend 1 point of Conviction. If the target Golem is uninhabited, this power works automatically, for as long as the Runebearer desires.

Otherwise, the Runebearer rolls Presence + Runebearer, opposed by the target's Presence + applicable Aptitude/Command. If the Runebearer fails, he cannot use this Devotion on the same target's soul (regardless of the Golem it inhabits) for 24 hours.

If he succeeds, his body lies dormant while he takes possession of the target Golem, treating its body as his own for 1 round per Runebearer rank. At the end of the power's duration he can choose to either use it again, or immediately reanimate his native body.

Soul Jump won't work against a Golem under the effects of Empower Runes.

Example: *Riann invokes Soul Jump against a Golem that's rampaging through a market square. Her player spends a point of Conviction and rolls Presence + Runebearer against the Golem's Presence + Charmer/Command. Riann scores 8 points against the Golem's 4. Her body slumps against a wall, but her soul seizes the other Golem. She runs it away from the crowded square to the local guard, turning "himself" in.*

Soul Shield

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Until dismissed

Description: You generate a spiritual shield against other Devotions. This isn't directly visible,

but if it turns away certain other visible Devotions, its energies shift colour into that of your patron God before vanishing.

Effect: Each point of Conviction the Runebearer invests in Soul Shield provides +1 Armour against Devotions that target him.

If the Runebearer is also part of an active One Mind effect, he can expand the Soul Shield to protect others. He must provide the same degree of protection and pay the Conviction cost separately for each ally he defends, -1 per each additional person protected, to a minimum cost of 1 per ally.

Multiple Soul Shields do not stack, but individual Soul Shields do stack with other forms of protection.

Example: *While part of One Mind, Dinnik invests 3 Conviction in Soul Shield for himself, 2 in a Soul Shield for Luin, and 1 for Ji. This provides 3 Armour against Devotions for all three of them, at a total cost of 6 Conviction.*

Step Out of Mind

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: See below

Description: You cast a haze of inattention over weak minds, causing people to ignore your presence. No visible manifestation accompanies this power.

Effect: Spend 1 Conviction on each intelligent target, and 1 Conviction for all non-intelligent life and runecraft sensors that might detect the Runebearer. The Runebearer may expend Conviction “speculatively,” on targets that may or may not be able to detect him (or even exist). The Conviction cost is the same even if he overspends.

To activate Step Out of Mind, roll Mind + Runebearer, opposed by each observer’s Presence + Rogue/Alertness roll (this automatically results in 0 for all sensors and non-intelligent beings).

If the Runebearer succeeds, targets fail to notice him for a number of rounds equal to his margin of success unless he dismisses the Devotion, attacks someone, or interacts with his environment in a manner that in normal circumstances, everyone would notice (by smashing a vase on the ground or overturning a chair, for example). The Runebearer could use Sleight of Hand to render some actions that are usually noticeable invisible, however.

The Runebearer doesn’t know how long Step Out of Mind will last on a given target, except for animals and sensors. He can, however, opt to renew the Devotion at any time, rerolling and allocating Conviction once again.

If Step Out of Mind fails on any observer, the Devotion will not function on that observer again for one hour. If one observer shakes off the effect while a part of One Mind, everyone in that One Mind notices the Runebearer.

Example: *Riann invests 4 Conviction into Step Out of Mind to affect all sensors and animals, and up to 3 observers, as she sneaks into the warlord’s hall. Her Mind + Runebearer scores 8 points. One of the two door guards scores 6 points to resist the Devotion, and the other scores 4. Riann will be invisible to the first guard for 2 rounds before she needs to check again, will be invisible to the second for 4 rounds, and will defeat sensors for 8 rounds. There is no third*

guard, so that extra point of Conviction is wasted.

Thought Rip

Type: Exclusive (appropriate for one character)

Duration: Instant

Description: You bore through your enemy's psychic defences to read his mind. No visible manifestation accompanies this power, but the target feels sick or disturbed, and senses the Runebearer is somehow assaulting him.

Effect: The Runebearer must look into a target's eyes or speak to him directly (not through a transmitted image or sound) to activate this power. Spend 1 Conviction and roll Presence + Runebearer, opposed by the target's Presence + appropriate Aptitude/Command. This is an attack against the target's Will. Failure renders the target immune to this power for 24 hours.

A Hit reveals either the information the character seeks, or a relevant piece of knowledge that the Runebearer hastily plucks from her target's stream of consciousness. A Knockout seizes a complete record of the target's thoughts. Both outcomes take seconds to occur. The Runebearer may sift through them in meditation. Her player should record the name of the target for future reference. It may be difficult to recover certain memories, especially if they're emotionally charged or were difficult for the target to remember in the first place.

Rhea hates this Devotion; to her the sanctity of the mind is absolute. Even so, Rhea has done nothing to stop her Knights from using it.

Example: *Ven tires of playing word games with the Archon's daughter and activates Thought Rip. His Presence + Runebearer roll is 7 – 5 higher than his target's defending Presence + Charmer/Command roll. This inflicts 5 damage against her 2 current Will: just a Hit, but enough to tear the required information from her thoughts. She feels the terrible weight of Ven's gaze, and slaps him to get away from it.*

Thought Wrack

Type: Exclusive (appropriate for one character)

Duration: See below

Description: Savaging your target's psyche, you invade and rewrite her thoughts. No visible manifestation accompanies this power, but your target feels sick, wounded and violated by your gaze or voice, and knows you're responsible for her disturbed state.

Effect: The Runebearer must look into the target's eyes or speak to him directly (not through a transmitted image or sound) to activate this power. Spend 3 Conviction and 1 Will, and roll Presence + Runebearer, opposed by the target's Presence + appropriate Aptitude/Command. This is an attack against the target's Will. Failure renders the target immune to this power for 24 hours.

A Hit allows the Runebearer to alter a small cluster of opinions or related memories in some fashion that would not be immediately self-destructive, or cause severe harm to close friends and loved ones. He might change his target's religious or political beliefs, but the target would keep

them a secret if she'd be severely persecuted for her new views. He can turn her into a friend, but not a bodyguard willing to attack her former comrades.

A Knockout gives the Runebearer the power to completely change the target's memories or personality, except for one set of personality traits or beliefs essential to her self-identity.

In both cases, the target may deduce that she's been manipulated if her current opinions seem inconsistent with past opinions, or her memories otherwise don't add up. The Guide may ask the Runebearer to roll Mind + applicable Aptitude/Lie, to be opposed by the target's Mind + applicable Aptitude/Logic roll. If the target wins the contest, she notices inconsistencies; if her margin of success is 5 or better, she throws off the effects of Thought Wrack.

Thought Wrack may also be used to undo a prior use of Thought Wrack, resetting the target's personality. This use of the power requires no roll; it's automatically successful.

Without detection or intervention, the effects of Thought Wrack are permanent. Like Thought Rip, this Devotion violates Rhea's ethics, but is permitted to her Runebearers under the Pact of Perfect Trust. It might be a good idea for any Knight using this Devotion to make amends to Rhea before he dies.

Example: *In a fit of pride, Ven uses Thought Wrack to make the Archon's daughter forget his Thought Rip. Her His Presence + Runebearer roll scores 2 points, but her defence scores Her defending roll scores 4 points. She throws off his mental assault and shrieks for the guards.*

If Ven had scored 6 points, he could have erased memories of the interview, but she would feel highly disturbed by his presence. If he had scored 7 or higher (a Knockout against her 2 Will) he could have made her remember him as a lifelong confidant and father figure – even a lover. She would still feel strangely disgusted by him, though she could soon dismiss the sensation. If Ven's band discovered he extensively rewrote her thoughts, he could be seized to face the Lords' justice.

Thousand Knives

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Instant.

Description: A heat ripple extends from your fist and forms into hundreds of shards of burning telekinetic force, violently tearing apart your target. Aside from the heat and rippling effect, this power is invisible and silent, so Runebearers often use it during clandestine operations.

Effect: Spend Conviction, double the result, and convert it into a Wound Damage attack that affects a single target within 500 meters. Roll to attack as if it was any other ranged attack.

Example: *Riann activates Thousand Knives with 4 Conviction, and releases a +8 Wound Attack from her closed fist.*

Touch of Benevolence

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Instant

Description: Energy in the colour of your patron God envelops your target's body, healing her of wounds and maladies. Knights wrap their patients in a field of shadow.

Effect: Spend Conviction to achieve the following results:

- *Heal Hits:* 1 Conviction removes 3 Stun Hits, 2 Lethal Hits or 1 Mortal Hit.
- *Heal Knockout:* 3 Conviction removes a Knockout.
- *Heal Downed:* 5 Conviction removes the Downed status.
- *Raise the Dead:* 10 Conviction resurrects a target who has been dead for no more than an hour, so long as his soul has not been trapped in a crypt stone or otherwise removed. This power works on followers of Rhea, who have not yet been fully given to the Goddess. The target recovers into the Downed status, and may require additional care to survive after that.
- *Cure Disease or Poison:* Each point of Conviction reduces the Hazard rank of a poison or illness by 2. If this reduces it to 0, the patient is cured.
- *Regenerate:* Spend between 2 (enough for a finger) and 8 (spine or major organ) Conviction to restore a destroyed body part that would cause an ongoing disability above and beyond general injury. The Guide sets the amount required.

The Runebearer may invoke any combination of effects on a single use, but a target may only benefit from Touch of Benevolence (from any Runebearer) once every 24 hours. It has no effect on Golems.

Example: *Dinnik's in rough shape. He's suffered 4 Wound Hits, 3 Mortal Hits, is Down, and is convulsing due to a toxin running through his veins. Igtus throws 10 Conviction into Touch of Benevolence: 3 of to eliminate Dinnik's Mortal Hits, 5 to remove the Down status, and 2 to reduce the toxin's Hazard rank by 4. Dinnik wakes up with 4 Wound Hits – damaged, but ambulatory. He'll need to wait till tomorrow before Touch of Benevolence can affect him again.*

Void Blast

Type: Exclusive (appropriate for one character)

Duration: Instant

Description: A crack opens in the fabric of existence. Behind it, your God's eye opens, irises filled with complex shapes of energy, until the power bursts forth, consuming anything in its path. Rhea's eye releases black lightning. Arcath's eye is closed, but red-gold fire spills from gaps in his stitched eyelid.

Effect: Spend 1 Will and as much Conviction as you like. Triple the total. This is the rank of a Wound Hazard that affects one area with a diameter of 20 meters per Runebearer rank, at any point within her line of sight up to a maximum distance of 500 meters.

Example: *Luin (Runebearer Rank 6) stands on top of his ship as it closes on a Croe's Tomb. Rhea's Eye opens before him; he spends 8 Conviction and a Void Blast blows a hole in its deck 120 meters wide, inflicting a 24 rank Wound Hazard. The hole is wide enough to fly his vessel into.*

Wings of Shadow

Type: Common (appropriate for multiple characters)

Duration: Until dismissed; maximum 1 hour.

Description: Winds of energy the colour of your patron sprout from your shoulders, and you

take flight at Orbital speeds.

Effect: Spend 1 Conviction per boom of speed. The Devotion protects users from acceleration, wind shear, small particles and low air pressure, including vacuum. It also provides air. Furthermore, the Runebearer may attain top speed or stop immediately.

The Runebearer makes Body + applicable Aptitude/Athletics rolls to perform complex manoeuvres, similar to piloting a ship. Collisions and shockwaves from extreme acceleration are serious hazards.

This power may not be used underwater.

Example: *As the assassin's ship flies out of port, Riann activates Wings of Shadow. The black wings appear as her player spends 5 Conviction. She immediately streaks into the sky at 5 booms. The ground beneath her cracks and every window for dozens of meters shatters.*

Creating Devotions

The Guide and players should feel free to make their own Devotions. There are several ways to do this:

- **Change the Description:** Take an existing power and change how it looks. Thousand Knives could easily be the God's Lightning. Wings of Shadow could become the Divine Chariot. Crystal Skin could be Iron Skin.
- **Alter Existing Devotions:** Make minor modifications to an existing Devotion. Want to make Thousand Knives into Flame Tongue? Reduce its range to 10meters and rule that anyone flammable who suffers damage from it must face a burning Hazard equal to the Conviction spent.
- **Create a Whole New Devotion:** This is the hardest method. Determine what the Devotion does and assign a value per Conviction, or straight Conviction cost. Use existing Devotions as a model. Powerful Devotions require more Conviction, and may require Will as well.

Step 8: Determine Possessions

All Knights acquire equipment that suits their Aptitudes, such as a Rogue's lock picks and a Scholar's think disks and books. A Pilot has access to a number of common vehicles. The Hidden Sun also supplies Knights with the basic necessities such as survival gear, torches, scanners, and Edge-class weapons and armour. Don't worry about tracking equipment unless it would make a dramatic difference to the story.

Each band also acquires a Knight Carrier. Pick one of the models in Chapter Seven.

Human Knights start with the special gear outlined in Chapter Four. Their game traits are:

- **Kill Gauntlets:** +4 Wounds or +5 Wounds when taking the shape of a favoured weapon (sword, mace, etc. – choose one).
- **Dark Hide:** Inactive Dark hide provides 2 Armour versus attacks. Active Dark Hide

provides 4 Armour versus attacks and environmental hazards, night vision, and flash suppression (+2D to resist blinding light).

- **Knight Tabard:** This item heals the wearer of 1 Wound Hit per hour and 1 Mortal Hit per day, and automatically stabilizes seriously wounded users.
- **Storm Belt:** Structure: 1, Manoeuvrability: 2, Speed: 3 (300kph), SP: 5, Armour: 0

Golem Knights gain the following equipment:

- **Integral Armour:** The Golem acquires armour with a bonus equal to his highest Golem Attribute. Half of this bonus (rounded up) consists of runecloth in hidden compartments that must be deployed at a mental command, and is visible to others.
- **Runecloth Weapons:** The Golem acquires hidden runecloth weapons. Once active (and visible), they inflict damage equal to the Golem's Body + 1.

Over the course of the game, Knights may stumble on gear they'd normally have no access to, like custom built Inner Circle Golems or a burning sword of Murah. The Hidden Sun usually allows bands to keep what they find.