



A dystopian fantasy game about fallen kingdoms and quantum magic on an alien world.

A STORY...

Avir drifted through the currents of the Void, his eyes closed. He could feel the ripples around him, faint fluctuations echoing like a distant hum, rising and falling as he sought their source. Not far now, thousands of minds buzzing as one, the harmony of the Rephaim.

He opened his eyes and swam towards the noise, cautiously, searching for any movement against the purple-black energies that swirled around him. He pushed forward and the misty currents parted, revealing in the distance his target: the silvery spires sparkled ominously against the Void, humming with thought and malice.

The structure was huge, larger than any city, somehow sculpted from the Void itself. The Rephaim swarmed around it in the thousands, like a swarm of insects protecting a hive. He floated there, still, keeping his thoughts calm and slow so they wouldn't sense him as he surveyed the enormous machine. He had been born in a place like that, he remembered the dark chambers inside that produced the Vaelyth, weaving them together the way a seamstress weaves cloth. He'd seen others like it many times, but never one quite so large. This one could make whole armies.

He pushed off, swimming away until the horrific thing was no longer in sight. He reached out to the Veil and ripped it wide, slipping back into the world to report what he had seen. Grimly he wondered how something so big could possibly be destroyed - yet they had to try.

* * *

Altaris

Age of Ruin

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ALTAIS: KICKSTARTER PREVIEW

Welcome to the Kickstarter Preview for *Altais: Age of Ruin*. This document was written to give you a taste of what's to come from the finished project, it's incomplete, some of it is untested, and there are probably more than a few mistakes, but hopefully it will inspire you to try it out and run a few games, we'd love to know what you think.

So what's still to be done between now and the final document?

Well first off there's a lot more to write: much of the world still needs to be fleshed out and many mechanics have not yet been included. Talents and spells only go up to level 3 instead of the 5 planned and we have a lot of new character creation options still to write: new Talents, new spells, and a whole heap of new Backgrounds.

Perhaps most notably missing though is layout and formatting. We've included some art and basic formatting in this document to make it nicer to read, but the final book will feature a detailed and professional layout created by people who are experts in that sort of thing. Check out the draft of the final layout on our Kickstarter page.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy what we've put together so far, and we look forward to hearing about your adventures.

INTRODUCTION TO ALTAIS

Altais: Age of Ruin is a dystopian fantasy roleplaying game set on a world where the land has been ravaged by magic, where once noble kingdoms have fallen into tyranny and rebellion, and where the players can work to save the world or dance in the ashes.

It is the first book in the *Rephaim War* saga, a new series of games about humanity waging a war throughout the ages: from their early beginnings on primordial earth to their distant future on a faraway world.

We begin at the end of the story: humanity has fled their home to other worlds, built new civilizations and waged countless wars. Society has fallen and technology has been lost, but now on the distant world of *Altais* they try one last time to rebuild while the ancient enemy, the *Rephaim*, claim more territory every year. It is a desperate and dangerous time: The perfect time for heroes.

THEME: NO FURTHER TO FALL

Altais is a game about a world that has descended into chaos, a dark backdrop against which heroes shine. It's about the last sparks of honour fighting omnipresent corruption. It's a game about rebellion and adventure in a world that desires neither. Because no matter how far the world falls into shadow, there will always be those determined to drag it back into the light.

Behind this backdrop there are other themes at work:

It is a world set in our future, humanity has fled Earth, hunted across the stars to an alien world full of new dangers and discoveries. It's about technology mistaken for magic, exploring other dimensions, and the damage that misunderstandings (political, cultural, and magical) can cause to the world.

THE WORLD OF ALTAIS

97.4 light-years away from Earth, in the constellation *Draco*, a small blue-green planet named *Altais* orbits a star of the same name. The planet is not really all that different to Earth; it has a nitrogen/oxygen atmosphere, its surface is mostly ocean, and the land is covered in an abundance of life in a multitude of different forms.

There are two moons orbiting *Altais*: the largest is known as *Sahar* and completes an orbit once every 24 days, the other is *Yerah*, a smaller moon that orbits significantly faster, completing an orbit in just 9 days.

The day is about 22 Earth hours long, and a year lasts for 287 *Altaen* days.

The two brightest stars in the sky are called the Celestials, they appear at night, just over the Northern horizon and are close together. They are named Hypatia and Cecillia and it is believed that they are ancient deities from a race called the Erelim who brought the people to Altai. There was once a third Celestial named Maria but a thousand years ago it fell from the sky and brought terrible destruction and chaos to the land. Since then it has symbolised death and ill omen and most avoid speaking its name.

There are temples dedicated to all three deities. It is believed that they are three sisters who brought the first people, the Eesa, to this land from far away and helped them make a new life for themselves.

Hypatia is the eldest of the three and the first to arrive. She is revered as a mother figure who brings life and safety and who watches over her people still.

The second sister is Maria, the fallen one. She who fell from the sky and brought about the Fall. She is the slain Goddess and is associated with death and endings.

The third sister is Cecillia, the invader. The youngest sister, she who brought new people to the world, and with them she brought war and chaos. The harbinger of strife and Goddess of battle.



HISTORY

Much of the history of Altai has been lost, through wars, natural disasters and the passage of time. There are scholars who try to piece things back together, but there is much that will always remain a mystery.

Historians record that there have been four ages on Altai, each marked by certain developments and each ending with disaster.

THE FIRST AGE: THE AGE OF HARMONY

The first age began with the arrival of the Eesa, the first people. The first two Celestials, Hypatia and Maria carried them to Altai from a faraway land, and they brought with them great power and strange magics now lost. It is said that they came to the land fleeing an ancient enemy called the Rephaim, hoping to find a new home free from their attacks.

No one really knows how long ago this was, but many millennia have certainly passed since that day.

While it is assumed that they built cities, none of them still stand and no one really knows much about this time, the details having long been lost.

Occasionally ancient remnants are found of this age, powerful objects possessing strange magics able to reshape the ground and change the path of rivers. Such items are not well understood and most of the remnants that have been found (and there haven't been many) have no known purpose.

The first age ended with the arrival of the third Celestial, Cecillia, and the coming of the Nasar.

THE SECOND AGE: THE AGE OF DISCORD

According to legend, a third Celestial appeared in the sky one night and brought with it the Nasar. Wild savages that tried to take the land and magics of the Eesa by force. War broke out between the two peoples; the Eesa were powerful but the Nasar savagery knew no bounds and they did not hesitate to destroy all that the Eesa held dear. Cities were reduced to ruins, farms burned and people died by the thousands.

The Nasar War went on and on, becoming less and less organised and finally descending into chaos. The armies of both sides were broken and much of the knowledge of magic was lost during this time as it became less about territory and more about struggling to survive. Skirmishes were fought over food and weapons and these battles continued on and off for centuries.

Eventually a great hero rose amongst the people, a man named Visyr who rallied the people to him and began to restore order to the land. Gathering a great army, he launched a full scale attack, pushing the Nasar forces far to the East and ending the war. A row of towers were built across the land to watch for their return and peace returned to the land.

THE THIRD AGE: THE AGE OF KINGDOMS

After the chaos and war of the Second Age, the land was in ruins. The people began working together to rebuild, first small settlements and then huge cities. The magic that had allowed the Eesa to build their wonders was long lost but the people made do with hard work and determination. The Kingdom of Aroja formed, ruled over by Queen Meluis and under her wise guidance there was peace for a time.

Other cities sprung up and grew, and in time they became Kingdoms in their own right: Korm, Tryan, and Selucia.

For a few hundred years there was peace, but eventually war broke out between them and they fought over land and resources. The Kingdom War lasted for decades, the cities were destroyed and the land split once more into squabbling factions. Eventually, when there was nothing left to fight over, an uneasy peace returned.

Over the next thousand years, new cities were built and ten new kingdoms rose and divided the land peacefully between themselves. Not wishing to repeat the wars of the past, alliances were signed and an age of prosperity commenced. There was open trade and dedication to the arts. During this time magic was rediscovered and people began to dedicate themselves to its study.

As thousands of years passed, magic spread until it was taught all across the land as an essential skill. Everyone from the high lords, through the learned scholars to the common peasant could use it and with magic to help them they flourished. The Kingdoms continued to grow and they began to use magic in the construction of their cities until each had become a mighty wonder. Among these wonders were counted a city made of steel, one that floated through the air, another built under the water, and more.

People travelled from across the world to visit them.

THE FOURTH AGE: THE AGE OF RUIN

Then came the Fall. The Celestial Maria fell from the sky and hit the ground. Dust clouded the sky for months and magic started to go haywire. To the west, at the site of the Celestials impact, the Veil between realms was torn asunder and the Rephaim, the ancient enemy of the Eesa written about in manuscripts, re-entered the world and began their invasion.

Priests claimed the Fall was due to the sins and debauchery of the people, kings blamed each other, and many blamed magic.

In the chaos that followed, much of the buried resentments bubbled to the surface, those who had been plotting for decades saw an opportunity to strike. Rulers were assassinated, the Kingdoms fell and society was plunged once more into ruin.

It has been over a thousand years since the Fall. Society has begun to mend but corruption and war are still common. While the Kingdoms bicker amongst themselves, scholars look to the sky in fear: the two remaining Celestials seem to grow closer every year and the world will not survive the coming of another Fall.

THE KINGDOMS



Altai is a world just like our own, it has oceans and continents, rivers and forests, and most of it is unexplored. The majority of the human population lives on the continent of Orcia and although there is shipping routes between its cities and some of the surrounding islands, no other large continents have been fully explored.

Most people are born and die within one of Altai's Kingdoms, all left over from before the Fall. Some of the kingdoms survived better than others, some are almost intact while others have fallen to ruin completely, and at least one is mysteriously missing...

MEHARAVIA – THE KINGDOM OF GLASS

Thousands of years ago, Meharavia was known as the Kingdom of Tides; a great city on the ocean's floor, woven from glass and protected by a magical dome. When the Fall shattered the land, the earth shook and the oceans shifted. The waves withdrew and the sandy ocean floor became a desert with the city in its centre. The dome protected the city from much of the chaos of that time and the glass towers still stand, untouched by the Fall.

Meharavia is perhaps the greatest wonder left in the world, the dome now keeps out the heat of the desert and shields the city from the sand storms that sweep through the area. Inside the dome the weather is temperate, condensation on the inside of the dome causes occasional rain fall and plants grow providing food, while beyond the dome there is only a wasteland.

While the city remained intact, the population was not unaffected. The city had long survived on the food supplied by the ocean and now the population faced starvation. Trade routes with the other kingdoms had been cut off and riots began in the city. The ruling class were overthrown and although new forms of agriculture were soon established, it took years for the chaos to fully subside.

Eventually a soldier arose who rallied an army, defeated his opposition and declared himself Mavia (king). He was Niava Kamade and his line ruled for over a thousand years. He established the Ranaven, the guilds that encompassed many of the cities professions and ensured all craftsman were working to the same high standard.



Meharavia – The capital city of the Kingdom of Glass

Over time this caused a wealth gap to appear as society split into two distinct halves, those families who could afford membership in one of the Ranaven became the upper and working classes and those who couldn't became the lower classes.

For a long time the position of Mavia was passed down through the Kamade family, inherited by the oldest child. Each Mavia was advised by a council containing representatives from each of the Ranaven who ensured that the needs of the people (or at least the middle and upper classes) were met. The last Mavia was a wise and generous man named Dahia Kamade who ruled the Kingdom well for forty years and was well liked by all. However trouble had been brewing even before he took office. The Renaven had been growing steadily in wealth and power,

especially the Namiaven or merchant guilds. Through their complete monopoly over land trade with the surrounding Kingdoms and their growing control over ocean trade they had grown enormously wealthy.

This tension came to a head eighty years ago when the Namiaven organised a coup and the murder of the Mavia. An alliance of Ranaven took control in what has since become known as the Coup of Coins due to the incredible number of bribes openly given to make it happen. The usurpers declared themselves the Menata and their alliance is often referred to as "The Accord" although some also call them "Menaya" instead, swapping the last syllable for "ya" to indicate corruption and evil (see the section on language below).

Since the coup, the Menata have ruled without opposition until now. There is trouble brewing to the North East in the city of Tamasia where it is said Tejin Kamade, grandson of the last Mavia, is rallying an army to take back his grandfather's crown.

The people of Meharavia call themselves the Ven which means simply "people".

THE RANAVERN

There are nine Ranaven that hold some degree of power within the city today. Membership is available to anyone that can afford their high entry prices and yearly tithes. Each Ranaven has their own set of rules that their members must follow, mostly related to how they carry out their profession, ensuring a minimum quality of products, as well as regulations on prices and trade. Each Ranaven also strictly enforces their own monopoly, those who attempt to start a business in an area controlled by one of the Ranaven soon find themselves run out of the city or worse.

People who can't afford membership or who have professions that don't fall within one of the Ranaven's influence are viewed as lower class and are afforded few privileges.

The Ranaven are:

Herinha ("to serve"): Mages, doctors, and apothecaries. They were originally called the Diasen which means "to mend" and were experts in the more obscure and specialised areas of academia. They focused on repairing the body and the Veil, believing the two to be connected. They were not a part of the Coup of Coins, but were commanded at spear point to serve or die. They chose to serve, and have been known as the Herinha (literally "to serve") ever since. Today their Ranaven is more heavily regulated by the Accord than any other out of fear for their magic. All members are indoctrinated from a young age to have a subservient role and they are taught that they are lower in station than any other Ranaven.

Ravahana ("to remember"): Historians, academics and scribes. They were originally dedicated to keeping records of all transactions and proceedings, looking after libraries, and providing their services as scribes, historians and linguists. During the Coup of Coins, they sided with the Mavia, believing him to be the rightful ruler. They were declared traitors in the aftermath and since they had no soldiers, they were forced to flee the mainland to an old military fort called Yiaja on a nearby island. Yiaja had been abandoned since the Fall due to belief that it was cursed and haunted but the Ravahana found little evidence of this when they moved in. A few years later they made peace with the Accord so that the preservation of history could continue. Today they have grown in power and have both a small army and mages amongst their number. They continue to operate from their island fortress and mostly stay out of politics, dedicating themselves to finding relics and lost knowledge of the past.

Seruhin ("to watch"): The Seruhin were formed by the first Mavia in the early years after the Fall to watch over the borders of the land and to warn if any other kingdom tried to invade. They were scouts and spies and some were sent to infiltrate other lands or sow discord. They are rumoured to be always watching for signs of treason, unseen and unheard, even within the capital itself and so they are rarely spoken about even in a whisper. Despite their reputation, they didn't see the Coup of Coins coming and failed to save the last Mavia. This became a point of great shame for them, and refusing to serve the Accord they vanished into the desert. To this day they continue to perform their function, going unseen and unannounced, most believe they are little more than a legend but they just keep to themselves and keep their identities secret. Many seruhin are recruited from orphaned children who are taken away to secret camps to be trained.

Namiaven (“to trade”): The Namiaven are merchants and traders, they started off as a small Ranaven but over time they have grown to be the largest. It was the Namiaven that masterminded the Coup of Coins, using the incredible wealth they had gathered from trading routes to bribe the Javana and Vamiata into recognising their rule. They are made up of the wealthiest families in the kingdom and control three of the six seats in the Accord. Their main trade routes are overland with the Kingdoms of Rust and Storms but they also have extensive ocean trade routes to many other ports around the world.

Javana (“to die”): The military of Meharavia. They were originally formed in case of invasion from the other kingdoms but have since become guards and law enforcement in every city. During the Coup of Coins they were bribed by the Namiaven to support their uprising and quickly overwhelmed the royal guard. It was a famous member of the Javana, a man named Niafa, who slew the last Mavia. The Javana hold one seat on the Accord. Today the javana recruit mercenaries and hire their services out to any that can afford to pay. They use a form of sign language to communicate silently with one another when discretion is required.

Tunama (“to shape”): This Ranaven consists of an alliance of craftsman of all kinds, smiths, weavers, tanners, bowyers and fletchers. Anyone who intends to create something and sell it must seek membership in this guild. Their interests overlap with some of the other guilds, while they focus on the creation of practical things such as tools, furniture, buildings, clothes, etc, the Ratia cover the creation of works of art and the two have an agreement that they won’t compete. They also do not work with glass which is the sole providence of Nianu. The Tunama were persuaded to join the Coup of Coins with promises of wealth and hold one seat on the Accord.

Ratia (“to be”): Artists and Performers. The Ratia seek to entertain and enliven the lives of those around them through works of art and performance. They are artists, sculptors, musicians, actors, playwrights and performers. They focus on crafts intended to amuse, delight and amaze and make things that are pleasing to the eye rather than practical. They did not take part in the Coup of Coins, and in fact weren’t even asked by the Namiaven who hold them in some contempt. For their part they do not like the Accord which often stifles their freedom and creativity but they are careful not to voice their distaste too loudly lest they lose what freedoms they still have.

Vamiata (“to speak”): The Vamiata are adjudicators, judges and speakers. They administer the laws of the city, judge criminals, and settle disputes. Their ranks also contain heralds, announcers and town criers. During the Coup of Coins they were bribed by the Namiaven and rewrote the laws to legitimise the usurpers. They hold one seat on the Accord.

Nianu (“to weave”): Of all the Ranaven, the Nianu have the most unusual position within society. They are craftsman who work almost exclusively with glass. Despite being creators they are neither connected to the Tunama or the Ratia and both of those guilds are forbidden from working with glass. They have many Pattern mages amongst their ranks who use their magic to shape the desert sand into glass that is harder and stronger than steel. Most significantly they forge the glass coins that serve as the Kingdom’s currency and also act as bankers and money lenders. Their wealth and political power, as well as their possession of unique magics known only to them have ensured they retain their monopoly over glass, however they have remained proudly neutral in all politics since they began almost a thousand years ago and they did not take part in the Coup of Coins. A representative of the Nianu is often invited to sit in Accord meetings even though they technically have no say on the council and the Namiavan often go out of their way to keep them on side as they may be the only Ranavan that rivals their influence within the capital.

LANGUAGE

Language in the Kingdom of Glass uses an alphabet in which each character is a complete sound. They do not have vowels and consonants and the sounds are always soft syllables, each of which has an ancient inherent meaning. The alphabet is generally written as follows:

					Resa (meaning)
Me	Ma	Mia	Min	Mu	First, great, important, above, city
He	Ha	Hia	Hin	Hu	Lesser, under, beneath, last, town
Re	Ra	Ria	Rin	Ru	Wisdom, patience, past, enduring
Ve	Va	Via	Ven	Vu	Water, deep, life, person
Ne	Na	Nia	Nin	Nu	Water, scarcity, value, glass, wealth
Se	Sa	Sia	Sen	Su	Dark, secret, sand, cave
Te	Ta	Tia	Ten	Tu	Mountains, high, clouds, sky
Je	Ja	Jia	Jin	Ju	Distant, far, horizon
De	Da	Dia	Den	Du	Lucky, blessed
We	Wa	Wia	Wen	Wu	Near, abundant, lacking in value
Be	Ba	Bia	Ben	Bu	Future, uncertain, unwise
	Ya	Yia	Yen		Broken, incomplete, evil, misfortune
Fe	Fa	Fia	Fen	Fu	<i>Unofficially:</i> bland, boring, ignorant
En	An	Ian	In	Un	Light, day, flame, bright

Each syllable can be thought of as one of the consonants “m”, “h”, “r”, “f”, “v”, “n”, “s”, “t”, and “y” followed by one of the vowels “e”, “a”, “ia”, “in” and “u”. Although for many of the consonants the vowel “in” becomes “en”.

Each syllable only has one pronunciation and the vowel sounds are always long sounds:

“Me” is pronounced “Meh” as in “**Me**rit”, not like the English word “Me” (referring to oneself).

“Ma” is pronounced “Mah” as in “**Ma**rch” and not with a short sound like in “**Ma**n”

“Mia” is pronounced “mee-ah” as in “academ**ia**”.

“Min” is pronounced like in “**mi**nute” and not like in “**mi**nor”

“Ren” is pronounced “ren” and never “reen”, like in “**Re**novate” and not like in “**Are**na”

“Mu” is pronounced “moo” like in “**M**ovie” and not like in “**M**uch”

The sounds of the other consonants rhyme with these.

The last row of syllables are the only ones that begin with vowels.

Syllables beginning with a “Y” are always pronounced like the consonant, not the vowel, so “Ya” is pronounced “yah” and not “i-ah”, for example in “**Y**ard”, not like in “**Cy**an”. The sounds of syllables also never merge, each is pronounced distinctly, for example “Tunama” is pronounced “Too-nah-mah” and not “Toon-a-mah” or “Toon-am-ah”. There are no silent letters.

Each row on the above table is called a “Resa”, a group of sounds that share a common meaning and these often add extra nuance to a word. The capital city Meharavia for example can be broken down into the Resa; “Me” (city), “ha” (under), “ra” (enduring), and “via” (water) which could be read to mean something like “the city that enduring under the water”. This refers to the city’s original location beneath the ocean. During the chaos of the Fall the oceans receded and the city became exposed to the air, but the name remained.

The meaning behind the Resa are mostly used by poets and politicians when they want to add extra nuance to their words and most of them don’t affect day to day life. The syllables at the start of a word are also more likely to mean something than those at the end and sometimes the Resa are ignored entirely. The syllables of each Resa have the same meaning, for example there is no difference to the meanings for “Me”, “Ma”, “Mia”, “Min” and “Mu”. Syllables ending in “e” and “a” are more likely to appear at the start of a word while “ia”, “in” and “u” are more likely to appear at the end although this isn’t a strict rule and many exceptions exist.

Of particular note is the Resa for “Ya”, “Yia” and “Yen”. There are no syllables in the language for the two missing sounds “Ye” and “Yu”, it’s theorised that these sounds were once used but they fell into disuse and no modern example of them exists. Because of this these sounds are often referred to as belonging to the “broken Resa” and they have come to symbolise that which is incomplete or evil. Parents almost never use these syllables when naming their children for example, to do so would curse the child to a life of misfortune.

The other unusual Resa are for the “F” syllables. Whatever meaning they may once have held was lost and for a long time these sounds fell into infrequent use and were often seen as being bland and neutral sounds. Recently they have begun to reappear amongst the youth of the Kingdom, used in new words intended to insult by implying that a person is dull or ignorant. Although not officially accepted by academics, this is a new Resa forming.

Glossary

Mavia: King.

Ranaven: Caste or guild.

Herinha: Mages and servants. Sworn to serve.

Ravahana: Historians and academics, searching for relics and lost knowledge.

Seruhin: Spies that once possessed the ability to move unseen. Vanished into the desert after the Coup of Coins.

Namiaven: Merchants. The masterminds behind the Coup of Coins.

Javana: Military, soldiers, guards.

Tunama: Craftsman of all kinds.

Ratia: Artists and Performers.

Vamiata: Adjudicators, judges, lawyers.

Nianu: Glassworks, money creators, banks.



LOCATIONS IN THE KINGDOM OF GLASS



Meharavia: The capital city. Often used interchangeably as the kingdom name.

Menaven: The Kingdom's largest port city and a major centre of trade and power for the Namiaven.

Tamasia: A large city built into the Storm Wall mountains. Rumoured to be filled with dissent and talk of rebellion.

Nasia: A large city to the North West of the capital, a major centre of trade with the surrounding kingdoms.

Ruhana: A fortress that guards the only pass to the Kingdom of Rust.

Turinha: A fortress guarding the only pass to the Kingdom of Storms.

Yiaja: An ancient island fortress held by the Ravahana. Said to be haunted.

Favuhin: A small port town, far from the capital.

Vasuhin: A small coastal town near the border with the Kingdom of Beasts.

Jaruha: A small desert town.

Yayenva: Three ancient ruined metal towers rise out of the sea. No one knows their purpose.

ITA'IKARAN – THE KINGDOM OF RUST

"I will ask you this only once heretic, in the name of the First Ones, who taught you this sorcery? Answer and I will spare you further torment." - Conservator Villis of the Conventicle, lying to a mage.



The Kingdom of Rust is a region wracked with constant conflict. Most of the land is ruled over by the Barons, who make frequent war upon each other and the Ikari peasants are burdened with taxes from their own lord, religious inquisitions, and attacks from the neighbouring baronies.

Each Baron rules from a keep, a huge and ancient fortification that dates back to before the fall, surrounded by a bustling city. The walls of each keep, and many of the older buildings are made of magically shaped iron, using a technique long since lost. They have rusted in the millennia since their construction, giving the kingdom its name.

Life within the larger cities is not so bad, those who can afford to live there are taxed exorbitantly but otherwise left in peace. For those born of noble blood (or those who have claimed it by force), life is actually pleasant; banquets at the Baron's court, attending performances by favoured artists, and socialising with the rest of the gentry. The wealthy live lives of leisure and give little thought to the hardship of the peasants who work all day to provide their food.

The capital city was once Ita'Ikaran but it has long since fallen to ruin and is mostly abandoned, save for scavengers and brigands who take shelter within its rusting iron walls.

In contrast to this chaos, the Northern-most territories are controlled by the Conventicle, an organisation dedicated to the worship of the first settlers and enforcing law and order through strength of arms. They hunt magic users as heretics and teach that only through their rule can peace be returned to the world.

Although the armies of the Conventicle are larger than any single Baron's, they would be outnumbered should the Barons ever unite. This has led to an agreement between them: The Barons will enforce Conventicle law, help persecute heretics, and not interfere with the work of their Conservators, and in exchange the Conventicle stays out of the wars and politics between the Barons. The truce is a very fragile one though and the Conventicle grows bolder in their demands all the time.

The Conventicle rules their territory from the city of Ita'Visyr, located at the tip of the Northern peninsula. Unlike the fortresses of the Barons, many of the metal buildings within Ita'Visyr remain free of rust and the city shines in the sunlight, a jewel with the blue ocean beyond.

Within the city there are temples to the three Celestials and the doctrine of the Eesa is taught as religion and law. Magic is blamed for bringing about the Fall, for only the Eesa were pure enough to wield it and the Fall was punishment for the arrogance of a society that saw itself as their equals. As a result, magic is outlawed within the kingdom and the special mage hunters called Conservators hunt down those who practice it.

Conservators are treated with fear all across the Kingdom, even within the Baronies they have the authority to detain and question anyone suspected of using magic.

Each Conservator is in charge of a captured mage called a Silent, they are bound and chained using an ancient device called an Inhibitor that prevents them using their magic without the Conservator's permission. Tortured and broken, the Silent are forced to hunt other mages and those that prove uncooperative are executed.

The people of Ita'Ikaran call themselves the Ikari.



NABON – THE KINGDOM OF ASH

The Western-most kingdom and the site of the Fall, named for the grey dust that blotted out the sky and which continues to blanket the area. It's a harsh land, struggling to recover from the worst disaster in the world's history. Plant and animal life are often stunted by the high levels of radiation that still fill the area, but they are slowly adapting. The people of Nabon reflect the nature of the land, often frail and sickly in appearance. Most live in small towns and villages and struggle to grow enough food to survive but they too are adapting. It's not just the land that's against them though, the Rephaim lurk beyond the Veil and their servants, the Vaelyth rule over the major cities in their stead.

Rephaim fall into one of two categories: Greater and Lesser.

Greater Rephaim retain some semblance of who they once were, they retain some solid mass as well and are able to enter the physical world and interact with it normally. They are ancient and have devices implanted in their bodies, technology from a past age, a past world. Fortunately for the Altaens these creatures are extremely few in number.



Most of the Rephaim are of the Lesser variety, those who have succumbed to the radiation of the Void. They lack free will of their own but seem to be extensions of the Greater Rephaim's thoughts, communicating through a form of hive mind. They are ephemeral and can only enter the physical world for a short time. If they stay too long, they begin to fade away and are forced back into the Void, a fact which makes direct attacks by Rephaim armies very rare.

Because of this, the Rephaim create human servants called Vaelyth to be their eyes and hands in the physical world. They are the Rephaim's military generals, their soldiers, and their spies. Their flesh and bones are woven together within huge machines deep in the Void where they are instilled with an uncompromising loyalty to their masters. Sometimes this programming doesn't hold and a Vaelyth manages to break free and develop a personality of their own, these Unbound are forced to flee their former masters and take refuge amongst the other kingdoms.

Four of the Vaelyth have been promoted above the rest, they rule over the Kingdom of Ash from separate keeps, sometimes waging war with one another, a sign that perhaps the Rephaim are not all united.

The people of Nabon call themselves Nabonians.



Prince Aradan, Lord of Nabon and the Kingdom of Ash

ELAL USHRIA – THE KINGDOM OF STORMS



Before the Fall, the city of Elal Ushria was one of the most magnificent in Altias, it floated above the ground, slowly drifting about the region, and many came from all over just to see this marvel. During the Fall, as the dust of the Celestial's impact filled the sky, the magic holding the city aloft was disrupted. The winds that carried it spun into a terrifying storm and the city plunged to the ground, breaking apart into pieces.

Today the region has several smaller cities built on the edge of the great storm that swirls in its heart. The storm is all but impenetrable to anyone that lacks the proper magical protection, but within its heart, in the relatively calm eye of the storm, the ruins of Elal Ushria drift still. Although the original inhabitants of the city were killed when it fell from the sky, it has not remained empty. Many people have found their way there over the years and now a bustling civilisation lives within. They have tied the drifting fragments of the city together with ropes and crude bridges and live on all but the most perilous pieces.

Magic in this kingdom is greatly respected, especially because only magic can grant safe passage through the storm. Elal Ushria is ruled by a small council who are the closest thing the land has to benevolent leaders and they spend most of their time overseeing the wellbeing of their people. The Kingdom has extremely fertile ground and an abundance of farms, allowing it to maintain strong trade with its neighbours.

To the East of Elal Ushria, stand a row of ancient watchtowers, built during the Second Age to keep the Nasar at bay. In the thousands of years since, no Nasar has ever been seen West of the towers, and it's been a long time since anyone kept serious vigil over the border. A few scholars still man the towers, using them for research and studying their ancient construction, but the land is ill prepared should the Nasar return.

The people of Elal Ushria refer to themselves as the Elalshi ("People of Elal").

AMONASTRA – THE KINGDOM OF SERPENTS

The great storm over Elal Ushria carries rain water away from the Kingdom of Glass, leaving a desert behind, and deposits it over the Kingdom of Serpents where it falls upon the three Storm Spire Mountains, before flowing down rivers into the flood plains below. As a result, the Kingdom of Serpents has become mostly swampland and marsh.

The difficult and dangerous terrain makes large cities uncommon, instead the population is clustered around many small villages scattered along the rivers, most only a day or so ride from one another. The largest of these, and the capital of the region, is Amonastra, a huge city filled with many ancient buildings that predate the Fall.

The people of the Kingdom of Serpents are referred to as Kamasians and they hold reptiles as sacred, but above all they worship gods they call the Forgotten. They have many names for them, some say an infinite number, one name in particular is never used: their true name: Drakari. It is said that the Drakari were reptilian humanoids that once ruled the land but no one has seen one in at least a thousand years, and beyond the borders of the Kingdom most believe they are a myth.

Most Kamasians are also experienced sailors and the region boasts more ocean vessels than any other Kingdom. The majority are for trade, but they also have the largest military navy in the world. Of all the Kingdoms, they have sent the most ships off to explore faraway lands but besides a few small islands, no other large continents have ever been found.

VA'AJ TA'UK – THE KINGDOM OF BLOOD

Va'aj Ta'uk. It's a name that makes people shudder in fear, but this wasn't always the case. It was once a magnificent marvel, The Kingdom of Gold, a mighty underground empire that spanned most of the known world. Their Stone Weavers could shape solid rock as if it were clay and they used this to create thousands of miles of interconnected tunnels, and chambers; some large enough to hold entire cities.

Va'aj was the source of most of the gold and other metals used throughout the Kingdoms and through trade with the surface they soon became incredibly wealthy. They had so much gold that the walls of their halls were lined with it, giving the Kingdom its name. When the Fall came, the ground shook and many tunnels collapsed. The magic that moved the Golden Gates, the mighty doors to the world above failed and they could no longer be opened. The Stone Weavers found their powers no longer worked, and the entire kingdom - millions of people - were trapped underground.

Without trade with the surface, food became incredibly scarce. Cities waged war with one another over what remained and in time even that was used up. The few animals they had were slaughtered and eaten, and the underground lakes were fought over for the fish they contained. The few edible fungi and moulds that grew on the tunnel walls were not abundant enough to feed the whole population and people began raiding and looting. It wasn't long before they began eating the only thing that remained: each other.

For over a thousand years they were trapped beneath the ground, until people on the surface started excavating old ruins in search of ancient treasure and reopened the passages to the world below.

They found the gold walls were covered in dried blood. Then they found the tribes of pale cannibals and their expedition came to a sudden end. The population of millions has fallen to a few dozen small tribes that view meat as sacred. It must be worshiped and consumed so its divine essence may be taken into the body. Meat must not be wasted. To allow meat to go to waste is the greatest crime one can commit. These tribes call themselves the Ti'gu, but others call them Fleshlings.

Now that the passages have been reopened, the Fleshlings have begun raiding the surrounding villages, abducting people and carrying them back down into the tunnels to be devoured.

LESULANI – THE KINGDOM OF BEASTS

Little remains of the Kingdom of Beasts, Lesulani was once a thriving city that prided itself on its gardens and menageries, but its greatest achievement was its Shapers, people who had mastered the Wild to such a degree that they could use it to breed all manner of strange plant and animal, weaving time to evolve a species thousands of generations in a day.

When the Fall occurred, they saw the light of the impact in the distance and the shockwave of dust and debris rushing towards them. In a panic, they reached out with their magic and sought to stop time, to undo what had been done, but the Veil was stretched thin from the impact of the Celestial and ripped wide open. The world and the Wild merged and time went haywire. In some areas a hundred years passed in a second, while in others time came almost to a stop.

In the thousand years since, the gardens have grown into forests filled with strange and terrifying creatures never seen anywhere else on Altai. The Veil has mostly healed but pockets of unpredictable time exist still, making travel through the region perilous. The city of Lesulani lies in ruins, empty and abandoned for it remains the most dangerous location in the Kingdom. The few decedents of its people are called the Kanaka and they roam the land as nomadic tribes who live off the bounty of the forest and shun outsiders.

URKRYM – THE KINGDOM OF FIENDS

A land feared and whispered about but never visited. During the Second Age, the Eesa defeated their enemy the Nasar and pushed them back to this area. A row of watchtowers were built to guard the border and most of them still stand to this day although few bother to keep watch any more. It's been thousands of years since anyone saw one of the Nasar, they have not tried to invade since their defeat and do not leave their lands to trade or travel.

Few dare to enter and this has created an air of mystery about the place. It is known that there is a large city called Urkrym, but little beyond that. Tales of depravity and atrocity are common: that the Nasar have the heads of beasts, that they eat children, and that any who look upon them are stricken with a terrible curse. It's hard to tell if any of this is true, or merely superstition.

QUALLISAR – THE LOST KINGDOM

Quallisar is a Kingdom mentioned in ancient manuscripts and old tomes. It was said to be the largest and most beautiful of all the kingdoms, although accounts seem to wildly disagree about the specifics. It was supposedly filled with wonders the likes of which have never been seen since; streets lined with gems, magics long forgotten, and there are even stories that it was inhabited by a race of Gods, tall and beautiful.

It's impossible to know for sure if any of this is true. The Kingdom (if it even existed at all) vanished without a trace during The Fall and no one even seems to know where it once stood. Many adventurers, treasure hunters and thieves have searched for the Lost Kingdom, hoping to win riches, fame or glory but none have found any trace of it. Many believe that it is but a fairy tale and that no such kingdom ever existed, but that doesn't stop scholars coming up with all sorts of theories about where it might be found or what may have happened to it.

THE REALMS

Beyond the physical universe and the world of Altai lie other Realms, extra dimensional spaces with their own unique properties. Some can be visited, others are dangerous and chaotic, all of them can be useful in the hands of those with magic. The Realms are separated from the physical world by the Veil, a porous membrane that keeps them from colliding while allowing them to influence each other in small ways.

Magic is achieved by manipulating the Veil to allow more of the other Realm's energies into the physical world, or by cutting them off completely.

How Altaens gained the ability to manipulate the Veil isn't well known, certainly such power is passed down through the generations and has been with them for millennia. They have stories of the Eesa and Nasar wielding powerful magic during the Second Age, but little is known about magic before that time.

The five Realms commonly known to Altaens are the Pattern, Wild, Tempest, Blaze and Void. It's possible other realms exist as well, but there is no known way to get to and from such places.

The Physics of the Realms

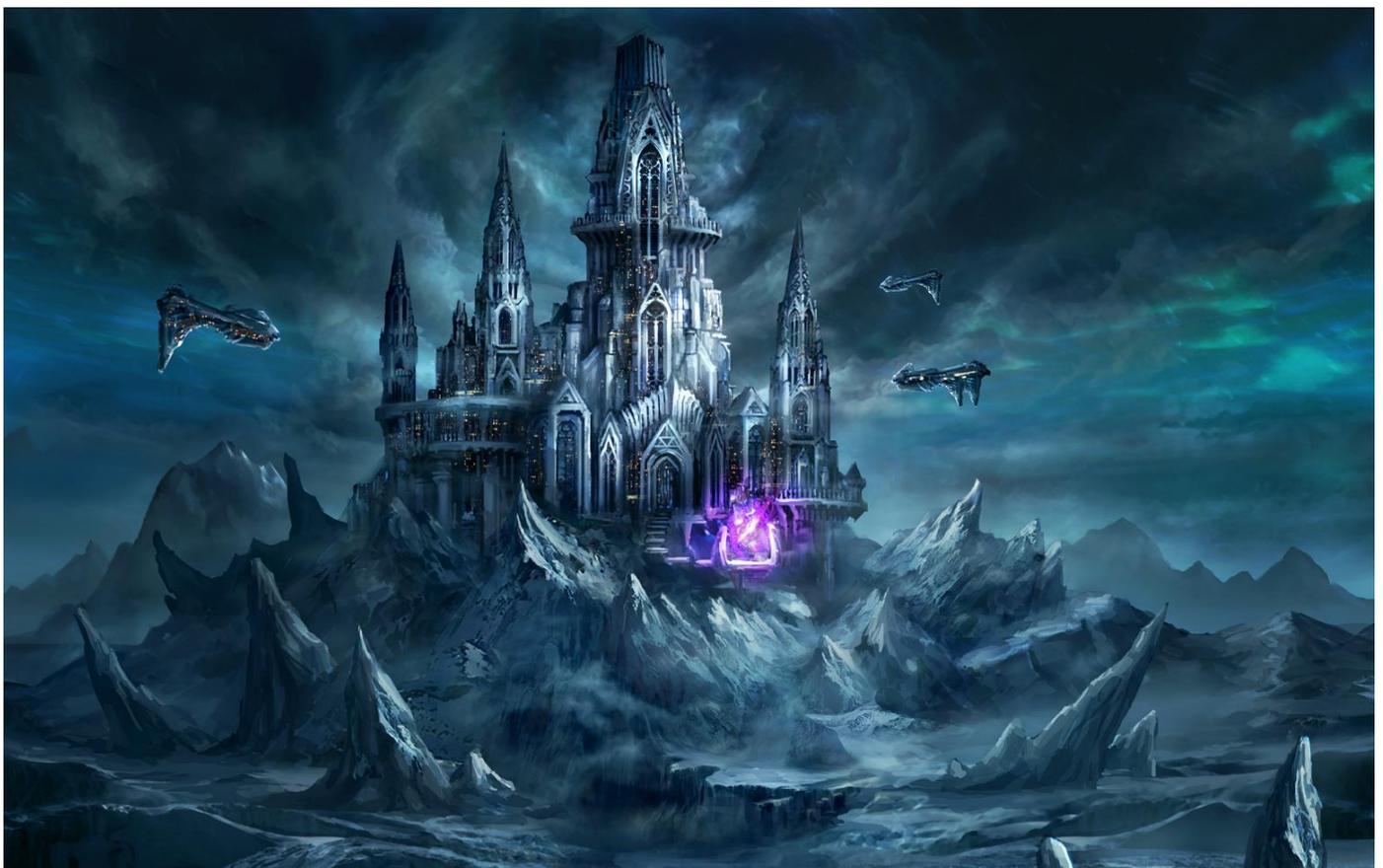
The people of Altais don't have a strong grasp of how magic really works, to them it just does, but in order to give players a better understanding of what is possible, here is an explanation long lost to those that practise it.

Altais (and the rest of the normal physical universe) occupies a vast, possibly infinite space filled with stars and planets, and it is often thought to be the place where all the Realms converge, although some have argued that the Realms have no centre.

As matter moves through the universe, it drags on the Veil and is slowed, and this resistance creates many of the forces we take for granted, including mass and inertia. We feel the weight (and therefore the mass) of an object when we try to lift it, the more massive it is, the more it pushes against the Veil and the more the Veil pushes back, making it feel "heavy". Likewise when we try to push a large object, we have to overcome this resistance to move it which is inertia. This principle was referred to by scientists of ages past as the Higgs mechanism.

This 'friction' with the Veil also temporarily weakens it, allowing more of the forces from the other realms through into the universe and these are often mistaken as being natural properties of matter. For example matter is often thought to possess gravity but this is a force leaking through the weakened Veil from the Tempest. The incredible amount of matter in a planet weakens the Veil so much that enough gravity leaks in to hold people to its surface.

When objects get truly massive, as massive as stars, then we see the energies of the Blaze leaking through, creating the heat and light of nuclear fusion. Magic users abuse these rules, bending the Veil to allow energy through where it shouldn't exist and so perform feats that seem extraordinary.



CHARACTER CREATION

In order to play Altai, each player will need their own character, their hero who will take part in the story and seek to overcome the challenges placed before them by the GM.

Each character begins with a concept: Who are you in the world? Are you a soldier, a peasant, or merchant? Why are you taking part in the story? To right a wrong? To avenge a loss? Your concept is the story that defines your character and their role in the world and it's up to you (with the aid of the GM) to create this story. Characters in Altai are more than just a concept though, they have stats that determine their abilities. Is your character good with a sword or a bow? Can they use magic? How many injuries can they suffer before they die? All these things are determined through character creation.



STEP 1: CHARACTER CONCEPT AND BACKGROUND

The first thing you should do is work out what kind of character you want to play. Will they be a warrior? A magic user? Will they be sneaky and cunning or perhaps strong and enduring?

Select a Background from the list on page XX, it will determine where you grew up, how you were trained and provide you with some advantages and disadvantages that will set you apart from everyone else. A character can only ever possess one Background.

STEP 2: CHOOSE ATTRIBUTES

All characters have five attributes that determine their general abilities. These are usually rated between 1 and 5, having 1 or 2 in an Attribute is considered normal, and 3 or higher is considered exceptional. In some cases a character's Attribute may be reduced to zero by sickness or magical effects, although this is rare.

The Attributes are:

Strength represents the character's overall physical prowess, their ability to lift heavy objects, run for a long time without becoming tired and their resistance to pain and injury.

Agility represents the character's speed, how nimble they are and how well they perform delicate and intricate tasks requiring fine manual dexterity.

Mind indicates a character's intelligence and problem solving ability.

Charisma represents the character's social aptitude, a combination of physical appearance and charm.

Focus represents the character's strength of will, determination, and their ability to remain focused on the task at hand. It is also used in all spell casting.

All characters begin with 1 point in each Attribute and may divide an additional 5 points between them. No Attribute may be raised higher than 3 at this stage.

STEP 3: CHOOSE SKILLS

While Attributes indicate your character's general innate ability, Skills represent specific things your character has learned. Each Skill is rated 0 to 5, with 0 indicating no ability in that area at all and 5 indicating exceptional mastery.

The rank of a Skill determines how many dice you roll when testing to see if your character succeeds or fails in a related task, for example you might need to make an Athletics roll when trying to jump over a chasm.

Your Background lists 5 starting Skills and you begin with 2 ranks in each of these. You may then allocate another 5 points to other skills but may not raise them higher than 2 during this step. Skills begin on page XX.

STEP 4: TALENTS

Talents are special abilities possessed by heroic (and villainous) characters. They represent special training, magic or advanced techniques that the character has learned. Each Talent has 5 Ranks, although only the first 3 are presented in this Preview.

Talents do not have a single effect but rather represent a broad area of expertise, with each rank providing a bonus of some kind. Some provide a passive effect that is 'always on' while others must be activated and usually have a cost.

Activating a Talent is not usually an action unless specified in the description as most modify a normal action the character is attempting. For example True Strike improves a character's chance to hit when attacking, the attack is an action but using True Strike is not.

Unless specified, bonuses from Talents do not stack and a rank of a Talent cannot be activated multiple times in the same turn.

All characters begin with the rank 1 Talent listed in their Background and they may choose two other Talents that also begin at rank 1. Talents can be found starting on page XX.

STEP 5: SPEND EXPERIENCE

Player characters in Altair are not freshly trained recruits, they have years of experience. To represent this, all players begin with 10 Experience Points (XP) they can spend to increase aspects of their character during creation.

Players usually earn 5 XP for their characters at the end of every session although GMs may wish to award more or less depending on how fast they want characters to advance. Each Attribute, Skill or Talent can only be increased once per session.

Attributes:

Increase	Cost
1-2	4 XP
2-3	8 XP
3-4	12 XP
4-5	16 XP

Skills:

Increase	Cost
0-1	1 XP
1-2	3 XP
2-3	5 XP
3-4	7 XP
4-5	9 XP

Talents/Magic:

Increase	Cost
0-1	4 XP
1-2	8 XP
2-3	12 XP



STEP 6: SECONDARY STATISTICS

There are four more important stats to record that determine how long your character can fight for before succumbing to their wounds or exhaustion.

PROWESS

Prowess measures a character's over all physical capabilities and serves as an indicator of the character's progress towards greatness. Minor characters and non-combatants such as farmers and merchants may at GM discretion have a Prowess of 0, but all PCs and important NPCs determine their Prowess based on the total of all Attributes added together. A character's Prowess changes as their Attributes increase or decrease.

Attribute Total	Prowess
0-9	0
10-11	1
12-13	2
14-15	3
16-17	4
18-19	5
20-21	6
22-23	7
24-25	8
26-27	9
28-29	10

Prowess is used to derive certain stats and affects the use of some Talents but it otherwise serves simply as a guide to a character's level of ability. Player characters usually start at Prowess 1 or 2.

HEALTH

A character's Health is a measure of their physical well-being and hardiness. It can decrease due to sickness or injury, and the character dies when it reaches zero.

To determine a character's maximum Health, start with 10, then add an extra 5 for each point of Prowess the character possess, and an extra 5 for each point of Strength. For example a character with Prowess 2 and Strength 3 would have 35 Health.

$$\text{Health} = 10 + (\text{Prowess} \times 5) + (\text{Strength} \times 5)$$

STAMINA

Stamina measures a person's ability to put in extra effort and keep going even when exhausted. Stamina can be spent to use Talents and to fight on when otherwise incapacitated.

A character's maximum Stamina is equal to 2 plus their Prowess and either their Strength or Focus, whichever is greater.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Stamina} &= 2 + \text{Prowess} + \text{Strength} \\ &\text{or} \\ \text{Stamina} &= 2 + \text{Prowess} + \text{Focus} \end{aligned}$$

VALOUR

Player characters are heroic individuals often destined for great things and Valour is one of the things that sets them apart from the average person. It represents their importance to the story and can be used to perform truly amazing feats or to overcome otherwise unbeatable obstacles.

A character's maximum Valour is determined by their Prowess.

Prowess	Valour
0	0
1-3	1
4-7	2
8	3

MOVE

During combat, characters can move a number of meters equal to their Move rating as a Quick Action or they can run at three times that amount as a Full Action.

All humans (and humanoids like the Vaelyth) have a base Move rating of 3.

DEFENCE RATING

All characters have a Defence Rating which is used as the difficulty for all attack rolls made against them. A character's Defence is equal to 6 plus their Agility.

$$\text{Defence} = 6 + \text{Agility}$$

INITIATIVE

Initiative determines the order in which characters take turns during combat. Each character has an initiative represented as a dice roll with a bonus.

The Number of dice rolled is equal to the lowest of their Agility and Mind and the bonus is equal to the highest. For example a character with Agility 3 and Mind 2 would roll 2d + 3 to determine their Initiative score.

This roll is made at the start of every combat, so record the dice rolled and bonus on your character sheet for easy reference.

STEP 8: PURCHASE EQUIPMENT

Anyone that plans to venture far from the safety of the cities should first ensure they are properly equipped, a good weapon and suit of armor can make all the difference. Although some towns and cities impose laws governing who can carry weapons, it's quite common to see all but the poorest citizens carrying a sword or at least a dagger to ward off thieves and bandits.

Most of the currency in the Kingdom of Glass comes in the form of Merchant Marks, most commonly referred to simply as marks. These are small rectangular glass coins that contain a flat piece of iron stamped with the seal of the Nianu imbedded in its center. Marks come in a wide variety of denominations, most commonly 1, 2, 5, 10 and 20. Other Kingdoms have other forms of coinage and many merchants will usually accept them although their value can vary wildly.

All characters begin with basic clothing and traveling gear as well as 100 Marks which can be spent on starting equipment. (See page XX).

BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds represent special traits that set a character apart based on their heritage or past history. Sometimes characters are born with them, sometimes they are the result of a lifetime of study and training.

A character can only have 1 Background, and these usually cannot be gained during play, either you spent 20 years learning an obscure fighting technique, or you didn't. Gaining this knowledge is beyond the scope of play.

HERINHA FUGITIVE

Born in one of the larger cities in the Kingdom of Glass, it was discovered that you possessed magical talent at a young age. You were taken to be trained as one of the Herinha, you completed your training and were assigned to a wealthy family but soon grew dissatisfied. The indoctrination; that it is better to serve others, never really worked for you and you fled, abandoning your responsibilities. The Herinha do not treat deserters well and may seek to recapture you at every opportunity.

- **Skills:** Medicine, Veilcraft, Veilsense, Etiquette, Knowledge: Kingdom of Glass.
- **Talents:** Blaze or Pattern Magic
- **Advantage:** The Herinha seek to understand magic, not to stifle it. Your training makes it very unlikely that a Surge will occur. Whenever you make a Veilcraft roll, you may ignore one Surge Die.
- **Disadvantage:** You are bear the mark of the Herinha on your face, marking you as little better than a slave. You are also being hunted by your former masters and few within the Kingdom of Glass treat you well or will knowingly give you sanctuary.



MERCHANT BLOOD

You were born to the Namiaven, one of the wealthy merchant guilds and this should grant you great privilege and wealth, but unfortunately you were one of the youngest children of your generation. You have at least a dozen siblings, all older than you and all more likely to inherit the family's wealth and power, leaving you with a noble name, a hint of respect, and little more. Being generally viewed as unimportant by your family, you set off across the land to find your own purpose.

- **Skills:** Charm, Etiquette, Politics, Appraise, Knowledge: Kingdom of Glass.
- **Talents:** Charming Allure
- **Advantage:** You start with twice as much money and can occasionally call upon minor favours from your family. It also costs you 1 less XP to increase your Charm and Appraise Skill, and 2 less to increase your Charisma.
- **Disadvantage:** Due to your pampered upbringing you cannot start with any Weapon Skills and learning them costs twice as much XP.

WOUNDED VETERAN

You were one of the Javana, a member of the military guild, trained and employed by the Ranaven to enforce their rule within Meharavia or one of the other cities or towns. A master of weapons and combat, you protected trade routes from raids, families from assassination, or carried out these tasks against other families.

At some point during your service you were badly injured and that wound never properly healed, leading to a forced retirement when your employers decided you weren't worth paying anymore.

- **Skills:** Brawl, Medium Weapons, Intimidation, Streetwise, Knowledge: Kingdom of Glass.
- **Talents:** Battle Hardened

- **Advantage:** You begin with rank 1 in Weapon Expert: Dua
- I Wield, but due to your highly specialised training, you may only use this Talent while wielding scimitars.
- **Disadvantage:** Due to an old wound, your maximum health is reduced by 5.

SERUHING SCOUT

Most believe the Seruhin are gone, they vanished into the wastes eighty years ago and haven't been seen since, but they are out there still, watching. You were trained amongst them, they taught you of the Void and how it connects all minds and connects all perception. You learnt patience, you learnt to move unseen, and you learnt to kill. Now you have been sent back to walk and watch the Kingdom once more.



- **Skills:** Archery, Perception, Stealth, Survival, Knowledge: Kingdom of Glass.
- **Talents:** Archery Expertise
- **Advantage:** The Seruhin have long practised a strange mental discipline: by emptying their mind of all thoughts, they become almost invisible. Thoughts create ripples in the Void and it is through the Void that all minds are connected. By having few thoughts they reduce (or even break) this connection, and become difficult for sentient minds to notice. You may activate this ability by spending 2 Stamina and using it counts as a Full Action. While this ability is active, you are effectively invisible as onlookers simply refuse to acknowledge your presence. Although people are not consciously aware of you, their subconscious is and they will go out of their way to walk around you or avoid colliding with you. For example if you are sitting in a chair, other people will also avoid sitting in that chair and if you are standing between an archer and their target, they will move to get a better shot without consciously realising they have done so. Someone looking directly at you loses track and cannot explain where you vanished to and those with Void Magic cannot detect the presence of your mind. This ability also works effectively on all animals, and entities from other realms. You can maintain this effect indefinitely but doing so takes up a Full Action each turn. It also ends if you take damage, attack, cast a spell or do anything to draw a great deal of attention to yourself (e.g. shouting at someone). When this power ends you take 2 damage as your connection to the Void painfully reasserts itself. This is not a magical effect and cannot be detected with Veilsense.
- **Disadvantage:** Your nomadic life is not one of riches, you start with half the normal amount of money. Your training was dedicated stoicism, silence and patience and you struggle to make connections with people. Whenever you roll a Skill that would normally involve Charisma, you do not add your Attribute to the result rolled and these rolls cannot Cascade.

UNTRAINED MAGICS

You were born with magical talent but managed to avoid being indoctrinated into the Herinha. Perhaps your parents hid you away, smuggled you out of the city to safety, maybe your talent simply went unnoticed. You've survived against all odds, struggling against either the wilderness or the harsh city streets, and you're stronger for it. So far no one realises what you are truly capable of, you have great potential but without training, your magic is likely to rage out of control if you're not careful.

- **Skills:** Subterfuge, Veilcraft, Veilsense, Knowledge: Kingdom of Glass, Your choice of Survival or Streetwise.
- **Talents:** Any one Realm.
- **Advantage:** You have huge potential but lack discipline and training. You may spend 1 Valour to use one of your Magical Talents as if it were 1 level higher than it actually is. You must have at least 1 rank in the Talent to do this. When you cast a spell in this way, the Surge Rating counts as being 2 higher than normal and this stacks with the disadvantage below.
- **Disadvantage:** Due to your lack of formal training, the Surge Rating always counts as being 1 higher than normal whenever you cast spells.

NIANU GLASSWEAVER

The Nianu are the only Ranaven allowed to work with glass and this affords them special privilege within Meharavian society. They create the glass coins that are used as currency throughout the Kingdom, they maintain and repair the Pattern Glass buildings that date back to before the Fall, and they run glassworks all across the city. You were trained amongst the Nianu, taught to shape glass both as a trade and as a weapon. You have lived a privileged life with all that you could need provided for you but the Nianu have very high standards and your training has been filled with hardship. The Nianu expect perfection in all things and mistakes are punished harshly.

- **Skills:** Appraise, Artisan: Glass-weaving, Veilsense, Veilcraft, Knowledge: Kingdom of Glass.
- **Talent:** Pattern Magic
- **Advantage:** You were taught the Loom of Sand, an ancient technique for transforming the desert sands into beautiful glassworks stronger than steel. This works like Rank 1 of the Pattern Weaver Talent except that instead of solidifying air, it can only be used to shape sand into glass. Unlike Pattern Steel, these objects are permanent once created but only retain their ability to harm Rephaim while you maintain their connection to the Pattern with physical contact and concentration.

The Nianu have strict regulations governing the distribution of glass and always require payment for their services. Giving away your creations to those who are not part of the order without approval from your superiors can lead to you becoming known as “Yianu” – the ‘broken bauble’. Yianu are ostracized by their Ranaven and find life within the Kingdom very difficult indeed.

- **Disadvantage:** Your dedication to the weaving of glass is so complete that you cannot learn the normal ranks of Pattern Weaver. The Nianu treat Pattern magic as an art form, they are unaccustomed to using it as a weapon and do not add their Focus to Veilcraft rolls to use it in stressful situations such as combat.



SKILLS

ANIMAL HANDLING

Characters with this skill know how to properly handle and train animals of all kinds. Whether it be teaching a Corix to perch on your arm or training a Shuhus to be a good mount, it falls under this skill. It can also be used to sooth a panicked animal, or to calm an otherwise aggressive beast but this only extends to the native animals of Altais and the Wild. The Constructs and Lucentis of the Tempest, and the entities of the Void are too alien to be tamed in this way.

This skill only allows for simple taming and domestication, as well as teaching basic tricks (“sit”, “roll over”, etc). Although a loyal beast may react hostilely if its master is in danger, it won’t overly endanger its own life in the process and will retreat as soon as it is injured or if the threat appears too great.

Training an animal is time consuming and doing so can take several weeks. First choose one of the below tricks to teach it. An animal can only be learning one trick at a time but once taught it keeps that trick even if taught others. This requires several hours of dedicated training each day and at the end of each training period make an Animal Handling roll and record the DoS you scored. Only one such roll can be made per day. Once enough DoS have been achieved, the animal gains the new trick.

Basic Tricks	Description	Dos
Taming	The animal will now react favourably towards you and will no longer be scared or hostile. All wild animals must be tamed before other tricks can be taught.	20
Riding/Carrying	The animal will now be suitable to ride or use as a beast of burden.	12
Simple Trick	The animal can be taught a simple trick like “sit”, “roll over”, “fetch”, etc. Each simple trick must be taught separately.	6

APPRAISE

A useful skill for merchants and thieves, it allows the character to determine how much something is worth and to haggle over the cost. Those with legitimate businesses uses it to buy and trade without getting ripped off, while those with less savoury occupations find it useful to know what is worth stealing and what isn’t.

ARCHERY (WEAPON SKILL)

The skill for aiming accurately with ranged weapons like bows, crossbows or ballista. Such weapons are reasonably common throughout the Kingdoms, and although they vary a little from place to place, the fundamentals remain the same. Armies often employ whole regiments of archers and their use can turn the tide of battle. They are equally common amongst adventurers and hunters who find it safer to keep a distance from ones prey.

ARTISTRY

Despite some scholars claiming that nothing worthwhile has been created since the Fall, there are still many artists who dedicate themselves to creation for the enjoyment of others.

When choosing this skill, you must specify what area of artistry your character is skilled in and you may take it multiple times in different areas, each counts as a completely separate skill.

Examples: Painting, Sculpture, Carving, Weaving, Carpentry, Blacksmithing, Silversmithing, Fletching, etc.

ATHLETICS

This skill is used for running, climbing, jumping, and performing acrobatic manoeuvres. It covers all physical acts of movement and GM’s might call for an Athletics roll when a character tries to catch up with a fleeing opponent, to see if they can fall without being harmed, or leap from rooftop to rooftop safely.

BRAWL (WEAPON SKILL)

A useful skill for those who find themselves unarmed and in a dangerous situation. This skill is rolled whenever a character wishes to make an unarmed attack, be it a punch, kick or grapple. It is also used by creatures whose weapons are a natural part of their body, such as claws, teeth, or a poisoned stinger.

CHARM

Some people just have a way with words and can make friends with little more than a smile. This skill is equally useful for politicians and swindlers who want to sway a crowd to their cause or convince someone to do them a favour.

ETIQUETTE

Understanding the correct mannerisms and etiquette of the royal courts is no simple feat and even many nobles who have been born into the life make embarrassing mistakes from time to time. This skill covers any roll needed to correctly interact with nobility and the courts without offending anyone.

INTIMIDATION

A good leader gets results through their commanding presence and charisma, a bad leader does it through fear. This skill allows a character to intimidate, terrify and bully others into submission through a stern look, a raised voice, or by just being physically overbearing. Those cowed are usually submissive and do as commanded, at least until they have an opportunity to escape. Charisma is usually the Attribute to use with Intimidation but players may choose to use Strength instead, using their character's physical presence to overwhelm onlookers.

KNOWLEDGE

A common skill amongst scholars and academics, this skill covers theory, philosophy, history and other similar subjects. You can take a Knowledge skill in virtually any subject. When choosing this skill, you must specify what area of artistry your character is skilled in and you may take it multiple times in different areas, each counts as a completely separate skill.

Examples: History, Other Realm (pick one), Rephaim, Artefacts, a Kingdom (pick one), wildlife, The Eesa, The Celestials, etc.

This skill may not be used untrained.

LARGE WEAPONS (WEAPON SKILL)

This skill is used for making attacks with a large two handed weapon such as a halberd, spear or staff.

LEADERSHIP

Whether it be inspiring troops in a battle or encouraging an employee to work harder, Leadership is the skill to roll. Characters with a high Leadership tend to be charismatic, confident, and sometimes even charming. They give orders and others leap to obey due to their strength of character and commanding demeanour.

LINGUISTICS

There are several languages widely spoken across Altais and some unique to certain regions. Everyone is assumed to speak their own native language fluently as well as Aroji if that's not their native language, but some also go out of their way to learn other languages as well. For each rank you have in this Skill, you are fluent in an additional language. This skill can also be rolled to identify a language you're not fluent in and if you get more than one DoS you might even be able to work out a word or two.

The languages of Altais are:

Aroji: The most widely spoken language on Altais, often regarded as the "common tongue", it dates back to the Kingdom of Aroja during the Third Age, whose influence spread so far across the continent that the remains of their civilization can still be found in all the Kingdoms today. It's the official language in the Kingdoms of Rust and Ash and around one in three speak it in most other Kingdoms.

Varin: The official language of the Kingdom of Glass and not widely spoken outside except amongst merchants and traders where it is increasingly becoming the "language of trade".

Kamas: The official language of the Kingdom of Serpents, not widely spoken outside it except by some sailors from other Kingdoms due to a high amount of ocean trade.

Elali: The language of the Kingdom of Storms, they claim it's the holy language of the Elal, divine beings who once walked their land.

Ghui: This language is only really spoken on the isle of Ghul. Only the traders from the Kingdom of Serpents have regular contact with them.

Kanak: The modern language of the Kanaka tribes who live in the forests around the Kingdom of Beasts, it is descended from Aroji but has changed considerably over the last thousand years.

Void Tongue: The language of the Rephaim, although they and the Vaelyth call it Kana'an to everyone else it's the Void Tongue. It contains strange sounds unlike any other language on Altai.

Old Eesan: The ancient language spoken by the Eesa, only fragments of it remain in writing and no one speaks it fluently. Taking this as a language gives you only basic fragmented understanding at best.

Dras: This mysterious language exists only in written form in the Kingdom of Serpents and most outside the orders of the Akhubesh have never seen it. It is said to be the language of the Forgotten, the Akhubesh study it and can read it fairly fluently but only small amounts can be spoken.

MEDICINE

You have some knowledge of treating the sick and injured and can set bones, stitch wounds closed and provide curative salves and ointments. You also have a reasonable knowledge of herbs and minerals that aid in this process. Succeeding in a Medicine check allows you to improve the rate someone heals while resting, see page XX.

MEDIUM WEAPONS (WEAPON SKILL)

This skill is used for all attacks with medium sized weapons, which generally range in size from about 2' long to 5' long. Most commonly these include swords, axes, and clubs, both one handed and two, but can also include improvised weapons (a well swung chair for example).

PERCEPTION

A useful skill for most adventurers, Perception is the skill to roll to whenever a character's senses are being tested. GMs might call for a roll when a player searches a room, to see if they notice someone following them, or to detect an ambush. In order to make such a roll however, the character must be able to use the sense in question, it's impossible to notice something visually if you've been blindfolded for example.

PERFORMANCE

This skill covers all forms of performance and entertainment and practitioners are found throughout all of Altai, especially in royal courts where entertainment is always in high demand. When choosing this skill, you must specify what area of performance your character is skilled in and you may take it multiple times in different areas, each counts as a completely separate skill.

Examples: Dancing, Singing, Acting, Playing an instrument (pick one), etc

POLITICS

This skill determines whether the character has an understanding of a kingdom's current political situation and can be used to gather information about who the most important people are and what their agendas might be. Characters with this skill are good at turning the current politics in their favour, drawing up treaties and negotiating alliances.

RIDE

There are a few animals suitable for riding in Altai; Domar are common across most of the kingdoms and make good mounts once trained. Shuhus are only found in the Kingdom of Glass and are renowned for their temper, yet they can make good steeds, especially in times of war. Anyone who has at least one point in this skill is proficient enough to ride a mount under normal circumstances without needing a roll. This Skill is rolled when the GM decides that the situation has become stressful enough that controlling the animal is more difficult than normal, for example when your mount is injured in combat, or while trying to keep to a narrow path during treacherous weather. A failed Ride roll usually indicates that the character either falls off, or the animal runs off wildly, carrying its rider with it.

SEAFARING

This skill covers everything you might need to know about sailing. Anyone with at least one rank in this skill can sail a boat or ship under calm conditions and only needs to make a roll in bad weather or when under pressure.

SMALL WEAPONS (WEAPON SKILL)

Small weapons are usually those that are under 2' in length, including daggers, knives, saps, and similar. Such weapons are often easy to conceal and this makes them a favoured choice for assassins, but they also make good backup weapons and most soldiers carry a dagger or other small weapon.

STEALTH

This is the skill for moving without being noticed. This includes keeping to the shadows, creeping silently, and generally avoiding detection. Characters with this skill are good at sneaking past guards, creeping up behind a potential victim, or staying out of sight when people are looking for them.

While using Stealth, a character's Move is reduced by 1 as they creep slowly and carefully to avoid notice. A character may ignore this penalty and move at their normal rate but suffers a -2 on all Stealth Rolls and a character who runs or performs any action using the Athletics skill suffers a -6.

STREETWISE

Surviving on the streets can be tough, yet there are thousands who do so. Characters with this skill can make a roll to know about crime in the area and which areas of a city are safe and which aren't. Where stolen goods can be purchased, and which shops are easy to steal from. Where shelter can be found, and which nobles give out free food to the poor.

SUBTERFUGE

This skill is used to lie and deceive, whether it be verbally or through body language. It's equally common amongst criminals who want to avoid being caught, and nobleman who seek to gain power at the expense of their fellows. Players can make Subterfuge rolls to both deceive others, and to detect when they are being deceived. This Skill can also be used to conceal an object in a room or disguise yourself as someone else.

SURVIVAL

Surviving in the wilderness can be difficult, you have to know which plants are safe to eat, which animals are poisonous, how to track prey and how to avoid dying from exposure. This skill covers all these things and is essential for characters that plan to live away from civilization. GMs might call for a roll whenever the character is struggling against nature to find food, water, or shelter, but it can also be used to track someone through the wilderness.

SWIM

Being able to swim is not common in the medieval world of Altais and this skill is usually only possessed by sailors (and a surprising number of them still lack it). A character with at least one rank in this can swim under normal conditions and only needs to make a roll in dangerous weather or when under pressure (for example being shot at by archers while swimming).

THIEVERY

The disreputable trade of criminals and cut throats, this skill covers picking pockets, opening locks, and taking things without being noticed.

THROWING (WEAPON SKILL)

This skill is used to make attacks with thrown weapons such as javelins and thrown daggers, it is also used for slings.

VEILCRAFT

Prerequisite: This skill can never be higher than your rank in Veilsense.

All spells are cast by either weakening the Veil so that the energies and exotic properties of the other realms are allowed to bleed through into the physical world, or by strengthening it to reduce the influence of those effects. To the spell caster, this feels like they stretching at the Veil with their mind, tearing more tiny holes in it, or squeezing the existing holes together to close them off.

The Veil between realms takes skill and finesse to manipulate and this skill represents a character's expertise in that area. Veilcraft rolls are made whenever a character attempts to affect the Veil in any way, success usually results in a successful spell, while failure can cause the Realms to mix in unexpected ways.

This skill cannot be used untrained.

VEILSENSE

This skill allows a character to sense the current state of the Veil in the immediate vicinity. This sense is in many way similar to the sense of touch except it occurs at a distance. The character "feels" how strong the Veil is around them and can feel the tiny holes that are usually present. Mundane phenomenon can be sensed as well, for example the flame of an ordinary candle draws its energy from the Blaze and Veilsense can be used to feel the tiny holes letting the energy through. Likewise all matter creates holes letting through gravity. Whenever someone affects the Veil nearby, a player can make a Veilsense roll to detect the change before the physical effects of the spell manifest, they can also make rolls to determine how fragile the Veil is in the area and whether a Surge is likely. The range of this sense extends about 5 meters for every rank the character possesses in this skill and can even be used through walls and other solid obstacles although this increases the difficulty by 5. This skill cannot be used untrained.



TALENTS

Type: Indicates the categories the Talent falls in. Some effects and Backgrounds affect only Talents of certain types.

Rank: Each Talent has multiple ranks which must be purchased separately with XP and the ranks must also be purchased in order. E.g. you have to buy Rank 1 before you can buy Rank 2 of that Talent.

TALENTS - COMMON

ACADEMIA

Type: Common, Mental.

Prerequisite: Any Knowledge Skill at Rank 2.

There are many scholars throughout Altai that dedicate themselves to the study of the various aspects of the world. Some choose to study ancient history or magic, while others chart the flow of rivers, map mountain ranges or catalogue the different animals, plants and minerals. This Talent represents the time you have dedicated to advancing your knowledge of academia.

RANK 1: EXPERIENCED RESEARCHER

You have spent a lot of time in study and it has paid off, few can rival your knowledge of specialised subjects or uncover information quite as quickly as you.

When using a Knowledge skill, you receive a bonus equal to twice your rank in this Talent. This also applies to any roll being made to research a topic or find a specific piece of information from within a library or other repository of knowledge.

RANK 2: WELL LEARNED

You've spent so much time in learning that you have picked up lots of obscure facts about a broad range of subjects, some of them you've never studied directly, you just found bits and pieces mentioned in works on other subjects.

You may now make untrained Knowledge skill rolls, allowing you to succeed even if you don't have any Skill in that particular area of expertise.

RANK 3: PRESTIGIOUS MEMORY

You've trained your mind to remember even the most obscure facts and you almost never forget something you've read.

When making any Knowledge roll, you may adjust one of the rolled results up by 1. You can only do this to one result per Skill check but not only does it improve your result, it can turn a 9 into a 10 and trigger a Cascade or turn a 1 into a 2 to prevent a Dramatic Failure. This cannot increase a result above 10 however.

Alternatively you can spend 1 Valour to turn any one die result on a Knowledge check into a 10 and trigger a Cascade.

ANIMAL AFFINITY

Type: Common, Social.

Prerequisite: Animal Handling 2

Some people have a natural ability to empathise with animals, a mix of empathy and understanding that allows them to excel when training or domesticating animals.

RANK 1: ANIMAL EMPATHY

You're good with animals and can tell a lot about their emotional and mental state based on their body language and can even communicate back to a limited degree through sounds, body language and gestures. There is nothing magical about this ability, you cannot truly talk to the animal, but you can get a rough idea of their general emotional state.

You may add your rank in this Talent to all Animal Handling rolls, and may make such a roll to gauge an animal's mood. Your empathy with them is enough to indicate whether they are happy, upset, angry and so on, and may at GMs discretion tell you roughly why they currently feel the way they do. (E.g. "The animal is scared of a nearby predator", "the animal is angry because you are in its territory" or "the animal is hungry and wants the food in the nobleman's hand".)

RANK 2: EXPERT TRAINING

You're so good at training animals that you can get them to perform fairly complex tricks.

You are no longer limited to teaching the basic tricks listed under Animal Handling and can now teach animals to perform more complex actions based on triggers of your choice. This works just like teaching an animal a basic trick.

Advanced Tricks	Description	DoS
Loyalty	The animal will now be so loyal to its master that it is willing to endanger its own life to protect theirs. It will react aggressively towards anyone who clearly threatens or seeks to harm its master.	20
Attack	The animal will attack on verbal command. (Requires Loyalty)	15
Guard	The animal will protect a location, object or person as if protecting its master. (Requires Loyalty)	15
Complex Trick	The animal can be taught a complex trick, for example balancing a ball on its nose, counting to 5 by stamping a foot, or picking up a ball and putting it in a bucket, etc.	10
Hunting	The animal can now help hunt, it will flush out game, help round it up, and can fetch and bring back small animals once killed.	15

RANK 3: WAR TRAINING

You're not only able to train animals to obey but also for warfare.

Whenever you succeed in an Animal Handling roll to teach a new trick, you gain one additional DoS towards the total.

You may now also teach the following new tricks:

Advanced Tricks	Description	DoS
Warfare	The animal can now wear armor and participate in battle without panicking. If combined with the Riding basic trick, the animal can be ridden into battle, if combined with Loyalty the animal will actually fight to protect its master.	40
Battle Hardened	Through combat training the animal has become hardier. The animal's Health increases by 10. (Requires Warfare)	30
Combatant	The animal has been trained to be particularly lethal and aggressive. It gains a +1 bonus to hit and to all damage it deals. (Requires Warfare)	30

ARCHERY EXPERTISE

Type: Common, Physical.

Prerequisite: Archery Rank 2.

Skilled archers can turn the tide of battle and they are an essential part of war in Altias, but soldiers aren't the only ones who practise these skills, whether hunting or exploring an ancient ruin, keeping a distance from the enemy is always advantageous. This talent can only be used when firing a bow, crossbow or ballista.

RANK 1: AIMED SHOT

You take aim, holding your weapon steady as you line up your shot before firing.

You gain a bonus to all Archery Rolls equal to your rank in this Talent.

In addition, each time your turn comes up in the initiative order, you may spend 1 Stamina to aim carefully at a target with your weapon instead of taking a turn. If you do, then your Initiative for this round is reduced to 1 less than the next person in the initiative order and you gain a new turn at that new Initiative slot. You can keep doing this each time it would be your turn, delaying longer and longer as your character takes a careful aim.

The maximum number of times you can do this in a round is equal to your Strength, and you may not delay further if doing so would reduce your Initiative below 0 or if you are the last person to act in the round.

For each Stamina you spend in this way, your attack and damage rolls against the target (when you finally do fire) is increased by +2. You must keep aiming at the same target however to receive this full bonus, if you swap targets during the round, then the bonus resets.

RANK 2: TRICK SHOT

You've learned to perform all kinds of trick shots: knocking an object off a table, cutting a rope, disarming an opponent and so on.

You no longer suffer range penalties (see page XX), and you don't suffer any situational penalties for performing difficult shots like cutting a rope with an arrow. You may also spend 1 Valour to perform a shot that is all but impossible. For the purposes of this attack the range of your weapon is effectively doubled and you may still hit your target even if you don't have a direct line of sight so long as there is a way for the arrow to reach the target, for example by firing up into the air and having it come down on the target, or by bouncing it off a wall. This attack also ignores all penalties from darkness (page XX), obscuring fog, wind (page XX), and other factors.

RANK 3: QUICK SHOT

Your experience with ranged weapons allows you to quickly load and fire with very little delay.

At the start of your turn, you may spend 3 Stamina. If you do then for the rest of this turn your attacks with archery weapons only count as Quick Actions.

You may also spend 1 Valour at any point during your turn to immediately take an extra Quick Action which can only be used to make these attacks or to switch weapons.

ARMOUR EXPERT

Type: Common, Physical.

Armour can be cumbersome and uncomfortable to wear for those unaccustomed to it. You've spent so much time in armour though that you've gotten used to some of its more unpleasant aspects and no longer find it as burdensome.

RANK 1: WORN IN

You have become used to your armour and are no longer as encumbered by it. You've also learned to make the most of it and tend have adopted subtle changes in the way you fight to take full advantage of its protective capabilities.

While wearing any armour, your Speed penalty is decreased by 1 and the total Skill Penalty you suffer from wearing armour is reduced by your rank in this Talent (See page XX).

RANK 2: WELL WORN

You are so comfortable in armour that you can move about far more easily and your armour protects you even more.

Your AR when wearing armour is increased by +1 and you may spend 3 Stamina to ignore the Skill Penalty completely for one round. This doesn't apply to the penalty from using a Shield.

RANK 3: UNYIELDING

Your ability to make the most of your armour is truly astounding and not even the mightiest blow can cause you to stagger.

The Speed penalty from your armour is reduced by a further 1 and so long as your total AR against an attack is at least 5 you cannot be Knocked Prone or otherwise shifted by its force unless it deals more than 40 damage.

You may also spend a Valour to increase your AR by 5 for one round.

BATTLE HARDENED

Type: Common, Physical.

Prerequisite: Strength 2.

In the world of Altai, war is all too common and the peace between Kingdoms is fragile and frequently tested. Mercenaries fight for whoever pays them and soldiers die for causes they have no stake in. The one thing that every fighter, soldier and guard has in common, is that they spend a considerable amount of time learning to fight and hoping that the next battle won't be their last.

RANK 1: EXPERIENCED SOLDIER

Years on the battlefield have hardened you against injuries and pain, making you tougher and harder to kill.

You gain a passive +5 to your total Health for each rank in this Talent and it now only costs you 1 Stamina to ignore Wound Penalties for a round (See page XX).

RANK 2: ENDURING VETERAN

You're so used to hardship and pain that these things just rarely bother you anymore.

You gain a passive +2 to your total Stamina and may now spend 1 Stamina to ignore Wound Penalties for an entire fight instead of just one round.

RANK 3: BATTLEFIELD PROWESS

Having fought in countless battles, you have learned to apply yourself when it counts.

You may spend 1 Valour to triple the damage bonus from your Strength for a Round or to succeed in an incredible feat of strength such as lifting a huge tree log or breaking down a door.

CHARMING ALLURE

Type: Common, Social.

Prerequisite: Charisma 2.

Some people love being the centre of attention, whether at a royal court or performing before an audience, this Talent allows you to sway the emotions of a crowd. Some use this through carefully delivered speeches, others through a dance or song, either way you give a performance that onlookers will never forget.

RANK 1: CHARMING PRESENCE

You understand how to tug on the heart strings of your audience, whether it be charming a single person or performing before a crowd, you almost always get the result you desire.

When making any Skill roll using Charisma, you may add a bonus to the roll equal to twice your rank in this Talent.

RANK 2: SWAY THE CROWD

People hang on your every word and crowds are easily swayed in the direction you choose. This can be done through dance, song, a speech, or any other medium that conveys emotion and meaning.

You may spend 3 Stamina and make a Charisma/Charm or Charisma/Performance roll to influence a crowd of onlookers. For each DoS you roll, one quarter of the crowd is inspired to feel the emotion contained in your performance. This can calm a crowd or create an angry mob. It can reduce people to tears, or create an excellent distraction. The results of this Talent are left up to the GM.

RANK 3: GOLDEN TONGUE

Your skill in manipulating the emotions of others knows no equal, you sway individuals and crowds with a smile, a word and a wave of the hand.

Whenever you make a Skill roll involving Charisma, you may adjust one of the rolled results up by 1. You can only do this to one result per Skill check but not only does it improve your result, it can turn a 9 into a 10 and trigger a Cascade or turn a 1 into a 2 to prevent a Dramatic Failure. This cannot increase a result above 10 however.

Alternatively you can spend 1 Valour to turn any one die result on a Skill check using Charisma into a 10 and trigger a Cascade.

DECIPHER ARTEFACTS

Type: Common, Mental.

Relics and Remnants from past ages are very rare but there are adventurers and scholars who seek them out and study their function. Most are never fully understood but occasionally a purpose for one is discovered, although whether it is the purpose it was originally designed for is another matter. This talent is most commonly possessed by those who dedicate their lives to the study of such objects and it is rarely possessed by anyone else.

RANK 1: A BASIC UNDERSTANDING

You have studied a few artefacts and read many books on the subject. Enough to make some headway when investigating a new one for the first time.

When making a Knowledge: Artefact roll to uncover the functions or a relic or remnant, you may reroll one die.

RANK 2: MISTAKES NOT MADE

One of the most dangerous aspects of studying ancient artefacts is their tendency to backfire or even outright explode when least expected. Sometimes this is due to misuse, but often their age has simply made them unstable. At this rank, you have enough of an understanding that you can reduce the chance of a dangerous backfire occurring.

When making a Knowledge: Artefact roll, a single DoS is now enough to spot any immediate danger that might be involved in handling or attempting to use a device due to damage or age. When examining a remnant, if a Backfire does occur, you may add +1 to the result of a roll on the Backfire table. You may also spend 1 Valour to reroll the Backfire result completely (without adding +1 this time) but you must accept the second result.

RANK 3: FAMILIARITY

Your understanding of remnants rivals that of most scholars. You learn from your successes and rarely make the same mistake twice.

Whenever you succeed in a Knowledge: Artefacts roll, you may now add an additional DoS to your result. This not only allows you to learn more about the object, but reduces how long it takes to become familiar with the functions of a remnant. You may now also add an additional +1 to the result of the Backfire roll (so +2 total).

DIRTY FIGHTING

Type: Common.

Not all fights are fair and sometimes to win you have to cheat. Although usually the practice of scoundrels and rogues, no one is looking for fair play in war and whatever brings victory goes. Characters with this Talent are not above using whatever means are at their disposal to ensure they win, even if doing so isn't very honourable.

RANK 1: EYE DUSTING

You grab whatever's at hand and throw it in your opponent's eyes; it could be dirt, dust, a handful of pebbles or leaves. Perhaps you even carry around a pouch of dirt for just such occasions.

You may spend 2 Stamina to blind an opponent as a Quick Action. They must be within arm's reach and you must have a free hand and something you could conceivably throw in their eyes. The target's Initiative drops to one less than the next lowest initiative, moving them down one slot in the initiative order as they splutter and rub at their eyes. They also suffer -2 to their next attack/skill roll due to the irritation.

RANK 2: LEG SWEEP

You sweep your opponents legs out from under them, tripping them over and sending them sprawling.

You may spend 2 Stamina as a Full Action to attempt to trip a target within reach. Make a Brawl attack roll against the target with a bonus equal to your ranks in this Talent. If it succeeds, it deals no damage but they are Knocked Prone.

RANK 3: CRIPPLING STRIKE

You strike the opponent in a delicate area, aiming for a soft spot that will cause the most pain.

You may spend 3 Stamina as a Full Action to strike a soft spot and cause your target to double over in pain. Make a Brawl attack roll against the target with a bonus equal to your ranks in this Talent. If it succeeds, in addition to the normal damage, they suffer from Wound Penalties for the next minute as if they were critically injured.

EVASION

Type: Common, Physical.

Prerequisite: Agility 2.

While armor can save a soldier from a fatal blow, it's arguably better to not be hit in the first place. This Talent improves the user's ability to avoid attacks of all kinds and to move more freely on the battlefield.

RANK 1: WEAVE AND DODGE

You move nimbly, side-stepping attacks and staying just out of reach.

Each rank in this Talent increases your Defence against melee opponents by +1, but armor slows you down and hinders this bonus. Using a shield also gets in the way of your ability to move agilely and reduces how effective this Talent is. The following table lists the maximum bonus this talent can provide you based on the armour and shield you are using.

Armor	No Shield	Buckler	Shield
None	No limit.	+3	0
Light	+3	+1	0
Medium	+1	0	0
Heavy	0	0	0

RANK 2: ACROBATICS

You can tumble and flip, roll and spin, almost dancing as you move to avoid blows.

The Weave and Dodge bonus now also applies to all rolls using the Athletics skill, and you may move through both allies and enemies in combat, as well as through any obstructed area so long as it would be possible to do so using acrobatics (GM's discretion).

When you are caught in an area of effect, you may spend 3 Stamina to take only half damage as you dive to safety.

RANK 3: DIVE ROLL

You roll to safety, avoiding ranged projectiles and explosions.

The Weave and Dodge bonus is now also added to your Defence against all ranged attacks, both physical and magical. When you are caught in an area of effect, you may spend 1 Valour to dive to safety and avoid the effect completely.

EXPERIENCED APOTHECARY

Type: Common, Mental.

Prerequisite: Medicine 2.

You are experienced the medical arts and not only know how to set bones and stitch wounds, but also know how to concoct useful salves and ointments from herbs.

RANK 1: EXPERIENCED PHYSIC

Your knowledge of basic medical practices allows you to treat even the most serious of injuries.

Whenever you make a Medicine roll you may add a bonus equal to twice your rank in this Talent. You also no longer suffer any penalties for treating people with the Wounded condition.

RANK 2: HEALING SALVE

You know how to make salves and poultices to speed healing and fight off infection. You even know how to treat poisons and diseases.

You may make a Mind/Medicine roll to prepare a healing salve. You need to have suitable herbs on hand which might be difficult to find in certain areas of the world, and it takes about an hour to make one dose.

When applied to wounds, the salve increases the rate of natural healing by 2/day and grants the subject +1 on all rolls to recover from poison or disease.

You also no longer suffer any penalty when treating people with the Crippled or Unconscious condition.

RANK 3: MEDICAL EXPERT

Your skill with medicine is so great that your patients always make a full recovery.

Any Salves you make are now twice as potent, increasing healing by 4/day and granting +2 on rolls against poison and disease. When making a Medicine roll to treat someone's injuries, you can also spend 1 Valour to double the number of DoS you roll. (See page XX for healing times).

IMPROVED STEALTH

Type: Common, Physical.

Prerequisite: Stealth 2.

Avoiding notice is the staple of criminals and scoundrels, but there are times when even the more law abiding citizen might want to go unnoticed. Hunters use stealth to avoid being detected by their prey, bounty hunters find it useful for similar reasons.

RANK 1: SILENT SHADOWS

You are an expert in blending into shadows and moving without making a sound.

You gain a bonus to all Stealth roll equal to your ranks in this Talent, this is limited by wearing armour however.

Armor	Max Bonus
None	No limit.
Light	+3
Medium	+1
Heavy	0

RANK 2: SWIFT AS THE NIGHT

No longer limited to creeping along slowly, you've learned to muffle the sound you make even while running, climbing or performing other athletic feats.

When using Stealth, you may now move at your normal Move rate without penalty, and any Stealth rolls you make while running, climbing, jumping or performing any other activity that uses the Athletics skill now only suffers a -2 penalty. (see page XX).

RANK 3: UNSEEN, UNHEARD

Your mastery of Stealth has progressed to the point where you are almost never seen by even the most observant guards.

When making a Stealth roll, you may roll one extra d10.

SCOUTING

Type: Common, Mental.

Prerequisite: Perception 2.

Good scouts need to be both observants and careful when moving through the wilderness. You have some experienced in this area and are very perceptive when it comes to gathering information about your surroundings.

RANK 1: EAGLE EYED

You are sharp eyed and have a great attention to detail, little gets past your notice.

You gain a bonus to all Perception and Survival rolls equal to your rank in this Talent.

RANK 2: KEEN AWARENESS

Your senses are so good that you can operate in darkness or fog with little penalty.

Your Perception rolls and attacks are less affected by darkness, fog, smoke and other conditions that impair your sight, so long as your hearing isn't also impaired. Any penalties you would normally suffer under these conditions is reduced by your rank in this Talent and you may spend 1 Valour to ignore the penalties completely for a round.

RANK 3: EXCEPTIONAL SENSES

You can spot even the stealthiest of assassins, nothing ever gets passed you.

You may roll an extra d10 on all Perception Skill checks.

SHIELD MASTERY

Type: Common, Physical.

Shields are commonly used all across Altais, they provide excellent protection and are relatively cheap to make. This Talent represents a character's experience using any form of shield or buckler, in both warfare and personal combat. Naturally in order to benefit from this, a character must be using a shield of some form.

RANK 1: FAMILIARITY

You are accustomed to using a shield and are no longer so encumbered by it, allowing you to manoeuvre it into position more easily.

The Skill Penalty for using a shield (see page XX) is reduced by 1 and the Defence bonus it provides is increased by +1.

RANK 2: SHIELD BASH

A shield is not just a defensive device, it can also be used as a weapon.

You may use your shield to make a melee attack as a Full Action, treating your rank in this Talent as your attack Skill and your Strength as the Attribute. If the attack hits, you cause damage equal to your Strength and knock your opponent back 1 meter per DoS rolled. Your opponent also suffers a penalty to any rolls they make on their next turn equal to the DoS you rolled due to being off balance.

In addition, you may spend 1 Valour to make the above attack as a Quick Action instead of a Full Action, allowing you to also make a normal attack in the same turn.

RANK 3: UNYIELDING SHIELD

Your skill with a shield allows you to block blows that would otherwise have caused you injury

Your Defence when using a Shield is increased by a further +1 and you may spend 1 Valour to block a blow that would otherwise have hit you, negating all damage from it.

SWIFT STEP

Type: Common, Physical.

Prerequisite: Agility 2.

Being swift of foot can be useful both in and out of combat. Whether charging an opponent, outrunning a wild animal or simply carrying a message from one place to another, being a fast runner can be an advantage.

This talent cannot be used while wearing armour.

RANK 1: SPRINT

You move quickly over short distances.

Your Move is increased by +1 and you may spend 1 Stamina to increase it by a further +1.

RANK 2: TIRELESS

You can run for a long time before getting tired.

You gain a bonus to all Athletics rolls equal to your rank in this Talent, and your rank is added to your Strength when determining how long you can run for. (See page XX)

Even once you get tired, you may spend 1 Stamina to keep going for an extra 10 minutes as if you were fully rested.

RANK 3: FLEET OF FOOT

You are quick and nimble, moving in to strike your opponent before retreating to safety.

On your turn, you may spend 1 Stamina to take an extra Quick Action or 3 Stamina to take an extra Full Action, both of these may only be used for moving.

TACTICS

Type: Common, Mental.

Prerequisite: Mind 2.

You are equally an expert in battlefield tactics and games of strategy, you know the best move in any given situation, and the best counter to every opponent's move. This Talent may be used whenever there are tactical decisions to be made, whether it be in a one on one fight, moving armies in a war, or a game of cards.

This Talent only work against an opponent you are carefully studying. You may choose who you are studying as a Quick Action and once chosen they remain your studied target until you choose a new one. When used in games, politics or a battle you are personally fighting, this target must be a single person you can see. When used from a position of leadership over a battlefield (and only when you are not personally fighting), you may specify the enemy leader as the target, gaining the effects against all their troops.

RANK 1: TACTICALLY MINDED

You think quickly but strategically, planning for every possible outcome.

You gain a passive +2 bonus per rank in this Talent to any Mind roll related to strategy and tactics against your studied target, whether it be winning a game of cards, puzzling out the intricacies of court politics, or planning troop movements on a battlefield.

You may also spend 1 Stamina to gain a +1 bonus to a single attack roll you are making against your studied target. You must declare that you are doing this before making the roll.

RANK 2: SKIRMISH MANOEUVRES

You guide your allies towards victory, shouting out orders and directing the flow of combat.

You may spend 2 Stamina as a Quick Action to issue combat orders to a number of allies equal to your Leadership Skill. These orders must be suitable for combat and they must be instructions to act against the opponent you are studying in a hostile manner.

If your allies follow those orders, they get a +2 bonus to all attack rolls they make this turn. You must be able to communicate these orders clearly for them to gain the bonus, they could be shouted verbally, passed through sign language, or even written down if there is time to read.

Players using this Talent should give their orders without consulting the other players OOC, they don't have time to discuss tactics in a heated battle and if the other characters choose to disobey then they simply don't receive the bonus.

RANK 3: ONE PERFECT MOMENT

You study your opponent's every move, watching them fight with others until you see the perfect moment to act, and when you do so, it often brings decisive victory.

During your turn, you may spend 1 Valour to activate this Talent. You cannot perform any other action first except choosing which target to study. Your turn ends immediately and while this Talent is active you no longer gain turns each round, instead you simply study your target, waiting for the right moment.

You may choose to deactivate this Talent at any time within the next three rounds and when you do you immediately gain a turn that interrupts the normal initiative order. Any attacks you make during that turn gain a bonus to all Attack Rolls and Damage equal to the number of times you saw your target attacked and the number of times they themselves attacked others added together. This does however count as your turn for the round so you cannot use it to take two turns in the same round.

Example: Avir comes face to face with one of the Rephaim, knowing he will need to make every blow count, he spends 1 Valour to activate this Talent. His turn ends immediately and his fellow party members continue the fight. There are four of them and they each attack the enemy once. The Rephaim also attacks once during that round. When Avir finally chooses to act at the end of the round he gains +5 to his Attack Rolls and Damage against the Rephaim.

Any kind of attack counts for determining how great a bonus you receive, whether physical or magical, so long as it had the potential to cause damage to the opponent (regardless of whether it actually did). For example a spell caster using the Blaze to engulf their target in fire counts as an attack, as does the swing of a sword, or a falling boulder.

You only receive this bonus against the target you were studying when you activated this Talent and switching targets resets the bonuses back to zero. If you don't deactivate this Talent within three rounds or if the target dies or escapes then this Talent ends and you do not gain its effects.

UNARMED EXPERT

Type: Common, Physical.

You have studied a variety of combat techniques using only your body as a weapon and have learned to be a lethal fighter even when unarmed.

This Talent cannot be used with Medium or Heavy armour which hinders movement too much to take advantage of these techniques.

RANK 1: ADAMANT FIST

You have learned to strike vital spots with precision, dealing extra damage with each attack.

You may add your ranks in this Talent to all unarmed Attack Rolls. Your damage with unarmed attacks is now 1d and you may choose to ignore the normal rule that unarmed attacks are non-lethal (See page XX). If you spend 1 Stamina, you may also add your ranks in this Talent to your damage roll.

RANK 2: INSIDE STRIKE

You have learned to evade attacks, knock the enemy's weapon aside and step inside their reach.

While unarmed and both your hands are free, you gain a bonus to your Defence equal to your ranks in this Talent. You can also spend 1 Stamina before making an Attack Roll to ignore any penalty from the opponent's Reach.

RANK 3: CLAWS OF THE GARL

You strike swiftly, raining down blows on your opponent before they can recover.

At the start of your turn, you may spend 3 Stamina. If you do then for the rest of this turn your unarmed attacks only count as Quick Actions. You may also spend 1 Valour at any point during your turn to immediately take an extra Quick Action which can only be used to make these attacks.

UNSEEN STRIKE

Type: Common, Physical.

Prerequisite: Agility 2.

A talent most commonly used by assassins and cut throats, who strike unseen in the dead of night. Such tactics are not honourable, but they are effective.

This Talent can only be used with Small Weapons and only in melee. Your target must also be unaware of your location, either due to a successful Stealth roll, an ambush situation, or because the target is blinded in some way.

RANK 1: HIDDEN STRIKE

After sneaking up on an opponent, you strike without them even being away of your presence and aiming at vital areas to cause the most harm.

You may spend 3 Stamina to make a Hidden Strike as a Full Action. If this attack hits and the target's Prowess is lower than yours, you add 10 to your damage, otherwise you add twice your rating in this Talent.

RANK 2: THE SLENDER BLADE

You slide your blade between the gaps in your targets armour, avoiding steel and finding soft flesh beneath.

When using Hidden Strike, you may spend 3 extra Stamina to ignore your target's AR. You must announce you are doing so before making the Attack Roll and this doesn't work against AR from magical sources.

RANK 3: MURDER

You have become a master of assassination, killing all but the toughest enemies in a single blow.

When you hit with a Hidden Strike, you roll an extra die on the damage roll. You may also spend 1 Valour to adjust one damage die to be a 10, triggering a Cascade.

WEAPON EXPERT – DUAL WIELD

Type: Common, Physical.

Prerequisite: Agility 2.

It is rare to find people who are skilled in wielding two weapons at once but occasionally someone masters this extremely difficult art. This Talent can only be used while wielding two small or medium weapons.

RANK 1: TWO WEAPON TRAINING

You have learned to use two weapons at once and are no longer as encumbered by this unusual fighting style.

Your Attack Roll penalty for Dual Wielding (see page XX) is reduced by your rank in this Talent and your Defence is increased by +1 due to being able to parry with your-off hand.

Rank	Penalty
0	-4
1	-3
2	-2
3	-1
4+	0

RANK 2: FIRST TO STRIKE

You are extremely quick with your weapons, able to bring them to bare before the enemy is prepared.

While dual wielding you gain a +2 bonus to your Initiative. You may spend 1 Stamina to add an additional +2 to your initiative for the duration of the fight and you may do this a number of times equal to your ranks in this Talent.

RANK 3: MOMENT OF ENDINGS

You deftly turn an attack aside with one of your weapons while striking with the other.

When an enemy makes a melee attack against you, you may spend 1 Valour as a Reflexive Action to negate the attack and immediately make a single counter attack with one of your melee weapons.

WEAPON EXPERT – ONE HANDED

Type: Common, Physical.

You are well trained in the use of one handed weapons and have learned specialised techniques in this area. This Talent may only be used while wielding a single one-handed melee weapon. You may use it with a shield in the other hand, but not while dual wielding.

RANK 1: ACUITY

You are extremely quick and accurate with your weapon, both to draw it and to strike.

You may draw a one handed melee weapon as a Free Action and gain a bonus to your Attack Roll equal to your rank in this Talent.

RANK 2: LUNGE

You leap forward and attempt to strike your opponent without regard for your own wellbeing.

When making an Attack Roll, you may spend 2 Stamina to lunge as a Full Action. You ignore your opponents Reach (See page XX) and if you hit you may increase one of the results rolled on your damage dice by 2. This cannot increase the result above 10 but can cause a Cascade.

However after using this attack you are open to retaliation and until the end of your next Turn, your Defence is halved (round down).

RANK 3: ALACRITY

Your experience in combat has taught you to strike more swiftly and to never overcommit to an attack.

At the start of your turn, you may spend 3 Stamina. If you do then for the rest of this turn you can make normal attacks as Quick Actions. You may also spend 1 Valour at any point during your turn to immediately take an extra Quick Action which can only be used to make one of these attacks or to switch weapons.

WEAPON EXPERT – THROWING

Type: Common, Physical.

You are a master at throwing weapons or using a sling. Naturally this Talent can only be used with such weapons.

RANK 1: ACCURATE SHOT

You are not only more accurate with thrown weapons, but you have also mastered techniques to throw them further.

You gain a bonus to your Attack Rolls equal to your rank in this Talent and you suffer 2 less penalty when making an attack beyond the weapon's normal range. (See page XX)

RANK 2: DISTRACTING SHOT

One of the most common uses for throwing weapons is to distract you opponent, a technique you have mastered.

Whenever an opponent makes an attack or casts a spell nearby, you may attempt to throw something at them to distract them. This costs you 2 Stamina to use and you do not need to have a thrown weapon ready in your hand, you simply require one within easy reach (such as on your belt or in a pocket). You may immediately draw and throw the weapon as a Reflexive Action, up to the weapon's base range.

Due to the haste with which you must throw the weapon you do not have time to aim properly, you suffer a -2 to hit and cannot use this against opponents who are beyond the weapon's base range. If the attack hits, it deals damage as normal and the opponent suffers a -4 penalty to their attack or spell casting roll.

RANK 3: IMPROVISED THROWING

Your mastering of thrown weapons has increased to the point where everything becomes a lethal missile in your hands.

You may spend 1 Stamina to throw any object you are holding with deadly accuracy. The object must be light enough for you to easily carry around, for example weapons, shields and chairs are fine, but wagons or full barrels of wine are too heavy.

Weapons thrown in this way cause their normal damage but with a -2 penalty, they have 0 AP, and a base range of 5 meters. Objects that aren't weapons and don't have a listed damage rating cause 1d (-2) damage. You may even use this in combination with Distracting Shot.

WEAPON EXPERT – TWO HANDED

Type: Common, Physical.

Prerequisite: Strength 2.

You have experience with fighting techniques that specialise in large two handed weapons. You must be using a two handed weapon with both hands to use this Talent.

RANK 1: TWO HANDED EXPERIENCE

You've learned to take full advantage of your weapon's length and power.

You add +1 to your weapon's Damage and Reach.

RANK 2: FIERCE BLOW

You swing your weapon with all the force you can muster, sacrificing accuracy for power in an attempt to fell your foe in a single blow.

You may spend 2 Stamina before making an Attack Roll. You suffer a -2 penalty but if it hits, it deals extra damage equal to your Strength.

RANK 3: SUNDERING STRIKE

With a mighty swing, you bring your weapon crashing down on your opponent, cleaving their shield, puncturing armour and shattering bone.

You may spend 1 Valour to perform this attack as a Full Action. If it hits, you destroy your opponent's Shield and permanently reduce the AR of each piece of armour they are wearing by 1 before then dealing damage as normal. If the attack misses, unless you Dramatically Failed, it still destroys your opponents shield (if they have one) as they use it to parry the attack. Magical shields and armour are not affected by this attack.

TALENTS - MAGICAL

ARCANE DEFENCE

Type: Mental.

Prerequisite: Veilcraft 2.

A mistake many magic users make is focusing purely on the power their magic gives them, they overlook that sometimes it's more important to prevent magic than to cause it. Those who train in this Talent learn to keep the Veil stable and to maintain the status quo.

RANK 1: RESTRICT THE VEIL

You sense when the Veil around you begins to fluctuate and you've learned to make it more rigid so as to prevent any changes.

You may spend 1 Stamina to raise the difficulty of a spell casting roll by 2. You may do this multiple times up to your ranks in this Talent, but only for spells that are targeted nearby: within 3 meters per rank you possess in Veilcraft.

RANK 2: MEND THE VEIL

You've learnt to undo a spell in progress, to shift the Veil back to normal and restore the world to its natural state.

You gain a bonus to all Counterspell rolls equal to your rank in this Talent and may spend 3 Stamina to try and undo a spell that you don't have the Realms or Ranks to cast.

RANK 3: HOLD THE VEIL

When a spell is cast near you, you reach out and steady the Veil, holding it still so no changes can occur.

You may now spend 3 Stamina to make a free Counterspell roll against any nearby spell at the moment it is cast. The spell must be targeted within 3 meters of you per rank you possess in Veilcraft. Additionally you may spend 1 Valour to gain a bonus DoS on any Counterspell roll.

ARCANE EXPERTISE

Type: Magic, Mental.

Prerequisite: Veilcraft 2.

The nature of magic isn't fully understood, although most scholars agree that the ability to manipulate the Veil is innate to all the people of Altais. Many manifest the power in times of stress and some even learn basic control, but most hide such power away. Magic is shunned throughout most of the Kingdoms and few try to really master it.

RANK 1: PRACTISED MAGIC

You practise magic regularly and have learned to better control the state of the Veil.

You gain a bonus to all Veilcraft and Veilsense rolls equal to your rank in this Talent. You may also spend 2 Stamina to reduce the Surge Rating on a casting roll by 1, but you must do this before rolling and it doesn't change the rating of the actual area, just what you are rolling against. Future rolls still use the full rating.

RANK 2: INTUITIVE MAGIC

Magic is no longer a challenge for you, what takes others time and considerable concentration now comes naturally. You manipulate the Veil with a casual thought and the universe begins to bend to your will.

You may now make Veilsense rolls as a free action, and you can spend 1 Stamina to reduce the time it takes to cast a spell by 1 Full Action. You can spend multiple Stamina in this way but you can never reduce the casting time to less than 1 Full Action.

RANK 3: STABLE MAGIC

You've gained an understanding of the Veil that allows you to reduce the severity of a Surge. Now when they occur, you still retain some control over the effects and can prevent complete catastrophes.

When a Surge occurs, you may attempt to control it; for every 2 Stamina you spend, you can remove one Surge Die from the severity. If the Surge causes an effect on random targets, you may spend 2 Stamina per target to choose who it affects instead.

PATTERN WEAVER

Type: Magic, Pattern, Mental.

Prerequisite: Pattern Magic 2. May not be raised higher than your Rank in Pattern Magic.

This Talent involves rare techniques practised only by a few hunters and adventurers around the Kingdom of Ash. Instead of slowly using the Pattern to shape the world around them, those who master this Talent have learnt to make sudden and precise changes, usually to aid them in combat.

RANK 1: PATTERN FORGE

You open hundreds of tiny precise holes in the Veil, allowing the energy beyond into the world and solidifying the air into the shape you choose. Most use this to create weapons or armour, although other objects can also be created. These objects of frozen air are as strong as iron and are often described as Pattern Steel, appearing to be made of a mostly transparent pale blue glass.

Objects you create must be touching you: you can create a sword in your hand, or armour around your body for example, but you cannot create objects at a distance. You can create any object you can visualise, up to about a cubic meter in volume.

Each item is created as a Quick Action and no spell casting roll is required. The Stamina cost depends on the size and complexity of the item:

Item Size	Stamina Cost	Examples
Small or less	1	Dagger, arrow, bowl
Medium	2	Sword, shield, blacksmith's hammer
Large	4	Armour, anvil

Perhaps one of the most notable properties of Pattern Steel is that it seems to interfere with the incorporeal forms of the Rephaim. A Pattern Steel sword can cut them and a shield can block their blows, making this a very useful tool for those that seek to do battle with the Rephaim.

Once created, the objects continue to exist so long as you remain in contact with them and spend a Quick Action each turn concentrating on them, which is enough to maintain any number of objects. Any object you lose contact with or stop concentrating on melts back into the air.

RANK 2: AEGIS

In emergencies, you reach out with a free hand and rip open the Veil, calling the Pattern to defend you. The resulting shield is a crude latticework of jagged edges and misshapen Pattern Steel that grows rapidly from your fingertips.

When you are hit by an attack, you may spend 3 Stamina and make a Veilcraft roll as a Reflexive Action. If you succeed, the attack is intercepted by the sudden appearance of a crude Pattern Steel barrier which absorbs an amount of damage equal to 3x your rank in this Talent before shattering.

If the attack deals more damage than the barrier can absorb, the rest is dealt to you as normal as the blow continues through the shield to hit you. Until the barrier shatters, it remains and can be maintained like any other item created with this Talent.

In order to use this Talent, you must have a hand free.

This talent may block physical and magical projectiles and melee attacks as well as the intangible touch of the Rephaim, but not magical effects that would manifest on you directly.

RANK 3: PATTERN FLOW

Your mastery over the Veil now allows you to shape the Pattern more freely, items you create shift and flow almost like liquid while still remaining solid to the touch.

As a Reflexive Action, you can alter the shape or function of any object you are touching that was created by this Talent. For example you can cause a sword to change into a spear, or cause it to lengthen or grow spikes. The change occurs instantly and can even be done when it's not your turn.

Each change costs 1 Stamina, and an item can only benefit from each once (growing two lots of spikes from a weapon doesn't make it deal even more damage). It also costs 1 Stamina to remove a change from a item.

Here are some examples of changes you can make, other non-combat changes are left up to the GM.

Armour:

- Increase density: +1 AR. Armor skill penalty increased by 2.
- Decrease density: -1 AR. Armor skill penalty reduced by 2.

Weapon:

- Bend and shape it to seek the enemy as you swing: +2 to your Attack roll, -1 to Damage.
- Sprout spikes along its length: +2 Damage, -4 Attack.
- Lengthen the weapon: Double Reach, -2 Attack.
- Change from one weapon type into another.

Aegis:

- You can fully repair the Pattern Steel barrier, you may even do this at the point it would normally shatter to restore it and absorb even more damage from the attack.

Changes can even be made between rolls, you could cause a weapon to bend to avoid the opponent's defences so as to hit and then sprout the spikes when determining damage, masters of this talent keep their weapons in constant flux, changing to fit the situation.

STORM SYMPATHY

Type: Magic, Tempest, Mental.

Prerequisite: May not be raised higher than your Rank in Tempest Magic.

This Talent focuses on rare techniques developed by the Élanishi. They specialise in protecting people from the terrible storm in the heart of the Kingdom and often serve as guides and guardians to those who need to travel.

With this Talent you can create carefully controlled pockets of gravity that pull on the air to create wind or cancel it out and a build-up of static charge in the air can lead to lightning. You cannot create rain however, Tempest Magic does not provide a way to increase the amount of moisture in the air, although you could move existing rain clouds around.

To work out alterations to the weather, look up the current conditions on this table.

Weather	Penalty	Stay Standing	Movement	Notes
Calm	0	--	Normal	No wind at all.
Light Breeze	0	--	Normal	Enough to blow out a candle or swirl papers around.
Strong Breeze	0	--	Normal	Whips hair and clothes around.
High Wind	-1	--	Normal	Effort needed to walk against the wind.
Gale	-2	--	-1	Some branches break. People stumble.
Strong Gale	-4	Difficulty 6	-2	Some trees fall. Some buildings damaged.
Hurricane	-10	Difficulty 15	-3	Trees and buildings destroyed. Widespread damage.

Penalty: This penalty applies to all rolls made except those to remain standing.

Stay Standing: Everyone in the bad weather must make a Strength/Athletics roll against the listed difficulty to stay standing. Each DoS rolled allows the character to stay up for 1 round before they need to roll again.

Movement: This penalty is applied to the speed of everyone moving in the area.

Using this Talent, the character can shift the severity of the weather towards either the Calm or Hurricane ends of the table. The changes are centred on the user and requires a Full Action each turn to concentrate on maintaining the spell or the effect ends.

No roll is required to use this Talent but it costs Stamina to make any change to the weather and your rank determines how easy these changes are:

Rank	Radius	Cost	Steps
1	5m	5	1
2	10m	3	2
3	20m	2	3

Radius: The size of the weather change. The effect is always centred on you.

Cost: The Stamina cost to activate this Talent. Once active no further cost is required so long as concentration is maintained.

Steps: The maximum number of steps a character can shift the weather towards either Calm or Hurricane.

You may also spend 1 Valour to shift the weather one extra step beyond the limit normally imposed by your rank in this Talent. This extra step doesn't cost you Stamina.

REALMS

Some characters may begin play with magic and all may learn it during the course of the game. Magic is treated similar to Talents, each area (Realm) is divided into multiple Ranks which must be learnt in sequential order. Activating a rank of magic works a little differently to Talents however, it is slower often taking multiple rounds to create a magical effect and usually requires a Focus/Veilcraft roll to succeed. See page XX for rules on spell casting.

THE BLAZE

Type: Magic, Blaze

Prerequisite: Veilcraft 1

The Blaze is the source of all light and heat. It bleeds through in places of high energy, creating the impression that a fire creates light and heat, when in fact it just allows it through from the Blaze.

Those who weaken the Veil to this realm allow more light and heat in, while strengthening it can shut light and heat out, even to the point of plunging a room into darkness or freezing water solid.

The Blaze is one of the more dangerous realms, its effects are directly harmful and when those who use it lose control, the Surges it causes are also often destructive in nature. For this reason it is viewed with suspicion more than any other Realm except the Void.

RANK 1: CONDUIT OF FLAME

Twisting the Veil, you can control the world's connection to heat and light, creating small flames or extinguishing them.

When using this realm, the caster decides if they are increasing the amount of heat and light in the area, or decreasing it. Light and heat flow through from the Blaze together and altering one also alters the other. The intensity of the effect is determined by the number of DoS rolled:

DoS	Heat	Light	Damage
1	Small flame	Lantern light	1d + Focus
2	Fireplace	Light a small room	2d + Focus
3	Large Bonfire	Light a large room	3d + Focus
4	Huge Bonfire	Daylight	4d + Focus
5+	Raging Inferno	Blinding Light	5d + Focus

Any fire created burns normally and may ignite combustible materials, creating secondary fires. See the above table for the amount of damage dealt to those caught directly in the effect, secondary fires usually cause less damage at GM discretion.

If the caster chooses to thicken the Veil, then each DoS lowers the temperature by about 20 degrees Celsius/40 degrees Fahrenheit. A character subjected to cold suffer the effects listed for cold in the Weather section. (See page XX)

The caster can also put out fires and reduce the light in the area: find a similar sized fire or light source on the above table and subtract the casters DoS from the number listed. The new number is how small the effect becomes and if the DoS are reduced to zero or lower, the fire is extinguished and the area is plunged into darkness. The effects of fighting in dim light or darkness are covered under the combat section. (See page XX)

Example: A caster tries to extinguish a huge bonfire (4 Dos). She scores 3 DoS, reducing the size of the bonfire down to a small flame. Note that it's not the cold putting out the fire, rather the fire diminishes and goes out as it is cut off from its source: the Blaze.

Any fire, ice, light or darkness created fills the area of affect in its most natural form, however those with enough Veilcraft to shape the radius could create walls of ice, letters of fire that hang in the air, tendrils of darkness, and other creatively shaped effects.

The caster may always choose to apply fewer DoS than they rolled, so a caster who gets 4 DoS can still choose to use just 1 to light a candle.

RANK 2: DOMINION OF RADIANCE

Your aptitude with the Blaze allows you to create much larger effects.

When using Conduit of Flame, you may now add one extra DoS to the result, creating a much greater affect than you otherwise could and you may also choose to affect only the levels of either heat or light in the area, instead of both. Not only can you create a light source without flame or heat, but you can also create impossible things like fire that burns but doesn't illuminate.

RANK 3: INFERNO

You can now sunder the Veil, allowing the Blaze to flow in with its full intensity or thicken it and cut off the Blaze completely.

If you choose to open the Veil, you create a human sized rift into the Blaze and the area around it is immediately immolated by the energy pouring in, as if 5 DoS had been achieved on Conduit of Flame. The effect is incredibly concentrated however and only affects a single target, regardless of your normal spell radius.

One person per round could, in theory, step through the rift into the Blaze but doing so is almost certainly fatal unless they have some way to protect themselves from the extreme heat on the other side.

Alternatively you could cut off the Blaze completely, instantly extinguishing a single fire or light source or plunging a small area into pitch darkness.

Using either of these effects costs 1 Valour in addition to any other normal costs for casting a spell and increases the Surge Rating in the area by 1, this increase lasts a day.

THE PATTERN

Type: Magic, Pattern

Prerequisite: Veilcraft 1

Little is known about the Pattern itself since travel within it is extremely difficult. It is the origin of the nuclear forces that bind matter together and these forces are omnipresent within the realm. They leak through where matter in Altai weakens the Veil, allowing subatomic particles to fuse into atoms and atom into more complicated molecules.

Lowering the Veil intensifies the nuclear forces, causing rapid state changes from gas to liquid and from liquid to solid. In a sense it “freezes” matter but without a change in temperature. With enough effort, even the air can be solidified.

Raising the Veil lowers the nuclear forces, converting solids into liquids and liquids into gasses.

Entering the Pattern is difficult, it’s full of strong and dense crystalline matter. According to legend, some very powerful Pattern Mages once attempted to shunt the energy away into other realms, melting the matter within, but this was like trying to tunnel through a glassier and they gave up after several hours of work yielded a tunnel only a few meters long.

The Pattern is extremely versatile, it can be used to shape matter to create objects for artistic purposes, or as an attack. By carefully manipulating the Veil to slowly soften and harden parts of an object, the caster can shape even the densest of substances like clay although this can take some time. This doesn’t necessarily allow the caster to create works of art, they may be able to meld marble with their hands but they still need to be a talented sculptor to produce a result that will be admired by others.

Pattern Magic can also be used to compress solids, making them denser and stronger in the process, and this technique was used to create the Steel buildings in the Kingdom of Rust and the glass ones in Meharavia.

Although Pattern magic can alter the state of matter, it can’t change it to a different form of matter. Stone can be made to run like water but it can’t be actually turned into water, likewise wood can be made as hard as metal but cannot be made into metal.

RANK 1: SCULPTOR’S EDGE

By making subtle adjustments to the Veil, you can alter the natural state of matter.

You can only change matter by one state: substances that are normally solids can be made into liquids or vice versa, and liquids can be made into gasses and gases to liquids, but you cannot turn something that would normally be solid into a gas, nor can multiple castings of this spell be stacked to create that effect.

The transition from one state to another is slow and based on the DoS rolled. The following table lists how long the transition takes as well as how much damage a living creature suffers each turn they are exposed to the effect:

DoS	Time	Damage
1	6 rounds	1d - 4*
2	4 rounds	1d - 2*
3	2 rounds	2d - 2*
4	1 round	3d
5+	Instant	4d + 2

*Minimum of 1 damage.

Solid objects can be easily sculpted by hand after being softened for half the time listed on the above table, but otherwise solids turned to liquids just melt naturally into a pool and liquids solidified tend to form their most natural structure as if frozen.

Living creatures killed by the effect undergo a complete state change as their body either solidifies or changes to liquid.

Some substances turned to gasses can be very toxic if inhaled, the effects of this are left up to the GM but the section on Poisons could be a good guide (See page XX).

RANK 2: MASTERY OVER MATTER

Able to bend the veil more, you can now alter the state of matter even further.

When using Sculptor's Edge, you may now add one DoS to the result, altering the state of matter more quickly. Additionally you can now change matter by two states: turning a solid first into a liquid then a gas, or vice versa. Each change in state still takes the time listed on the above table so with 2 DoS it takes 4 rounds for the solid to turn to a liquid and another 4 rounds for it to turn to a gas.

RANK 3: TOUCH OF THE SUBLIME

No longer limited to small alterations in the Veil, you can now rip it wide and let the Pattern in or seal it off almost completely.

You can open the Veil, creating a human sized rift and allowing the energies of the Pattern to flow in. The effect is extremely concentrated but everything nearby, whether gas, liquid or solid immediately solidifies completely. The radius is only big enough to effect a single living creature (regardless of your normal spell radius) and they suffer the effects of Sculptors Edge as if 5 DoS had been rolled. Additionally they must make a Strength roll to move each turn as they are being encased in solidified air (which resembles a blue crystalline solid).

If someone manages to step through the rift (difficult considering the air around it is solidified), then they find themselves in the pattern and may just have enough time to marvel at the strange crystalline matter that fills it before they solidify completely.

Alternatively, if you cut off the connection to the Pattern, then a single target sublimates, instantly becoming a gas. This also deals the above listed damage to a living creature and destroys all mundane objects they are carrying.

Magical creatures and objects may be more resilient to these effects at GM discretion.

Using either of these effects costs 1 Valour in addition to any other normal costs for casting a spell and increases the Surge Rating in the area by 1, this increase lasts a day.

THE TEMPEST

Type: Magic, Tempest

Prerequisite: Veilcraft 1

The Tempest is the realm of storms and gravity and before the Fall masters of Tempest magic used its influence to make an entire city fly through the sky. It is filled with a breathable atmosphere, denser than on Altai, the pressure difference is noticeable but not dangerously so.

There is no ground in the conventional sense but there is other matter, mostly chunks of rock drifting randomly through the space. Some of these chunks are so large that they could be walked upon, and there are stories that explorers have found ancient ruins on some of them.

There are a few features of the Tempest that make it particularly unusual. Gravity is far stronger within, hundreds of times stronger, but unlike in Altai it isn't connected to physical matter, it permeates the space evenly pulling equally in all directions and cancelling itself out. This leaves any solid matter within the Tempest floating in free fall. Matter in Altai pulls on the Veil and allows some of this force through, creating the appearance that gravity is a property of matter. When mages influence the Veil, they can allow more of the gravity in from the Tempest, or deny it completely.

Another unusual feature of the Tempest is that all the matter within often has a very high electrical charge that fluctuates wildly from place to place. Pockets of relative stability form and can last years only to break apart into chaotic electrical storms as they collide with another pocket of different charge. If the Veil is weakened enough, these charged particles can rush into the world, arcing as a lightning bolt to strike everything nearby.

Despite the potentially volatile nature of the Tempest, travel within is possible but dangerous. In addition to the chaotic storms, the Tempest is home to native life forms that seem to be formed from charged energy. These creatures are called Luents and they seek out other sources of energy to feed and can drain the heat out of a human being.

RANK 1: STORM'S FLIGHT

Manipulating the Veil allows you to control the amount of gravity in the area. This can be used to fly (albeit clumsily) or as a weapon to crush opponents.

By lowering the Veil you can increase the gravity in a location to either pull an object in that direction or to crush someone standing there and by Raising the Veil you can cut gravity off and float. With a single spell, a caster can bend the Veil enough to achieve limited flight. The following table describes how fast a character can fly or levitate an object and how accurately they can control that movement.

Flight

DoS	Move Speed	Defence Modifier	Control
1	3	-4	Clumsy
2	9	0	Normal
3	18	+1	Agile
4	30	+2	Very Agile
5+	60	+3	Fine Manipulation

While flying, a character has the Move Speed listed on the above table and cannot Run to increase it. A flying character uses Focus instead of Agility to calculate their Defence and gains the modifier listed on the table. A character being levitated by another is at their mercy: if the caster chooses to move them evasively, their defence is calculated using the caster's Focus, if they are held still they get no Defence at all.

Control indicates how nobly the character can fly (or levitate an object). Clumsy is slow and sluggish, while Agile is as mobile as a bird. Fine Manipulation indicates that the caster has so much control they could tie a shoelace with the spell as easily as they could with their hands.

You can also increase gravity on a person to try and crush them, doing so inflicts damage and potentially makes it more difficult for them to move.

Increasing Gravity

DoS	Damage	Move Speed
1	1	-1
2	2	-2
3	1d + 1	-3
4	1d + 2	-4
5+	2d + 2	-5

A character reduced to zero or lower Move Speed can no longer move using Walk actions but might still be able to move through the Run action.

RANK 2: STORM'S STRIKE

By twisting the Veil further, you can now alter the electrical charge in an area, allowing more negative charge in or cutting it off to create positive charge. Although most Altaens have little understanding of electricity and charge, you have mastered this enough to harm your enemies.

When using Storm's Flight, you may now add one DoS to the effect, allowing you to manipulate gravity more easily.

You can also now call forth a burst of lightning. It fills the target area, arcing in through the Veil to strike everything within the area of effect.

Lightning

DoS	Damage
1	1d
2	2d
3+	3d

RANK 3: EMBRACE THE STORM

Your control is now so great that you can open a rift into the Tempest and let its full fury in, or shut it out completely.

If you choose to weaken the Veil, a human sized rift opens in a burst of electricity. This effect is concentrated and can hit a single target standing where the rift opens for 3d damage. The increased gravity on the other side begins flowing across and exerts a pull on everything within your normal area of effect. This causes characters to start sliding towards the rift unless they use a Move action to keep their ground.

One character per round can enter the rift, they take 3d damage when they enter and assuming they survive, they are now freely floating in the tempest. Magic can be used to levitate around although this is done through the opposite process to levitating while on Altai. Instead of increasing gravity in the direction you want to fly and being pulled towards that location, you lower the gravity behind you, shunting the excess into Altai so that you are pulled towards the now higher gravity ahead of you.

The Tempest is full of highly charged pockets and the GM may require a Perception roll to avoid them, colliding with one causes another 3d damage. Returning also causes a similar amount of damage as the electrical charges once again equalise.

Cutting off the Tempest completely causes a single target to become weightless, take 1d damage each round and pass out as the electrical signals in their brain and nervous system are disrupted. Other sources of electricity on the target are also cut off, although such things are rare in Altai: most relics and remnants cease to function, although usually recover once the effect ends.

Using either of these effects costs 1 Valour in addition to any other normal costs for casting a spell and increases the Surge Rating in the area by 1, this increase lasts a day.

THE VOID

Type: Magic, Void

Prerequisite: Veilcraft 1

The Void is the strangest of all the realms. It is the one that poses the biggest threat to life on Altai and so most avoid tampering with it. Space within the Void is very unusual, often defying easy classification. It seems to swirl and twist with shades of purple and black. It doesn't contain an atmosphere but is filled with an exotic form of the energy so 'thick' that anyone there can 'swim' through it as if it were water. Space within the Void is extremely compressed and it can be used to cross large distances in Altai very quickly, in fact humanity once used it to cross between the stars.

There is no native matter in the Void, only things that people bring in with them, although the Rephaim have made it their home and have built hives and worse within. One of the most unusual properties of the Void and one of the least well understood is that the energies of the Void vibrate in the presence of sentient minds, reacting to the electrical energy within, these vibrations can be read allowing thoughts and emotions to travel between people in close proximity.

The most dangerous property of the Void however is that long term exposure begins to change people, the radiation causes a cancerous sickness in those exposed for too long, which spreads fairly rapidly. Those contaminated by this 'Void taint' find their physical body gradually becoming insubstantial as it shifts closer and closer to the Void, eventually the sickness reaches the mind and their brain becomes little more than an empty husk for the Rephaim's will.

Lowering the Veil causes space to distort, disorienting those in the area but allowing rapid movement over great distances, while raising the Veil stretches space, making it more difficult to cross space.

A side effect of the Void's unusual reaction to electrical energy is that any large electrical effect (like a lightning bolt) causes the equivalent of tidal waves within. These currents can be strong enough to sweep people away and completely overwhelm any psychically attuned creatures such as the Rephaim. These disturbances often persist for hours afterward, making any attempts to read minds impossible.

Using Void magic or being exposed to its energies may require a Taint Test to avoid becoming increasingly tainted. (See page XX).

RANK 1: THOUGHT BEFORE STRIDE

By bending the Veil, you can bring yourself closer to the Void in order to sense the thoughts of others or you can bend space to aid or confuse.

By weakening the Veil on a target, the caster grants them the ability to sense the ripples in the Void created by the presence of thinking creatures in the area. The target becomes aware of the number and vague location of all minds within a radius of 10 meters/yards per DoS rolled. They can tell the difference between sentient minds and animals, and between large animals and small animals (although not the specific species). Vaelyth minds feel the same as human ones, but Rephaim stand out very clearly, the constant drone of the hive mind is easy to detect. Insects, plants and other life forms without minds are not detectable.

Anyone attempting to keep their mind hidden from this power needs to roll Focus/Subterfuge and get more DoS than the caster to avoid detection and they can only do so if they remain more than 10 meters away from the caster.

By strengthening the Veil around a target, the caster can reduce that mind's impact on the Void and make them invisible to the above effect. Each DoS rolled is added to those of the above Focus/Subterfuge roll and this also allows them to go undetected even up close.

Alternatively Void magic can be used to compress or stretch space to aid or hinder movement or to disorientate an enemy. You may grant your target a bonus or penalty to their Move equal to the DoS rolled, or may penalize all Skill rolls by a similar amount. (You need to choose one of these effects and they don't stack with multiple castings, the one with the highest DoS applies.)

RANK 2: MIND OVER MIND

Your ability to manipulate the Void has increased and you can now read the thoughts of others more clearly and impose your own thoughts on them in turn.

You now gain one bonus DoS when using Thought Before Stride.

You can also now read a specific person's mind, the amount of information gained is based on the DoS rolled:

DoS Accuracy

- 1 You can read the target's emotional state. E.g. angry, upset, relaxed, happy, etc.
- 2 You can determine who they are thinking about and general short term intentions (e.g. you could sense that someone plans to kill the Baron this evening, but not how they will do it.)
- 3+ You can read their surface thoughts completely. Anything they are thinking about is an open book to you. You can't sense anything the target isn't immediately thinking about although conversation and social skills could be used to guide the target's mind to a specific subject.

When used on a crowd of people, reading thoughts and emotions becomes very confusing, you might for example detect that someone in a large crowd has murderous thoughts but might need to make a Focus/Perception roll to determine who the thoughts came from.

You can also attempt to influence the emotions and thoughts of others, shifting their mental state based on your roll. Emotions are easy and the subject is likely to adopt the specified emotion without hesitation. Controlling someone's mind is harder, any action you try and force them to do must be immediate, you can't implant a suggestion or tell someone to wait 10 minutes and then perform the action: You control their immediate impulse rather than brain washing them to do something in the future.

DoS Mental change

- 1 Small change, anger to annoyed, happy to ecstatic, etc. You can force someone to take a very simple and inconsequential Free Action, such as letting go of something they are holding, or speaking a single word. This cannot force someone to do something they really don't want to do, you couldn't make someone hand over their prized possession, or drop a lit candle while they are standing in a pool of oil.
- 2 You can calm someone in an emotional state, making them relaxed and neutral, or turn someone in such a state towards any strong emotion. You can now force someone to take a Free Action that they don't want to do.
- 3+ You can turn any emotion into any other emotion, and you can force someone to take a Quick Action of your choice.

RANK 3: INTO THE VOID

Opening a rift into the Void can allow you to travel great distances in a matter of moments but comes with incredible dangers, not only of Void Taint but of being noticed by the Rephaim.

You can open a human-sized rift into the Void and one person can enter per round.

The Void is not a very hospitable environment, there is no breathable atmosphere but the pressure exerted by the energy within is sufficient to stop any problems with decompression. Those entering can survive for as long as they can hold their breath which is enough time to use it to travel great distances quickly. Anyone moving through the Void can travel as if swimming, and uses the Swim skill for any tests related to movement. Of course the Void is also the home of the Rephaim and those who pass through have to be very careful not to draw their attention.

Space is so compressed within the Void that it's possible to enter and travel only the distance of a single step and emerge on the other side of Altai. In order to find your way around, a character needs to know where they are going to and must succeed in a Veilsense roll to emerge in the right location:

DoS Accuracy

- 0** You come out nowhere near your intended target, probably not even in the same Kingdom, but the location will be relatively safe.
- 1** You end up about an hour's walk from where you intended.
- 2** You emerge within a few hundred meters of your intended location.
- 3+** You emerge exactly where you intended.

Dramatically failing this roll could be disastrous, the character could emerge in the depths of space, under the ocean, or inside a wall.

Alternatively you can cut a target off from the Void completely. This makes the target immune to lesser ranks of this Realm: they can no longer be detected or influenced by those with Void Magic. This can also be used to cut a Vaelyth off from their master, and when used on a Rephaim the effects are even more dire. Lesser Rephaim cut off from the Void take 5d damage per round, are disconnected from the hive mind and can no longer use Void Magic. Greater Rephaim don't take the damage but otherwise affected the same.

Using any of these effects costs 1 Valour in addition to any other normal costs for casting a spell and increases the Surge Rating in the area by 1, this increase lasts a day.

THE WILD

Type: Magic, Wild

Prerequisite: Veilcraft 1

Of all the other realms, the Wild is the most well-travelled. Its environment is similar to that of Altai. There is solid ground, a breathable atmosphere and similar gravity. The most unusual property of the Wild is time.

Some think that time originates in the Wild and leaks through into other realms, certainly it flows significantly faster there. It is possible to enter the Wild, spend three weeks traveling and exit to find that only a few seconds have passed in the physical world. This made it useful for those who needed to journey long distances in a hurry and travel within became very common.

Soon life began to appear in the Wild. Seeds were carried in clinging to traveller's shoes and animals entered through permanent gates that had been set up to make travel easier. In the thousand or so years that have passed in Altai since the Fall, millions have passed within the Wild. From a few seeds and stray animals an entire ecosystem has grown and spread. The Wild has become a dangerous place filled with mega flora and strange beasts; travel within is now a very risky idea.

As the Veil is weakened, time flows into the world faster and things begin to speed up. Objects move faster and time passes more quickly. Strengthening the Veil has the opposite effect, time is reduced and everything slows down. This alters time directly, rather than changing the velocity of an object. A sword slowed down still hits with all the force it normally possesses, in fact it's still moving at the same speed, it's time that has slowed, not the blade.

When people are sped up, they still perceive themselves as moving at normal speed and it's the rest of the world that appears to slow down. When people are slowed, they see the rest of the world speeding up. Individuals who are frozen in time are not aware of their surroundings at all while the effect lasts and they cannot take any action, but they also cannot be harmed since any blows against them are unable to impart any energy on their bodies which are locked in a moment of stasis.

Despite this Realm being one of the more commonly used, there is one limitation that seems to be immutable: Time can never run backwards. It can speed up, slow down, and even be brought to a stop (or so close to it that you can't tell the difference), but it never runs in reverse.

RANK 1: TOUCH OF THE WILD

You can bend the Veil, altering the flow of time slightly so that objects appear to speed up or slow down.

For each DoS rolled, you can halve or double the apparent speed of affected objects. This doesn't change how much damage a moving object does when it hits something but could allow a character to get out of the way at GMs discretion.

In combat, this effect alters the target's Initiative. Each DoS grants a -3 penalty to those slowed or a +3 bonus to those sped up.

If multiple versions of this spell are cast on someone, they don't stack. If the effects were the same then instead use the one that had the highest DoS. If someone is sped up and slowed down at the same time, then the two spells start to cancel each other out, with each DoS used to speed up cancelling out one used to slow down. Any excess then have their effect as normal.

RANK 2: FLEETING TIME

Bending the Veil even further, you can alter the apparent speed of objects even further, granting people an incredible boost of speed or slowing them almost to a stop.

When you use Touch of the Wild, you may now gain one extra DoS for determining its effect and you can also alter the number of actions targets can take in a round.

If you use this to speed someone up, the targets gain an additional Quick Action, while those that are slowed lose a Quick Action.

As with Touch of the Wild, multiple versions of this spell do not stack, the highest DoS are used if the effects are the same, or they cancel each other out if the effects are opposing.

RANK 3: VERDANT STEP

No longer limited to bending the Veil, you open it completely for just an instant and slip into the Wild, or close it off completely, bringing time to a stop.

If you choose to open the Veil, you create a thin rift into the Wild that one human sized creature can step through per round. Anyone entering the rift finds themselves in the Wild. This effect can also be used to return in the same way.

Closing off the Veil brings time almost to a halt, this can only be used on a single target (regardless of the normal radius for your spells) and they appear to stop completely although they are actually still moving, just so slowly that it's hard to see unless you spend several hours watching them. The affected target cannot be harmed or moved and in fact their body is almost invulnerable due to being locked in a moment of stasis. Even the air around them becomes effectively solid, unable to move out of the way of other objects.

Using either of these effects costs 1 Valour in addition to any other normal costs for casting a spell and increases the Surge Rating in the area by 1, this increase lasts a day.



A Basentu Monk contemplating the Forgotten

EQUIPMENT

For the most part, technology in Altai resembles that of medieval and renaissance era Europe and there are many who are skilled in working with metal and cloth. Steel is very common and of a reasonably high quality although softer metals like brass can still be found, people typically wear linen and wool clothing that are often dyed bright colours, and advances in warfare have produced plate armour, catapults, and a wide variety of melee and ranged weapons. Clockworks are rare and highly valued and gunpowder weapons have not yet been invented. This section provides common equipment that might be useful in the game, it's impossible to list everything though so GMs are encouraged to make up their own as needed.

Cost: This is how much the item typically costs in marks and usually includes any accessories like a scabbard for a sword, spare strings for a bow, etc. The costs are just examples and may vary from town to town.

Damage: This is an indication of how much damage the weapon deals. It will be listed as a number of dice with a bonus or penalty. For example: "3d (+1)" indicates that you roll 3 dice, choose one to be your result and then add 1 to it. Your character's Strength is then added to this result to get the final damage. Entries marked with (B) indicate that the weapon deals bludgeoning damage that is less likely to be lethal, if the blow that reduces a character's health to zero or below was done by such a weapon, they automatically stabilize and will not bleed to death.

Reach: This describes the reach of the weapon and how much of an advantage it can provide over shorter weapons. Small weapons tend to be easier to swing quickly, but have a huge reach disadvantage compared to larger weapons and the wielder has to spend more time closing the gap with their opponent before they can attack. Whenever you make an attack roll, compare your Reach to your opponent's. If yours is lower, you suffer a -2 penalty to your roll. This doesn't apply if you manage to flank your opponent or attack from surprise, in such situations they are not able to react and take advantage of their longer reach.

AP: This stands for 'Armour Penetration', and indicates how much of the target's AR is ignored by attacks with this weapon.

Range: This indicates the most effective range of the weapon. When used up to this range there is no penalty to the Attack Roll, they can be used up to double this range at -2 and up to triple at -4. The maximum range of the weapon is 3x the listed range.

Weight: The weight of the weapon in grams or kilograms.

SMALL WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Reach	AP	Weight
Unarmed	--	1d (-2*) (B)	--	--	--
Dagger / Knife	1 mark	1d	1	--	0.4 kg
Punch Dagger	6 marks	1d (+1)	--	--	0.5 kg
Kukri	20 marks	1d (+1)	1	--	0.7 kg

*Minimum 1.

MEDIUM WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Reach	AP	Weight
Sword	40 marks	2d	2	--	1 kg
Scimitar	40 marks	2d (+1)	1	--	1 kg
Longsword (2 hands)*	120 marks	2d (+2)	2	--	1.6 kg
Longsword (1 hand)*	--	2d	3	--	--
Battle Axe	10 marks	2d (+2)	1	--	1.2 kg
Club	1 mark	1d (B)	1	--	1.5 kg
Mace	20 marks	1d (+1)	1	2	1.5 kg
War Hammer	20 marks	1d (+1)	1	2	1.5 kg

* Longswords are generally used with two hands but can be used one handed, sacrificing power for reach and the option of using a shield. A player must choose whether they are using it with one or two hands when determining initiative and cannot change during the round.

LARGE WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Reach	AP	Weight
Great Sword ‡	200 marks	3d	3	1	2.5 kg
Spear (2 hands)*	10 marks	2d (+1)	4	--	1.5 kg
Spear (1 hand)*	--	2d	3	--	--
Halbard ‡	400 marks	2d (+2)	3	4	2.5 kg
Lance (charge)**	300 marks	3d (+10) ¹	3	5	3 kg
Lance (stationary)**	--	1d	3	--	--
Quarterstaff ‡	3 marks	1d (B)	3	--	1.2 kg

‡ Weapon must be used two handed.

* Spears can be used either with two hands or one. Two hands allows more control, and faster movement of the point while one hand allows the user to also hold a shield. A player may freely change between one and two hands so long as their other hand is free.

** Lances can only be used effectively when mounted and charging, in all other cases use the 'stationary' row to determine their effectiveness.

¹ User's Strength isn't added to the damage of this weapon.

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage	AP	Range	Weight
Shortbow ‡	10 marks	1d	--	50 m	0.8 kg
Longbow ‡	80 marks	2d	2	100 m	1.5 kg
Arrows x10	5 marks	--	--	--	0.3 kg
Crossbow**‡	30 marks	1d (+2)***	1	100 m	2.5 kg
Bolts x10	5 marks	--	--	--	0.2 kg
Sling	3 marks	1d (-2*) (B)	--	150 m	0.3 kg
Javelin	10 marks	2d	--	15 m	1.5 kg
Dagger / Knife (Thrown)	1 mark	1d (-2)	--	15 m	0.4 kg

‡ Weapon must be used two handed.

* Minimum 1.

** Crossbows require a Quick Action to reload.

*** User's Strength isn't added to the damage of this weapon.

ARMOUR

Stacking Armour: Most armour consists of multiple layers of different materials and padding to make it all relatively comfortable to wear. A character can wear up to two layers of armour at one time so long as they are both different and no more than one of them is of the Rigid type.

Example: You can wear a Gambeson and Mail, Gambeson and Full Plate, Mail and Full Plate, but not two suits of Mail or a Leather Cuirass and Plate Cuirass at the same time.

AR: Armour Rating indicates how much damage is ignored from all attacks. A weapon's AP can counteract this value though, for example Full Plate combined with Mail would normally reduce all incoming damage by 6, however attacks from a Great Sword with its AP of 1 would only be reduced by 5.

Defence: Shields add to a character's defence, making it harder to successfully hit them.

Skill Penalty: This is an indication of how cumbersome the armour is and is the penalty the wearer suffers on all Skill rolls that use Agility as their Attribute. It does not apply to Attack rolls.

Speed: This penalty applies to a character's Move while wearing the armour.

Armour	Cost	AR	Skill Penalty	Stackable	Type	Speed	Weight
Gambeson	10 marks	1	-1	Flexible	Light	0	2.5 kg
Mail	100 marks	2	-2	Flexible	Medium	-1	15 kg
Leather Cuirass	30 marks	1	-1	Rigid	Light	-1	5 kg
Lamellar	200 marks	2	-3	Rigid	Medium	-1	7 kg
Plate Cuirass	300 marks	3	-4	Rigid	Medium	-1	8 kg
Full Plate	600 marks	4	-5	Rigid	Heavy	-2	20 kg

Shields	Cost	Defence	Skill Penalty	Weight
Buckler	4 marks	1	-1	1 kg
Shield	60 marks	2	-3	3 kg

MISCELLANEOUS

Item	Cost	Weight
Backpack	2 marks	0.5 kg
Barrel (Empty)	2 marks	10 kg
Bedroll	1 mark	2 kg
Blanket	2 marks	1 kg
Bottle, clay	1 mark	1 kg
Bottle, glass	5 marks	0.5 kg
Candle, tallow (x2)	1 mark	0.5 kg
Chain (5 meters)	8 marks	1.5 kg
Chest (Empty)	2 marks	10 kg
Clothing (Simple)	3 marks	1 kg
Clothing (Fine)	30 marks	2 kg
Flint and Steel	1 mark	0.1 kg
Ink	4 marks	0.1 kg
Lantern	10 marks	0.5 kg
Linen (Per meter)	1 mark	0.5 kg
Mirror	10 marks	0.5 kg
Oil (1 Litre)	1 mark	1 kg
Paper (x5)	2 marks	--
Pot (Iron)	1 mark	1 kg
Pouch	1 mark	0.1 kg
Quill	1 mark	--
Rope (10 meters)	3 marks	2 kg
Scroll Case	1 mark	0.3 kg
Tent	12 marks	8 kg
Waterskin	2 marks	1 kg
Wagon	16 marks	70 kg
Whetstone	1 mark	0.2 kg

FOOD AND DRINK

Item	Cost	Weight
Rations (per day)	1 mark	0.5 kg
Cheap inn meal	1 mark	--
Expensive inn meal	10 marks	--
Wine (cheap)	2 marks	1 kg
Wine (expensive)	50 marks	1 kg

Loaf of bread	2 marks	0.5 kg
Merik (whole)	4 marks	1 kg
Darga (bag of 10)	1 mark	2 kg
Sack of Flour	5 marks	4 kg
Sea Safi (dried)	100 marks	0.1 kg

See page XX for a description of some of the more unusual foods.

MERIK

A large beautiful fish with six fins and scales that shimmer with rainbow colours. They are found in the more Southern waters and live off small plants and algae. They grow up to half a meter long and are one of the most commonly eaten fish throughout the more Southern cities. Once caught and killed, their scales gradually begin to lose their rainbow shine and this is often used to judge how fresh the fish is.

ANIMALS

Animal	Cost
Domar (farming)	20 marks
Domar (riding)	100 marks
Domar (war)	400 marks
Aubex	40 marks
Shuhus (tamed)	2000 marks
Skite (tamed)	5 marks
Corix (tamed)	30 marks
Safi	300 marks

See page XX for a description of the different animals.

SERVICES

Service	Cost
Poor Inn (per day)	2 marks
Fancy Inn (per day)	20 marks
Stabling (per day)	1 mark
Messenger (per days travel)	5 marks
Ships passage (per days travel)	10 marks
Medical treatment (per day)	20 marks

PROPERTY

Property	Cost
Peasant Hut	50 marks
Small House	300 marks
Fine House	5,000 marks
Small Keep	50,000 marks
Farm	2,000 marks

POISONS

Poisons are illegal throughout Altai, but that hasn't stopped the more underhanded merchants from secretly stocking a few vials for special customers. Acquiring poison can be difficult since most who trade in it don't do so openly and are unlikely to trust strangers, but those who manage to find a willing seller will find a steady supply available, albeit for a rather high price. See page XX for rules on how poisons work.

Name	Cost	Rarity
Ocean Tears	5000 marks	Rare
Kadris Green	30 marks	Common
Kadris Green Antidote	100 marks	Common
Water of Lies	1000 marks	Rare
Scrivak Venom	40 marks	Common
Scrivak Venom Antidote	30 marks	Common
Serpent Blood	150 marks	Rare
Serpent Blood Antidote	200 marks	Rare
Merk Dust	3000 marks	Rare
Peasant's Bane	10 marks	Common
Peasant's Bane Antidote	2 marks	Common
Desert Salt	50 marks	Uncommon
Fire Tongue	40 marks	Uncommon
Radiance	10,000 marks*	Rare

*If available for sale at all.

Rarity: Provides a guide to how easy the item is to acquire. Common items can probably be found in any market if you know the right people to talk to. Uncommon items might be only available from a few places in larger cities. Rare items should require some considerable effort to acquire, if they are available at all.

OCEAN TEARS

By far one of the deadliest known poisons, Ocean Tears are made by mixing the blood of the Enk Fish with the juice from a type of seaweed called Sea Safi. The mixture is boiled and then dried, creating a black powder with a sour taste. Even the smallest amount is rapidly fatal, but fortunately it is also one of the rarest and most expensive poisons due to the difficulty of acquiring the ingredients.

There is no known antidote for this poison.

Type: Ingestion.

Rate: Once per round.

DoS: 3

Duration: 10 rounds.

Effect: -1 Strength, -1 Agility.

Conclusion: -2 Health.

KADRIS GREEN

The Kadris vine is extremely useful and plentiful across most of the Kingdoms. When dried, its fibres can be woven to make a tough but coarse fabric used to make sacks, canvas and similar items. The ripe berries are dark blue and are used to make wine, while the green unripe berries can be distilled into a potent poison called Kadris Green.

While Kadris Green is potent and fairly easy and cheap to acquire, there is an antidote which has foiled more than a few assassination attempts.

Type: Ingestion.

Rate: Once per hour.

DoS: 2

Duration: 10 hours.

Effect: -1 Strength, -1 Focus

Conclusion: -5 Health.

WATER OF LIES

The concentrated extract from the Lyse flower can be made into a very slow acting poison. It has become popular amongst rebellious elements in the Kingdom of Rust, often used to assassinate corrupt politicians. Lyse only grows in

the Southern half of the Kingdoms of Rust and throughout the Kingdom of Beasts, and it is difficult to acquire this poison in other Kingdoms.

There is no known antidote for this poison.

Type: Ingestion.

Rate: Once per day.

DoS: 1

Duration: 20 days.

Effect: -1 Strength.

Conclusion: -2 Health.

SCRIVAK VENOM

Scrivaks have a poisonous stinger on their tail which can be harvested and sold on night market. The venom can be applied to weapons and has become a popular tool for assassination. It can be difficult and expensive to acquire however, Scrivaks hunt in packs and many a would-be poacher has lost their lives trying to make their fortune.

There is an antidote but this poison acts so quickly that a victim is unlikely to administer it in time.

Type: Injection.

Rate: Once per round.

DoS: 1

Duration: 3 rounds.

Effect: -3 Health.

Conclusion: --

SERPENT BLOOD

This poison comes from the fangs of the Kotaga, a serpentine creature found in the Kingdom of Serpents. It bites its prey and then allow sit to escape, tracking it by scent until the slow acting venom does its work.

An antidote exists for this poison but it is rare and difficult to acquire outside the Kingdom of Serpents.

Type: Injection.

Rate: Once per hour.

DoS: 1

Duration: 10 hours.

Effect: -1 Strength.

Conclusion: -3 Health.

MERK DUST

Not a poison in the conventional sense, but the spores of a moss that grows deep in the Kingdom of Beasts. The moss releases clouds of these spores when disturbed in an effort to reproduce. Individually the spores are too small to see, but usually they are released in a meter wide cloud that appears to be yellow smoke. The spores paralyse on contact and their victims usually die from dehydration over the next few days. The spores then germinate, using their victim as fertilizer for the next generation of moss.

Harvesting merk dust is a dangerous prospect but it fetches a very high price on the night market. It's usually sold in small pouches that contain about a handful of dust, enough for one use. Individual spores are not potent enough to cause any effects.

There is no antidote, but those who survive the paralysis usually make full recoveries, and treating those affected is simply a matter of keeping the patient hydrated until the paralysis ends.

Type: Contact.

Rate: Once per round.

DoS: 2

Duration: 3 days.

Effect: -1 Stamina, -1 Strength, -1 Agility.

Conclusion: Complete paralysis lasting until 1 hour after the poison's duration expires.

PEASANT'S BANE

This yellow powder is the dried extract of the darga, an unpalatable root vegetable often eaten by peasants too poor to afford anything better. Peasants Bane is made from darga that were picked while the plant was flowering, a time when the root is poisonous. It induces nausea, stomach cramps and vomiting and has been used for a wide variety of uses, including pranks, revenge and even as medicine.

There is an antidote for this poison and it's relatively easy to acquire since it's sold as a remedy to normal cases of darga poisoning that occur when people accidentally eat the root at the wrong time of the year.

Type: Ingestion.

Rate: Once per 10 minutes.

DoS: 1

Duration: 3 hours.

Effect: Character throws up and suffers -1 to all Skill Checks due to nausea. These penalties stack up to -10 and once the effect ends they are removed at a rate of 1 per 30 minutes.

Conclusion: --

DESERT SALT

This poison is extracted from a small desert plant called the Ruyensu which grows throughout the Kingdom of Glass. Creation of the poison is fairly simple although it takes a large number of the plants to make even a single dose. The resulting poison is a white crystalline powder that resembles salt but has a slightly bitter flavour. When added to liquids it acts as a thickener and becomes a sticky paste. It can be put in food or applied to weapons. The poison rapidly causes symptoms similar to intoxication and then unconsciousness.

There is no antidote but the poison is usually non-lethal.

Type: Ingestion or Injection.

Rate: Once per round.

DoS: 1

Duration: 10 rounds.

Effect: -1 Focus.

Conclusion: -1 Mind.

FIRE TONGUE

Distilled from a mix of herbs from around Altai, this poison causes people to lose their social composure. It tends to cause aggressive behaviour and those affected often say whatever is on their mind which is usually something expletive or vulgar. Symptoms similar to drunkenness occur and the victim usually embarrasses themselves, insults everyone around them and then falls unconscious. This poison has been used to embarrass nobles as far back as anyone can remember.

There is no antidote.

Type: Ingestion.

Rate: Once per hour.

DoS: 1

Duration: 8 hours.

Effect: -1 Charisma.

Conclusion: -1 Mind.

RADIANCE

This poison was created in the Kingdom of Glass by the Herinha through alchemical experiments. It resembles a thick silvery liquid and attacks the victim's connection to the Blaze. It causes tiny holes to be ripped in the Veil throughout the victim's body, letting in heat and light to incinerate them from the inside out. Fortunately the Herinha don't sell this poison and rarely make it, its secrets are kept in the most well protected parts of their library.

There is no antidote for this poison, but a Blaze mage could attempt to unweave the effect as it occurs.

Type: Ingestion.

Rate: Once per round.

DoS: 3

Duration: 10 rounds.

Effect: Victim begins to glow brighter and brighter and takes d10 damage from heat as tiny portals to the Blaze open inside their body.

Conclusion: --

SYSTEM

Sometimes players will attempt actions that their characters could fail dramatically, most commonly this occurs in combat, but actions such as jumping across a pit, or attempting to break down a door might also have nasty consequences if failed. In these situations, players use their character's stats and some dice to add an element of randomness to the outcome, these are called Tests.

TESTS

Each Test has an associated Attribute and Skill which is usually determined by the GM. This should be whichever skill seems most appropriate. For example when a character attempts to search for a hidden item, they make a Mind/Perception Test. If they are firing a crossbow, they make an Agility/Archery Test.

When the player takes a Test, they gather a number of d10s equal to their rating in the associated Skill, this is called the Dice Pool. The maximum number of dice a player can ever have in their Dice Pool at one time is 6, there should be no possible way to get more than this so if you find a way please let us know because we've made a mistake.

Each test also has a difficulty rating determined by the GM to indicate how hard it is. Most commonly this is 8 and it's what tests default to if they don't specify otherwise. However the GM may also choose to modify the difficulty to make the test easier or harder depending on the circumstances:

Degree	Difficulty
Trivial	3
Easy	5
Average	8 (Default)
Hard	10
Very Hard	15
Heroic	20
Legendary	25+

DICE ROLLS

To determine if the character has succeeded in the task, the player rolls their Dice Pool, then picks one result of their choice (usually the highest) to be their result for that Test. The character's rating in the associated Attribute is then added to this result along with any other modifiers and if the total is equal to or greater than the difficulty, the character succeeds

Example: Juana is attempting to climb the wall of a tall building. The GM asks her player to make an Agility/Athletics test to see if she falls and decides that it's an Average test with a difficulty of 10. Juana has an Agility of 3 and an Athletics of 4, so her player gathers up and rolls 4d10 and gets a 3, 5, 6 and an 8. She chooses the 8, adds her Agility of 3, bringing her total to 11. That's greater than the difficulty so she succeeds in climbing onto the roof without mishap.

This approach is used for all rolls in the game, including damage, spell casting, Attribute checks, and so on. Whenever a dice roll is called for and you see the notation such as 3d+2, this indicates you should roll 3d10s, choose one result and add 2.

It's important to note that a player doesn't have to choose the highest result rolled, there are situations where you might want to control how high your total is. For example if you are trying to knock someone out, you might choose a lower result to make sure you don't accidentally kill them. The only limit on this is that you can never choose a 1 as your result (see Dramatic Failures below).

RETRYING SKILL TESTS

Sometimes failure indicates a small setback that can easily be overcome, while other times it signifies one so large that the players cannot continue with that activity. Generally it's up to the GM whether a Skill Test can be attempted multiple times, but as a general rule: failed physical skills can be retried any number of times so long as your character remains capable of attempting the action, for example you can keep attempting an attack so long as your character remains alive and you can keep trying to climb a wall so long as you haven't fallen to your death.

Failed social skills generally can't be reattempted on the same person for the same purpose during that same day. For example: after failing to haggle over the price of an item, you could haggle over something else but not that same item again, you're just not going to change the shopkeepers mind.

Failed mental skills can't be attempted on the same subject until the skill increases. You might make a Knowledge: Kingdom of Rust roll to see what you know about one of the Barons of Rust but if you fail then you simply don't know anything and can't try again on that same subject. Increasing the skill represents that you've learned new things and maybe now you know more about the Baron than you did before.

CONTESTED TESTS

Sometimes a character will come into direct conflict with another character in such a way that one of them will always succeed and one will always fail. In these situations the GM may decide that a Contested Test is more suitable. Contested Tests work just like normal Tests except that the two players roll against one another instead of against a static difficulty rating, in cases where one of the characters is an NPC, the GM rolls for them. The character that gets the higher result succeeds, in the case of a tie, the one with the higher skill rating succeeds, if those are equal then the higher attribute succeeds, if those are also equal then the GM should use whatever method they choose to decide who wins the test (flip a coin?).

Example: Juana sneaks along the corridor, being careful to make as little noise as possible. She peaks around a corner and sees a guard approaching. As quickly and quietly as she can, she attempts to dart across into the room opposite. The GM calls for a Contested Test: Juana's Agility/Stealth against the guards Mind/Perception. Juana's player rolls her 2 Stealth: 4 and 6. She chooses the 6, adds her 3 Agility for a total of 9. Meanwhile the GM rolls the guards Perception of 3: 2, 6 and 8, takes the 8 and adds the guards Mind of 2: 10. The guard scored higher and spots Juana, shouting out in alarm as he gives chase.

UNTRAINED TESTS

Sometimes a character might want to attempt an action they have no Skill in, for example trying to jump across a pit when they have no Athletics. Most skills can still be used even if the character doesn't have any points in it, and this is referred to as using a skill untrained. Some skills however specify that they cannot be used in this way, someone can't make a Knowledge roll to see if they know something if they've never been taught about that subject, they simply don't have the information.

To make an unskilled test, you roll 1d10 and try to beat the difficulty as normal, however you don't add any Attribute to the result, making the chance of success far less likely.

CASCADES

Cascades represent the potential for a character to succeed at difficult tasks despite all odds due to simple luck. When the player makes a test of any kind, if the die result they chose was a 10, then a cascade occurs: They choose a second result from those already rolled and add that to their total as well, if that result was also a 10, then they choose a third result and add that too, and so on until they add one that isn't a 10. In this way results can occasionally end up very high, allowing a character to succeed at legendary difficulties.

Example: Juana is attempting to deceive a minor official about her purpose in the city and the GM decides she needs to make a Charisma/Subterfuge roll to pull off the deception. Fortunately this is something Juana is very good at, she rolls her Subterfuge of 4: 3, 6, 10 and another 10! She chooses one of the 10s and a cascade occurs, she gets to pick and add an additional result. Naturally she chooses the second 10 and so gets to add a third result, in this case the 6. Adding in her 3 Charisma (10 + 10 + 6 + 3) and her total comes to 29!

A Cascade only occurs if the player *chooses* a 10 as their result. If they rolled a 10 but decide to choose a lower one then no cascade occurs, likewise they may stop adding extra dice at any point, even if the last one added was a 10.

If the player runs out of dice to add during a Cascade (e.g. if all their dice were 10s) then no further results are added, and additional dice are never rolled. Because of this, a player can never add more results than the number of dice in their Dice Pool.

DEGREES OF SUCCESS (DOS)

Sometimes it's important to know how much you succeed by, for example there's a difference between injuring someone with an attack and killing them in a single blow. Even outside of combat the GM may choose to use degrees of success to determine how well the players are doing. A character searching for hidden items might only narrowly succeed in their test and find one hidden item, or they may be very successful and find multiple.

When a player makes a test of any kind, if they manage to equal or exceed the target difficulty (or get higher than their opponent in a Contested Test) this counts as one Degree of Success or DoS. For every 5 points that the player beat the difficulty (or opponent's roll), they get an extra DoS.

Usually only one DoS is required to succeed, and additional ones just improve the outcome for the character.

Some skills and abilities list the specific effects of rolling additional DoS, but if they don't then it's up to the GM what effect they have or even if they have any effect at all. Sometimes it's enough to simply succeed.

ASSISTING TESTS

Sometimes characters may wish to work together in a task that they are all skilled in, for example two blacksmiths could assist each other in forging a sword. One character is chosen to make the primary skill roll, this would normally be the one with the highest number of ranks in the skill. Assisting characters must also possess at least 1 rank in the skill being used and the GM will decide how many people can reasonably assist in a task. Each assisting character makes their own roll and for each DoS they score they give the primary roller a +1 bonus to their result.

DRAMATIC FAILURE

The opposite of a Cascade is a Dramatic Failure: when a character fails so spectacularly at something that they are hindered in some way beyond the normal effects of failure. Perhaps their weapon breaks, or the guard not only sees them and raises the alarm, but is also secretly a powerful magic user.

Any 1s rolled during a test can never be chosen for the character's total and if more 1s are rolled than all the other results combined it's a Dramatic Failure, regardless of what those results actually are.

Example: Juana's player rolls her Perception skill: 3 dice, and gets: 1, 1 and 8. Even if the 8 is enough to succeed, this counts as a Dramatic Failure because more than half the results were 1s.

This table indicates the minimum number of 1s a player would need to roll to get a Dramatic Failure.

Number of Dice	Number of 1s
1	1
2	2
3	2
4	3
5	3
6	4

Dramatic Failures work just like regular failures but the GM is encouraged to add additional negative consequences, exactly what these are is left to the whims of the GM.

Magic is the one exception to this rule: Veilcraft rolls never suffer from Dramatic Failures in this way, instead they cause Surges (See page XX).

DARKNESS AND SIGHT PENALTIES

Darkness and dim lighting can negatively affect a character's ability to act, making it more difficult to aim attacks and perform complex tasks. Whenever a character is in a dark area, or cannot see what they are doing due to thick fog or blindness, they suffer a penalty based on the severity of the conditions. This applies to all Attack, Veilcraft, and Perception rolls, most Agility based rolls and any other roll based on sight.

Conditions	Penalty
Dim lighting, fog	-1
Darkness, thick fog	-3
Magical darkness, blindness	-5

Characters attuned to the Veil can often sense an object's location by the minor disturbances it creates and may negate these penalties for one action by first succeeding in a Veilsense roll.

COMBAT

Violence is all too common in the dystopian world of Altais: Whether huge battles or small skirmishes. Ambushes, murders, or simple hunting expeditions - violence is a fact of life.

Combat takes place as a series of Tests, with the events of the story divided up into a number of rounds. In each round, players take it in turns to announce what their character is doing, complete any tests needed to achieve their goals, and finally when all players have acted, the next round begins.

Terminology:

- Round: A dramatic series of events in which all characters take it in turns to take an action that influences the world in some way.
- Turn: A chance for the character to act. Characters may have multiple Actions per Turn.
- Action: A single attack, move, or other action (e.g. drawing weapon, jumping a pit, etc), usually (but not always) involving a single Test. There are four types of Action: Free, Quick, Full and Reflexive.
 - Reflexive Action: Something you do without even thinking about it.
 - Free Action: A very quick and simple Action.
 - Quick Action: Not as fast or as simple as a Free Action, but still pretty quick.
 - Full Action: A complex or slow action. Characters usually only take one per Turn and can do little else.

INITIATIVE

The first step in combat is determining the order in which all the characters will be acting, this is done by rolling initiative: Each player rolls a Dice Pool equal to their Agility or Mind, whichever is *lower* and adds the other to their result.

Example: A character with an Agility of 3 and a Mind of 2, rolls 2 dice, picks one result and adds 3. Likewise a character with a Mind of 4 and an Agility of 3 rolls 3 dice, picks one result and adds 4.

This roll cannot Dramatically Fail but it can Cascade, and the result becomes their Initiative score for the rest of the fight. Players then take their turns in order from highest Initiative to lowest, if two characters have the same initiative then they act simultaneously.

The GM rolls initiative for any NPCs involved in the scene and they also take turns just like PCs.

ROUND

Each round, the characters take it turns to act in the order determined by their initiative. They get one turn each and after they have all had a turn, the round usually ends and the next begins. You don't need to roll initiative again, just keep using the same results for the entire conflict.

Within the story, each round is considered to take between 3 and 5 seconds.

ACTIONS

Actions can be anything the character could reasonably attempt and it's up to the players and the GM to agree on what is and isn't possible. Usually this is pretty straight forward: a soldier can obviously swing his sword or climb a tree, and tests are made to see how successful these actions are. Sometimes no test is needed, for example you don't normally need to make a test to speak because there's no chance of failure (of course if something was impeding a character's ability to do so then that might be a different matter).

There are also different types of actions, for example Quick Actions are considered so simple and fast that they don't require tests and may be done in conjunction with other actions. Free Actions are even faster and any number of them may be performed at the same time.

Full Actions are at the opposite end; the standard actions that are time consuming and have a chance of failing and usually involve tests.

Finally there are Reflexive Actions which are a special case, they occur outside of the normal initiative order and are detailed below.

For each turn, a character may do all of the following:

- They may perform any number of Free Actions.
- They may perform one Quick Action.
- They may perform one Full Action.

There are various Talents and magical effects that can alter the number of Actions a character can take in a turn, and some Actions can be traded for others:

- A Full Action can be changed into two Quick Actions.
- Two Quick Actions can be exchanged for one Full Action.

FREE ACTIONS

Free actions are usually so fast that they take less than a second or take so little effort that the character can do other things at the same time. There is usually no limit to the number of Free Actions a character can take in a turn, although there are a few exceptions listed below.

The most common Free Actions are:

- Speaking: The character may speak a simple sentence, about a dozen words or so, and this may only be done once per turn.

- Dropping an item the character is currently holding.
- Looking around.

QUICK ACTIONS

Quick Actions are those that are fairly simple but take a few seconds to perform and may have a chance of failure. Characters may perform one Quick Action per turn in addition to any other actions they are taking.

Some of these actions require tests, and some don't, it can be situational. For example a character can walk across a room without needing to make a test, unless there is an earthquake, then they may need to test to avoid falling over. This is left to the discretion of the GM.

Examples of Quick Actions include:

- Move: Walk - The character may move up to the full distance specified by their Move Rating. A character may not normally perform more than one Move action in a round.
- Draw a weapon.
- Loading a crossbow.
- Pull something from a pocket or belt pouch.
- Pick up an item on the ground.

FULL ACTIONS

These are complex or time consuming actions that almost always require a Test. A character can only perform one Full Action per round.

Common Full Actions include:

- Move: Run - A character may run up to three times their Move rating. A character may not normally perform more than one Move action in a round.
- Attacking with any kind of weapon.
- Complex acrobatics (climbing, jumping, etc.)
- Retrieving an item from a backpack or other inconvenient location.
- Spell casting.

Some actions may take multiple Full Actions to complete, for example removing a full suit of armour, creating a painting, or repairing a broken sword. Such actions are either detailed in the appropriate skill or are left to GM discretion.

REFLEXIVE ACTIONS

Reflexive Actions are a special kind of action that occurs outside of the normal initiative sequence. Reflexive Actions can be taken at any time, even when it's not your character's turn and there is no limit to the number that can be taken, however each one has its own specific conditions and rules for when and how they may be used. There are no common Reflexive Actions, they are all detailed under the relevant Skills, Talents, and Magic.

MOVING IN COMBAT

During combat, characters can only move a limited distance each round. To represent this, each character has a Move score that indicates how far in meters they can walk in a single Quick Action. A character may also run up to three times this distance as a Full Action. A character may only perform one Move action in a round so cannot do so as both a Quick Action and a Full Action to move even further.

Any bonuses or penalties to a character's Move score are applied before the tripling for running occurs, so a character with 3 Move suffering a -1 penalty may walk at 2 or run at 6.

If a character suffers enough penalties to reduce their Move to 0 or lower, they can only move 1 meter per round as a Full Action.

ATTACKING

At the heart of all combat is the basic attack. Although many characters may have special Skills, Talents, or Magic, sooner or later they will all need to just hit something with a piece of metal. Attacks come in a wide range of forms and include unarmed attacks like punches or kicks, attacks with close range weapons like swords, or clubs and long ranged attacks with projectile weapons such as bows and crossbows.

When a player wants their character to attack the enemy, they make a Test using the relevant Skill for the weapon they are using, and add their Agility to the result chosen. Each weapon in the Equipment section lists which Skill to use, but here's a general guide:

- Brawl: Punches, kicks, head-butts, unarmed attacks.
- Small Weapons: Daggers, knives, cudgels, any weapon under two feet in length.
- Medium Weapons: Swords, axes, clubs.
- Large Weapons: Polearms, staves, spears, long and often two handed weapons.
- Archery: Bows and crossbows.
- Thrown Weapons: All thrown projectiles, including daggers, rocks, spears, slings, etc.

Regardless of the weapon type, the Attribute to use with this Test is always Agility.

The Test is made against a Difficulty equal to the enemy's Defence Rating and any additional DoS should be tracked and added to the damage roll.

DAMAGE

Whenever an attack hits, it deals a number of points of damage that are used to determine when the opponent is knocked out or killed. This is determined using the weapon's damage rating which is listed in the equipment section.

When a weapon hits, make a Damage Test using the weapon's damage rating in the place of a Skill and the attacker's Strength as the attribute. Some weapons list additional bonuses or penalties that are also applied to the result. Spells usually list just the number of dice to roll and no Attribute is added unless stated in the description.

Example: A Scimitar has a damage rating of 2d (+1). If you hit with such a weapon, you would roll 2D10, choose one result, add the +1 and then add your Strength to get the total damage.

Example: Rank 2 Tempest magic allows a mage to call forth a lightning bolt to strike for 2d damage. In this situation you would roll 2d10 and choose one result as your damage. No attribute is added.

Damage rolls can Cascade normally but cannot Dramatically Fail.

ARMOUR

Fortunately for those on the receiving end of a sword blade, armour helps reduce the amount of damage taken from weapons. All armour lists an Armour Rating (AR) which is subtracted from the damage being taken. Unless otherwise stated, AR only applies to damage from weapons and mundane attacks, including unarmed punches and kicks, swords, axes, arrows, and so forth. Damage from poisons, magic and environmental effects like fire or drowning are not affected by armour.

DUAL WIELDING

Dual wielding provides some significant benefits, it's harder for the opponent to watch two weapons at once, and you can potentially swing both at once. Dual wielding is quite difficult however and few consider it a worthwhile practice, preferring to use a shield in the offhand instead. Dual wielding provides the following effects:

- Only one-handed weapons can be dual wielded.
- The character can attack as a Quick Action instead of a Full Action.
- While dual wielding, the character suffers a -4 penalty to all attacks they make during the round.

WOUND PENALTIES

Wounds take their toll and injured characters are no longer able to fight as well until their injuries have healed. Some succumb to their injuries and perish while others recover over time.

Once a character's health has fallen below half (round down), they gain the 'Wounded' status which causes them to suffer a -1 penalty on all Skill rolls due to pain and injury. Once their health has fallen below a quarter (round down), this is replaced with the 'Crippled' status which causes a penalty of -3.

UNCONSCIOUSNESS AND DEATH

A character that reaches zero health falls unconscious and if the final damage was done with edged weapons they begin to lose 1 health per minute due to bleeding until they die or someone uses the Medicine Skill to stabilise them.

A character dies if their health falls too far below zero, based on their Strength:

Strength	Death
1	-2 health
2	-4 health
3	-6 health
4	-8 health
5	-10 health

SURPRISE

If a character is attacked without warning and is unaware of the danger they are in then they may be Surprised. The attacker needs to make a Stealth roll to make the attack without being noticed and the defender makes a Perception roll to detect them. If the attacker rolls higher, then the defender doesn't see the danger coming and loses their normal Defence. They may still benefit from magical bonuses if they have any that always apply but otherwise their Defence is reduced to zero and the attack automatically hits.

This only applies to the first attack made in a combat, once someone knows they are under attack they can no longer be surprise attacked.

KNOCKED PRONE

Sometimes a character may end up knocked to the ground, either due to a special attack or due to environmental conditions such as being caught in a landslide. A character is considered Prone if they are lying on the ground when they are attacked. Attacks against Prone characters gain a +4 bonus to hit and deal +2 extra damage.

Once Prone, getting back up costs a Quick Action.

DEFENCELESS

If a character is unconscious, or tied up so that they cannot defend themselves in any way they are considered Defenceless. Their normal Defence reduced to zero and the attacker may convert one rolled damage die to a 10, triggering a Cascade.

STAMINA AND VALOUR

Stamina and Valour are both used to cast spells, activate Talents and use other special abilities, but in addition the following effects can also be used:

2 Stamina can be spent to ignore Wound Penalties for one round.

1 Stamina can be spent to stay conscious for a round while at zero health, the character may act as normal but at the end of their turn takes 1 damage and falls unconscious.

1 Valour can be spent to refill your Stamina back to full.

You may spend all your remaining Valour (must have at least 1) when an attack would reduce your Health below 0 and cause your death, your Health is reduced to 0 instead and you fall unconscious.

RECOVERING VITALS

HEALING

All characters naturally heal over time but the amount they heal is based on how seriously they are injured and how well they rest, as well as whether they receive medical attention which is quite limited within the medieval world of Altai.

In order to receive the benefits of resting, a character has to spend the day resting and taking it easy. They can travel at a slow walk or ride so long as the mount travels slowly, but any more strenuous activity puts too much strain on the body and they heal based on the 'Active' column instead. The amount healed is also slower if the character is significantly injured.

Status	Resting	Active
Normal	5/day	2/day
Wounded	3/day	1/day
Crippled	1/day	0
Unconscious and bleeding	-1/Minute	0
Unconscious and stabilised	0	0

The Medicine Skill can help someone recover but the user suffers a penalty based on how injured the subject is:

Status	Penalty
Normal	0
Wounded	-1
Crippled	-2
Unconscious	-3
Using on self*	-2

*The penalty for using the Medicine skill on yourself stacks with any other penalties due to the severity of the injury.

Even a single DoS is enough to stop an unconscious person bleeding to death, they stabilise and their health stops decreasing. In addition, each DoS achieved on the roll allows a person to recover 2 extra health for that day. A new Medicine roll must be made every day if increased healing is to continue.

Characters that have an Attribute reduced to zero through poison, disease or other effect, do not heal damage until all Attributes are once again above zero.

RECOVERING STAMINA

Characters recover Stamina more rapidly than Health and so long as they aren't involved in strenuous activity or combat, they get back 1 point of Stamina every 15 minutes. Sleeping is even better and restores Stamina twice as fast.

RECOVERING VALOUR

1 Valour is recovered with a full 8 hours of sleep and only 1 can be recovered per day (Oversleeping doesn't restore more).

EXHAUSTION

No matter how physically fit a person is, eventually exhaustion can take its toll, especially for characters who spend a lot of time running, fighting and climbing over ruins. The time it takes for a character to tire depends on their Strength and Stamina, as well as how active they are.

SLEEP DEPRIVATION

A person can usually stay awake for 14 hours without any problem, after that they start to tire. Once a person has been awake for this long, they no longer recover Stamina from inactivity and begin losing Stamina at a rate of 1 point per hour. Once their Stamina reaches zero they begin suffering the effects of exhaustion (see below)

EXERCISE

The following table lists how long a character can walk or run before they need to spend a Stamina to continue. Once they run out of Stamina they may continue to walk or run but begin suffering the effects of exhaustion.

Strength	Walk Time	Run Time
1	30 minutes	1 minute
2	1 hour	5 minutes
3	3 hours	10 minutes
4	*	30 minutes
5	*	1 hour
6	*	2 hours
7	*	4 hours
8	*	6 hours
9	*	8 hours
10+	*	10 hours

Strengths greater than 5 are listed for non-human creatures and humans who have Talents that boost their endurance.

An * indicates that a character has reached a level of physical fitness where they no longer need to spend a Stamina to continue walking. They still need to eat and drink regularly and will tire if they go for a long period without sleep, but walking is no longer a significant factor.

Characters riding on a Domar or other animal do not need to spend Stamina for travel (although the animal might).

EXHAUSTION

A character that goes for a long time without sleep, or continues to participate in strenuous activity like running when their Stamina is depleted, begins to suffer the effects of exhaustion. They no longer recover Stamina simply due to inactivity and each time they would be required to spend a Stamina but can't, they instead suffer a cumulative -2 penalty to all Skill rolls.

Once a character sleeps they begin recovering Stamina normally and the penalties are removed at a rate of 2 per hour of uninterrupted sleep.

This does not allow a character to spend Stamina to ignore wound penalties, remain conscious or activate Talents, it only applies when a character is forced to spend Stamina due to strenuous activity or sleep deprivation and cannot do so. A character may choose to spend a Valour to recover their Stamina and shake off the exhaustion but they are not forced to do so.

ATTRIBUTE LOSS

There are effects that can lower a character's Attributes, the most notable being poison. These effects are always temporary and recovering from this loss is described for each specific case. When a character loses points from an Attribute, they also adjust any derived stats (except Prowess), for example losing points from Strength also lowers a character's maximum Health and Stamina. Their current totals are only lowered to be no higher than their maximum.

Example: If a character has 30 maximum health, but has been injured and only has 20 health remaining were to lose a point of Strength, their maximum health would decrease by 5. Since their new maximum (25) is still greater than their current health (20), they wouldn't lose any from their current health.

Attribute loss can also affect a character's Prowess and stats derived from it.

If a character has an Attribute reduced to zero, they also suffer additional ill-effects:

Strength: A character with 0 Strength can no longer support their own weight. Their limbs feel extremely heavy and their muscles go limp. Their base Move is reduced to 0, they collapse to the ground and can no longer stand up, walk, run or perform any action that involves the Athletics skill. The character may drag themselves along the ground with a speed of 1 as a Full Action. The character suffers a -6 on all Damage rolls they make.

Agility: A character with 0 Agility cannot keep their balance unaided and their limbs begin to shake. They fall to the ground and have trouble standing. They can pull themselves back to their feet if they can brace themselves against a wall or other person to avoid falling over and with assistance they can move but only at a Move of 1. They cannot run or perform any action that would involve the Athletics skill. The character also suffers a -6 on all Attack rolls.

Mind: A character with 0 Mind falls unconscious.

Charisma: A character with 0 Charisma loses all ability to interact socially with people without causing offense, their behaviour resembles that of someone extremely and inappropriately drunk. They say precisely the wrong thing at the perfect time, insulting all around them. They cannot succeed in any roll to persuade others to do what they want through Charm, Leadership, Intimidation or similar skills. They also need to pass a Focus roll to communicate more than a few slurred words.

Focus: A character with 0 focus finds it difficult to dedicate themselves to a task, they are constantly distracted and unable to think about just one thing. Their mind wanders and they cannot attempt the same task two rounds in a row, including Attacking. They suffer a -6 penalty on all Skill rolls due to an inability to focus on the task at hand.

VOID TAIN

Void taint is a measure of how close a character has become to the Void. Its exotic energies soak into the skin, cause internal damage and Void Sickness. Someone exposed long enough can be consumed by it completely and become one of the Rephaim.

Void Taint is measured as a rating of 0-10 and most people begin at 0.

TAINT TESTS

Whenever a character is exposed to the energies of the Void, they need to make a Taint Test to see if their level of Taint increases. This is done by rolling 1d10 and if the result is higher than their current taint level then the roll is failed and their Taint increases by 1. On the other hand if the result is equal to or lower than their current taint, then the roll is a success and they are safe... for now.

Taint Tests are modified depending on the level of exposure:

Exposure	Modifier
Using Void magic	-4
Affected by a Void spell that compresses space	-6
A day in the Kingdom of Ash	-6
An hour at the Bay of Sorrow	-2
Drinking water from the Bay of Sorrow	0
Caught in a Void Surge Rank 2 or 3	-2
Caught in a Void Surge Rank 4 or higher	0
Touched by Lesser Rephaim	-4
Touched by Greater Rephaim	0

An hour near someone with a Taint of 8 or higher	-4
Entering the Void	+2
An hour in the Void	+2
Each week while at Taint 8	0
Each day while at Taint 9	0

If a character is exposed to multiple sources of Void energy within the same round, they only need to make one roll using the highest exposure.

TRANSFORMATION

As a character becomes increasingly tainted, they begin to develop the symptoms of Void Sickness. At first they find that Void magic comes more easily to them, but at the same time they are also more easily affected by the Void magic of others. As the disease progresses, this effect is amplified and they find that the Void almost seems to call out to them, coming closer and closer all the time.

The Rephaim also find it easier to sense the character's location and are drawn to the location of those in the later stages of Void Sickness.

Faint purple glowing veins begin to appear in the whites of the character's eyes and these spread until all their veins glow purple. At his point the sickness enters the final stages. The character starts to get very gaunt and sickly and suffers from acute nausea and weakness in their extremities.

As the disease nears the end, their skin begins to shimmer with purple light and becomes blurred and indistinct. It becomes hard to see where exactly their body ends and the Void begins as the Veil begins to fray around them until finally they are consumed completely. There is an explosion of energy as their body becomes completely insubstantial and they are ripped into the Void. The Veil tears open and a Rank 5 Void Surge occurs in the area, potentially harming all nearby.

At this point they have become Rephaim and their mind is completely subsumed by the Hive. Their original personality is destroyed and they cease to be a playable character.

Taint	Void Bonus	Strength	Skills	Surge	Notes
0-1	--	--	--	--	No Effect.
2-3	--	--	--	--	Starts to look a bit pale.
4-5	+1	--	--	--	Faint purple veins around eyes.
6-7	+2	--	--	--	Very pale skin and glowing purple veins over whole body.
8	+3	-1	-2	+2	Suffers nausea, and starts to look very gaunt.
9	+4	-3	-4	+4	Skin seems to shimmer in and out of the Void.
10	+5	--	--	--	Character becomes Rephaim and a rank 5 Void Surge occurs.

Void Bonus: The character gains this bonus on all attempts to use Void Magic, but others also gain this bonus when using Void magic against them. The Repahim also gain this bonus on all Perception tests to sense the character and on all Attack Rolls made against them.

Strength: Penalty to the character's Strength while they remain at this level of Taint.

Skills: Nausea and dizziness causes this penalty to all Skill rolls the character makes, except those to use Void magic.

Surge: This modifies the Surge Rating whenever the character uses magic of any kind.

RECOVERY

There is no medicinal cure for Void Sickness although there are concoctions that can help with the nausea. The best treatment for mild cases is simply to avoid further exposure, given enough time the body can make a full recovery, but for people in the final stages of the disease, it's often too late and over time it simply progresses towards complete transformation.

If a character manages to go a month without failing a Taint test then their body begins to recover and their Taint rank is reduced by 1. The easiest way to ensure this is to simply avoid exposure completely, however for characters with a Taint of 8 or higher this becomes trickier. The sickness begins to fray the Veil around their body, causing additional Void energy to leak in, endangering both them and those around them. This can cause the disease to progress even without additional external exposure.

Fortunately there is a way to help even those who have progressed this far, any character with even 1 rank of Void Magic can thicken the Veil around someone, reducing their connection to the Void and reducing the chance of additional exposure. Maintaining such an effect around a stricken individual for the months required for them to recover can be a tiring process, and can require multiple void mages.

Unfortunately there is nothing further that can be done for those that reach Taint 10, once they have become Rephaim the process is irreversible. They no longer recover over time and there is no known way to undo the transformation or lower their Taint below 10.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE

The environment in Altai can be a dangerous hazard, whether due to the chaotic effects of magic gone awry or simply the harsh conditions of the Northern Ice or the Kingdom of Storms, those exposed to extremes of temperature for too long without adequate protection can find themselves freezing to death or dying from heat exposure.

WEATHER

Weather conditions are divided up by severity and can impose penalties to rolls:

Weather	Penalty	Stay Standing	Movement	Notes
Calm	0	--	Normal	No wind at all.
Light Breeze	0	--	Normal	Enough to blow out a candle or swirl papers around.
Strong Breeze	0	--	Normal	Whips hair and clothes around.
High Wind	-1	--	Normal	Effort needed to walk against the wind.
Gale	-2	--	-1	Some branches break. People stumble.
Strong Gale	-4	Difficulty 6	-2	Some trees fall. Some buildings damaged.
Hurricane	-10	Difficulty 15	-3	Trees and buildings destroyed. Widespread damage.

Penalty: This penalty applies to all rolls made except those to remain standing.

Stay Standing: Everyone in the bad weather must make a Strength/Athletics roll against the listed difficulty to stay standing. Each DoS rolled allows the character to stay up for 1 round before they need to roll again.

Movement: This penalty is applied to the speed of everyone moving in the area.

HYPOTHERMIA

Exposure to extreme cold can lead to hypothermia and frostbite. Character exposed to low temperatures take damage over time unless adequately protected. The following chart indicates how long it takes for a character to take 2 points of damage when exposed to the cold.

Danger	Temperature (°C)	Exposed	Warm Clothing	Penalty
Very Low	0 to -14	10 minutes	--	-1
Low	-15 to -24	6 minutes	--	-2
Medium	-25 to -34	4 minutes	10 minutes	-3
High	-35 to -44	2 minutes	6 minutes	-4
Very High	-45 to -54	1 minute	4 minutes	-5
Extreme	Lower than -55	30 seconds	2 minutes	-6

Exposed: The rate at which characters stake damage when not wearing adequately warm clothing.

Warm Clothing: In order to slow the rate of hypothermia characters need to be wearing multiple layers of thick clothing that covers most of their body. Adequately protected characters take damage at the slower rate listed. If no time is listed then the clothing is enough to protect them from the cold indefinitely.

Penalty: Characters suffer this penalty to all Skill rolls while exposed to the cold conditions. Wearing warm clothing reduces the severity of the penalty by 2.

Wind can increase the chance of freezing to death. If a character is exposed to strong winds while in cold conditions, refer to the following chart and adjust the Hypothermia category by the number listed towards the Extreme danger end of the scale.

Weather	Cold Modifier
Calm	--
Light Breeze	--
Strong Breeze	1 category worse
High Wind	1 category worse
Gale	2 categories worse
Strong Gale	2 categories worse
Hurricane	3 categories worse

Example: If a character is exposed to -30 degree temperatures, they would normally fall into the Medium danger category and would take 1 damage every 4 minutes if they didn't have adequate protection. If they were also exposed to High Winds, the danger increases to High and they take 1 damage every 2 minutes.

POISON

Poisons are not very common in Altais but they are not unheard of. They are most commonly used in Amonastra where they are held in almost a sacred reverence.

Poisons usually work by gradually weakening the character's body until it begins to give in and fail. Assuming the victim survives long enough, the poison eventually runs its course and the character begins to recover.

Once someone has been poisoned, they must make a Prowess/Strength roll at regular intervals to avoid the effects of the poison. Success indicates their body has resisted some of the effects for now but they still need to make further rolls until the poison's full duration has expired.

Some poisons cause magical effects, these are still mundane chemical compounds but trigger the victims own innate magical ability (latent or otherwise) to manifest the effect. A mage could attempt to counter the effects of the poison using the normal rules for unweaving a spell (see page XX), however doing so only ends the immediate magical effect, not the poison itself which will continue until its duration expires.

TYPE

All poisons fall into one of three types: Contact, Ingestion, and Injection.

Contact poisons are the rarest type, they affect the target if they make contact with any part of their exposed skin. They also work if ingested or injected since this also bring them into direct contact with the victim's body.

Ingested poisons are some of the most lethal but need to be swallowed to be effective. They can be added to food or drink and will affect anyone that consumes them. Ingested poisons have no effect if applied through contact or injection.

Injected poisons need to enter the targets blood stream. They can be applied to weapons and anyone that takes damage from such a weapon is also affected by the poison. If a poisoned attack hits but deals no damage due to armour or magical protection, then the poison has not managed to enter the targets blood and has no effect. Injection poisons cannot be administered through contact or ingestion.

RATE

All poisons take time to work, but some are faster than others. The poison's Rate lists how often the victim has to make a Prowess/Strength roll to resist the effects of the poison.

DoS

Some poisons are harder to resist. Each lists the number of DoS needed to avoid the poison's effect.

DURATION

Eventually poisons run their course and neutralize in the body. The Duration lists how long the poison lasts.

EFFECT

Each time a character fails to get the needed number of DoS on the roll to resist the poison, they suffer the listed effect, usually a reduction in one or more Attributes. These effects stack so each time the resistance roll is failed the character's condition worsens. If the effect lists an Attribute penalty but all listed Attributes have already reached zero, then the victim suffers the Conclusion effect instead.

CONCLUSION

If the victim fails a resistance roll and can no longer suffer the normal Effect then the results listed here apply instead. This continues to occur each time the Effect would have been applied if the specified Attributes are still at zero.

STACKING POISONS

Poisons of different types stack their effects and the victim will need to roll to resist each one separately. Multiple applications of the same poison don't have increased effect, but if someone is poisoned repeatedly over many rounds, each application will restart the duration. Only one type of poison can effectively be placed on a weapon at a time, trying to add multiple just dilutes each ones effectiveness.

RECOVERY

Once the poison's duration ends, the victim (if they are still alive) recovers 1 lost Attribute point per day. If they have lost points from multiple Attributes, the player may choose which to restore each day. Other effects end as described under each poison.

ANTIDOTES

Some poisons have antidotes that can be administered to prevent the poison causing more harm. Each poison lists whether or not an antidote is available. When taken, the antidote immediately ends the poison's duration, the effects then wear off at the normal rate.

MAGIC

Magic was once an inherent part of day to day life, everyone possessed it, and it was as omnipresent within the lives of the Altaens as technology is for us in the 21st century. During the height of magical understanding, the majority of each Kingdoms citizens were well educated and the Veil and the Realms were essential subjects taught to even the youngest children.

The average person possessed enough understanding of these subjects that they could use magic to aid their day to day activities; lighting a stove for cooking, levitating the bowls over as needed, it became second nature.

All this changed with the Fall. Magic was blamed for much of the misery that befell the people and its use fell into obscurity. A great deal of knowledge on the subject was lost, much of it only now being rediscovered.

Magic remains an innate ability that in theory everyone can use, most have no idea how and would never dare to do so, believing that they might cause another Fall if they even try. A few either don't believe this or are willing to risk it and so in each kingdom there are those that still practise magic to this day.

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of magic is how fragile the Veil has become since the Fall. Whenever a spell is cast, the mage has to be very careful not to rip the Veil open completely, creating a Surge that plunges the area into chaos. Such mishaps can lead to the death of the spell caster or worse: the merging of realms.



LEARNING THE ART

Learning to use magic is a slow process and usually can only be done with the assistance of a teacher. A few rare individuals manifest it spontaneously (especially in times of stress) but they rarely gain any measure of control.

Before someone can use magic, they must first learn to sense the Veil, the barrier between the realms. Most learn this by spending hours in meditation, attempting to reach out to feel the world around them while ignoring the normal information their senses are telling them. It takes a long time and many a student has given up in frustration.

With practise though, it becomes second nature, and they learn to sense the Veil as easily as they use any other sense.

From there they can begin trying to alter the Veil by pushing out with their mind against it, in an attempt to either poke holes in it or squeeze the holes shut. This part of the training is usually much faster, although a lot more dangerous. Once the Veil is sensed, it is easily altered, but control is difficult and a misstep can be disastrous.

SURGES

Spell casting is a dangerous activity. The Veil was badly damaged during the Fall and in many places it's still thin and fragile. Whenever a spell is cast, there is the chance that the Veil will react badly, ripping open or knotting up, causing random and strange side effects. This is often referred to as a Surge. Note that Veilcraft rolls can never cause Dramatic Failures but they can cause Surges instead.

Whenever a Veilcraft roll is made, the GM determines a Surge Rating: usually this defaults to 1, but areas that have been heavily traumatised by past magic may have higher.

Example Surge Ratings:

- Default Surge Rating: 1
- Kingdom of Ash: 2

- Bay of Sorrow: 5
- If a rift is opened in the area: +1 for a day
- If a Surge of rank 3 or lower has already occurred in the area: +1
- If a surge of rank 4 or greater has already occurred in the area: +2

Areas with a high Surge Rating start to exhibit some strange effects:

Surge Rating 3: Minor chaotic effects begin to occur frequently and randomly in the area, equivalent to a Rank 1 Surge (see below).

Surge Rating 4: Moderate effects begin to occur frequently, equivalent to a Rank 2 Surge. The area becomes increasingly unstable.

Surge Rating 5: The area is now dangerously unstable. The air whips about in a chaotic fashion, creating hurricane-like conditions. Rank 1 and 2 Surges are everywhere and Rank 3 Surges begin occurring at random. Creatures and objects within the area begin slipping in and out of other Realms at Random, usually without serious harm. Rephaim can cross at will and can survive indefinitely within the area.

Surge Rating 6+: The Veil is sundered and the universe rips open. Within the area the physical world and the other realms merge and everything is plunged into chaos. Rank 3 Surges are now common and occasionally the effects of a Rank 4 surge occurs. Those in the area who survive and manage to leave return to whichever Realm they started in; if they were in the physical world then they are pushed back in as the Veil reasserts itself. If they started in one of the other Realms then they remain in that Realm.

Whenever a Veilcraft roll is made, any die that rolls the Surge Rating or lower becomes a Surge Die and is moved aside. Surge Die cannot be selected by the player to be their roll result, or added as part of a Cascade.

The rank of the Surge is equal to the number of Surge Die rolled:

Rank 1: Something trivial and harmless. Some wind blows things around, some nearby objects glow, etc.

Rank 2: A moderate effect. The ground shakes, something catches fire, and things are knocked over. Can cause a small amount of damage.

Rank 3: A major effect. Things burst into flame, time warps, someone is seriously injured. Should severely inconvenience the caster.

Rank 4: A huge effect. It rains fire from the sky, things randomly change from solids to liquids, a hurricane occurs. Harms a great number of people.

Rank 5: Deadly disaster. Causes the same effect as 4 and in addition the caster is sucked into another Realm.

Rank 6: Cataclysm. Causes the same effect as 4 and the caster and everyone within 100 meters is sucked into another Realm.

Surges are common, in fact most spells will cause one, but the player can always choose to roll fewer than their full Veilcraft and by doing so reduce the chance of a serious Surge. The one exception is when they are interrupted while spell casting, in this case they MUST roll their full Veilcraft.

The exact effect of the Surge is left to the GM but should match the Realm being used: for example if a Blaze spell is being cast then the Surge should involve heat or light.

SPELL CASTING

The ranks listed under each Realm (See page XX) are often referred to as spells. Each describes a specific effect that can be created through manipulation of the Veil. Spell casting involves a Focus/Veilcraft roll and the DoS rolled and the character's level of Veilcraft often have a significant effect on the desired outcome. The player can always choose to reduce any numerical component of the spell (e.g. range, duration, damage, etc) to less than those listed at the time the spell is cast.

CHOOSING THE EFFECT

The first step in casting a spell is to select which effect you intend to create. Each Realm is divided into multiple ranks and many of the ranks can create different effects. A caster usually cannot use multiple Realms at once and must choose whether they are weakening the Veil or strengthening it. The effects of each Realm are described on page XX.

CHOOSING A TARGET

Once an effect has been chosen, the player needs to choose the target of the spell. Spells always occur targeting physical locations. While the caster can certainly use magic to harm an enemy, they are not targeting the enemy but rather the point in space where that enemy is standing. After all it's the Veil in that location that is actually altered, not the person standing there who happens to be hit by the resulting effect.

This means that magic, by default, is always stationary and doesn't follow a person or object unless the caster continues to concentrate to move the effect to follow the target (see below).

Magic in Altais also makes no distinction between types of objects; people, animals, plants, and inanimate objects can all be affected by spells.

Targets are either completely affected or they aren't at all, you cannot use the Wild to speed up how fast half of a person's body moves in order to cause them harm, or send just someone's head into another realm, it's all or nothing. When measuring whether someone is within an area of affect, they are affected if they are at least half covered by the radius, otherwise the spell misses.

CASTING TIME

Spell casting is a slow process, the mage has to feel out and slowly shape the Veil to create the effect while being careful to keep it from tearing. The character must spend a number of Full Actions equal to the rank of the spell just to concentrate on the desired effect, and if the character is interrupted the spell fails and has a higher chance of causing a Surge.

Once the last Full Action has been used, the player makes a casting roll to complete the spell.

CASTING ROLL

Casting a spell always requires a Focus/Veilcraft roll to create the desired effect. If caster beats the difficulty then the spell will occur successfully. If they are interrupted before this occurs, the spell immediately fails and the player must roll their full Focus/Veilcraft roll with a Surge Rating one higher than normal just to see if a Surge occurs (they do not get to choose dice and attempt a success, the spell has already failed).

DURATION

The duration of a spell is determined by the character's rank in the Realm being used and the degrees of success achieved during the casting roll. The player may always choose to set a lower duration when the spell is cast.

Realm Rank 1: 1 Round per success.

Realm Rank 2: 1 Minute per success.

Realm Rank 3: 1 Hour per success.

Realm Rank 4: 3 Hours per success.

Realm Rank 5: 1 Day per success.

RANGE

The maximum range of a spell is based on the character's Veilcraft and the rank they possess in the Realm. A character usually requires line of sight but they can also target locations they can't see, such as behind a wall, but they must first succeed in a Veilsense roll to get a feel for the Veil in that area.

Realm Rank 1: 2 meters/yards per rank of Veilcraft.

Realm Rank 2: 5 meters/yards per rank of Veilcraft.

Realm Rank 3: 10 meters/yards per rank of Veilcraft.

Realm Rank 4: 25 meters/yards per rank of Veilcraft.

Realm Rank 5: 50 meters/yards per rank of Veilcraft.

RADIUS/TARGETS

Magical effects usually occur in a sphere around the target location, affecting all within the area. The maximum radius of the effect is determined by the character's rank in the Realm they are using and their level of Veilcraft. Characters with a high rank may also choose to create effects in shapes other than a sphere (e.g. a wall, cone, cube, etc) but the effect is still limited to same volume of space.

Realm Rank 1: A single human sized target or smaller.

Realm Rank 2: 1 meter/yard per rank of Veilcraft. All targets within the radius are affected equally.

Realm Rank 3: 3 meters/yards per rank of Veilcraft. Can choose to exclude targets within the radius.

Realm Rank 4: 5 meters/yards per rank of Veilcraft. Can create a similar volume in a shape other than a sphere.

Realm Rank 5: 10 meters/yards per rank of Veilcraft.

MANIPULATING THE EFFECT

Spell casting is an art and casters sculpt the Veil with their mind like an artist working clay with their hands. Some stretch the veil while others poke holes in it, the Veil can be twisted, bent, or squished to create the desired effect and although all casters follow the same core principles, no two of them use precisely the same technique. For this reason all casters find it far easier to alter their own effects than to change those created by others.

Once a spell is cast, its creator can continue to manipulate the effects until its duration expires.

During the caster's turn, they may spend some of their Action to alter any of the following properties of the spell:

- Quick Action: End the spell early.
- Full Action: Move the effect at a speed of 3.
- Full Action: Alter the radius to any size less than the maximum they can create. As a part of this action they may also change which targets are excluded or alter the shape if they have the ability to do so.
- Full Action: Reduce the damage of the spell to any value lower than what it currently is (once lowered it can't be increased again without a new casting of the spell).
- Full Action: Reinforce a spell being countered (See below)

COUNTERSPELLING

Spell casters may attempt to end an ongoing spell effect created by someone else by undoing the changes they made to the Veil. This can also be used to end Surges.

Ending an active spell is identical to casting that same spell: it requires the same Ranks in the Realms, takes the same time and uses the same roll. Each DoS rolled is subtracted from those previously rolled by the caster and the effect diminishes to match. If the casters original DoS are reduced to zero then the spell ends and all of its magical effects also end, however side effects do not. For example a magical fire would go out but if it had spread to a nearby tree, that tree would keep burning naturally. Of course another spell could be used to dampen that fire as well.

If the caster is still present, they may attempt to reinforce the spell as a Full Action to prevent it being countered. This also functions like casting the original spell, except that any DoS rolled are added back on to the spell's total, but cannot take it above the original number that were rolled.

Example: Nisios uses his mastery of the Blaze to create a great fire that burns in the heart of a local town. He rolls his Focus/Veilcraft and gets 3 successes. Another caster, Kesar wishes to prevent this and makes a roll to counterspell, scoring 2 successes. Nisios' original total is now reduced to 1. Seeking to continue his fiery chaos, he rolls to reinforce the spell, scoring just 1 DoS and increasing the total to 2. Finally Kesar rolls again and scores 2 more DoS, reducing the total to zero and the fire goes out.

Ending the effect of a Surge is treated just like ending an active spell except the rank is equal to the number of Surge Die that were rolled when the Surge was created, so ending a Rank 3 surge works just like ending a Rank 3 spell. Rolls to counter a spell or surge, or to reinforce them can still cause surges themselves, making long magical battles particularly dangerous.

RELICS AND REMNANTS

Sometimes objects are found that are left over from previous ages and some of these exhibit strange and unusual properties. Such items of power are rare and are sought after by many, some seek them for personal power, others to preserve or study the secrets of the past. All such items fall into one of two categories: Relics and Remnants.

RELICS

Relics are magical artefacts that date back to the third age and they both more common and better understood than Remnants. Magic was abundant at the time and people learned to permanently attach effects to items that anyone could use. These range greatly in function, some are simple such as a lantern that never goes out or a cup that keeps its contents warm, to the truly wondrous such as a flying carriage or a burning sword.

There are scholars who study Relics and some aspects of their creation has been unravelled but much still remains a mystery. All Relics contain one or more Veil Stones which seem to act as an anchor for the item's magical effect, and this effect can even be changed although doing so is difficult and can be dangerous. The one thing that remains a mystery is how the Veil Stones were created in the first place.

The magic in relics is extremely difficult to unweave, the veil stones within them maintain the state of the Veil and any attempt to change it meets resistance. It takes 5 DoS to unweave such an effect and once done the item is permanently depowered. Many relics contain dozens of veil stones acting together in complicated ways and unweaving the effect of just one of them can create unstable and disastrous effects.

Ancient Relics that use Void Magic do not normally cause Void Taint, the effect doesn't leak any Void energy when used, however this seems to be due to the technique used in creating them and modern Relics with Void magic effects do cause Void Taint as normal.

VEIL STONES

All Relics contain Veil Stones, they are small light blue stones that have thin purple lines running through them in a spiderweb pattern. They are the only known way to anchor a magical effect to an object, which they seem to do by pulling the changes in the Veil along with them.

When examined with Veilsense, a strange twisting knot can be sensed in the stone's centre and the Veil around it is stretched taught. The alterations to the Veil that create the magical effect stored in the stone can also be sensed and all of this follows the stone as it is moved around.

Veil Stones come in a wide range of shapes and sizes, and the size determines the area of the Veil around it that it controls. Most are only a centimetre or two across and anchor small controlled effects within about 10 cm, but larger ones with a much greater effect have also been found.

Some Veil Stones seem to anchor permanent magical effects, like lights that never go out, while others have effects attached that can be switched on and off. This seems to involve an application of Tempest energy but the process is not well understood. Most Veil Stones are found within magical items, but occasionally they are found loose and without spells attached.

Attaching a spell, or modifying one already attached is extremely difficult and often involves Pattern, Void and Tempest magic, in a process that usually takes at least two people.

USING RELICS

Some Relics are always active and their purpose is obvious, while others can be turned on and off and have adjustable effects, or no apparent effect at all. Whenever a character studies a new Relic for the first time, they may need to make a Knowledge: Artefact test to try and determine what it does and how to work it. Success allows them to work out the basics and more DoS might give them a greater understanding at GM discretion.

A failed roll usually leaves the character with no clear idea of what the Relic does or how to activate it, while a Dramatic Failure may indicate that the Relic is faulty and backfires dangerously.

REMNANTS

Far rarer and more mysterious than the Relics of the third age are the Remnants that come from before. Most date to the first or second age and it is believed they were created by the Eesa. No one understands how Remnants work, a few have been disassembled and no Veil Stones were found within, although many other small pieces of unknown function were.

Very few Remnants have ever been found, perhaps only a few dozen or so across all of Altai, and the function of most of them isn't understood. They are often made from unknown materials, such as substances that are as clear as glass but flexible, or as strong as steel but like no metal ever seen.

Simple items like clothing have been found that seem to have endured the millennia without noticeable sign of age or decay.

Upon a pedestal within the great hall of Ta'Nara, sits a metal device about 30cm long, with a handle at one end and a glass cylinder at the other that glows with a cold white light that illuminates the whole room.

In the fortress at Erali, on the border with the Kingdom of Fiends, an ancient weapon is kept under lock and key. It was found in the area and is believed to date back to the Nasar war. The device resembles a crossbow but without bow or string and it shoots rays of light that can burn through stone.

Items like these that have a clear purpose are not common though, and most are strange looking objects that have no apparent purpose.

USING REMNANTS

Remnants are almost always unusual objects with no obvious purpose and anyone trying to use needs to first study it and work out how the object functions.

Whenever a character tries to activate a Remnant's effect, determine its use, or otherwise study how it works, they need to make a Knowledge: Artefacts roll. Even one DoS allows them to learn a bit about it, get it to perform some kind of function (if it still functions at all), work out how many functions it seems to have and whether it still works. This test needs to be made each time they try to use the Remnant until they have gained a total of 5 DoS at which point they understand enough about it to use it in the same manner without further rolls, although if it has multiple function then this must be done to discover each one.

The GM may impose a penalty to the roll based on how obvious the Remnant's effects are and whether it's similar to something still used on Altai that the character might be familiar with.

Penalty	Familiarity	Examples
0	Simple familiar function	Creates light, cooks food, etc
-2	Complex familiar function	Fires a projectile, opens a realm portal, etc
-4	Unfamiliar function	Communications device, hologram, etc

If the roll fails, then a Backfire roll needs to be made:

Backfire (roll 1d10)

- 1: The Remnant explodes and is destroyed. Everyone within 5m takes 3d10 damage.
- 2: Lightning crackles along its surface. It's damaged beyond repair and the user takes 1d10 damage.
- 3: The character touches something they shouldn't and takes 1d10 damage from heat or shock but the Remnant is unharmed.
- 4-5: The Remnant fails to function and won't function for the next day.
- 6-10: The Remnant doesn't function but nothing bad happens.

BESTIARY

Altai is a different world, with its own unique ecosystem and aside from humanity, no other Earth species are found on this world. Life on Altai tends to come in similar forms to that on Earth, there are insects, fish, reptiles, mammals and birds but there are also significant differences:

LIFE IS REPTILIAN

Altai hasn't undergone the same extinction events that took place on Earth, the large reptiles were never wiped out and remained dominant but then evolved into many of the other animals found today. As a result, all higher life tends to be more reptilian in appearance, most mammals and birds continue to have more scales in addition to fur and feathers and often have a more reptilian stance and shape. Altaens tend to define mammals as reptiles with fur and birds as feathered reptiles that fly.

Life Has Six Limbs

Almost all animals have six limbs, fish have six fins, reptiles and mammals have six legs, and birds tend to have two legs and four wings. The arrangements and function of the limbs varies quite a bit from species to species, but very few animals have a different number of limbs. There are snake-like reptiles that have tiny vestigial limbs and some have fewer than six, but they tend to be the exception.

LIFE HAS FOUR EYES

Most of the native life on Altai has four eyes, herbivores tend to have eyes that are spaced out evenly on the sides of their head to give them good vision to their sides and behind so they can avoid predators, while carnivores tend to have more forward facing eyes for better depth perception.

ANIMALS

DOMAR

Strong and reliable, domar are found all across Altai serving as both steeds and beasts of burden.

Type: Animal

Kingdom: All

Environment: Temperate or Desert

Prowess: 1

Strength: 3

Agility: 3

Mind: 1 (Animal)

Charisma: 1

Focus: 1

Health: 30

Stamina: 6

Valour: 0

Initiative: 1d + 2

Defence: 9

Attacks: Bite (Dmg: 1d + 3, Reach: 0) or Claw (Dmg: 1d, Reach: 3)

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Intimidation 1, Perception 2, Survival 3, Swim 1

Move: 9

Special: May spend 1 Stamina to increase its run speed from 3x its Move to 4x.



Altai has no horses but these docile creatures more than fill the role. Domar are large furred reptiles with six long powerful legs and a small tail that helps them balance, they are found in all but the harshest regions and their reliability and speed have made them an essential part of everyday society. They make excellent steeds for travellers, they are ridden by nobles on the hunt, they pull ploughs on farms and wagons for merchants, and they are used as war mounts for cavalry.

Ecology: Domar are herbivores, living mainly off grasses and the leaves of small bushes. They are most comfortable in temperate climates and it's believed they were originally native to the grassy plains of Western Altai long before the Fall. To this day great herds of them are still found in the more habitable parts of the Kingdom of Rust, but domestication and trade has spread them all across the continent and beyond.

They are not usually found wild in the more arid regions, but still survive well under human supervision and are widely used as beasts of burden throughout the Kingdoms of Glass and Ash. Only in the icy northern areas of the continent do they truly seem to struggle, even when well cared for they quickly succumb to the cold.

Domar are warm blooded and give birth to live young, usually one at a time although twins or even triplets are not unheard of.

Breeding: Controlled breeding has created several different breeds of domar, some of which are bred in only one location in the world, making them extremely rare and valuable. These breeds are afforded special prestige by those in high society who consider such pedigree important. The term Common domar refers to any animal of uncertain breed, mixed heritage or that was tamed from the wild. Common domar are, as the name suggests, the most populace and wide-spread type and although they serve well pulling carts on farms, or as mounts for the average traveller, such animals are often looked down upon by high society.

Agiran domar are bred by a small number of breeders in the city of Ta'Agir, they are noted for being hot-blooded animals of great speed and agility, and can be recognised by their smaller feet and the lighter colouration of the scales along their back.

Samalian domar are hardy beasts, bred for war around Ta'Samal. Although slower than the common domar, they make up for it with increased strength and a ferociousness that can be harnessed in battle. They can be identified due to their increased size and build compared to other domar.

Sand domar are found most commonly in the Kingdom of Glass and are far more enduring of arid and desert environments, able to go for several days without water. Although they were originally bred around Ruhana, today they are found all across the Kingdom and have become more popular within the kingdom than the common domar.

Behaviour: Wild domar are placid but slightly skittish creatures, usually fleeing at the first sign of significant danger although they are capable of fighting if cornered. Domestication usually just involves making sure the animal is familiar enough with humans that it doesn't try to flee when approached, that it is accustomed to being ridden. Despite their docile nature, domar can be trained for war and can fight fiercely once when the situation requires it.

Combat: Domar fight with a combination of biting and clumsily clawing with their front or back legs but can only attempt one such attack at a time. Unless a domar is trained for war, it will panic and flee as soon as it is injured unless its rider succeeds in a Riding skill check to keep the animal under control.

AUBEX

Huge and powerful, aubex herds slowly plod through the sands, or pull large loads between farms.

Type: Animal
Kingdom: Glass
Environment: Deserts
Prowess: 2

Strength: 6
Agility: 1
Mind: 1 (Animal)
Charisma: 1
Focus: 1

Health: 70
Stamina: 7
Valour: 0

Initiative: 1d + 1
Defence: 7, AR: 3
Attacks: Head-butts (Dmg: 1d + 6, Reach: 0, AP: 2)



Special: An aubex can perform a Charge Attack as a Full Action. The aubex moves up to 4x its normal move in a straight line, crashing through everyone in the way, dealing damage and knocking them aside so long as it travelled at least 5 meters before reaching them. Each time it collides with a creature, it makes an attack roll as normal (Dmg: 3d + 6, Reach: 0, AP: 5), if it misses the target manages to leap aside but the aubex continues on its rampage. It can smash through flimsy wooden or adobe walls and furniture but a strong stone wall will stop it.

Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Intimidation 2, Perception 1, Survival 4, Swim 1
Move: 3

These large slow moving reptiles grow to over 2 meters high and 4 to 5 meters long. Their bodies are covered in thick scales that in some places have fused together into armoured plates and horn like growths. Although quite slow, their great strength allows them to pull both huge ploughs and large wagons loaded with cargo, making them very useful for farmers and traders. It's possible to ride an aubex but they are neither very comfortable nor any faster than a person can normally walk so few do for very long.

Aubex are also bred for butchering and their meat is commonly sold within the Kingdom of Glass.

Ecology: Wild aubex are rare even within the deserts to which they are native. Their herds slowly wander their way through the desert, able to go without food or water for weeks. They are herbivorous, living off the rare desert plant, and when they do find a source of food, the herd will remain in that location until every green shoot has been eaten before moving on.

Hunters and breeders often track these animals by the trail of destruction they leave through the local flora.

Aubex do not survive well in colder climates and they are almost never found outside the Kingdom of Glass. They are warm blooded and give birth to live young, usually a single calf at a time. Twins are rare and often result in complications that lead to the death of the mother or the young.

Behaviour: Aubex tend to be as slow to react as they are to move, they rely mostly on their natural armour and large size to keep them safe from other animals, although they can become very dangerous when enraged and a stampeding herd of aubex is a truly terrifying event that can threaten even the largest of predators.

Even in the wild, aubex do not react hostilely or timidly around humans, and usually ignore them unless they feel their young are threatened.

Aubex are never truly domesticated, but once separated from the herd and bridled, they tend to go where they are led most of the time. An aubex that digs its heels in can prove to be an unmovably stubborn animal and one that does so too often is usually butchered for meat instead.

Combat: An angry aubex is an incredibly dangerous animal, their size and strength can allow them to damage even walls and other property. Aubex fight by butting their target with their armoured head, using their horns to gore or their sheer size to crush. Aubex will charge if their target is at a distance and can easily trample anyone in their path. They were once used in war but this has not been done in hundreds of years.

GARL

These large furred carnivorous are analogous to a lion, they hunt in groups of two or three and can be quite dangerous to small villages.

Type: Animal

Kingdom: Rust, Beasts

Environment: Temperate plains and forests.

Prowess: 2

Strength: 3

Agility: 3

Mind: 2 (Animal)

Charisma: 1

Focus: 2

Health: 40

Stamina: 7

Valour: 0

Initiative: 2d + 3

Defence: 9

Attacks: Bite (Dmg: 2d + 3, Reach: 0), or Claw (Dmg: 1d + 3, Reach: 1), or Head-buttt (Dmg: 1d + 3, Reach: 0)

Special: A garl may follow up a Run Action with a Bite attack as a Free Action, allowing it to run and attack in the same turn.

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 3, Perception 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Swim 2

Move: 6

One of the larger and more dangerous predators in the Kingdom of Rust and one of the smaller ones in the Kingdom of Beasts where much larger creatures lurk, adult garl are usually 2 to 3 meters in length (not counting their short tail) and can weigh up to 200kgs, with females being slightly larger than the males. Although six legged and reptilian like most of the animals in Altai, garls are heavily furred rather than scaled and have a short mane running down their back, closer inspection reveals that this fur is actually made up of long but very thin flexible scales which stick up from the skin, rather than hair.

Ecology: Garl are predatory carnivores that survive by hunting other animals, usually domar and smaller herbivores. They are found in both open plains and forest areas where they hunt by stalking their prey until they see an opportunity to pounce. Garl are not very good at climbing trees and tend to stay in the low underbrush where they make a den by crushing down the grass and digging a shallow depression in the ground. Garl are most active around dusk.

Adult garl pair with a mate for life and hunt with that mate almost exclusively. A pair will give birth to a litter of 2-4 live young every couple of years who are looked after by the parents for only about 6 months before they split off to form their own hunting pack. The young garl form their own pack, hunting together as a family unit until they too



find a mate to pair with, at which point they leave their siblings behind. As the group splits apart, often the last garl left without a mate will be forced to hunt alone. These lone garl are frequently shunned by potential mates due to their lack of pack and many never find a hunting mate.

Behavior: Garl are territorial animals, fiercely loyal to their pack or hunting mate, and will attack anyone they perceive as a threat to either. They will usually only hunt when hungry, although they have occasionally been known to hunt for sport when food is abundant.

Garl usually treat humans passing too close to their den as a threat and may attack, they have also been known to attack livestock in farms and small villages.

Combat: Garl usually attack by pouncing on their prey and biting with their powerful jaws. Although they have powerful claws, these are just used to keep purchase on their prey and not to strike directly. The horns on their nose and head are usually used in dominance challenges against other garl and not to bring down prey.

SCRIVAK

Although not large, these cunning predators hunt in large packs, striking at their prey with poisonous stingers.

Type: Animal

Kingdom: Glass

Environment: Desert

Prowess: 1

Strength: 1

Agility: 4

Mind: 2 (Animal)

Charisma: 1

Focus: 1

Health: 25

Stamina: 10

Valour: 0

Initiative: 2d + 4

Defence: 11

Attacks: Bite (Dmg: 1d + 1, Reach 0) or Sting (Dmg: 1d - 3, Reach 3, AP: 1)

Special: If a scrivak deals at least 1 point of damage with a sting attack, it injects its victim with Scrivak Venom (See page XX).

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Intimidation 2, Perception 4, Stealth 4, Subterfuge 2, Survival 3, Swim 2

Move: 6

Scrivak are small lean predators, usually only about a meter long (not including tail). They are sandy-coloured and scaled with stripes of darker fur running down their backs in regular patterns. Their six legs are shorter than other similar sized animals and they tend to slink low to the ground as they move. They have a very long prehensile tail, over 2 meters long, which ends in a nastily barbed stinger containing a powerful poison.

Scrivak are viewed by some of the more superstitious people of Meherahvia as symbols of disease and death, believing that the presence of a pack nearby can bring sickness to an entire village.

Ecology: Scrivak live in the deserts of the Kingdom of Glass, hunting in large packs that usually contain anywhere between 6 and 20 animals. They are exclusively carnivorous and will both hunt and scavenge for food.

They birth litters of up to half a dozen live young and the cubs become part of the pack until they are old enough to split off and find a new pack. Each pack has an alpha member, although fights over dominance are common, with the loser either killed or driven out of the pack to perish alone in the desert.

Behavior: Scrivak are simultaneously savage, aggressive and individually timid. They will often attack and kill just for sport and seem to delight in tormenting dying animals, but will not attack unless they feel that numbers are on their side, and with great enough numbers, even aubex have been known to fall to repeated scrivak stings.

As soon as a hunt seems to be turning against them, the entire pack will usually flee. This cowardly behaviour combined with their cruelty and poison has created a very negative perception of them in the view of the people.

Combat: The packs are quite cunning and rely on a stealth and team work to bring down their prey, often circling around to attack from all sides. When they do strike, they approach cautiously and lash out with their tails, keeping their distance and striking cautiously, letting their poison do most of the work. As soon as their prey falters, the entire pack converges on them and is able to pick a carcass clean in a matter of minutes.

They are immune to Scrivak Venom.

SHUHUS

These huge reptiles tunnel beneath the desert sand and strike when least expected, devouring whole caravans before vanishing once more.

Type: Animal
Kingdom: Glass
Environment: Desert
Prowess: 3

Strength: 6
Agility: 4
Mind: 1 (Animal)
Charisma: 1
Focus: 3

Health: 100
Stamina: 8
Valour: 0

Initiative: 1d + 4

Defence: 10, AR: 5

Attacks: Bite (Dmg: 4d + 6, Reach: 0, AP: 3) or Claw (Dmg: 2d + 6, Reach: 3)

Special: A shuhus may spend 2 Stamina to spit a stream of acid as a Full Action. It makes a Brawl attack roll as normal and if it hits it may deal 3d damage to a target up to 20 meters away. This attack ignores armour.

They can dig through the ground at 2x their Move speed as a Full Action and can use Stealth to pass unnoticed while underground.

Creatures trying to strike the Shuhus with unarmed attacks or other natural weapons such as claws or teeth take 1d damage on a successful hit due to the spikes that cover its body.

Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 4, Intimidation 4, Perception 2, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 2, Survival 3
Move: 4

Shuhus are by far the largest predator found in the Kingdom of Glass, these huge six-legged reptiles stand at 3 meters high and up to 8 meters long, not counting the tail. Their bodies are scaled and covered in armoured plates



and spikes that help protect them against other predators. Like many reptiles, the shuhus has a very low stance, its belly dragging along the ground as it moves through the sand.

Shuhus are excellent burrowers and they spend a lot of their time tunnelling just beneath the surface of the desert sand, so close to the surface in fact that they can feel when prey walks over them.

Ecology: Shuhus are cold-blooded reptiles and regulate their body temperature by soaking up heat from the desert sand, rising to the surface to warm up and digging deeper when they get too hot. They are extremely territorial and almost never found together except for brief mating periods each year. At any other time should one Shuhus encounter another, they usually fight to the death.

Shuhus lay small clutches of half a dozen eggs buried deep in the sand. Once the eggs hatch, the babies attack and devour each other, leaving only a single survivor to tunnel to the surface.

They are exclusively carnivores and will eat any other animal they can catch, including others of their kind.

Behaviour: Shuhus are extremely aggressive, attacking anything that moves on sight even if they are not hungry. They have even been observed attacking plants and moving objects such as a piece of cloth blown on the wind.

Shuhus will not normally flee from a fight, even if badly wounded.

Taming: A few brave (or stupid) individuals have managed to tame a Shuhus although that is perhaps being too generous. These animals are never fully domesticated and more than one rider has had their mount turn on them and devour them after only a few days of ownership.

Any attempt to tame a Shuhus suffers a -5 on the roll and even once tamed, a new Animal Handling roll needs to be made by the rider the first time they encounter the Shuhus each day to keep control of it. On a failure, the Shuhus reacts negatively and attacks for one round, with a new roll required to regain control the following round. If a Critical Failure is rolled then the Shuhus reverts to being wild and runs amok.

Combat: Shuhus always prefer to initiate combat from below ground, they will lie in wait or move slowly beneath the surface until they encounter something they perceive as food or a threat. Then erupt from the ground, propelled by their powerful legs and tail, they are able to rise several meters into the air and have been known to grab low flying animals.

Once combat is engaged they remain on the surface and attack with their teeth, claws and acid spit until all enemies have been defeated (and devoured).

A Shuhus is immune to its own acid.

SKITES

Type: Animal

Kingdom: All

Environment: Any

Prowess: 1

Strength: 1

Agility: 4

Mind: 1

Charisma: 1

Focus: 1

Health: 3

Stamina: 6

Valour: 0

SKITES



Initiative: 1d + 4

Defence: 10

Damage: Bite (1 point)

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Perception 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Swim 2

Move: 4

These small furry six-legged reptiles breed very quickly and form large swarms. They are usually only 10 to 20 cms long, not including tail and can be found in every city. Most people view them as vermin and they can be found plaguing city streets and the occasional inn cellar, feeding off scraps and rubbish. They are not normally dangerous to humans.

Ecology: Skites are omnivores and will eat just about anything, they can be found in the wild where they live off plants and small insects but within cities their diet consists mostly of rubbish and scraps left over from human habitation. They can gnaw through wood which makes it difficult to keep them out of food storage areas, and they will often gnaw rope, cloth or paper simply out of habit.

Skites prefer dark, damp areas and tend to avoid bright lights, humans and other large animals that might prove to be a threat. They breed frequently and lay about a dozen eggs each time, a single pair of skites can birth about a hundred babies a year.

Skites usually stay together and can form large swarms that number anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand.

Behavior: Skites are timid creatures and usually flee from anything they perceive as a threat which includes any animal larger than it. They are almost always hungry and spend most of their life seeking food or mating.

Combat: Skites usually don't attack humans and other large animals unless they are already sickly and lying on the ground. An individual skite is little threat, but a swarm can be dangerous to someone who can't defend themselves. A swarm attacks as one creature, using the stats of an individual skite but dealing 1d damage on a successful hit. It is difficult to kill a skite swarm using conventional weapons due to the large number of individual creatures within the swarm, instead treat it as a single creature with 40 Health and when this reaches zero the swarm scatters and flees rather than being destroyed. Fire or other area attacks are more effective and any effect capable of dealing 3 damage to all the skites in the swarm will destroy it completely.

CORIX

Type: Animal

Kingdom: All

Environment: Any

Prowess: 1

Strength: 1

Agility: 5

Mind: 1

Charisma: 1

Focus: 1

Health: 10

Stamina: 6

Valour: 0

Initiative: 1d + 4

Defence: 11

Damage: Claw (1d - 3)

Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 2, Intimidation 1, Perception 4, Stealth 2, Survival 3,

Move: 20



A small bird-of-prey. Corix have four feathered wings and two rear legs and they tend to hunt other smaller animals like the skites. For this reason they often flock around human habitats and are viewed as vermin control. Some people even keep them as pets.

Ecology: Corix are carnivores and live off other small animals, preferring to hunt skites but they have been known to scavenge carrion when prey is scarce. Corix usually mate once or twice a year and nest in hollow cavities in trees, laying one to two eggs which they cover protectively with piles of bark and twigs to prevent them being detected by other predators.

Corix usually live in small broods of 4 to 6 individuals. As babies reach maturity, the oldest members of the group usually leave to find new territory while the younger ones remain. The displaced corix seek out a brood that will accept them and upon joining are treated as young members who will spend several years with the brood until they are once more the oldest and are displaced to make room for more young.

Behavior: Corix are territorial creatures and each member of a brood will fiercely protect its territory until the time comes for them to move on. They usually hunt at dawn and dusk, flying high and circling until they spot potential prey with their exceptional eye sight. Once they find something suitable to eat, they swoop down and grab it in their claws, usually killing it on the spot. A corix will usually carry prey back to a safe location before beginning to feed.

Combat: Corix do not usually attack animals larger than themselves and will only do so in defence of their young. They usually react to an intruding creature by swooping at it, low enough to seem threatening but still keeping enough distance to avoid retaliation. This is often enough to drive most wild animals away but in cases where it's not sufficient, they will begin using their claw to attack.

A wounded corix will usually retreat rather than continuing to fight.

TARKA (FEMALE)

Type: Animal
Kingdom: All
Environment: Ocean
Prowess: 3

Strength: 8
Agility: 3
Mind: 1
Charisma: 1
Focus: 3

Health: 150
Stamina: 8
Valour: 0

Initiative: 1d + 3
Defence: 9, AR: 3
Damage: Bite (5d + 8)



Special: If a Tarka successfully hits with a bite, it may spend 4 Stamina to swallow the target whole, dealing an additional 3d damage due to the spikes in its throat. Those swallowed are trapped inside the tarka's stomach until someone cuts them out. If they have an edged weapon they can attempt this themselves: they may make an attack each round and hit automatically but the tarka's stomach has an AR of 5. If they deal a total of 30 points of damage, they can escape. Those who fail to escape are slowly digested, taking 1d damage per minute.

Skills: Brawl 5, Intimidation 5, Perception 1, Survival 4, Swim 5
Move: 16

Female Tarka are one of the more dangerous predators found in the ocean, they are huge fish with large fan-like fins that run down the length of their body and a mouth filled with jagged spines that continue down their throat. They grow to over 6 meters long, aggressively attack humans and make fishing expeditions quite dangerous. Fortunately they are fairly rare.

Ecology: Tarka are exclusively carnivorous and prey on other fish and humans foolish enough to enter their waters. They possess the ability to see electrical fields in the water, like those generated by the central nervous systems of other creatures, and use this along with smell to hunt.

Male Tarka are significantly smaller than the females, measuring only half a meter in length, they follow the female in a school, feeding off the scraps left behind from her feeding frenzies and fighting each other for dominance. The dominant males attach themselves to the underside of the female's body with a sticky slime they excrete through their skin. Once attached they fertilize her eggs as they are slowly absorbed by her body, a process that can take several years. A female can have half a dozen males attached at one time and once one is absorbed a new one usually takes its place.

Female tarka lay dozens of eggs at a time but most fall to predation. Those that do hatch are predominantly male, only 1 in 10 egg produces a female tarka which starts off the same size as the baby males but grows rapidly, reaching full size after about 3 years.

Tarka do not protect or nurture their babies, their eggs are left to drift on the waves and they show no more loyalty to their babies if they do encounter them than to any other of their species.

Behavior: Tarka are savage and predatory and tend to attack anything they can potentially eat on sight. They have been known to go into feeding frenzies when a lot of food is about and don't stop eating until everything has been devoured.

Combat: Tarka attack by biting onto their prey and attempting to swallow them whole. The barbs in their mouth make it extremely difficult for their prey to escape. They have been known to rise out of the water to attack small boats, but can do little against a large ship or prey that is on land.

ENTITIES OF THE REALMS

LUCENTS

Type: Lucent
 Realm: Tempest
 Prowess: *

Strength: *
 Agility: *
 Mind: *
 Charisma: *
 Focus: *

Energy: *

Initiative: *
 Defence: *
 Damage: Energy Drain (1d + Focus, Ignores all AR)

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Veil Sense 3

Special:

Energy Sense: Lucents cannot see or hear, but can sense all sources of energy within 100 meters, this includes the heat of a fire, the warmth of someone's body, or the electrical signals in their central nervous system.

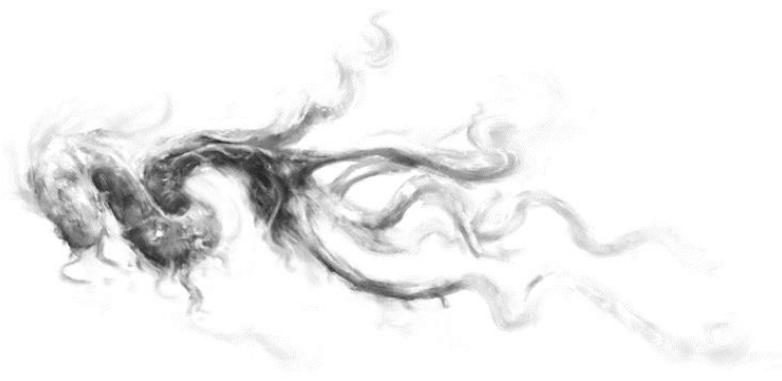
Energy Life-form: Lucents do not have Health, Stamina or Valour, and are unaffected by Wound Penalties, Poisons, Diseases, exhaustion, and other biological conditions. They also cannot be harmed by mundane damage, and instead can only be killed by reducing their Energy total to zero.

Energy Total: Lucents have an Energy total that represents how much energy they have consumed. This increases whenever they successful drain energy from a target, but can be spent to power certain abilities, just like Stamina.

Energy Drain: Lucents attack by draining heat and other forms of energy which they feed on. This attack normally requires touch and ignores the targets armour. When used against living creatures, this energy drain simply takes the form of damage. When used against other sources of energy (for example a fire), roll damage each round to see how much energy the Lucent has drained, with the amount available dependent on the size and intensity of the energy source. All energy drained in this way is added to the Lucent's Energy total.

Energy Source	Suggested Available Energy
Sun-Warmed Ground	1 / meter of ground
Candle	2
Campfire	10
Large Bonfire	20
Burning House	40

Inhospitable Environment: Lucents cannot survive long outside the high energy environment of the Tempest and lose Energy constantly while they are outside. The amount lost depends on the Lucent's size and is indicated on the size table. Lucents that Fetter to something no longer suffer this effect.



Realm Affects: Although Lucent's cannot be harmed by mundane damage, they are affected in unusual ways by the Realms:

Blaze: Adding heat and light simply feeds the Lucent, increasing its Energy by the amount of damage it would normally have done while removing heat and light reduces the Lucent's Energy by that amount. Using cold to drain away a Lucent's energy is an effective way of killing them.

Wild: Affects the Lucent normally.

Tempest: As with Blaze, using lightning simply adds the damage to the Lucent's Energy total, while cutting off its connection to the Tempest reduces its Energy total by a similar amount. The Lucent is affected by gravity-based affects normally. Opening a Tempest Rift is an effective way to shunt them back into the Tempest since the Lucent will naturally seek the highest source of energy which is usually on the other side of the veil.

Void: Might be able to sense a vague mind, depending on how powerful the Lucent is. Otherwise it affects them normally.

Pattern: Lucent's can be turned solid, this freezes them in place but doesn't cause any damage. Cutting them off from the Pattern causes them to start losing their cohesion reducing their Energy by 1d per round.

Spawn: Lucent's reproduce by splitting themselves into multiple smaller copies. This effectively destroys the original and creates two or more new lucent's of a smaller size. To do this, the Lucent expends all its Energy and perishes, a number of new Lucent's are created equal to its Strength and the Energy that was expended is divided evenly between them (any excess points are lost). Example: A Huge Lucent with 123 Energy would split into 6 Small Lucent's with 20 Energy each and the extra 3 Energy would be lost.

Size: As a Lucent consumes energy, it grows in size and power, increasing its stats and abilities, if its Energy is reduced, it also shrinks and becomes weaker to match.

Size	Tiny	Small	Medium	Large	Huge	Enormous	Gigantic
Energy Needed*	1	10	30	60	100	250	500
Energy Loss	1/Hour	2/Hour	1/Minute	2/Minute	5/Minute	10/Minute	1/Second
Prowess	1	2	2	2	3	4	5
Strength	1	2	3	4	6	8	10
Agility	4	4	3	3	2	2	1
Mind	1	1	1	1	2	2	3
Charisma	1	1	1	1	1	2	3
Focus	1	2	3	4	6	8	10
Initiative	1d+4	1d+4	1d+3	1d+3	2d+2	2d+2	1d+3
Defence	10	10	9	9	8	8	7
Move	12	12	9	6	6	4	2
Special	--	Blast Fetter	Blast Fetter Syphon	Blast Fetter Syphon Mass Syphon	Blast Fetter Syphon Mass Syphon Discharge	Blast Fetter Syphon Mass Syphon Extend Range Discharge	Blast Fetter Syphon Mass Syphon Extend Range Discharge

* A Lucent's current size and stats are indicated by the amount of Energy it currently has. The number listed in the table is the minimum required for each size. For example a Lucent with 40 Energy will be size Medium. If its Energy falls below 30, it will decrease to size Small. When a Lucent changes size, its stats change immediately.

Lucent's gain (and lose) additional abilities as they change size:

Blast: The Lucent releases a blast of physical force that damages a single target within 5 meters. This costs 1 Energy, requires a Brawl attack roll, and deals 1d + Strength damage if it hits.

Fetter: Lucent's can bond themselves to a physical object they are touching, animating it and becoming one of the Fettered Lucent creatures listed in the following pages. This costs the creature half of its remaining Energy (round

down) and its stats are adjusted to its new size before the Fettering then takes place. Fettered lucent no longer lose Energy for being outside the Tempest but also lose access to most of their other abilities as well (unless also listed under the specific Fettered Lucent). Fettering is permanent and the Lucent is forever trapped inside the object it bonds itself to, unless freed by a powerful Tempest mage, for this reason most Lucent don't do this except as a last resort.

Syphon: The Lucent can use its Drain Energy attack from a distance of up to 5 meters. To do this it spends 1 Energy before making a Brawl attack roll and damage roll as normal.

Mass Syphon: The Lucent can drain energy from multiple nearby sources at once. Each one must be within 5 meters of the Lucent. It spends 3 Stamina and makes an attack roll against each one as if using Syphon.

Extend Range: The Lucent's range on Blast, Syphon and Mass Syphon increases to 5 meters per point of Strength it has.

Discharge: The Lucent can discharge a bolt of pure electrical energy at a target up to 30 meters away. The bolt automatically hits the target and all others within 5 meters of them, no attack roll is required. The Lucent can spend either 5 Energy to deal 2d damage, or 10 Energy to deal 3d damage. This attack ignores AR. The Lucent cannot use this on themselves to increase their Energy.

Lucent are the native inhabitants of the Tempest, they come in a wide range of shapes and sizes and some have theorised that they are actually many different species, although most people simply lump them together under the one name. All lucent have a vaguely snake-like shape, are pale blue in colour, semi-transparent, and have tendrils and tentacles that usually hang below their body, making them look a bit like a serpentine jellyfish. They float through the air by manipulating gravity and their bodies seem to be made of some kind of energy, making them insubstantial. Most do not seem to be sentient.

Ecology:

Lucent normally live in the Tempest, where they mostly exist in a form of homeostasis; feeding off the background energy but excreting an equal amount of energy back so they remain stable. Sometimes a Lucent will seek out a highly charged pocket and take in a great deal of energy before splitting into two or more smaller Lucent, which seems to be how they reproduce.

Lucent that find themselves outside of the Tempest go wild, deprived of their normal abundant source of Energy, they begin attacking anything they perceive as a source of energy. The heat of a fire, or the warmth of someone's body. Once they find something they often latch on and drain the energy out which is usually fatal to humans who freeze to death within seconds.

Many Lucent don't last long outside the Tempest, they start leaking too much energy and soon dissipate, but some manage to survive long enough to Fetter themselves to an object, becoming permanently bound to it. Fettered Lucent can usually animate whatever they are inhabiting, leading to stories of golems, elementals and animated items. Perhaps most terrifying are Wights: lucent that have occupied a living human body.

Behavior: While in the Tempest, Lucent are normally fairly passive and float about on the charged currents, like swarms of jellyfish, only occasionally flocking to feed from a high energy area when one draws close. They usually ignore any living intruders since the ambient energy of the Tempest is far higher than what a human body gives off, and might only be drawn close by a sudden burst of magic or similar energy discharge.

Outside of the Tempest they can feel their energies ebbing away and ravenously seek out and devour any source of energy they encounter. Most Lucent are not sentient and have even less self-awareness than most animals, possessing only the instincts to feed or flee, however larger lucent have shown some intelligence although no one has ever found a way to communicate with them.

Combat: Lucent usually attack by approaching the closest source of energy and smothering it. Those that grow strong enough will syphon energy from a distance if necessary or feed on multiple sources at once. They usually only expend energy on more powerful attacks if they feel threatened.

FETTERED LUCENTS

These creatures keep all the same stats they had as Lucent at the moment they fettered themselves, including their Size, Prowess, Attributes, Initiative, and Defence. They lose all Attacks and Special Ability however, both those innate to all Lucent and those gained from size and instead gain abilities based on their new form.

Corporeal Form: Fettered Lucent are physical creatures and have a Health total equal to whatever their Energy was at the moment they were Fettered. They no longer have an Energy total. If their Health is reduced to zero, the Lucent within dissipates and the matter it is animating collapses lifeless. They remain unaffected by Wound Penalties, Poisons, Diseases, exhaustion, and other biological conditions.

Energy Drain: Fettered Lucent can still drain energy but far less efficiently. Each time they touch a living creature or source of Energy, they drain a single point which is added to their Health. This cannot take them over their original total however and never increases their size.

Energy Sense: Fettered Lucent still cannot see or hear, but retain their ability to sense all sources of energy within 100 meters.

SAND SPRITES

Type: Fettered Lucent

Kingdom: Glass

Environment: Desert

Move: 9

Special Abilities:

Strike: Sand Sprites can strike their targets with all their mass, pouring all their sand into them with the force of a storm. This deals 2d + Strength damage.

Sand Storm: Sand Sprites of size Large or greater can spread their form out and swirl around, creating a sand storm over the local area. The size and severity of the storm is based on the size of the Sand Sprite, see the Weather table (page XX) for most of the storm's effects. This counts as touching all within the area and allows the Sand Sprite to drain energy from them.



Size	Storm Strength	Area
Large	High Wind	5m radius
Huge	Gale	10m radius
Enormous	Strong Gale	20m radius
Gigantic	Hurricane	30 m radius

Burrow: Sand Sprites can burrow through sand at their normal movement rate, and can move through deep water at half that rate.

These serpentine sand elementals occur when a Lucent fetters itself into a large patch of sand and they are most likely to be found in the Kingdom of Glass where deserts are common. They burrow through the sand, bursting forth to attack unwary travellers.

Rock Sprite:

Type: Fettered Lucent

Kingdom: Any

Environment: Any

Move: 2

Special Abilities:

Slam: Rock Sprites can slam their targets with the huge pieces of rock that make up their bodies. This deals a number of dice of damage equal to their Prowess, adding their Strength to the die chosen.

Resilient Forms: Rock Sprites are made of solid stone and have an AR of 6.

Sometimes lucent possess rocks and gravel, such creatures usually drift around feeding on what they can. Some appear to be a single rock, others as groups of swirling stones that orbit each other or fly around in random patterns. Sometimes Lucent possess a rock that's too large for them to move, and they remain trapped, unable to feed unless someone is unlucky enough to sit on them.

Wights:

Type: Fettered Lucent, Animal

Kingdom: Any

Environment: Any

Move: As per host.

Host Abilities: Wights have two sets of stats; the host retains all its own stats, skills and abilities, while the lucent gains those based on the Fettered Lucent rules described above. The Lucent can usually make use of any of the hosts physical abilities but only the host can use their mental abilities such as spell casting.

Divided Control: When a lucent fetters into a living body, it takes physical control over the body's limbs, like a puppeteer pulling at them with invisible strings. The host's mind is unaffected and they can continue trying to control their own limbs, fighting whatever the lucent tries to force them to do. Whenever the host wants to fight what the lucent is trying to do, it must spend 1 Stamina and enter into a contested Strength roll with the Lucent. It can attempt this every round and success gives the host limited control for 1 minute and causes 1d damage to the lucent. When the host is in control, the Lucent can fight their actions as well, imposing a -2 on whatever action they are trying to do. If the host runs out of stamina, or falls asleep or unconscious, the lucent is free to do what it wishes with their body.

Cure: Like all fetherings, when a person or animal becomes possessed, it is usually permanent. Often a host is eventually worn out and dies, leaving the lucent free control over their body. However there are a few ways a wight can be cured. Each time the host wins control over their body, the lucent within takes damage as their strength drains, with enough time, this could destroy the lucent, but of course the first thing it will do upon gaining control is seeking out a source of energy to feed, healing itself and undoing the hosts hard work. The only other cure is to find a Tempest mage powerful enough to banish the lucent within.

Wights are people or animals that have become bonded to a lucent. The host's mind remains their own while the lucent tries to control their body, this turns into a struggle that inevitably the lucent wins. Humans and animals get tired and need to sleep, the lucent doesn't and once it takes control it uses them to seek out sources of energy to feed off.



PLANTS

LYSE

A rare parasitic flower that grows on trees in the warmer forests throughout the Kingdom of Rust. Its roots grow into the tree's bark and it survives by stealing nutrients from its host. In the Kingdom of Rust it has become a symbol of rebellion, although despite the idiom "All lies have thorns" and the rebellion's tendency to use "thorn" as a euphemism for assassin, the plant itself is thorn-less.



KADRIS

A vine that grows quite rapidly and is found in the Kingdom of Storms. It has long thin roots that sprout all along its creepers, digging into the ground and anchoring them against the fierce wind. One kadris vine can cover an area of several hundred square meters. It grows small blue berries that are edible when ripe and can be used to make wine. However the unripe berries are poisonous.



SEA SAFI

A type of seaweed that grows in warmer climates. It has a fan of bright fronds that change colour depending on the temperature of the water. They are named after the safi, a bird found in tropical climates, due to their bright colours and the similarity between the shape of their fronds and the Safi's tale feathers. Sea safi have an extremely sour taste and small amounts are used in cooking as a rare and expensive delicacy. They form a similar role to lemons in flavouring food, but are one of the rarer more expensive spices. They are also one of the main ingredient for making the deadly poison known as Ocean Tears.

MERK MOSS

This thick moss grows in the deep southern areas of the Kingdom of Beasts. When disturbed, it reacts by releasing a cloud of spores which induce paralysis on contact with most mammals. The spores then grow in their victim, using them as fertiliser and turning them into a new outcropping of merk moss.

DARGA

Small plants that grow in temperate areas throughout most of Altai. They grow large brown tubers beneath the ground which have a slightly offensive taste and an unpleasantly woody texture, which is improved slightly by boiling them for several days. Most people consider them unpalatable but they are sometimes eaten by those poor and desperate enough, and they are nutritious enough to live off. However there is a danger in eating them; during the time of year when the plant is flowering, the tubers take on a slightly yellow colour and become slightly toxic. They aren't poisonous enough to kill, but those eating them suffer acute nausea and vomiting.



RUYENSU

A small desert plant that grows in the Kingdom of Glass. It has several thick stalks that store water and are covered in spines and small leaves around the tops of each stalk. The stalks contain a toxin that causes those who eat it to enter into a dazed stupor.

