FREE LEAGUE

VAESEN

NORDIC HORROR ROLEPLAYING

Based on the book *Vaesen* by

JOHAN EGERKRANS

VAESEN

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PREFACE

I'VE ALWAYS LOVED monster books.

One bright August night in the late 1980s, my ten-year-old self made first contact with the enchanting world of roleplaying games. It wasn't just the playing that was magical. Delving into the monster books was just as cool – specifically the prosaically titled *The Monster Book* and *The Monster Book II* for Swedish fantasy RPG *Drakar och Demoner*, illustrated by the inimitable Nils Gulliksson. These modern bestiaries were teeming with strange creatures. Some were original creations, but others – like brook horses, trolls, and vaettir – I recognized from myths and folklore, although they had been recast into roleplaying monsters with long lists of attributes and skills (or "statblocks", in roleplaying lingo).

I could sit and read and fantasize for hours about what it would be like to encounter these beings. And with the help of a box of paperback books, some weird-looking dice, and two or three friends, I was able to do just that.

When my editor Maja Lindqvist and I came up with the idea of making a book about Nordic folklore, the old familiar monster book format seemed like a perfect fit. A beautiful drawing and the right amount of text, just enough to spark the reader's imagination, became the perfect way to present the old vaesen. The main difference is that the creatures and beasts featured in *Vaesen* do not have "stats." They are allowed to keep their mystery. I'm delighted to say that *Vaesen* seems to have inspired many of today's ten-year-olds, just as *The Monster Book* and its sequel fueled my own imagination back in the day.

Now, you are holding the roleplaying game *Vaesen* in your hands. The book of folklore inspired by roleplaying games has gone full circle and become a game of its own. With this book, a set of dice, and a group of friends, you can venture into the dark woods and encounter the mythical brook horses, lindworms, trolls, and vaettir.

But our vaesen still lack the endless statblocks of old. We wouldn't want to spoil the mystery, would we?

Johan Egerkrans
STOCKHOLM, MARCH 10TH 2020

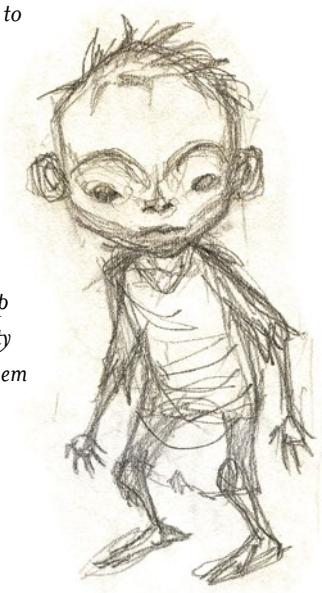
INTRODUCTION

No one in Hedås wanted to talk about the dead children. At the inn we were met with silence, and a friend of the priest — a white-haired nobleman named Gustaf von Flink — implicitly threatened that, if we kept on asking, we wouldn't return to Upsala alive. Luckily, an employee at the local orphanage defied the stern look from her headmistress and asked us to visit an abandoned mill south of the village. It was getting dark as we arrived. The path between the cow pastures was covered in puddles, with light from the full moon reflecting off the water. With every step we had to pull our shoes out of the mud.

The path reached a swift-flowing stream with a wooden bridge leading to the mill on the other side. The mill was old and neglected. The wheel had been shattered by the rushing waters, and the building was leaning over the stream.

Halfway across the bridge we heard screaming. It sounded like a baby, coming from inside the mill. Could this be the myling to whom we had come to bring peace?

Kaspar pushed past me on the bridge, but stopped cold when he reached the other side, almost causing Iljenka and I to run straight into him. On the patch of grass in front of the mill stood the headmistress of the orphanage and the nobleman, Gustaf von Flink. He was carrying a rifle, while she held a flintlock pistol in one hand, and in the other her long riding crop which we had seen her use on the dirty children at the orphanage. Before them lay the woman who had asked us to investigate the mill. Her hands and feet were tied, her clothes bloody and torn — and she did not move.



THE GAMEMASTER: *They haven't spotted you yet, but it's a matter of seconds before they do.*

PLAYER 1 (KASPAR STÅHL): *I draw my rapier and assume a fencing stance. "Let her go!"*

THE GAMEMASTER: *They look at you, but seem neither afraid nor surprised.*

PLAYER 2 (ASTRID LILJA): *I raise my palms and take a couple of steps toward them. "We have come to help the village. We know why the children are getting sick and dying."*

THE GAMEMASTER: *The headmistress flashes a joyless smile. "Then you know too much." She aims her pistol at you.*

PLAYER 1: *"You can help us or stand aside. Either way, we will do what we're here to do."*

THE GAMEMASTER: *Make a* ***MANIPULATION*** *test.*

PLAYER 1: *That's five dice. One success, I pass!*

THE GAMEMASTER: *She lowers her gun as if she's ready to listen. Meanwhile, the sky goes dark, as the moon is covered by a huge black bird descending on the mill. Its feathers are broken and scraggly, its beak long and sharp; the eyes are as orange as hellfire. Neither the headmistress nor Gustaf von Flink seem able to see it.*

PLAYER 2: *The myling!*

THE GAMEMASTER: *What do you do?*

WHAT YOU ARE holding in your hand is a roleplaying game based on Johan Egerkrans' book *Vaesen: Spirits and Monsters of Scandinavian Folklore*. The idea is that you and your friends will use it to tell – or play – mystery stories together in mythic Scandinavia of the nineteenth century.

Only one of you will have to read the entire book, but it would be good if the others flipped through the first chapters as well. You are not supposed to know its contents by heart, but rather use it as a reference book while playing the game. In addition to this book you will need pens, paper, and at least ten six-sided dice.

INTRODUCTION TO VAESEN

Throughout history, supernatural vaesen have lived side by side with the people of Scandinavia. But these creatures are not perceptible to human senses – unless they choose to be. Invisible, they have helped out on farms, assisted in calving, made sure that stray ewes find their way home, and kept people safe during harsh winters or wildfires, in exchange for some of the farms' milk and grain. Vaesen have filled the fields with flowers, shown the way to ponds where people can see their future reflected on the surface, and whispered dreams into the ears of the sleeping.

In the nineteenth century, Scandinavia is changed by industrialization, war, and revolutions, and new ways of thinking and understanding the world are spreading through its universities. Old truths are being questioned. The rural poor are pouring into the cities or across the Atlantic to escape starvation, hoping to build a life where they can be free.

It is no longer the nobles and priests who decide how people should think and act. Instead, those who are able to use the inventions of this new age can make a fortune and exert influence through their wealth. Factories are emerging around the cities, giving rise to vast suburbs where impoverished workers are crammed together in harsh conditions.

The elderly are left behind in the villages, along with those too weak or scared to leave. Meadows become overgrown, forests are cut down, and the construction of railways between cities lays waste to paths and communities that have existed for centuries. Glassworks spew out chemicals, while the mines eat their way into the mountains like wolves feasting on a wounded animal.

The vaesen of Scandinavia are changing as well. The villagers used to know how to appease the creatures when angry and gain their help with farm work – for instance, they refrained from peeing on the ground where the vaettir have their burrows, and provided the nisse with porridge and a new hat every year. But the old rules and traditions no longer seem to apply. The vaesen have turned aggressive and bloodthirsty, snatching children from the villages, wrecking houses, and setting barns on fire.

In certain parts of Scandinavia, the supernatural seems to have grown stronger and started acting erratically – like a storm sweeping over the farmlands. There are rumors of kittens being born with two heads, streams where the water is mixed with blood, forests lulling young ones into eternal sleep, and fairies dancing through villages, luring youngsters into the woods to slave for those underground. In other places, the creatures seem to have disappeared from the countryside, as if they never existed, and magic along with them. It is also said that some vaesen have followed people to the cities and found new homes in sewers and abandoned factories.

Some people in Scandinavia are able to see the vaesen, even when they are trying to stay invisible – it is called "having the Sight." You are one of them. At some point you experienced something that scared or hurt you; maybe you almost died in a fire or a werewolf chose to reveal itself to you. After that, nothing was ever the same. Suddenly you could see nature spirits stealing food from the tables and trolls showing up uninvited to weddings and christenings.

You and several others who also have the Sight have gathered in Upsala in central Sweden. You have learned that there used to be an organization called the Society. Their mission was to study and combat the vaesen, but the last members of the Society went missing or left the organization about ten years ago, and since then the Society's headquarters – the old Castle Gyllencreutz by the Fyris River in Upsala – has been left to decay. You have decided to re-establish this organization. A former member by the name of Linnea Elfeklint, an elderly woman who spends her days at the city's mental asylum, has given you the keys to the castle along with documents making you its legal owners.

You all have your reasons for wanting to track down vaesen and protect people from them. And you will embark on long journeys to remote villages and regions of the wilderness, attempting to uncover the secrets of Scandinavia. Armed with nothing but your courage, conviction, and ability to see the supernatural, you will come face-to-face with vaesen. Neither bullets nor steel can stop them – to drive them off, you must identify their weaknesses. And even if you succeed, your encounters with the vaesen of the north will leave you with scars that never heal.

THIS BOOK

In this chapter we explain what roleplaying games are and how they are played. It begins with an example of what a gaming session might look like, and there are more examples scattered throughout the book. Here you will also find a brief description of the world in which *Vaesen* takes place, and the kinds of people these stories are about. After a short overview of what the vaesen are, the chapter concludes with an introduction to the game's form and rules for conflicts – that is, how to play the game and roll the dice to determine what happens in exciting or dangerous situations.

The next chapter describes how to create a player character, meaning the person or character you will portray while playing the game. Your player character is based on one of ten archetypes – a skeleton or framework to build on during the creation process. Then comes chapter 3 which covers Skills – different actions you can perform, the success of which is decided by rolling dice; perhaps you are trying to trick someone, or escape some terrible monster. Chapter 4 is devoted to Talents, which are various tricks and types of expertise that your player character may possess and might find useful in his or her encounters with the vaesen.

Chapter 5 describes conflicts that might arise during the game; it can be anything from life-and-death battles, to what happens if someone tries to poison you or if you are trapped in a burning building. It includes rules for how your player character might be injured or even killed, and addresses what happens when you encounter things that frighten you. Chapter 6 focuses on the Society, the organization to which your character belongs, while chapter 7 provides information about the world where the game takes place: the mythical Scandinavia. There you will also find some thoughts on how to approach the difference between the historical nineteenth century and the world featured in this game.

The last three chapters hold secrets about the game world and its vaesen. Only one member of the group should read these chapters, and the one who does cannot have a player character, but will be the person who runs the game – the Gamemaster. Therefore, no one should read these chapters until

THE BOOK AND THE GAME

This volume is fully self-contained and is all you need to play. However, we highly recommend Johan Egerkrans' *Vaesen: Spirits and Monsters of Scandinavian Folklore* to dive even deeper into Scandinavian folklore and myth. It can be used as a sort of manual for the players when they explore the horrors of mythic Scandinavia.

you have decided who will take on the role of Gamemaster. Chapter 8 describes vaesen and their magic. There are several examples of vaesen, with descriptions of how they can be used in mysteries and how they can be fought. Chapter 9 contains instructions on how the Gamemaster may run and write his or her own mysteries, while the tenth and final chapter of the book comprises a complete mystery titled *The Dance of Dreams* – meant as an introduction to the game, and as the first mystery your player characters will experience.

WHAT ARE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES?

Roleplaying games are a form of collaborative storytelling, usually taking place around a table with papers and dice in front of you. All but one of you will have a player character – a character to portray just like in a play or a movie. In this book we address both you, the player, and your player character as "you" – since you should be thinking of your character as "I". For example, when you want your character to do something, you might say "I chase the thief into the train car" and act out what she is saying, perhaps screaming "Stop, in the name of the law!" You decide what your player character is wearing and what she looks like, what she thinks and feels, and how she reacts to what is happening in the story.

When roleplaying you are usually in a group of three to six people, with sessions normally lasting between two and five hours. No individual player decides exactly what happens; you all help fill in the details. That is one of the great pleasures of roleplaying – no one can predict what will happen next. For it to work well, you must always listen to what the others are saying and pay attention to how they describe the game world around them. You must also contribute to the story with your own ideas of what things look like and how they work.

The members of your gaming group will have different tasks. All but one of you are "players", each controlling a player character. Your task is mainly to inhabit your characters as fully as possible. Try to see the world through your character's eyes and do what she would do in any given situation – which can sometimes mean making decisions you as a player know are bad for her.

The person without a player character is the "Gamemaster". Her role is to ensure that the story makes sense and keeps moving forward. She also describes what the world looks like and plays all the

people who are not player characters. Should your player characters run into some grumpy innkeeper, he or she will be played by the Gamemaster, who at the same time describes the filthy inn – the dwindling flames in the fireplace and the huge hunting trophies on the walls. The individuals controlled by the Gamemaster are called non-player characters (NPCs).

The Gamemaster does not have to make everything up herself. She can always lean on the players for support, and furthermore, she has a mystery to fall back on. A mystery is a text much like a manuscript, except that the story you create around the gaming table does not have to unfold as written. It is more like a foundation for the Gamemaster to build on, suggesting things that could happen in the game and NPCs one might encounter. There is also some advice on how to describe locations and how the player characters could piece together the available clues to solve the mystery. The mystery also contains challenges – obstacles and dangers that might befall the player characters. It is up to the Gamemaster to determine which parts of the written mystery she will actually use, being sure to take into account the actions of the player characters when deciding. Perhaps you choose to visit people who are not even described in the mystery?

During the course of the game, situations will arise where your player character will attempt things that are difficult and dangerous. Perhaps you are trying to threaten an enemy into dropping its weapons, or stop a friend from bleeding out? On such occasions, the outcome is determined by rolling dice. How good your character is at doing things – such as shooting, sneaking, or interpreting clues – will affect your chance of success. You can read more about die rolls at the end of this chapter and in chapter 5.

It is important to remember that roleplaying is not a competition, but a collaboration. It is not the Gamemaster's job to try to sabotage or kill the player characters – although she may of course put you in dangerous situations if that is where the story takes you. Sometimes it can be good to pause and talk about the game, to make sure that everyone is having fun.

THE UNSEEN

"Oh, there have always been nissar, on secluded farms and crofts, and on estates deep in the backcountry. Wise folk fear them. The nisse is wayward and vengeful – and punishes severely those who anger him.

My grandmother Kerstin was a maid at Aninge Farm, and there lived a farmstead nisse. Granny spoke of how the masters one night were having a feast, making a tremendous noise long after dark. As the guests left, and the masters and servants had gone to bed, the nisse started making noises of his own and did not stop until morning.

But the nisse is kind to the livestock, although he has his favorites. Granny Kerstin said that one of the manor's horses got its mane and tail brushed and braided every night, while another was shooed into the woods to be eaten by wolves.

The nisse doesn't show themselves to just anyone, either. Only the second-sighted can see them. Should such people encounter the nisse on the road, they better stand aside. For a nisse will not. People should respect the unseen. They sense his presence, but don't like talking about him, and I never heard of anyone associating with the nissar."

– Anna Enogsdotter, midwife in Kvidahult.

VAESEN IN A NUTSHELL

This section offers an overview that might be good to keep in mind while reading the rest of the book. It also contains references to later chapters where various aspects of the game and its world are described, all to make it easy for you to find the information you seek.

THE MYTHIC NORTH

Vaesen takes place in a mythical nineteenth-century Scandinavia. This version of Scandinavia is not historically accurate, but an alternate world where events may correspond more or less to our reality.

As such, the stories do not take place in any specific period of the 1800s – the Mythic North combines phenomena from the entire century. Steamboats, trains, as well as political and philosophical movements from the end of the nineteenth century may well be mixed with earlier phenomena. That said, you would do well to draw inspiration from historical events – much that happened in the 1800s would make excellent starting points for creating exciting mysteries.

The mythical game world is described further in chapter 7, with a particular focus on the player characters' current home, Upsala.

VAESEN

Throughout history, humans have shared their land with vaesen; trolls, ghosts, lindworms, and other creatures inhabiting the woods and lakes. Like the humans, these have had their ups and downs with one another. Many have assisted the farmers in their back-breaking labor and made the dark, winter nights more bearable with enchanted music and gifts in the form of strange handicrafts to blacksmiths and lute players.

Although vaesen have always been present, few have actually seen them. The creatures are imperceptible to the human eye – they choose whether or not to reveal themselves. It is said that their presence may be inferred from something as innocuous as a draft in the room, or from the abnormal behavior of farm animals.

Tales and songs tell of rules that must be followed so as not to anger the vaesen. Rural people often think they know how to avoid getting on the wrong side of those who dwell underground, but something has altered the balance between the humans on the surface and the creatures beneath. Vaesen have started attacking villages and destroying homes, factories, and train stations. They no longer behave as they do in the stories. Some think they have gone mad, others that the end times are nigh.

Twenty-one different vaesen are cataloged in chapter 8, along with a description of their relationship with humans, as well as their powers and special rules.

USING OTHER CITIES

This book assumes that the characters will be based in the city of Upsala. The town is ideally located in central Scandinavia and is home to a famous university, scores of societies and curious academics. However, you can of course choose to place your game in another town of your choice. Read through the chapter about Upsala (page 105), research your location using books and the Internet and then write your own short gazetteer about the characters hometown.

THE SIGHT

You are a person with the Sight, meaning that you have the ability to see vaesen – even when they are trying to remain invisible. You acquired the Sight as a result of some physical or psychological trauma, most likely some form of supernatural event, either during childhood or as an adult. Those who have the Sight are sometimes referred to as Thursday's Children.

For one reason or another you have sought out other people with the Sight, and together you have decided to use your ability to help those affected by the

HORROR, MYSTERY, AND ADVENTURE

In *Vaesen*, a session normally includes horror, mystery, and suspense. It is up to the gaming group to decide whether one of these should outweigh the others. To emphasize the horror aspect, the Gamemaster can put the player characters in situations where they are alone and exposed. The creature seems unbeatable. Screams and strange scents occupy the characters' nightmares. The countryside is dark and strange, and most questions are left unanswered.

If you would rather focus on solving mysteries and challenges, the players should be given tricky clues and time to reflect on them. A murder would then involve multiple suspects and subtle details that might reveal the truth. Clues from different places must be pieced together to form the big picture. Over the course of the game, the characters uncover how it is all connected. In these stories, vaesen are often used as tools by NPCs seeking power, riches, or acknowledgment.

To create a sense of adventure and suspense, there should be chase scenes, creatures to attack with sabre and rifle, and aggressive NPCs looking for a fight. Perhaps the player characters are running from a monster on top of a train passing through a tunnel – soon afterwards they are forced to hurl themselves down a waterfall in order to escape, after which it all ends with them confining the creature to its cave by blowing up the entrance with dynamite.

The atmosphere and focus of the mysteries are mainly the Gamemaster's responsibility. But as a player, there are also ways you can contribute. The character you create, and how you choose to play her, will determine what kind of experience you and your group will have. In a horror story your player character must be susceptible to fear and despair – she must be allowed to flee when frightened. If your focus is on puzzles and clues, your player character will need the appropriate skill set; she must be able to read and skillfully investigate crime scenes and libraries. In an adventure story, you should try to create a sense of momentum by making bold decisions and throwing yourself into epic battles. Do not rely on the others to create the story or feeling you want to experience – it is your responsibility to make sure that you are having a good time.

ill-tempered caprice of the vaesen. You have learned that there used to be an organization known as the Society, and decided to re-establish it. The Society existed for hundreds of years, made up of people with the Sight who devoted their time to studying and expelling vaesen. Its members met at the old Castle Gyllencreutz in Upsala, but some ten years ago the last of them abandoned the organization, locked the castle gate, and left the building to decay. No one knows why.

You and your friends have tracked down a former member of the Society – an elderly woman named Linnea Elfeklint, now a patient at Upsala Asylum. Linnea has told you about the history and traditions of the Society, and given you the keys and deeds to Castle Gyllencreutz. But she refuses to leave the asylum and will not come with you to the castle under any circumstances – and she does not say why. It is up to you to restore the old organization, build your headquarters, and go on expeditions in Scandinavia, solving mysteries and driving off vaesen.

During the game you will have the opportunity to explore and expand Castle Gyllencreutz. The castle is your headquarters, where you may prepare for journeys and heal any physical or mental wounds from your encounters with vaesen. At the same time, you must maintain a façade of normality in front of your friends and relatives in Upsala – if they ever found out about your alleged ability to see supernatural creatures, they would sooner or later have you locked up in the asylum with Linnea.

You can read more about the Society, Linnea, and the headquarters in chapter 6.

THE FIGHT AGAINST VAESEN

Your mission is to protect humanity from vaesen. But the world is not black and white. The vaesen you encounter are often victims of other vaesen, or of human activities, so you will have to take a stand and do what is right. Whatever that may be.

Before heading out on expeditions you arm yourself with rifles and rapiers. Your weapons can help you defeat human adversaries such as robbers and rebels. Against vaesen, however, you may as well be carrying sticks and scraps of paper. Vaesen may be stalled or temporarily driven off by human weaponry, but can rarely be killed by bullets or blades.

To combat vaesen, you must turn to the tales and forgotten books of the olden days. The rituals required to expel them are always exact and seldom easy to perform. You might have to sprinkle silver powder into the waterfall on the night of a full moon – or chase giants into the woods by ringing the church bells at dawn. Each vaesen protects its weakness very carefully, and those seeking to exploit it risk provoking its wrath.

General information on how vaesen can be fought is provided in chapter 5, while more specific details are found in chapter 8, in the descriptions of individual vaesen.

THE FORM OF THE GAME

The Society's expeditions start from Upsala, with the purpose of solving a mystery that has come to your attention. A mystery usually lasts between one and three game sessions of four to six hours each. A typical session starts with you making preparations such as buying equipment, gaining knowledge at the library, and visiting friends and contacts.

An invitation of some kind initiates the story. It tells of a place where a vaesen seems to be present. The invitation could be a letter from someone asking for help or rumors of people going missing.

On the way to this location you have the opportunity to prepare by gaining a so-called Advantage. You get a chance to describe and play your character

THURSDAY'S CHILDREN

"Monday's child is fair of face
Tuesday's child is full of grace
Wednesday's child is full of woe
Thursday's child has far to go,
Friday's child
is loving and giving,
Saturday's child
works hard for a living,
And the child that is born
on the Sabbath day
Is bonny and blithe,
and good and gay"

– Nursery rhyme about people with the sight

in a short scene where you acquire an item, gain an insight, or meet someone who can help you once you reach the location.

Upon arrival, you will investigate various places and talk to NPCs. These places have challenges and clues. Challenges can include aggressive people trying to stop you, strange enchantments, deadly tempests, or fairies leading you astray, while the clues tell you more about the vaesen you are hunting and how to destroy or expel it.

Vaesen is played in scenes. This means that you play a situation, and when it ends, the Gamemaster "cuts" and proceeds to the next one. You do not have to play every single thing that happens – only what you feel is important. The Gamemaster decides when a scene starts and when it ends.

> THE GAMEMASTER: *Iljenka, what are you doing while the others are seeing the mayor?*
>
> PLAYER 3 (ILJENKA PROKOTIN): *I try to break into the priest's home to see if he's hiding something.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *How do you go about it?*
>
> PLAYER 3: *I wait until the middle of the night, then I sneak up there and try to open the door.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *You're just outside the door to the vicarage. The stars are shrouded by clouds, and it's really dark. An owl is hooting from the trees. The door is locked.*
>
> PLAYER 3: *I take out my lockpick and try to unlock it.*

Over the course of the gaming session you gather information about the vaesen haunting the place and how it is affecting the people living there, while the situation gradually deteriorates. Hopefully you find enough information to perform the ritual necessary to expel the creature. Whether you succeed or not, you will finally return to your headquarters in Upsala, where you can recover from injuries and learn from your experiences.

For more information on how mysteries are structured and played, and how to create your own mysteries, see chapter 9.

CONFLICTS

When attempting something difficult, or when someone is trying to stop you, it is time to take out the dice. The die roll decides the outcome. The number of dice to be rolled depends on your character's attributes and skills. For example, if you are trying to hide from an angry nisse, you use Precision and **STEALTH**. Add both values together, and roll a number of six-sided dice equal to your total.

You must roll at least one six to succeed. Sixes are called successes. Sometimes you will need more than one success, and rolling more successes than required means that you are extra successful.

If the conflict involves someone trying to stop you, you must both roll dice and compare who gets the most successes. In some places in this book it says that you get +1 to your roll, which means that you get to roll one extra die.

More detailed information about how conflicts and die rolls work is found in chapter 3.

> THE GAMEMASTER: *The farmer grabs you. He reeks of alcohol, but his gaze is lucid and his grip tight. "I don't care about your fancy titles. No one disturbs my sister."*
>
> PLAYER 1 (KASPAR STÅHL): *"Can't you see that we're trying to help her? This is no ordinary illness. Your sister is possessed!"*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *He burps straight into your face. "No lord or lady comes through here."*
>
> PLAYER 1: *I push him aside and open the door.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *Make a* ***FORCE*** *test.*
>
> PLAYER 1: *I've got Physique 3 and* ***FORCE*** *1, four dice in total. I roll a six. Sweet!*

THE GAMEMASTER: *He has seven dice and rolls three sixes. That's two more than you, which means he succeeds, and is extra successful. You grab the farmer and try to push him over, but it's like he is anchored to the ground. His body won't move.*

PLAYER 1: *"Right, okay... Perhaps we can talk about it?"*

SPECIAL DICE

Vaesen uses special dice. They are not required in order to play the game, but may contribute to the atmosphere around the gaming table.

ROLLING DICE

The characters have numeric ratings for what they are good at – understanding things, fast talking, climbing, and running fast. The rating indicates how many six-sided dice you get to roll when trying to overcome trouble. A six means a success. You rarely need more than one success. If you fail, you may try again, but then you risk getting a Condition. This is explained further in chapter 3.

Some tables ask you to roll a D66. This means you roll two six-sided dice, after deciding which die represents the tens and ones, respectively. For example, if you roll a three on the first die and a six on the other, the result is 36.

SIX PRINCIPLES

Vaesen is governed by six principles that can be drawn on for inspiration or used to define the benchmark for how the world should be portrayed and how its people and creatures ought to behave. These principles are:

1. Vaesen are neither good nor evil: The creatures encountered by the player characters have their own daily lives, their own dreams and plans. Some are cooperating with human locals; others are mischievous or downright murderous. Whatever the case, they always have a motive for their actions.
2. Nature is dark and dangerous: The player characters have their homes and headquarters in the city; that is where they feel most safe. Nature represents the unknown – the other, the different – and anything can happen in the dark woods and lonely mountains. No one will find you if you go missing.
3. Scandinavia is changing: The old Scandinavia is being swept away by industrialization, and signs of this often violent shift are everywhere: abandoned farms, paupers roaming the streets, and confused vaesen seeking their place in the new world of factories and steam engines.
4. Knowledge and cunning are the keys to success: The mysteries of *Vaesen* can rarely be solved with violence. Instead you must use your abilities to study clues, contextualize the information you discover, and convince humans and vaesen to share their secrets.
5. The journey is part of the goal: The mysteries are not merely problems to be solved or overcome – their whole point is to pull the players and the player characters into the story that emerges during the course of the game. Another important focus is each player character's journey from naive and untrained youngster to seasoned and experienced – and likely scarred – veteran.
6. You will not survive without each other: The player characters will face creatures the mere sight of which can drive a person mad, and beasts that can kill a man with a single blow. The only way to survive is to stick together. The player characters' relationships with each other and with important NPCs are crucial, both to the story and for healing injuries that are sustained during the game.

What I thought was a bird crashing into my window proved to be a young woman, no bigger than a crow. She was naked with ethereal wings. Her body shone like pink crystal, and her back and neck were covered with bite marks. They looked like rat bites, but I never found out what caused Eylindasinda-tetr to flee and end up with me. Having tended to her wounds, I initially kept her locked in a cage by my bed. It came as quite a shock when, after four days, it turned out that she could speak. What's more, she seemed more knowledgeable than me and claimed to be older, too, by hundreds of years. Later I let her sleep on my pillow with a silver chain around her ankle. She kissed my cheek goodnight. Now, as I try to understand how she could wind up dead and preserved in a glass jar, I think of those kisses. I still love her. But she did not return my feelings.

YOUR PLAYER CHARACTER

YOUR PLAYER CHARACTER is a human living in nineteenth century Upsala, gifted with the Sight. Together, she and her friends have re-established the Society – an organization whose purpose is to track down and combat vaesen.

As a player, you should play your character wholeheartedly. Put her in dangerous and interesting situations. Do not hold back – it is more fun that way. This chapter offers a step-by-step description of how to create a player character. You may want to do it as a group, so you can make choices that link your characters together and form interesting relationships.

The choices involved in character creation have been categorized under three headings: *personality*, *characteristics*, and *miscellaneous*. Under personality, you must first pick an archetype – a kind of template for the character. You then name your character and determine your motivation for hunting down vaesen. You also need to specify your source of trauma, describe the event that gave you the Sight, and come up with a dark secret which you are keeping from the other player characters

Characteristics are things your character is good at, and are used when rolling dice to see what happens in dangerous and suspenseful situations. They consist of attributes, skills, and talents.

The last part of the character creation process is covered under miscellaneous and concerns your relationship with the other player characters, but also what equipment and financial resources you have at your disposal. There you will find rules for how you can be injured – physically and mentally – and how to improve your characteristics through the experience you gain from completing mysteries. The Advantage heading details how, on your travels to strange locations in Scandinavia, you can prepare yourself by honing your skills, reading occult literature, or meeting people who inspire you.

PERSONALITY

You build your player character based on decisions about their background and personality. These become the foundation of your character; as the game progresses you will get an increasingly clear picture of who your character really is.

ARCHETYPE

The first thing to do is choose an archetype. Your archetype is a basis for creating the player character, and specifies a number of choices that need to be made. Your choices become a skeleton from which a character of flesh and blood may emerge. The archetype also says something about what you are good at. There are ten archetypes to choose from, all of them described at the end of this chapter. There should not be more than one player character of the same archetype in the group.

AGE

The next step is to decide the character's age. There are three age groups in the game: young, middle-aged, and old. Pick one, and note your choice on the character sheet. Your age will affect your attributes and skills

NAME

Choose one of the names suggested under your archetype, or make up your own.

CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

1. Choose an archetype.
2. Choose an age.
3. Choose a name.
4. Distribute Attribute Points according to your age.
5. Distribute points to skills and Resources according to your age.
6. Choose a talent.
7. Choose a motivation.
8. Choose a trauma.
9. Choose a dark secret.
10. Choose your relationship with each of the other PCs.
11. Roll for mementos.
12. Choose equipment.

MOTIVATION

Your Motivation explains why you are willing to risk your own life to track down and fight vaesen. It helps you play your character. Pick one of those suggested for your archetype, or come up with one yourself.

TRAUMA

Your Trauma is the event that gave you the Sight. It could be an incident from your childhood or something more recent, but usually it has some connection to the supernatural. A Trauma can be physical or mental – perhaps you witnessed something terrible, or were involved in an accident.

AGE

AGE GROUP	AGE	ATTRIBUTE POINTS	SKILL POINTS
Young	17–25 years	15	10
Middle-aged	26–50 years	14	12
Old	51+ years	13	14

DARK SECRET

Your Dark Secret is a problem you are ashamed of and therefore keep to yourself. It may be linked to your Trauma or concern something completely different, but either way it will actively affect the game – it makes things difficult for you, in Upsala as well as on your travels. Perhaps you are hounded by government agents, hiding your alcoholism, suffering from delusions, or maybe there is something in your family that no one must know about.

It is the Gamemaster's job to make sure that your Dark Secret comes into focus in your stories. Incorporating the secret into the game makes the mysteries more fun – even if it may cause trouble for your player character. Should your Dark Secret be resolved, or if you are getting bored with it, you should replace it with something else.

THE GAMEMASTER: *The miller says that's all he knows, and is just about to leave when he suddenly stares at you, Astrid. You see in his eyes that he recognizes you.*

PLAYER 2 (ASTRID LILJA): *Oh crap!*

THE GAMEMASTER: *"What did you say your name was?"*

PLAYER 2: *"Astrid Lilja, formerly a nun at the Convent of the Holy Mother Mary. Why do you ask?"*

THE GAMEMASTER: *"We've met before. But you had a different name back then, and you certainly weren't a nun."*

"CUCKOO IN THE NORTH
BRINGS SORROW FORTH
CUCKOO IN THE EAST
MEANS GRIEF DECREASED
CUCKOO IN THE SOUTH
HOLDS DEATH IN ITS MOUTH
CUCKOO IN THE WEST
IS THE VERY BEST"

– NURSERY RHYME ABOUT HOW TO INTERPRET THE CUCKOO'S CALLING

GENDER ROLES

The real 19th century was a patriarchal society where men had power over women, and women were constrained in what they could do, say, and what jobs they could hold. However, this roleplaying game is not about the real 19th century but the mythical Scandinavia. It is up to the gaming group to determine how your version of Scandinavia looks like and how you will handle this around the table. We see no reason to let historical injustice limit the options available to the players, particularly since there are lots of examples of powerful women in historical literature and fairy tales.

"All must protect themselves against the invisible ones, witches and trolls, and satanic creatures such as snakes and lizards. If there's anything they can't handle it is steel and coins and other man-made creations they cannot control. My brother was fool enough to listen to a merchant telling him that vaesen and trolls are mere children's stories. It made my brother stop sticking his sheath knife above the door and have his wife remove the coins that had been placed on the cornerstones of the barn for protection. And just like that, he had nature spirits in the house, stealing bread and pieces of cloth, gnawing the children's fingers and toes until they bled. The snickering of the invisible kept the family awake for several nights until my brother had enough and fired his shotgun into the house, using shells filled with silver shavings. The spirits went up the chimney like a black cloud, shrieking that they would return with fire and ice. But as soon as they left, my brother jammed his knife into the doorframe, and with that they had lost their power."

– Enog Svensson, crofter in Bidalite

CHARACTERISTICS

Attributes, skills, and talents indicate what your player character is (or is not) good at, and they affect the die rolls you will make as conflicts and exciting or dangerous situations arise in the game.

ATTRIBUTES

There are four attributes which together indicate what you are more or less good at: Physique, Precision, Logic, and Empathy. Each attribute has a value between 2 and 5 which determines the number of dice you roll when attempting things that depend on the attribute in question.

You may distribute points according to your age between your attributes. The minimum value is 2 and the maximum is 4, except for the main attribute of your chosen archetype, which has a maximum value of 5.

PHYSIQUE

Physique is a measure of how big and strong you are. It is the ability to take and deliver a beating. It determines things like how long you can go without food or rest, and how easily you can lift a fallen tree trunk.

PRECISION

Precision is a measure of your coordination and motor skills.

LOGIC

Logic is your intellectual capacity, which you use to solve problems. Logic also measures how well-educated you are, and can help you tackle certain scary situations.

EMPATHY

Empathy represents your ability to understand other people, and to persuade, charm, or trick them. Empathy can also help you tackle certain scary situations.

SKILLS

- **AGILITY** (Physique)
- **CLOSE COMBAT** (Physique)
- **FORCE** (Physique)
- **MEDICINE** (Precision)
- **RANGED COMBAT** (Precision)
- **STEALTH** (Precision)
- **INVESTIGATION** (Logic)
- **LEARNING** (Logic)
- **VIGILANCE** (Logic)
- **INSPIRATION** (Empathy)
- **MANIPULATION** (Empathy)
- **OBSERVATION** (Empathy)

SKILLS

Skills represent acquired knowledge, training, and experience. There are twelve skills, all of them described in chapter 3. Each skill has a value between 0 and 5. The value determines the number of dice you add to your attribute when attempting something difficult or dangerous.

You may spend a number of points determined by your age. At the start of the game you cannot have more than 2 in any skill, except for the main skill of your chosen archetype, which you may spend 3 points on. Solving mysteries grants you Experience Points which you can use to improve your skills (see below).

TALENTS

Talents are tricks, traits, and abilities that can benefit you in various situations. They affect your die rolls, or give you access to powers or resources. Talents are described in chapter 4.

Your archetype offers three starting talents to choose from when creating your player character. As you play and gain experience points (addressed below) you can get more talents. You may then choose freely among them, including talents from other archetypes.

MISCELLANEOUS

In order to survive her encounters with vaesen, your player character will need help from her friends, as well as weapons, equipment, and resources to pay for travel and accommodation in remote villages. Finish your character by describing her to the others.

Here you will also find information on what happens when you are injured, how to prepare for your journeys by acquiring an Advantage, and how your experiences can improve your skills and allow you to buy new talents.

RELATIONSHIPS

You have a relationship with each of the other player characters; at the start of the game you all know each other. You may have just become acquainted with each other, or been friends your whole lives. For each of the other characters, choose a relationship from your archetype or make one up on your own. The other player must approve the relationship. Relationships should be interesting, without making you enemies – you must be able to travel and work together.

RESOURCES

Your Resources value indicates how much capital you have at your disposal. A higher value means that you enjoy a nicer home and lifestyle, and have easier access to things you need. The table on the next page shows the meaning of different values. In-game events that affect your living standard will change the value. Normally you start out with the lower value for your archetype. However, this can be raised by spending skill points – each point raises Resources by one step, although your starting value cannot exceed what is indicated in the archetype. Resources can only be raised with skill points before you start playing; once the game has begun you can only increase Resources by purchasing talents (see chapter 4).

RESOURCES

VALUE	STANDARD OF LIVING
1	**DESTITUTE.** You are completely dependent on others for your survival. Every day is a struggle for food and you have few, if any, belongings. This may have caused you to contract diseases, starve, or turn to drugs or alcohol for relief.
2	**POOR.** You live very simply. Most days there is food on the table, but far too little. If you have children, they are forced to live in squalor. You might own a change of clothes and a few possessions. Loss of income would be disastrous for you and your family.
3	**STRUGGLING.** You have a humble home and a fixed income. You have no money for savings, but you can dress your family for special occasions and your children have some access to education – at least for a few years.
4	**FINANCIALLY STABLE.** You own your own home and have a job that provides a steady income. Most likely you have some money stashed away. Occasionally you may treat yourself to some sweets, a trip, or a beautiful object. In times of crisis there are people to lend you money.
5	**MIDDLE-CLASS.** You own a home and a business. You may have one or several employees and know how to invest for the future. You have savings and access to loans. You and your family are living well.
6	**WELL-OFF.** You have a big house or apartment. You probably have multiple sources of income and several employees. You do not think of money as a scarce resource, but as a game to increase your capital and influence. You keep fine company and have little contact with the poor. Your family can go on vacations and you can afford all the latest innovations.
7	**WEALTHY.** You have large amounts of inherited money and real estate. You probably own multiple properties, keep lots of servants, and have many sources of income. There are few things you cannot afford. You are well-connected with the city's and country's elite, and on good terms with senior officials, politicians, and nobles. The only time you see any poor people is through your carriage window.
8	**FILTHY RICH.** You are one of the richest people in the country and have direct contact with its rulers. You own one or several castles or mansions. There is no expense too great. You can treat yourself to lavish extravagance without ever worrying about the cost.

EQUIPMENT AND MEMENTOS

Your archetype specifies what equipment you start with. In addition to your regular equipment you get a memento that will help you play and portray your character. Roll on the table for mementos or decide for yourself what items you have. You can use your memento to heal a Condition by interacting with it. Explain how you use the item in question. The Gamemaster has the final say.

Your memento is part of your character – feel free to weave it into your personality or background. It can be broken or lost during a mystery, but by spending one experience point you can have it returned or repaired in time for the next mystery. You may also choose a new one, but in that case you must first play a full mystery without a memento.

MEMENTOS

Roll two six-sided dice. The first one represents tens and the other ones.

D66	ITEM
11	Dried red rose
12	Photo of someone close to you
13	Seal ring with a secret chamber
14	Your father's cane
15	Hat with a secret compartment
16	Book in a foreign language
21	Hip flask with inscription
22	Old love letter
23	A scruffy cat
24	A monkey's skull
25	Bloodstained promissory note
26	Gold jewelry worn by your mother
31	Silver cross on a chain
32	Beautiful fiddle passed down in the family
33	Journal (yours or someone else's)
34	Newspaper from a date that means something to you
35	Ragged doll
36	Tame pigeon

D66	ITEM
41	Well-thumbed novel with dedication
42	Plans for a family tomb
43	Map with notes in the margin
44	Strange animal preserved in a glass jar
45	Music box from your childhood
46	Sunstone (cut mineral)
51	Small bottle of perfume that reminds you of someone
52	Hymnbook passed down in the family
53	Pocket watch with a photo inside
54	An unsigned will
55	Golden box from a foreign land
56	Sheet music from a forgotten master
61	Powder compact with sleeping pills
62	Beautifully ornamented pipe
63	Rabbit's foot or some other lucky charm
64	Syringe with needle in a box
65	Worn dice made of bone
66	A manuscript passed down in the family

DESCRIPTION

Before starting the game, you must introduce yourself to the Gamemaster and the other players. For example, you could describe what you look like, how you make the others feel, what you are wearing, and how you should be addressed. Perhaps there are rumors about you, or maybe you have an ability to always become the center of attention in social situations. Are you quiet and mysterious? Do you smell of forest and sweat? Your description should be vivid, but brief. Make some notes on your character sheet, and feel free to draw your character.

CONDITIONS

During the game you may have to suffer what are called Conditions, which can be likened to injuries or afflictions. These occur when you fail to protect yourself in dangerous situations, or when you push yourself to succeed. This is described further in chapters 3 and 5.

There are three physical Conditions and three mental ones. Acquiring a Condition means that you get a -1 modifier to skill tests for that type of action. Physical Conditions add a penalty to skills related to Physique and Precision. Mental Conditions add a

penalty to skills related to Logic and Empathy. Also note that these modifiers accumulate: acquiring two Conditions adds -2 to your skill test. However, it is possible to cure Conditions during the mystery (see chapter 5), and no matter how many Conditions you accumulate, you may always roll at least one die.

If you have incurred all Conditions of either type, mental or physical, and then suffer yet another one, you become Broken. The player character cannot continue without medical attention.

Being physically Broken can mean that you are exhausted beyond your limits, or have sustained a serious wound. You might be unconscious or dying. Perhaps you have had your leg crushed or been shot in the gut, writhing in agony. While physically Broken you cannot move or do anything but utter a few words at a time. The Gamemaster decides whether you are able to crawl away, roll to safety, or cry for help.

When you are mentally Broken you might be terrified, shocked, or confused. Perhaps you have lost all hope of getting through the situation alive, or lost faith in yourself or your companions. Maybe you can no longer make sense of the world and collapse in tears. While mentally Broken you may move and flee the scene, should you wish to do so, but are unable to engage in any kind of sensible dialogue; at best, you can scream or whimper in monosyllabic bursts.

If you are Broken, you cannot make any successful die rolls, whether physical or mental. You also sustain a critical wound, which means that you must roll on a table to see whether you get a Defect or an Insight. Defects and Insights are described further in chapter 5.

Conditions can help you portray your character: if she is upset, that should be reflected in how you play her. But in the end, it is of course you who decides the extent to which Conditions will affect the way you play your character.

ADVANTAGE

On the way to a mystery you will be able to gain an Advantage, but only one per mystery. The Advantage might be a new acquaintance who will then be available at the location to help you, a mysterious experience that gives you power, or you maintaining or training with your weapons on the way to the location. The Advantage can also be you bonding with another player character, which will later help you work together.

You can use your Advantage once per gaming session, which adds +2 dice to a skill test. You must decide whether to use it before rolling the dice, or

CONDITIONS

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS (PHYSIQUE AND PRECISION)

- Exhausted
- Battered
- Wounded

MENTAL CONDITIONS (LOGIC AND EMPATHY)

- Angry
- Frightened
- Hopeless

when pushing the roll (see chapter 3), and explain how you use it. After the mystery your Advantage is lost. Next time you must choose another skill as your Advantage.

EXAMPLES OF ADVANTAGES

- I have trained with my rapier day and night
- Miss Silferdaal seems to like me
- I was blessed by an angel
- I dreamed that I risked my life for my friends
- The conversation with Captain Brungaard resolved our differences once and for all
- With the memory of Professor Brunelius's kiss, I can do anything

GAMEMASTER: *A rumble is heard in the distance. Everyone around you disappears. You are alone in the town square. The sun is coated in a sickly shade of green. Something approaches from the forest. The ground turns muddy, pulling you down. Make a Fear test.*

PLAYER 1 (KASPAR STÅHL): *I take out the icon I got from the old lady on the train. Looking at it, I remember her words. "In the darkest moments, hold out your hand and feel the Lord's presence." I get to roll two extra dice.*

EXPERIENCE POINTS

At the end of each session your player character gains Experience Points (XP). The Gamemaster asks your character questions (see text box), and for every one that you can answer with a "yes" you are granted 1 XP.

When you have gained 5 XP you can buy an Advance. This means that you may increase the value of a skill by one step, or buy a new talent. You can never have more than 5 in a skill, but there is no limit to how many talents you can purchase. Also note that you are free to choose any talent you want, including those pertaining to other archetypes.

QUESTIONS FOR EXPERIENCE POINTS

1. Did you participate in the session? (The character always gets at least 1 XP)
2. Did you confront any vaesen?
3. Did you identify a previously unknown vaesen?
4. Were you affected by your Dark Secret?
5. Did you take risks to protect other people?
6. Have you learned anything? (what?)
7. Did you develop something in your headquarters?
8. Did you perform an extraordinary action?

ARCHETYPES

This section describes ten archetypes, one of which you must choose as a basis for your character. For each archetype there are choices to be made, and suggestions on what to choose.

For the parts that constitute your character's personality, you are free to make up your own alternatives – although they must ultimately be approved by the Gamemaster. For those that are referred to as characteristics, however, you must stay within the bounds of your archetype.

LIFE PATHS

The quickest method of creating player characters is the default one found in this chapter. However, for those that want some more detail there is an alternative character creation process using random rolls on life path tables found on page 214 at the end of this book.

ACADEMIC

We all agreed that it was theoretically possible to give those who are not verum videntes, or so-called Thursday's Children, the ability to see vaesen. The others quickly forgot our discussion. For me, the issue became an obsession. And not only a theoretical one. If people around us could see the truth, we would become the leaders of the new world. A text written by a Sufi philosopher from Kottayam mentioned a dark fluid which, after translation, was called Black Mud. Drinking it causes creatures to emerge. I had to sell much of my mother's jewelry to have a merchant bring a jar of said mud back to Upsala. And now, here it is, on the desk before me.

Choose among the suggestions below or make one up yourself.

NAME

- FIRST NAME: Albert, Astrid, Elin, Isaac, Louis, Praskoviya
- LAST NAME: Brugge, Gregorius, Taaltinen

MOTIVATION

- Charting the unknown
- Proving my critics wrong
- Becoming famous

TRAUMA

- Vaettir turned you into a rat
- Aged by the magic of a mermaid
- Watched your partner being torn apart by a giant

DARK SECRET

- Addicted to drugs
- Stole or falsified documents to get research results
- Hunted by a vaesen

RELATIONSHIPS

Choose a relationship for each of the other player characters, or make up your own.

- A tool for my purposes
- I cannot stay calm in your presence
- A good friend

- **MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Logic
- **MAIN SKILL: LEARNING**
- **TALENTS:** Bookworm, Erudite, Knowledge is Reassuring
- **RESOURCES:** 4–6
- **EQUIPMENT:** Book collection or map book, writing utensils, liquor or slide rule.

DOCTOR

There are electrical signals moving through our bodies. When a foreign organism penetrates the skin, microscopic soldiers are created in defense. The brain can remember more things than anyone could possibly write down in a lifetime. These wonders take place every second. Yet my colleagues continue to question the existence of supernatural beings. I was forced to retract my statements under humiliating circumstances in order to retain my right to practice. I know that the creature I dissected during my business trip to Rovaniemi in northern Finland was not one of God's creations. My oath as a doctor, to help and protect my fellow man, includes the threats of Hell.

Choose among the suggestions below or make one up yourself.

NAME

- FIRST NAME: Alfred, Dorotea, Friedrich, Karl, Margit, Vilhelmina
- LAST NAME: Borelius, Köningsmark, Luukonen

MOTIVATION

- Exploring and describing the world
- Aiding the weak and afflicted
- Strengthening the Society and becoming its leader

TRAUMA

- A corpse came back to life during an autopsy
- Operated on a person with donkey's ears and hooves
- Saw your destiny in the eyes of a dying mermaid

DARK SECRET

- Has two separate personalities
- Involved in illicit affairs
- Unnatural lust

RELATIONSHIPS

Choose a relationship for each of the other player characters, or make up your own.

- I trust you with my secrets
- You annoy me
- I dream of you at night

- **MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Logic
- **MAIN SKILL: MEDICINE**
- **TALENTS:** Army Medic, Chief Physician, Emergency Medicine
- **RESOURCES:** 4–6
- **EQUIPMENT:** Doctor's bag with medical equipment, liquor or fine wine, weak horse or strong poison

HUNTER

The Baroness's interest in duck hunting was nothing more than an excuse to get some time alone with me in the open air. We used to bring wine and baguettes, and she would read to me tales of monsters and vaesen before we made love on beautiful blankets. I had mustered the courage to call her darling, even though her face told me I was moving too close to, or even beyond, the boundaries of our relationship. One night she came to my home, stark naked and exposed. Only when she straddled me did I notice that the Baron and several others had followed us into the cabin and hidden in the darkness by the door. I tried to get up, but the Baroness's increasingly violent movements pushed me down. As her moaning turned into strange words in a tongue that made my body cramp with fear, the others approached us, chanting along with her.

Choose among the suggestions below or make one up yourself.

NAME

- FIRST NAME: Algot, Blenda, Egil, Maj, Malte, Torun
- LAST NAME: Ek, Lindberg, Sigridsson

MOTIVATION

- The thing that attacked my family must be destroyed
- Live in tune with nature
- Wants to bag some fantastic game

TRAUMA

- Attacked by the branches of an ash tree wife
- Broke your leg in the forest, but was guided home by a will o' the wisp
- Captured at dawn by a mountain troll and was stuck in its petrified arms

DARK SECRET

- I sold my soul
- I cannot control my fits of rage
- Has children with a vaesen

RELATIONSHIPS

Choose a relationship for each of the other player characters, or make up your own.

- I am attracted to you
- I hate bullies like you
- You're a townie weakling

- **MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Precision
- **MAIN SKILL: RANGED COMBAT**
- **TALENTS:** Bloodhound, Herbalist, Marksman
- **RESOURCES:** 2–4
- **EQUIPMENT:** Rifle, hunting knife or hunting dog, hunting trap or hunting equipment

OCCULTIST

I had to know the truth. How did I acquire the power of foresight, and how could I make men collapse in pain just by imagining their beating hearts? When I was young and moved to the city, my mother stayed behind in Långaby. She lived alone with two goats and a pig which she oddly enough had named after my late father. Mother didn't like to talk about these things. She kept coming back to the same two sentences: Your cradle. I woke up and looked in your cradle. Eventually I lost my patience. I threatened her with the fireplace poker, claiming that I could turn her into a wart on my cheek. Then she told me. I was swapped for another.

Choose among the suggestions below or make one up yourself.

NAME

- FIRST NAME: Aleksander, Niklas, Thomas, Ingrid , Ulrika, Valentina
- LAST NAME: Bäcklund, Konradsson, Mörk

MOTIVATION

- Learning about vaesen
- Understanding myself
- Power

TRAUMA

- Was hit by corrosive venom while trying to steal a lindworm egg
- The family farm is being run by a grumpy house nisse
- Was attacked by a night raven who infected you with a febrile disease

DARK SECRET

- Guilty of a heinous crime
- My powers control me
- Changeling

RELATIONSHIPS

Choose a relationship for each of the other player characters, or make up your own.

- You are hiding something from the rest of us
- You bring me peace.
- You will save us all one day

- **MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Precision
- **MAIN SKILL: STEALTH**
- **TALENTS:** Magic tricks, Medium, Striking Fear
- **RESOURCES:** 1–4
- **EQUIPMENT:** Crystal ball, powdered stag's horn (page 123) or tinder box, dagger or cooking pot

OFFICER

As a child, I was enchanted by the glistening medals of the stately gentlemen moving across the dance floor at my parents' gatherings. An uncle taught me to shoot. He instructed me in the moral principles to which the king's soldiers ought to adhere. As I myself rode toward the battlefront, I fantasized about my spectacular return. No one had told me what would happen in between. Among screaming bodies and gut-spewing soldiers, I saw looting and abuse. I was hit by a bullet from one of my own. When I woke up, I was lying on a cart packed with corpses. The creatures caring for me were quite strange-looking. I think they were trolls. Yet friendly and shy. I haven't told mother about them or the battlefield. But I lose my speech when I think of the courier that will one day summon me to the next battle.

Choose among the suggestions below or make one up yourself.

NAME

- FIRST NAME: Alexandra, Franz, Jarmo, Johan, Klara, Kristina
- LAST NAME: Almklint, Lidén, Nordenflycht

MOTIVATION

- Make my father proud
- My friends need me
- Seek out danger and death

TRAUMA

- Almost drowned when your ship was dragged down by a sea monster
- Lost all your men to an angry giant
- Saw dead warriors rise again on the battlefield

DARK SECRET

- Deserter
- Cannot cope with filth and disorder
- Killed a defenseless enemy

RELATIONSHIPS

Choose a relationship for each of the other player characters, or make up your own.

- Protects you at any cost
- My leader
- Distrusts you

- **MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Precision
- **MAIN SKILL: RANGED COMBAT**
- **TALENTS:** Battle-hardened, Gentleman, Tactician
- **RESOURCES:** 3–7
- **EQUIPMENT:** Rifle or pistol, compass or bayonet, map book or saber

PRIEST

I was a skeptic like any other. Despite the color of my collar I met with modern thinkers talking about the symbolic messages of the bible. Leviathan, the great devil-snake, was mankind's struggle against its own potential for evil. Possessions and demons were historical descriptions of the mental disorders of the time. But I saw revenants crawling out of the fjord near the village of Vestnes on the Norwegian coast. We hid inside the church and let the bells ring until the morning light drove them off. Now I know better than to be ignorant of the word of our Lord. The scriptures are true!

Choose among the suggestions below or make one up yourself.

NAME

- FIRST NAME: Elizabeth, Erik, Lydia, Maria, Otto, Viktor
- LAST NAME: af Blacke, Forsmark, Nyström

MOTIVATION

- Performing a sacred mission
- Cleansing my tarnished soul
- Understanding God's creation

TRAUMA

- Hurt someone after being enthralled by a witch
- Watched a church grim tear apart some thieves trying to steal the church silver
- The third owner of a spertus, serving the church to avoid being twisted

DARK SECRET

- The Devil speaks to me
- I have stolen my identity
- Ensnared by a vaesen

RELATIONSHIPS

Choose a relationship for each of the other player characters, or make up your own.

- I am better than you
- Secretly in love with you
- My disciple

- **MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Empathy
- **MAIN SKILL: OBSERVATION**
- **TALENTS:** Absolution, Blessing, Confessor
- **RESOURCES:** 4–6
- **EQUIPMENT:** Musical instrument or fine wines, writing utensils, holy water or old bible (page 123)

PRIVATE DETECTIVE

It never occurred to me to ask why they hired a detective to go all the way to Kristinehamn instead of contacting the local authorities. I assumed they had heard of the man who solved the dockside murders. But what they needed was someone to clean up a slaughterhouse. The castle looked as if it had been blasted by cannons. The villagers were afraid to enter. It reeked of blood and excrement. I don't even want to think about what happened next. I banished whatever it was that had attacked the von Fleesingen family and turned their bodies inside out. But not before it had slain every man, woman and child in the nearby villages. I now visit the castle every night.

Choose among the suggestions below or make one up yourself.

NAME

- FIRST NAME: Anders, Felicia, Gabriella, Henrik, Samuel, Stina
- LAST NAME: Bagghult, Järv, Mäkinen

MOTIVATION

- Getting away from my family
- Uncovering the truth
- Thrill-seeking

TRAUMA

- Heard the cry of a myling during your search for a missing child
- Had nightmares and woke up breathless and mare-ridden
- Came face-to-face with a werewolf

DARK SECRET

- There is a price on my head
- Constant adulterer
- Drug addict

RELATIONSHIPS

Choose a relationship for each of the other player characters, or make up your own.

- You think you can trust me
- A good person
- Tries to understand you

- **MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Logic
- **MAIN SKILL: INVESTIGATION**
- **TALENTS:** Eagle Eye, Elementary, Focused
- **RESOURCES:** 2–5
- **EQUIPMENT:** Magnifying glass or lockpicks, revolver, knuckle duster or binoculars

SERVANT

I was saved by my small bladder. While I was out pissing against a tree, an uninvited fiddler showed up at the Christmas party which the Duke lets us servants hold once a year, on Boxing Day evening. The tunes of his fiddle made my legs twitch as I stepped back toward the house. Through the window I saw them dancing, their faces frozen in desperate grins; they couldn't stop. I had heard of the devil's instrument which forces one's limbs to move until they fall apart. There were rumors of skulls still rhythmically clacking their jaws as they were being buried. How would I be able to resist the musician of Lucifer? When I returned the following morning, the music had stopped. No one spoke of the party. More than half quit their jobs. I wonder what would have happened had I joined the others inside.

Choose among the suggestions below or make one up yourself.

NAME

- FIRST NAME: Anna, Elsa, Joakim, Rut, Sören, Torsten
- LAST NAME: Bäck, Rask, Änglund

MOTIVATION

- Protecting my master
- Curiosity
- An urge to help humans and vaesen alike

TRAUMA

- Bitten by a brook horse
- Lost a master to the alluring song of the Neck
- Served a household plagued by a changeling

DARK SECRET

- I murdered someone
- Persecuted for my religion
- Spying for a foreign power

RELATIONSHIPS

Choose a relationship for each of the other player characters, or make up your own.

- At your service
- I don't take orders from you
- Mutual respect

- **MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Physique
- **MAIN SKILL: FORCE**
- **TALENTS:** Loyal, Robust, Tough as Nails
- **RESOURCES:** 2–4
- **EQUIPMENT:** Revolver, hurricane lamp or make-up, field kitchen or simple bandages

VAGABOND

I was five years old when I learned to carve and interpret hobo signs. At fifteen I came across a symbol I'd never seen before. It had been scratched into the fence of an isolated farm — a star with a distorted guard dog, along with the symbol for warning, repeated several times. Instead of getting out of there I hid in in the hay loft of a barn, and waited, eager to learn what I would see through its window. When night came, a bright light rose from the ground, and I could hear a whistling sound seemingly coming from the starry sky above. I grabbed my pack, ready to run far away from there. But there was a handsome man with shining eyes standing in the doorway. It took me ten years to break the spell that made me his slave. Next time we meet, he will pay for the humiliation he subjected me to.

Choose among the suggestions below or make one up yourself.

NAME

- FIRST NAME: Dagmar, Oskar, Rasmus, Rolf, Signe, Viola
- LAST NAME: Dolk, Eriksson, Krabbe

MOTIVATION

- Avenging my family
- Exposing supernatural secrets
- Being liked

TRAUMA

- Saw a revenant rise from its grave
- Forever in love with a wood wife
- Survived a week inside a troll bag

DARK SECRET

- Stolen identity
- Terminal illness
- A vaesen kills anyone I love

RELATIONSHIPS

Choose a relationship for each of the other player characters, or make up your own.

- You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours
- Feigned gratitude
- You are my friend

- **MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Physique
- **MAIN SKILL: MANIPULATION**
- **TALENTS:** Hobo Tricks, Suspicious, Well-traveled
- **RESOURCES:** 1–3
- **EQUIPMENT:** Walking stick, knife or crowbar, liquor or pet dog

WRITER

Was the creature trying to hurt me or do me a favor? I had been sitting in my chamber for several nights in a row, with no money for candles or lamp oil, my only companions a stack of blank sheets of paper and my own growling stomach — or so I thought. Suddenly there was something beside me, breathing white clouds in the cool air. It grabbed my pen in a firm grip. And then it wrote. At first I rejoiced in the beautiful words. But it wouldn't stop. For five days and five nights the creature wrote with my hand. The result was the book everyone is talking about, and the fingers I can no longer use. I never saw its face. But I will find it again.

Choose among the suggestions below or make one up yourself.

NAME

- FIRST NAME: August, Edvard, Helena, Hugo, Maud, Selma
- LAST NAME: Johansson, Nilsson, Skytte

MOTIVATION

- Finding a certain vaesen
- Researching a book
- Revenge

TRAUMA

- Angered fairies who put you to sleep and sucked your blood
- Cursed by a homeless vaettir to write a book in your own blood
- Heard the song of the Neck, but failed to write down the lyrics

DARK SECRET

- I record and use the secrets and weaknesses of my friends
- Wanted for revolutionary ideas
- My life's work is a lie

RELATIONSHIPS

Choose a relationship for each of the other player characters, or make up your own.

- You inspire me
- Tries to win your appreciation
- You frighten me

- **MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Empathy
- **MAIN SKILL: INSPIRATION**
- **TALENTS:** Automatic Writing, Journalist, Wordsmith
- **RESOURCES:** 2–5
- **EQUIPMENT:** Writing utensils and paper, camera or opera glasses, pet dog or book collection

In the daylight, the pond and the surrounding pine forest seemed perfectly peaceful. The villagers who showed us the way assured us that the place had nothing to do with Father Holtz's disappearance. Yet everything pointed here. We shared their food and laughed. On the way back to the village they asked when we would return to Upsala, and we pretended they had convinced us, claiming that we would depart first thing in the morning. That night we slipped out into the forest. The stars had painted the trees gray. The darkness deepened between the tree trunks, as the moonlight glittered on the surface of the pond. Standing close together, we waited. Glowing eyes opened around us; there must have been close to a hundred owls gathered in the surrounding treetops. Thunderous drums roared from the forest. We heard voices chanting in a tongue devised by the Dark One, and we knew it was the villagers who had also snuck out in the night. There were ripples in the water. Something was rising from beneath the surface.

SKILLS

MOST OF WHAT happens in *Vaesen* can be handled through conversations between the players and the Gamemaster. But sooner or later a player character will attempt something exciting, where success is not guaranteed. In that case, it is time to bring out the dice and let chance decide what happens next. The more proficient your character is in her skill, the greater her chance of success will be.

This chapter describes using skill tests to determine how well you succeed at certain actions through a combination of skill and luck. It outlines the various stages of the skill test – and what the outcome may look like. We also describe how the test can be made easier or more difficult by the circumstances at hand, such as you being hurt or using your talents, Advantage, or equipment. There are rules for how you may push your roll – that is, putting in so much effort that you suffer negative effects but also get a chance to re-roll the skill test. The text proceeds to explain what happens when you are injured and forced to acquire physical or mental Conditions – as a result either of pushing the roll or failing a skill test. The chapter concludes with a description of the twelve skills featured in the game.

SKILL TESTS

Skills will let you handle or endure difficult situations, if used successfully. There are twelve of them, each linked to a certain attribute. When using a skill, you start by adding the skill value and the attribute together. The sum determines how many six-sided dice you get to roll. Rolling a six counts as a success. You rarely need more than one success in order to pass a skill test.

Also note that your player character is free to use any skill in the game, even if her skill value is 0; in that case you simply roll the number of dice indicated by the relevant attribute. The same applies if you attempt something that is not covered by a specific skill.

> PLAYER 1 (KASPAR STÅHL): *I put on the cowl and the mask, and sneak into the church.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *It's dark and cold, and the great double doors of the church are decorated with demonic faces made of metal. As you open them, you hear the murmur of a hundred or so people — all wearing cowls. There must be several villages gathered here. There are red candles burning all over the place. Someone is playing a stringed instrument you can't identify. At the front there is a person facing the crowd. The face is shrouded by a hood. Make a* ***STEALTH*** *test.*
>
> PLAYER 1: *I have Precision 2 and* ***STEALTH*** *2. That's four dice. No sixes — I fail!*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *The person at the front pulls back his hood. It's your brother. Your eyes meet.*

SKILLS

- **AGILITY** (Physique)
- **CLOSE COMBAT** (Physique)
- **FORCE** (Physique)
- **MEDICINE** (Precision)
- **RANGED COMBAT** (Precision)
- **STEALTH** (Precision)
- **INVESTIGATION** (Logic)
- **LEARNING** (Logic)
- **VIGILANCE** (Logic)
- **INSPIRATION** (Empathy)
- **MANIPULATION** (Empathy)
- **OBSERVATION** (Empathy)

ADDING MODIFIERS

A basic rule is that everything affecting the roll is added together. If you have a Talent that adds +2 to the roll, and use your Advantage to gain another +2, you get four extra dice to roll. Should you also be injured and have a Condition, that deducts one die, giving you a total of three extra dice.

MEANS AND ENDS

Before rolling you must tell the others what your player character is doing and what she is trying to achieve. The Gamemaster may ask you to explain further or change your goal. This usually happens when she cannot get a clear picture of what you want to do, or finds your goal too unrealistic. For example, you cannot use **MANIPULATION** to make an enemy kill itself, or heal hundreds of patients without access to medicine, equipment, or beds.

> THE GAMEMASTER: *Kaspar is sitting in a metal cage in the middle of the marketplace. He is naked, filthy, and barely conscious. Twenty or so villagers have gathered around him, armed with hunting rifles and scythes. They have that crazy look in their eyes which seems to be spreading through the entire town.*
>
> PLAYER 3 (ILJENKA PROKOTIN): *I draw my knife and launch myself at them.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *Do you really want to do that? Alone against twenty armed opponents, you are guaranteed to lose.*

FAILED TESTS

Failing a test means that something detrimental or unexpected happens to you. In most situations the implications are quite obvious. A failed attempt at sneaking means that you are detected. If you are trying to inspire a crowd they may turn against you. Even before the roll is made, the Gamemaster should try to be clear about what happens if the test fails.

In particularly difficult or dangerous situations, failing a test also means that you become afflicted with a Condition. The Gamemaster should inform you of this before you roll. You suffer a Condition of the same type (physical or mental) as the skill you attempted to use, but are free to choose which one. Not all tests should carry the risk of acquiring a Condition – the player characters would quickly be worn down and the game would come to a halt.

Some situations are so serious that you immediately become Broken upon failure. Perhaps you are trying not to get hit by a train or defending your seemingly outrageous behavior before the entire commission.

> PLAYER 2 (ASTRID LILJA): *I sit down across from the sorcerer, staring into his eyes. "Do your worst!" I let him use his powers on me. But I'm trying to resist and understand how he is controlling others.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *Make an* ***OBSERVATION*** *test. If you fail, he takes control of you. You will also suffer a mental Condition.*

PUSHING THE ROLL

Having failed a test, you can choose to muster your strength and give it one more try. This can only be done once per action, and must happen immediately after failing a test. This is called *pushing the roll*.

When pushing your roll, you suffer a Condition. If you are using Physique or Precision you choose a physical Condition – if you are using Logic or Empathy you choose a mental one. You may then re-roll every die except the sixes, should there be any. You can push rolls that have already succeeded, since there are situations where multiple successes make you succeed particularly well (see below).

> **A SINGLE ROLL**
>
> Whenever your player character tries to do something, you make one roll for the entire situation. If you are attempting to sneak through a castle, you do not roll to see if you reach the gate, then roll again to see if you get to the stairway, and then to go up the stairs. One die roll is enough. Sometimes that means the effect of the skill test can last a long time; for instance, it can take many days to craft something or cure a sick person. The only exception is combat, which is covered in chapter 5.

> PLAYER 1 (KASPAR STÅHL): *I shout at him: "I'm your brother!" I try to get him to snap out of whatever spell he is under.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *Make a* ***MANIPULATION*** *test.*
>
> PLAYER 1: *I roll three dice, but fail. I choose the Condition Angry and push the roll. I grab him, screaming: "Look into my eyes, Roland!" Then I re-roll all three dice.*

BROKEN TO SUCCEED

When pushing a roll, you get to re-roll all dice except the sixes. The Condition you acquire as a result does not come into effect until after the roll. It is therefore possible to become Broken from pushing a roll. Only after the roll does the Condition Broken render you incapacitated.

THE STORY MUST GO ON

The Gamemaster must make sure that failed tests do not bring the story to a standstill. It could happen if you fail to obtain the information you need to locate a certain creature, or if you are locked up and required to pick a lock in order to escape. When a failed test threatens the flow of the story, there are three methods the Gamemaster can use to salvage the situation: consequences, Conditions, and requirements.

- Consequences mean that you succeed even though you failed the test, but that something else goes wrong instead. You got the information you wanted, but the creature has noticed you in the library and blocks your path. Sometimes the Gamemaster may keep the consequence secret for a while and reveal it later on.
- Conditions mean that you achieve what you wanted despite failing the test, but that you must choose a physical or mental Condition. You manage to push away the rock that is crushing your friend, but become Exhausted in the process.
- Requirements mean that you get some of what you wanted, but that more is required to achieve success. It can also mean that you fail, but the Gamemaster suggests an alternative way of resolving the situation. Perhaps you get the information you need, but it is written in a strange language and you must find a way to translate it. Maybe the person who can help you has already left, but the Gamemaster reveals that her children share some of her knowledge – and they are still in the village.

CONDITIONS

There are two ways to acquire Conditions. You may have to choose one when pushing a roll, and can also get them as a consequence of failing a test. Acquiring Conditions means that your player character has been negatively affected.

Conditions are divided into two types: physical and mental. Physical Conditions are linked to Physique and Precision, and mental ones to Logic and Empathy. Physical Conditions include: **EXHAUSTED**, **BATTERED**, and **WOUNDED**, while mental Conditions include **ANGRY**, **FRIGHTENED**, and **HOPELESS**.

While you are suffering from a Condition you get 1 fewer die for all rolls that are linked to either physical or mental attributes. Also worth noting is that Conditions stack, meaning that two Conditions of the same type will subtract two dice from your dice pool. No matter how many Conditions you have accumulated, you may always roll at least one die. Conditions can be healed through rest and other activities, which is described further in chapter 5.

When you already have three Conditions of the same type and acquire a fourth one, you become Broken. This means that you are seriously injured, temporarily insane, or otherwise worn down. You may not perform any actions, physical or mental. In addition, a Broken player character also sustains a critical injury (see page 64).

CONDITIONS AND SKILLS

TYPE OF CONDITION	AFFECTS SKILLS BASED ON:
Physical	Physique and Precision
Mental	Logic and Empathy

LEVELS OF DIFFICULTY

In extreme cases, the Gamemaster may decide that it takes more than one success to succeed. This might happen when attempting to persuade a lynch mob to release the accused, or when you are being pursued by a killer across the stormy rooftops of a town. A challenging action requires two successes, while a difficult one requires three successes.

DIFFICULTY

ACTION	NUMBER OF SUCCESSES
Normal	1
Challenging	2
Difficult	3

HELPING EACH OTHER

Other player characters can increase your chance of passing a skill test by offering to help with whatever you are attempting to do. The Gamemaster decides whether you really do benefit from their actions. You gain +1 to your skill test for every person helping you, to a maximum of +3.

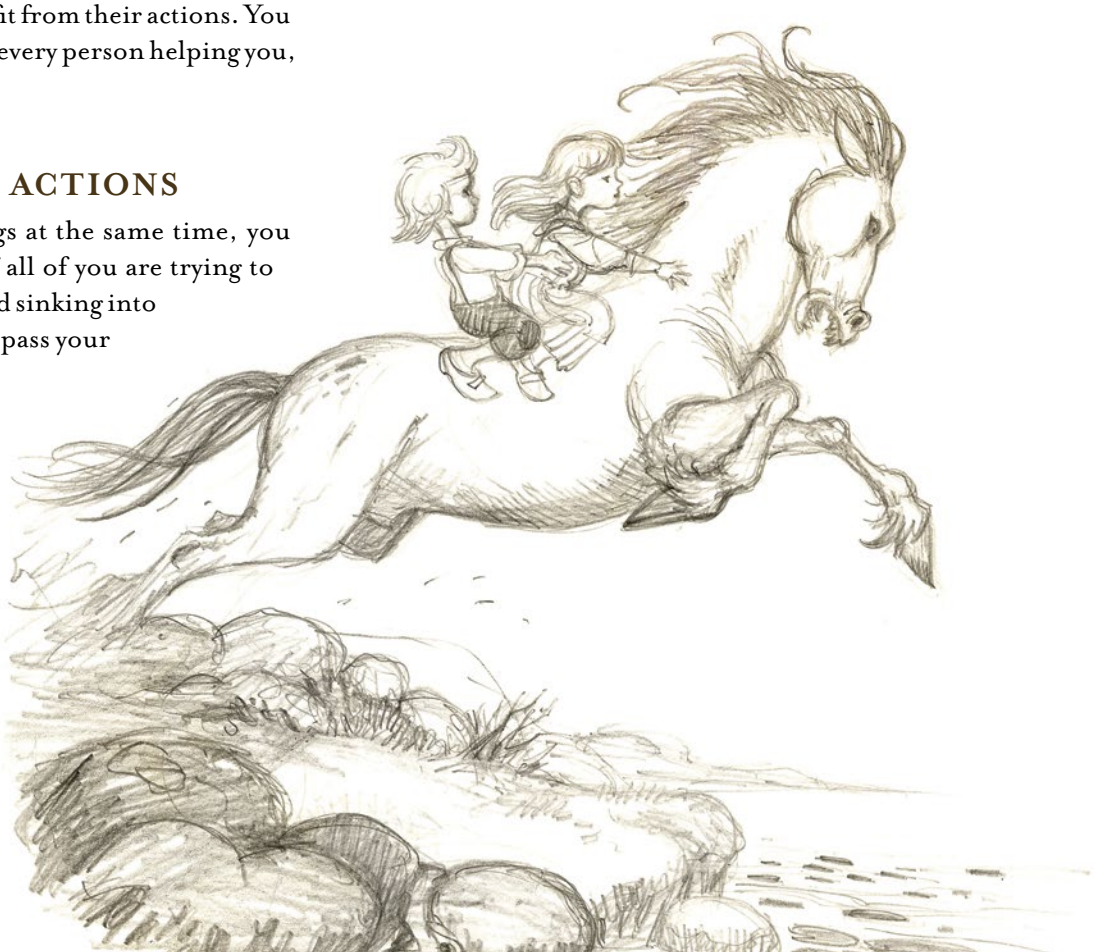
PARALLEL ACTIONS

When you are doing things at the same time, you cannot help each other. If all of you are trying to sneak past someone or avoid sinking into a swamp, each of you must pass your own test without assistance from the others. However, some skills allow a character whose test is extra successful to give successes to others (see *Extra Successes*), and help them that way instead.

CHANCE OF SUCCESS

This table shows the chance of succeeding at a roll, as well as the chance of succeeding if you then choose to push the roll.

NUMBER OF DICE	CHANCE TO SUCCEED	PUSHED ROLL
1	17%	31%
2	31%	52%
3	42%	67%
4	52%	77%
5	60%	84%
6	67%	89%
7	72%	92%
8	77%	95%
9	81%	96%
10	84%	97%



OPPOSED ROLLS

There will be many situations where an NPC or a player character tries to stop you from succeeding. A guard may try to detect you while you are sneaking. You and your friend disagree on something and each try to sway the opinion of the other. In such cases the outcome is decided by opposed rolls.

"My mother had a sister called Gunlög who, when they were children, always used to sit on the porch and gaze at the stars, telling stories about the glitterfolk living in the deep woods beyond the lakes and meadows. One night, when the mist lay heavy on the land, she heard music coming from the pasture and snuck over there without telling her parents.

In the middle of the pasture stood a fiddler who made the grass and flowers sway to his tunes. She danced with him in the moonlight until she could no longer stand. She was somewhere else then. When she returned the following morning, her hair had grown long and white, and her skin was wrinkly like an old woman's. Gunlög said she'd been to the land of the fairies and lived a life as the glitter prince's wife. But now he was dead, and she had come home.

- Elsa Tapper, farmer's wife in Ovanåker

You and your opponent each make a roll. The person with the most successes prevails. Should both get an equal number of successes, you have neither succeeded nor failed. If your opponent is an NPC the Gamemaster may use one of the three methods described under failed rolls: consequences, Conditions, or requirements. You get what you want, but something goes wrong.

In a conflict between two player characters, where both roll the same number of successes, each may choose to push the roll to win. If you still get the same number of successes, you must agree on a compromise. Both get something they want, but at a cost.

> THE GAMEMASTER: *As you throw the holy water on Kaspar's brother it creates a shockwave that knocks both you and him off your feet. Kaspar, when you get up you see your brother on his knees. His eye color has returned to normal.*
>
> PLAYER 3 (ILJENKA PROKOTIN): *I snatch one of the axes and sever his head from his neck.*
>
> PLAYER 1 (KASPAR STÅHL): *No way. I run straight into you and yank the axe from your hands.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *You'll need to make an opposed roll. Kaspar, you roll for* ***AGILITY*** *while Iljenka rolls for* ***CLOSE COMBAT****.*
>
> PLAYER 1: *I got two successes.*
>
> PLAYER 3: *Me too.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *Then it's a compromise. How about this: Kaspar manages to push you away, positioning himself in front of his brother, but fails to take the axe and suffers a physical Condition?*

ADVANTAGE

You can use your Advantage to increase your chance of success. The GM must be able to explain what makes it helpful, but it is probably best to be gener-

ous in their assessments – it would be a shame if the player characters never got to use it.

Advantages are specific to each mystery and may be used once per session, granting you two extra dice when making a skill test. Using an Advantage must be declared before rolling the dice, or when you decide to push a roll. In other words, you cannot use an Advantage if you have already failed the test. The Advantage you have gained on your journey to a mystery expires when you return to Upsala, but you will of course be able to acquire a new one on your way to the next mystery. The next Advantage you gain cannot be tied to the same skill, you have to choose another.

EQUIPMENT

Most of the items you find during your mysteries are of the everyday variety, but some can be more useful, increasing your chance of passing your skill tests. You might need lockpicks to open something, or a horse to outride a lynch mob. These items add a bonus to your test, usually +1. Some special or even magic items may grant you a greater bonus, but rarely more than +3.

EXTRA SUCCESSES

Rolling more successes than required means that you are extra successful. You impress yourself as well as others, get more than you wanted, or win renown for your skillfulness. In some cases, the Gamemaster may deem your surge in confidence so great that you heal a Condition.

Some skills let you use extra successes to achieve certain effects, such as helping another player character who has failed the same kind of skill test. Each effect costs one success. The Gamemaster decides whether or not (and for what purpose) you may use your extra successes.

"Mare, mare, mare!
Thou may'st not enter here,
Until thou hast counted
Birds in woods, fish in rivers,
Every oak,
And the words of God!"

– Traditional charm for banishing the mare

THE SKILLS

AGILITY (PHYSIQUE)

AGILITY is the ability to run fast, be flexible, and leap out of danger. You make an **AGILITY** test when attempting to flee, chase someone, jump, or climb. If there are several of you performing the same action you may transfer your successes to others, thus improving their chance to succeed.

In combat you can use **AGILITY** to evade attacks or escape. Extra successes can be used to:

- Outmaneuver your enemy. You exchange initiative cards.
- Stress your enemy. The enemy gets a mental Condition (may be chosen once per turn).
- Move one zone away from the enemy.
- Make your enemy position itself in a certain part of a zone.
- Perform actions while evading the enemy, for instance performing a ritual or setting fire to things in the room.

CLOSE COMBAT (PHYSIQUE)

When fighting with melee weapons you use **CLOSE COMBAT**. By rolling more successes than required, you may:

- Increase your damage by 1. This effect can be chosen multiple times.
- Outmaneuver your enemy. You exchange initiative cards.
- Stress your enemy. Your attack causes mental Conditions rather than physical ones.
- Push the enemy into another zone or a specific part of the zone you are in.
- Make the enemy drop a weapon or item. Picking up an item during combat requires a fast action.

RESISTING ATTACKS

A character who is targeted by an attack or ambush, poisoned food, or an attempt at persuasion has a chance to resist or detect the assailant. **AGILITY** is used to evade physical attacks. **VIGILANCE** is used to detect someone sneaking up on you or slipping something into your pocket. In social situations where your character is passive, you use **OBSERVATION**.

FORCE (PHYSIQUE)

When using brute strength to lift something heavy, or to endure pain and hardship, you make a **FORCE** test. The skill can let you survive without food or water, or walk day and night, without suffering a Condition. You may transfer any extra successes to other player characters in the same situation.

FORCE can sometimes be used to repair things, such as a wagon with a broken wheel.

When engaged in hand-to-hand combat, or when attempting to wrestle or grapple the enemy, you use **FORCE**. By rolling more successes than required you may:

- Increase your damage by 1. This effect can be chosen multiple times.
- Outmaneuver your enemy. You exchange initiative cards.
- Stress your enemy. Your attack causes mental Conditions rather than physical ones.
- Push the enemy into another zone or a specific part of the zone you are in.
- Make the enemy drop a weapon or item. Picking up an item during combat requires a fast action.
- Grapple your enemy. She must succeed with an opposed roll to break free.

MEDICINE (PRECISION)

MEDICINE lets you use your expertise to help someone who is hurt. The skill can also provide knowledge about anatomy, diseases, and injuries.

When a player character has sustained a physical critical injury, she may sometimes require medical assistance in order to survive (see chapter 5). Passing your skill test means that she is no longer Broken. Each extra success heals one physical Condition. If

you fail and wish to try again, you must first procure more medical supplies, transport the patient to a more suitable location, or get help from someone else with medical training.

MEDICINE can be used to heal physical Conditions. Your patients must be in bed, safe from immediate harm, and have access to food, drink, and medical equipment. You make a **MEDICINE** test for each day of treatment. A successful test heals three physical Conditions, distributed between the patients as you see fit. Each extra success heals another three Conditions. Even the Broken Condition can be healed this way. Usually a failed test simply means that a day has been wasted, though the Gamemaster may allow an enemy to act.

RANGED COMBAT (PRECISION)

When attacking with ranged weapons or explosives you make a **RANGED COMBAT** test. By rolling more successes than required you may:

- Increase your damage by 1. This effect can be chosen multiple times.
- Outmaneuver your enemy. You exchange initiative cards.
- Stress your enemy. Your attack causes mental Conditions rather than physical ones.
- Push the enemy into another zone or a specific part of the zone you are in.
- Make the enemy drop a weapon or item. Picking up an item during combat requires a fast action.

STEALTH (PRECISION)

When attempting to sneak, hide, pick locks, or perform card tricks, you make a **STEALTH** test. Extra successes make you succeed even better.

INVESTIGATION (LOGIC)

You can use **INVESTIGATION** to search a room, understand what happened at a crime scene, examine a dead body, or find what is obscured. If you succeed, the Gamemaster will provide you with clues. If you roll more successes than required, the Gamemaster decides whether you find more clues, understand the context, or simply enjoy the satisfaction of a job well done.

> The **INVESTIGATION** skill is not used to find hidden things such as doors or traps, or to uncover hidden clues. If you describe your character searching in the right place, the Gamemaster should simply let you find what you are looking for, if it can be seen at all. However, a succesful skill test can provide a bonus if the GM wants.

LEARNING (LOGIC)

LEARNING is a measure of your education, as well as your ability to establish connections through logic and knowledge. When you need to know something about what is in front of you, you can make a **LEARNING** test to gain clues. Sometimes the Gamemaster will say that it requires books or other sources of information. In some situations, it is impossible to get any clues.

You can use **LEARNING** to translate foreign languages, figure out how best to behave in a certain situation, or understand the workings of a mechanical device, an occult ritual, or a magic item. You can use **LEARNING** to obtain basic information about a vaesen if the Gamemaster deems it appropriate. By rolling more successes than required you can sometimes gain access to more information.

> GAMEMASTER: *Inside the abandoned barn the boards are covered in symbols, clearly carved with a knife.*
>
> PLAYER 2 (ASTRID LILJA): *I make a* ***LEARNING*** *test to see if I recognize them. One success.*
>
> GAMEMASTER: *You definitely recognize them. The man who kidnapped you and your mother when you were a child had lots of books with similar symbols. They are ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. Several of them resemble those from his most precious text — the one he read that drove him insane and led him to do those terrible things.*

VIGILANCE (LOGIC)

You use **VIGILANCE** to notice someone sneaking up on you. The person doing the sneaking makes an opposed **STEALTH** roll (see page 62) against your **VIGILANCE** roll. You also use **VIGILANCE** to follow tracks left by creatures or other people.

Furthermore, **VIGILANCE** can be used to interpret situations you are monitoring. If you succeed the Gamemaster provides you with information. You may realize what is about to happen, who the leader of a group is, which people might become a threat, or how best to tackle a situation. If you roll more successes than required, each extra success adds a +1 bonus to a skill test where the information is helpful to you. Failing can mean that you have misread the situation, been detected, or appear hostile to the people you are watching.

INSPIRATION (EMPATHY)

INSPIRATION is the ability to address a crowd, encourage and guide your friends, and create or understand works of art. When trying to influence the thoughts or actions of a group of people, you make an **INSPIRATION** test.

When a player character has sustained a mental critical injury, she sometimes requires **INSPIRATION** in order not to become chronically Broken (see chapter 5). If you pass the test she is no longer Broken. Each extra success heals one mental Condition. If you fail and wish to try again, you must first find another way of getting through to her. You may need to take her to a new place, seek help from someone else, or find another way to connect with her.

INSPIRATION can be used to heal mental Conditions. Your friends must be somewhere safe, have access to food and drink, and be willing to engage in close contact or dialogue with you. You make an **INSPIRATION** test each day you spend together without doing anything else. A successful test heals three mental Conditions, distributed between your friends as you see fit. Each extra success heals another three Conditions. Even the Broken Condition can be healed this way. Usually a failed test simply means that a day has been wasted, though the Gamemaster may allow an enemy to act.

MANIPULATION (EMPATHY)

You can use **MANIPULATION** to influence how other people think, feel, or act by lying, flirting, bribing, negotiating, haggling, or using your social skills in other ways. When **MANIPULATING** someone you describe what you hope to achieve and what you are doing. You also use **MANIPULATION** to trade or purchase items and services during the mystery (see *Equipment* in chapter 5).

On a success you get what you want. Failure means that the other person distrusts or dislikes you, that you take a Condition, or that she is reinforced in her original convictions. Player characters can make an **OBSERVATION** test to resist your influence.

If the other person tries to **MANIPULATE** you as well, she too describes what she hopes to achieve. You must approve each other's goals before rolling the dice. There are limits to what you can convince people to do or believe. An opposed **MANIPULATION** test determines who gains influence over the other.

The losing party can decide to lay down a Condition for doing what the winner wants. Perhaps you must promise not to tell anyone about what she agreed to do, or maybe she first wants to know something about you?

NOT MIND CONTROL

When engaging in **MANIPULATION** your goal must be reasonable. You cannot completely alter another person's way of thinking, make someone commit suicide, or turn people against their friends without good cause. After you have successfully used **MANIPULATION** on someone, other things might cause the person to reconsider. The same applies when **MANIPULATION** is used on you.

When you get more successes than you need, you can use them to impose a mental Condition on your opponent – one for each extra success.

> PLAYER 2 (ASTRID LILJA): *"He is a traitor who uses others for his own purposes. If we let him go, he will continue to plague this town. We can't imprison him." I use* ***MANIPULATION*** *to convince you that we should execute your brother.*
>
> PLAYER 1 (KASPAR STÅHL): *Kaspar would never agree to that. Let's say that, if you win, you get me to stop taking responsibility for my brother. Okay?*

OBSERVATION (EMPATHY)

When talking to another person or spending time in her presence, you can use **OBSERVATION** to understand what she is thinking, feeling, or planning. If you pass the skill test the Gamemaster describes the impression you get from her. For example, the Gamemaster may tell you that she is lying or reveal whether she means you harm. You have the right to ask specific questions and have them answered.

Each extra success adds +1 to a test where the information is useful to you. Failing the test means that you give yourself away to the opposite party and must disclose your player character's thoughts, feelings, and intentions.

HONEST INFORMATION

Several skills give the player characters access to information. It is the Gamemaster's responsibility to provide information that is accurate and useful. A successful skill test should not result in vague answers or ones that "protects" the truth or an NPC. What makes the story interesting is what the player characters do with their information – not leaving them ignorant and unable to act.

There were three of us rowing out in the Karlskrona archipelago that moonlit night. And three times the priest at the seamen's church had, inexplicably, seen Captain Wåhlin scream silently from the pulpit. The captain and his three-master, the Karolina, disappeared in a storm last fall. It was said that he had sold his soul to buy that ship, and now the devil had come to collect.

I was the one rowing when suddenly we saw the Karolina just a few meters ahead of us. No lanterns were burning. I pulled the oars out of the water and let the boat drift the last few meters. No one said a word as we climbed on board. The hull was covered in barnacles and seaweed, as if the ship had been there for months. During the day it should have been visible from land.

It took us several hours to search the vessel. We found neither living nor dead, no cargo or provisions, and when the sun rose – painting the water red, green, and orange – we were utterly exhausted. But then we saw bubbles rising to the surface around the boat. We decided to dive down there. Maybe Captain Wåhlin's secrets were still waiting for us in the deep. I was the only one who made it back up – and what I saw down there I shall keep to myself, until the day I die.

TALENTS

IN ADDITION TO your skills, you have certain tricks and traits that might come in handy. These are called talents, and they are described in this chapter. First we list the talents that are specific to the various archetypes, then the general ones.

A newly-created player character has one talent, chosen from among the three talents specific to her archetype. Over the course of the game you will be able to purchase more of them by spending Experience Points. You may then choose any talent you want – including those from other archetypes.

Some talents add bonuses to skill or Fear tests (see page 68), affecting the number of extra dice you get to roll. The effects of different talents are added to the total.

THE ACADEMIC'S TALENTS

BOOKWORM

Gain +2 to **LEARNING** when looking for clues in books or libraries.

ERUDITE

You can pass a **LEARNING** test to establish truths about places and phenomena in the game. You may know that a certain location is renowned for its glassblowers, or that a gang of criminals operates in the area. The Gamemaster judges what is appropriate, and what is reasonable for you to know. You should not be allowed to make up things about vaesen.

KNOWLEDGE IS REASSURING

Ignore Conditions when making **LEARNING** tests.

"When oppressed
with wretched love
Find for yourself
a new pair of shoes
And walk a mile,
that your feet may sweat
Then remove your right shoe
Pour into it either wine
or ale and have a good sip
And you shall be free"

– Traditional folk magic for banishing unwanted love

THE DOCTOR'S TALENTS

ARMY MEDIC

Gain +2 to Fear tests when frightened by dead or damaged human bodies.

CHIEF PHYSICIAN

When you use **MEDICINE** to treat the other player characters, they can heal a total of four Conditions instead of three. The same applies to extra successes.

EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Ignore mental Conditions when using **MEDICINE**.

THE HUNTER'S TALENTS

BLOODHOUND

Gain +2 to **VIGILANCE** when tracking your prey.

HERBALIST

By utilizing wild herbs, you can use **MEDICINE** without having access to medical supplies.

MARKSMAN

Gain +2 to **RANGED COMBAT** on your first turn when successfully ambushing or attacking your enemy.

THE OCCULTIST'S TALENTS

CONJURING TRICKS

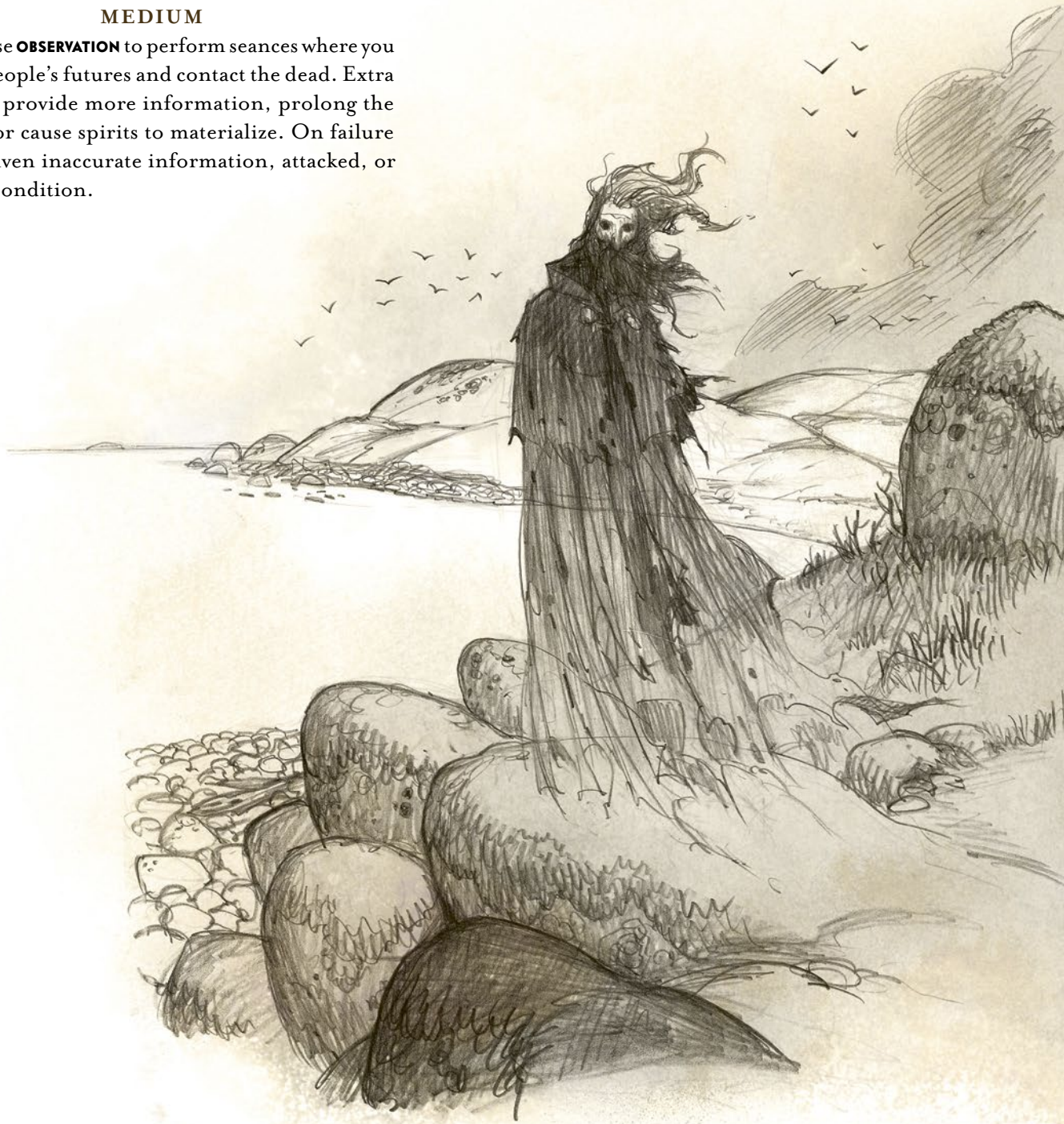
You can use **STEALTH** instead of **MANIPULATION** when performing conjuring tricks to influence people.

MEDIUM

You can use **OBSERVATION** to perform seances where you predict people's futures and contact the dead. Extra successes provide more information, prolong the contact, or cause spirits to materialize. On failure you are given inaccurate information, attacked, or suffer a Condition.

STRIKE FEAR

You can strike fear with Fear 1 (see page 68). It counts as a slow action and does not work against vaesen. Choose a victim in your zone. Targeted NPCs must pass a Logic or Empathy test. Their roll gains bonus dice equal to the number of friendly individuals in the same zone.



"A vicar in Hammenkulla was preaching from his pulpit, swearing on almighty God that there was no such thing as trolls, nissar, and other nature spirits. The next morning his house had no windows and the door was bolted from the outside, forcing the vicar to bang his way out with a sledgehammer. Yet in his next sermon he said the same thing, and when he woke the following morning, all animals at the vicarage had lost their heads, walking around with neither eyes nor mouths. And still he persisted – saying that God created humans and animals, but that the creatures of the forest were products of human superstition and satanic lies. Then, in the morning, he woke up next to a wooden log instead of his wife. Only then did he mount the pulpit and say he did not know whether it was God or the Devil who brought vaesen into existence, but exist they did. And when he came home, his wife was waiting for him outside the vicarage. Nothing angers the Unseen more than claiming they do not exist."

– Ola Sten, carpenter in Dalfors

THE OFFICER'S TALENTS

BATTLE-HARDENED

You are used to battle. When drawing for initiative, draw two cards and pick one of them (see chapter 5).

GENTLEMAN

You were raised to control your emotions and behavior in social situations, even under pressure. Ignore penalties from mental Conditions when making **MANIPULATION** tests.

TACTICIAN

When you pass a **RANGED COMBAT** test during combat and get extra successes, you may – in addition to the usual alternatives – issue an order to a friend. Doing so costs one success. If she follows your order, she gains +2 to her next test (can be chosen multiple times to give orders to different people).

THE PRIEST'S TALENTS

ABSOLUTION

A player characters who confesses to you as an activity (see page 72) heal three Conditions instead of two.

BLESSING

Once per session you can bless an object or another player character. The player character, or anyone using the object, gains the Blessed Advantage, adding +2 to a test of their choice. The Advantage expires upon use or when the mystery is over. You can only bless the same character or object once per mystery.

CONFESSOR

You may use **OBSERVATION** instead of **MANIPULATION** when having a confidential conversation.

THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE'S TALENTS

EAGLE EYE

You gain +2 to **VIGILANCE** when trying to interpret a situation you are not involved in.

ELEMENTARY

Once per session you can ask the Gamemaster to explain how clues are connected.

FOCUSED

Ignore penalties from Conditions when making **INVESTIGATION** tests.

THE SERVANT'S TALENTS

LOYAL

Gain +2 on Fear tests in the presence of someone you have sworn to protect.

TOUGH AS NAILS

Gain +2 to **FORCE** when fighting unarmed.

ROBUST

You may ignore penalties for physical Conditions on one roll per gaming session.

THE VAGABOND'S TALENTS

HOBO TRICKS

Gain +2 to **STEALTH** when trying to hide yourself or an object from a wealthy human.

SUSPICIOUS

Ignore mental Conditions when making **VIGILANCE** tests.

WELL-TRAVELED

Once per mystery you can make a **MANIPULATION** test to create an NPC who is situated in the area, and who you have met before. The Gamemaster decides how she has changed since you last met, and what she thinks of you now. If the test fails, she is either hostile or in great need of your help.

THE WRITER'S TALENTS

AUTOMATIC WRITING

When channeling spirits through automatic writing you can use **INSPIRATION** to gain clues. The Gamemaster provides more or less vague clues, predictions about the future, or momentary insights into the thoughts and experiences of your enemies. Extra successes reveal more clues. On failure the Gamemaster decides whether you suffer a Condition, become possessed, or undergo a personality change (you decide what kind) that lasts for 1D6 hours. You can use Automatic Writing once per gaming session.

JOURNALIST

You may use **INSPIRATION** instead of **MANIPULATION** when charming or deceiving someone to gain information.

WORDSMITH

Ignore penalties from Conditions when making **INSPIRATION** tests.

GENERAL TALENTS

BATTLE EXPERIENCE
Gain +2 to **MEDICINE** when treating a physical critical injury.

BRAVE
Gain +1 to all Fear tests.

COMBAT-TRAINED
Gain +2 to **CLOSE COMBAT** and **FORCE** when parrying.

CONTACTS
Once per session you can decide that you already know a certain NPC, and that your relationship is a positive one. The Gamemaster may disallow it, if the contact would make the mystery less fun.

COWARD
When wounded in combat, you can make another player character take damage in your stead by passing a **STEALTH** test. It does not count as an action. If the test fails, you are hit for 1 extra damage. This can be done once per combat encounter.

DECEPTIVE
Gain +2 to **MANIPULATION** when cheating and deceiving.

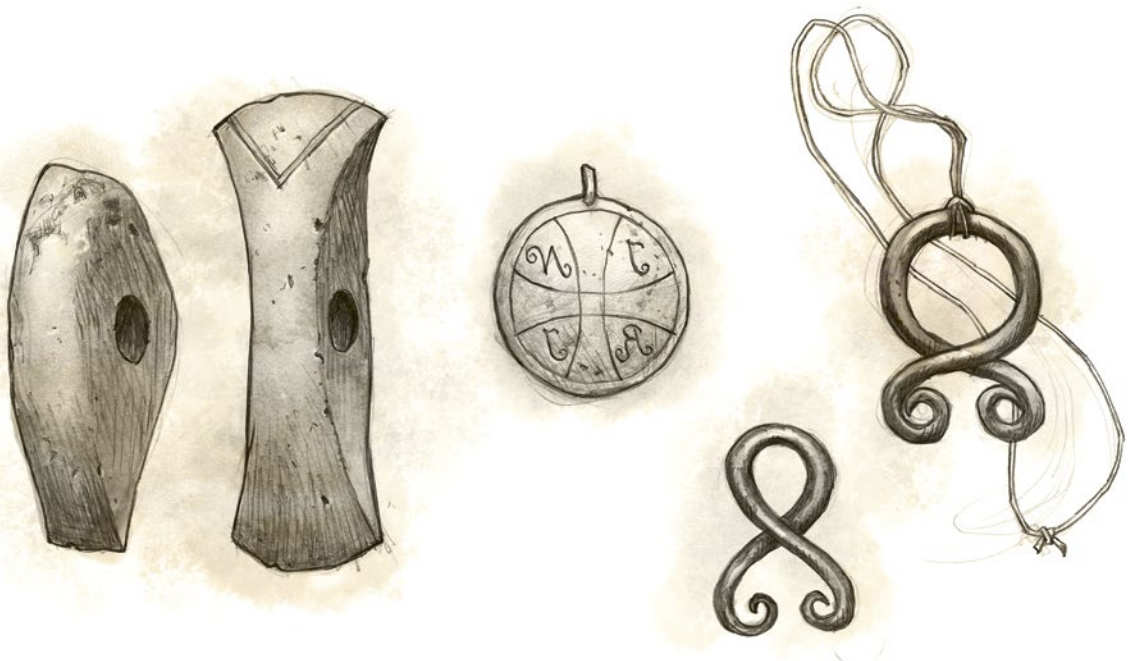
DEDICATED
Once per session you can ignore the mental Conditions from a skill test.

DEFENSIVE
Each turn you get one extra action that may only be used to dodge or parry.

DUAL WEAPONS
When using dual weapons in close combat, you can use extra successes to hit an additional enemy in the same zone. If you use more successes to increase damage, you may choose which attack deals more damage.

DYNAMITER
Gain +2 to **RANGED COMBAT** when using explosives.

EMPATHETIC
Ignore penalties from Conditions when making **OBSERVATION** tests.



ESCAPE ARTIST
Ignore penalties from Conditions when using **AGILITY** to flee.

FAMOUS
Gain +2 to **MANIPULATION** when trying to influence someone who has heard of you.

FLEET-FOOTED
During combat you may move within your own zone without using actions.

HOLY SYMBOL
You have a religious item that allows you to use **INSPIRATION** to attack vaesen in close combat, dealing 1 damage.

LIGHTNING REFLEXES
You can draw weapons without using an action.

NINE LIVES
When rolling for a critical injury, you may decide which of the dice represents the tens and which represents the ones.

PET
You have a pet that you can use once per session to gain +1 to a test of your choice in a situation where your pet is clearly of use.

PUGILIST
Deal 1 extra damage when fighting unarmed.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS
Gain +2 to Fear tests when accompanied by at least two other player characters. In combat this only applies if you are in the same zone.

SIXTH SENSE
When making **INVESTIGATION** tests you may spend extra successes to learn if a vaesen has been in the area, gain more or less vague impressions of what kind of vaesen it is, and find out if magic has been used.

SPRINTER
Gain +2 to **AGILITY** when trying to outrun or chase down someone.

THE LORD'S SHEPHERD
Gain +2 when using **INSPIRATION** to treat a mental critical injury.

WEALTHY
Increase Resources by 1 (can be purchased multiple times).

I was a prisoner in my own dreams, unable to wake. The sleep had been bestowed on me by a wood wife whom the locals called the Bark Angel. She kissed me on the forehead and vanished among the trees, as I fell sleeping to the ground.

My friends brought me back to the castle in Upsala and put me to bed. In my sleep I apparently kept talking about my wife, who was also a member of the Society but died on an excursion to Knäred in rural Halland. I was sweating profusely, twisting and turning in my bed.

It took my friends several days to track the Bark Angel to Digerfallet – a waterfall north of Sysslebäck in Värmland. She suffered their wrath, but even though she was shot twenty times with pistols and rifles, she would not die. Only when they found the mighty oak tree where she hid her soul, and burned it, did she cease to exist.

After the flames finished consuming the Bark Angel, I woke up. There was a cup of tea gone cold on the bedside table. I was touched that they remembered to add a sprinkle of cinnamon, just how I like it. When my friends returned, we celebrated. Again and again they wanted to hear how I'd been tormented by nightmares of snakes, fire, and black dogs. I never told anyone what I had really dreamed – that the kiss of the Bark Angel sent me to heaven, to see my wife.

CONFLICT AND INJURIES

THE SUBJECT OF this chapter is conflict – situations that escalate beyond words, where passing a skill test is not enough, and you must follow the rules step-by-step to determine the outcome. The first section of the chapter presents rules for combat. It describes how to determine the order in which your characters will act during combat, what actions they can perform, and various circumstances that may affect your chances of success. It also explains how movement works during combat, and lays out rules for setting ambushes, chases, and grappling your enemy or breaking free from a hold.

Next, we provide rules for physical injuries and how they can affect you. This is followed by a section that explains how beholding a vaesen or going through other terrible experiences can cause mental injuries. The rules describe how to make Fear tests to avoid being affected by what is happening before your eyes.

The subsequent section concerns rules for explosions, fire, poison, damage from falling, and the effects of hunger, thirst, and fatigue. We then describe how you can heal your own injuries and those of others, before the chapter concludes with rules for armor, equipment, and weapons.

COMBAT

Combat begins when you or someone else attempts to shoot, hit, or otherwise harm someone. The first thing to do is determine the order in which you may act – who is quick enough to strike first. This is done by drawing initiative cards.

INITIATIVE AND ROUNDS

Combat is divided into rounds. During each round everyone takes turns performing actions. When everyone is done, the round is over and another one begins.

Before the fighting begins, everyone involved draws a card to determine the order each participant (willing or otherwise) performs their actions in. Take ten playing cards numbered 1 to 10. Shuffle them and let everyone participating in the fight draw one card each. The value of the card is your initiative.

Put your initiative card next to your character sheet so everyone can see it. The Gamemaster puts the cards of NPCs and creatures in front of her, so you can see them as well. If you are facing multiple opponents identical to each other, the Gamemaster may choose to draw a single card for them as a group.

The one with the lowest initiative goes first. She performs her actions, followed by the person with the second lowest initiative, and so on until everyone has finished their turn. Once this is done, the round is over, and you start a new round in the same turn order. You do not draw new cards during the fight.

A round is not an exact measure of time. Usually each turn lasts a few seconds – long enough to aim and shoot, or dive out of the way.

SWAPPING INITIATIVE

You and another player character can choose to swap initiative cards during combat. You may only swap cards at the start of the round – before anyone has performed their actions. Your player characters must be able to talk to each other in order to swap initiative. In combat, extra successes can be used to outmaneuver the opponent (see skills in chapter 3), forcing her to swap initiative cards with you. If you are fighting a creature with multiple initiative cards, you get to pick the one you want.

PLAYING CARDS FOR INITIATIVE

The special *Vaesen* card deck (sold separately) includes ten initiative cards. Should you not have access to it, a standard deck of playing cards will suffice. The ace then counts as one.

ZONES AND DISTANCE

The scene where combat takes place is divided into zones. A zone is an area where it only takes a couple of steps to engage the enemy in close combat. To hit enemies one zone away you need throwing weapons or pistols, while reaching someone two zones away requires a rifle.

Zones can vary in size depending on terrain. Usually it is an open space delimited by walls, stairs, a river or other similar features. When combat begins the Gamemaster can draw a map of the area and mark each zone. The Gamemaster can also mark places

INTERESTING ZONES

You can make combat more interesting by varying the surroundings. Let two zones be separated by a wall, a locked door, or a great hedge that must be broken through. Perhaps a zone can only be reached from a certain place. Let there be a balcony where an enemy is hiding with a rifle.

Do not forget to describe the environment even when it does not affect any success tests. Make the ground muddy, the lanterns dazzling, or the smell pungent. Have hundreds of birds take flight when the first shot is fired.

where it is possible to take cover. Some obstacles can only be moved through, over or around by performing an action or passing a skill test. For example, it might take a successful **FORCE** test and a slow action to clear a pile of rubble blocking an exit.

CIRCUMSTANCES

If a fight takes place under particularly difficult circumstances, the Gamemaster may decide that certain skill tests are harder to pass. For example, when fighting in darkness you may need an extra success to use **RANGED COMBAT**.

The Gamemaster should only demand extra successes when the circumstances clearly reduce the chance of success. Fog and dim light may contribute to the atmosphere, but should not affect skill tests.

Since some creatures are not affected by things like darkness, it can be tactical for them to choose the time and place of the confrontation. The player characters can also use such circumstances to their advantage. The Gamemaster should even encourage this, for instance by providing indications that a certain vaesen is vulnerable to sunlight or cannot stand the smell of soap.

FIGHTING VAESEN

Everything you have heard about vaesen suggests that they can rarely be killed in combat. Physical confrontations with them will almost always be a matter of holding them off long enough to perform a ritual or escape.

Performing a ritual rarely requires any skill tests. Instead you describe what you are doing. If performed correctly, the ritual will drive the creature off.

> THE GAMEMASTER: *The myling seems bigger than before. Its bird-like body hovers over the mill without moving its wings. Suddenly it dives, banging its talons against the building. The mill leans further and further over the stream. Here and there boards come off or snap in two.*
>
> PLAYER 3 (ILJENKA PROKOTIN): *I open the hatch in the floor.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *Down there you see the corpse of a child, wrapped in rotting cloth. It can't have been dead for more than a couple of days.*
>
> PLAYER 2 (ASTRID LILJA): *I gently pick up the child. "We have to bury the body. Someone must give their name to the child, or the myling will never be at peace."*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *The myling's talons are tearing away at the walls around you.*
>
> PLAYER 1 (KASPAR STÅHL): *"It can have my name!" Is there any place we can bury it?*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *There's dirt in the hole where you found the body. You could bury it there.*
>
> PLAYER 2: *I take out my bible and my crucifix to consecrate the ground.*

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

Humans, animals, and most vaesen can perform two actions per turn, one slow and one fast. Slow actions take more time and usually involve a skill test. Fast actions are quick and rarely require a test to succeed; you might shout a word or two, or draw your weapon. If you want, you can perform a fast action instead of your slow one and thus get two fast actions that round.

Some fast actions are reactions – usually some kind of maneuver to evade attacks. Reactions may be performed at any time during the round. This means that you can use your fast action before your turn, or wait until after your turn to be ready for an enemy's attacks. When using reactions to protect yourself, you must choose to spend your action before you know whether your opponent's attack roll fails or succeeds.

TYPICAL SLOW ACTIONS

ACTION	SKILL
Attack with melee weapon	CLOSE COMBAT
Attack with ranged weapon	RANGED COMBAT
Unarmed attack	FORCE
Wrestle, push, grapple	FORCE
Flee	AGILITY
Persuade	MANIPULATION
Lure enemy to a certain place	AGILITY
Perform ritual (often takes several turns)	—
Survey the situation	VIGILANCE
Treat injuries	MEDICINE
Climb a wall	AGILITY

TYPICAL FAST ACTIONS

ACTION	SKILL
Draw weapon/ Swap weapon	—
Stand up	—
Dodge (reaction)	AGILITY
Parry (reaction)	CLOSE COMBAT/ FORCE
Break free (reaction)	FORCE
Hold (reaction)	FORCE
Chase (reaction)	AGILITY
Resist magic (reaction)	Depends on the magic
Shout more than a few words	—
Turn around	—
Close a door	—
Put out a candle	—
Move within the zone	—
Move into the next zone	—
Take cover	—

DESCRIBING ACTIONS

When choosing an action you must also describe how you perform it. This is part of creating the game's atmosphere and bringing the story to life. Perhaps you plunge yourself into the mud, swearing as you fire your rifle at the creature. Or maybe you crouch down, sneaking toward the enemy, gripping your knife so tight your knuckles turn white.

MOVEMENT IN COMBAT

You can use a fast action to position yourself anywhere within your zone. If the enemy is hiding behind cover or located far away in the zone, you may have to spend a fast action to get close enough to make a close combat attack. Entering an adjacent zone also requires a fast action.

CLOSE COMBAT

Attacking an enemy requires a skill test. Unarmed attacks are performed with **FORCE**. When armed with melee weapons you use **CLOSE COMBAT**. For ranged attacks you use **RANGED COMBAT**.

You need one success to hit your target, dealing damage as indicated on the *Weapons* table. The damage value shown is the number of physical Conditions that afflict the enemy as a result of your attack. When rolling multiple successes you can choose to deal additional damage (for more on using extra successes in

combat, see the skills in chapter 3). For each success the opponent suffers another Condition.

Human NPCs and animals don't suffer Conditions, but have a Toughness value instead, which works in a similar way. For instance, an NPC who is hit for 3 damage loses 3 Toughness points and gets 3 fewer dice on the next test (see *Non-Player Characters* in chapter 8).

RANGED WEAPONS

The *Weapons* table shows the range of ranged weapons. The value indicates how many zones your weapon can reach from where you are standing. A zero means that you can only use that weapon against enemies in the same zone, whereas a one or more means it possible to attack enemies in adjacent zones.

A revolver with range 0–1 can be used in the same zone as your enemy or one zone away. A rifle with range 1–3 can be used against enemies one, two, or three zones away from you, but not against those in the same zone.

DODGING AND PARRYING

When attacked, you can use your fast action to parry in close combat, or dodge a gunshot or some other ranged attack. Both of these are reactions you can use at any time during the round, even if it is not your turn. This means that you can choose to "save" your fast action in case you need to parry later in the round – but you can also use it before your turn.

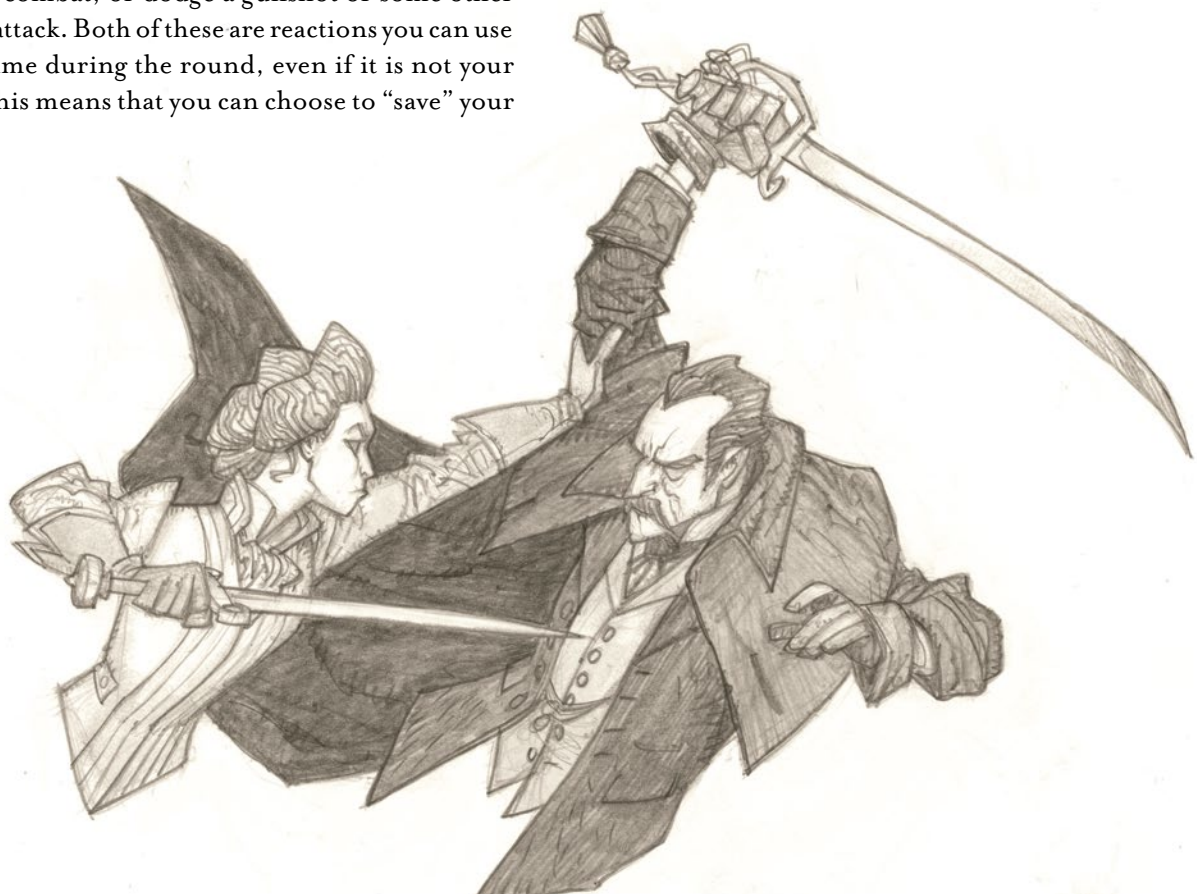
You dodge or parry by passing a skill test. You use **AGILITY** to dodge, and **FORCE** or **CLOSE COMBAT** to parry depending on whether or not you are armed.

Each success deducts one success from the enemy's attack. If you deduct all the enemy's successes, the attack misses. By rolling more successes than required you may choose to swap initiative cards with your enemy.

You must choose to dodge or parry before you know whether the enemy has succeeded with her attack.

AMMUNITION

You are expected to carry enough ammunition to use your weapon. In combat you have time to reload between actions. In certain situations the Gamemaster may ask you to keep track of how many bullets you have left – perhaps you are trapped in a network of caves and must preserve your resources. Or maybe you must rush to the desk, grab the silver bullets, and load your revolver before the werewolf reaches you.



HOLDING AND WRESTLING

When attempting to wrestle or grapple your opponent, you make a **FORCE** test. Your opponent can use a reaction to break free, also using **FORCE**. If you succeed, she is restrained and cannot perform any actions other than breaking free or shouting. Preventing your opponent from speaking by putting your hand over her mouth requires an extra success.

The opponent is restrained until you let her go or she breaks free. Once per turn she may use a fast action to try and break free. You can use hold as a reaction. The two of you then make an opposed roll for **FORCE**. The person being held must get more successes than her opponent in order to break free; if you get the same number of successes the situation remains unchanged. If you do not use a reaction to hold her, she only requires a single success to break free.

The person being held can parry, but cannot attack or flee until she manages to break free.

FLEEING AND CHASING

You use **AGILITY** to flee. A successful skill test means that you leave the fight; if you fail, you remain in the same zone. You cannot flee if doing so would require you to move through a zone occupied by an enemy (this does not include the zone the character starts her turn in).

"ACHE, ACHE, ACHE!
FROM HAND I BANISH YOU
WITH THIS COMMAND
FAR AWAY TO A DISTANT LAND"

– TRADITIONAL SPELL FOR SOOTHING PAIN

An opponent standing in the same zone as you can try to prevent you from fleeing. She uses a reaction to chase and then makes an **AGILITY** test. Each of her successes deducts one success from your result. If she manages to deduct all your successes, you stay in the fight. Both of you have moved one zone in the direction you were fleeing.

AMBUSH AND SNEAK ATTACK

In order to ambush or sneak attack your opponent you roll **STEALTH** against **VIGILANCE**. If successful you may draw an extra initiative card and pick the best one. Each extra success adds +1 to your first action of the round.

If the sneak attack fails you are detected, and your opponent may draw an extra initiative card and pick the best one. If there are several ambushers only one of you makes a **STEALTH** test. The result applies to all of you.

In some situations, the Gamemaster may decide that no skill tests are required in order to surprise your enemy. You may automatically draw an extra initiative card.

THE GAMEMASTER: *Through the window you see Father Torheim going to the privy out in the yard.*

PLAYER 2 (ASTRID LILJA): *I draw my knife and run over there, snatching the door open to slit his throat.*

THE GAMEMASTER: *Draw initiative cards. You get to draw an extra card since you take him by surprise. He draws a four.*

PLAYER 2: *I draw a three and a five, so of course I choose three as my initiative. I start by attacking him in close combat.*

THE GAMEMASTER: *He uses a reaction to parry with his arms. Make a* ***CLOSE COMBAT*** *skill test, and he will parry with* ***FORCE*** *since he is unarmed.*

INJURIES

As previously mentioned, taking damage causes you to suffer Conditions – the type of damage (mental or physical) determines the type of Condition that afflicts you. In combat, the weapon's damage value indicates how many Conditions you get.

BROKEN

When you have checked off all physical or mental Conditions and suffer another one of the same type, you become Broken. This means that you are incapacitated, and have sustained a critical injury that threatens to kill you or traumatize you so badly that you may never recover – immediately roll on one of the *Critical Injuries* tables, pages 65–66. You and the Gamemaster together decide exactly what happens to your character, depending on what caused you to become Broken.

BROKEN BY PHYSICAL INJURY

If you become Broken due to a physical injury, it can mean that you have passed out, are bleeding heavily, have broken several bones, or that you experience such severe pain that you lose control of your body. You automatically fail all tests. The only actions you can perform are talking succinctly and, if the Gamemaster allows it, crawling to safety. Each attack that hits you while Broken causes another critical injury.

BROKEN BY MENTAL INJURY

Being Broken as a result of acquiring mental Conditions means that you are overwhelmed by the situation you are in – perhaps you are suffering from delusions or have lost all hope of survival, or maybe you no longer know who or where you are. In any case, you have lost the ability to look after yourself and act with purpose.

If attacked while Broken by mental Conditions, you can flee, parry, and dodge, making skill tests as usual to see if you succeed. You cannot attack enemies or perform rituals, but are otherwise able to use your body and move around. You are still able speak, although what you say may not be coherent.

"Little Måns in Tvålåker was known for his thirst and his mischief. One dark autumn night he took a drunken leak in the troll forest. The next day, sitting in the outhouse doing his business, he felt something sticky cling to his behind and heard laughter coming from below. It was the trolls who had smeared him with tar, and it is said that the black color never went away. Little Måns never touched the bottle again, but still no woman has wanted him. He lives alone in his cabin, and some say he's marked by the trolls who continue to play tricks on him."

– Ida Westmark, washerwoman in Löt

CRITICAL INJURIES

When you become Broken you sustain a critical injury. Immediately roll on the table for either *Physical* or *Mental Critical Injuries*. You roll a D66, that is two six-sided dice, after deciding which die represents the tens and which represents the ones. For example, if you roll a three on the first die and a six on the other, the result is 36.

The tables on pages 65–66 show what kind of injury you get.

There is a fatal column for physical injuries, and a chronic column for mental ones. This means that some critical injuries must be treated by someone else (see *Treating Critical Injuries* later in this chapter) within a certain time limit – or else you will die or remain mentally broken forever. Should that happen, you discard your player character and create a new one. The Society has gained a new member.

Even if you receive treatment and cease to be Broken, the injury will affect you for the rest of the mystery. The *Critical Injuries* table states whether you have acquired a Defect or an Insight. Defects are things that affect you negatively, such as impaired vision in one eye or a general sense of dread that refuses to let up. Insights are superhuman abilities that help you, for example by giving you visions of the future or infusing you with power that makes it easier for you to pass a certain skill test

When you return to your headquarters, you must determine whether your Defects and Insights become permanent, or whether they heal or pass during the return trip to Upsala. Rules for this can be found in chapter 6, on page 88.

NPCS AND CRITICAL INJURIES

The rules for critical injuries, Defects, and Insights only apply to player characters. When an NPC becomes Broken she is effectively eliminated. The context determines whether she is dead, unconscious, or has succumbed to despair. The Gamemaster may of course roll on the *Critical Injuries* table for inspiration when describing what is happening.

PHYSICAL CRITICAL INJURIES

D66	INJURY	FATAL	TIME LIMIT	EFFECT
11	Foot injury	No	—	Defect: Limp, **AGILITY** −1
12	Broken fingers	No	—	Defect: Crooked fingers, **CLOSE COMBAT** −1
13	Ruptured tendon	No	—	Defect: Reduced mobility, **AGILITY** −1
14	Knee injury	No	—	Defect: Skewed walk, **AGILITY** −1
15	Fracture	No	—	Defect: False joint, **FORCE** −1
16	Splinters in the body	No	—	Defect: Ulcer, **INSPIRATION** −1
21	Skin lesion	No	—	Defect: Disfigured, **MANIPULATION** −1
22	Damaged throat	No	—	Defect: Wheezing, **STEALTH** −1
23	Eye injury	No	—	Defect: Impaired eyesight, **VIGILANCE** −1
24	Injured arm	No	—	Defect: Crooked arm, **RANGED COMBAT** −1
25	Facial injury	No	—	Defect: Deformed face, **MANIPULATION** −1
26	Crush injury	No	—	Defect: Tremor, **RANGED COMBAT** −1
31	Dislodged teeth	No	—	Defect: Toothless, **INSPIRATION** −1
32	Ear injury	No	—	Defect: Impaired balance, **CLOSE COMBAT** −1
33	Jaw injury	No	—	Defect: Drooling, **INSPIRATION** −1
34	Back injury	No	—	Defect: Hunchback, **AGILITY** −1
35	Severed fingers	No	—	Defect: Finger stumps, **RANGED COMBAT** −1
36	Nerve damage	No	—	Defect: Pain, **FORCE** −1
41	Torn ear	No	—	Defect: Impaired hearing, **VIGILANCE** −1
42	Abdominal injury	Yes	1D6 days	Defect: Stiff body, **CLOSE COMBAT** −1
43	Dirty wound	Yes	1D6 days	Defect: Sepsis, **FORCE** −1
44	Bleeding wound	Yes	1D6 days	Defect: Gangrene, **AGILITY** −1
45	Crushed genitals	Yes	1D6 days	Defect: Incontinence, **AGILITY** −1
46	Punctured eye	Yes	1D6 hours	Defect: One-eyed, **VIGILANCE** −1
51	Ruptured bowel	Yes	1D6 hours	Defect: Wears a colostomy bag, **AGILITY** −1
52	Deep arm gash	Yes	1D6 hours	Defect: One-armed, **FORCE** −1 (cannot use two-handed weapons)
53	Burst artery	Yes	1D6 rounds	Defect: Phobia of blood, Fear −2
54	Internal bleeding	Yes	1D6 rounds	Defect: Anemia, **FORCE** −2
55	Caved-in forehead	Yes	1D6 rounds	Defect: Altered personality, **OBSERVATION** −2
56	Cracked skull	Yes	1D6 rounds	Defect: Brain damage, **LEARNING** −2
61	Coma	Yes	1D6 days	Insight: Prophetic vision, **INVESTIGATION** +3
62	Spinal injury	Yes	1D6 hours	Insight: Living dead, **STEALTH** +3
63	Torn abdomen	Yes	1D6 hours	Insight: Supernatural focus, **RANGED COMBAT** +3
64	Torn body	Yes	1D6 minutes	Insight: Champion, **CLOSE COMBAT** +3
65	Punctured lungs	Yes	1D6 rounds	Insight: Guardian angel, **AGILITY** +4
66	Crushed chest	Yes	1D6 rounds	Insight: Supernatural strength, **FORCE** +4

MENTAL CRITICAL INJURIES

D66	INJURY	CHRONIC	TIME LIMIT	EFFECT
11	Confused	No	—	Defect: Dazed, INVESTIGATION −1
12	Overwhelmed	No	—	Defect: Sensitive to stress, STEALTH −1
13	Pushed too far	No	—	Defect: Fanatic, MANIPULATION −1
14	Incapacitated	No	—	Defect: Clumsy, AGILITY −1
15	Exhausted	No	—	Defect: Claustrophobic, STEALTH −1
16	Panic attack	No	—	Defect: Skittish, Fear −1
21	Sees her true self	No	—	Defect: Compulsive liar, INSPIRATION −1
22	Frozen facial muscles	No	—	Defect: Mask of terror, MANIPULATION −1
23	Whitened hair	No	—	Defect: Aged, OBSERVATION −1
24	Feelings of worthlessness	No	—	Defect: Shattered confidence, INSPIRATION −1
25	Paralyzed	No	—	Defect: Lacks initiative, INVESTIGATION −1
26	Trembling	No	—	Defect: Tremor, RANGED COMBAT −1
31	Confronted with mortality	No	—	Defect: Fear of death, CLOSE COMBAT −1
32	Fighting and screaming	No	—	Defect: Impaired impulse control, STEALTH −1
33	Divided attention	No	—	Defect: Hears voices, LEARNING −1
34	Disgusted	No	—	Defect: Hates filth, MEDICINE −1
35	Shaken	No	—	Defect: Sentimental, MANIPULATION −1
36	Stressed	No	—	Defect: Weakened immune system, FORCE −1
41	Extreme muscle tension	No	—	Defect: High-strung, AGILITY −1
42	Traumatized	Yes	1D6 days	Defect: PTSD, Fear −1
43	Furious	Yes	1D6 days	Defect: Capricious, MANIPULATION −1
44	Abandoned	Yes	1D6 days	Defect: Lack of trust, MANIPULATION −1
45	Overwhelmed by vulnerability	Yes	1D6 days	Defect: Paranoid, VIGILANCE −1
46	Crushed	Yes	1D6 hours	Defect: Impaired empathy, INSPIRATION −1
51	Ashamed	Yes	1D6 hours	Defect: Self-loathing, MANIPULATION −1
52	Detached	Yes	1D6 hours	Defect: Egocentric, MEDICINE −1
53	Out-of-body experience	Yes	1D6 rounds	Defect: Dissociating, RANGED COMBAT −2
54	Dream state	Yes	1D6 rounds	Defect: Nightmares, Fear −2
55	Return to childhood	Yes	1D6 rounds	Defect: Regressing, LEARNING −2
56	Horrifying realization	Yes	1D6 rounds	Defect: Mortified, MEDICINE −2
61	Hypersensitive	Yes	1D6 days	Insight: Healer, MEDICINE +3
62	Possessed	Yes	1D6 minutes	Insight: Haunted, LEARNING +3
63	Obsessed with detail	Yes	1D6 minutes	Insight: All-seeing, INVESTIGATION +3
64	Supernatural experience	Yes	1D6 minutes	Insight: Divine messenger, INSPIRATION +3
65	Invaded by other people's emotions	Yes	1D6 rounds	Insight: Absolute empathy, OBSERVATION +4
66	Split consciousness	Yes	1D6 rounds	Insight: Enlightened, LEARNING +4

DEFECT

Defects mean that your body has sustained an injury that will not heal, which makes life more difficult for you. A Defect can affect you once per session – the Gamemaster decides when. The Gamemaster can activate your Defect in the following ways:

- INCREASED DIFFICULTY: Adds a penalty to a skill test. The Defect states which skill it affects, and how many dice are deducted. Some Defects affect Fear tests.
- SOCIAL STIGMA: A non-player character reacts negatively to meeting you. Your injury might make her afraid or hostile. The Gamemaster describes what happens.
- MY OWN WORST ENEMY: A situation which you would normally be able to handle now automatically requires a skill test. Perhaps you acquire a limp and must pass an **AGILITY** test to make your way up a hill.
- LOSS OF CONTROL: The Gamemaster assumes control of your actions in a certain situation. This only lasts for a brief moment – then you return to normal. Perhaps your traumatic memories make you question what a friend is saying, or gaps in your memory cause you to confuse important pieces of information?

INSIGHT

Insights change you, giving you supernatural powers beyond anything normal for a human. You can use an Insight once per gaming session. Insights can be used in the following ways:

- INCREASED SKILL: Adds a bonus to a skill test. The Insight states which skill it affects, and how many dice are added.
- VISION: You have a supernatural experience, a prophetic vision, or an intuitive understanding of a problem. This provides a clue you need to solve the mystery. The Gamemaster sets the scene and gives you a clue. In some cases the Insight cannot be used this way. The Gamemaster decides.
- OPEN THEIR EYES: You can give another human the ability to see vaesen for the duration of one scene. When using this Insight, you must either touch the other person or say something that creates a strong emotional bond between you.
- CONTROL MY OWN DESTINY: You can use your Insight to control what an NPC is thinking or doing. The effect only lasts a moment and you cannot make her harm herself or her friends. The Gamemaster may decide that an NPC cannot be controlled at the moment.

PLAYER 3 (ILJENKA PROKOTIN): *I want to use my Insight to get a vision. I'm thinking that I go to the hotel for a nap, and that something visits me in my dreams.*

THE GAMEMASTER: *You fall asleep as usual, in the huge German bed with eider pillows. There are hunting trophies mounted on the wall, along with a beautiful mirror. Suddenly you're awakened by someone whispering your name: "Iljenka, Iljenka." It's still night, and it is impossible to determine where the voice is coming from. Seeing yourself in the mirror, you realize that you are dreaming. Your body is dead, your eyes are empty black sockets, and your hair, now gray, has grown to your knees.*

PLAYING OUT AND DESCRIBING THE EFFECTS

Tell the gaming group how your Defect affects your actions and appearance. The Gamemaster describes how NPCs react to it.

If you have an Insight, you must describe what happens when you activate it. Keep in mind that *Vaesen* is not a game about superheroes and magicians; you will not light up as if you are on fire or float in the air. The effects of Insights are subtle.

FEAR VALUE

SITUATION	FEAR VALUE
Scary – a vaesen, bloody corpse	1
Terrible – a werewolf, dead children	2
Unbearable – mass grave, tied up and subjected to serious violence	3

TERRIFIED

When Terrified you can choose either to:

- **FLEE:** You must use all your actions to flee from the thing that frightens you. There is no time to pick things up, talk, or help someone else. You choose the nearest and fastest way out of there.
- **FREEZE:** Your body refuses to move, rendering you completely immobile. You cannot talk or perform any actions whatsoever. If you are in a dark or concealed position, it takes a successful **VIGILANCE** test to spot you.
- **FAINT:** Your body goes limp, and a veil of darkness descends over the world. If you are lying in a dark or concealed position, it takes a successful **VIGILANCE** test to spot you.
- **ATTACK:** You attack the nearest hostile person or creature with whatever weapon you are currently holding. You lose the ability to make strategic choices, and will not stop attacking until the enemy is vanquished. You cannot perform any fast actions. If there are no enemies nearby, you explode in a fit of rage and start breaking things around you.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Your player character might end up in, or even cause, an array of dangerous or frightening situations that are not directly involved with combat, although they can certainly occur during combat as well. The rules for the effects of these situations are presented below.

FEAR

When encountering vaesen, being exposed to magic, or feeling scared or stressed as a result of seeing something horrible like dead bodies, it takes effort not to lose control and become Terrified. You must pass a Fear test.

Choose whether to tackle the situation with Logic or Empathy. The attribute value indicates how many dice you may roll. Add additional dice equal to the number of player characters present in the scene (maximum +3 dice). Player characters who are Broken or already Terrified do not count. If you become frightened during combat you use the number of player characters situated in the same zone as you.

Mental Conditions add penalties to Fear tests. On failure you can push the roll by acquiring a mental Condition. Some talents make Fear tests easier to pass.

The Fear value of the creature, magic, or occurrence indicates how many successes you need. If successful, you manage to control your emotions and can act normally. Extra successes have no effect.

On failure you become Terrified. Roll a six-sided die to see how many rounds it takes to regain control of yourself. Whether you flee, freeze, faint, or attack is up to you (see the Terrified text box). Once you have regained control you are no longer Terrified.

When you become Terrified, you suffer a number of mental Conditions equal to the Fear value. Each success on your Fear test reduces the number of Conditions that afflict you by 1. If you become Broken you sustain a mental critical injury.

Lastly, it should be noted that if you become Terrified in a situation that isn't particularly hazardous, where the duration of the effect or your exact reaction

is irrelevant, the Gamemaster can let you improvise your reaction and how long it lasts – for example if you are examining a mutilated corpse in an otherwise secure location.

> THE GAMEMASTER: *You push the knife into Father Torheim's throat, but instead of blood there's some kind of green, sulfur-smelling slime gushing from the wound.*
>
> PLAYER 2 (ASTRID LILJA): *I drop the knife and back out of the privy.*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *The priest's body dissolves onto the floor in front of you. You hear the roar of a thousand burning fires, steel drums, and the clanking of chains being dragged across sand. The slime rises from the ground, slowly taking the shape of a creature. Two eyes emerge, then a mouth. It smirks at you. Make a Fear test. The Fear value is 2.*
>
> PLAYER 2: *I use Empathy. One success. I fail, but only suffer one Condition. I choose to flee, and roll a D6 to see how many rounds I remain Terrified.*

EXPLOSIONS

Explosions hit everyone in the same zone. Dodge can be used to dive behind cover or into an adjacent zone. Cover reduces the damage of explosions, but armor does not.

The damage is determined by rolling a number of dice equal to the Blast Power. The number of successes shows how much damage is dealt to those hit by the explosion. The roll cannot be pushed.

You use **RANGED COMBAT** to throw explosives up to two zones (Range 1–2). Extra successes increase the damage. If you fail the skill test, the explosive charge hits a randomly selected adjacent zone.

The *Explosives* table indicates the Blast Power of different explosives and how many adjacent zones they affect. An explosive charge with one adjacent zone means that the explosion affects the zone where the charge detonates plus one additional zone. Exactly which adjacent zones it affects is determined at random. Mark the adjacent zones with numbers corresponding to a six-sided die. If there are three adjacent zones, they are marked with the values 1–2, 3–4, and 5–6. One die decides which zone is hit. For each zone away from the place of detonation, the damage decreases by 1.

EXPLOSIVES

TYPE	BLAST POWER	ADJACENT ZONES
Homemade grenade	6	0
Stick of dynamite	8	1
Big explosive charge	10	3

FIRE

Catching fire causes you to take damage and suffer a Condition. If the fire is not extinguished, you will keep taking damage at the start of each subsequent round. The amount of damage depends on the intensity of the fire (see *Fire* table), but also on an automatic **FORCE** test you make to reduce the damage – each success deducts 1 point of damage. The only actions you can perform while burning are attempts to extinguish the fire, flee, or shout.

FIRE

EXTENT	DAMAGE	SUCCESSES TO EXTINGUISH
Small part of the body is burning	1	1
Half the body is burning	2	1
Most of the body is burning	3	2

Extinguishing the fire is a slow action and requires a successful **AGILITY** test. More intense fires are harder to put out and require a greater number of successes. The successes are saved between rounds, which means that you can start extinguishing it on one turn and finish on your next.

Each round the fire is not extinguished, the Gamemaster rolls a die. A success means the fire spreads and increases by one step, until most of the body is burning.

POISON

Poison is measured in toxicity. A weak poison has toxicity 3, a strong one has toxicity 6, and an extremely potent one has 9 or more. When you are subjected to poison, you and the Gamemaster make an opposed roll. The Gamemaster rolls as many dice as the poison's toxicity, while you use **FORCE**. If successful you do not take any damage. If it is a tie you suffer one Condition. If you fail, you suffer a number of Conditions equal to the Gamemaster's successes.

In subsequent rounds you keep acquiring Conditions, though one fewer for each round. When you become Broken, you sustain a physical critical injury. The effect of the poison can be canceled by using an

"Whilst she engages
in carnal impurity
Find a dove and cut off
its genitals
Dry it and grind it into powder
To be ingested by
the one you desire"

– Traditional recipe for a love potion

antidote or passing a **MEDICINE** test with as many successes as the poison's damage.

FALLING DAMAGE

When you fall three meters or more onto a hard surface, the Gamemaster rolls an attack against you. She rolls as many dice as the number of meters you fall, minus 2. For each success you get a physical Condition. Armor offers no protection.

HUNGRY, TIRED, THIRSTY

If you do not eat, drink, or rest, the Gamemaster will ask you to make a **FORCE** test, where failing means you suffer a Condition. The Gamemaster decides whether it is physical or mental.

HEALING INJURIES

After violent or frightening encounters, you and your friends may need to heal your Conditions. This section describes ways in which you can help each other. Some of this has already been mentioned in chapter 3, but is repeated here to avoid having to flip back and forth unnecessarily.

TREATING CRITICAL INJURIES

When you have sustained a critical injury that might either kill you or become chronic, someone must treat you with **MEDICINE** or **INSPIRATION** before the time limit expires. If it succeeds, you cease to be Broken, while retaining all other Conditions. Extra successes can be used to heal additional Conditions.

If the attempt fails, the person treating you must either find help, gather more medical supplies, or move you to a safer location before she can try again. If no one has successfully treated you before the time runs out, you either die or become permanently Broken. Then it is time to create a new player character.

HEALING CONDITIONS

You can use **MEDICINE** to heal other people's physical Conditions, but not your own. You and your patients must spend a full day on treatment, in a secure location where you can drink, eat, and rest. You cannot do anything else that day.

CHEAT SHEET FOR MEDICAL CARE

ACTION	TIME	DESCRIPTION
Treat critical injury	Turn	Treat a Broken character with **MEDICINE** or **INSPIRATION** (each extra success heals an additional Condition)
Heal physical Conditions	Day	Use **MEDICINE** in a safe location to heal three Conditions per success for someone else (including Broken)
Heal mental Conditions	Day	Use **INSPIRATION** in a safe space while having a close dialogue to heal three Conditions per success for someone else (including Broken)
Rest	Scene	Describe a scene together with one or several other PCs to recover from two Conditions (except Broken), once per day.
Services	Scene	Use Resources and describe a scene where you, alone or with friends, receive medical services (see separate table).

> "OUT OF A SPRAIN AND INTO JOINT
> OUT OF DISORDER AND INTO ORDER
> BONE TO BONE
> JOINT TO JOINT
> AS IT WAS BEST
> WHEN IT WAS WHOLE"
>
> – TRADITIONAL INCANTATION FOR MENDING BROKEN BONES

Likewise, you can use **INSPIRATION** to cure others of their mental Conditions. In addition to spending a day, and having access to a safe place, food, and beverages, your friends must willingly engage in close contact and dialogue with you.

If the skill test succeeds, your patients heal a total of three Conditions which you distribute between them. They decide which Conditions are healed. Broken can also be healed this way. Each extra success can be used to heal another three Conditions. A failed skill test usually means that a day has been wasted, and may also give an enemy time to take further action against the characters.

A patient cannot have her physical or mental Conditions treated by more than one person at a time. However, it is possible for one person to treat the physical Conditions while another treats the mental ones. While you are treating the Conditions of others, you yourself may not receive treatment. That goes for both physical and mental Conditions.

ACTIVITIES

It is possible to heal your own Conditions by engaging in an activity that provides relaxation and rest. Summarize what happens or play a short scene. The activity must involve at least one other person, NPC or player character. For example, you can have a conversation with someone or pray alone in the woods while a friend keeps watch nearby.

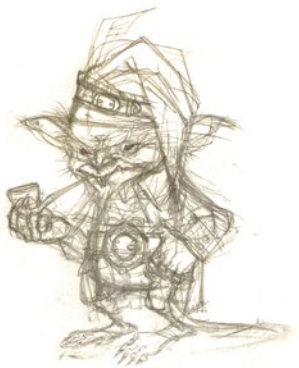
Activities heal two mental or physical Conditions of your choice, although Broken cannot be healed this way. Even if multiple player characters are participating in the scene, only one will heal Conditions. You can heal Conditions through activities once per day, or as often as the Gamemaster sees fit.

SERVICES AND ESTABLISHMENTS

Finally, it is possible to purchase medical attention or heal Conditions at a local doctor's office, by recuperating at some finer establishment, traveling lavishly, or resting at a nice hostel or hotel (see table on page 76). It counts as a special activity that must be bought with a roll for Resources (see below), with a couple of differences. In this case, all participants may heal Conditions, and in addition, you can perform the activity yourself. In other words, seeking medical attention at an establishment can only be done in lieu of a regular activity.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES

- Drinking alcohol
- Intellectual discussions
- Prayer/meditation
- Watching a play
- Romantic meeting
- Self-flagellation
- Storytelling
- Singing or dancing
- Keeping a journal
- Arguing
- Confession
- Playing cards
- Arm wrestling
- Tending to the sick, poor, or vulnerable



EQUIPMENT

Your player character may need to procure weapons, armor, or other equipment. This is usually done during the mystery's preparation phase, before leaving your headquarters, but it can also be done on site as the story unfolds. Rules for this are described below.

PREPARATORY EQUIPMENT

Equipment has a level between 1 and 5 that indicates its availability – how easy it is to acquire. Equipment is mostly obtained through contacts and status, represented by your Resources value (page 22). Your party is expected to procure equipment for the expedition at the start of the mystery, before you head out. It is part of the preparation phase (see chapter 9).

Each player rolls the number of dice indicated by their character's Resources value. The number of successes is used to purchase equipment – for example, an item with availability level 1 costs one success, while another with level 3 costs three successes.

You can donate successes to each other, or add them together to purchase higher level equipment and decide among yourselves who will carry the equipment, regardless of whose successes paid for it.

Each player may also decide to move points from their free Capital, but will then have less money to spend during the mystery (see below).

MODIFIER FROM RESOURCES

RESOURCES	LIVING STANDARDS	BONUS	CAPITAL
1	Destitute	–1	—
2	Poor	—	—
3	Struggling	—	1
4	Financially stable	+1	2
5	Middle-class	+1	3
6	Well-off	+2	5
7	Wealthy	+3	8
8	Filthy rich	+5	12

For normal purchases, from someone willing to sell at a fixed price, the Resources value is rolled to see how much money (or what promise of future payment) the player character is good for.

Rich individuals can automatically purchase equipment during an ongoing mystery by spending Capital (table *Modifier from Resources*), as long as it is not done with an opposed roll. The point is spent until the next mystery and can be used instead of a success test or added to increase the number of successes

SHOPPING DURING THE MYSTERY

Once on site, the PCs are expected to have money, status, or goods that correspond to their respective living standards.

When bartering with a non-player character who is reluctant to part with an item, you make an opposed roll for **MANIPULATION** and add a bonus based on your living standard (table *Modifier from Resources*). Equipment is bought by achieving a number of successes equal to or greater than the equipment's availability level.

ARMOR AND COVER

You can wear armor to protect yourself from attacks. Armor gives you a Protection value. When hit by an attack, you roll the number of dice indicated by the armor's Protection. Each success reduces the damage by 1. Wearing armor also makes you clumsy and imparts a penalty to **AGILITY**.

The *Armor* table lists the Protection value, the number of dice you must subtract from **AGILITY** tests, and the availability level.

An example of light armor is a leather cuirass. A medium armor could be to wear a helmet and a

ARMOR

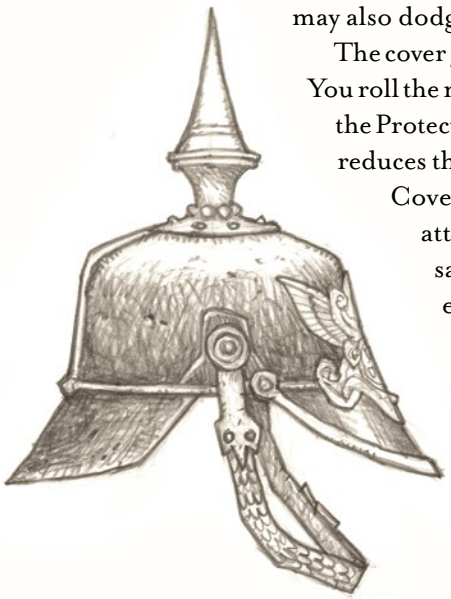
TYPE	PROTECTION	AGILITY	AVAILABILITY
Light armor	2	−1	2
Medium armor	4	−2	3
Heavy armor	6	−3	4

COVER

TYPE OF COVER	PROTECTION
Furniture	3
Wooden door	4
Hill	5
House wall	6

chain mail shirt, while heavy armor could mean putting on an old suit of plate mail armor before your encounter with a fearsome vaesen.

In combat you can also choose to take cover behind walls, barriers, or parts of the terrain to avoid getting hit by ranged weapons. This requires a fast action. While in cover you may also dodge attacks as usual.



The cover gives you a Protection value. You roll the number of dice indicated by the Protection value, and each success reduces the damage of the attack by 1. Cover does not protect against attacks from enemies in the same zone as you, since the enemy can go around or over the cover and attack you. An exception to this rule is explosions; cover protects against explosions even in the same zone.

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Tools, weapons, and other items help you by adding a bonus to your skill tests. The bonus indicates the number of extra dice you may roll. See the *Equipment* list for examples of items from each availability level. You may also visit various establishments or purchase services that can make things easier during the mystery or serve as a place for healing Conditions. Each service applies to the whole party, rather than any individual character. For examples, see the *Services and Establishments* list.

The *Weapons* table shows a list of weapons the characters might use. Damage indicates how many Conditions the opponent suffers if hit. Range shows which zones you can reach with your attack. Range 0–1 means you can attack enemies in your zone and adjacent zones, while 1–3 means you can attack enemies one, two, or three zones away, but not enemies in your own zone. Bonus indicates how many dice you may add to your success test when trying to hit your enemy. Skill shows which skill to roll for. Availability indicates how difficult the weapon is to obtain.

EQUIPMENT

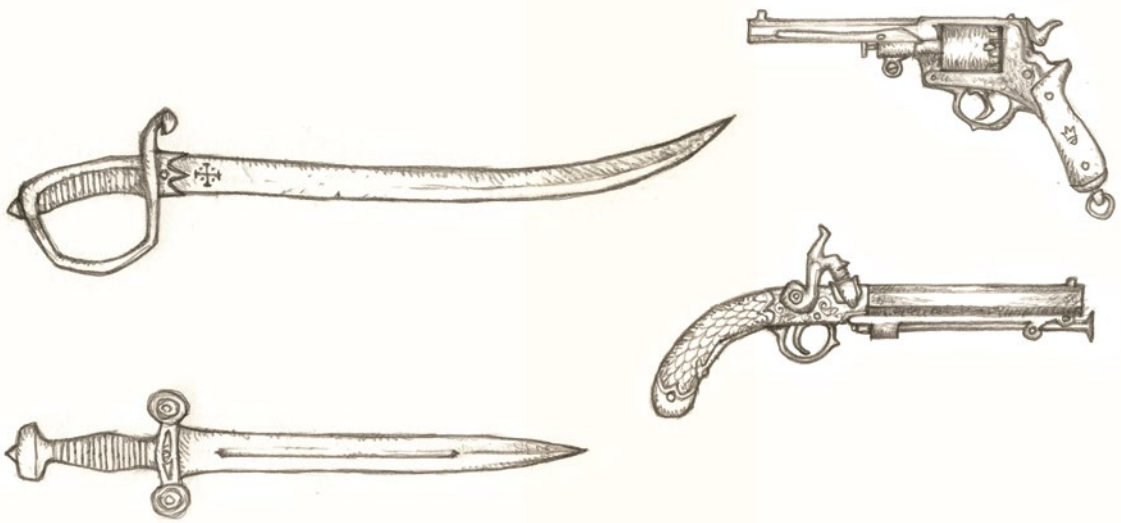
ITEM	BONUS	AVAILABILITY	EFFECT
Crowbar	+1	2	Break locks with **FORCE**
Lockpicks	+1	2	Pick locks with **STEALTH**
Opera glasses	+1	1	Use **VIGILANCE** from a distance
Binoculars	+2	2	Use **VIGILANCE** from a distance
Hunting trap	+1	1	Detect sneaking people with **VIGILANCE**
Hunting equipment	+2	2	Use **INVESTIGATION** in the wilderness
Tinderbox	+1	1	Use **INVESTIGATION** in dim places
Hurricane lamp	+2	1	Use **INVESTIGATION** in darkness and detect sneaking people with **VIGILANCE**
Compass	+1	2	Use **LEARNING** to find the way

EQUIPMENT

ITEM	BONUS	AVAILABILITY	EFFECT
Magnifying glass	+1	2	Use to find clues during **INVESTIGATION**
Camera	+2	3	Use to gain knowledge about a place with **LEARNING** or **INVESTIGATION**
Writing utensils and paper	+1	1	Use to take notes during **INVESTIGATION**
Slide rule	+1	2	Use to make calculations with **LEARNING**
Simple bandages	+1	1	Required for **MEDICINE**
Medical equipment	+2	2	Required for **MEDICINE**
Musical instrument	+1	2	Influence listeners with **INSPIRATION**
Mastercrafted musical Instrument	+2	3	Influence listeners with **INSPIRATION**
Cooking pot	+1	1	Cook with **INSPIRATION**
Field kitchen	+2	2	Cook with **INSPIRATION**
Simple provisions	+1	1	Last several days without **FORCE** tests
Nutritious provisions	+1	2	Last many days without **FORCE** tests
Liquor	+1	1	**INSPIRE** with alcohol
Fine wines	+1	2	**INSPIRE** and **MANIPULATE** with alcohol
Chemical equipment	+1	2	Determine cause of death with **INVESTIGATION**
Portable laboratory	+1	3	Produce poison with **LEARNING**
Book collection	+1	2	Use to find information for **LEARNING**
Old scrolls	+2	3	Use to find information for **LEARNING**
Crystal ball	+1	3	Use **OBSERVATION** to search for clues
Map book	+1	2	Use for **INVESTIGATION** and **LEARNING** when navigating
Weak horse	+1	2	Use for **FORCE**
Strong horse	+2	3	Use in **CLOSE COMBAT** and for **FORCE**
Pet dog	+1	1	Use for **CLOSE COMBAT**
Guard dog	+2	2	Use for **VIGILANCE** and **CLOSE COMBAT**
Hunting dog	+3	3	Use for **VIGILANCE**, **CLOSE COMBAT** and **INVESTIGATION**
Make-up	+1	1	Sometimes required for **MANIPULATION**
Disguise	+2	2	Sometimes required for **MANIPULATION**
Elegant disguise	+2	3	Sometimes required for **MANIPULATION** and can be used to sneak with **MANIPULATION**
Rope	+1	1	Use **FORCE** to climb
Rope ladder	+3	2	Use **FORCE** or **AGILITY** to climb
Weak poison (3 doses)	—	1	Required to poison someone (toxicity 3)
Strong poison (2 doses)	—	2	Required to poison someone (toxicity 6)
Extremely strong poison (1 dose)	—	3	Required to poison someone (toxicity 9)

SERVICES AND ESTABLISHMENTS

SERVICES	AVAILABILITY	EFFECT
Quack or feldsher	1	Heals Broken
Doctor	2	Heals Broken and one mental Condition
Personal doctor or surgeon	3	Heals Broken and any two Conditions
Bathing facility	1	Heals one mental Condition
Barber	2	Restores two mental Conditions
Errand boy	1	Allows the PCs to call in a contact during the next scene, if they pass a **MANIPULATION** test
Homing pigeon	2	Allows the PCs to call in a contact during the next scene
Postrider	3	Allows the PCs to call in a contact or get hold of an item small enough to be carried during the next scene
Carriage	2	Travel to a new location and heal one Condition
Train or boat	3	Travel to a new location and heal three Conditions
Shelter or hostel	1	Overnight accommodation with opportunities for rest or medical aid
Upscale hotel	3	Overnight accommodation and food that heals one Condition
Simple meal	1	Last a few days without **FORCE** tests
Fancy dinner	2	Last several days without **FORCE** tests
Banquet	3	Last several days without **FORCE** tests and heal a mental Condition



MELEE WEAPONS

WEAPON	DAMAGE	RANGE	BONUS	AVAILABILITY	SKILL
Kick or punch	1	0	±0	—	FORCE
Knuckle duster	1	0	+1	2	CLOSE COMBAT
Chair	1	0	+1	1	CLOSE COMBAT
Sledgehammer	2	0	±0	2	CLOSE COMBAT
Flail	2	0	+2	4	CLOSE COMBAT
Rifle butt	1	0	+1	—	CLOSE COMBAT
Knife or dagger	1	0	+1	1	CLOSE COMBAT
Rapier	1	0	+2	3	CLOSE COMBAT
Sword or saber	2	0	+2	4	CLOSE COMBAT
Crowbar	1	0	+1	2	CLOSE COMBAT
Axe	2	0	+1	1	CLOSE COMBAT
Quarterstaff	1	0	+1	1	CLOSE COMBAT
Halberd	3	0	+1	4	CLOSE COMBAT
Bayonet	2	0	+1	3	CLOSE COMBAT
Whip	1	0	+1	1	CLOSE COMBAT

RANGED WEAPONS

WEAPON	DAMAGE	RANGE	BONUS	AVAILABILITY	SKILL
Spear	1	0–1	+1	1	CLOSE COMBAT/ RANGED COMBAT
Bow	1	0–2	+1	1	RANGED COMBAT
Longbow	2	1–3	+1	2	RANGED COMBAT
Crossbow	2	0–1	+1	3	RANGED COMBAT
Pistol or revolver	2	0–1	+2	4	RANGED COMBAT
Musket	2	1–2	+1	3	RANGED COMBAT
Rifle	2	1–3	+2	4	RANGED COMBAT
Cannon	5	2–5	+1	5	RANGED COMBAT

They said that the black candles in the candelabra were made from the blood of bulls sacrificed by virgins on nights when the moon shone full. And yet I was drawn to their light. I was alone in a dark part of the headquarters where I had previously not been allowed. On my head I wore a hat much like a cockscomb. It was time for me, the youngest among us and the daughter of a lowly maid, to be accepted into the group.

The floor seemed to move beneath my feet. They had made me drink two carafes of wine, claiming it would help me cope with what was about to happen. There was talk of me facing some kind of vaesen. A lindworm was mentioned, and a kraken, although it seemed impossible. The thought of hearing a werewolf growl in the darkness terrified me.

The creak of a door opening grabbed my attention. A pair of glowing eyes appeared in the shadows, and there was a foul stench in the air. I grabbed a candelabra and raised it above my head, hot candlewax dripping onto my forehead. In its light a face emerged. It was a troll, and so gruesome was its face that I screamed and felt something warm and wet running down my legs. The beast was upon me. I was knocked to the floor, covered in the creature's ooze. Then I heard laughter around me. Several lanterns lit up in what turned out to be the library where we have tea every Sunday. I was holding a troll's head made of wax and cloth. I was soiled with shrimp soup left over from several days ago. Our leader gave me his hand and said it was time I took that silly hat off. Then we went to Elana's tavern, where we drank and sang well into the morning. I was part of a new family.

THE SOCIETY AND THE HEADQUARTERS

THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES a historical background to the Society – an organization made up of people with the Sight that for centuries devoted itself to studying and banishing vaesen, before it ceased to exist roughly ten years ago. It also explains how you and the other player characters band together to breathe new life into the organization and reopen the Society's old headquarters – an abandoned castle in the Swedish city of Upsala. The chapter concludes with a description of how you can explore unknown parts of the headquarters and work to improve it.

THE HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY

Linnea Elfeklint can tell you a lot about the founding of the Society and what happened afterwards. Once the game begins, it is up to the Gamemaster and the players to fill in the details where needed – perhaps a vaesen from the organization's past comes back to take revenge on the player characters for the actions of previous members, or to ask them for help?

A THURSDAY'S CHILD IS BORN

The founder of the Society was born into a poor family in a small town called Elsinore on the Danish island of Zealand at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Tine Rasmussen is said to have gained the Sight as a child after contracting smallpox and spending almost two weeks in a coma. When she woke up, seven of her nine siblings had died, and Tine could see strange creatures all around her. Growing up, she made contact with the fairies and trolls dwelling in and around the town, and helped other people in their interactions with vaesen. It is said that even as a teenager she was treated like a wise old lady, advising people both older and richer than herself.

"Off, off I soar
To Blockula's shore
To share in the feast
And the bliss of the Beast"

– Incantation recited by witches before their journey to Satan's gatherings at Blockula

Tine's life changed when the Church found out about her alleged abilities. On the priests' instruction, Tine's parents had her imprisoned and brought to the town square to be tried for witchcraft and, if found guilty, condemned.

The creatures Tine was in contact with helped her escape the wooden cage where she was awaiting trial, and the townspeople gave her a horse and some food. In the dead of night she fled south and made her way to Copenhagen, where she went into hiding under an assumed name.

THE ORDER OF ARTEMIS

By sheer coincidence, Tine came to live with a man who also possessed the Sight. The noble Mats Rosenberg was renting out parts of his home, which had previously been used by his late wife and child, to earn some extra money from passing travelers in need of accommodation. Mats had gained the Sight after being wounded by the werewolf that killed his wife and child, and was frightened by his ability and the things he saw.

After the ghost of his dead wife passed through the house in the middle of the night, Tine and Mats realized they shared the same ability. Shortly thereafter they founded the Order of Artemis for Studies of Vaesen, and set out to recruit more people with the Sight in order to study and understand such creatures.

One of those who joined the Order of Artemis was an Italian nun named Ana Rastelli, who had fled the Roman Inquisition and settled in Scandinavia. Ana took it upon herself to compile and catalog the Order's discoveries. She wrote numerous books and essays on vaesen, her life's work being the colossal tome titled *In Libro de Invisibilia* (The Book of the Invisibles).

The Order of Artemis grew and had a meeting hall built in central Copenhagen. In their encounters with vaesen, the members of the Order learned that the creatures would sometimes harm, enslave, and even kill humans, and several members believed that vaesen were in league with the devil. Mats wanted the Order to focus on locating and banishing vaesen,

while Tine insisted that the accumulation of knowledge should remain its primary objective.

When Ana and Mats passed away, others took their place. For two hundred years the Order of Artemis spread across Scandinavia, constructing several meeting halls – one of them in Upsala. And during all that time they gathered texts and information about vaesen and magic, building secret libraries of occult knowledge.

CARL LINNAEUS

In the early 18th century, the young scientist Carl Linnaeus left his home in Upsala and embarked on a scientific expedition to northern Sweden. No one knows whether Linnaeus already possessed the Sight at the time of his departure or gained it on his journey, but either way he returned with a secret journal titled *Homo Ferus*, in which he recorded numerous encounters with, and rumors about, vaesen. Linnaeus joined the Order of Artemis in Upsala and quickly became its leader.

Carl Linnaeus organized another expedition to Dalecarlia, this time composed of members of the Order, with the secret aim of studying vaesen. He planned to create a comprehensive scientific catalog of vaesen, which would make him a world-renowned scientist.

Linnaeus called his expedition to Dalecarlia "Societas Itineria Reuterholiana" – the Reuterholm Society. The name referred to the governor of Dalecarlia, Nils Reuterholm, who financed the expedition, unaware of its true purpose. Upon his return to Upsala, Linnaeus proclaimed that the expedition had been an "astounding success," and decided that the Order of Artemis's branch in Upsala should be renamed as the *Society for Studies of the Invisibles and Protection of Mankind*, or in short: the Society.

A few years after the expedition to Dalecarlia, Linnaeus gathered the members of the Society and announced that he was leaving the group, claiming to have lost the Sight. This sparked discussions that escalated into physical violence. Many felt duped, and expressed doubt as to whether Linnaeus had even had the Sight in the first place or just been lying all along to make a name for himself as a scientist. A week after the argument, someone set fire to the Society's headquarters, and before it could be extinguished all records of the Dalecarlia expedition were consumed by the flames.

"A merchant rode in on horse and wagon, claiming to have seen firsthand how the mare came to Husby and did not leave until every human and animal had drawn its last breath. He said the mare had always haunted Husby, slipping in during the night through cracks and keyholes to ride the sleeping men and women until they frothed at the mouth. This had been part of life in Husby, and the nightly visits could be profitable since the mare would leave some coins on the porch. But the mare had changed, no longer dispensing any money. The last time she came to Husby, she was governed by wrath and no one knew what had angered her so. That night the merchant slept on a kitchen bench at the parsonage, with a mare's broom for protection, and it saved him. He lay awake, hearing the men and women of the village – even the pastor himself – breathe like trumpets without getting any air, and one by one they died. The merchant said the mare had turned malicious, and that she now traveled from village to village, clearing them of life.

– Alva Frisk, miller's wife in Långsjö parish

THE DIVIDED SOCIETY

When the Society was first founded in the 16th century, there were conflicting views about the aims and methods of the organization. Several splinter groups have emerged over the years, but most of them soon ceased to exist. Some used magic themselves – like the group in the early 15th century led by a former schoolteacher named Caja Larsson, who was arrested for witchcraft in Stockholm and imprisoned. Others allied themselves with vaesen, like the followers of sea captain Vilfred Steen who allegedly walked off into the woods of Värmland for good after Captain Steen married a vaesen.

A group that has endured through the years is the so-called Rosenbergers, named after Mats Roseberg who co-founded the Society. The Rosenbergers consider vaesen to be monsters created by Satan, and are tracking down and killing or banishing them. Many of their members are former soldiers or hunters, well-trained in the art of combat. The group is currently led by Johanna Lampinen, a Finnish priest's daughter said to be an exceptionally talented exorcist. Relations are strained between the Society and the Rosenbergers, and meetings between the groups have on several occasions resulted in violence. The current numbers and whereabouts of the Rosenbergers remain unclear.

THE OULU MASSACRE

In the 18th century, the entire Order of Artemis was renamed the Society. During this period, many members around Scandinavia were wounded or killed in their encounters with vaesen, and several meeting halls were closed down. Many of the Society's members felt that the balance between humans and vaesen had changed; the covenant that had been made centuries ago no longer existed. In some places the creatures were attacking humans without provocation, and in others they vanished without a trace.

The purpose of the Society shifted more and more to banishing vaesen that attacked humans. They did so by using the Sight, as well as the vast stores of knowledge the organization had accumulated since the sixteenth century. The rural population may have known everything about appeasing and coexisting with the creatures, but when it came to driving them off, no one could match the Society.

At the end of the 18th century, northern Finland was ravaged by a family of giants trying to drive the humans away. The matriarch of the family, Bestla, claimed to be the protector of the wilderness, the mountains, and the woods, and would savagely attack hunters and miners in the area. The Society focused their efforts on repelling the threat, and more than a hundred people with the Sight gathered at Oulu Castle to formulate a strategy. But the giants got there first. That night, Bestla had her children set the castle ablaze. Almost every member of the Society perished in the fire.

The three who made it out alive – Baroness Katja Kokola, Professor Albert Wredenhielm, and Countess Hilma af Thulenstierna – did so by diving into the castle well. After spending several hours in the freezing water, they were eventually rescued, and promptly left Finland and fled back to Castle Gyllencreutz, the Society's headquarters in Upsala.

THE SOCIETY DWINDLES

The three who survived the fire in Oulu tried to recruit new members and rebuild the Society. But in the years that followed, all three disappeared.

Professor Wredenhielm went to northern Norway to investigate reports of strange lights in the sky and was never heard from again. Baroness Kokola was last seen getting on a ship in southern Sweden, supposedly to banish a creature in the depths of the sea. Countess Hilma af Thulenstierna traveled east, leaving no information as to where she was going.

The new recruits either died or went mad in their encounters with vaesen, or chose to save themselves by leaving the organization. One of these was Linnea Elfeklint, who is currently living at Upsala Asylum. It was she who told the player characters about the Society, and she has also suggested that there may be other groups of similar orientation operating across Scandinavia – without knowing their exact whereabouts or how to contact them.

THE SOCIETY IS REBORN

You and the other player characters have for different reasons decided to track down and dispose of vaesen, or help resolve conflicts between humans and vaesen. At the start of the game, you have already contacted Linnea Elfeklint. She has told you about the history of the Society and given you the keys to its headquarters in Upsala – Castle Gyllencreutz.

The game begins with you entering the castle, where you will begin the process of exploring and rebuilding it. Soon you will head out on your first expedition into the unknown.

WHO ARE WE?

Your Motivation should explain what makes you want to re-establish the Society and start hunting down vaesen. You and the other players may also have to think about how your characters first met, and what makes you want to work together. You could be friends or relatives who have all gained the Sight, you could be hired by the same nobleman, or you could be total strangers who met by coincidence or were brought together by destiny for a greater purpose. Alternatively, you could all have tracked down Linnea individually and gotten to know each other through her.

LINNEA ELFEKLINT

Linnea Elfeklint is a former member of the Society who chose to leave the organization. She is renting a room in a simple apartment in central Upsala, but spends most of her time at the city's mental asylum. Linnea refuses to visit the castle. You meet at the asylum or at an inn called the Burgher and Baker.

Linnea is dirty and confused. She often forgets your names and who you are. Her knowledge about the Society comes in short bursts, as she gradually recalls things she would rather forget. What she says is often contradictory.

When asked to describe her expeditions and encounters with vaesen in greater detail, she turned silent, and shortly afterwards you were informed that she had been readmitted to the asylum. Linnea's reasons for helping you rebuild the Society are so far unknown.

If you would rather use another person instead of Linnea, you are of course free to make up your own elderly individual to guide and aid the player characters.

WHO IS LINNEA?

As a group you can work out exactly how your player characters came in contact with Linnea, and what reasons she gives for wanting to help you. Some suggestions are presented below:

- Linnea has noticed that vaesen have grown more aggressive and are no longer behaving as they used to. Worried about the humans they afflict, she reached out to you, one by one, and brought you together to convince you that the Society must be restored.
- You have all had strange dreams about Linnea and the Society, and sought her out in an attempt to make sense of what is happening to you. Linnea does not know why you are dreaming about her, but understands the meaning of those dreams: the people of Scandinavia need protection from vaesen, and you have been chosen to re-establish the Society.
- You found each other in your search for other people with the Sight. Trying to learn more about the supernatural, you came across information about the Society. It was you who tracked down Linnea, and she has reluctantly agreed to help you revive the organization.
- One of you was attacked by a vaesen which Linnea helped banish. Afterwards she told that person about the Society, saying that she was too damaged by her experiences to resume her search for strange and hostile creatures, but she could at least help the person seek out the other player characters.
- You are members of a club, a secret covenant, or some other kind of group. There you approached each other, realizing that all of you possessed the Sight. At one point you heard another member – a man who happened to be Linnea's doctor at the asylum – talk about her nightmares and fantasies. You realized she knew much more about vaesen and the Sight than you did, and decided to meet with her.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETY

Linnea has told you about how the Society used to operate, and what traditions its members adhered to. How you choose to run and shape the Society's branch in Upsala is of course entirely up to you, but maybe there is something to be learned from history?

The Society has traditionally been led by a council of senior members. The council convenes in the salon on the ground floor, overlooking the garden and the Fyris river. Members who misbehave can be voted off the council. Decision are taken by consensus. Usually a meeting is held once a week, or whenever there are urgent matters to discuss – often rumors of vaesen in some remote part of Scandinavia.

The council appoints the members of expeditions that are sent to study and neutralize the creatures. Before they head out, all available resources are used to give the expedition the greatest possible chance of success. The Society's members are obligated to contribute knowledge and equipment. Everything belongs to everyone – for the good of the cause. Tasks and equipment are assigned to whoever is best suited for the job.

THE SOCIETY'S CREED

I solemnly swear not to be corrupted
Bloodied or weakened
By the spawn of the underworld
I swear not to let my mind be muddled
Clear of eye
Keen of thought
Pure of deed
I swear to put
The Society before
My own ambitions and emotions
My life for my comrades
I pledge my life to you, holy Artemis
For the battle against vaesen and the protection
Of mankind

TITLES WITHIN THE SOCIETY

Members with specific responsibilities are given a title with which they ought to be addressed. A person can have multiple titles. Not all positions have to be filled.

RESPONSIBILITY	TITLE
Priest and ritual master	Chaplain
Equipment	Armorer
Security	Guardian
Money and other resources	Treasurer
Contact with the outside world	Shadowmaker
Headquarters	Castle Master
Library and information gathering	Librarian
Physical training and medicine	Custodian

The Society's mixture of Catholic, pagan, and Greek traditions includes a multitude of rituals. Before an expedition is launched, its members are blessed by a priest at the chapel. They then gather in a room in the cellar before a statue of the goddess Artemis. In the light of lit candles and burning incense, the members recite the Society's creed (see text box). They stand in a circle, pressing their left-hand index and middle finger against their heart. Each is presented with a dried flower for the journey, symbolizing the love and power of the organization. The ones who return must be cleansed with a ritual in which they confess their sins.

The Society's symbol is the ouroboros , the lindworm biting its own tail. Originating from ancient Egypt, the ouroboros also appears in Norse mythology as the giant serpent Jörmungandr.

CASTLE GYLLENCREUTZ

The headquarters is a huge, neglected old castle on a hill by the Fyris river. It is surrounded by a black iron fence and has a gate flanked by statues of griffins. The garden and the paved walkway leading to the entrance are overgrown with bushes, trees, and shrubbery. There are plenty of mice, rats, foxes, and birds. In the backyard there is a dilapidated jetty on the shore of the Fyris river, and a boarded-up boathouse. The garden has several smaller buildings – most likely used as stables, storage rooms, and servants' quarters – as well as a number of statues and a fountain. Up on a small hill there are seven rotting crosses of wood.

The castle's facade is decorated with monstrous gargoyles. It is a three-story building with several towers and a vast underground cellar.

Castle Gyllencreutz stood vacant for many years. Its old furniture is covered in cobwebs, and mice have nested in couches and chairs. Rats defend their homes, while bats and crows come and go through the holes in the ceiling. Parts of the building reek of mold, and the leaky roof lets rain in.

Most of the castle is unexplored; many of its doors are either locked or nailed shut. By reading old journals left behind by previous residents, you have learned that there are several libraries, a laboratory, an infirmary, a chapel, an observatory, and halls for magical studies. There should also be cells where vaesen were held – all of this hidden behind the many secret doors you have identified but not yet opened.

Shortly after taking over the castle you were visited by a man called Algot Frisk. He claimed that his ancestors had served at Castle Gyllencreutz for hundreds of years, and insisted on being hired as steward of the castle. Steward Frisk works hard to keep you fed, help you dress, and clean up the castle, taking every opportunity to point out the need for more staff. Furthermore, it should be noted the good Steward on many occasions has sported a smile that suggests he knows more about the Society and vaesen than he lets on. So far, none of you have gotten him to reveal his secrets.

CHALLENGES IN UPSALA

Assuming ownership of Castle Gyllencreutz will attract many prying eyes. You may be visited by journalists, police officers, criminals, and others wishing to learn your secrets or get their hands on your assets.

HOW DOES IT START?

There is no predetermined opening scene – the game could start with you meeting Linnea for the first time, or entering the castle and starting to explore. Or maybe you have owned it for a few days and are already well-acquainted with Linnea? In the latter case, the opening scene could involve you acquiring information that leads you toward the first mystery.

If you are only going to play a single mystery, you can ignore the castle completely and start on the way to the mystery.

If the truth about who you are and what you are doing ever comes out, it will not be long before people in Upsala try to have you committed to the asylum. It is up to you to make up your own cover story.

CAMPAIGN RULES

If you are playing multiple mysteries with the same player characters – either as a campaign where the mysteries form a longer story, or as stand-alone narratives – there are things you need to do between the mysteries. Every time the player characters return to headquarters you must determine whether any Insights and Defects obtained (see chapter 5) become permanent or wear off. Furthermore, the player characters may expand and upgrade their headquarters. But there is also a risk of threats arising in Upsala – vaesen who for whatever reason are after the player characters or their headquarters, or ordinary humans such as police officers or journalists looking to cause trouble. The rest of this chapter concerns campaign rules indicting what you should do between mysteries.

YOUR HEADQUARTERS

After solving mysteries you will have an opportunity to improve your headquarters – Castle Gyllencreutz. You can hire staff, explore unknown parts of the castle, add new facilities or renovate existing ones. It might be fun to draw a sketch map of the headquarters and add new rooms and people as the castle expands.

Once you return to Upsala after a mystery, you must together answer questions (see text box) about what you have experienced – each affirmative answer yields one Development point. Before taking on a new mystery you can use your Development points to purchase Upgrades for your headquarters. Unspent Development points are saved.

Every time you purchase an Upgrade there is a risk that a threat will arise. The Gamemaster makes

a hidden roll using a number of dice equal to the cost of the Upgrade. Should any of the dice roll a success, the Gamemaster chooses a threat from the table. If multiple Upgrades are purchased on a single occasion, the Gamemaster makes multiple rolls and adds an extra die for each additional Upgrade. It is therefore possible for several threats to arise at the same time.

At the start of the game you already have two Upgrades: *The Society's library* and *Butler Algot Frisk*.

THREATS

When the die roll indicates that a threat arises, the Gamemaster must either pick one from the list or make up one of her own. Extra successes can result in a stronger threat, if the Gamemaster so desires.

The Gamemaster should name any NPC or vaesen relevant to the threat, and preferably start a countdown where the threat becomes more imminent and dangerous with every step. This can take place over multiple mysteries, with different threats overlapping and making life in Upsala less safe. But it is also possible to immediately reveal the threat in a scene and let the player characters handle and neutralize it.

Threats usually arise during scenes that take place at headquarters or in Upsala before or after a mystery, but some threats (such as a snooping journalist) might follow the player characters on their travels. Threats can also strike at the player characters' headquarters while they are away – a burglar, for example.

Threats may very well be connected to the player characters' Dark Secret, backstory, or a previously completed mystery. For example, if an ardent police officer turns up, convinced that there are illegal activities going on at Castle Gyllencreutz, that person could be an NPC from a player character's past – perhaps a brother or a childhood friend? If any player character should happen to awaken a vaesen at headquarters, the creature could be aware of her Dark Secret and decide to exploit it.

QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT POINTS

After completing a mystery you must together answer the following questions. Each affirmative answer yields one Development point.

1. Did you play at least one scene at the headquarters?
2. Did you encounter a new type of vaesen?
3. Did you visit a place of magic?
4. Were you subjected to magic?
5. Did you bring occult books or other important items back to headquarters?
6. Did you make important contacts?
7. Was the mystery particularly difficult and epic?
8. Did you solve the Mystery?

EXAMPLE THREAT

The players purchase an Upgrade to their headquarters, and the Gamemaster gets one success on her roll. She decides that the threat should be a ghost that has come to life at the castle. The ghost's name is Mads, and he is the spirit of a deceased member of the Society buried in disgrace after being falsely accused of consorting with vaesen. The creature will not have peace until he is vindicated. Mads will appear according to the following countdown:

1. Objects are switching places, the player characters are having nightmares, and the servants report that an unknown man has been spotted in different rooms of the castle, though no one has seen such a person enter or leave the building.
2. Mads becomes aggressive and uses magic to frighten the player characters – he uses his spectral voice, summons vermin to swarm the building, and conjures terrifying illusions.
3. Mads attacks the (in his view) haughtiest of the player characters.

LIST OF THREATS

Pick one of the following threats or make up your own.

- Policeman convinced that there are illegal activities going on at the headquarters
- Thieves planning to steal from the headquarters
- Crime boss who wants to extort or threaten the player characters
- Journalist intent on exposing the player characters' secrets at any cost
- Relative who wants one of the player characters committed to the mental hospital
- Criminal friend or relative in search of help
- Vaesen wakes up inside the castle and becomes obsessed with a player character
- Vaesen seeks out the castle and moves in to take control of it
- Researchers demand access to the books in the castle library – but are really out to steal occult books
- Noblewoman who claims to own Castle Gyllencreutz and wants the player characters to move out
- Priest convinced that there is an illegal cult at the castle
- Government official who has decided to demolish the castle
- Bank clerk who comes to collect on an old debt connected to the castle's previous owner
- Occult group that views the player characters as competitors
- A vaesen posing as a helpless child

EXAMPLE RECOVERY ROLL

During an unusually blood-soaked mystery, Kaspar Ståhl has gained two physical Defects, limp and gangrene, as well as a physical Insight. When the group returns to headquarters the player makes a recovery roll. The dice show two successes. The player decides to use one success to heal one of the Defects (gangrene) and the other to make the Insight permanent. Kaspar has now recovered from the gangrene, while the remaining Defect (limp) and the Insight both become permanent.

DEFECTS AND INSIGHTS

After completing a mystery you must determine whether the Defects and Insights (see page 67) you have gained become permanent or wear off. This is done with a die roll called recovery. On failure your Defects automatically become permanent and your Insights wear off before the next mystery. Insights and Defects that become permanent can never be removed.

If you have gained both physical and mental Insights or Defects, you make a physical recovery roll and a mental recover roll.

The number of dice used for the physical recovery roll is determined by adding the values of your Physique and Precision together – for example, if you have Physique 3 and Precision 2, you should roll 5 dice. For each success you may either heal a Defect or make an Insight permanent.

For mental Defects and Insights you roll a number of dice equal to your combined Logic and Empathy. Each success heals a Defect or causes an Insight to become permanent.

By purchasing Upgrades to the Society's headquarters, you can get a chance to push your recovery rolls or gain additional dice on your rolls. Conditions acquired during the mystery do not affect recovery rolls.

EQUIPMENT IN THE HEADQUARTERS

Besides your personal items, equipment acquired during a Mystery is assumed to be irrelevant once the Mystery is concluded. Months can pass before the next Mystery takes place, and once it does, it is

DISCOVERY

Some Facilities are places that can be discovered (page 91). They are relics from the headquarter's glory days, now abandoned or forgotten and dilapidated. If the facility's prerequisite and cost are met, you as Gamemaster can read the discovery text to your players. Then they must decide whether to spend Development points to find out what the facility will be.

time to acquire new equipment. Therefore, every player character only gets to keep one newly acquired item or weapon on the character sheet. This does not apply to equipment that you started the game with, mementos and everyday items – you always get to keep these. The headquarters will, once it is expanded with Upgrades, gain the ability to store additional equipment, but also to reward the player characters with free items to bring on their expeditions without spending Resources.

UPGRADES

There are three types of Upgrades: Facilities, Contacts, and Personnel. Facilities are new rooms or functions you discover or construct at headquarters. Contacts are people who can help you, and Personnel are servants or new members of the Society.

All Upgrades consist of several categories: Prerequisite, Cost, Function, and Asset. Prerequisites are things you need before the Upgrade can be purchased – Resources means that one of the player characters must have at least the specified value. Cost is the number of Development points to be spent to purchase the Upgade. Function and Asset together explain the purpose of the Upgrade and what effects it provides you with.

Each Upgrade can use its Function and its Asset once per mystery. The only exceptions are the Infirmary, Chapel, and Treasure Chamber, which can be used once by each player character – for example, everyone in the group may push their recovery rolls. Some Upgrades can be purchased multiple times, which allows them to be used more than once.

The gaming group is free to come up with other Upgrades in addition to the ones below.

FACILITIES

These Upgrades are rooms and functions in the castle and on the castle grounds.

ARMORY

Room with weapons on display in glass cases.

PREREQUISITE: Resources 5 and Weapons Corridor

COST: 5 (Can be purchased up to three times)

FUNCTION: During the preparation phase, each level allows the player characters to bring a melee weapon or an armor from availability level 2 without using Resources.

BUTTERFLY HOUSE

An annex to the glazed garden full of beautiful butterflies and insects.

PREREQUISITE: Botanical Garden

COST: 2

FUNCTION: A player character who spends a scene in the botanical garden heals two mental Conditions.

CARP POND

A carp pond with little streams and waterfalls under white wooden bridges.

PREREQUISITE: Botanical Garden

COST: 2

FUNCTION: One of the player characters can gain an extra Advantage before a mystery: Unwavering Calm.

INFIRMARY

A well-equipped infirmary.

PREREQUISITE: Resources 5 or Doctor in the group

COST: 6

FUNCTION: Makes it possible to push all physical recovery rolls.

"Oh, hallowed kings three
Whom this night will I see?
Whose table will I set?
Whose bed will I make?
Whose bride will I be?
Whose name is for me?"

– Traditional song sung by girls to see their future husbands in their dreams

KENNEL

An enclosure for breeding and training dogs.

PREREQUISITE: Gamekeeper or Hunter in the group

COST: 4 (Can be purchased up to three times)

ASSET: During the preparation phase, each level allows the player characters to bring a guard dog or hunting dog without using Resources.

LIBRARY

An enormous library.

PREREQUISITE: Available from the start

COST: 0

FUNCTION: Clues can be found here.

LOCAL TAVERN

Tavern (named by the players) *of varying quality not far from the castle.*

PREREQUISITE: —

COST: 4 (Can be purchased up to three times)

FUNCTION: One player character per level can gain +2 to their physical recovery roll.

MAP ROOM

A room with a large globe. There are numerous maps and route descriptions piled on a massive oak table.

PREREQUISITE: Library or Professor

COST: 4

ASSET: One of the player characters can gain an extra Advantage before a mystery: Old Map.

OBSERVATORY

One of the towers is converted into an observatory, ready to gaze at the stars.

PREREQUISITE: Patron or Inventor

COST: 5

FUNCTION: The player characters can seek information among the stars and planets. One of the player characters can gain an extra Advantage before a mystery: Divination or Weather Prophet.

ASSET: One player character can bring the item Binoculars without using Resources.

PIGEON LOFT

Cage with homing pigeons.

PREREQUISITE: Caretaker

COST: 4

ASSET: The player characters can bring a homing pigeon with them on the mystery and use it to send for help during a subsequent scene.

SEANCE PARLOR

A parlor for contacting spirits.

PREREQUISITE: Resources 4 or Occultist in the group

COST: 5

FUNCTION: The player characters can hold a séance before a mystery and gain access to additional clues – the Gamemaster decides which ones.

SHOOTING RANGE

Basement or walled garden complete with targets.

PREREQUISITE: Weapons Corridor

COST: 5 (Can be purchased up to three times)

FUNCTION: All castle guards carry ranged weapons from availability level 3.

ASSET: During the preparation phase, each level allows the player characters to bring a ranged weapon of their choosing from availability levels 1 to 3, without using Resources.

STABLE

A stable for horses and carriages.

PREREQUISITE: Resources 5 or Vagabond in the group

COST: 4 (Can be purchased up to three times)

ASSET: During the preparation phase, each level allows the player characters to bring a scrawny horse without using Resources.

THE ANNALS OF THE SOCIETY

A hefty tome with written accounts of encounters with vaesen.

PREREQUISITE: —

COST: 4

FUNCTION: At the end of a gaming session, a player can record the party's experiences, granting each player character one additional experience point.

WEAPONS CORRIDOR

Corridor or room with simple display cases full of weapons.

PREREQUISITE: Resources 4

COST: 4 (Can be purchased up to three times)

FUNCTION: During the preparation phase, each level allows the player characters to bring a melee weapon from availability level 1 without using Resources.

WORKSHOP

Well-equipped workshop.

PREREQUISITE: Resources 4

COST: 4

FUNCTION: One of the player characters can gain an extra Advantage before a mystery: Well-Maintained Weapons or Well-Maintained Tools.

DISCOVERED FACILITIES

These Upgrades are rooms and functions that have fallen into disrepair, been walled off, or been forgotten since the previous members of the Society left the castle.

BOTANICAL GARDEN

Glazed garden with gorgeous greenery and fragrant flowers.

PREREQUISITE: Gardener

DISCOVERY: An overgrown part of the grounds with particularly exotic plants conceals crumbled arches, broken glass, and stone pillars…

COST: 4

FUNCTION: A player character who spends a scene in the garden heals two mental Conditions.

CELLAR VAULT

A simple vault or wine cellar used as a storage space.

PREREQUISITE: —

DISCOVERY: Through a cracked door in the cellar you see a dark passageway leading under the annex…

COST: 4 (Can be purchased up to three times)

FUNCTION: Each level can store up to 3 common items or weapons from previous mysteries.

CHAPEL

A place of Christian worship.

PREREQUISITE: Resources 5, or Priest in the group

DISCOVERY: Outside one of the castle's wings is an old ruin. You can see leaded mosaic windows and an altar, overgrown with thorn bushes and dried-up vines…

COST: 6

FUNCTION: Can push all mental recovery rolls

ASSET: The player characters can bring with them the power item holy water.

DIFFERENCE ENGINE

The inventor builds a mechanical computing machine in one of the old castle halls.

PREREQUISITE: Inventor

DISCOVERY: One dark night your inventor bursts into the great hall. "*Eureka! I have figured it out! We only need a few more parts…*"

COST: 6

FUNCTION: Facilities cost one less Development point to construct.

DUNGEON

Barred room in the basement.

PREREQUISITE: Cellar Vault

DISCOVERY: A damp stone staircase leads down to a collapsed cellar vault. Inside you glimpse a sturdy, barred door of rusty iron…

COST: 3

FUNCTION: NPCs imprisoned here cannot escape without help.

FORGOTTEN GALLERY

A vast passageway full of showcases displaying the Society's previous finds.

PREREQUISITE: Guard or Occult Library

DISCOVERY: Behind an old shelf in a hallway there are scrape marks on the floor, and a mysterious wind seems to be coming from a chamber on the other side…

COST: 6

FUNCTION: One player character gains +1 to Resources until the end of the mystery.

ASSET: The player characters can bring with them a clue in the form of old journal entries from previous members of the Society. They gain +1 to **INVESTIGATION** or **OBSERVATION** when using the clue during the mystery.

GYMNASIUM

Fitness room.

PREREQUISITE: —

DISCOVERY: In the back of an old tool shed is a cracked door that seems to lead to a part of the annex with dirty windows along the roof ridge. Inside you see a hall full of old junk…

COST: 5

FUNCTION: A player character who spends one scene in the gymnasium heals a physical Condition.

OCCULT ARCHIVE

A vault enclosed by thick, leaded walls and protective inscriptions.

PREREQUISITE: Occult Temple or Mystic

DISCOVERY: The alcoves in the passageways behind the library have been bricked up, and behind the porous stone you see impenetrable lead doors…

COST: 6 (Can be purchased three times)

FUNCTION: Each level can store up to 3 power items or magic items from previous mysteries.

OCCULT LIBRARY

A library of banned occult books.

PREREQUISITE: An occult book from a mystery

DISCOVERY: One of the library's bookcases echoes as if hollow…

COST: 5

FUNCTION: Once per mystery a player character can gain a free success on a roll for locating or understanding occult knowledge. The player must state what information the character recalls.

OCCULT TEMPLE

A place for worshipping vaesen and demons.

PREREQUISITE: Occult Library

DISCOVERY: Loose stones in the Occult Library are covered with runes that read "worship" and "submission". Hidden under the stones is a leaded hatch that someone has bricked up…

COST: 5

FUNCTION: One of the player characters can gain an extra Advantage before a mystery: Occultist.

OCCULT WORKSHOP

A workshop for crafting items that affect vaesen.

PREREQUISITE: Occult Library

DISCOVERY: Behind a statue in the Occult Temple is a bricked-up vault with a lead rune that reads "creation"…

COST: 5

FUNCTION: Can craft one power item before a mystery. The Gamemaster rolls or picks an item from the list on page 123, or makes one up.

SELF-FLAGELLATION TOOLS

Tools and inventions for punishing the body.

PREREQUISITE: Dungeon

DISCOVERY: In the castle basement there is a cluttered cupboard full of terrifying tools and old inventions…

COST: 4 (Can be purchased up to three times)

FUNCTION: One player character per level can gain +1 to their mental recovery roll.

TREASURE CHAMBER

A large vault full of the Society's hidden treasures.

PREREQUISITE: Banker or Forgotten Gallery

DISCOVERY: Behind a bricked-up doorway is a large iron door. A numbered dial, like that of a safe, mocks your ignorance…

COST: 6

FUNCTION: All player characters gain +1 Resources for the duration of the mystery

FAMOUS AND INFAMOUS TEXTS

There are lots of texts and books the Society can use to improve their knowledge of vaesen. For example:

- *In Libro de Invisibilia* by Ana Rastelli. This book laid the foundation for the existence and purpose of the Society. The text was lost more than a hundred years ago. For reasons unknown, no copies were ever made. There are whispers claiming that the content of the text does not match the reader's expectations. Perhaps the book portrays the nun Ana Rastelli in a different light than in the stories. Perhaps she had other objectives and means than the rumors suggest. Whatever the case, the text holds unique knowledge about vaesen.
- *Fragen – Antworten* by Max Brugger. This is a philosophical text from the eighteenth century. The book was banned by the church in 1792 due to its association with the occult. The questions raised in the book are said to shatter the reader's view of herself and the world. The text is written in red ink on black paper. The cover features a lindworm devouring its own tail.
- *Malleus Maleficarum* is a text from the 15th century that was used as a handbook by witch hunters of both Catholic and Protestant faith. It focuses on witches, but also contains quite a bit of information about vaesen.
- *Homo Ferus* by Carl Linnaeus. Linnaeus' secret journal describes the many encounters with vaesen on his travels in northern Sweden in 1732. It is said that the book was stolen from the library of Upsala University and now rests in private hands.
- *Death in Helsingland* by Sonia Lindegaard. This is a popular novel about a woman forced to defend her family against a werewolf. Few outside the Society are aware that Sonia was a Thursday's Child and the story is true.
- *A Description of the Northern Peoples* by Olaus Magnus is a collection of 22 books written in the 1500s. Many of the essays are attempts to describe Scandinavia and its people. It includes a great number of tales about mysterious creatures, and how to defend against them.
- *Paholaisen Pue* by Veeti Kovisto is a confusing collection of essays, poems, and songs penned by Finnish Satanists who one summer gathered on Åland to perform some kind of ritual. The participants have now been lost to obscurity – all that remains is the book. They say that a person who reads the text gains tremendous riches but also an altered personality.
- *The Dark Surrounds Me* by Morten Christensen. According to the author, this thousand-page tome contains transcripts of conversations with ghosts and other undead beings. The book includes detailed instructions on how to lure, bind, and control vaesen. Morten Christensen was once a National Antiquarian in Copenhagen, but abandoned his position and his family several years ago. He is claimed to have gathered a group of like-minded people in a remote village in northern Norway.

CONTACTS

These are helpful individuals or institutions. All people must be named by the players. Feel free to play out a scene as the player characters recruit the contact.

BANKER

Can pay in bonds.

PREREQUISITE: Resources 5

COST: 5

FUNCTION: Once per mystery a player character can raise her Resources by 2 for the duration of one scene.

FIXER

A handy contact.

PREREQUISITE: Six or more Facilities at the headquarters

COST: 4

FUNCTION: Restore or retrieve a lost memento at the end of the mystery without spending experience points (see rules for memento on page 22).

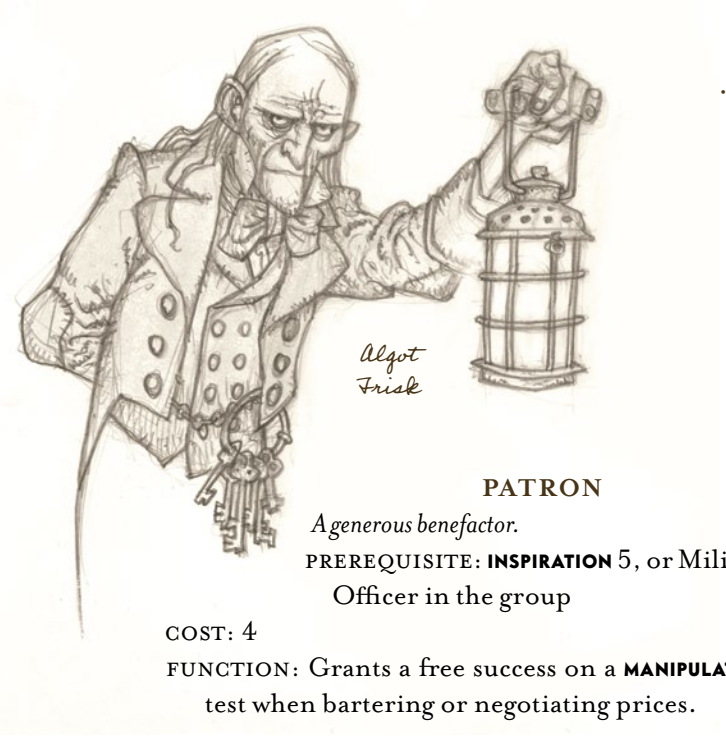
JOURNALIST

Investigative reporter on your side (page 166 in chapter 8).

PREREQUISITE: Resources 4, or Author in the group

COST: 4

FUNCTION: Can provide additional clues and come along on mysteries as a helping hand.



PATRON

A generous benefactor.

PREREQUISITE: **INSPIRATION** 5, or Military Officer in the group

COST: 4

FUNCTION: Grants a free success on a **MANIPULATION** test when bartering or negotiating prices.

POLICE CONSTABLE

Kindly policeman. (Stats as police officer on page 166 in chapter 8).

PREREQUISITE: Resources 5, or Private Investigator in the group

COST: 4

FUNCTION: Can provide additional clues, fabricate evidence, protect against criminals, etc. The Gamemaster decides what is possible.

PROFESSOR

Contact at the university.

PREREQUISITE: Resources 5, or Academic in the group

COST: 4

FUNCTION: Grants a free success on a roll for finding or understanding information in Upsala.

PSYCHIATRIST

Treatment at the mental hospital.

PREREQUISITE: A player character must have become mentally Broken during the mystery

COST: 4

FUNCTION: Gives a player character +2 on her mental recovery roll.

PERSONNEL

These Upgrades are servants or humans with the Sight who join the Society. The players must give them names and a brief description before they can be used.

BUTLER ALGOT FRISK

Algot is already at the castle when you move in.

PREREQUISITE: Available from the start.

COST: 0

FUNCTION: Manages the headquarters.

CARETAKER

A handy janitor looking after the property.

PREREQUISITE: Workshop

COST: 3

FUNCTION: Repairs facilities in the castle if something is broken, for example by a threat.

CHEF

Efficient housekeeper with a passion for large portions.

PREREQUISITE: —

COST: 4

FUNCTION: Cooks fancy dinners at the headquarters and makes sure that everyone is well fed.

ASSET: Provides each player character with simple provisions during the preparation phase, without rolling for Resources.

COACHMAN

Quiet horse groom who lives in the stable.

Can come along on mysteries, played by the Gamemaster. The players spend 10 points on attributes (max 4) and 8 on skills (max 3), two of which must be based on Physique. Physical Toughness 1, Mental Toughness 1 (page 166 in chapter 8).

PREREQUISITE: Stable boy

COST: 4

ASSET: The player characters have their own carriage with two strong horses that they can use to travel to a new location and at the same time heal a Condition (see page 76).

GAMEKEEPER

Keeps the animal population down on the estate.

PREREQUISITE: Shooting Range

COST: 5

FUNCTION: Upgrades the weapons from the shooting range to availability level 4 for the player characters and the castle guards.

ASSET: The player characters bring along hunting equipment or a hunter trap without rolling for Resources during the preparation phase.

GARDENER

An artisan of nature who looks after the castle grounds.

PREREQUISITE: Resources 5

COST: 4

FUNCTION: All food from the headquarters automatically counts as nutritious.

ASSET: Can provide the player characters with three doses of weak poison (toxicity 3) or one dose of strong poison (toxicity 6) during the preparation phase, without rolling for Resources.

GUARD

Guard at the castle.

The players spend 12 points on attributes (max 4) and 6 on the skills **CLOSE COMBAT**, **RANGED COMBAT**, **VIGILANCE**, and **OBSERVATION** (max 3 in any given skill). Physical Toughness 2, Mental Toughness 1 (page 166 in chapter 8). The guard also gets a weapon at availability level 1.

PREREQUISITE: —

COST: 5 (Can be purchased multiple times)

FUNCTION: Protects the castle from burglars and enemies, as best they can – the Gamemaster decides.

HOUSE PHYSICIAN

Troubled doctor who moves into one of the castle's wings.

PREREQUISITE: Infirmary

COST: 6

FUNCTION: Automatically treats Broken and two Conditions for all player characters at the headquarters during one scene per mystery.

ASSET: Provides the group with medical equipment in the preparation phase without rolling for Resources.

INVENTOR

Eccentric engineer.

PREREQUISITE: Professor

COST: 5

FUNCTION: The player characters can build one mechanical item of their choosing before the mystery, regardless of availability level.

ASSET: Provides the group with chemical equipment without rolling for Resources.

MYSTIC

Recluse exploring the occult.

PREREQUISITE: Occult Library

COST: 5

FUNCTION: Can gain a clue about a power item or magic item that has something to do with the mystery's vaesen.

QUARTERMASTER

A former officer with lots of contacts and an organizational mind.

PREREQUISITE: Banker or Patron

COST: 6

FUNCTION: All player characters gain +2 Capital, regardless of living standard (see page 73). It can be used in the preparation phase or during the mystery.

RECRUIT

A person with the Sight is recruited to the Society.

The players spend 12 points on attributes (max 4) and 10 on skills (max 2). The Gamemaster decides the recruit's Motivation and Dark Secret. The players and the Gamemaster together create a relationship with each of the player characters, as well as with other recruits. Physical Toughness 1, Mental Toughness 1 (page 166 in chapter 8).

PREREQUISITE: **INSPIRATION** 4

COST: 5 (Can be purchased multiple times)

FUNCTION: Can come along on mysteries. Controlled by the Gamemaster.

STABLE BOY

A hardworking youngster.

PREREQUISITE: Stable

COST: 3

FUNCTION: All horses the player characters take from the headquarters count as strong.

The carriage stopped, and I stepped down to a trampled patch of dirt on the outskirts of the village — a world away from my soft bed in the city. The light seemed brighter here. There was neither the smell of smog in the air nor gaslights lining the muddy paths, and rather than lurking in the alleys between buildings the way they did back home, the customary beggars and thieves were completely absent. The cows grazing in the meadow beyond the general store were emaciated, and a girl was beating them with a stick. In the center of the village loomed the church, decorated with strange statues.

My reason for coming here was an anonymous letter. The writer claimed that people in the village had lost their minds and gone to live among the trees — naked, without any tools or furniture. They smeared themselves with black mud from the Kalhara ravine deep within the forest, singing songs to the stars. The writer said they had attacked and eaten a city dweller passing through the area. One such as myself.

A rifle hung from a strap over my shoulder, and its weight lent me a feeling of security, however false it might prove to be. To assuage my fears, I kept reminding myself that exposing the secrets of the Kalhara ravine would require logic and cunning, not violence. Still, I kept the rifle close.

The village priest approached me. I was to spend the night at his home while waiting for the others to arrive in the morning. Would I still be here to greet them, or would I too be consumed by the darkness of the countryside?

THE MYTHIC NORTH AND UPSALA

THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES some insight into mythical Scandinavia and the conflicts that are driving people apart. The city and the countryside are pitted against each other as two increasingly different habitats for humans and vaesen alike. The city of Upsala – which will be the starting point of all your mysteries – is described with several examples of places you can visit, either to search for clues or drive away the vaesen occupying them. The chapter also includes brief descriptions of important cities in nineteenth-century Scandinavia, which can be used as inspiration when creating a backstory for your player character.

This chapter focuses on the general features and atmosphere of Scandinavia. The idea is that you will create your own version of Scandinavia which may be more or less similar to the historical one. Most things in the game world should be vaguely defined until you need to clarify something that appears in a mystery. For example, if you want to play a mystery centered around an enchanted kinetoscope, you can decide that technology has come far enough for such things to exist. In other words, you do not have to decide exactly what year it is.

YOUR MYTHIC NORTH

Vaesen takes place in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark – in a version of our world that is entirely its own. It is a time and place that mixes events, cultural expressions, and conflicts from the entire 19th century, in a way that will be unique for each gaming group. Together, the players, and particularly the Gamemaster, get to decide what their version of Scandinavia will be like.

Use what you know, or think you know, about the 19th century, or whatever fantasies you might have about the era, to create a setting that highlights your player characters and stories. If Finland being occupied by the Russian Tsar is what it takes to make your characters' journey to the outskirts of Tampere more exciting, and to build up to an encounter with a vaesen, then occupied it will be. If you want your journalist to write her socially critical texts on a typewriter, then typewriters will have been invented and made available.

CONFLICTS IN SCANDINAVIA

The Mythic North is marked by a series of conflicts that affect your player character. Europe is starting to recover from the Napoleonic Wars that raged across the entire continent, and a number of new wars have already begun, or are about to. News of the American Civil War is coming in from across the Atlantic.

A growing nationalism divides people in all countries into two groups: us and them. It becomes important to define what a true Swede or Norwegian really is, and those who fail to meet the criteria risk being ostracized, deported, or even killed. Conflicts are growing within the Church as well. Catholics are pitted against Protestants, and those who dare go their own way with small independent denominations are persecuted and severely punished.

Industrialization sparks conflicts between the old and the new, between workers and employers, and between people living in the cities and those who go there to seek their fortune. Tensions arise between those wishing to leave the rural villages and those wanting to preserve everything that previous generations helped build. In the forests, peasants and maids are fighting the logging and mining companies that seek to evict them in order to secure timber and ore for the urban factories.

There is a rift between the city and the countryside. The city is vibrant and dynamic – the machines in the factories constantly belch out smoke through huge smokestacks, while shipments of goods and raw materials come and go from the ports and train stations. With each new load, people, stories, and new ideas flow into the cities. The lower class multiplies in the suburbs, while city centers become crowded with new buildings where businessmen are turning gold and labor into profit. Donations from the wealthy are bolstering the universities, where it is believed the spread of knowledge will help man subdue nature. Anything is possible; anything can be explained and understood.

The rural villages seem to wither and die. Houses are abandoned and fields covered with rotting vegetation. The water from the marshes is rising, seeping into people's homes. When the food runs out, the sick and poor are left to die in the snow. The wilderness is untamed and eternal.

There are profound injustices in the distribution of wealth and knowledge. The Church and the nobility still have power, but they are threatened by the bourgeoisie and the influence that trade and property provide. The world is hierarchical, politically as well as domestically. At the bottom are the poor and dispossessed, the children, and those who have been declared insane or enemies of the state.

There are also tensions brought on by the fight surrounding the rights of men and women. It is a time when gender inequality is being challenged and women gain the right to inherit property and make their own decisions about their lives. Women are also becoming more prominent in the workplace. At the same time, new gender ideals emerge that give rise to new constraints – women should be delicate, wear corsets, and preferably faint in difficult situations. A feminist countermovement is launched, leading to greater freedom of movement for some. The strict dress codes that denote gender and social status are starting to erode.

THE
MYTHIC
NORTH
Moskenstraumen
Hammerfest
Tromsø
Narvik
Bodø
Trondheim
Luleå
Piteå
Uleåborg
Kajana
Brahestad
Asele
Umeå
Jacobstad
Nykarleby
Idensalmi
Sundsvall
Wasa
Kuopio
Christinestad
Nystott
Hudiksvall
Björneborg
Räumo
Tammerfors
Gefle
Falun
Friedrichshamn
Borga
Helsingfors
Upsala
Stockholm
Bergen
Stavanger
Christiania
Drammen
Tönsberg
Arendal
Christiansand
Stromstad
Örebro
Arlstad
Nyköping
Norrköping
Söderköping
Linköping
Wenersborg
Bohus
Gothenburg
Ulricehamn
Kalmar
Borgholm
Öland
Gottland
Wisby
Dagoe
Hapsal
Oesel
Wesenberg
Weissenstein
Dorpat
Wolmar
Riga
Goldingen
Mitau
Memel
Braslaw
Kejdany
Wilna
Königsberg
Walkowischken
Elbing
Marienburg
Danzig
Grodno
Aalborg
Viborg
Aarhus
Fredericia
Odense
Christianstad
Lund
Copenhagen
Malmö
Bornholm
Halmstad
Wexiö
Schleswig
Kiel
Lübeck
Rostock
Stralsund
Wismar
Glückstadt
Stade
Hamburg
Wittenberge
Emden
SINUS BOTHNICUS
SINUS FINNICUS
SINUS RIGENSIS
MARE BALTICUM
100 km

Revolutionary groups form all over Europe, infecting many with various philosophies of how society should be arranged – and the idea that the status quo can not only be challenged, but overthrown.

LIFE IN THE CITY

Cities are the heart of the industrial revolution. Important decisions have previously been made in castles and mansions by representatives of the clergy and nobility; now the burghers are using their capital to take control of political and economic decisions, and their homes are in the cities.

The Church is losing authority to the scientists, who are objectively studying and cataloging everything from stones and moss to human thoughts and behavior. No mystery is left unexamined. The accumulation of knowledge takes place at the universities, which sometimes grow into independent communities within the cities.

On the edge of town, the working class lives in squalor – vast slums are emerging where temporary tents and huts become permanent shacks and houses. Unions are trying to unite factory workers in the struggle for better living and working conditions, but are opposed with violence and cunning by police and capital holders.

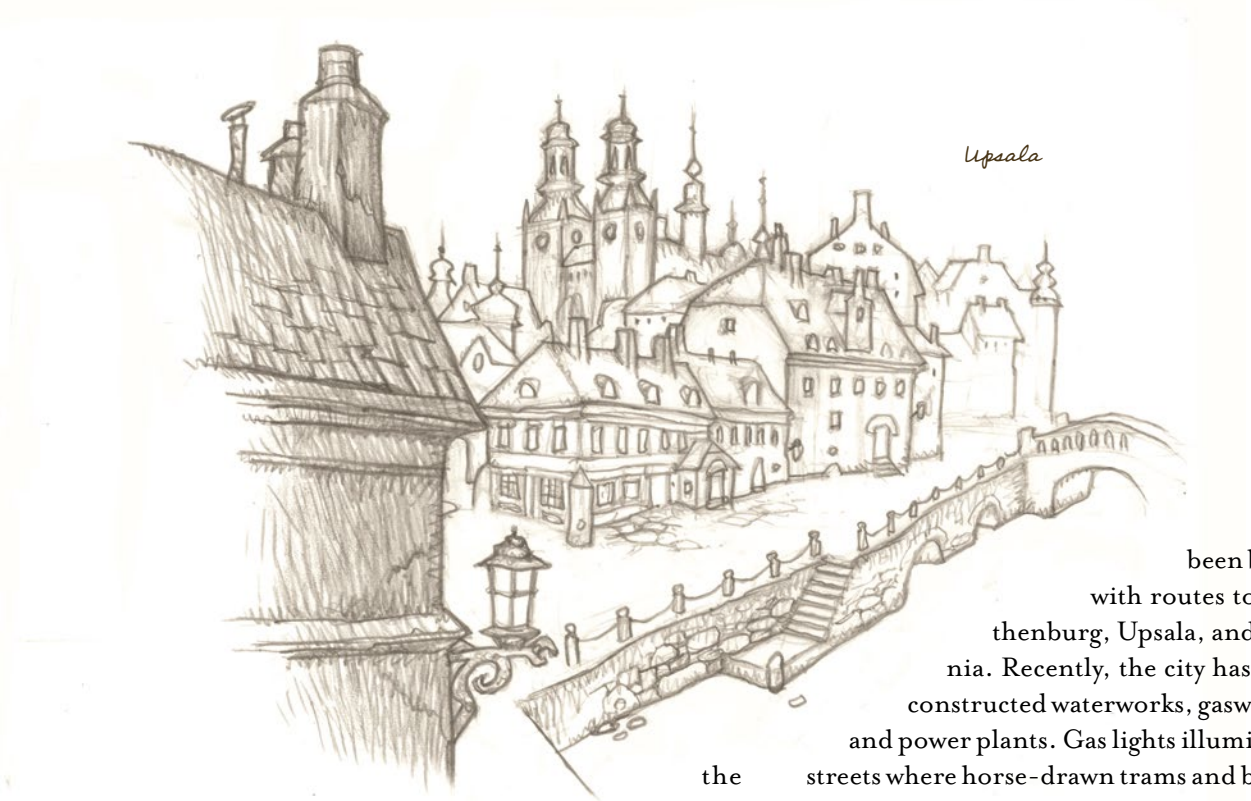
Inventions are changing the lives of many people in the cities. Soap and factory-made cotton clothing improve hygiene and reduce the spread of disease. Robust brick buildings are raised throughout the city, and straight streets are laid out with ample space for coaches and pedestrians. The sewers are expanded, and the filth that would previously pile up in the alleys can now be washed away from the city centers. Healthcare also improves, thanks to new technology and medication.

Ships from colonies around the world enter the ports with spices, tea, opium, and exotic animals in cages, spreading stories of strange cultures and landscapes.

The police force becomes more organized, with greater responsibility for controlling the general population, and the role of the state changes. Citizens must be governed, supervised, and shaped according to national ideals. Many governments employ secret police to monitor and crack down on the

"To find out who is a witch
Drop a coin in the aisle
of the church
And as you bend down
to pick it up
Look between your own legs
And you will see witches
and other creatures"

– Traditional instructions
for exposing witches and vaesen



nation's enemies. Spies infiltrate foreign powers to gather information and prepare for armed conflicts.

Scientists no longer view mental illness as a sign of demonic possession; instead they establish mental institutions with modern means of curing the sick. These new treatments are often painful and tend to make matters worse: a very high-pressure jet of water is blasted at the sick person's head; patients are strapped to rotating chairs and spun until they faint, and many believe in cure through fright. Sometimes they will even hide body parts in patients' beds – one of many forms of abuse and sadistic treatments practiced by medical professionals.

IMPORTANT CITIES IN NORTHERN EUROPE

Your player characters and the people they encounter may be well-traveled individuals with roots outside Upsala. Described below are some of the major cities of 19th century Scandinavia.

STOCKHOLM

The capital of Sweden is home to roughly 100,000 people, but the population is growing fast due to urban migration and high birth rates. The city suffers greatly from starvation and disease, and one in three children die before the age of one. The first railroad station has been built, with routes to Gothenburg, Upsala, and Scania. Recently, the city has also constructed waterworks, gasworks, and power plants. Gas lights illuminate the streets where horse-drawn trams and buses move about at a leisurely pace. The king and the royal family reside in a luxurious palace.

CHRISTIANIA

Christiania is the capital of Norway. The population is soaring, and the city is the center of the first Norwegian railroad and steamship lines. Timber and ore flow in from the wilds and are shipped throughout Europe.

COPENHAGEN

The capital of Denmark is marked by political debates. There is great dissatisfaction with the absolute monarchy. Copenhagen is the commercial hub of northern Europe, and the city is rapidly expanding. Many of its new, hastily constructed residences are cramped and dark, with tiny alleys and yards. Cultural life is flourishing. Several theaters and zoological gardens have recently been built.

HELSINKI

The Finnish capital is a relatively young city with few inhabitants, half of which speak Swedish. It has recently seen the addition of numerous buildings, including a railroad station and the Uspenski Cathedral. The city center is called Kluuvi, and is now composed of wide boulevards and vast plazas. In Kallio, the workers are crammed together in simple wooden houses. At the edge of town lies Lapinlahti Hospital, the largest mental hospital in the country.

"The whole parish is whispering about the bear that attacks people instead of animals. My son Nils and his hunting party were in Långastrand to track it down when suddenly it grew late and dark, so with lanterns lit, they turned back through the woods. But the creature was waiting at the ford of the Sälle River, and launched itself at them as if it was the hunter and they the prey. Three grown men lost their lives, and even though it was shot many times, the beast didn't seem weakened at all. Only when Nils pressed the crucifix he was wearing around his neck against the creature's right hindleg did it wail and disappear into the woods. Nils said it wasn't a bear, but a manwolf. He showed me the place where it had waited for them and there was some snuff behind a tree, as if a human had stood there, biding his time. Nils told me he's looking for a man with a limp on his right leg, and when he finds him, he will get the priest from Törboda and ask him to bring the cross of the church itself to drive the wolf away."

– Åla-Sven, peasant from Jämtnäs

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY

In the countryside, wealth is measured in animals, tools, and houses. All work is done by muscle power – either that of humans or animals. The villages are strictly divided between the landowners and the vast majority who work for others, and who depend on their goodwill. As the population grows, the number of landless laborers increases dramatically.

Churches are important social meeting points and priests usually the only source of news. It is illegal to engage in any other faith than the form of Christianity practiced in the churches. The priest preaches "truths" and condemns those who deviate from the norm. Everyone knows everything about everyone. A person's reputation, and the reputation of her family, can be ruined by a single ill-considered action.

Local county administrators are in charge of tax collection and law enforcement, sometimes also serving as prosecutors. They are assisted by part-time police officers and bailiffs. Children who cannot be cared for are placed in orphanages run by the Poor Care Board.

In rural areas, people's diet consists of whatever can be caught or grown nearby. Food is preserved by salting and smoking, and the seasons have a supreme impact on life – particularly during the cold, dark, and hungry winter. People make most of their belongings themselves: clothes are locally manufactured; fabrics are colored with dyes from plants; leatherware and metal are in high demand, but expensive and hard to come by.

The beginning and end of the harvest are often celebrated with a feast, where people dance the waltz, schottische, hambo, and polka. The violin is a common instrument. Songs, dances, and other cultural expressions have persisted from the time before Christianity's ascendance. In some cases, pagan traditions have been mixed with Christian teachings.

It should also be noted that, in the 19th century, large parts of Scandinavia are struck by crop failure and famine. In Sweden, this time is referred to as Storsvagåren ("the Years of Great Weakness"), while the Finns call it Lavåren ("the Lichen Years") as many

are forced to eat bark bread and porridge made of lichen. The winters are extremely cold and long. Ice covers ponds, lakes and waterways, while animals freeze to death in their stables.

Some summers are almost as cold as the winters. One year, Stockholm is three degrees celsius at the end of May, and in many of the northern provinces the ground remains frozen well into June. The ice prevents freighters from reaching cities on the northern coast. Emergency committees are established. The press spreads appeals for help to people in the cities. Charity concerts and other spectacles are hosted to raise funds for the starving. Other summers are so hot that fields become parched and crops are scorched by the sun.

> "One whose woman
> is infertile
> Must catch a pike and piss
> in its mouth while it still lives
> And so the woman
> shall be fruitful"
>
> – Traditional witchcraft
> to cure involuntary childlessness

TECHNOLOGY

It is up to the gaming group to decide how far technology has come in your particular game world, and there is certainly no need for consistency – although you will of course have to create a world that feels believable to you. In one mystery you might visit a remote location where the technological development seems to have stagnated, while the next mystery takes place in a city with technology from the end of the century. Some thoughts on 19th century technology are presented below.

One of the most important inventions of the industrial age is the steam engine. It powers the machines in the factories and the trains which allow for quick travel across Europe. Steamboats carry goods and people through freshly dug canals.

Newspapers become increasingly common thanks to improved printing presses and typewriters. People can communicate through telegraphs. The chemical industry produces a series of revolutionary substances like dynamite and new kinds of paint. The match is invented. Vaccines are spreading, making it possible to combat diseases that were previously thought to be terminal. The camera becomes more and more advanced. A number of scientific expeditions are mounted to explore the world, including the North and South Pole.

In the 19th century, unpredictable flintlock rifles and muzzle-loading muskets are replaced with breach-loading cap lock rifles. These new firearms are reliable and quick to load. In battle, a bayonet is fixed to the rifle.

The rapier is used by nobles as an ornament, a weapon, and a marker of class. The lower estates favor the knife, while peasants use axes and scythes. Muskets and crossbows are still used in rural areas.

TITLES AND NAMES

Titles are important when addressing other people. Miss is used for unmarried women and missus for married ones. Mister can be used for men. Many professions come with a title as well, such as bailiff, or father for Catholic priests. Teachers in higher education are called adjunct or lector. Soldiers and officers are addressed with their rank.

TRAVEL IN SCANDINAVIA

Traveling takes time. The player characters will usually go by boat, train, or coach. Most people they encounter have only left their villages a few times in their lives. Despite the growing industrialization, Scandinavia is still an agrarian society.

VEHICLE SPEEDS

VEHICLE	km/h
Coach (including breaks)	8–10
Train	30
Steamboat	25
Sailboat	10–20
Horse (including breaks)	10–20
Walk (including breaks)	3
March (including breaks)	4–5

UPSALA – SCIENCE AND FAIRYTALES

Upsala is located just north of the Swedish capital of Stockholm – on the border of Norrland, where cities and villages are few and the wilderness endless. The city is best known for its university. But it is also a place deeply rooted in the pagan world. Upsala was one of the last outposts of the old Norse religion when the country was Christianized. Just outside the city lie the Mounds of Upsala – barrows where mighty kings were buried in the sixth century.

Upsala was recently struck by an extensive fire that killed one fifth of its population and devastated much of the city itself. It was on the brink of complete destruction, but rose from the ashes and has since undergone a significant transformation, with lots of new buildings, a great influx of uneducated workers for the factories, and students and scientists from across the globe flocking to the university.

The streets of Upsala are lit by gas lamps. Paperboys cry out the latest headlines. Through the city center runs the Fyris River which flows into Lake Malar. There are several bridges over the river, including the Cathedral Bridge and the Iron Bridge. The poorer sections of the city are plagued by cholera. Robbers hide in the alleys, and policemen move around with drawn sabers in search of burglars and speakeasies.

The presence of brick clay has given rise to an entire brick industry, and there are several textile factories on the outskirts of town. The city's main source of income, however, is the production of aquavit – liquor money, legal and illegal, is paying for many of the city's establishments.

The campus is massive, thanks to the Gustavian patrimony. In the 17th century, King Gustavus Adolphus donated 400 farms and their land to Upsala University. There are numerous grand and beautiful buildings. The students gather in student unions, singing songs and discussing science and philosophy. Some groups favor the romantic ideals, with focus on emotions rather than reason, idealization of the exotic, and an interest in mysticism. Other groups believe in the natural sciences and despise the sublime. They wish to uncover truths through carefully performed experiments. Conflicts and confrontations are constantly raging between these groups.

Upsala is a divided city. Farmers, industrial workers and servants live side by side with students, nobles, and clerics – the latter enjoying extravagant luxuries in huge villas and apartments, while the former tend to their every need, bowing and scraping, until their bodies are all worn out. Open conflicts rarely arise between the two groups, but when they do, it tends to happen at illegal night clubs and brothels, where the distinction between rich and poor is less clear.

The Church holds great power. The Archbishop of Sweden, Henrik Reuterdahl, has his seat in Upsala. The gothic cathedral is one of the largest in Scandinavia, with a bell called Storan which can be heard throughout the city. The altar cross contains a relic of the True Cross, and a new gigantic pipe organ takes up an entire wall inside the cathedral.

UPSALA UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

Upsala's hospital is one of the most modern in Scandinavia. The building is brand new and resembles a multistory castle with beautiful turrets and ornaments. Patients are distributed between 16 wards, each managed by a chief physician. There are operating rooms, autopsy rooms, session rooms, a chapel, a library and offices.

There have been health facilities in the area for hundreds of years, and it is rumored that people who died

UPSALA UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

The player characters can be admitted to the hospital and have their wounds and illnesses treated. They can also use the autopsy rooms to learn more about vaesen. The hospital may be used as a setting for a mystery.

UPSALA

1 Upsala Castle
2 Universitt Hospital
3 Upsala Universitt
4 Castle Gtllencreutz
5 Upsala Cathedral
6 Central Station
7 Upsala Astium
8 Botanical Garden
9 Oltmpus

on their sickbeds are bound to the place, haunting the new hospital. These creatures are said to torment the patients and scare doctors and nurses into madness.

UPSALA ASYLUM

The city's mental asylum is encircled by a black iron fence. Patients arrive at the brick building in wagons, but rarely leave except in a casket. It is a place for half-wits, lunatics, and people who have caused outrage in the parish. Patients are divided into first and second class, depending on their financial situation. Wealthier patients are treated well and have meals brought to their rooms on a tray.

Lower-class patients are starved, shackled, and put in confinement boxes. They are treated with laxatives and emetics. Their skin develops ulcers after being smeared with irritant substances. Insanity is attributed to mucus, and so the patient must be cleansed. All treatment is supervised by Doctor Niklas Frejd, a man of small stature and good humor, who is convinced his treatments are effective. He is supported by a large group of orderlies, guards, and physicians.

THE POLICE STATION

The city's police wear blue uniforms with golden buttons and helmets, and are armed with sabers. The force is corrupt and violent. The police station is cramped, water-damaged, and badly infested with vermin. The wooden floors are creaky, and the entire building smells of filth. The station consists of offices, cells, and courtrooms. One end of the building is occupied by a special detective branch responsible for more complicated investigations. A laboratory has recently been installed in the basement, where chemical tests are now conducted to facilitate the hunt for criminals.

The newly-appointed police chief, Oscar Stierna, is one of the few people in the force who cannot be bought. He is trying to purge his organization of corruption. Some officers idealize him and have stopped working with shady elements. Others hate him.

THE POORHOUSE

Begging, vagrancy, and poverty are illegal. Those who are found guilty of such crimes are confined to poorhouses. Upsala's poorhouse, located in Kamphavet Square, is packed with paupers, reduced to poverty by years of crop failure. The master of the poorhouse is Doctor Per Dubb. Together with the local police force, Dubb runs an extensive network of informants with the aim of tracking down and apprehending thieves and beggars. Those who are forced to live at the poorhouse lead miserable lives plagued by starvation, lice, and abuse.

THE POLICE STATION

The player characters can come to the police station as suspects of a crime, or to obtain information on people and events in the city's underworld. The police chief can serve as their invitation to mysteries.

UPSALA ASYLUM

The player characters can be admitted to the asylum for treatment of madness. They can also come across people who have encountered or been afflicted by vaesen and are thought to be insane.

THE POORHOUSE

Some people who have the Sight cannot cope with their ability to see vaesen. Sooner or later they end up at the asylum or the poorhouse. The player characters can contact them to obtain information about vaesen.

WELLSPRING STREET 59

There are plenty of brothels in Upsala, the most famous being Wellspring Street 59 run by Madam Tekla. Said to be a crofter's daughter from the small town of Vänge, Tekla is now a wealthy woman, well-connected with both the university and elite members of the clergy. Her employees are treated very badly. Many have contracted syphilis and pneumonia, and most have given birth to children who died or were killed. Beatings are common, as are various forms of substance abuse. People who make their living selling sex are registered as prostitutes in the prostitution ledger, forced to undergo regular medical examinations, and can never again hold a normal job.

WELLSPRING STREET 59

Many of the women working at the brothel have had traumatic experiences, and several have gained the Sight. They can provide information about vaesen or invitations to mysteries.

"Mushrooms have a special function for many vaesen, and scholars regard them as 'fruits of evil'. The garden contains all manner of species, some of which are particularly interesting to certain vaesen and anyone versed in the magical arts."

THE UPSALA GAZETTE

The journalists can provide invitations to mysteries in the form of articles or interviews, although they probably have not realized that they are writing about vaesen.

THE UPSALA GAZETTE

In a smoky, noisy building called Olympus, 22 journalists are working around the clock. The newspaper's editor-in-chief, Felicia Lipschitz, is an ambitious visionary who welcomes the modern age with opened arms. The paper was founded by students as a liberal counterbalance to the conservative publications of the time. The editorial team call themselves the pioneers of Upsala radicalism. The newspaper comes out three times a week, mostly reporting news from the city and its surrounding communities. Occasionally a strange or entertaining story from the countryside will find its way into the paper.

UPSALA BOTANICAL GARDEN

Professor Fries can be a source of information for the player characters. He can share secret books and documents on vaesen. Fries has contacts with the university and the local government, and can make a powerful ally. He can also serve as the catalyst for a mystery by encountering or seeking out vaesen. The botanical garden can also be of interest because of its large collection of mushrooms. Mushrooms have a special function for many vaesen, and scholars regard them as "fruits of evil". The garden contains all manner of species, some of which are particularly interesting to certain vaesen and anyone versed in the magical arts.

UPSALA BOTANICAL GARDEN

The botanical garden of Upsala University was founded in the 17th century by Olof Rudbeck, but is best known for being the workplace of Carl Linnaeus in the 18th century. Linnaeus transformed the garden into one of the finest in the world, with thousands of different plants. Today the garden is run by mycology professor Elias Fries, renowned for his book *Systema Mycologicum* and his relentless efforts to introduce mushrooms as food items. A few people know about his traumatic trip to Värmland where he was badly injured by a bear. Fewer still are aware that Elias thinks the animal that attacked him was not actually a bear, but a "terrible beast," and that since the incident he has seen strange creatures moving unseen among humans.

THE JUNTA

The student movement known as the Junta was established at the end of the 18th century as a political protest movement against restrictions on the freedom of the press and other civil liberties. Several of its members were musicians of the Royal Academic Orchestra. In the year 1800 they put on a concert for the king; some refused to play, while others performed the piece so poorly it caused a scandal. The musicians were severely punished, and the Junta was dissolved.

Or so the official story goes. The truth is that the Junta went underground and was joined by more members. It is now a secret revolutionary organization with ties to enemy nations.

THE JUNTA

Exactly what the Junta is up to is for the Gamemaster to decide. They could be republicans, have ties to groups fighting for Norwegian independence, be paid by Danish spies, or represent political ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, or nationalism. One of the player characters could be a member – or maybe the Junta is an enemy of the Society?

The slaughterhouse waste we had scattered inside the stables worked as intended. When night fell, and the people and animals of the village were asleep, we lay hidden in the hayloft. The door opened, and the light of the full moon revealed that something was about to enter. The creature might have been mistaken for a wolf, were it not for its horse-like size and the human way in which it shut the door behind it with one paw. Before being enveloped by darkness, we could see the black bristles of its fur. We were trapped with a werewolf.

A doctor named Eberhalt who lived nearby had told us about werewolves having roamed the area for hundreds of years. The villagers used to worship the creatures and offer them blood sacrifices, but with the building of the local railroad station the area's isolation came to an end and these old customs were forgotten. Doctor Eberhalt showed us a brass bell hanging from his necklace – he said the only way to destroy a werewolf is to ring bells of brass.

With trembling hands and thumping heart, I lit the oil lamp. The werewolf was standing beneath us, its mouth full of entrails, looking straight at me. To my right, Hedwig jumped to her feet and fled screaming into the darkness behind us. Anders, standing to my left, leaned over the rack we had built with seven sanctified bells of brass and started ringing them with a small hammer. The werewolf's mouth twisted into something like a smile, before it effortlessly jumped up to the loft and landed in front me. Anders kept ringing the bells, but they made no difference. And then I noticed the werewolf's necklace, from which hung a brass bell. In the creature's eyes, I saw the gaze of Doctor Eberhalt.

VAESEN

THIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES vaesen and their secrets. If you are a player, and not the Gamemaster, this is where you should stop reading. This chapter and those that follow are for the Gamemaster's eyes only.

The chapter begins by explaining the reason why vaesen exist, and what relations are like between them and humans. This information should be kept from your players at all cost, as it would make the game less mysterious and fun to play. The text proceeds to describe the nature of vaesen and give some examples of where they might be encountered.

The next section provides rules for magic that vaesen can use, both to affect the area where the mystery takes place and to attack the player characters. There are also rules and characteristics for vaesen, along with information on how to handle conflicts between them and the player characters. In addition, we present rules for (and examples of) special or magic items that can be used either by vaesen or by humans hoping to protect themselves from such creatures.

But above all, this chapter details twenty-one vaesen that humans might encounter in Scandinavia. These are examples of creatures, not an exhaustive list of every vaesen in existence. The idea is that you will be inspired to create your own vaesen, either based on listings in Egerkrans's book *Vaesen*, or from other sources – you can also make up your own original creatures. The chapter concludes with rules for non-player characters and animals.

FOR THE GAMEMASTER ONLY

This chapter and those that follow are only intended for the Gamemaster. If you are a player, you should read no further.

VAESEN AND HUMANS

Vaesen and humans have lived side by side for thousands of years – as both adversaries and allies. But neither the humans nor the vaesen themselves understand the true depth of this relationship. They are dependent on, and shaped by, human belief – if people stopped believing in them, they would weaken and maybe even cease to exist. Few vaesen and humans know that this is the case; the player characters (and the players!) must not be aware of this as they start to play. A character might start to suspect the truth after encountering lots of vaesen and solving mysteries all over Scandinavia, but her suspicions should never be confirmed in any way.

Vaesen can change, spring up, and vanish depending on what humans believe to be true. The creatures can emerge as demons and angels, and they can change and follow humans to the cities and exist in some other form. Vaesen can also appear from nothing. If people in a village are worried that the newly opened mine will provoke the wrath of the mountain trolls, the mountain may suddenly be inhabited by trolls, and furthermore: even though they were never there before, both the humans and the trolls themselves will think they have been there for as long as they can remember.

This dependency on belief means that vaesen are also affected by the development of society at large. In the 19th century, when people are leaving their villages to start new lives in the cities, they also abandon their old faith in favor of Christianity or urban myths – or stop believing altogether. The new ideas of the enlightenment and the knowledge spreading from the universities are eradicating the truths of old. As a result, vaesen are disappearing from Scandinavia or, at best, changing into something that can survive into the next century.

Although they do not understand what is happening, the vaesen of Scandinavia feel attacked and exposed. Many direct their anger at physical, tangible targets – killing railroad builders, and destroying factories and churches. Others go off into the wilderness to places where there are no humans. These creatures will soon cease to exist, or feel drawn back to human societies.

When the balance between humans and vaesen is disturbed, the old covenants and traditions come to an end. The knowledge that has been passed down through generations can no longer be trusted. Many vaesen go mad and murderous, or become convinced they must attack the humans in self-defense.

The player characters have the Sight, and access to the knowledge amassed in the Society's library over the centuries. This makes them well equipped to protect those who risk falling victim to the creatures' wrath.

GOD AND THE DEVIL

The game does not define whether or not God and the Devil really exist. Some vaesen think they have been sent from Hell and may well appear as demons, convinced that the power of Satan is working through them. Others believe themselves to be servants of God.

Christian symbols have an intimidating or even lethal effect on many vaesen. This happens because both the creatures and humans believe it will. Likewise, some player characters may be religious and see the fight against vaesen as a service to God, thus drawing strength from their faith, while others are scientists who study vaesen in order to better understand the world. Whether God and the Devil really exist in the game world is not relevant to your mysteries.

THE NATURE OF VAESEN

Scandinavian vaesen are clearly linked to nature. They live in forests, in watercourses, and on mountaintops, and many can transform into animals. They tend to stay away from cities, but will occasionally follow people who leave their villages and then settle near factories and mental asylums. Some vaesen believe themselves to be in league with the Devil, while a few think they are serving God.

Only the Thursday's Children can see vaesen all the time – to others they are invisible, until they choose not to be. But visible or not, they cannot move without leaving perceptible traces. If they pay attention, ordinary people can also detect signs of their presence – such as an inexplicable draft though the house, freshly bloomed flowers suddenly withering, or unexpected hisses and shrieks from the house cats.

Vaesen are proud by nature, often bordering on haughtiness, and they get angry when they are ignored or mistreated. They will then seek revenge using any means available, without regard for the moral considerations that usually characterize human conduct. While they rarely fail to honor their agreements, by stretching and reinterpreting the terms and obligations that were agreed upon, they still tend to get what they want.

Aside from the world of humans, the vaesen have access to a magical world with strange realms located underground or in a different reality. They have paths leading to peculiar places; some of them can bend time and space, conjure new creatures, and rejuvenate or transform humans. Some vaesen live in groups, others seek solitude, but either way they rarely trespass on each other's territory.

TYPES OF VAESEN

Although all vaesen are unique, an attempt to categorize them might look something like this:

- **NATURE SPIRITS** are humanoid creatures such as trolls, vaettir, giants, mermaids, land wights, wood wives, the Neck, the brook horse, nissar, the ash tree wife, and fairies.
- **FAMILIARS** are created by magic, and often convinced that they are somehow related to the Devil. These include the spertus and the carrier.
- **SHAPESHIFTERS** are people who can turn into animals or monsters. These include werewolves, mares, and witches.
- **SPIRITS OF THE DEAD** are deceased humans who linger restlessly in the world of the living. These include ghosts, revenants, the myling and will-o'-the-wisps.
- **MONSTERS** are creatures whose characteristics are more animal than human. These include lindworms, sea serpents, the Kraken, hell sows and church grims.

WHERE ARE THE VAESEN?

Vaesen are particularly prevalent throughout the countryside and in the wilderness, but also in the slums of the cities. Below are four examples of places where one might encounter a vaesen.

THE SMITHY IN FORSMARK

There has always been a blacksmith on the hill by the stream in Forsmark, located on the coast just north of Stockholm. The Lind family has run the smithy for centuries, and it has recently been taken over by Eida Lind and her many sons and daughters. Farmers travel long distances to enlist their services.

It is said that, some nights, Eida makes things in her smithy using moonlight instead of fire, to make the metal soft and ductile. These moonforged items are believed to be more beautiful and durable than the ones made during the day.

Locals have recently noticed that the smithy in Forsmark runs hot around the clock. In the area around the smithy, all plants and animals have died and the stream has turned a yellowish brown color. Eida and her children are never seen leaving the smithy.

The truth is that Eida's grandfather caught a spertus in the stream almost a hundred years ago. This insect-like creature is said to be in league with the Devil, and can offer amazing gifts in exchange for the soul of its third owner. For many years, the spertus has allowed magnificent items to be made in the smithy in Forsmark.

When Eida inherited the creature from her father, she became its third owner, and so she suffered its curse. The creature, who also believes itself to be sent by the Devil, has used black magic to take control of the family and the smithy, and ordered them to forge long black chains which will later be brought to the underworld to be used in Hell.

The only way to save the Lind family is to lower the spertus into the baptismal font at the church and let the church bells ring for a whole night. The creature will then dissolve in the water. But the spertus will not let this happen. Should the player characters attempt to rescue the family, it will take control of people in neighboring villages and use them to attack the player characters.

THE MEADOW IN KURJENNEVA

It has long been known that, in a forest near Kurjenneva in western Finland, there is a meadow covered in beautiful flowers. The meadow does not become overgrown, even though it is never grazed or mowed. On the brightest night of the summer, teenagers gather there with garlands and jars of honey. The honey is poured on the ground, after which the boys and girls tell each other stories until they fall asleep in the grass. Those who have sweet dreams about the future will see their dreams come true. Now, several of the young people sleeping in the meadow have gone missing.

An aging fairy named Skittelhyft has fallen in love with the teenagers' youth and taken some of them deep into the woods. She will let them stay in her castle among the trees. There they will wait on her while she steals their youth.

The only way to free the youngsters is to lure Skittelhyft to the meadow with a witch circle made of honey. She must then be trapped in a glass jar that has been smeared with syrup, and kept there until she lets the teenagers go.

FRIEDHJEM CASTLE IN ISENVAD

For many years, Friedhjem Castle has stood abandoned in the woods near Isenvad on the Danish peninsula of Jylland. By day it is deserted, filled with cobwebs and dirt. At night, balls are held at the castle – with young people laughing and dancing to music, servants serving wine and food, and walls covered with magnificent paintings.

The Krøyer family, who lived in the castle almost a hundred years ago, were sadists. In the evenings the servants would be forced into the attic and fettered to a massive beam in the ceiling while the family assaulted them.

When the Krøyer family succumbed to cholera, all of its members rose again as revenants. Now they are throwing nighttime balls at the castle to lure in guests and drain them of life. The spirits of the dead are then brought back to dance at the ball, and to suffer in the attic. Several merchants have recently gone missing near the castle. The only way to banish the revenants is to bring an axe or a saw to the attic and cut the beam in two.

THE WASHHOUSE IN BYMARKA

One morning, one of the women at the washhouse in Bymarka near the Norwegian city of Trondheim found a newborn baby in its cradle. Realizing it was a troll child, she beat it to death and threw the body into the water. Since that day, all clothes washed at the washhouse become dyed with blood. In addition, several newborn children in the area have gone missing. The locals think they have been kidnapped by a group of wanderers living in tents nearby, and are planning to take matters into their own hands by burning down the camp.

The truth is that the trolls are abducting human children in search of a toddler beautiful and bright enough to compensate for the one killed by the washerwoman. But no human baby has been able to match the troll child. The only way to appease the trolls is to find the corpse of the troll child and bury it in the marsh where it was born.

MAGICAL POWERS

Vaesen have access to magical powers which can be used to attack enemies, frighten people, and alter reality. As Gamemaster, you should use their powers to create an atmosphere and give your mysteries a sense of danger.

There are three types of powers: Enchantments, Curses, and Trollcraft. Some vaesen have access to all types, while others can only use one or two. They can also have specific powers, such as the ability to move with immense speed.

Vaesen can use magic in a variety of ways – they can speak words of power, recite incantations, sprinkle magic powder, concoct potions, or summon the forces of heaven or hell. Usually the player characters will not see the magic being performed, but merely suffer its effects.

Curses and Trollcraft can be used in combat as a slow action. The creature must be able to see or otherwise perceive the player character. The player character may then use a fast action to resist **MAGIC**. If she does not, the creature only needs one success in order to succeed.

The range of magic is 0–1. In combat, Curses and Enchantments that normally last one scene or longer remain active for 1D6 rounds. Each round, the player character can use a fast action to resist **MAGIC**. If it succeeds, the magic is canceled.

CHOOSING MAGIC

The descriptions of the various vaesen specify the types of magic the creature can use. However, they do not mention any specific Enchantments, Curses, or Trollcraft. It is up to you as Gamemaster to decide what kind of magic best suits the mystery. You can do this beforehand while planning the mystery, or make up your mind as you go along.

MAGIC, NOT COMPETITION

Magical powers are not meant to defeat and eliminate the player characters. They are tools for creating exciting stories. Use them in moderation. Let them reveal the existence of the creature and say something about who or what it is.

ENCHANTMENTS

Enchantments are magic that affects the location and the people living there, and sometimes the player characters as well. The village might be enshrouded in a thick fog, the food starts to rot before the characters' eyes, or maybe the water in the village well turns into blood? The main function of Enchantments is to create an atmosphere.

You do not roll to see whether a creature succeeds with an Enchantment – they succeed automatically. Player characters affected by an Enchantment must pass a Fear test with Fear 1. Extreme situations might call for a higher Fear value. Enchantments usually last one scene, but you are free to increase their duration as you see fit.

> THE GAMEMASTER: *The table where you are sitting starts to shake, knocking over bottles and causing the food to tremble on your plates. The other guests glance anxiously at each other…*
>
> PLAYER 1 (KASPAR STÅHL): *I get up and shout: You will not scare us with simple tricks!*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *The response comes immediately — several guests fall to the ground, howling with pain. Each of you must make a Fear test with Fear 1.*

CURSES

Curses are magic that vaesen can use to attack the player characters. It can happen from a distance without the player characters knowing where the creature is, or be used as a weapon in combat situations. For the magic to succeed, the creature must win an opposed roll – its **MAGIC** against the player character's **OBSERVATION**, **VIGILANCE**, or **FORCE**. Which skill the player character must use is specified in parentheses next to each Curse. The player characters may push the roll, but the creature may not.

For the Curse to succeed, the creature must roll more successes than the player character. The effect of a successful roll is described next to each Curse. Extra successes usually cause the player character to suffer Conditions.

If the creature and the player character get an equal number of successes, nothing happens, except that the player character may sense that someone is trying to influence or attack her through supernatural means.

If the player character rolls a greater number of successes, she wins the opposed roll and has not only resisted the magic, but gained the upper hand over that vaesen. What this means is up to you – perhaps she gains a free success to her Fear test when she sees the creature, or may add an extra die to a future skill test. Two other options can be that she gains an insight that reveals a certain part of the mystery, or that she heals a Condition.

Some Curses affect multiple player characters. Each character must then roll individually, while the creature makes a single roll. Some Curses come with certain requirements: the creature might have to steal a lock of the player character's hair, or be physically near her.

Curses last one scene, unless stated otherwise. In combat it takes a slow action to perform a Curse.

> THE GAMEMASTER: *Just as you are about to go back inside and join the others, your hand stops halfway to the door handle. It strikes you that they are much better than you. The realization hits you like a sledgehammer — you're a fat, stupid, disgusting coward — a burden they have reluctantly agreed to bear.*
>
> PLAYER 3 (ILJENKA PROKOTIN): *I try not to cry. Can I resist?*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *Make an* ***OBSERVATION*** *test. I roll for* ***MAGIC****.*

TROLLCRAFT

Trollcraft is a form of magic, usually practiced by trolls and fairies, that involves bending time and space or altering reality in various ways. When Trollcraft is used to set the mood and create a certain atmosphere, for example by turning villagers into cats or turning back time every night, it technically works the same way as Enchantments. The creature succeeds automatically, and the player character makes a Fear test when suffering its effects.

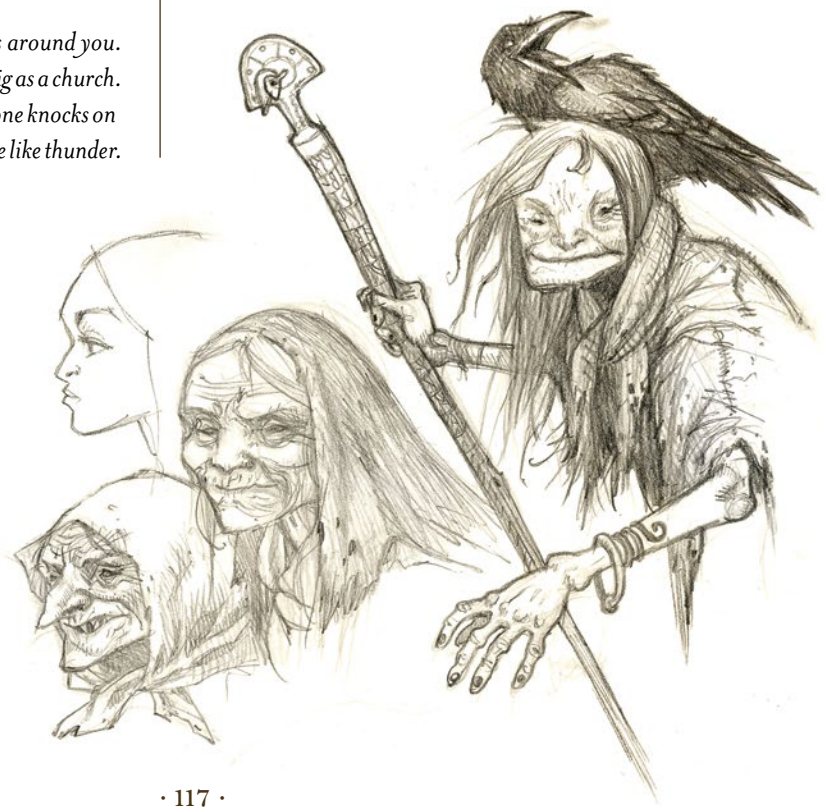
When Trollcraft is used to attack a player character, for example by transforming her into a pig or shrinking her to the size of a teaspoon, it works just as it does with Curses. The creature makes an opposed roll using **MAGIC**, and the player character must pass a skill test to resist its effect. The creature must roll more successes than the player character in order to succeed.

> THE GAMEMASTER: *As you get out of bed and reach for the chamber pot, your body starts to shake. It feels like an electric shock. Make a* **FORCE** *test. I roll for* **MAGIC** *and get one success.*
>
> PLAYER 2 (ASTRID LILJA): *I don't get any successes!*
>
> THE GAMEMASTER: *The room expands around you. Your bed grows huge. The chamber pot is as big as a church. You have shrunk to the size of a beetle. Someone knocks on your bedroom door, which to you sounds more like thunder.*

THE STORY COMES FIRST

The rules for magic leave ample room to interpret the effects of the various powers. For example, a player character who has her vision twisted can be affected in many different ways. This is deliberate, to allow you and your group to interpret things based on what seems reasonable and most fun for the story.

Keep in mind that the Gamemaster should not view the players and their characters as enemies to be defeated; the point of the game is to create a story together – one where everyone is both a participant and a spectator. This is not to say that you should never put the player characters in difficult or even life-threatening situations. Your job is to use magic – and all the other rules of the game – to do what is reasonable and interesting for the story. That way, the player characters will both get into trouble and have a chance of getting out of it.

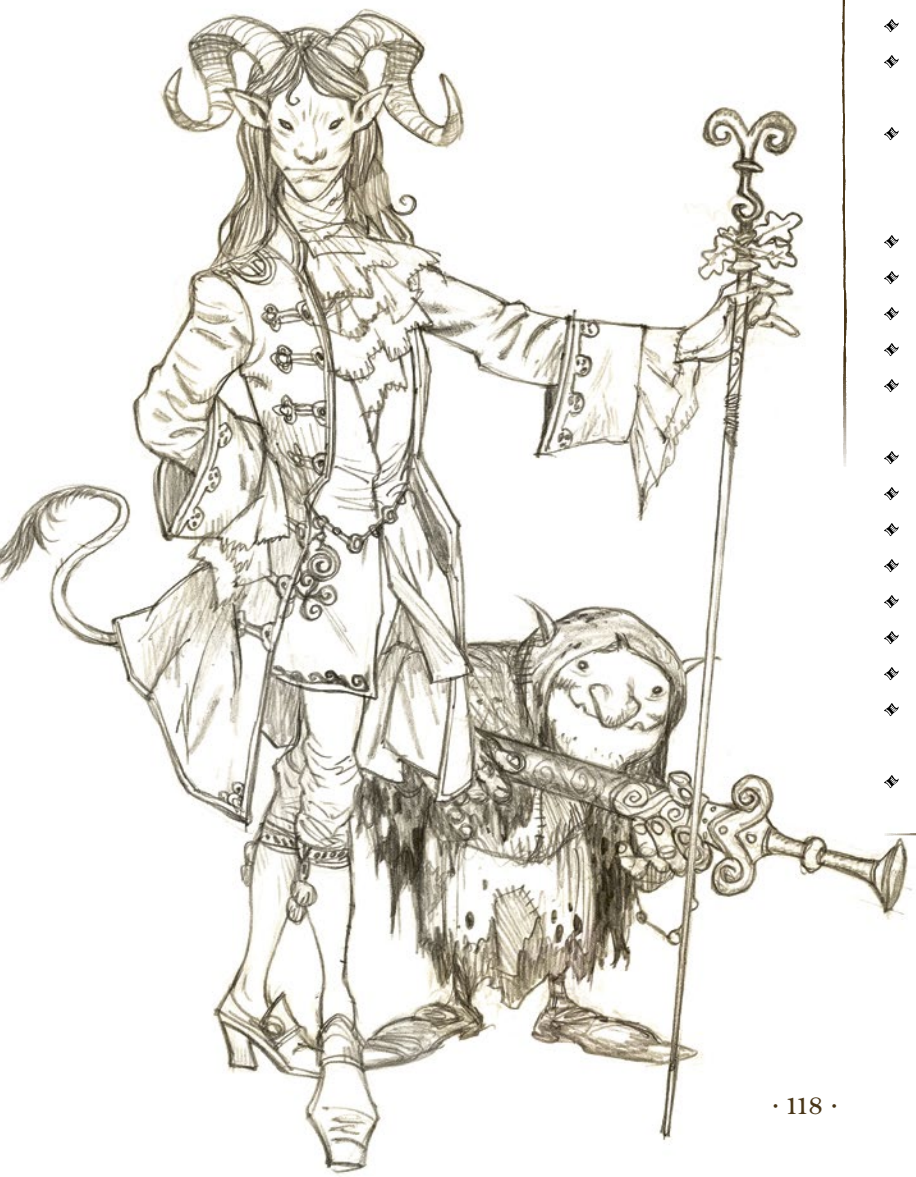


PLAYER CHARACTERS USING MAGIC

In exceptional circumstances, the player characters can obtain the **MAGIC** skill, for example from a spertus or a wand. The source of the magic provides a skill value and one or more Enchantments, Curses, or Trollcraft spells. When the player rolls for **MAGIC**, no dice are added from any attribute. The skill cannot be raised with Experience Points.

MAGIC counts as a slow action. The roll can be pushed with mental Conditions.

MAGIC usually requires some form of ritual or rhyme.



ENCHANTMENTS

Enchantments may include:

- Animal invasion
- Animals are born with defects
- Animals bolt
- Blindness (NPCs lose their eyesight)
- Christian symbols shatter
- Command animal
- Contact with the great beyond (spirits and undead vaesen communicating through speech, screams, scents, writing or visions)
- Darkness
- Distort vision (NPCs see something other than what is really there)
- Disturbance (NPCs are haunted by horrifying visions)
- Earthquake
- Enchanted sleep (afflicts NPCs in the location)
- Enthrall (NPCs become mindless slaves and may be used to attack the player characters)
- Fog
- Food or beverage is transformed or rots
- Mareel (phosphorescence on water)
- Muteness (NPCs lose their ability to speak)
- Nightmares (one or several player characters are plagued by nightmares)
- Plant invasion
- Plants die
- Raise the dead
- Shape stone or wood
- Spread disease
- Storm
- Terrible signs
- The drinking water is filled with tadpoles (NPCs belch up frogs)
- The ground turns marshy

CURSES

Curses may include:

- **DEADLY COLD (FORCE)** The player character is struck by extreme cold which deals 1 damage. Extra successes deal additional physical damage.
- **ENTHRALL (OBSERVATION)** The creature controls the player character's actions. Extra successes deal mental damage. The victim cannot be made to hurt herself. Some creatures need access to an item belonging to the player character in order to Enthrall her. You either assume control of the player character for the rest of the scene, or instruct the player through notes or a secret conversation about how the character must act.
- **FEAR** (Fear test) The player character is tormented by dreadful visions, thoughts, scents, or other sensations. The number of successes rolled by the creature determines the Fear value.
- **FEAST (VIGILANCE)** The player characters are seized by an overwhelming urge to party and indulge themselves. Extra successes deal mental damage. Affects all player characters.
- **FIRE (FORCE)** The player character catches fire. A small part of the body is burning. Extra successes increase the intensity of the fire by one step (see page 70).
- **INFECT (FORCE)** The player character contracts a terrible disease which deals 1 damage. Extra successes deal additional physical damage. The disease must be cured with **MEDICINE**. The creature may require some of the player character's hair or skin, which if destroyed cures the disease. Sometimes the creature must be banished.
- **LAME (FORCE)** The player character is unable to walk. Extra successes deal physical damage.
- **LURE (VIGILANCE)** The player character feels compelled to get to the creature, and will try to break through any obstacle with violence or cunning. Extra successes deal mental damage.
- **MUTE (FORCE)** The player character is unable to speak. Extra successes deal physical damage.
- **NIGHT TERROR (OBSERVATION)** The player character is plagued by severe nightmares. She cannot be woken up for the rest of the scene and takes 1 mental damage. Extra successes deal additional mental damage. Can only be used on sleeping player characters.
- **SEDUCE (OBSERVATION)** The player character is attracted to the creature. Extra successes deal mental damage.
- **SELF-LOATHING (OBSERVATION)** The player character hates or disgusts herself, and cannot stop thinking about it. Extra successes deal mental damage.
- **SLEEP (FORCE)** The player character falls asleep and cannot be woken up. Extra successes deal mental damage. The creature must have placed some kind of item in the victim's bedroom. If the item is removed, the player character wakes up.
- **STRANGER (OBSERVATION)** Something about the player character makes other people dislike her and want to hurt her or drive her away. Each extra success extends the duration of the effect by one scene. The creature must have access to an item belonging to the player character. Retrieving the item lifts the curse.
- **TWIST VISION (VIGILANCE)** The player character experiences reality differently. She might view the villagers as monsters, or think that her friends have been replaced by vaesen. Extra successes deal mental damage.
- **WOUND (FORCE)** A wound opens on the player character's body, dealing 1 damage. Extra successes deal additional physical damage.

TROLLCRAFT

Trollcraft may include:

- **ALTER AGE (FORCE)** One or multiple people grow older or younger. Extra successes deal mental damage. The Gamemaster decides whether it affects one or multiple player characters, and whether the aging is permanent or temporary. If it is permanent, the Gamemaster should provide clues about how the player character can regain her true age by tracking down vaesen or performing strange rituals – this is preferably made into a separate mystery.
- **ANIMAL PARTS (FORCE)** The victim has a body part or two turned into those of an animal, such as donkey's ears or a pig's tail. Extra successes escalate the transformation.
- **ANIMATE THE INANIMATE** (Fear test) Something that is not alive comes to life and is controlled by the creature. This may sometimes require player characters to make a Fear test. The formerly inanimate matter can be used as a warrior in combat, with stats like one of the animals listed in the table at the end of the chapter. Choose an animal according to the shape and size of the warrior.
- **DANCE (OBSERVATION)** The victim is forced to dance until the music stops. Extra successes deal mental damage. Affects one or multiple player characters.
- **ENLARGE (FORCE)** The victim grows to the size of a cottage or a giant. Each extra success extends the duration by one scene. The Gamemaster decides whether it affects one or multiple player characters.
- **MIX THOUGHTS (VIGILANCE)** The victims' thoughts are jumbled together, and they must each pass a Fear test with Fear 1. Extra successes deal mental damage. Affects all player characters.
- **OBSTRUCT (FORCE)** The victim cannot get past a certain point or move in a certain direction. Each extra success extends the duration by one scene. Affects one or multiple player characters.
- **PASSION (OBSERVATION)** The victim falls fiercely in love with another person. Each extra success extends the duration by one scene.
- **SHRINK (FORCE)** The victims shrink to the size of an insect. Each extra success extends the duration by one scene. The Gamemaster decides whether it affects one or multiple player characters.
- **STOP TIME (OBSERVATION)** Time in the locality stands still. This can mean that everything outside its borders is frozen in time while everything and everyone else keeps aging, or that the same day keeps repeating over and over in a time loop. The player character must kill or banish the creature, or make it undo the Trollcraft for time to go back to normal. If **STOP TIME** is used to attack a player character, she may be frozen and unable to move, but also immune to damage and other effects.
- **TELEPORT (FORCE)** Something or someone is sent to a different location. Extra successes deal mental damage. Affects one or multiple player characters.
- **THOUGHT VIRUS (OBSERVATION)** A firm belief spreads among people as if it were true. Extra successes deal mental damage. Lasts for the duration of the mystery or until the creature dies. Affects all player characters.
- **TRANSFORM INTO ANIMALS (FORCE)** The victims turn into animals, while retaining their mental faculties. Affects one or multiple player characters. The creature must come within ten meters of the player characters, or be in the same zone during combat.

RULES FOR VAESEN

In addition to their magical powers, vaesen can use physical attacks and magic items to attack or affect the player characters or NPCs, which is further described in this section.

First, it should be mentioned that vaesen do not have attributes or skills. In conflicts they instead use four stats: **MIGHT**, **BODY CONTROL**, **MAGIC**, and **MANIPULATION**. The stat value indicates the number of dice rolled. They cannot push the roll. Remember that you do not roll dice when vaesen are trying to attack or affect NPCs – in such situations, you decide what happens.

Vaesen also come with a fifth stat: Fear. When the player characters see the creature for the first time, they must roll a Fear test against this value (see page 68). Next time they see the creature they know what to expect and are not required to make a Fear test. Fear 0 means that the characters do not have to make a Fear test, even if they have never encountered it before.

Some particularly horrid vaesen never stop being terrifying. They have two Fear values – one that is used in the player character's first encounter with the creature and one for subsequent encounters. For example, such a creature might have Fear 3/1. Fear 3 is used in the initial encounter, and 1 in those that follow.

In combat, vaesen get one slow and one fast action per turn, unless otherwise specified. They draw cards for initiative, just like the player characters. Certain vaesen have some form of Protection, which works the same as armor.

When vaesen are injured they suffer Conditions. They do not have separate Conditions for physical and mental injuries, but specific Conditions that are exclusive to them.

The creatures' Conditions are listed in the descriptions on pages 124–165 and are always checked from the top down. A creature's current Condition determines its dice modifier and does not stack with previous Conditions. The modifier affects the first four stats, but not Fear. Each Condition gives you as Gamemaster a suggestion on how the creature might act. As with player characters, you always roll at least one die, as long as the creature is not Broken. What happens when the creature becomes Broken is specified for each vaesen. Once the specified effect of Broken has occurred, the creature heals all Conditions. The creature also heals all Conditions if it is left alone for an extended period of time without being threatened by the player characters.

VAESEN IN COMBAT

Vaesen are rarely murderous monsters that keep attacking until the player characters become Broken. They will avoid physical confrontations until the player characters put them in a situation where there is no other option but to fight back. Where possible, the vaesen will use magic to attack the player characters from a distance, without revealing their position or their hiding place.

Player characters trying to defeat vaesen in combat will find that the creatures are quite dangerous. Combat can usually be avoided by distracting, tricking, or sneaking past the creature.

VAESEN STATS

Each vaesen is described with five stats:

- **MIGHT** is used for attacking, heavy lifting, or resisting fire and other kinds of damage
- **BODY CONTROL** is used for evading attacks, chasing, fleeing, stealing things, sneaking, or detecting someone who is sneaking
- **MAGIC** is used for casting or resisting magical powers
- **MANIPULATION** is used for deceiving or persuading the player characters, or for seeing through their lies
- Fear is used when the player characters see the creature for the first time. The value indicates how many successes they need to pass their Fear test and not become Terrified (see page 68). Some creatures remain frightening even after the initial encounter; these have a second value that is used in subsequent encounters with the creature.

BANISHING VAESEN

Vaesen can be banished, bound, killed, or lulled to sleep by performing rituals. The ritual is specific to each vaesen, and may differ between vaesen of the same type – one group of trolls are appeased by returning their silver treasures, while another must be driven off by putting sharp steel in their nest. An aggrieved fairy might not leave before it has had satisfaction, while another fairy who tricked some villagers into an agreement might itself have to be deceived in order to get rid of it.

The players do not roll dice when performing the ritual – they describe what their characters are doing, and if performed correctly, the ritual succeeds. In combat you must decide how many rounds it takes to complete the ritual.

The ritual takes effect immediately upon completion – the creature vanishes into thin air, falls asleep, or is forced to leave. All effects of its magical powers are disrupted.

SECRET

People's stories about how to banish vaesen are, in most cases, only partially accurate. Important parts of the ritual are missing. For each vaesen there is a text box containing secrets. These are details that expand on and complicate the ritual. With them in mind, you can first provide clues that reveal more common knowledge of how a vaesen can be banished; for instance, the players might be allowed to read about a certain vaesen in Johan Egerkrans's book *Vaesen*. Later on, the player characters get clues that deepen their knowledge.

It is up to you to decide whether you want to use the secrets in your mysteries. Some gaming groups think it makes banishing vaesen too difficult, while others enjoy the added complexity.

PHYSICAL ATTACKS

Physical attacks are a creature's way of dealing damage in combat. It can be a lindworm's ability to shoot acid, a werewolf's claws, or the brute force of a nisse.

SPECIFIC POWERS

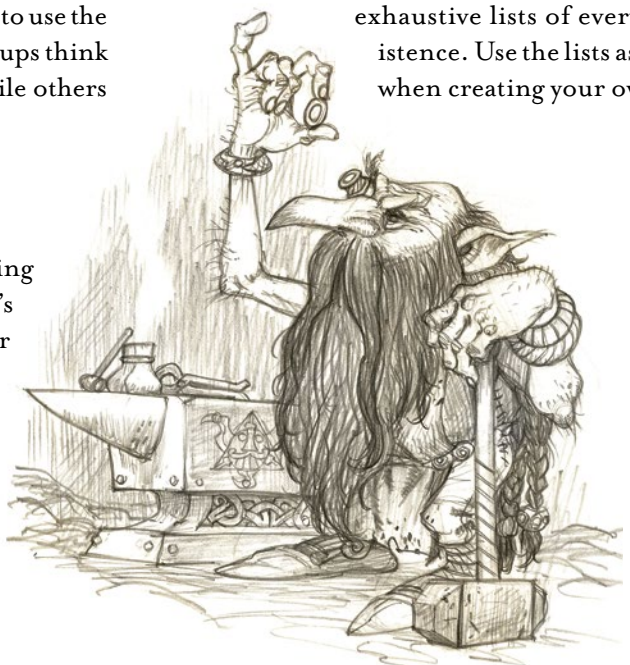
Some vaesen have specific abilities or powers. It might be the ability to fly or shapeshift, an increased number of actions in combat, or getting to draw two initiative cards and pick the best one. Some creatures may even draw two initiative cards and act twice per round, which means that they can perform a total of two slow and two fast actions each round.

ITEMS OF POWER AND MAGIC ITEMS

Items of power are things that people in the countryside have traditionally used to protect themselves against vaesen. The player characters can find them during mysteries or make them at their headquarters (see chapter 6). Items of power are used by rolling 1D6. On a roll of one, the item breaks, runs out, or stops working.

Magic items are things owned and wielded by vaesen. After banishing a vaesen, the player characters may sometimes come across things the creature leaves behind. For a player character, however, using them always comes with a risk. Roll 1D6 hidden from the players every time one of their characters uses a magic item. A one means that the player character is negatively affected – what happens then is described under *Risk* in the *Magic Items* table. Vaesen can use their own items without risk.

The two tables on the next page containing items of power and magic items are examples of things that might appear in mysteries – they are not exhaustive lists of every item in existence. Use the lists as inspiration when creating your own items.



ITEMS OF POWER

ITEM	EFFECT	DESCRIPTION
Fairy cross	+2 defense against Trollcraft	Amulet of nine kinds of silver, forged on three consecutive Thursday nights
Silver bullets	Can kill certain vaesen. Deal 1 less damage.	Ammunition made of silver
Bible	Add **INSPIRATION** to your attribute test when performing a Fear test.	Holy scripture
Holy water	Use **INSPIRATION** against **MAGIC** to temporarily drive off undead	Sanctified water
Troll cross	+2 to resist Curses from trolls	Arc-shaped pendant
Scythe	+2 to resist Curses from mares	A scythe hanging above the bedroom door
Elf mill	+2 to resist Trollcraft from fairies when near the elf mill	Cup marks in a rock surface, smeared with grease

MAGIC ITEMS

ITEM	EFFECT	RISK
Seaweed bladder	Breathe underwater	Water seeps in. Suffer one physical Condition for every ten minutes spent underwater
The lute of the Neck	**INSPIRATION** +5 when luring a crowd	Cannot stop playing, and suffer one mental injury per hour. The player character plays until she becomes Broken or someone knocks the lute from her hands
Powdered stag's horn	You can use **OBSERVATION** to resist the temptations of vaesen	The player character feels unloved and suffers one mental Condition every hour, until someone succeeds with **INSPIRATION**
Snake skin from a wood wife	Turn into a snake	The transformation lasts 1 day
Spindle	Discover magical gateways	Transports the player character to a magical place
Track sand	**VIGILANCE** +3 when tracking vaesen	A strange vaesen notices the player character and starts tracking her
Nisse's porridge	**FORCE** +3 to a skill test	The player character angers the nisse
Troll's eye	Use **OBSERVATION** through your dreams to get a clue	A vaesen visits the player character's dreams
Wand	Can cast one or more Enchantments, Curses or Trollcraft spells. Gains the skill **MAGIC** 8	The wand breaks and the magic affects the player character
Fairy square	Can pass through locked doors	The player character ends up somewhere else

ASH TREE WIFE

In Hamrånge grew the largest ash I ever beheld in these latitudes. It stood on the outskirts of the parish, surrounded by dilapidated dwellings. I wondered why no man, woman, or child would look at it, or go anywhere near its roots. It took me much of the day to learn the answer: the Ash Tree Wife.

– Carl Linnaeus, May 16th, 1732

Some ash trees are inhabited by an ash tree wife – a terrifying female vaesen that is bound to the tree, demanding offerings from the people at certain times of the year. She can haunt those who damage the tree, spread diseases, and twist people's minds. The ash tree wife resembles a human woman combined with certain features of the tree – long green hair, bark-like skin, and horns like branches. She controls the tree and all the greenery in its surrounding area.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 8 **BODY CONTROL** 10 **MAGIC** 10
MANIPULATION 8 Fear 1/1

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- The vegetation in the area around the ash reflects the mood of the ash tree wife
- Can control vegetation and use branches to attack or enclose people
- Can use a fast action to move instantly between trees whose branches connect with the ash
- Has an extra action that can be used for attacking with branches
- Can open underground passages in the tree's root system, for hiding or trapping people who fall in

CONDITIONS

- ☐ The area's vegetation shakes
- ☐ Furious +1 (tries to trap someone)
- ☐ Cautious (hides)
- ☐ Bleeding sap –1
- ☐ Murderous +2
- ☐ Desperate –2 (broken branches in the trees and hissing vegetation)
- ☐ Broken – turns into leaf litter and re-emerges in the ash tree after 1D6 hours

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Claws	2	0
Branches	2	0–4*
Enclose	0†	0–4*

* Only in zones with trees and large bushes.
† The ground opens and devours someone. The player character must spend a fast action and pass an **AGILITY** test to get away. An enclosed character may each turn attempt to break out as a slow action, which requires a successful **FORCE** test with two successes.

RITUAL

The only way to kill the ash tree wife is to cut down or burn the ash.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- In Vangså, northern Denmark, there is an ash tree wife tired of not being treated with respect. She has cast a spell on the villagers and had them raze a factory that was recently built in the area, and forced them to live in the woods with her.
- Near Strömfors in southern Finland, a group of women have banded together, killed their husbands, and started robbing aristocrats in the area. The women have found refuge with an ash tree wife in a nearby forest. The ash tree wife makes sure they are not discovered. A gentleman farmer named Alvar Heitinen has sent for a "witch burner" from Turku – a ruthless Thursday's Child who drinks the blood of vaesen, thinking it makes him stronger.
- In Christianstad in southern Sweden, a popular artist named Felix Rask has, on many occasions, managed to paint an ash tree wife. The ash tree wife gives him the ability to see vaesen, and will subject him to increasingly terrifying sights. She wants to drive him mad as revenge for a logging company clearing forests in the area.

SECRET

Before the ash is killed, seven iron nails must be hammered into its roots. Otherwise the ash tree wife might leave the tree and find another ash to occupy. She is then likely to seek revenge on those who tried to slay her

BROOK HORSE

Never had I thought I would be swimming in a murky pond after the stroke of midnight. But here I am, far away from tonight's supper with Mr. and Mrs. Ångström up at the Academy. A white stallion in the splendor of the moonlight, standing among the lily pads on the bank of the Fyris River. A foolish wager made on the canal. Suddenly I found myself on a nightmarish ride away from Upsala Cathedral, through Sala Municipality, past the estates of Avesta and the kilns of Kullhyttan, clinging to the wet back of the brook horse. Good golly, what a sobering up. Now it seems I am left in the wild, with only a mocking neigh as evidence...

– Carl Linnaeus, May 3rd 1732

The brook horse is a magnificent stallion – white, dapple gray, black, or shimmering blue in the moonlight. It is a predator with razor-sharp teeth that lurks in brooks and lakes. Its greatest wish is to lead children or careless farmers into a drowning swamp, or take them on a mad ride away from the region. It usually seems calm and friendly, as it tries to present itself as a normal horse, strolling along a shore or a gurgling brook. It wants to lure curious humans, and its back can grow to make room for several riders. Having survived the prank of the brook horse, the last thing one hears before it vanishes is a sly, neighing laugh.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 9 **BODY CONTROL** 12 **MAGIC** 8
MANIPULATION 10 Fear 0

MAGIC

- Enchant
- Curse
- Can breathe underwater
- Can extend its back to make room for more riders
- Can travel at great speed during its mad ride and be a parish away in just a minute or two
- **LURE:** Can use its innocent look and neighs to lure a person into riding it. This is done with **MANIPULATION** against **OBSERVATION**.
- **BROOK RIDE:** The rider is taken on a mad ride to the nearest watercourse and must pass a **FORCE** test against the horse's **BODY CONTROL** to jump off without taking 3 damage.

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Luring – tries to get a sinner to climb on its back
- ☐ Angry +1
- ☐ Wild and reckless +2 – lures or grabs a victim in its teeth for a mad brook ride
- ☐ Tired –1
- ☐ Frightened –2
- ☐ Broken – turns into slushy water and underwater plants, and re-emerges in the nearest watercourse after 1D6 hours

SECRET

Steel, like that of a bridle, binds the brook horse to temporary obedience. Exclaiming "cross" or "cross of Christ" makes it temporarily disappear with a chilling neigh.

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Bite, hooves	2	0
Drown	2*	0

* A player character dragged into a watercourse as a result of a brook ride takes 2 damage per turn. Extra successes increase the damage.

RITUAL

The brook horse can be banished by riding it across plowed ground in the form of a circular sun cross, or leading it into a stable where six Christian symbols have been carved – one on each wall, one on the floor, and one on the ceiling.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- In his stable a farmer named Jan keeps a particularly beautiful stallion that he never bothers to groom. With bridle and plow he will plow any field for a pretty penny. The stallion is in fact a brook horse bound by steel. But at night the farmer butchers chickens and cattle stolen from neighboring farms to feed the mysterious horse.
- A jet black stallion with shimmering blue mane roams the dark marshes of Dalecarlia forests, attacking cattle and leading local children astray. Several youngsters have gone missing lately, but now a drowned body has been found in the Österdal River down by the watermill in Väsa.
- A spiteful brook horse is attracting starving paupers, farmers, and vagrants in the area along the Ljusnan River. It lures its victims and takes them on mad rides through forests and fields, before throwing them off somewhere far away from their home parish. It is said that lone, confused wanderers all have the same tale to tell.

CHURCH GRIM

We have arrived in Lycksele after traveling up the Ume River. Many falls threatened to capsize our vessel, and we suffered heavy rain and swarms of mosquitoes that drove me to the brink of madness. The villagers are remarkably taciturn. A woman claimed the village was cursed and the water full of tadpoles. Apparently, she had to drink hard spirits not to belch up frogs. I inquired about the source of this black magic. She pointed at the rickety wooden church on the edge of the village, saying that the handsome pastor from the south is punishing the people of Lycksele for not taking him into their hearts. I went to see him. Reverend Gran was indeed an elegant young man. He stood in the doorway with darkness behind him and asked me whether I thought it possible to make decent people out of these wayward locals. When I mentioned the supposed curse, he immediately turned gruff. Something stepped out of the darkness. The largest dog I have ever seen rubbed its head against the pastor's leg, glaring at me with its red eyes. I realized that the beast was not of this world. Perhaps I really did go mad from those infernal mosquitoes keeping me awake for days on end.

— Carl Linnaeus, May 30th, 1732

A church grim is a creature that keeps watch over a church. It is created by killing an animal and burying it inside the church wall. Most church grims take the form of a dog, rooster, cat, or horse. The creature attacks anyone trying to harm the church or its pastor, steal from the church, or otherwise desecrate the hallowed grounds of the church. The creature is fierce and ruthless. Church grims have the power to raise spirits from the graveyard in the form of black birds. At night the grim wanders the church, ringing the bells at midnight on the night before a villager's death.

SECRET

It is possible to attract a church grim through sinful deeds and blasphemy against God and Jesus Christ. The creature is provoked and drawn to the place. It usually tries to put an end to the sins through threats and force, but might also attempt to talk the sinner out of her wicked ways. In the meantime it is possible to sneak into the church and find the place where the carcass of the grim is entombed.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 8 **BODY CONTROL** 8 **MAGIC** 8
MANIPULATION 4 Fear 1

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Bite, claws	2	0

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- Sees everything that happens in the church
- Moves with the speed of a galloping horse
- Draws two initiative cards and acts twice per round

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Angered
- ☐ Mad +1
- ☐ Dazed –1
- ☐ Wounded and cautious –2 (only acts on one initiative)
- ☐ Furious +2 (Enchants or Curses)
- ☐ Broken – dissolves into smoke and re-emerges in the church after 1D6 minutes

RITUAL

The most common way to banish a church grim is to find the wall where it is buried, break it down, and burn the carcass. When the body catches fire, the grim howls and disappears. This will often split the church in two or raze it entirely.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- The Archbishop of Upsala has decided that the church in Näsby is to be razed and replaced with a new one. The church grim of Näsby will not let that happen. As a result of its magic, the Archbishop has taken ill. The builders visiting Näsby are also sick, on the verge of death.
- The four Niemi sisters used the church in Ylivesi as a meeting place for planning a murderous robbery. Now the church grim is killing them, one by one.
- In southern Norway, Father Riddervold in Haukeligrend is using a church grim to control and terrorize the local population.

FAIRY

I lie shivering in bed next to my fellow travelers. They scream as they are plagued by nightmares. Our skin is blemished with blisters, and our lips swollen like strawberries. The malady struck us halfway to Sorsele. That night I dreamed that I was awake. I rose from my bed in the light of luminous little creatures that flew between trees and rocks. They giggled and mocked me in ways that ought not to be transcribed. Somehow I felt compelled to follow them on a path I had not noticed during the day. We arrived at a bright green lake, so vast that I could not see the shore on the other side. From the deep arose a creature that, for lack of better words, resembled a whale. It opened its jaws to reveal a mouth filled with gleaming treasures. The winged creatures prodded me to step inside and help myself to its riches. When I hesitated, they reviled me in the foulest terms. Something made me turn around and head back. This infuriated them. One of the creatures flew to my face and blew some form of dust which made me cough. Shortly thereafter I woke from my slumber, and we were all very ill.

– Carl Linnaeus, June 3rd, 1732

Fairies live and work in communities. They normally appear as luminous, palm-sized women, although they can take any form they like – often wisps of mist, insects, or frogs. Male fairies are called elves and look like tiny old men. Elves play their musical instruments while the fairies lead the fairy dance which plunges people into insanity and distorts their sense of time.

Fairies love playing pranks. They are self-centered and easily offended, devoid of human morals. People who anger them are either bitten or infected with disease, and even when the fairies are in a good mood, they can bite the fingers of small children and feed on their blood. Fairies live in mounds, led by a fairy queen or an elf king. They move in processions on magical paths along underground streams. Fairies are closely connected to animals and plant life.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 4 **BODY CONTROL** 8 **MAGIC** 9
MANIPULATION 7 Fear 0

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- Trollcraft
- +2 to **MAGIC** at dusk or dawn
- Can fly
- Draws two initiative cards and picks the best one
- **FAIRY DUST:** can be blown into people's faces to make them see visions. **MANIPULATION** against **OBSERVATION**. The visions last one scene, during which the player characters require an extra success to pass any skill tests. Extra successes cause mental Conditions.

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Playful –1
- ☐ Feisty and aggravating +1 (blows fairy dust)
- ☐ Offended –1
- ☐ Furious +1 – uses both initiative cards
- ☐ Broken – turns into mist or escapes underground. Returns to its dwelling after 1D6 minutes.

COMBAT

In combat, a handful of fairies count as one NPC with shared initiative and actions. Some elves carry small swords, wear armor, and ride on ferrets or crows.

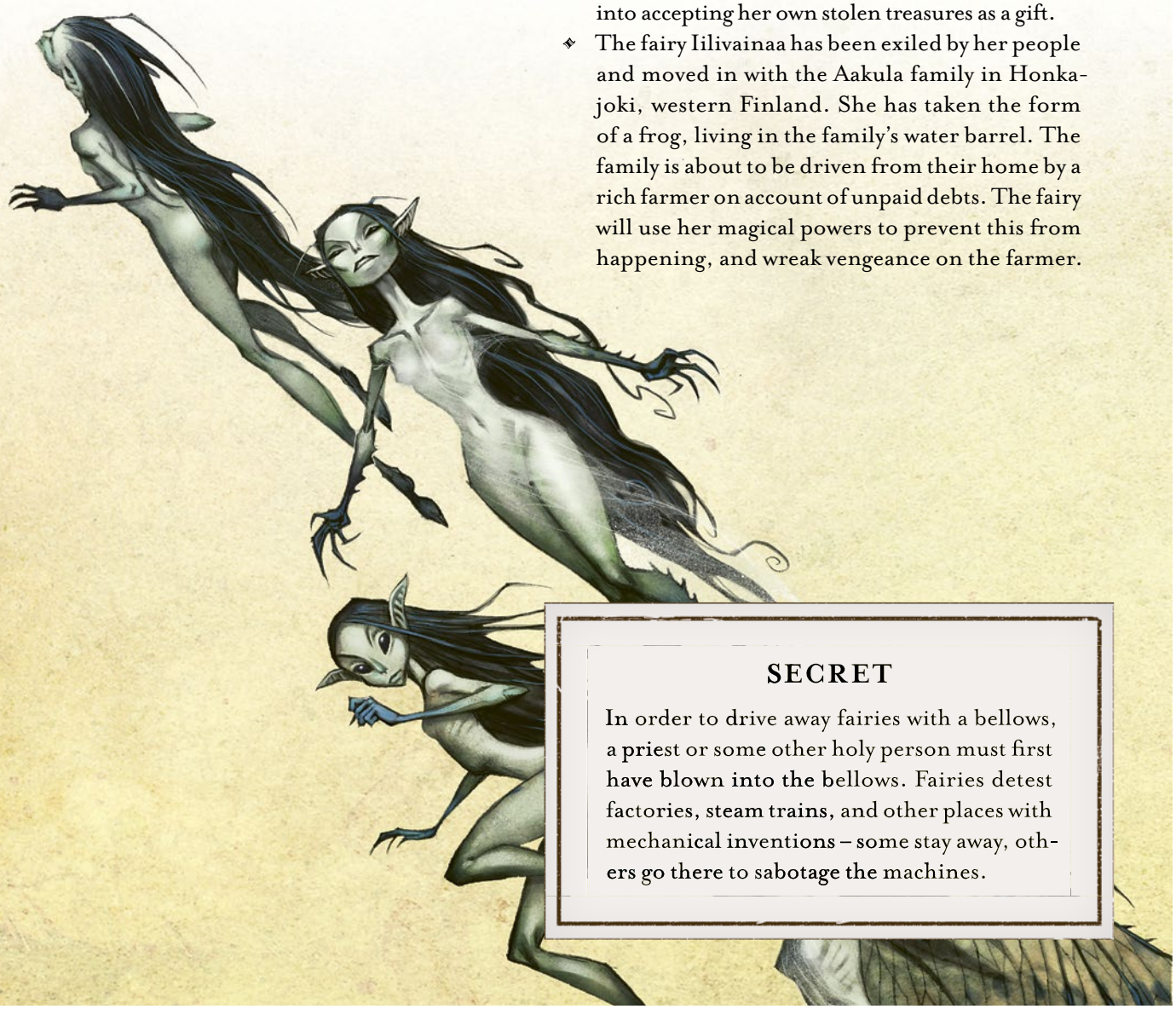
ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Bite, sword	1	0

RITUAL

One way to drive away fairies is to blow into their dwelling with a bellows. Another way is to find their magical paths and walk them while ringing a bell from a church and sprinkling holy water. Some fairies will leave if they feel tricked or outsmarted, or when their spells are broken. Fairies can be killed with certain magic items or by violence from other vaesen.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- The elf king Tiisendaft has fallen in love with the miller's wife Helga in the village of Åstorp in southern Sweden. Helga has recently given birth to triplets. The babies have tufts of hair on their ears, and are unpredictably performing magic tricks with their little fingers. Helga and her husband realize that the elf king must have impregnated her in her sleep. They want to hide this fact from the rest of the village and raise the kids as their own. The elf king wants to marry Helga and bring her and the children to his underground realm. The local blacksmith, Björn, has seen the children and is trying to convince the village to kill them and burn Helga as a witch.
- A tailor named Vidkun has found one of the fairies' magical paths and followed it to a grove filled with riches. He has brought jewelry and money back to the village Nore in Norway and bought everything he could ever want. What he does not know is that his money will twist the minds of those who spend it. For the madness to end, the fairy queen must be tricked into accepting her own stolen treasures as a gift.
- The fairy Iilivainaa has been exiled by her people and moved in with the Aakula family in Honkajoki, western Finland. She has taken the form of a frog, living in the family's water barrel. The family is about to be driven from their home by a rich farmer on account of unpaid debts. The fairy will use her magical powers to prevent this from happening, and wreak vengeance on the farmer.



SECRET

In order to drive away fairies with a bellows, a priest or some other holy person must first have blown into the bellows. Fairies detest factories, steam trains, and other places with mechanical inventions – some stay away, others go there to sabotage the machines.

GHOST

At Kronoby Hospital I sat with numerous maniacs whose minds had been broken by misfortune or liquor. Their ramblings made little sense, as one would expect, yet there was a consensus that a man named Elias Gren, a patient who hung himself in the hospital attic, wandered the corridors waiting for his wife and children, who never visited him after his descent into lunacy. They snuck me past the treatment rooms and pointed at the attic stairs which Elias had climbed to meet his doom. There was a light glowing from the attic, blue and most unnatural. But I hesitated, and when I finally mustered the courage to go up there the attic was dark, empty, and smelling of dust.

— Carl Linnaeus, September 20th, 1732

Ghosts are the spirits of dead people who have not found peace in death because of some need or desire that must first be met. They might crave vengeance or forgiveness, wish to do something or warn someone, or be tethered to the world by the grief of its loved ones. Ghosts have faintly transparent bodies in the form of rotting corpses, and make themselves known through drops in temperature, strange noises, and the flames of fires and candles turning blue. They are often bound to a certain place – it could be where they died, a crime scene, or their old home. Ghosts can be contacted through seances, or send messages to people in their dreams.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT — **BODY CONTROL** — **MAGIC** 10
MANIPULATION 7 Fear 2/1

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- Cannot be harmed in combat

RITUAL

The only way to banish a ghost is to find out what is keeping her from passing on, and help her resolve whatever unfinished business she may have.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- A card player named Mads Kuhn was falsely accused of cheating and shot on a riverboat in Hvalpsund, Denmark. He is haunting the boat, waiting for his murderer to return so that he can have his revenge.
- Lise Maalgard was one of many little girls being used by Mother Mette, mistress of the Serenity Poorhouse in Copenhagen. Mother Mette killed Lise to prevent her from telling anyone about what she was subjected to. But the spirit of Lise remained in the poorhouse to watch over the other girls.
- The so-called "Shadow Castle" in Jyväskylä got its name after the death of Pertti, only son of the Rantanen family. Most of the servants have quit, and Countess Mari Rantanen is numb with grief. She does not realize that her inability to let go of Pertti is the very reason he cannot find peace, and continues to haunt the castle.

SECRET

Some ghosts store their life force in physical objects or living beings. They can then be banished by destroying the object or killing the living host. A person who becomes possessed in this way will feel as though she has another person living inside her. She can trick the ghost into revealing itself by looking in a mirror and repeating its name. The ghost can then be persuaded or extorted into leaving the body.

GIANT

A farmer named Otto Person at the Grimsmark Inn spoke of a mountain where he had found large quantities of copper. When a man from the Board of Mines in Umeå was sent to investigate the matter, he found nothing but gray rock. Otto contended that the giants, who had lived there since before mankind, were hiding the riches of the mountain.
– Carl Linnaeus, June 13th, 1732

Giants are ancient creatures who have been in Scandinavia since long before the humans. They are vaguely human-like, but huge, often equipped with horns, fangs, tusks, or strange growths on their bodies. Giants live in their own separate communities. Some are favorably disposed toward humans, while others love to feast on human flesh. Giants are often violent and impetuous. They abhor Christianity and are known for hurling boulders at churches in the hope of crushing them.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 15 **BODY CONTROL** 6 **MAGIC** 5
MANIPULATION 5 Fear 2

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- **GIANT CAULDRON:** Can be used to cast curses. **MAGIC** +3
- Moves with the speed of a galloping horse
- Has an extra action in combat that can only be used for movement or to grapple an opponent.
- **THICK SKIN:** Protection 6

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Nonchalant –1
- ☐ Scornful +1
- ☐ Mad +1 (hurls boulders and grabs)
- ☐ Bloodthirsty +2 (crushes everything in its path)
- ☐ Cautious –1 (Enchants)
- ☐ Confused –3
- ☐ Broken – flees and stays away for 1D6 days

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Fist, club	3	0–1
Boulder	2	1–3
Jump	2	0*
Bite	4	0†

* Affects everyone in the same zone.
† Must first hold the victim.

RITUAL

Giants flee at the sound of church bells, although they may try to raze the church by hurling boulders at it. A person who manages to raise a cross or sprinkle holy water near a giant's dwelling can drive it into the wilderness. Some giants turn to stone if a human calls them by their true name.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- The ice giant Nefaalim saved the people of Hoddöva from a terrible storm that threatened the island. The giant was invited to their village and lived among humans for months, until an expedition of adventurers arrived from Bergen and chained the giant to the basement rock, with the intent of selling her to the Christiania Zoo. The villagers know that the giants of the mountains are planning to rescue their sister.
- Enticed by the promise of gold, the giant Ydresvär has agreed to help erect a mighty fortress in Tampere. The builder has not told him that the fortress will in fact be a church, and when the bells are in place, he will ring them and drive the giant away without payment. The townspeople know that the construction work is being accomplished by magical means, but do not realize there is a giant among them.
- The giant Oxaar roams the woods of Värmland, eating people as she pleases. Oxaar's father is looking for her, hoping to persuade her to come with him to their home in the northern mountains.

SECRET

The giants are only frightened by church bells when they are rung by Christian believers. The same goes for crosses and holy water. Most giants call each other nicknames so as not to reveal their true name. However, they always have a place where their real name is carved and hidden, for example on the underside of a boulder.

LINDWORM

We had to travel down the river again, but alas we brushed against an islet. The boat broke. My companion lost his boat, his axe, and a pike – I lost a couple of stuffed birds, including a heron. After wringing the water out of our clothes and walking a mile along the shore, we came upon a settler who gave us food. His name was Oscar. His face was pockmarked with disease, although he ascribed it to the acid spit of a rolling whiteworm. I assumed the illness had ravaged his mind. When we left, I saw something huge slither through the woods. I asked my companion what the monstrous creature could be, but he saw nothing but trees and shrubbery.

– Carl Linnaeus, June 4th, 1732

A lindworm is an ancient monster with a reptilian body and razor-sharp claws, capable of spitting caustic acid. A white mane grows on its neck. It tends to stay under old oak trees, whose leaves will then remain green throughout the year, or dwell beneath churches or in ruins. The lindworm hoards treasures in its burrow. By biting its own tail, it is able to roll along at high speed.

A lindworm feeds on cattle, human flesh, and corpses. They routinely trick people and put them under their spell. Some say there are God-fearing lindworms that can grant people the gift of magic, others claim that a person can gain magical powers from eating the flesh of such a creature.

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Alert +1
- ☐ Spiteful
- ☐ Mad +1
- ☐ Dazed –2 (withdraws and tries to heal)
- ☐ Panicking +1 (spits corrosive venom at everyone in range, slow action)
- ☐ Cautious –1
- ☐ Wounded –2 (bargains for its life, see *Gift*)
- ☐ Broken – hurls itself headlong at its enemies and flees. Returns after 1D6 hours.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 12 **BODY CONTROL** 8 **MAGIC** 8
MANIPULATION 7 Fear 2

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Bite, claws	3	0
Caustic venom	2/1*	0–2

* The target takes 2 damage the first round and 1 damage the next. Successes spent on increased damage only apply to the first round. Armor does not protect against venom.

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- Draws two initiative cards and acts twice per round
- **ARMOR:** Protection 6
- Takes no damage from fire
- Can move at high speed by rolling
- Heals two Conditions if left alone for two turns

RITUAL

Lindworms are not harmed by fire, but can be killed by tricking them into slithering through three different fires. The third fire turns the lindworm into ash.

THE GIFT OF THE LINDWORM

Humans can gain magical powers by eating the flesh of a lindworm, wearing its shed skin, or making a deal with the creature. The player character gains **MAGIC** 7 and access to one of the powers below. If the test fails, she suffers a physical Condition and the magic attracts vaesen lurking nearby. Let the player choose a power or roll a six-sided die.

1. **HEALING:** Can heal other humans. Each success heals one Condition.
2. **ANIMAL CONTACT:** Can talk to one type of animal. Extra successes let the player character: turn into an animal, command the animals, or form a permanent contact with that type of animal. Lasts one scene.
3. **STRENGTH:** Each success raises the player character's **FORCE** by 1 and increases the number of physical Conditions she can take without becoming Broken by 1. Lasts one scene.
4. **INVISIBILITY:** The player character becomes invisible. Extra successes either increase the duration by one scene or make other player characters invisible as well. Lasts one scene.
5. **SPIT VENOM:** The player character can use the **RANGED COMBAT** skill to spit venom at enemies in the same zone. Targets take 1 damage when hit and another 1 damage the following round. Armor does not protect. Lasts one scene. Extra successes increase the venom's initial damage by 1 (to a maximum of 3).
6. **REPTILE:** The player character turns a human into a snake. Other player characters may resist the effect with **FORCE**. Lasts one scene. Extra successes increase the duration by one scene.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- A pig farmer called Lill-Lasse has stolen some gold from the lindworm Svafnir in the woods of Dalsland and bought himself a large estate in Gothenburg, where he now lives in luxury. As a result, the Dalsland forests are faced with the fury of the lindworm.
- The sadistic Count Bendz has made a deal with a lindworm. He is using the creature to retain power over the village of Vildbjerg, where people have repeatedly risen up against his terrible rule.
- In Joensuu, eastern Finland, two poor sisters have been given healing powers by the lindworm Yggrad. The church has had the sisters incarcerated and sentenced to death for heresy, which caused Yggrad to retaliate by devouring a priest. The sisters are trying to get someone to rescue them by sending dream visions to people with the Sight.

SECRET

Lindworms propagate by laying eggs. They can only do so in places that are magical or charged with supernatural energy. Their reproduction is not sexual, but a mythical event. Lindworms can be driven off and stopped from reproducing by pouring silver shavings on the ground or burying objects of silver at the correct location.

MARE

During my journey along the barren banks of the Lais River, towards the roots of Nasa Mountain, we came upon a particularly fearful village. As we spent the night at Mrs. Adolfsson's mansion, the maids and farmhands of Hällbacken told of a dark witch in Stormyran. Those who did not put horsehair in their hymnbook at night found themselves breathless and mare-ridden upon the rooster's crow. Maids in the village spoke with particular regret of Erik, the unmarried farmhand at Sten's Stud, who like the stallions in their stall had wasted away to skin and bones. Having put these stories into writing, my partner and I decided to head out into the marsh to seek the truth about the mare of the Lais River.
— Carl Linnaeus, July 5th 1732

Mares are women who unknowingly shapeshift into nightmarish vaesen. The victims are possessed by deceased, unmarried women who seek revenge on the living, or long to see a beloved in the afterlife. There is also talk of a curse passed down from the mother who tried to relieve the pain of childbirth through black magic. At night, the afflicted woman turns into an oily mist that can pass through even the smallest knothole. After taking physical form she crawls onto the chest of the sleeping and squeezes the air and vitality out of them. The victim suffers terrible nightmares, sweats profusely and struggles to breathe. The mare sometimes rides horses as well, who wake in their stall foaming with sweat and with marelocks in their mane. In the morning, the mare returns home and resumes human form.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 6 **BODY CONTROL** 9 **MAGIC** 8
MANIPULATION 10 Fear 2/ 1

MAGIC

- Enchant
- Curse
- Can spend a fast action to switch between gaseous form and solid form
- In gaseous form it can fly and pass through tiny cracks, but not attack
- Does not take damage in gaseous form
- **MARE'S KISS:** The attack enchants the victim. Works like the trollcraft **PASSION**, where the victim tries to protect the mare. The effect lasts for turns rather than scenes.
- **SHORTNESS OF BREATH:** The mare uses all its actions. Can target a single person or everyone in range. Victims makes an **OBSERVATION** test; on failure they suffer shortness of breath, take mental damage, and lose their next slow action.

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Cautious +1 – dissolves into oily smoke and hisses
- ☐ Angry +1 – threatens and curses
- ☐ Pleading –1
- ☐ Fawning and seductive –1 – blows mare's kisses
- ☐ Unyielding rage +2 – squeezes the air out of its opponents
- ☐ Panic and escape –2
- ☐ Broken – dissolves into dark smoke, but returns home and reverts back to its human form at sunrise with no memory of what has happened

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Claws	2	0
Mare's kiss	1*	0
Shortness of breath	2/1†	0–1

* Enchants the victim like the Trollcraft **PASSION**.
† Takes mental damage. A single victim takes 2 damage, but can also deal 1 damage to everyone in range.

RITUAL

The mare suffers from obsessive thoughts and can be kept away from one's home by placing hair in a bible, spreading flax seeds around the bed, or making her count something until daybreak. But the curse can only be broken by someone who loudly declares that she is a mare just as she is becoming human again. Then the transformation is aborted in that moment and the afflicted woman can wake up with a lost finger or leg.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- In the autumn of her years, the childless widow Augusta in Svartnäs gave birth to three golden-haired girls. It is said that she made a deal with a witch and molested a boy working on a neighboring farm to get what she wanted. The Svartnäs girls grew up and took care of the estate, even after their mother's sudden passing. They have remained unmarried into adulthood, and now the area is plagued by nightmares and debauchery.
- In Varekil on the island of Orust, a deacon named Anna Tafström leads a deeply pious existence in service of the Church. The locals and the priest all say the village would not be the same without her good heart. But Anna has been cursed through her mother and is haunting the village's young men in mare form. Lately one has also found mare-ridden stallions in the stalls at the stud.
- Outside Aavasaksa, in the wetlands of Torne Valley, lie the bodies of five unmarried women who drowned in the swamp at the end of the 18th century. Now the spirits of the "Torne Hags" are haunting bitter maidens in the area, causing them to shapeshift into mares to unknowingly seduce or take revenge on picky men in the village.

SECRET

The mare can be bound to the place she is visiting by filling in the gap she passed through in gaseous form. She will then remain in mare form until she can return home. A mare-ridden person who kneels and makes a promise of marriage might ease the mare's thirst for vengeance and buy some time, but woe to the man who breaks his promise…

MERMAID

On the banks of Sörfolda fjord I saw items supposedly dating back to the dawn of mankind – crude axes and knives. They also showed me carvings near the waterline, claiming they had been made by the mermaid and her sea children. We headed out into the fjord on a fishing boat, and the fishermen called to her, throwing gifts of coins and gloves into the water. There was no sign of the mermaid.

– Carl Linnaeus, July 13th, 1732

The mermaid rules over the sea and the waves and all the creatures of the deep. She is said to have a fish tail instead of legs, a hollow fish-scaled back, and gills. Some insist that there are many mermaids, and even mermen.

Seafarers would be wise to give her offerings. She may repay such acts with favorable winds or a huge catch of fish, or punish those who fail to give her what she wants by sending storms or placing icebergs in their path.

The mermaid lives in a palace at the bottom of the sea, along with her serving spirits, the humans under her spell, and her sea children – often a mix of human and vaesen. From time to time a fisherman might catch a sea child in his net and raise it as his own. Sea children never stop longing for the sea, often growing up to become excellent swimmers and fishermen.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 7 **BODY CONTROL** 8 **MAGIC** 8
MANIPULATION 8 Fear 1

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- Trollcraft
- **ENCHANTED SONG: MAGIC** +2 while singing. Does not affect those who cover their ears
- While in water, she may draw two initiative cards and act twice per round
- **FISH SCALES:** Protection 4
- **MONSTER:** can summon monsters from the depths of the sea. They can sink ships and pull people into the water to be devoured. The monsters have their own initiative and their own actions. **MIGHT** 14. **BODY CONTROL** 10.
- Can transform into any marine creature

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Vengeful +1
- ☐ Cautious (Enchants through song)
- ☐ Bleeding –1
- ☐ Wounded –2 (transforms to escape)
- ☐ Tactical +1
- ☐ Panicking –2 (summons monster for protection)
- ☐ Broken – retreats to the bottom of the sea and stays away for 1D6 days

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Trident	2	0–1

RITUAL

The mermaid dreads metal. Those under her spell can regain control of themselves if their bare skin touches steel. The mermaid will leave a vessel alone if the seafarers throw offerings into the water. Once she becomes enamored with a human, she will not stop pursuing her love interest unless he gets married in a church and wears a ring on his finger.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- In Copenhagen, a mermaid has fallen in love with a ballerina named Milla Eriksen, who often goes down to the water to mourn her late husband Hans. Those close to Milla worry about her and the stories about her friends from the sea. When Milla goes missing, lured into the underwater palace of the mermaid, her friends turn to the authorities for help. The police close the case as a suicide.
- In Köpingsvik on the island of Öland, the fisherman have caught several of the mermaid Isidora's sea children. Believed to be unwanted children thrown into the water by their mothers, they are sent to the poorhouse in Borgholm. Isidora will do anything to get her babies back. She has let storms sink ships, and her monsters are swimming close to the shore, ready to pull people into the water.
- The mermaid Cphkane has settled in the Bothnian Bay outside Munksund in northern Sweden, and is filling her palace with male servants. She is enchanting men living along the coast and luring them into the water.

SECRET

The gifts thrown into the water must be important to those who offer them. The mermaid can sense whether it is a true sacrifice. Some mermaids require human sacrifices. Those who throw the wrong things into the sea may have their ship attacked by a giant sea monster summoned from the deep.

MYLING

I asked my friend why it was that the dance hall in Nykarleby stood empty. She said that a mother had buried her unbaptized child beneath the floorboards to hide the identify of the father. During the dance, its spirit rose from under the floor and danced with its mother until blood was running down her legs and she died in the arms of her dead child. That is why people won't go near the dance hall without sharp steel or crosses. No one dances in Nykarleby.
– Carl Linnaeus, September 22nd, 1732

A myling is the spirit of a child murdered by its mother, often because it were born out of wedlock or because there was no social safety net for those too poor to care for their child. In the 19th century, infanticide is punishable by death, and the myling often wants to see its mother punished.

The spirit haunts the place where the body was hidden – screaming, wailing, and sobbing. It appears as a ghost of the same age as the child when it died. The creature can also take physical form in the shape of a giant black bird with a human head. A myling can be teasing and mischievous.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 9 **BODY CONTROL** 7 **MAGIC** 8
MANIPULATION 6 Fear 2/ 1

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- Fly
- 1 extra fast action that can be used for movement
- **FEATHERS:** Protection 4
- **WHIMPER:** Attackers must pass an **OBSERVATION** test to attack and damage it

CONDITIONS

The myling can only be harmed in its bird form.

- ☐ Spiteful
- ☐ Aggressive +1
- ☐ Hateful +2
- ☐ Scruffy and dropping feathers –1
- ☐ Shaken and pleading –2
- ☐ Wounded –2 – bleeding black blood and whimpering with sadness
- ☐ Broken – dissolves and leaves behind black feathers. Becomes a ghost in the form of a child.

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Beak, talons	2	0

RITUAL

A myling finds peace when its mother is sentenced to death for murder, or when the crime is otherwise solved and justice has been served. The spirit can also be put to rest by finding its body, burying it on consecrated ground, and giving it someone else's name. The person who gives away her name must then be renamed. If she keeps using her own name, the myling will come to haunt her.

SECRET

When burying the myling's remains, the body must be wrapped in pieces of cloth with drops of human breast milk.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- The city of Karlskrona in south-eastern Sweden has been visited by witch hunters, led by the legendary Father Skoog. They say there is a witch in the city, and will not leave until she has been burned at the stake. But the reported witchcraft is actually the work of a myling. A poor young woman killed and buried her newborn child in the cellar of an inn.
- In a convent east of Lund, one of the nuns has killed her child to hide her love affair with a peddler. She buried the child in the convent attic. Now the convent is haunted by the myling.
- A forest near Sønderborg, Denmark, is haunted by a myling, forcing travelers to take detours around the place. At the end of the 18th century, ten pregnant women raped by German soldiers decided to kill their children and bury them in the woods.

THE NECK

I am sitting in a meadow, a cup of liquor in my hand, writing about a strange encounter. The people of Torneå complained about a pestilence killing the cattle as they were put out to pasture after the winter. This meadow is where they graze, not far from the river. I managed to identify the cause of their death. Vast quantities of Cicutaria aquatica grow in this place. I asked myself aloud why this plant was so abundant, and was answered by the sound of a flute. There was a man perched on a rock in the stream. He had the eyes of a goat, with black horns on his forehead. As I approached the man, he dove into the water. The tunes of his flute lingered in the air, and new sprouts of cicutaria sprung up all over the bank.

– Carl Linnaeus, August 18th, 1732

The Neck is a musician living in rivers, brooks, and lakes. He takes the shape of a man, young or old, often with some peculiar characteristics – cloven hooves, a third eye in the middle of his forehead, or frogs' eyes. The Neck plays the fiddle, the flute, and the harp. His melodies are beautiful, melancholic, and captivating. Those who listen to his tunes cannot stop dancing. The Neck lures people into the water and drowns them. Some say he is lonely, and that he draws people into his underwater realm to enjoy their company, forgetting that humans cannot live without air. Perhaps he is just wicked. There is only one Neck, and he has no other name. He can be found all over Scandinavia – occasionally at the same time, but it is still the same creature.

The Neck can teach people to play magic melodies, if he is given a black cat in return. Sometimes those who play his music are unable to stop, causing people, tables, and chairs to dance until their bodies and table legs are worn down to bloody stumps, and the musician herself has lost her fingers. The music only stops when the strings of the instrument are cut.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 5 **BODY CONTROL** 8 **MAGIC** 12
MANIPULATION 10 Fear 1

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- Can breathe underwater
- Can transform into animals living in and around water
- Can use a slow action to move between different waters and watercourses
- **MAGIC INSTRUMENT:** Works like the Trollcraft spell **DANCE**

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Fawning +2 (plays and lures)
- ☐ Desperate
- ☐ Wounded –2 (curses its attackers)
- ☐ Fleeing –1 (changes watercourse or transforms)
- ☐ Broken – Turns into a fly or toad. The Neck re-emerges in a watercourse after 1D6 hours.

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Claws	1	0

RITUAL

The Neck is sensitive to Christian symbols and steel. He can be prevented from using magic by sticking a knife in the ground when talking to him. He hates places where the cross has been painted. The Neck can be banished by luring him to a place where he is completely surrounded by Christian symbols and steel.

SECRET

For the Neck to be affected by a knife in the ground, it must first have been used to cut the strings of a lute or a fiddle. When the Neck is blocked by Christian symbols or steel, he may still gain enough power to pass if he hears people singing or playing music with gusto.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- The people of Kuhmoinen have let themselves be spellbound by the music of the Neck. They dance, whistle, play, and sing. In return, the villagers have received treasures from his underwater realm.
- A strange young man has been admitted to Roskilde Asylum. He has managed to keep his flute hidden from the guards and is holding nighttime dances ending in wild orgies. Several patients have killed themselves.
- The ghosts of Danish and Swedish soldiers are haunting the small village of Håstad in southern Sweden. It is said that the Neck brought them to life to punish the villagers for not letting him play at a wedding.

NIGHT RAVEN

We had wandered towards the shelter after the hymns of the midnight mass had gone quiet. The village priest of Bällinge claimed to have heard the horrifying shrieks beyond the snow-laden field to the east. But the mutilated bodies were not found until the sun finally dawned after the thick snowfall on Christmas Day, revealing the widow Egleus and her three children in a gruesome sludge of blood and night-black feathers. Landlord Fritjof Egleus, wretched and subdued, is said to have taken his own life to escape his harsh wife. Now, in the undead form of a wicked night bird, it seems he has had his revenge...

– Carl Linnaeus, December 25th 1731

Night ravens are the bitter and damned spirits of suicides and criminals buried in unholy ground, sometimes banished by a church grim who purged the unhallowed dead from the northern part of the graveyard. The night raven is a raven-like creature whose shape seems to shift and transform as it moves. An elusive night-black bird of oily smoke and scruffy feathers with glowing eyes and a beak full of razor-sharp teeth. The spirit flies close to the ground, always at night, supposedly seeking the tomb of Christ. They gather in flocks during major holidays, but during daytime they always seek shelter underground, only to resume their search when darkness falls.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 8 **BODY CONTROL** 9 **MAGIC** 6
MANIPULATION 8 Fear 1/1

MAGIC

- Enchant
- Can fly, but only two meters above ground
- Draws two initiative cards and picks the best one
- Gains an additional slow action when part of a flock
- **NIGHT SHRIEK:** The night raven can petrify its victim with a blood-curdling shriek. Roll **MANIPULATION** against **OBSERVATION** for everyone in range 0–2. The affected take 1 point of mental damage if they try to use actions to run or flee.
- Can only be harmed by holy weapons or church silver

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Bitter
- ☐ Angry +1
- ☐ Hateful +1
- ☐ Dazed –1 – drops feathers
- ☐ Confused -2
- ☐ Mad +2 – swaps initiative with a PC of its choice
- ☐ Broken – disintegrates into oily smoke and broken feathers, and re-emerges north of the nearest church after 1D6 minutes

SECRET

The spirit can be bound to, and forced to obey, a master as long as three of its feathers lie pressed in a bible along with a dried passion flower. Victims can avoid its attacks by flattening themselves against the ground until sunrise.

COMBAT

In combat, up to a handful of night ravens count as one NPC with shared initiative and actions.

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Talons, beak	1/2*	0

* A single night raven deals 1 damage, but when part of a flock the bitter spirit works itself into a frenzy and deals 2 damage instead.

RITUAL

The night raven's spirit will not find peace until its original body is buried in holy ground. It can be forced back into said body if it is wrapped in the burial shroud of a saint or bishop at night, and then exposed to the first rays of the morning sun.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- The church outside Mörarp has collapsed after an unusually severe autumn storm, and the bitter spirits that once sought rest in the northern graveyard have returned in the form of a flock of jet-black night ravens. At night the flock flies east to seek the tomb of Christ, leaving nighttime wanderers dead in their wake.
- A witch in Ørje named Aline Nordrum has enthralled a flock of night ravens, carrying in her coat an old bible with their feathers pressed inside. Every night they fly out of her home at the old poorhouse on the other side of the river and seek out those who mocked and offended her. The spirit birds keep clawing, biting, and scaring until her French horn is heard throughout the village and the flock returns home after its nightly escapades.
- A curse rests on the noble family of Garpenberg, who with their manors and estates rule the area along the southern shore of Gruvsjön. One by one the family members go mad and end their lives by their own hand. And one by one they are buried in unholy ground, only to rise again by the time of the nearest holiday, seeking to avenge their madness and grievous demise.

NISSE

The master of the farm in Nordmaling where we have been staying offered us buttermilk and flatbread. He said the cherry trees by the well rarely bear fruit, yet they cannot cut them down, as the farmstead nisse regards their berries as his property. The other day a farmhand pissed on the barn where the nisse has made its home. The following night, a calf was born whose legs, tail, and head had all been switched by the vengeful nisse. I asked the master to show me the animal. He obliged, and dug up a stillborn calf with a deformed body.

— Carl Linnaeus, May 22nd, 1732

Some farms have a farmstead nisse. The nisse wants what is best for the farm and usually ignores the people living there. He helps with the farmwork, and often has a favorite horse whose mane he braids in a way that is very difficult to undo.

Nissar appear as little old men with long beards, shabby gray clothes, and red hats. They are grumpy, vindictive, and proud. Lazy farmhands and maids are scolded with a hard smack in the face. Nissar expect offerings from the household, such as a bowl of porridge. There have been cases where a nisse has mistaken the kindness of a farmer's wife for something more and tried to take the farmer's place, both in bed and on the farm. Nissar can turn into animals, often a toad or a cat. They are extremely strong, much more so than their appearance would suggest.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 10 **BODY CONTROL** 8 **MAGIC** 5
MANIPULATION 7 Fear 0

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- **NISSE'S PORRIDGE:** by eating his porridge, the nisse gains **MIGHT** +3 for one scene
- Can turn into animals
- Draws two initiative cards and picks the best one
- Has an extra action that can be used for movement
- Can become invisible for a short period of time and causes trouble and mischief

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Scornful
- ☐ Irritated +1 (becomes invisible and causes mischief)
- ☐ Dazed –1
- ☐ Hateful +2 (seeks to inflict damage on its surroundings)
- ☐ Bleeding –2
- ☐ Panicked rage –2 (wounded, but always acts with the highest initiative)
- ☐ Broken – hides for 1D6 hours and plans a terrible revenge

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Fists	3	0

RITUAL

The easiest way to get rid of a nisse is to make him accept a new piece of clothing. After putting it on, he disappears to another farm. Another way, should the first one fail, is to stop giving him food and gifts or to offend him by soiling his porridge. This can be a precarious affair as the nisse will seek revenge, for example by killing a cow or burning down the stables, before leaving for another farm. Trying to chase away a nisse who is determined to stay can be very difficult. Sometimes they can be made to leave by stealing their hat or threatening to harm their favorite animal.

SECRET

Nissar can be bound with spider silk. This robs them of their power, preventing them from breaking loose. It is possible to kill a nisse with a nail from the wall of a dilapidated farmhouse. The nail must be driven through the nisse's heart.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- A nisse named Großer Steinvater has long accompanied the German theater troupe Nachtmagie on their travels through Scandinavia, taking care of their animals, wagons, and props. The star of the show is a prima donna called Else, and the business has recently been taken over by Director Holger Heinz. Holger intends to give the best parts to his wife instead of Else, which is why the prima donna has wooed Großer Steinvater into thinking she is in love with him. She plans to use the nisse to seize control of the theater and take center stage once more.
- The port of Turku, Finland, is home to Niemat – a nisse who is helping with the boats, jetties, and storage sheds. He has lost patience with the harbor master, who was constantly neglecting his duties, and beaten him and his family to death. Four Swedish sailors have been arrested for the murder.
- In Stånga on the Swedish island of Gotland, a nisse called Tinderman has lived on Klarhed Farm since time immemorial. Unfortunately, the current owners of the household fell ill and were forced to sell everything they own, prompting Tinderman to fill up the stables with animals stolen from other farmers. The thefts have caught the attention of the local county administrator.

REVENANT

As I write this, I am alone in the mountains. My companion is dead, and I am at my wits end. The two of us were heading for a goahti outside the foundry, and we were late. It was midnight, although the sun still shone upon the earth. My fellow traveler pushed rapidly ahead. I came across a plant previously unknown to me, picked it, and named it Andromeda. When I looked up, my companion was gone. I hurried after him, eventually entering the goahti. My companion lay dead before me, his face frozen in a dreadful grimace. Something emerged from the shadows. I screamed and ran. Now, here I am, the pen shaking in my hand. Where my pack is, I do not know.

— Carl Linnaeus, July 20th, 1732

A revenant is the undead spirit of an evil human, full of hatred for mankind and an urge to frighten, harm, and kill. Usually it wants to torment its family or other people it used to loathe back when it was still human.

Revenants are usually invisible, but can appear as monstrous figures with sharp teeth and claws. Sometimes they are black as night and several meters tall. Revenants suck the life out of people by ghost-pressing them, but are also known to eat humans alive. They generally make their lair in a tree, a pile of rocks, or a ruin near the place of their death, where they must stay until nightfall.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 9 **BODY CONTROL** 9 **MAGIC** 9
MANIPULATION 8 Fear 2/1

SECRET

A revenant can inhabit the body of a living human. That way it can live on even if the remains of its human body are destroyed. Banishing the revenant from its living host requires some form of exorcism.

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- Has an extra fast action that can only be used for movement
- Can use a fast action to switch between physical and spectral form
- Can only deal damage and be damaged in physical form
- Can fly and move at high speed
- Magically identifies people's weaknesses and shameful secrets
- Can pass through tiny spaces like door gaps and keyholes

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Devious +1 – seeks the victim's secrets
- ☐ Hateful +2
- ☐ Twisted –1 (curses)
- ☐ Cautious (shows up unexpectedly in spirit form)
- ☐ Broken – retreats to its dwelling and stays away for 1D6 days

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Claws, bite	2	0
Ghost press	2/turn	0*

* Must hold the victim. Deals damage every round the victim remains in its grip. Armor does not protect.

RITUAL

A revenant cannot pass a Christian symbol painted with tar or harm a person wearing a cross around her neck. However, it can use magic to make the person take her necklace off.

A revenant who cannot get back to its abode before sunrise stays where it is, invisible, as a so-called day stander. It can neither be harmed nor cause harm, but Thursday's Children can hear it hurl threats and insults at all who pass it by. Accidentally bumping into a day stander can cause a human to have a stroke.

The revenant can be banished using the remains of its human corpse. If it was not buried in a graveyard, it can be banished by digging up the body, carrying it across a graveyard wall (rather than through the gate), and burying it in consecrated ground with a cross on the casket. If the body has already been buried in a graveyard, it must be dug up again, carried across the wall three times, and reburied with a cross and the shovels with which the grave was dug. Another way is to burn the dead body.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- A bookseller in Copenhagen named Vibeke Frost fired his apprentice Karsten Anker when it turned out that he was extorting many of his fellow employees. The same day, Karsten was hit and killed by a stagecoach. His body was buried in the local graveyard. Karsten's spirit returned as a revenant and is now haunting the bookstore and the neighborhood where he died.
- In Knäred in southern Sweden, the villagers lured the hated and feared local county administrator, Andersson, into an abandoned inn, which was then set ablaze. Andersson died in the flames, but came back to haunt the villagers as a revenant.
- Watchmaker Matthijs Holter in the Norwegian city of Stavanger has been holding seances in his home. Unfortunately, this has brought a revenant to life. The revenant Ea is the spirit of a 13th century woman who has mistaken the Holters for the Viking family who bought her as a thrall before torturing her to death.

SEA SERPENT

The stevedores at the port of Varberg spoke of many sailors meeting their end in the maw of the Kattegat Serpent. They say it dwells deep in the murky waters outside Læsø. I readily admit that these horror stories disturbed me, as we were set to board the wet deck of the schooner in the morning. But my journey to Amsterdam and the Tulip Kingdom could not wait. I can only hope that this sea serpent and its grisly deeds, like the fabled existence of the Great Lake Monster, are but stories from the thirsty throats of drunken travelers.

– Carl Linnaeus, August 21st 1735

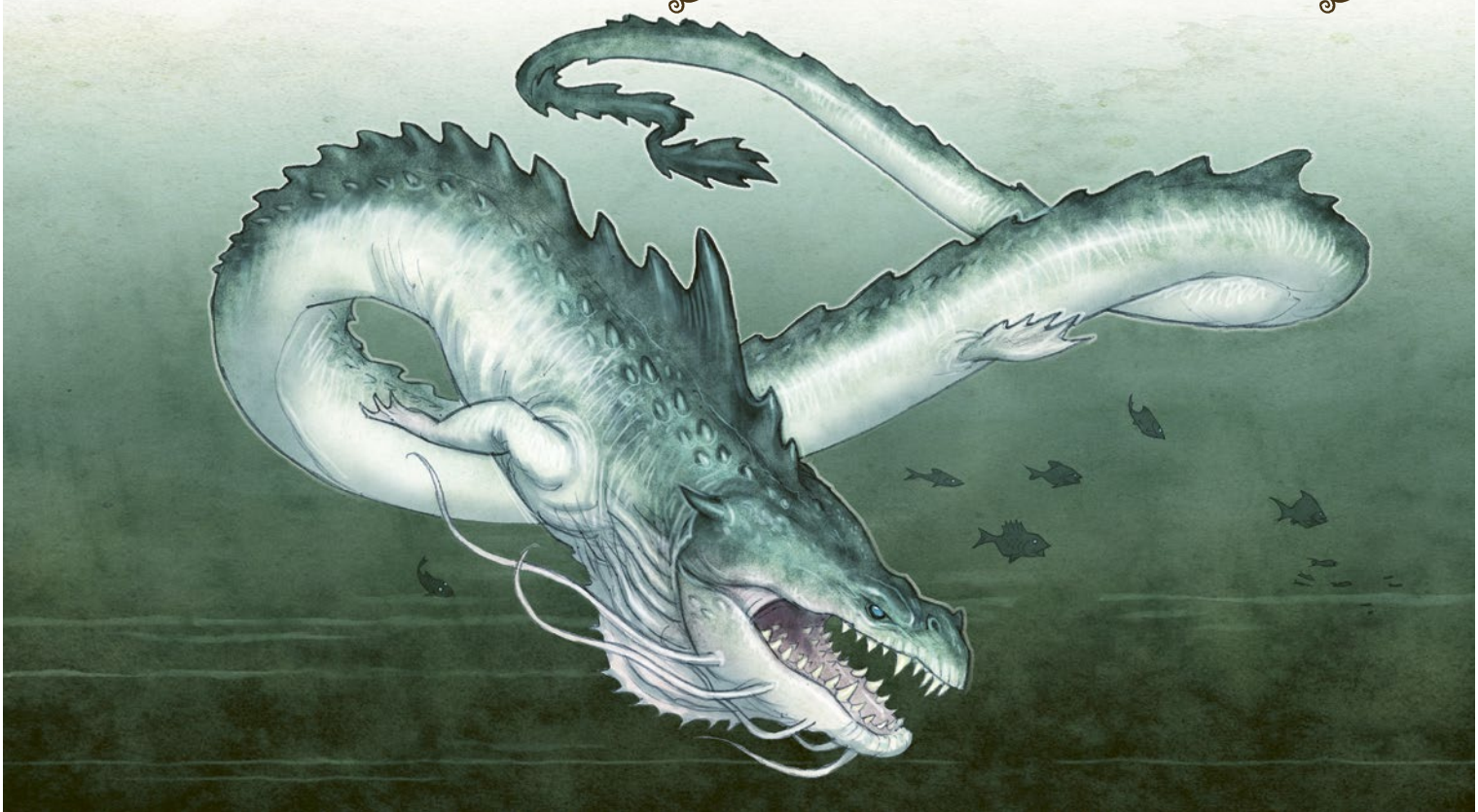
Sea serpents, or sea monsters, are strange creatures hiding in dark waters. They live in caves and crevasses around coasts and fjords, beneath windswept islands, or in the depths of mountain lakes. As long as there have been humans in the North, there have been stories about these creatures – from the Norse myth of the world serpent Jörmungandr, to the legendary monster of the Great Lake. They are intelligent creatures born out of magic who can enthrall an entire crew with their hypnotic gaze, or break masts and sink ships with their sheer size and bulk.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 15 **BODY CONTROL** 10 **MAGIC** 8
MANIPULATION 6 Fear 3/2

MAGIC

- Can use its **HYPNOTIC GAZE (OBSERVATION)** to control and lure its victims
- Draws two initiative cards and acts twice per turn
- **COPPER SCALES:** Protection 8
- Can move at high speed underwater
- Its bite can release a paralyzing venom with potency 4
- Can constrict a victim and continue to act against others by grappling with a free action each turn
- Drags humans, cattle, and entire ships into the depths of the sea with an opposed **MIGHT** test (Agility or Force)



CONDITIONS

- ☐ Tactical
- ☐ Angry +1
- ☐ Cautious −2
- ☐ Vengeful – drags someone into the deep if possible
- ☐ Furious +2 – tries to destroy everything and everyone
- ☐ Wounded and raging +1
- ☐ Broken – takes the nearest victim in its maw and retreats into the deep. Returns after 1D6 minutes.

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Bite	3	0
Constrict	2/1*	0
Pound	2	0†
Ram	3‡	1–2

* Tries to grab the victim which deals 2 damage. Then deals 1 damage per turn until the victim becomes Broken or breaks free.
† Affects everyone in the same zone.
‡ Deals damage to ships and humans, but requires momentum.

RITUAL

Sea monsters are shy and solitary creatures who will attack anything seen as a threat. They can be tricked into biting their own tail and paralyzing themselves. This requires that they are led around in tunnels or cavities so the tail is mistaken for an enemy. They will then sink to the bottom of the sea and disintegrate into a murky sludge of fish scales and guts.

SECRET

Sea monsters can be lured with the tender meat of a piglet attached to an anchor or a large hook. They are drawn to the smell of metal and can wrap themselves around an iron anchor and then sink to the bottom.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- The fishermen of Brommö tell of "the Väner Serpent" beyond the Crow Islets, which with its patinated copper scales is scraping the keel of boats and breaking fishing nets. It is said that the serpent lifts rocks from the bottom of the lake to create breakers that can run ships aground. The sea serpent is the result of an enchantment cast by the keeper of Smörhätta Lighthouse on a particularly windy autumn night.
- From Krylbo to Söderfors, the villagers along the Dal River speak of a shimmering water spirit protecting the area from misfortune. However, cattle and ill-fated visitors have disappeared along the river, and some say they angered the spirit. The shimmering protector is in fact a gleaming white sea serpent created by the earth's powerful energies outside Näs Bruk. The serpent digs into the muddy river bed to rest for weeks at a time, before it returns to the banks in search of food.
- As the ice cap receded, two sea serpents were born at the dark bottom of the Bothnian Sea: Gǫrning and Heiðr. When they first met, the serpents fought for seven days and seven nights, until both monsters became tangled with each other. Over time, or possibly through dark magic, the serpents merged into the two-headed Grissle Monster which, over the years, has attacked lonely vessels on the Sea of Åland. Now the monster has laid a shimmering silver egg in the muddy seabed and started building a nest of sunken shipwrecks.

SPERTUS

One of the hunters in Torfforden showed me the dried deer bladders they would blow up, fill with liquor, and carry with them. He wanted to show me something else as well, which he said was the secret to his wealth and success. In his snuff box lay a small beetle of unknown species. It turned out to be alive, twisting and turning like a housewife on a feather bed, until the hunter gave it a good spit. Then it sprouted limbs with which I was not familiar. The man quickly put the lid back on. He would not sell me the creature, claiming it was worth more than all the gold of the mountain trolls.

– Carl Linnaeus, July 12th, 1732

The spertus is a magical being, often appearing in the form of a shiny black bug or a small white snake or worm. It is said to be in league with the Devil, and humans can use its powers to gain wealth, love, and success. The most common way of obtaining a spertus is to go fishing in a brook with a human leg as bait, or keeping a chicken egg in one's armpit until it hatches.

The spertus usually lives in a snuff box and needs to be fed every day with human spit. If the owner forgets to feed it, its vengeance will be terrible. Sooner or later the creature will take control of its owner, unless it is sold or given away. But it can only be passed on twice. The third person to accept the creature will never be rid of it, and the spertus will assume control of its owner.

SECRET

The only way to get rid of the spertus is to live a virtuous life. A person who performs rituals with blood sacrifices in order to kill the spertus will only make it stronger, and allow the creature to crawl into the ear of its owner and control her from inside her head. The owner may think that the ritual was successful and that she is free of the creature, even though her actions are in fact controlled by the spertus.

MAGICAL POWERS

The spertus has no powers of its own, but gives its owner (a player character or an NPC) **MAGIC** 8 and one or several of the following abilities:

- **ENCHANT:** one or more Enchantments
- **CURSE:** one or more Curses
- **TROLLCRAFT:** one or more Trollcraft spells
- **WEALTH:** Increase Resources by 2
- **LUCK:** Can be used once per session to get a free success on a test
- **LOVE: MANIPULATION** +3 when seducing someone
- **STRENGTH: FORCE** +2 and an extra physical Condition before becoming Broken

When a player character uses the powers of the spertus, the Gamemaster rolls a die. A one means that the creature's powers have leaked out. Roll on the *Leaking Magic* table. The Gamemaster makes a hidden roll and lets the effect continue for one or multiple scenes.

The spertus must be fed every day with a wad of spit. If not, the owner (or one of her friends or family members) will be struck by misfortune, illness, or death. Roll on the *Leaking Magic* table.

CONDITIONS

The spertus cannot be destroyed by physical means. If thrown away, it returns to its owner within 1D6 hours.

RITUAL

Once the spertus has taken control of a human, there are two ways to get rid of it: the first is to sacrifice a dozen people in a magical ritual; the second is for the owner to devote her every action to the Church for many years and live a virtuous life. In both cases, the spertus will eventually shrivel and die.

LEAKING MAGIC

Roll 1D6 to determine what happens.

1. An Enchantment affects people in the player character's surroundings
2. A Curse (**MAGIC** 10) affects people in the player character's surroundings
3. The player character's body is distorted or transformed. The Gamemaster decides what happens.
4. The player character's body suffers from bleeding, nausea, and strange physical changes
5. The player character is possessed by a spirit for 1D6 days. Her entire personality changes, as she becomes someone else. Together, the Gamemaster and the player secretly decide how the character should be played.
6. The spertus takes control of the player character, affecting the player characters as if she were its third owner.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- In Ystad, a man named Hans Magnusson has realized that he is the third owner of a spertus. He has learned how to escape this hell by sacrificing the souls of others. He keeps three unfortunate wanderers locked up in his house by the sea, and is currently on the hunt for more.
- In Esbjerg in western Denmark, the enormously affluent trader Christian Tanner has died. His family knows that his fortune was made with the help of a spertus. Christian's children are using black magic and violence against one another, each hoping to become the only living heir.
- The slums of Stockholm are terrorized by a sadistic killer who keeps evading the police. It is the glazier Helena Svahlstedt who is living out her murderous fantasies with the help of a spertus.

THE THIRD OWNER

The third owner of the spertus is under the creature's control, and can neither sell the creature nor give it away. If she does, it reemerges in her pocket after 1D6 hours. Shortly after accepting the spertus, she starts to change:

- Her body becomes twisted
- Her dreams are haunted by visions of hell
- The spertus (who believes itself to be Satan's vessel) can assume control of the body at any point during a scene. A player character can resist by passing an **OBSERVATION** test with at least two successes.
- Humans and animals react negatively. A player character trying to establish positive relations, for example through **MANIPULATION**, needs one extra success to succeed.
- Jinxed. Friends and relatives fail in business and in love, houses fall apart, diseases begin to spread.
- Enchantments affect the person's surroundings

TROLL

The strangest wedding I ever attended was here in Västerbotten. Inside the cabin, which was not very spacious, the tables were set not only for human guests but also the mountain trolls. Relatives of the groom brought dried meat and cheese. His mother and father had everyone drinking liquor from a jar, as the guests shook hands with each other. Many drinks were poured onto the ground, for the lady of the mountain. I was told the trolls had come to visit, invisible to human eyes. They were described as old men, bearded and gray. Apparently, their gifts were greater than those of the humans – not given during daytime, but placed around the sleeping bride and groom. I remember nothing else, either from the explanation or the wedding feast, as the schnapps flowed too freely. My head is throbbing, and I dread the light of day.

– Carl Linnaeus, September 28th, 1732

Trolls live in communities in mountains and hills where they brew beer, keep livestock, get married, and have their own traditions. Although they hate everything about the Christian religion, the trolls can sometimes exchange favors and tools with humans.

Forest trolls often have long beards, tails, and large noses. They can also look a lot like humans – sometimes even beautiful – but there is always some detail that gives them away. Their facial features are skewed, their skin greenish, or their pupils strange.

The mountain trolls are related to giants. They are huge and hideous, with tusks, large ears, warty skin, or multiple arms or legs.

Some trolls steal things from people's farms, and might even kidnap the humans themselves. The abducted will be offered enchanted food that looks delicious, but is actually disgusting slugs and frogs. Those who eat it become bound to the trolls. There have been cases where the trolls have snatched a baby from its cradle and left a changeling in its stead.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 9 **BODY CONTROL** 6 **MAGIC** 7
MANIPULATION 7 Fear 1

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- Trollcraft
- Can have one or several magic items (see text box)
- **MOUNTAIN TROLL:** Mountain trolls turn to stone during the day. They have **MIGHT** 12, **MANIPULATION** 5, Fear 2 and deal 3 damage.

TROLLS' ITEMS

ITEM	POWER
Spindle	Spinning it reveals magical paths and gateways
Troll Dust	Throwing it adds MAGIC +2 to a test
Troll Food	Binds the will of those who eat it (MAGIC against OBSERVATION). Lasts 1 scene. Each extra success extends the duration by 1 scene
Wand	MAGIC +2
Troll sack	Can hold anything and everything, including humans
Troll eye	By sacrificing one of its eyes, the troll gains the ability to enter people's dreams and influence them in their sleep

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Irritated +1
- ☐ Angry +2 (Enchants and scares)
- ☐ Afraid –1
- ☐ Dazed –1
- ☐ Bleeding but furious +1 (Curses its enemies)
- ☐ Badly injured –2
- ☐ Broken – flees and stays away for 2D6 hours

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Club, knife, staff	2	0

RITUAL

Trolls can be driven away through Christian rituals, for example by placing a cross in their dwellings. Uttering holy words inside their farmhouses makes the food turn rancid. Toddlers can be protected by baptizing them. Some mountain trolls will crack or turn to stone permanently if exposed to sunlight.

SECRET

Christian symbols cannot be brought into the dwelling of a troll unless the bearer first turns her clothes inside out and walks backwards through the entrance while also speaking backwards. The magic protecting the dwelling will then think the human and the symbol are on their way out.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- In Myrkdalen, Norway, the village idiot claims to have seen a bridal party with a priest and a cantor dance up the mountains and disappear. The troll Halvflaas has taken revenge for some crosses that were raised on the mountaintops, which turned his entire family to stone. Now he intends to bind the wedding guests to himself and turn them into trolls.
- A hunter named Sixten Falk has downed a huge beast in the woods north of Mora – a wild dog the size of a horse. He does not know that it is the runaway pet of the mountain troll Axntr. The troll has armed itself with a club in each of its five arms, and is coming to kill the person who stole his puppy.
- In Suonenjoki, a thirty-year-old woman has arrived dressed in moss and bark. She says her name is Irja Korpela and that she was taken by the trolls as a child. The woman claims that the village telegrapher, also named Irja Korpela, is actually a changeling that took her place – that she practices Trollcraft and is in contact with the trolls.

VAETTIR

This morning I left Reverend Solander's home in Piteå with my gift stuffed into my satchel. It was given to me by a vaesen no bigger than my forearm – a rat-like creature on two legs, who addressed me by name as I was trying to sleep. The creature begged me to move a water barrel that had been placed in the corridor outside the kitchen. I did what it asked, and found that the barrel was blocking a hole in the floor. A tiny figure popped out, smiling at me with its froggish face and tipping its hat. The next morning, I found my gift – a beautiful troll drum wrapped in birch leaves – upon my blanket.

– Carl Linnaeus, June 17th, 1732

No vaesen lives closer to the humans than the vaettir, who are also the easiest to get along with. They live in colonies underneath stables and fireplaces or in underground passages. The household ought to warn them before pouring hot water on the ground or moving any buildings. The vaettir are as small as rats, dressed in black or gray clothes, with an appearance that resembles small animals such as toads, mice, or hedgehogs. They have short names like Toss, Poss, or Knoss. Humans kind enough to help them can be rewarded with leaves of gold or magic items. But the vaettir can also be vengeful, spreading diseases or burning down the farm.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 5 **BODY CONTROL** 7 **MAGIC** 8
MANIPULATION 7 Fear 0

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Dazed –1
- ☐ Sad and pleading –2
- ☐ Wounded and scared –1
- ☐ Broken – dies if the damage is physical. Curses the place where it used to live or the person who dealt the most damage.

COMBAT

In combat, a handful of vaettir count as one NPC with shared initiative and actions.

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Knife	2	0
Small animals	1*	0–3
Fire bomb	†	1

* Can attack up to four targets with a single action. Can be done once per combat encounter.

† Hits everyone in the same zone and sets a small part of the body on fire (see page 70). Each extra success increases the fire by one step. Dodge can be used to dive out of the zone or into cover.

RITUAL

Vaettir have all the same weaknesses as humans. They can be killed or driven away using any method or weapon that would harm a human being.

SECRET

Some vaettir turn into small animals when they are killed (or thought to have been killed). They will then seek revenge in animal form. There have been cases where humans have acquired pets that later turned out to be vaettir. These have used their position to help other vaettir steal things from the household.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- A priest and Thursday's Child named Halldor Rønning has moved into the parsonage in Hokksund. He found vaettir living under the house and, believing all vaesen to be creatures of hell, smoked them out and ran them off. The vaettir returned to burn the house down. Halldor was waiting for them with an axe and slew four of them before they managed to escape. The vaettir have summoned relatives and friends from all over southern Norway and launched an attack on the people of Hokksund. Three people have already had their throats cut in their sleep.
- On Åland, in the city of Mariehamn, the evil vaettir Kärmekieli has bewitched the mayor and made him turn the island into his own realm with cruel laws, a system of informants, and large-scale corruption.
- The village of Blötberget in central Sweden is about to be wiped out by epidemics created by vaettir in the area. Their vaettir queen Grigi is trying to draw out the truth about who killed the forest's animals and left them to rot.

WEREWOLF

Officer Kock of the county police met us on the other side of Lake Virijaure. Before we had even climbed out of the boat, he came up to us through the thick fog, asking if we had seen a man dressed in wolf pelts with blood all over his body. Some stranger had run amok, slaughtering a maid and ripping out her heart. We knew nothing, and told him so. He asked that we keep our eyes open. That night we heard the howls of wolves, echoing through the woods and across the lake.

– Carl Linnaeus, July 17th, 1732

The werewolf is a shapeshifter – a human that can transform into a wolf or a bear. There are three ways to create a werewolf: a human can turn into one through a curse from a vaesen or a wizard, a baby might become a shapeshifter if the mother's pain during childbirth is relieved through magic, and the third way is for someone learned in magic to willingly transform herself into a werewolf.

Werewolves are strong, and they are bloodthirsty. Some only transform when the moon is full, others when they feel emotional – sad, angry, happy. A few can choose when to transform, but most cannot control their transformation nor their actions in animal form. Like other vaesen, werewolves can choose whether to be invisible to humans. But many werewolves are driven by an urge to stalk and frighten their prey, and prefer to be seen during the hunt.

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Bloodthirsty +1
- ☐ Irritated
- ☐ On guard +1
- ☐ Dazed –2
- ☐ Tactical and evasive +1
- ☐ Furious but wounded +1
- ☐ Blood frenzy +3 (If a person becomes Broken by the frenzy and the Werewolf dies, the Curse is passed on and the victim becomes a new shapeshifter. Can be prevented by swallowing silver before the first transformation.)
- ☐ Broken – retreats for 1D6 minutes and heals. If damaged by silver the werewolf dies.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 10 **BODY CONTROL** 9 **MAGIC** 3
MANIPULATION 6 Fear 2/1

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Bite, claws	2	0

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Draws two initiative cards and acts twice per round
- **FUR:** Protection 4

RITUAL

There are three ways to kill or neutralize a werewolf. If an attack with silver weapons renders the werewolf Broken, the creature dies. When addressed by its true name in the light of a full moon, the werewolf is released from her spell and becomes human. The werewolf can also break its own curse by finding a pregnant woman, tearing out her unborn child, and eating it in solitude.

SECRET

A werewolf can only be killed with silver if the finishing blow hits its neck or its heart.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- While studying the movements of the moon, the astronomer Gunther Fax on the island of Hven in southern Sweden accidentally provoked the anger of a lunar cult. As punishment, they transformed him into a werewolf. Gunther has left his observatory and his home, and settled in a grove at the center of the island, leaving behind his pregnant sister. Gunther realizes that he can regain his humanity by eating his sister's unborn child in complete solitude. What he does not know is that the curse is lifted if she calls him by his true name.
- In the outskirts of the Danish city of Odense, a Thursday's Child named Ditte Frost has turned herself into a werewolf, with the aim of killing those who used and humiliated her.
- In Mandal on the southern tip of Norway, Karl-Ove Kitelsen – who was born a werewolf – has gathered a pack of fellow werewolves. They are killing Swedish soldiers in the fight for Norwegian independence.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP

Bright green fir trees were everywhere as we left Umeå in the early hours of the morning. We made a short stop and found bog rosemary in full bloom. Soon the mist came creeping down from the mountain. My companion alerted me to a green light among the trees. I felt a sudden urge to follow its glow, which seemed to be moving deeper into the forest. The interpreter advised against it, and when I persisted, he grabbed me hard by the coat until the light had vanished. I grew angry, calling him a muck-eater and a smellfungus. Now I regret my words, wondering whether he somehow saved me from a tragic fate.
— Carl Linnaeus, June 12th, 1732

A person who cheats someone out of a piece of property might one day return from the dead as a will-o'-the-wisp. The spirit is doomed to walk the boundary of its stolen land, moving the sticks that mark it. The will-o'-the-wisp is a small figure dressed in green or gray who carries a lantern with a strange glow. Some will-o'-the-wisps use their light to lead people astray, luring them into marshes and leaving them to drown. Others are kind and can help people find their way home.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT — **BODY CONTROL** — **MAGIC** 10
MANIPULATION 8 Fear 1/ 1

MAGICAL POWERS

- **ENCHANT**
- **MAGIC LANTERN:** The will-o'-the-wisp can use the **LURE** Curse. All who see the light of the lantern are affected and led out into the woods, toward a lake or marsh.
- **DROWN:** The will-o'-the-wisp can use **MAGIC** to make people walk into waters or wetlands and drown themselves.

CONDITIONS

The will-o'-the-wisp has no physical form and cannot be harmed in combat.

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Drown	2*	0–3

* Once affected by the lantern's glow, player characters can be forced by the will-o'-the-wisp to drown themselves. The player character may try to resist **MAGIC** once per turn, rolling for **OBSERVATION** against the vaesen's **MAGIC**. She cannot do anything else. All player characters enchanted by the lantern are affected, taking 2 damage each round. Extra successes increase the damage. Other player characters can help the victim. If someone breaks its hold, the will-o'-the-wisp will leave, if only for the moment.

RITUAL

The only way to bring peace to a will-o'-the-wisp is to return the land to its rightful owner.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- In a marsh near Helsingborg in southern Sweden there is a will-o'-the-wisp who, when it was alive, cheated others of vast stretches of land. His heirs are about to make a fortune building housing on their inherited property, and will not want

to part with it. The will-o'-the-wisp has caused many people to drown themselves in the marsh.

- In the wetlands around Lake Norra Hyn in Värmland, there are ten will-o'-the-wisps, once belonging to a group of merchants who deceptively acquired some land where they developed a mine. During the inspection of their first mine shaft, they died in a collapse.
- A nobleman from southern Europe has gone missing on a trip to Lake Tone in northern Sweden. The only thing that can prevent a diplomatic crisis is someone rescuing the nobleman who has been lured into the lake by a will-o'-the-wisp.

SECRET

Those who are drowned by the will-o'-the-wisp can be reborn as its spectral slaves. The slaves give off a bright green light and do everything they can to lure people into the marsh. They can sometimes take human form, for brief periods in the night, and move among people. Usually they spread false rumors about treasures of gold hidden in the wetlands. The spectral slaves can be banished by splashing them with holy water or tricking them into eating and drinking. As the food drops straight through their ghostly bodies, they realize that they are no longer alive and cease to exist.

WOOD WIFE

The woods are composed of gray alders and birches with witches' brooms. (Nescio cur?) My horse collapsed several times during today's trip through Ångermanand. On one occasion I sustained a fracture. In the glow of the fire, I now write of a sight that took my mind off the pain. Encamped for the night, I emptied my bladder near a brook, when suddenly I saw three moose – one white, one brown, and one black – crowned with magnificent antlers. On the back of the white one rode a woman with antlers on her forehead. She was beautiful, with fair skin and green eyes. I could see from her look that we had her permission to visit the forest.
– Carl Linnaeus, May 19th, 1732

The wood wife is part of the forest, and she is its guardian. She appears as a human woman, but can also take the form of a tree, a rock, or an animal. There is always something strange about her. She might have cloven hooves, a tail, skin with a greenish glow, or a back covered with bark like a hollow tree trunk. She is often accompanied and protected by animals – wolves, bears, or dogs.

The wood wife is capricious. Humans who harm the animals of the forest, particularly capercaillies and deer, might be subject to punishment. Her victims are spellbound or led astray, wandering aimlessly until they go mad, fall ill, or grow old. But the wood wife can also be kind and help lost children find their way home, or warn of forest fires.

It is said that the wood wife seduces people. Once they fall in love with her, they will never be the same again. All that remains is a yearning for the forest and solitude. Some say that people have had children with the wood wife, and that these have grown strong and powerful. Other guardians of nature include mine guardians, nymphs of the springs, ship gnomes, and lake wives.

CHARACTERISTICS

MIGHT 6 **BODY CONTROL** 8 **MAGIC** 9
MANIPULATION 9 Fear 1

MAGICAL POWERS

- Enchant
- Curse
- Trollcraft
- Can turn into an animal, a plant, or a rock
- Can sense what is happening in the forest

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Angry +2
- ☐ Afraid
- ☐ Dazed
- ☐ Bleeding –1 (transforms into a large animal)
- ☐ Seductive +1
- ☐ Badly injured –2 (summons animals form the forest)
- ☐ Broken – turns into greenery. Re-emerges in the heart of the forest after 1D6 turns.

COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE	RANGE
Claws, bite*	2	0
Fists	1	0

* In animal form.

RITUAL

A wood wife can sometimes be appeased with a gift, such as food or a valuable coin. She may then grant hunters permission to kill certain animals. Those who are affected by her magic can break the spell by turning their coat inside out (+2 to resisting her magic on one occasion). The wood wife can be lured with beautiful songs, artworks, or people. By appeasing her, it is possible to seek an agreement with the wood wife.

The wood wife can be killed or banished by burning or cutting down the trees at the heart of the forest.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICTS

- The charcoal burner Albin Askedal is one of many people working the charcoal pits outside Jönköping. He has fallen in love with the wood wife Hiinteria, left his family, and gone to live in the woods. Albin is now helping the wood wife protect the forest from his colleagues, who keep burning and clearing the vegetation.
- In Svartå in central Sweden, a hunter named Lukas has killed and stuffed a large number of animals. The wood wife has avenged them by abducting and killing the villagers. Lukas is one of the few people left in the village. He realizes that the forest seeks revenge and is planning to retaliate.
- A young herding girl named Åse has fallen in love with a wood wife and invited it to the farm outside Fåsdal in southern Norway. Now the sprite has taken over the farm. Wild animals have moved in, trees are growing up through the buildings, and the land is covered with bushes and shrubbery. The people on the farm have been enchanted, thinking they live in a castle while in fact they are walking around naked.

SECRET

Turning one's coat inside out only protects against the wood wife's magic if there is a cross or crucifix in its pocket. In order to kill or banish the wood wife, the trees at the heart of the forest must be burned or cut down in the correct order. The tree in the center of the area must be destroyed first. If the wood wife is killed, the forest will die or turn into a barren marshland.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

As Gamemaster, it is your job to create and play NPCs. Give the character some descriptive detail and let her develop over the course of play. Some characters will only appear for a few seconds in a single scene, while others recur in multiple sessions. To make things easier you can roll once or twice on the *NPC Traits* table.

NPCs have skill and attributes values. These are only used in conflicts with player characters. When two NPCs come into conflict with each other, you decide what happens. NPCs cannot push their rolls.

Instead of Conditions, NPCs have mental and physical Toughness. Toughness works the same as Conditions. Each point of damage inflicted on the NPC adds a –1 penalty to the corresponding skill tests

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

	ATTRIBUTES:				TOUGHNESS:		
ARCHETYPE	PHYSIQUE	PRECISION	LOGIC	EMPATHY	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	SKILLS
Soldier	4	4	2	2	2	2	RANGED COMBAT 3, AGILITY 2, CLOSE COMBAT 2, VIGILANCE 1
Police officer	3	3	3	3	1	2	INVESTIGATION 3, CLOSE COMBAT 2, OBSERVATION 2, RANGED COMBAT 1
Doctor	2	4	4	2	1	2	MEDICINE 3, LEARNING 3, AGILITY 2
Professor	2	3	4	2	1	2	LEARNING 4, INVESTIGATION 3, INSPIRATION 3
Student	2	3	3	3	1	2	STEALTH 2, LEARNING 2, MANIPULATION 2
Farmer	4	2	2	2	2	1	FORCE 3, AGILITY 2, LEARNING 1
Blacksmith	4	2	3	2	2	1	AGILITY 2, FORCE 2, MANIPULATION 1
Maid	2	2	3	3	1	1	FORCE 2, STEALTH 2, VIGILANCE 1
Priest	2	2	3	4	1	3	INSPIRATION 4, OBSERVATION 3, MANIPULATION 2, MEDICINE 1
Coachman	3	2	2	3	2	1	AGILITY 3, CLOSE COMBAT 2, OBSERVATION 2
Valet	2	2	3	3	1	2	STEALTH 2, LEARNING 2, VIGILANCE 2, OBSERVATION 1
Hunter	2	4	3	2	2	2	STEALTH 4, RANGED COMBAT 3, INVESTIGATION 2, VIGILANCE 1
Street child	3	2	2	3	1	1	AGILITY 3, STEALTH 3, CLOSE COMBAT 1, MANIPULATION 1
Dockworker	4	2	2	2	3	1	FORCE 4, CLOSE COMBAT 3
Merchant	2	2	3	3	1	1	MANIPULATION 3, LEARNING 2, OBSERVATION 2
Seer	2	2	4	3	1	2	LEARNING 3, INVESTIGATION 2
Journalist	2	2	3	4	1	2	LEARNING 2, OBSERVATION 3, MANIPULATION 2

(mental or physical). As soon as the total amount of damage exceeds her Toughness value, the NPC becomes Broken. A Broken NPC is usually taken out for good. If the damage is physical the NPC dies.

Most NPCs have 1 point in physical and mental Toughness. In other words, they can either take two physical or two mental injuries before becoming Broken. Named NPCs who are important to the mystery have Toughness 2. Some unique NPCs, such as powerful magicians or the main characters of a campaign (see next chapter), can have Toughness 3.

NPCs and animals do not recover Toughness during a mystery – once damaged they stay damaged. The only exception is if they receive medical attention from the player characters, or if a lot of time has passed and they have had a chance to rest.

You do not have to establish an NPC's stats until they become relevant in the game. When that happens, have a look at the table that indicates how many dice she gets to roll for her main skill. You may then set the other values, which should be a step or two lower. For example, a competent soldier should get to roll seven or eight dice when combining **RANGED COMBAT** with Precision, and one or two less when using other important skills.

NPC CONDITIONS

NPC	PHYSICAL TOUGHNESS	MENTAL TOUGHNESS
Minor NPC	1	1
Named NPC	2	2
Unique NPC	3	3

MAIN SKILLS FOR NPCS

TYPE OF NPC	NUMBER OF DICE (SKILL + ATTRIBUTE)
Novice	4–5
Skilled	6–7
Competent	7–8
Expert	9–10

WITCHES AND WIZARDS

It is possible for human NPCs to gain the same powers as vaesen. Give your NPC a **MAGIC** value and access to one or several magical powers. Choose specific Enchantments, Curses, or Trollcraft spells that suit your mystery.

NPC TRAITS

T66	TRAIT	T66	TRAIT	T66	TRAIT
11	Eccentric dresser	31	Considerate	51	Poor
12	Furious	32	Boastful	52	Bitter
13	Lisping	33	Hateful	53	Wanted
14	Flirtatious	34	Eccentric	54	Storyteller
15	Insecure	35	Unusual clothes	55	Extremely religious
16	Happy	36	Singer/musician	56	Hungry
21	Smokes	41	Haughty	61	Deviant
22	Suspicious	42	Curious	62	Sturdy
23	Help-seeking	43	Short-sighted	63	Filthy
24	Stranger	44	Injured or sick	64	Foul-mouthed
25	Drunk	45	Has true dreams	65	Quiet
26	Violent	46	Playful	66	Intrusive

ANIMALS

If the player characters are facing animals in combat, the animals attack with **MIGHT** and use **BODY CONTROL** for sneaking or evading attacks. All animals have one slow and one fast action. The Toughness and attack damage of various animals are listed in the table below.

ANIMALS

ANIMAL	MIGHT	BODY CONTROL	TOUGH-NESS	DAMAGE
Badger	5	4	1	1
Bear	8	6	3	2
Dog	5	6	1	1
Eagle	5	7	1	1
Fox	4	8	1	1
Moose	7	4	3	2
Reindeer	4	5	1	1
Wild boar	5	6	2	1
Wolf	6	7	2	1
Wolverine	5	6	1	1

THE VAESEN OF THE WORLD

This book is about Nordic vaesen and Norse mythology. But the rules can also be used to solve mysteries in places outside the Nordic region. This section offers tips on how you as Gamemaster can use the rules to create vaesen from other countries and cultures. All it takes is a bit of imagination, some research on the place's local mythology, and a willingness to tweak the rules to suit the particular vaesen you plan on using. If you only use its rules and principles as a framework for your own imagination, the game can easily be set in a different environment.

DECIDE THE ORIGIN

There are vaesen all over the world, from the ice fields of Greenland to the rain forests of South America. The first thing to ask yourself when creating a vaesen is where it comes from. Perhaps you want to build a mystery around your and the players' real-life hometown and let them explore familiar locations in a mythical time? Or maybe you have watched or read about an interesting creature and want to use it in your game? Whatever the case, you should always start by researching the nature and origin of the vaesen. Search the Internet, visit the nearest library, and learn as much as you possibly can. In many cases there are myths and stories that contradict each other – use this to create a vaesen that will surprise the players. Base your vaesen on real myths, but do not let them limit your creativity.

Three origins:

- *Black Shuck*, the black hellhound roaming churchyards, is found in East England around Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.
- *Rübezahl*, the feared and capricious mountain spirit, is said to be hiding in the mountains between Bohemia in Germany and Silesia in Poland.
- *Aswang* is a feared shape-shifting spirit found, among other places, on the Visayan Islands in the Philippines.

CHOOSE A MODEL

Flip through the chapter on vaesen and see if any of the existing ones remind you of your chosen vaesen. If you find a suitable creature, use its stats and description as a starting point for the vaesen you wish to create. This will save you a lot of work, and as long as you make some changes to your vaesen the players will never notice what you've done.

Three vaesen and their respective models:

- *Adze*, an African spirit that can shift between the form of a firefly and that of a bloodsucking human, shares some similarities with revenants (page 150).
- *Loup Garou* is a mythological creature from French Canada that uses magic to transform from human form into that of a wolf. Loup Garou is almost identical to the classic werewolf (page 160), with the difference that it can choose when to transform and retains full control of its actions.
- *Jikininki*, originating in Japan, are the undead spirits of greedy or selfish humans that in the afterlife turn into corpse-eating monsters. They are by nature a form of ghost (page 132).

CREATING A VAESEN

By now you have researched your potential vaesen, looked into its origins and possibly chosen a creature from this book to base it on. It is now time to use what you have to write down game information about your vaesen. Follow the template used for other vaesen in this chapter or just jot down some simple notes. Think about its strengths and weaknesses. Then write down Characteristics, Magic, Conditions, and attacks, as well as a ritual and a secret. If you are unsure of something, look at the vaesen you chose as a model for your creation and adjust what is already there.

Three vaesen:

- *Baba Yaga* is a terrible witch from Eastern Europe who, according to legend, flies around in a wooden mortar. She may be wicked, but could also become an ally; she always follows through on her promises. Baba Yaga lives in a hut of bones, where she keeps a cauldron full of death and suffering.
- *Tikoloshe*, originating among the Zulu people in Southern Africa, is a small spirit who can cause sickness and death. They say it becomes completely invisible by drinking water and only comes at night, while people are sleeping. A sure way to avoid it is to place a rock under each leg of the bed.
- *La Madremonte*, or the mother of the forest, is a spirit from Colombian mythology said to protect the forest from intruders and danger. She is regarded by most people as a force for good, but shows no mercy to those who anger her.

VAESEN AROUND THE WORLD

Use this list as a starting point for finding out more about the region you wish to portray in the game.

The British Isles
- Bean Nighe
- Black Shuck
- Knocker

Central Europe
- Erdhenne
- Drude
- Rübezahl

Eastern Europe
- Bannik
- Baba Yaga
- Kikimora

North America
- Loup Garou
- Bakwas
- Apotamkin

South America
- Yacumama
- Madremonte
- El Culebrón

Africa
- Adze
- Inkanyamba
- Tikoloshe

The Middle East
- Ifrit
- Jinn
- Al Anqa'a

Asia
- Aswang
- Diao Si Gui
- Jikininki

My only friend at the front, Captain Bjorn af Hillegaard, was arrested. He was charged with espionage and sentenced to be shot the next morning. I recalled what he'd told me about his family, and how we had carved a wooden sword for his oldest boy. When the guards were asleep, I snuck into his cell. Bjorn was slumped on the ground, talking into the dirt. Noticing me, he raised his shackled arms and said, "I cannot bear steel."

Before running off into the night he handed me a locket. I thought it was a friendly gift. Initially, everything changed for the better — my family informed me that our business was booming, by letter I proposed to Miss Feldinger af Pommerland and surprisingly she accepted, and then the war ended and I could go home. The locket never left my coat pocket. Something told me that it was responsible for my good fortune. Through the fabric I could feel it move like a caterpillar in my pocket.

When I got home, my parents fell ill and died. The doctor said I had brought disease from the continent. Miss Feldinger was shot during a hunt by a stray bullet, and could no longer move the lower part of her body. The engagement was canceled.

I now know that I am cursed, and that it's the locket's fault. Yet I cannot throw it away. My bodily fluids — blood, urine, and saliva — have changed color and darkened. The veins run like tattoos across my skin. On my forehead, as well as other parts of my body, the bones have changed into protruding lumps and horns. No one must see me like this. Since I fired the servants, my family's estate has become a ghost house. Children from the villages gather at the gate to point at me and the house. The ground in the garden is dry and cracked like charred skin.

By studying occult books, I have found out how to be rid of the locket. It will require sacrifice, from me as well as others.

THE MYSTERY

THIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES how to create and Gamemaster mysteries in *Vaesen*. The first part of the text focuses on the components of the mystery, and explains how to lay the groundwork by choosing one or more vaesen and coming up with conflicts that have triggered the events at the center of the story. You must consider what clues the player characters will need in order to solve the mystery, how they can get to the location where it takes place, and what atmosphere you want the place to evoke. By defining a so-called countdown, you give rough descriptions of events that step-by-step will exacerbate the situation while the player characters are trying to piece together the clues.

The second part is about shaping the mystery into a text that you can use during play. It describes the phases that make up every mystery, which are always played in the same order. The text also includes tips on how to create atmospheric scenes. The chapter ends with some suggestions on techniques you can use while Gamemastering.

THE COMPONENTS OF THE MYSTERY

Described below are the basic components of a mystery: what vaesen it will involve, what the central conflict will be, and what will happen if the player characters do not take action. You must also decide where the mystery takes place and what atmosphere you want to evoke.

THE VAESEN

The first thing to do is decide what kind of vaesen the mystery is about. You can either use one of the creatures described in chapter 8 or make one up yourself. There can be multiple individuals of the same type, for example a fairy colony. Some mysteries feature more than one type of vaesen.

You need to figure out who your vaesen is and make it unique. What is its name? What does it look like? What does it want? If you are reusing a vaesen the player characters have already encountered, it is important to change certain details, but not to the extent that the creature becomes unrecognizable.

Think about why you are choosing this particular vaesen. The answers to that question will give you a sense of how the creature should be described. If you have chosen a nisse because you like the idea of them being immensely powerful and capable of both good and evil, it may be wise to emphasize those aspects. At one moment your nisse is gentle and kind, the next he is evil and vengeful. The people on the farm live in constant terror of its capriciousness.

What is the creature's personality like? Is it shy or cocky? Vaesen are usually more fun if they are multifaceted, both humorous and serious, compassionate and ruthless. A short backstory might be useful.

Come up with the creature's weakness and describe the ritual for banishing it. What powers does the creature possess, and how does it use its magic? Write down a couple of Enchantments or Curses it may use during the mystery.

NAMING YOUR VAESEN

Every vaesen should have a name. Since vaesen are born out of humans' belief in them, their names are usually related to the people around them and their views on the creature. A vaesen believed to be the soul of the forest might have a name related to a massive tree in the middle of the woods, while a vaesen that adults tell stories about in order to frighten their children will probably have a scary name. Listed below are some categories for you to use as inspiration:

- Plants and natural phenomena: Darkpond, Queen Blackberry, Lindenmoss, Bouldercrack
- Names that sound dreamy to humans: Eliaandria, Verum-Vox, Tindrovium, Galaaskapago
- Cities and factories: Rumbleclang, Sickwind, Blackroad, Razewreck, Brick, Chemostink
- Names in the human tongue: Old Father, Trickster, Bulky, Lord Grouchy, Joker
- Human names: Tom, Rut-Anna, Egil, Fina Stina
- Scary names: Howler, Sunderburst, Bloodsucker

TWO EXAMPLES OF VAESEN

The will-o'-the-wisps in the marsh southwest of Lake Arreskov, in the southern part of Funen Isle in Denmark, are the undead spirits of a group of merchants. In the early 18th century, they cheated the local church out of its land by spreading diseases in the region and offering to evacuate and sanitize the area. Now they must walk the marsh forever. The will-o'-the-wisps wear lots of shiny, clinking jewelry and beautiful apparel. They call out to passing travelers in different languages, and at night their green lanterns can be seen dancing in the dark. The observer is filled with a feeling that everything will be alright if only she follows the light. Those who stray into the marsh are drowned. The will-o'-the-wisps will not find peace in death until the marshlands are returned to the church.

The troll Lomi wanders the desolate moors of Stora Alvaret in southern Öland. She keeps a flock of white sheep and uses their wool to make beautiful clothes. She offers the clothes to humans in the area, if they let her spend a night by the farmer's fire and hear stories about human romance and unrequited love. Lomi was once part of a troll community on the island, but all her friends and family were murdered as the royal family came to the island to hunt. The trolls tried to protect the wild animals and were torn apart by dogs. Lomi resembles a human with long white hair and dark eyes, dressed in wool clothing. She longs for love and affection, but does not know how to get it. Once in a while, the troll enchants a young man and brings him to her home in the ruins of the ancient Eketorp Castle. The magic tricks the man into loving her – but sooner or later the spell wears off. When the man wants to leave, Lomi becomes completely overcome with loneliness, and usually ends up killing him with a butcher's knife. The only way to banish Lomi is to isolate her from all companionship by killing her sheep, and helping the human under her spell escape. Furthermore, her abode must be sanctified with Christian symbols. Doing these things will cause Lomi to wither and die within moments.

GAME BALANCE

Some vaesen are more dangerous than others, but the player characters' experience level does not necessarily have to match the capabilities of the creature; on their first mystery, the characters are as likely to encounter a lindworm as a vaettir. For this to work, it must always be possible to fail the mystery without getting killed.

CONFLICTS

The mystery is based on conflicts – something has gone wrong and is about to get worse. There is always a primary conflict centering around a vaesen, and a secondary conflict between humans at the site. In some mysteries, the primary and secondary conflicts can be connected – in others they are completely unrelated. Longer mysteries may call for more conflicts.

A primary conflict involves two or more parties or people, one of them being the creature. The second party could be a human, a group, a company, a Thursday's Child who is not part of the Society, or another creature. Think about who these parties are. Who is this "someone" in the examples below:

- Someone wants something from the creature
- Someone has taken something from the creature
- Someone is exploiting the creature's powers
- Someone is trying to save someone from the creature
- Someone has wronged the creature
- Someone wants to stop or banish the creature
- Someone is trying to become one with the creature
- Someone is using rumors about the creature for his/her own purposes

EXAMPLES OF PRIMARY CONFLICTS

A Thursday's Child named Pernille Jacobsen wants to use the will-o'-the-wisps in the swamp of Lake Arreskov to kill her family and claim her father's inheritance. She has invited them to the Merry Lad Inn near the swamp. Pernille has a reputation for being psychic and claims that her sister, who died at a young age, is haunting the wetlands. She hopes to lure the family members out there, one by one, to be drowned by the will-o'-the-wisps. The conflict is between Pernille and her family – with the will-o'-the-wisps as a duped third party.

The troll Lomi has bewitched a merchant named Sven Andersson into falling in love with her. Sven's fiancée and childhood friend, Ingeli Rask, is looking everywhere for her betrothed. The wedding is due in a month. Most people think Sven has gotten cold feet and left, but Ingeli is convinced that Sven has been bewitched. The conflict is between Lomi and Ingeli. Ingeli understands that the strange white sheep seen crossing Stora Alvaret are linked to Sven's disappearance. She has caught two of them and plans to lure in the creature who stole her future husband by cutting the sheep open and slowly letting them bleed to death.

The secondary conflict is about intrigues, feuds, or problems going on around the location where the mystery takes place. It brings the place to life and makes sure that things are happening while the player characters investigate the clues of the mystery. The secondary conflict gives the NPCs that the player characters encounter reason to be angry, sad, distressed, suspicious, and unreasonable – which makes for a more dramatic story.

Secondary conflicts may have been going on for hundreds of years, or be triggered by the arrival of the player characters. The conflict could involve adultery, jealousy, a clash between rich and poor, an infectious disease, a forbidden sect hiding from persecution by the Church, or a group of maids worshipping a vaesen while the farmhands are trying to make them go to church instead.

A secondary conflict can be used to establish a link between the place and the player characters, for example by involving people mentioned in the player characters' Dark Secrets. You can also use themes from the player characters' backstories – if a character's Motivation is to help those in need, the conflict could revolve around a local landowner trying to evict a poor single mother. A secondary conflict does not have to be solved by the player characters – they can put it behind them as they return home.

EXAMPLES OF SECONDARY CONFLICTS

At the Merry Lad Inn where Pernille Jacobsen has gathered her family, a dramatic and adulterous love affair is taking place. The husband in the family has fallen in love with Rolf, a stable boy twenty years his junior. The lady of the house realizes that something is up, but is not aware of the details. She will react with grief, hatred, and violence when she finds out what is going on. Rolf wants to find a way out of the situation, but cannot do it on his own. The conflict is between the husband and wife at the inn.

For many years, there has been little control over Öland's liquor production. The farmers have been making some extra money by cooking moonshine and selling it on the mainland without paying taxes. Now there is a new police chief in Färjestaden, and he will not turn a blind eye to tax evasion. Several farmers have gotten together and decided to murder the police chief. They are secretly meeting in the ancient Eketorp Castle, without noticing that the place is also home to a troll – Lomi. The conflict is between the police chief and the rebellious farmers.

MISDEED

The primary conflict has already begun when the player characters arrive, and something has happened that catches their interest and prompts them to leave Upsala and investigate the matter. This event is called the misdeed of the mystery. A misdeed could be innocent people getting hurt or possible sightings of magic. Other examples include:

- Someone has died
- Someone has gone missing
- Someone has gone mad
- Something strange has happened
- Something or someone has changed or changed place
- Someone has performed strange rituals or magic
- Someone has been enslaved
- Someone has fallen ill

EXAMPLES OF MISDEEDS

Pernille has tricked a member of her family into the swamp, and that person has been drowned by the will-o'-the-wisps.

The merchant Sven Andersson has been bewitched by the troll Lomi and disappeared.

THE LOCATION

If you have not already decided where the mystery should take place, this is the time to do it. Look at the map of Scandinavia and think about an exciting setting for your vaesen to inhabit. It could have settled in the slums of a city, high in the mountains, on an island, or in an abandoned castle. Give the place a name and a description. Perhaps the mystery takes place on a train? Draw a map of the place that can be shown to the players.

Ask yourself questions about the location, and try to answer them: What does it look like? What time of year is it? What grows in this climate? What are the landmarks of the region? Is it set in high mountains or deep woods?

By creating conflicts you have already started populating the place. Name and describe the NPCs – a single word can be enough. Consider whether you need to come up with another person or two. One way to keep track of NPCs is to create a flow chart with all the people and the creature. Draw lines between the individuals where you describe their relationship to one another.

If the ritual for banishing the creature requires certain items, these must be available at the location. You also need to think about where to place clues about the creature and the ritual. Perhaps one of the villagers is a collector of occult books?

ATMOSPHERE

It is your responsibility to help the players create mental images of what is happening by describing what their characters are seeing, smelling, tasting, hearing, and feeling. The descriptions should be short and concise. Prepare by writing down some notes to help you create atmospheric descriptions during play, or a short text that you can read when the player characters arrive at the location.

When creating atmosphere, you can switch between describing details and providing an overview. It is good to establish a recurring theme, for example: decay, mold, and rotting food. Use seasons and weather. Dichotomies are also useful – people and items in the place are either orderly, conservative and uptight, or young, rebellious and unreliable.

EXAMPLE OF FLAVOR TEXT

It is a late autumn night. There's a cool breeze in the air, and the coach carrying you toward the southern part of Funen seems to be moving through an endless darkness where time goes on but the vehicle does not. Suddenly there's a light, and you hear voices and laughter. A hand-painted sign declares that you're approaching the Merry Lad Inn. When the coach stops and the coachman helps you out, you are hit by the stench of rotting vegetation, swamp gas, and mud, reminding you that the swamp is right nearby. You hurry through the front door of the inn and breathe a sigh of relief, as if you were about to be consumed by the darkness and the stench outside, but made it to safety. Once inside, you are overwhelmed with impressions – laughing people, loud songs, and spirited conversations. There are fires burning in the hearths, and beer is being served with savory food. It feels like the fires and warmth of the building are shielding you from the rotting and ancient blackness of the swamp.

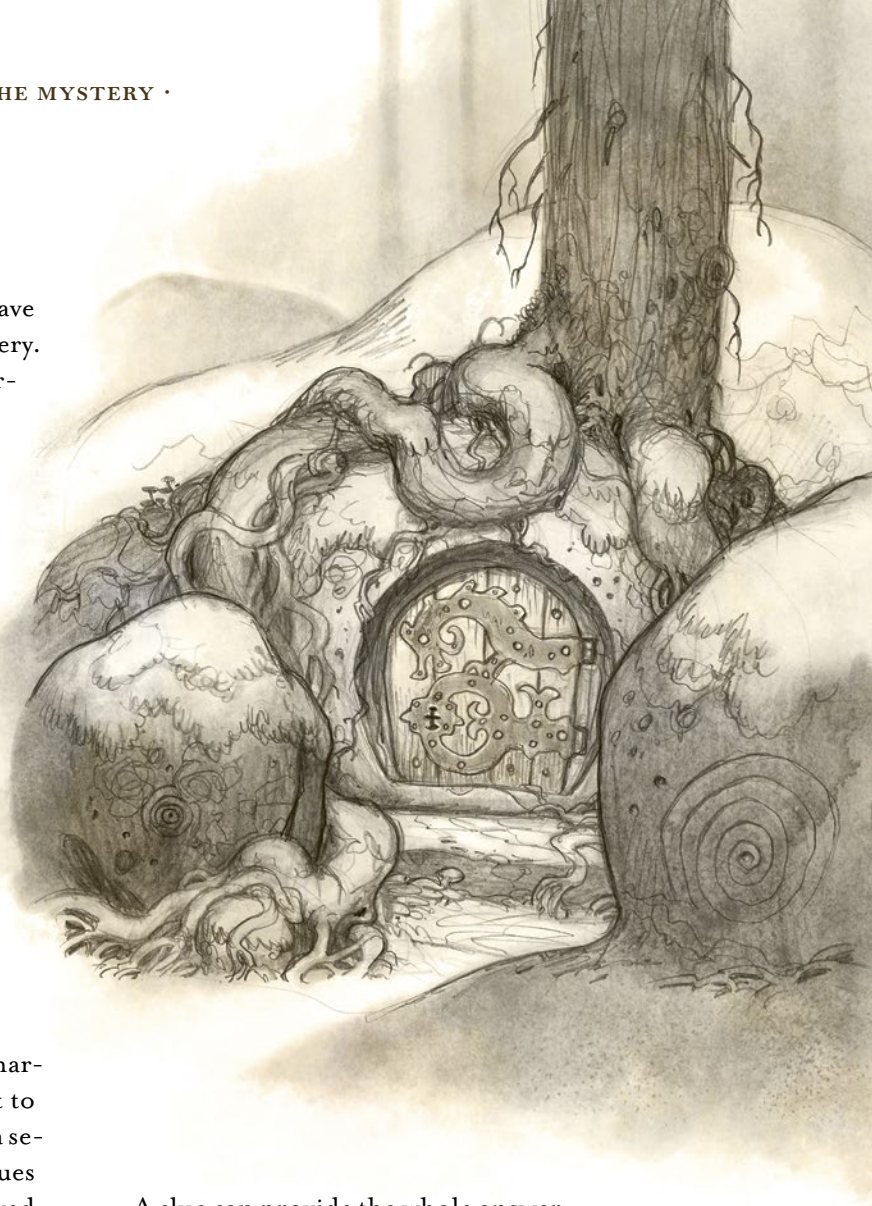
EXAMPLES OF ATMOSPHERE

- Hot and dry summer
- Windy moors
- Herbs and large amounts of blue flowers
- Sheep and wool clothing
- Taciturn farmers
- The sea can be seen everywhere
- Remains of ancient artifacts, Viking tomb, and Norse runes
- Anger towards the new police chief, rebellion in the air
- Weddings, love, sexuality, and pagan wedding traditions
- A priest hates his congregation
- A congregation hates their priest, turning instead to pagan traditions
- Bloody sheep carcasses, birds hovering over carrion
- Isolation, desolate paths, abandoned cottages
- Windmills
- Fishing boats
- Isolated island, isolated people
- Fields separated by stone walls
- Mosquitoes and wasps
- Summer storms sweeping in from the sea

CLUES

The player characters will need clues to figure out what has happened and what they must do to defeat the creature. If the players fail to connect the dots, you must come up with more clues as you play. It is your responsibility to make sure the story does not come to a halt.

Clues are described as either central or peripheral to the plot. The central clues are vital for solving the mystery. The peripheral ones provide more information about what is happening in the area and add depth to the story – but they are not required in order to perform the ritual and banish the creature. All clues related to the secondary conflict are periph-



eral, as the player characters do not necessarily have to resolve the secondary conflict to finish the mystery. Make a list of what information the player characters must be able to access, and divide it into central and peripheral clues.

The clues should be located in the various places (see below) of the location. You can also place clues in Upsala, so the player characters can start investigating the mystery even before leaving the city.

The central clues should be repeated in at least two different places, so that player characters who miss them in one place can still get them. The characters should preferably be able to obtain the central clues without having to rely on die rolls, as failure risks grinding the story to a halt. Make sure that the characters gain the clue if they look in the right place or talk to the right person.

On the other hand, finding the peripheral clues may require a successful roll or two, since the story can progress without them. The player characters may, for example, have to pass a skill test to persuade an NPC to reveal her secret, or to find a secret compartment hiding a journal. Peripheral clues can be misleading and contradictory or conveyed through symbols and images, making them more difficult for the players to interpret, while at the same time adding atmosphere and mystique to the story.

A clue can provide the whole answer to a question, or merely part of it. It can be fun for the players to have to piece together the clues in order to see the bigger picture.

CENTRAL CLUES

Central clues may, for example, answer the following questions:

- What kind of vaesen is it?
- How can the vaesen be killed or banished?
- How can the vaesen be found or lured in?
- Where does one find the requisites of the ritual?

PERIPHERAL CLUES

Peripheral clues may, for example, answer the following questions:

- What is the background to the ongoing conflict?
- What is the creature's background?
- What has happened here?
- What will happen unless we act?
- Whose fault is it really?
- What is the history of this place?

EXAMPLES OF CLUES

Clues may include:

- A journal
- Things a NPC knows and is able to divulge
- Information in an archive
- Footprints or paw prints
- A song sung by the children
- A crime scene with a dead body
- A book in a library
- Inscriptions on the church walls
- A message in a dream
- Information in a fairy tale
- The notes of a missing scientist
- The way someone is behaving
- Information from a player character's Dark Secret
- A painting

PROPS

A good way to create atmosphere is to present the clues in the form of objects you have created. If the player characters are meant to receive a letter, you could prepare a letter that looks as if it came from the game world, and hand it to them when appropriate. This can be done with everything from train tickets, containers of strange chemical substances, a boot left behind at a crime scene, or a puzzle the players must solve in order to gain certain information about the creature. These objects that are physically used at the gaming table are called props.

COUNTDOWN TO CATASTROPHE

Think about how the situation will deteriorate step-by-step during the course of play. Unless the player characters can find a way to prevent it, this will eventually lead to a catastrophe. The steps leading up to the catastrophe form a countdown. The countdown helps advance the story and makes the situation increasingly desperate and dramatic. The countdown should progress by one step when the pace around the gaming table is getting too slow, when the players do not know what to do, or when you think you are nearing the end of the mystery. Use what is written in the countdown to set a scene. The player characters can be affected by what is happening, be around when it affects someone else, or you could set a scene where they hear about what has happened.

A mystery can have one countdown for the primary conflict and another for the secondary one. There can also be a single countdown for both conflicts. Sometimes there is also a countdown for the way the creature attacks the player characters: the closer they get to the truth about how to perform the ritual, the more ferocious it will be.

The countdown usually consists of three steps. Each step should follow naturally from the one before, and preferably be connected to the misdeed – that is, the event that made the player characters come to the location. The catastrophe should be an extension of the countdown – what happens if nothing is done?

The first event of the countdown could be something that happens far away from the player characters, which does not seem very dangerous. Gradually, the events come closer and closer to the characters and become increasingly threatening. In the first step, a stranger dies in the village. The second step brings the death of someone the player characters have gotten to know at the inn. The third step is that the player characters are attacked. The catastrophe is that the sister – whom the player characters came to protect – is killed.

The creature's magic should also become increasingly powerful with every step, and its effects should be felt more acutely by the player characters. First, a

EXAMPLE OF A COUNTDOWN AND CATASTROPHE

1. Ingeli kills several of Lomi's sheep. Lomi lets a terrible storm blow in over Öland. Many houses are destroyed, a fishing boat sinks, and trees fall over the paths.
2. Ingeli gets a group of farmers to help her search for Sven. As they move closer to the ruin of Eketorp Castle, Lomi curses them. The farmers lose their minds and wander off on Stora Alvaret.
3. Ingeli reaches the castle ruin armed with a rifle, a butcher's knife, and a cross from the church in Mörbylånga. She kills fourteen of Lomi's sheep.

CATASTROPHE: Ingeli finds the troll. Lomi defends herself by making the bewitched Sven attack and kill Ingeli. Afterwards, Sven wakes from his spell. Realizing what he has done, he takes his own life.

strange fog descends over the village. Then the player characters' food turns into worms. The third step is that the inn where they are staying is set ablaze by magic fire.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MYSTERY

After laying the foundations of the mystery, it is time to structure it into a "script" that you can use while playing. The mystery is played in phases, which are the same in every mystery. The player characters receive their mission, make preparations, travel to the location, and attempt to solve the mystery. Finally, they return home to lick their wounds.

PROLOGUE

Some gaming groups like to warm up before the mystery by each playing a scene from their character's life in Upsala. It can be a meeting with a lover, a family dinner, an event at work, or a meeting at headquarters.

THE MYSTERY STEP BY STEP

1. **PROLOGUE:** If necessary, each player character gets a scene from their daily life
2. **INVITATION:** The mystery is introduced, giving the characters a reason to visit the location
3. **PREPARATIONS:** The characters prepare at their headquarters
4. **JOURNEY:** The Gamemaster describes the journey to the location. The characters can gain an Advantage
5. **ARRIVAL:** The characters arrive at the location.
6. **PLACES:** The characters investigate a number of places, often three, in search of clues
7. **CONFRONTATION:** The characters confront the creature or the humans behind the conflict
8. **AFTERMATH:** The characters head back to headquarters where they gain Experience Points and find out whether their Defects and Insights have become permanent

DEVIATING FROM THE TEMPLATE

Sometimes it can be reasonable to skip a step or two, or role-play freely for a while. This is perfectly alright and something you as Gamemaster should encourage it if it suits the mystery. For example, a mystery set in Upsala probably does not require a journey. A threat against the headquarters can be developed into a mystery without the party even leaving Castle Gyllencreutz. Use the template for mysteries as a basis, and ignore it when you think necessary. The player characters do not even have to face a vaesen in every mystery – it could be a mad priest, an old curse, or enemies from within the Society.

An ambitious Gamemaster can try to set scenes with the same theme as the conflicts of the mystery. If the story is about a vaesen seeking revenge after being betrayed, a player character's scorned lover could take revenge on her during a scene in the prologue.

·13·

INVITATION

The player characters receive an invitation that gives them reason to go to the location and start investigating. The invitation informs them of the misdeed and reveals – directly or indirectly – that something supernatural is happening. Clues may be included in the invitation.

EXAMPLE INVITATION

Dear members of the Society,

I have heard distant rumors of your engagement with the spiritual and the occult. It is an interest I certainly share. My husband and I are running the Merry Lad Inn south of Lake Arreskov, in the southern part of Funen. I was recently told by our stable boy, Rolf, that a family by the name of Jacobsen who is staying at the inn has in fact come to seek contact with a deceased daughter. They claim that her ghost walks the wetlands south of the lake. One night I personally visited the boundaries of these lands and saw a ghostly light move through the air. Lacking the appropriate attire, as well as the courage to head out into the wetlands, I returned to my bed at the inn. Had that been all, I would probably have put it out of my mind. But what happened next is what prompted me to write this letter. One of the Jacobsens has gone missing. One of the young men in the family is said to have walked out into the swamp and not come back. I fear that it will happen again—there is a strange aura about these lands, and indeed the inn itself. Something devious and supernatural is afoot. Should this be of interest, you are welcome to visit my inn. I offer free food and accommodation if you investigate these things and share your findings with me.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs. Agnes Wøldike

There should be some piece of information that lets the player characters search for clues in Upsala before leaving the city. For example, the invitation might mention a name which they could look up in the castle library.

Invitations may include:

- A letter
- A dying messenger
- A dream
- A supernatural messenger
- A newspaper article
- The words of a madman
- A lost memory coming back
- A person speaking in tongues
- A page falling out of a book
- A story told by a drunk
- A song being played

PREPARATIONS

Before traveling to the location, the player characters have a chance to prepare. They can look for clues, build or procure equipment, or hone their skills. The mystery should contain information about which clues are available from the start in Upsala. The characters' preparations do not have to be played out, but if they are, such scenes should be brief. This is described further in chapter 6.

THE JOURNEY

The journey to the location is the starting point of the mystery and the game night. Its purpose is to set the mood and give the players a chance to get into character. The journey should be kept short.

The Gamemaster summarizes and describes the journey to the players. Ten or so sentences should suffice. Perhaps the player characters are taking the train from Upsala to Skövde, continuing by coach to Brandstorp, where they take a small fishing boat to Visingsö in Lake Vättern.

The atmosphere of the journey could be the same as at the location or a sharp contrast. For example, if your mystery is about a town suffering from severe crop failure, poverty, and disease, the characters could first travel through rich and prosperous neighborhoods, encountering nobles with expensive jewelry. As they get closer to their destination, the

POTENTIAL MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

- Steamboat
- Train
- Coach
- Horseback
- Walking
- Sailboat
- Barge
- Skis, ice skates, snowshoes or kicksled
- Mountaineering equipment
- Rowboat
- Velocipede
- Dog sled
- Hot air balloon

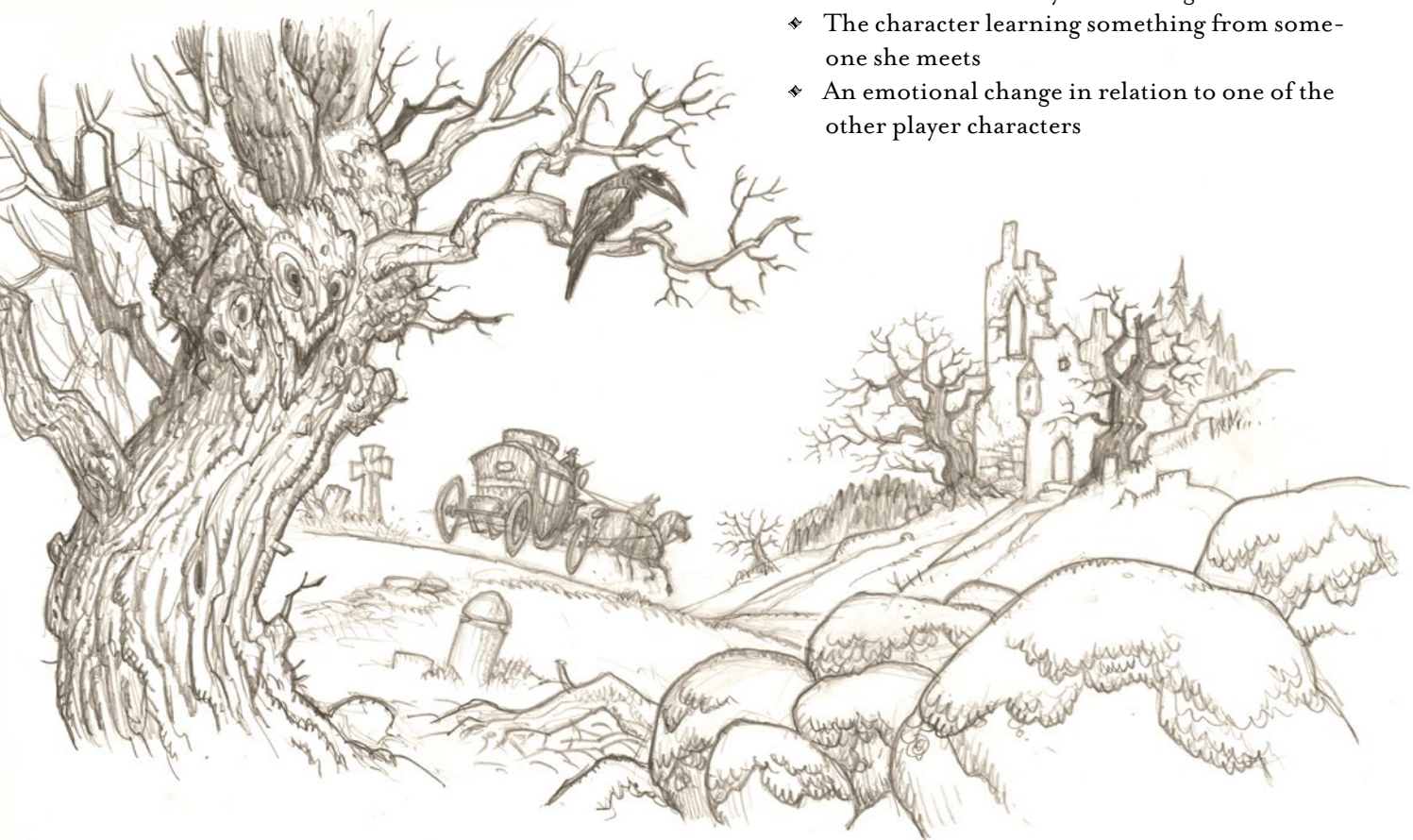
poverty becomes increasingly evident. This contrast makes the town seem more vivid and real.

You can set the mood of the journey by describing:

- Weather and heat
- People getting on or off
- People they see along the way
- Status and wealth
- Accents
- The reactions of people they pass by
- The shape and condition of the vehicle
- The inn where they are staying
- Nightmares or visions during the trip
- Food and drink
- Music being played

During the journey, each player character has the opportunity to gain an Advantage (see page 24). How the character obtains the Advantage should be played in a short scene at some point along the road. The player chooses where, when, and what the Advantage is. The player should then jot down a few words about what she has learned, remembered, or encountered. The Advantage might be:

- Another person heading toward the location
- Information that a friend or relative is at the location
- The character gaining a better understanding of something
- A chance to improve the equipment
- The opportunity to train a skill
- A religious or philosophical experience
- A childhood memory resurfacing
- The character learning something from someone she meets
- An emotional change in relation to one of the other player characters



GAMEMASTER: *Any of you want to play a scene where you gain an Advantage on the journey?*

PLAYER 2 (ASTRID LILJA): *I want to visit a church on the road through Funen. I want to meet someone who's heading toward the same destination.*

GAMEMASTER: *Before taking a coach from Nyborg, you can visit a church by the sea. It is dark, empty, and quiet. It feels like a place where both the living and dead can find peace.*

PLAYER 2: *I walk up to the baptismal font and fill my pocket flask with holy water. Then I take out my silver cross, hold it up to the altar, and say a few phrases in Latin. When it's done, I take a seat on the front bench. I bow my head, clasp my cross, and pray. I think about the troubled spirit of my father which still haunts me at night.*

GAMEMASTER: *You're startled by someone moving in the row behind you. Peering over your shoulder, you see a woman with curly blonde hair and clothes that suggest noble birth. She smiles at you, whispering: "Am I right to assume that you too are heading for the Merry Lad Inn?"*

EXAMPLE OF FLAVOR TEXT FOR THE JOURNEY

The journey to Mörbylånga in southern Öland is quite pleasant. It is a beautiful summer day and people are in a good mood. You are on a train heading south from Upsala to Kalmar. From there you take a small steamboat to Färjestaden on Öland. The island is very different from the mainland. The islanders are quiet and keep to themselves. Following the dirt roads south, you see plenty of pagan symbols which would not be allowed where you come from. There are maids and farmhands dancing around flowered maypoles in the meadows, and several houses decorated with remnants from the time of the Aesir. The rocky landscape is filled with sheep grazing on meager pastures, mostly covered with blue flowers called blueweed.

Mörbylånga is a small community. The villagers give you a friendly welcome, offering mutton and moonshine. However, some murmur about the police being after their liquor. Many of the farmers are armed with old revolvers and shotguns. There is anger in the air – but no one wants to explain what is going on.

ARRIVAL

When the player characters arrive at the location, the players will need some kind of overview. This can be achieved in a scene or through a brief description from the Gamemaster. This is a good time to read the flavor text and place the map of the location on the gaming table.

SHORT ON TIME

If you are short on time and want to finish a mystery in one night, you can skip the prologue and start with the player character arriving at the location. If so, you should summarize the invitation and the journey in a few sentences.

ADVICE FOR THE GAMEMASTER

If you want to create a story that is unpleasant and scary, there are certain things you should consider.

NO FRIENDS – NO ESCAPE ROUTES

The player characters leave the city to venture into the unknown. Make sure that they are isolated and exposed. The coach that usually passes through town every day stops showing up. The farmer who has been helping them is found dead, missing, or changed by the creature's magic. As they enter the revenants' cairn, the entrance closes behind them. The villagers have a strange accent or talk in an unknown language. Night after night, the characters are woken by their own screams, and the lack of sleep is driving them mad. The environment is dark, cold, and inhospitable.

RATS, INSECTS, AND MAGGOTS

Nasty and unpleasant details always have a place in horror stories, though they can easily be overused or become predictable. The skin seems to slough off the villagers, hanging loosely from their bodies. The food the player characters are eating turns into worms. The passage down into the creature's burrow is filled with crickets whose intense noise envelops the characters. Festering sores, hunger, disease, and death can all be useful tools.

SLOWLY TURN UP THE HEAT

Horror stories usually turn into adventure stories the moment the player characters' lay eyes on the creature. All that remains is to banish it. You should slowly turn up the heat. First let the characters notice small signs that something is wrong – things that could be explained away – before gradually increasing the level of strangeness. Let unpleasant events, places or people become increasingly threatening. Save the encounter with the creature until the very last moment. The purpose of the countdown is to escalate the situation. Should something dramatic have to happen early on, you can use the countdown of the secondary conflict.

STRANGE PEOPLE AND PLACES

Make sure that there are odd people and places in the mystery. A policeman follows the player characters like a lovesick child, seemingly growing younger by the day. Children ill with fever wander naked through the streets. The church has been missing a wall for almost twenty years. The surface of the lake is covered with rotting fish. However, there must also be normal people and places to accentuate the oddities through contrast.

HELP THE PLAYERS CREATE MENTAL IMAGES

Horror lies in the minds of the players. Extensive and detailed descriptions of frightening things make it harder for the player characters to create their own mental images. Implying rather than telling, revealing only some of the details rather than the whole picture, and giving false or contradictory descriptions can all stimulate the players' imaginations. Focus on one or several senses. The creature's flowery scent is reminiscent of Aunt Selma's hugs. The sound of deer being eaten alive is heard through the forest. Use similes. The anguished roar of the wood wife echoes between the trees like someone buried alive screaming from inside the casket. The involuntary giggle spreads through the village like pox at the poorhouse. The werewolf's breathing in the dark sounds like the bellows in a smithy.

You can let the players describe why they find a certain non-player character unpleasant, odd, or attractive. The players know best what is most poignant to them. However, this changes the balance between players and Gamemaster and should be done with caution.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Take every opportunity to make the story about the player characters' lives, either literally or symbolically. For example, you could let the creature attack a family member rather than some unknown NPC. Someone at the location might look a lot like a player character's sister. A theme from a Dark Secret might recur in the mystery. Think about what the players find unsettling – sometimes human evil can be more terrifying than vaesen.

CANDLES, MUSIC, AND YELLOWED PARCHMENT

Create a gaming environment where the players can immerse themselves in the story. Lit candles, props from the game world, and eerie music are always helpful.

PLACES

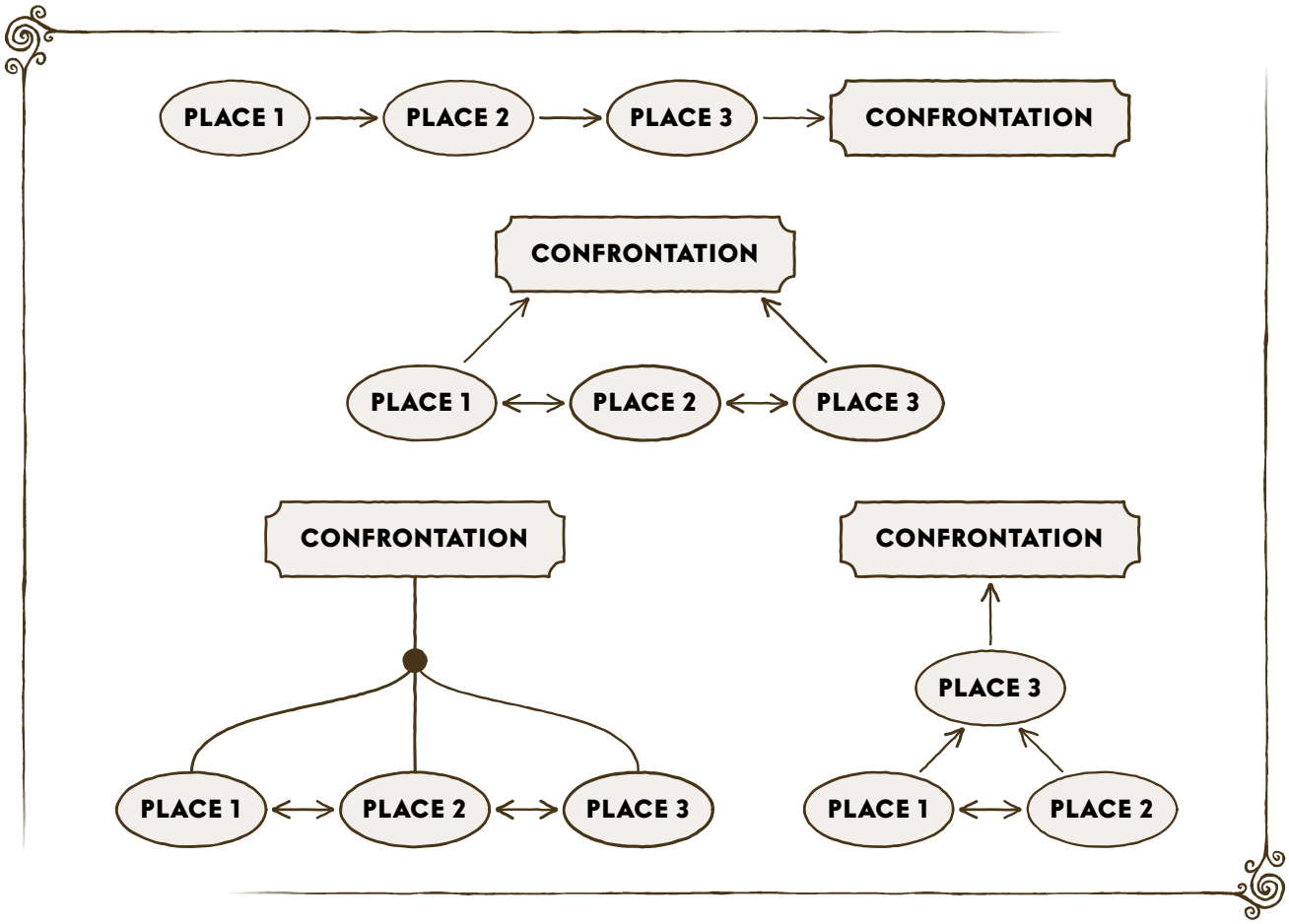
At the core of the mystery are the places the player characters can visit. The places should contain clues and challenges. Most mysteries feature three places – longer mysteries may have more, while a short introductory mystery only has one or two.

The places are areas central to the story and the mystery. It could be three houses at the location, different parts of a castle, or three train cars. The places can be ordinary like a residential building or a smithy, or fantastic like the fairies' castle on a magical island or a meadow surrounded by supernatural fire.

The places may be arranged so that the player characters must visit them in a certain order. Perhaps they must first get to the castle (place 1) where they find a secret entrance to an underground cave (place 2) with a tunnel leading to an enchanted landscape (place 3). It could also be possible for them to visit the places in any order, for example if the places are three houses in a village. It may be helpful to draw a sketch of how the places are connected.

CHALLENGES

Most places come with some form of challenge. It could be something preventing the player characters from finding a clue, such as a hidden compartment or a lying NPC. Other examples are creatures or humans attacking the player characters, or dangerous and frightening magic. Challenges can also be circumstances that make it difficult to be in a certain place, for example an earthquake or an ongoing dispute between NPCs. Use the primary and secondary conflicts to come up with challenges.



CLUES

Each place contains one or more clues. Clues of key importance should be available in several places and easy to find.

A place can also contain clues about how to get to the other places. For example, the player characters might investigate a murder at a school and find a note on the floor containing the address of a shoemaker, and at the shoemaker's home an NPC reveals that the priest was talking about killing the victim – which makes the player character pay a visit to the parsonage.

LIBRARIES ON SITE

Ideally there should be some form of library or book collection at the location where the player characters can gain new clues or confirm their suspicions. The Gamemaster can also use the library to provide clues which the player characters might have missed.

THE MYSTERY AS A MAP

The mystery, with its people and places, is to be used as a map with a marked path. The player characters may either follow the path or ignore it to visit other places and people, and gather clues in ways that are not described.

The mystery should be a safety net for the Gamemaster. When you do not know what to do, you can always lead the story back to the path, or use the places and people described. It is not your job to make sure the mystery turns out exactly as written.

TWO EXAMPLES OF PLACES

The sibling spouses Mr. and Mrs. Bruhn live with their countless inbred children in a dilapidated house by the edge of the swamp in the southern part of Funen. The family makes a living selling swamp fish caught with hand nets from a rowboat. The Bruhns know that the lights in the swamp come from dead spirits which are luring people into the wetlands. They worship the will-o'-the-wisps as gods, and many of the children have been "blessed" and walked out into the swamp to be drowned. The parents are suspicious of strangers. They have been assaulted on several occasions by people from neighboring villages, and are wanted by the law as well as the local church. The player characters must trick the Bruhns or gain their trust if they want to learn about the family's faith in the "lantern men who speak the tongue of the gods."

The witch Elois lives alone by a jetty at the southern tip of Öland. She has the Sight, and was in contact with the trolls before they were slain. Elois is acquainted with Lomi and knows about her obsession with human men and love. She has often tried to talk sense into Lomi, but always been turned away. She has realized that the only way to protect the islanders from the troll is to kill her. Elois knows that solitude would cause Lomi to wither – if the player characters kill her sheep and chase off the object of her love, the troll will be destroyed. While visiting Elois, the player characters are detected by Lomi who uses magic to keep an eye on the witch. She puts a curse on Elois, causing her to be strangled by an invisible hand. The player characters must save the witch to gain information about how to banish Lomi.

CONFRONTATION

The confrontation is the final scene of the mystery. It describes a place or an event where the player characters encounter the creature. The Gamemaster should avoid confrontations where failure automatically leads to the player characters' death. If they fail the confrontation, the characters may get a second chance to banish the creature, though sometimes it is too late – they have no choice but to return to Upsala with their tails between their legs.

Like everything else in the mystery, the confrontation is a suggestion regarding what may happen as you play. The mystery does not have to end as it is written. The confrontation is a tool for driving the story toward one of multiple possible endings.

TWO EXAMPLES OF CONFRONTATIONS

The player characters have encountered will-o'-the-wisps and learned that the only way to bring them peace is to return the swampland to the church. Its current owner is a merchant named Nicolaus Qvist. They can can buy the land from him, but Pernille Jacobsen will use her magic to prevent them from meeting.

The player characters manage to track the troll Lomi to the castle ruin of Eketorp – with or without Ingeli's help. To banish Lomi, they must kill the sheep, break the spell binding Sven to the troll, and place a cross inside the ruin. Lomi will defend herself with magic and make Sven attack the player characters.

AFTERMATH

The player characters return to their home in Upsala. Back at headquarters they gain Experience Points and find out whether any Defects or Insights have become permanent (see page 88).

Each player answers questions (see page 25) to determine the number of Experience Points (XP) their character receives. For each positive answer the character gains one Experience Point. If the mystery is solved over multiple sessions, the characters gain Experience Points at the end of each session.

When a player character has accumulated 5 Experience Points, she gets a chance to make an Advance. An Advance can be used to increase a skill by one step or buy a new talent. The player can buy any talent she likes – including those which during character creation where specific to other archetypes.

When the mystery is over, the player can – if she wants to – change her Motivation, Dark Secret, or Relation to the other player characters. The change should have some connection to what happened in the mystery.

MYSTERY TABLES

You can draw a lot of inspiration for your own mysteries from old fairy tales and songs. For additional help you can use the following tables. Roll the dice and let chance decide, or take your pick. Keep in mind that you are free to alter the suggestions and make up your own.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

The invitation, the player characters' mission, can come in the form of a letter or a message delivered in person, composed on someone's initiative. The source of the message is a quest giver who has either heard of the Society or sought help from acquaintances, who in turn bring the person's plea to the player characters. The mission is prompted by some mysterious or ominous misdeed.

INVITATION

D6	TYPE
1	Breathless messenger
2	Letter by postal rider
3	Telegraph message
4	Conversation with the town's vicar
5	A nailed box at the castle gate
6	Scruffy homing pigeon

QUEST GIVER

D66	TYPE
11–13	Eccentric scientist
14–16	Traveling historian
21–23	Faraway relative
24–26	Child of a former member of the Society

QUEST GIVER

D66	TYPE
31–33	Local priest or bishop
34–36	Village council/village elder
41–43	Noble with a large estate
44–46	Troubled innkeeper
51–53	Mysterious patron
54–56	Lawyer representing an estate
61–63	Investigation official
64–66	Dreams of pleading vaesen

MISDEED

D66	EVENT
11–13	Bad dreams
14–16	Tainted drinking water
21–23	Crop failure
24–26	Brutal murder
31–33	Great fire
34–36	Disappearances or kidnappings
41–43	Break-ins and thefts
44–46	Vandalism or sabotage
51–53	Series of violent acts or assaults
54–56	Dead livestock
61–63	Disease or madness
64–66	Inexplicable weather phenomena

WHAT IS THE REASON?

A vaesen is blamed, wrongly or rightly, for the local misdeed. There is a main conflict between the creature and the people – individuals wanting to get rid of, take control of, or even help the creature. For whatever reason, the vaesen is in a particular state of mind after what happened. There is also a long or emerging secondary conflict causing strife among the locals. This happens regardless of the background to the main conflict with the vaesen.

VAESEN TABLE

D66	VAESEN
11–12	Ash tree wife
13	Brook horse
14–15	Revenant
16–21	Ghost
22	Mermaid
23	Giant
24–25	Church grim
26	Lindworm
31–32	Will-o'-the-wisp
33–34	Mare
35–36	Myling
41	The Neck
42–43	Night raven
44	Sea serpent
45–46	Wood wife
51–52	Spertus
53–54	Nisse
55–56	Troll
61–62	Werewolf
63–64	Vaettir
65–66	Fairy

MAIN CONFLICT

D6	GRIEVANCE
1	Vaesen has lost its home
2	Vaesen is no longer appeased by the people
3	Vaesen is being hunted or threatened
4	Vaesen no longer has any followers
5	Vaesen has been robbed
6	Vaesen is bound by magic

VAESEN'S STATE OF MIND

D6	ATTITUDE
1	Frightened or fleeing
2	Hateful or murderous
3	Pining or jealous
4	Scornful or mischievous
5	Confused or insane
6	Protective or territorial

LOCAL SUB-CONFLICT

D66	CAUSE OF TENSION
11–12	Disinherited
13–14	Childlessness or bastard
15–16	Quarrel over inheritance
21–22	Shortage of pastures
23–24	Financial debt
25–26	Competition for office or job
31–32	Idle living and consumption
33–34	Suspicion of magic

LOCAL SUB-CONFLICT

D66	CAUSE OF TENSION
35–36	Unrequited love
41–42	Unjust enrichment
43–44	Ill-fated family or person
45–46	Unclear boundaries
51–52	Rising sect or free church
53–54	Desecrated relative
55–56	Starvation vs abundance
61–62	Love triangle
63–64	Ostracism by family
65–66	Family feud (roll again for reason)

WHO ARE WE MEETING?

The player characters will always meet a contact when they arrive and become acquainted with those who might be involved in the mystery. The archetypes in the chart below have their own attributes, talents, and skills listed on page 166. When creating non-player characters, you can use the list of Traits found on page 167. Furthermore, it is always good to give your NPC's a name.

MEETINGS

D66	CHARACTER	ARCHETYPE
11	Village idiot	Street child
12	Servant	Maid
13	Pauper	Street child
14	Destitute vagrant	Dockworker
15	Drunkard at the inn	Dockworker
16	Drunken dairy farmer	Farmer

MEETINGS

D66	CHARACTER	ARCHETYPE
21	Hardworking farmer's wife	Farmer
22	Local grocer	Merchant
23	Undertaker	Doctor
24	Determined butcher	Dockworker
25	Miller	Farmer
26	Errand boy	Street child
31	Dedicated botanist	Student
32	Bookish archivist	Professor
33	Schoolteacher	Professor
34	Retired military officer	Soldier
35	Kindly village doctor	Doctor
36	Washed-up surgeon	Doctor
41	Gamekeeper	Hunter
42	Coppersmith	Blacksmith
43	Postmaster	Coachman
44	County sheriff	Police officer
45	Trapper	Hunter
46	Peddler	Merchant
51	Constable	Police officer
52	Straight-backed footman	Valet
53	Deaconess	Priest
54	Village elder	Farmer, blacksmith
55	Mocked outsider	Street child
56	Famous hermit	Seer
61	Prominent landowner	Merchant

MEETINGS

D66	CHARACTER	ARCHETYPE
62	Local priest	Priest
63	Eccentric landlord	Merchant
64	Bodyguard to the disconcerted	Soldier
65	Fortuneteller	Seer
66	Rural mystic	Seer

NAMES IN SWEDEN

During the end of 18th century and much of the 19th, Sweden saw great changes in naming practices. Greek, French, and Latin names were fashionable among intellectuals. Although traditional names continued to dominate, there was a rise in more creative options:

- Ägir, Methodius, Holmger, Torborg, Qvinten, Elving
- Talena, Etekel, Serudia, Rosalia, Åbertha, Siglög

Clerics often adopted new Latinized versions of their old Christian names: Erik became Erici, Stefan became Stephani, and Johan became Johannis. Some chose Latinized names based on their hometowns, such as Helsingus or Gevaliensis.

Soldiers were usually given special surnames based on personal characteristics, such as Glad ("happy"), Stark ("strong"), or Säker ("secure"). The surnames of nobles often evolved from the family's heraldry, as in Svinhufvud ("pig's head") and Leijonstierna ("lion star"), or place of birth, for example von Linné and af Klintberg.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTER NAMES

D66	MALE NAME	FEMALE NAME	LAST NAME
11	Alexander	Agatha	Almgren
12	Anton	Alva	Andersdotter
13	August	Annette	Backlund
14	Bernhard	Astrid	Bäckmark
15	Bertil	Christina	Berggren
16	Bror	Ebba	Bjur
21	Edvin	Eivor	Blomberg
22	Efraim	Emma	Bokvist
23	Elias	Eva	Brylla
24	Emil	Hulda	Carlstedt
25	Erik	Ida	Corell
26	Frithiof	Josefina	Eriksson
31	Gösta	Karin	Falkengård
32	Gustaf	Kerstin	Frisk
33	Gusten	Lena	Grauers
34	Harald	Linnea	Gustafsson
35	Herman	Lisbeth	Hammarfors
36	Johan	Lotten	Hellström
41	Johannes	Magdalena	Jernberg
42	Karl	Malin	Johansson
43	Klas	Margareta	Larsson
44	Knut	Marianne	Lindberg
45	Konrad	Milda	Lundström
46	Lars	Monica	Mässing
51	Leif	Olga	Mellander
52	Leonard	Olivia	Orre
53	Måns	Paulina	Oskarsson
54	Mattias	Rebecka	Persson
55	Oskar	Sara	Rääf
56	Ove	Sigrid	Stark
61	Per	Sofia	Sundén
62	Stefan	Solveig	Tafström
63	Sven	Stina	Thulin
64	Tryggve	Theresia	Vikander
65	Vilhelm	Vera	Wallén
66	Walter	Wilhelmina	Widmark

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

After reaching the village or town where the misdeed has been committed, the player characters will investigate various locations in search of clues. Use the following list as inspiration and fill in the details for each place. What does it look like? Who has been there? Is there any sign of the ongoing conflict or the vaesen roaming the area?

INTERESTING LOCATIONS

D66	COUNTRYSIDE	CITY
11–12	General store	Church
13–14	Smithy	City hall
15–16	Inn	City park
21–22	Dance hall	Residential districts
23–24	Village clinic	Library
25–26	Old castle	Poorhouse
31–32	Deserted farm	Dock
33–34	Windmill or sawmill	Under the bridge
35–36	Hunting cabin or shepherd's hut	Town square
41–42	Farm	Warehouse
43–44	Mansion	Prison
45–46	Cemetery	Army barracks
51–52	Marshlands	Stud farm
53–54	Mountain cliffs	Sewing factory
55–56	Caves	Brickworks
61–62	Primeval forest	Public library
63–64	Wildflower meadow	Tavern or beerhouse
65–66	Lake, stream, or sea	Hospital

CAMPAIGN

Several mysteries can be combined into a longer story. If so, there is an overarching conflict from which the primary conflicts of all the mysteries are derived, in one way or another. A vaesen might have decided to take control of a certain region, and the player characters must counter the creature's influence over multiple mysteries in different parts of the region.

When playing campaigns, it is common to play scenes from the player characters' lives in between mysteries, for example a character getting married or having trouble with the law – or being admitted to a mental hospital. It might also be fun to have a mystery take place in Upsala, or even at the headquarters.

A campaign can have overarching themes and atmospheres. If the overarching conflict involves a troll trying to raise her siblings from the dead, the different mysteries could feature NPCs and places that are somehow related to death, graveyards, or the hope of preventing the inevitable. Perhaps a player character will lose a loved one over the course of the

LINNEA ELFEKLINT

The player characters are introduced to the Society and its history and traditions by the former member Linnea Elfeklint – who now spends most of her time in Upsala Asylum. It is up to you to decide who she is and what has happened to her, and why she refuses to come with the player characters to the Society's headquarters. Perhaps she knows that a terrifying vaesen dwells in the castle, or maybe the old headquarters brings back painful or disturbing memories? Linnea's background and secrets may well be woven into a longer campaign, where each mystery reveals more details about her and how events from her life relate to the conflict as a whole.

campaign, leading to scenes where she wrestles with emotions similar to the troll's?

GAMEMASTER TECHNIQUES

After a couple of gaming sessions, it may be interesting for you to start exploring different Gamemaster techniques.

WAIT AND LISTEN

To create great stories, you must listen carefully to what the players are saying about their characters, both during character creation and during play. Pay attention to details, and use them when creating and Gamemastering mysteries. Let NPCs, places, and other things the players have invented appear in play. If a player has established that her character was raised by the now senile Uncle Carl, the uncle could happen to be at the location of the mystery and suffer the fury of a myling.

Also give yourself time to describe details and create atmosphere. Slow things down. Assess the situation. Do not be afraid of silence. Think about what details you yourself have created in the game world, and use them the same way as the players' material.

PUZZLES AND RIDDLES

There are many ways to create entertaining puzzles and riddles for the players. For example, the mystery could involve a text written in code, a song that exposes the creature, pieces of a puzzle which together form a map that shows the route to the creature's lair, or perhaps the player characters – and therefore the players – must answer three riddles in order to banish the creature.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

In order to create friction and conflicts between the player characters and NPCs, all major NPCs should either want to help the player characters, try to obtain their assistance, or work against them. If the player characters are trying to expose a troll, there might be one NPC who needs the troll to remain hidden, another who is afflicted by its magic, and a third who tries to help the player characters drive the troll away – but in a way that would be disastrous for the village.

What the NPC wants may be linked to a player character's Dark Secret, background, or personality. A player character tormented by feelings of ugliness could meet an NPC with the same problem, who has altered her appearance by supernatural means.

A FAIRY-TALE FEEL

If you want to add a fairy-tale feel to the mystery, there are certain techniques you can use.

- **PICTURES FROM FAIRY TALES:** Look at the pictures in this book and pictures from fairy tales, like the illustrations of John Bauer. Try to recreate scenes and moods. Describe deep pine forests with moss-covered rocks, long-haired trolls, and encounters between humans and the Devil.
- **THREES AND SEVENS:** Fairy tales are based on repetition – variations of the same event occur (and escalate) either three or seven times. Three old crones come to the village. The fairies warn the blacksmith three times, and each time the warning becomes sterner and more intimidating. Hairs from seven good people must be gathered and burned to lure the land wight to the village.
- **DESTINIES, CURSES AND FORETELLINGS:** Use foretellings of the future and predetermined destinies to evoke a sense of mystique. An old crone reads the player characters a verse on their way to the location; the events of the verse take place in the that very location. After the confrontation, the crone shows up and hands the characters a supernatural item, along with a line or two of verse.
- **MORAL:** Fairy tales have something to say about how people should behave. What is the message of your mystery?
- **UNIQUE PLACES AND ITEMS:** Fairy tales are not set in ordinary places. Let the player characters visit the darkest forest, the deepest pit of the underworld, and the blackest lake. Let them taste bread that sates all hunger, hear songs from fairy tales, be trapped in a gingerbread house, and run from the black riders.
- **INNOCENT TRAVELERS:** At the center of fairy tales is often a young and innocent boy or girl who encounters vaesen and grows from the experience. She is either helped by the creatures or defeats them.
- **ONCE UPON A TIME...** You can let your sessions begin and end with a classic fairy tale phrase. Perhaps you read the beginning and end of a book, opening and closing it to mark the beginning and end of the story and the session.

DARK SECRETS IN PLAY

Ask the players questions about their Dark Secrets. Find out what makes each secret interesting to that player. The secret might come into play by having people from the player character's past show up at the location. You can also use the secret's theme to portray the conflict. Provide the location with things that might activate the player character's Dark Secret. If she is an alcoholic, for example, there could be an inn famous for its beer.

TWIST

It can be fun to let the first clues point in one direction, and later introduce a clue that shows the truth to be very different. This could be one of the steps of the countdown or a seemingly random clue at one of the mystery's locations.

A twist could be that the werewolf who has terrorized the village did so to protect the people, or that the player characters' mission giver turns out to be a vaesen, or that the ghost has not only possessed the patient the player characters are chasing, but controls the entire asylum.

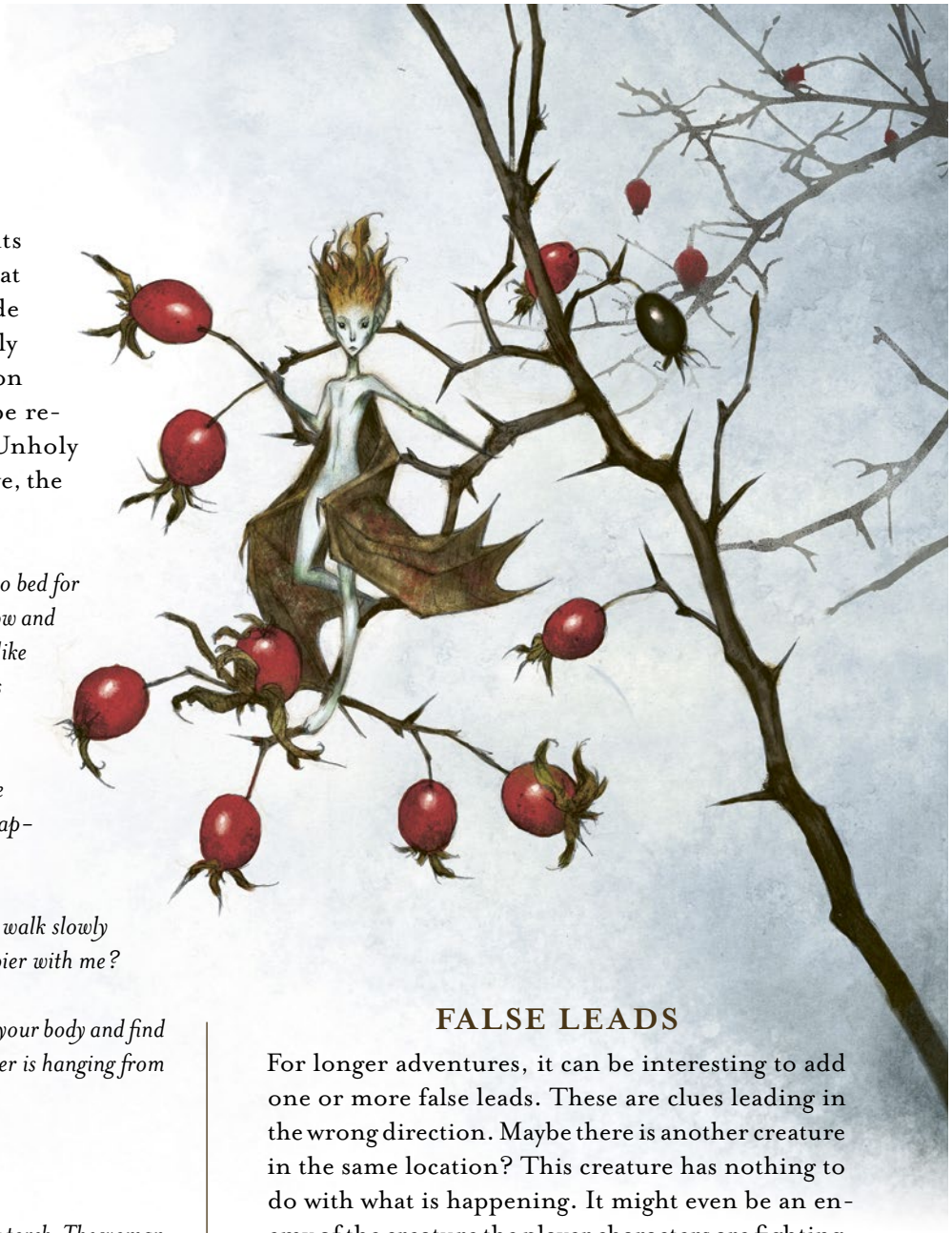
MAPS

Aside from the maps of Scandinavia and the location, you should always draw maps of the various places that you expect the characters to explore. Maps provide an overview and clarity, and give the players something to focus their eyes on. They can be drawn in the heat of the moment, or be carefully designed.

DREAMS AND SUPERNATURAL EXPERIENCES

Most mysteries benefit from the player characters having supernatural experiences and strange dreams. These could occur on the way to the location or while investigating clues. Such experiences might be caused by a creature's magic or occur because those with the Sight have heightened sensitivity to the sublime.

Dreams can give vague hints about what the creature is and what it wants, and visions can provide clues to what the conflict is really about. For example, the letters on the sign outside an inn might be rearranged to form the words Unholy Death. Then, in the blink of an eye, the sign returns to normal.



GAMEMASTER: *Just before going to bed for the night, you peer through the window and see a light in the sky above the forest—like fire burning between the clouds. As you lie down and shut your eyes, you can still see the fire. Suddenly you're standing in a dark room or a cave. The air is stale and stuffy. A bright light approaches.*

PLAYER 1 (KASPAR STÅHL): *I walk slowly toward the light. Have I got my rapier with me?*

GAMEMASTER: *You look down at your body and find yourself dressed in black. Your rapier is hanging from the belt.*

PLAYER 1: *I draw it.*

GAMEMASTER: *The light becomes a torch. The woman holding it is old, red-haired, and wearing a black dress. She speaks to you in a language that might possibly be Russian. You can't understand what she is saying. Then you realize that you're inside a tomb. The woman's siblings lie buried here—she is the only one left. As the woman takes a step toward you, you can see her skin in the light of the torch, hard and rigid like a shell or plates. Her eyes seem almost reptilian. She takes another step toward you, and suddenly she is an awful lot bigger than you. You realize that you must run to survive. But before taking a single step, you wake up in your bed, the sheets soaked in sweat. You feel a burning sensation in your tongue and lips, as if you've been drinking boiling water.*

FALSE LEADS

For longer adventures, it can be interesting to add one or more false leads. These are clues leading in the wrong direction. Maybe there is another creature in the same location? This creature has nothing to do with what is happening. It might even be an enemy of the creature the player characters are fighting.

If you want the adventure to resemble a classic detective story, you can let there be multiple suspects. They are all odd in different ways, but only one of them is a vaesen in the guise of a human. The player characters must find out who it is by gathering and interpreting clues.

When the players have become more experienced, you can add false clues about how to banish the creature, or information pointing in different directions. The players must decide which ritual to perform. But keep in mind that false clues risk making it impossible for the player characters to succeed, which may cause the players to lose confidence in you and the game.

THE DANCE OF DREAMS

THIS CHAPTER CONTAINS the introductory mystery, *The Dance of Dreams*, which should take approximately two to three sessions to complete. If you would rather finish the mystery in a single session, you may skip the first steps and start with the journey to the location. Simply recount how the player characters got the Invitation instead of playing it as a scene. You can also skip the part where each character gains an Advantage.

The mystery begins with the player characters being called to the Witch Cat Inn south of Upsala. Private detective Olaus Klint has noticed strange things going on there, and reaches out to the player characters for help. The clues tell of a murder that took place fifty years ago, and in the confrontation the player characters get the opportunity to give an angry and confused revenant the peace he desires. The events take place in late fall or winter.

PRELUDE

This first section describes the background of the mystery and the conflicts on which it is based. There is an invitation to kick off the session, then the text proceeds to describe the journey to the Witch Cat Inn and what it is like there. The section concludes with a countdown of events which you as the Gamemaster will initiate at some appropriate time during the mystery – and a catastrophe that describes what happens if the player characters do not take action or fail to banish the revenant. But first we must look back at the events leading up to the mystery.

Fifty years ago, some of the Society's members held a secret meeting at the Witch Cat Inn south of Upsala. They had come to realize things about vaesen

and the supernatural forces in Scandinavia that they were afraid to share with the rest of the Society. The purpose of the meeting was to devise a plan that would change the future of Scandinavia forever. More about this plan, and the strategies to implement it, will be revealed in future supplements of *Vaesen*, but in order to Gamemaster The Dance of Dreams, there are three things you need to know.

The first is that the reason for Oscar's ghostly return, fifty years after his death, is that the time has come to carry out the plan. The moment he is raised from the dead, other things start to change across Scandinavia – all of them linked by a single purpose.

The second thing you need to know is that the private detective Olaus Klint is actually a Rosenberger (see The Divided Society on page 82). He wants to make the player characters his allies, or even friends to be able to infilitrate their branch of the Society and recruit them to his order or destroy them.

The third thing you should be aware of is that the dilapidation of the inn (see below) is linked to a series of changes in Scandinavia. In certain parts of the region, the inventions and constructions of mankind are falling apart, while the supernatural is growing stronger.

The people who met at the Witch Cat Inn fifty years ago were three of the Society's most experienced members, Albert Wredenhielm, Katja Kokola, and Hilma af Thulenstierna, all of whom are mentioned in chapter 6. They were there to meet a young man who had recently joined the organization. His name was Oscar Hjort, and they wanted him to play a crucial part in the chain of events they were about to set in motion. Also present was the Witch Cat's innkeeper, Pyri Harjula – a fellow Thursday's Child on board with the plan. Pyri had on several occasions acted as a bodyguard for the three of them, and was instructed to use force to erase all traces of the meeting, should Oscar prove unwilling to cooperate.

Instead of joining and helping the three senior members of the Society, Oscar reacted with outrage and contempt. He declared that he would expose

their secrets to the other members of the Society and stormed out of the inn. Pyri snuck after him and slit his throat. Oscar was buried in the root cellar behind the inn, and his body was prepared with magic so that, even in death, he would serve his intended purpose in Albert, Katja, and Hilma's plans.

THE REVENANT OSCAR HJORT

Roughly ten months ago, Oscar Hjort came back to life as a revenant. He remembers the circumstances of his death, and that it was the innkeeper and the three friends Albert, Katja and Hilma who killed him. What he does not realize is that fifty years have passed since his death – Oscar thinks it happened recently.

Oscar is obsessed with the idea of taking revenge on his murderers. He wanders the rooms and corridors of the inn, waiting for an opportunity to strike down all four of them. When the player characters come to investigate what is happening at the Witch Cat, the revenant mistakes them for Albert, Katja, and Hilma – he sees his chance, and he takes it.

The moment Oscar returned from the dead, the magic that was prepared during his burial was activated. The Witch Cat and its surrounding area became a place that increases the power of vaesen and magic and causes all man-made constructions to fall apart.

CONFLICTS

The primary conflict is Oscar's desire for revenge on the innkeeper and the Thursday's Children who betrayed him. He mistakes the current proprietor of the Witch Cat, Sami, for his grandfather Pyri, and believes the player characters to be the Thursday's Children who betrayed him.

The secondary conflict is between the innkeeper Sami and his daughter Sophia. Sophia wants to be an artist like her mother. Sami hates everything to do with art and expects Sophia to take over the inn after he is gone, and he is trying to impose his will by force.

Over the last year, Sophia has been inspired by dreams from the revenant Oscar. In life, Oscar was an artist and writer who studied shadow theater under the masters in Paris. Now Sophia has secretly built a shadow theater in the attic. She plans to put on a play she has written herself – The Dance of Dreams – which is really about Oscar's life and experiences, although Sophia does not realize this. She has sent out fliers about her play and hopes that her father Sami will finally give in when faced with her accomplishment, and welcome any guests to the show.

Sami's wife and Sophia's mother, Nora, was interested in all things artistic, just like her daughter, but also had a great interest in the occult. When Oscar returned as a revenant, she noticed that something was haunting the inn and tried to determine the identity of the revenant. Sami was furious when he found out what she was up to, as he had forbidden her to engage in such activities, and he beat her severely. Nora fled with a passing theater troupe and died in a sickbed a few months later.

INVITATION

The invitation to the mystery comes from a private detective in Upsala named Olaus Klint who specializes in cases with elements of the supernatural. He realizes that the Witch Cat Inn is haunted but, sensing the creature's considerable power, he dares not confront it himself. Instead he sends a message to the player characters, asking them to meet him at the Witch Cat to banish the creature together. Olaus suspects a connection between Sophia's theater and the creature haunting the inn.

The player characters receive a letter sealed in red wax with a seal that says Klint. The letter contains a handwritten note advertising the shadow play The Dance of Dreams (*handout A*):

THE DANCE OF DREAMS

A shadow play of horror, murder, and revenge!

Let yourself be enraptured and terrified by shadow theater with clockwork as amazing as that of the master's constructions on the continent. Watch as evil smiles, good people go to their doom, and spirits come to life! Follow Oscar Hjort's encounter with the Black One, his struggle, and finally the betrayal which claimed his life. Hear the tunes of the enchanted flute that sends souls dancing to hell.

The show will premiere shortly at the Witch Cat Inn.
Not for the faint of heart!

On the note someone has written:

"*Meet me tonight at the Witch Cat Inn /Olaus.*"

The player characters can search for clues (see text box) in their library or at the university. Let them roll a **LEARNING** test. On failure they still get the information but also suffer a Condition, or it gives rise to a problematic situation. Depending on how much time you have, you can give them all the clues at once or spread them across different sources.

CLUES IN UPSALA

As usual, the player characters can prepare for the journey at their headquarters and thereby gain an Advantage (see page 24).

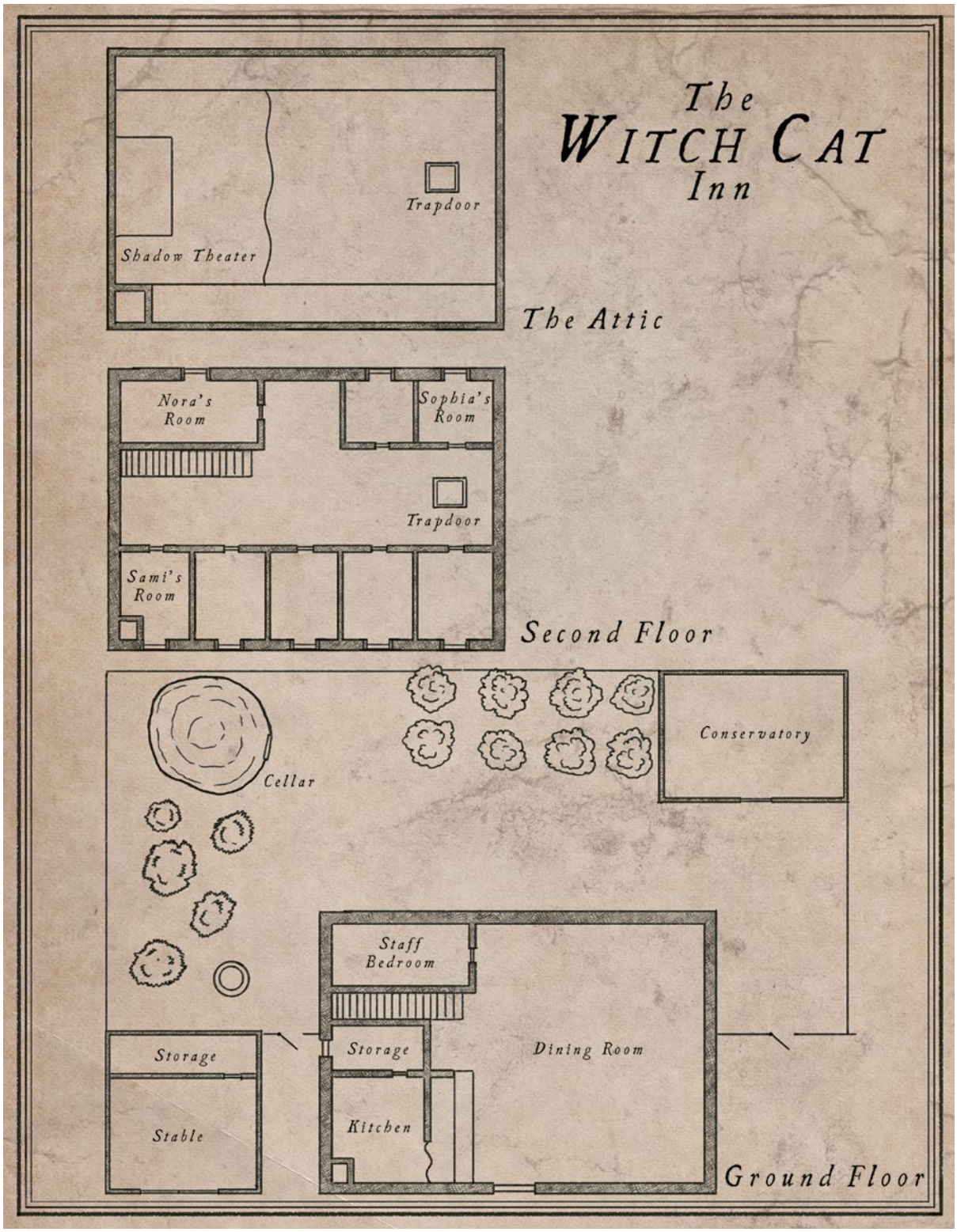
Player characters searching for clues in Upsala can obtain the following pieces of information:

- There is a private detective in town named Olaus Klint. He has a small house in the middle of the city. Olaus has made a name for himself as an expert in cases involving the occult.
- The Witch Cat is an inn at a crossroads north of Sigtuna. When the Society was rebuilt after the great Oulu fire at the end of the 18th century, the inn was used as a gathering place, as the innkeeper at the time, Pyri Harjula, was a Thursday's Child. Today the inn is run by Pyri's grandson Sami Harjula.
- The list of Society members mentions a man named Oscar Hjort who lived in the late 18th century. He worked as a writer and spent some time in Paris studying under Francois Dominique Seraphin – a famous artist who put on shadow plays for the court at Versailles and the Palais-Royal.
- Shadow theater originated in India and China, where it was practiced several centuries before Christ. Cut-out paper figures are held up to a source of light which creates shadows on a cloth screen. A skilled puppeteer can manipulate the puppets and the light so that the figures appear to be alive. The art form came to Italy in the 18th century and continued to spread across Europe. Artists in England and France have experimented with clockworks to create automated shadow theaters.

THE JOURNEY

Read aloud the following narrative to describe the journey. On the way to the location, each player should get a scene where they gain an Advantage.

It is fall when you leave Upsala in a coach heading south, and there is a terrible storm raging. Black clouds blanket the sky, with the wind howling and rain and hail pouring down, leaving you soaked to the skin. Lightning cracks across the sky and thunder makes the horses rear and whinny, but the coachman drives them on with his whip. The journey takes three and a half hours, and the storm grows increasingly violent as you progress. Through the coach window you see Lake Malar in the west – its foaming waves splashing against the shoreline. Traveling through a pine forest, you see tall trees being knocked to the ground by tempestuous winds or split by lightning strikes. In the flashes of lightning you see large rocks among the trees – moss-covered lumps staring back at you. Suddenly the Witch Cat Inn appears at a T-junction, surrounded by woods, with Lake Malar to the north and west. It seems to be the only building around. The coachman is eager to drop you off and continue on his route south to Sigtuna. Halfway between the inn and the small community in the distance you see a lonely church tower protruding from the trees.


The
WITCH CAT
Inn
Trapdoor
Shadow Theater
The Attic
Nora's Room
Sophia's Room
Trapdoor
Sami's Room
Second Floor
Conservatory
Cellar
Staff Bedroom
Storage
Storage
Dining Room
Stable
Kitchen
Ground Floor

ATMOSPHERE

The player characters arrive at the inn in the middle of a thunderstorm, with harsh winds and dampness seeping through their cloths. The darkness between the lightning swallows them, over and over. At first the inn feels like salvation from the storm and the dark. The ceiling may be leaky, but there are warm fires, oil lamps, songs and laughter, hot meals and beer.

But step by step, being inside the Witch Cat turns out to be even worse than suffering through the raging storm. The outside darkness makes its way into the building, and strange things begin to happen. What seemed like a place of refuge turns out to be dangerous – something lurks in the corners, shadows are moving, and strange sounds can be heard – the player characters are alone and exposed. Water drips from the ceiling, and the wind that cuts through the building sounds like a howling voice.

THE WITCH CAT INN

The Witch Cat Inn is located at a T-junction. The road west leads to a ferry camp, where during the day one can cross over to Hatuna village. The road south leads to Sigtuna (described in the text box titled If The Player Characters Escape). Two kilometers south of the Witch Cat, midway between the inn and Sigtuna, is Billby Church, whose tower can be seen from afar between the pines.

The inn is made of wood and consists of a large main building and a stable with a storage room. There is a garden in the back. The house seems to be falling apart in every possible way – the rain is coming in and there are pots and buckets everywhere to catch it, door handles come off, stairs break in half, and windows shatter. The garden is a mess as well.

ARRIVAL

The coachman drops the player characters off at the Witch Cat and quickly sets off for Sigtuna. Olaus Klint is out smoking, waiting for the player characters under the protruding roof of the stable. He tells the characters that the flier he sent them about The Dance of Dreams has been spread across Upsala. Olaus also informs them that passing travelers have allegedly had strange dreams at the inn – rumor has it that the building is in the grip of magical powers.

Olaus has heard that the player characters, like himself, are interested in matters of the occult. He implies that he knows about Linnea, and says that he too has the power to see thing that others cannot. Olaus explains that he visited the inn a few days ago and felt a power that frightened him, and that he wants the player characters' to help him figure out what is going on. If the player characters question his motives, Olaus will recount a tall tale about how he as a teenager swore to vanquish the occult after his sister was lured into the woods by a vaesen and never returned.

With a successful **OBSERVATION** test the player characters realize that Olaus is afraid, and that he is hiding something, although they cannot tell exactly what it is. If pressured he will whisper that it is difficult for him to talk about what he has been through, before heading inside the inn.

COUNTDOWN AND CATASTROPHE

Let the countdown progress step by step when something needs to happen. Do not rush it, and remember to let the player characters act between the events.

COUNTDOWN

1. Oscar casts an Enchantment lulling everyone at the inn (including Olaus) to sleep, except for Sami and Sophia. People are suddenly falling asleep where they stand or sit, and cannot be woken. The light of all lamps and fires goes dim and takes on a bluish color, darkening the room. The fires still burn, but give no heat and barely

DESCRIPTION OF THE WITCH CAT

The garden is overgrown. The conservatory has collapsed. The root cellar is a mound with a room dug into it.

In the stable are two horses and a wagon. There is room for three more horses and another wagon. The storage room contains boxes of food supplies and equipment for the inn.

The ground floor comprises a large lounge with double fireplaces, a kitchen with a bar, a storage room, and a bedroom for the staff.

Sophia and Sami each have a room on the second floor, which also has a public living room as well as five rental rooms. The room which used to belong to Sami's wife Nora is locked. In the corridor there is a hatch in the ceiling leading to the attic. The ladder is hanging on the wall.

The attic is full of debris. Sophia has cleaned up the far end and closed it off with curtains hanging from the ceiling. Here she has built her shadow theater and set up chairs for the audience.

any light. The temperature drops until the entire inn is freezing cold. The player characters must pass a Fear test against Fear 1.

2. Oscar uses magic to take control of Sami. The enchantment makes Sami think that he is his grandfather Pyri – he is ridden with guilt over a crime he once committed, and feels that he must pay for his sins by taking his own life. Sami hides or shuts himself in a room at the inn or the stable. There he hangs himself from the ceiling. When Sami dies, Oscar uses magic to write the words "*Pyri the traitor*" in blood on Sami's body. If the player characters manage to stop Sami from withdrawing and committing suicide, he is unable to explain what crime he is guilty of – only that he is guilty and deserves to die. If they keep preventing him from killing himself, he will eventually fall asleep like the other guests at the inn. Player characters who see Sami's dead body must pass a Fear test against Fear 1.
3. Oscar takes control of all the sleeping NPCs at the Witch Cat – their bodies, not their minds – and uses them like puppets to kill the player characters. The sleeping bodies gradually wake from their slumber – they open their eyes and stare without seeing, someone coughs, someone else scrapes her foot across the floor, an arm twitches and knocks over a glass of beer, someone bursts into a hoarse laugh and finishes the sentence that was cut short as she fell asleep. After a while, all the sleeping individuals rise in unison and move rhythmically through the inn with sweeping, dance-like movements, occasionally mumbling "*Katja, Albert, Hilma, Pyri*" in their sleep. Oscar sends his sleeping puppets to find and attack the player characters. He tries to make them flee to the second floor or the attic, after which he will set the house on fire and make sure that the player characters cannot get out. When the player characters see the sleeping people they must pass a Fear test against Fear 1.

CATASTROPHE

The player characters and all NPCs are burned to death by icy blue fire that barely emits any light.

PLACES

The player characters are free to move around the inn, talk to the guests, and try to find out what is about to happen. Follow the steps of the countdown. Three places contain useful clues: the dining room, the attic, and Nora's room.

DINING ROOM

The dining room is warm and lively. The guests Jonathan, Lisa, and Father Klarhed (see *NPCs at the Witch Cat*) all sit at separate tables, served by Sven and Sophia. The ceiling leaks, with rain dripping down into pots and bowls. Sami is behind the bar passing

on orders to the cook Ingelie. The player characters are offered food and lodging for the night.

If they show Sami the note about The Dance of Dreams he will call for Sophia. The two of them go into the kitchen, and there is a crack as Sami hits his daughter and gives her a violent scolding. Sophia escapes to the attic. Sami and the other guests pretend like nothing has happened.

CHALLENGES

If Sami realizes that the player characters are asking questions about his late wife Nora, The Dance of Dreams, occult occurrences at the Witch Cat, or Sophia, he becomes upset and asks them to stop. If pushed, he gets his rifle and tells them to leave the inn. The player characters can calm him down with a successful **MANIPULATION** test.

The player characters can also get into trouble by questioning one of the guests, Lisa. She is smuggling opium for her research, convinced that the police are after her, and using her own drugs to stay calm. Lisa is cold and sweaty, seems confused, and quickly loses her temper. A player character who passes a **LEARNING** test recognizes the symptoms of opium abuse. If Lisa starts to suspect that the characters are spying on her, she withdraws to her room and prepares to leave the inn at nightfall. Lisa carries a revolver concealed under her clothes (Precision 3, **RANGED COMBAT** 1).

When the player characters have talked to most people in the dining hall, you may trigger the first step of the countdown (see text box). Sami becomes visibly frightened when everyone around him starts falling asleep. He thinks it is the ghost of his wife Nora who has come back to punish him, and asks the player characters to lock themselves in their rooms (if they are spending the night at the inn). Sami goes out to Nora's collapsed conservatory in the garden and tries to talk to her through the storm. If Sophia is still in the dining room, she gets scared and flees to the attic.

CLUES

Jonathan, Father Klarhed, or one of the employees can reveal the following:

NPCS AT THE WITCH CAT

- **OSCAR HJORT:** Revenant (see below)
- **SAMI HARJULA:** Innkeeper (see below)
- **SOPHIA HARJULA:** Sami's daughter, works at the inn (see below)
- **OLAUS KLINT:** Private detective (see below)
- **INGELIE HOLM:** Cook: loud, humorous, red-haired
- **SVEN KRUSE:** Waiter and attendant: extremely tall and thin, soft-spoken, curious
- **JONATHAN GNEJS:** Guest, farmer and Sami's best friend: touches those he talks to, gossips, alcoholic.
- **LISA FINKEL:** Guest, chemist on her way back to Upsala with illegal opium for her research: paranoid, flowing gestures, high on drugs
- **FATHER NIELS KLARHED:** Dinner guest and priest at Billby Church: serious, ill, fundamentalist

- Sami's wife, Nora, had a strong interest in the unknown and was a talented artist. At the start of the year she thought she saw a strange figure in the night and claimed to hear footsteps. At the same time, she had a fight with Sami about inviting actors and singers to the inn. Sami, who detests all forms of art, said no. Something happened that escalated the conflict, and Sami beat her on several occasions. Eventually she had enough and left with a theater troupe. Last summer, Sami received word that his wife had died of cholera, in a sickbed in Karlskrona.
- Sami locked the door to Nora's room after she left, and has not allowed anyone in there.
- The inn has deteriorated in the past year – the roof leaks, boards break, and the garden has become overgrown, despite the fact that Sami works hard to maintain the inn. It is like the Witch Cat is accursed.
- Since the beginning of the year, guests at the inn have suffered terrible nightmares – dreaming that

SAMUEL "SAMI" HARJULA

"There is only one captain on this ship!"

The Witch Cat Inn has been passed down from father to son for hundreds of years, and Sami sees his role as innkeeper as a sacred calling. It would be unthinkable to mismanage the house or not pass it down to Sophia. He does not understand why the house and the garden continues to deteriorate despite all the work he puts in. Sami suspects that it is Nora's spirit seeking revenge.

Sami is a short, stout man in his forties. He has a large beard and beautiful blue eyes. Sami is loud, dominant, and violent. He provides for his daughter and his staff, but expects complete control over everything they do. Sami is interested in technological advances, and abhors occultism and the arts.

- Physique 4 Precision 3
  Logic 2 Empathy 2
- **AGILITY** 1 **CLOSE COMBAT** 3 **FORCE** 3
  RANGED COMBAT 1 **VIGILANCE** 2
- Mental Toughness 2 Physical Toughness 2
- **EQUIPMENT:** Knife, rifle

SOPHIA HARJULA

"The feeling of not belonging is my only friend. Mom was the same."

Sophia is a sixteen-year-old dreamer and loner. She misses her mother and is deeply affected by the dreams Oscar induces in her. Oscar has also taken control of her body on several occasions and helped her build the shadow theater.

Sophia is tall and plump, with brown hair and almond-shaped brown eyes. She whispers when she speaks and has trouble maintaining eye contact. She often uses vague and poetic language. Sophia dreams of not taking over the inn and instead becoming an artist, writer, and actor. She is afraid of her father, and her body is bruised from his frequent batterings.

- Physique 2 Precision 3
  Logic 2 Empathy 4
- **INSPIRATION** 3 **OBSERVATION** 3 **MEDICINE** 1
- Mental Toughness 2 Physical Toughness 1

someone is cutting their throat with a knife, that they are being buried alive, that their best friend is actually the Devil, or that they are on stage when suddenly another actor stabs them with what turns out to be a real knife, the audience applauding as they die.

- Sophia shares her mother's interest in occultism and art, but Sami has forbidden her to do anything other than take care of the inn which he wants her to take over after him.
- Sophia has become strange since her mother left – shy and reclusive, talking to herself and losing herself in thought. When she is not working, she retreats to the attic.

OLAUS KLINT

"You have a sharp eye."

Olaus is a Rosenberger (page 82) and sees vaesen as the Devil's spawn. He hates them with all of his heart. Olaus is sensing that there is a valuable secret involving Albert, Hilma and Katja and wants to find out what it is. Olaus plans to infiltrate the Society and make the player characters his allies or friends to be able to recruit them to the Rosenbergers. Or destroy them.

When the player characters first meet Olaus he introduces himself as a private investigator and makes it clear that he is a Thursday's Child. He will try to gain their trust by supporting their ideas and helping them as much as possible.

Olaus is a forty-year-old man with a well-groomed beard, round glasses, and pointy nose. He has sharp eyes and uses pauses to give added weight to his words. When he thinks no one is watching he sometimes whistles or uses his fingers to drum short pieces of extremely advanced and stirring music. Olaus wears a worn jacket and hat.

- Physique 3 Precision 3 Logic 4 Empathy 4
- **RANGED COMBAT** 2 **STEALTH** 3 **LEARNING** 2 **VIGILANCE** 2 **MANIPULATION** 3 **OBSERVATION** 2
- Mental Toughness 3 Physical Toughness 3
- **EQUIPMENT:** Revolver, magnifying glass, instruments for chemical analysis, book collection, horse and carriage.

THE ATTIC

The attic is littered with trunks, boxes, books, and old clothes. Sophia has cleaned up the far end of the room and put up curtains to hide what she is doing. Behind the curtains she has built an advanced shadow theater and set up chairs for a future audience. The theater consists of lanterns, paper figures on sticks, and cloth screens that can be replaced to show different backgrounds. Everything is connected to rails and clockwork mechanisms, and by turning a crank, the light sources and the figures can be moved around and the background replaced.

Sophia can reveal that the ideas for the theater came to her in dreams she started having at the beginning of the year. She is eager to perform her play for the player characters and asks them to take a seat. The blue light of the lanterns gives the theater a ghostly appearance. As Sophia turns the crank, moving the paper figures, she recites the script from memory (see text box).

CHALLENGES

If Sophia is allowed to perform her play, she cranks up the clockwork mechanism and starts telling her story. Her voice grows increasingly strong and deep, until it becomes clear that it is not her voice at all, but the voice of a man, echoing as if it comes from the bottom of a hole. Sophia's gaze is fixed on a certain part of the ceiling and her body loses all tension, except for the arm turning the crank, which seems to be moving by itself as if suspended with invisible wires from the ceiling.

SCRIPT FOR THE DANCE OF DREAMS

A young man wanders through Europe, seeing things few people are fortunate enough to witness. He dances with queens and visits Versailles and the Palais-Royal. There people perform his plays and praise his name, and life dances along like a dream. But the people's revolution sweeps the land with grenades and fire, and those who were playing and singing end up dead by the side of the road. The young man flees the song of the guillotine.

Our hero returns home to a city in the north – he walks through its gates without shoes, poor and mute. The house where he was born is burnt to ashes and his family is missing. He kneels by the side of the road, begging for coin, and no one knows that his name was once sung in the palaces of Europe.

Suddenly he sees things no one else does – creatures creeping, flying, and crawling – as the Invisibles reveal themselves to him. When he points them out to others, he is mocked and beaten.

A man picks him up from the street and has him bathed and clothed. The man's name is Albert, and his mansion is a place of love and song. Our young hero performs his plays and sings to him for days and nights, and they eat fruit and drink wine.

Albert introduces his friends. In the young man's dreams they are all dancing together.

But the dreams lie.

It was you. You brought me here. You asked me to sit down and talk. We spoke of the future of the world.

I have the right to refuse, you said so and smiled, and then you butchered me like a pig one hangs from the ceiling. You buried my body in unholy ground, without priest or consecration.

Now, dreams are all I have left – I gaze out over the audience at the Palais-Royal, I dance with a princess, I eat cake, I look up into your eyes, Albert, and I let you take my dirty hand. You summon me to Pyri's inn. You make me a villainous proposition, and I decline.

You cut me up. I scream, not wanting to die.

At last you are back.

Welcome.

As Sophia finishes her story, the revenant Oscar Hjort emerges from the shadow theater. His undead body stinks of decay, and the entire building starts to shake as if hit by an earthquake. Oscar whispers "welcome," and the word vibrates in the room, lingering like a bad taste in the mouth. Then the revenant howls and launches itself at the player characters, who must pass a Fear test against Fear 2. Whether they succeed, or become frozen and unable to move, Oscar goes straight through them. The revenant dissolves and vanishes. Shortly thereafter Sophia regains control of her body, but is deeply shaken and collapses in tears.

If the player characters do not let Sophia perform the show, Oscar will show himself when they are on their way down from the attic, in which case he comes soaring up through the hatch to the attic.

CLUES

A player character who examines the theater with **LEARNING** or **INVESTIGATION** can see that the construction is extremely complicated – it would take a master puppeteer to set up a shadow theater of this quality. Moreover, the dolls are all wearing clothes that were fashionable on the continent in the late 18th century.

By using **EMPATHY** the player characters can tell that Sophia is confused, afraid of her father, and missing her mother. She will happily tell them what she knows:

- Sophia and her mother Nora shared an interest in art and the occult. Sami hates all that. Sophia knows that it is because Nora cheated on him with an actor just before they got married and had Sophia.
- Nora was collecting notes about "the Witch Cat ghost" in her room. She thought the house was haunted by one of Sami's relatives. Sophia says the "ghost" started showing up at the beginning of the year.
- Sophia has been having strange dreams. In the dreams she is always a man, and they are always about the story of her play.

NORA'S ROOM

The room contains a bed, a desk, a closet with clothes, a bookcase, and a large number of paintings. Everything is covered with dust.

CHALLENGES

The door to Nora's room is locked, and the key hangs on Sami's key ring. The lock can be picked with **STEALTH** or pried open with **FORCE**. If Sami is nearby, he will try to stop the player characters from entering the room. He is prepared to use force if necessary.

When the player characters are in the room, Oscar will attack one of them with the **ENTHRALL** curse. Describe how the player character feels a tingling sensation in her body. Roll for Oscar's **MAGIC** and let the player character defend herself with **OBSERVATION**. If the player character gets the most successes, she resists the magic and has a vision of Oscar's body buried in unconsecrated ground, his spirit unable to find peace. If both get an equal number of successes nothing happens. If Oscar wins the opposed roll, he takes control of the player character's body for a couple of moments. Slip the player the note of instructions (see the text box titled *Enthralled* and *handout B*). Oscar will force the character to attack one of her friends, after which he loses control of the character and she is free to act as she pleases. The last thing she feels is an icy chill leaving her heart.

CLUES

Nora's journal (see text box on next page and *handout C*) can be found in the bookcase. No roll is required to find it.

ENTHRALLED

A vengeful creature has taken control of your body for a few moments. You think the other player characters are responsible for a terrible crime committed against you, and you want to kill them. Perhaps this is reflected in your breathing and posture? Try to build a scary atmosphere by portraying how your character has changed. You might tell the other characters you hate them and that none of them will leave the inn alive. Draw your weapon and attack one of them. After one round of combat the creature loses control of your body.

LEARNING TEST

When the characters have read Nora's journal or after they have been attacked by the Revenant they can at anytime make a **LEARNING** roll to learn the information below. If the test fails, the PCs will need to find the information elsewhere, primarily by talking to NPCs.

- **ONE SUCCESS:** This must be the work of a Revenant – a haunted spirit, filled by hate against those that have wronged it in life. The Revenant is often invisible but is known to take the shape of a monstrous being with sharp teeth and claws.
- **TWO SUCCESSES:** The revenant can draw the very life out of a person with its ghostly embrace. It can also control a person's soul using magic.
- **THREE SUCCESSES:** A Revenant can be banished by burying its remains.

NORA'S OCCULT LIBRARY

Nora has a large number of occult books. A player character who describes what she is looking for can find information about ghosts and spirits. It becomes clear that revenants must find peace in order to be banished. The body must be buried in hallowed ground.

NORA'S JOURNAL

January 15th
I saw it again last night, as I was on my way to empty the widower Rutger's chamber pot. The candle in my hand went out and, standing still in the dark corridor on the second floor, I could hear the floorboards move. Someone was walking toward me. I whispered my husband's name, and an unknown voice responded with a word I couldn't understand. The hairs on my arms stood up and the blood throbbed in my veins. Finally I dropped the pot and ran downstairs. My footsteps woke several of the guests. I had to spend more than an hour on my knees scrubbing the stench of Rutger's excrement off the floorboards. Sami was angry. I didn't tell him I'd seen a ghost – it would be adding fuel to the fire.

January 17th
Do I really have myself to blame? I know what I did to Sami, but that was almost twenty years ago. He gets so different when he's angry, and I go mute with fear – whilst he demands answers. Perhaps I should know better than to upset him? But all I did was suggest that the sudden falling apart of the inn might have occult causes. I definitely shouldn't have mentioned the ghost. Now I won't be able to show myself to the guests for a week – the bruises around my neck can be concealed with a collar, and no one can see the pain in my chest and stomach, but my left eye is purple like a plum and my nose is swollen.

I fear for Sophia. She is so much like me, and I'd like to tell her everything – but I'm afraid of what Sami would say. He wants to eradicate all things artistic and sublime from his daughter's body – that which came from me.

January 31st
I mentioned my nightmares to Sophia, and it turned out she's been having the same dreams! A man being killed – the murderer sneaking up behind him and cutting his throat with a knife. The body is buried in unconsecrated ground, and suddenly it is my body in the grave. I've been buried alive and can't get out. All I want is revenge, or peace in death. I wake with a scream.

February 7th
The fourth time I saw him I understood what he was whispering – it's not a word, but a name: "Pyri". After spending several days pondering the matter, to Sami's great annoyance, I remembered where I'd heard that name. Sami's grandfather, who used to run this inn, was named Pyri Harjula. There are lots of old letters in the attic. Among them I found a stack of messages all signed with Pyri's name, written in code and addressed to someone in Upsala. The code was easily deciphered, and now I've shut myself away in my room all morning, reading Pyri's love letters. Sami is furious that I've neglected my duties. He is banging the kitchen walls and throwing saucepans against the floor. Poor Ingelie.

February 8th
I now know who the dead man is. Pyri writes of his guilt and feelings of remorse over a murder he committed. He killed a man named Oscar Hjort by slitting his throat. This happened during a meeting with three people from Upsala. One of them was named Albert. Oscar was unwilling to cooperate, but what he was meant to do I am unsure of. They buried his body somewhere in our garden. Pyri says that, instead of having a priest consecrate the ground, they desecrated his body with magic. He fears that he has damned the inn and condemned himself to hell.

March 1st
Sophia has been quiet and withdrawn for some time now. I sat down to talk with her, and she told me that she dreams of setting up a theater. She wants to put on shows here at the Witch Cat. I think it's a brilliant idea.

I have sent an invitation to the Troll Dreams theater troupe, mostly to attract customers but also to inspire Sophia. They will pass through here in early April. This time I won't let Sami get his way.

March 19th
Sami saw the letter from the theater director, and as I'm writing this I have hid in the stable like a naughty child. He hit me with the fireplace poker – everything went black and I woke up on the floor. I lost the feeling in the fingers of my left hand, and they are still numb. Blood, saliva, snot and tears are running down my face, so I need to keep this paper away from my body to avoid staining it. I'm so scared.

April 3rd
If I stay here he'll kill me. Tonight I'm packing my things, and I'm taking Pyri's letters with me. I'll show them to Sophia when I come for her. Perhaps we will return to the Witch Cat one day, when Sami has died or come to his senses. Then we can go looking for ghosts together.

CONFRONTATION

Oscar's body lies buried in the garden root cellar. The player characters must dig it up and bury it in consecrated ground in order to banish the revenant and bring him peace.

The root cellar has been infected by Oscar's magic and nightmares. Opening the door, the player characters see a huge dark cave that is vastly bigger than the root cellar. On the walls are shelves of food crawling with maggots, bugs, and rats. There is a strong wind. Fragments of Oscar's voice are constantly heard whispering and shouting: "*...Albert my love...*" "*...my right to decline...*" "*You were everything to me!*" "*You let Pyri kill me and I will...*" "*Katja!*" "*Hilma...*" "*Have seen things none of you could ever...*" "*My name was...*" "*danced in Paris and...*"

The player characters have a vision of Oscar as a human standing before them in the cave. He is a young man with expensive clothes and eyes glittering with love. Oscar looks to the side at someone who cannot be seen. Then his neck bursts open as if cut by a knife, gushing blood, and Oscar falls to the ground. He tries to scream but only lets out a gurgling sound. His body decays in an instant and is covered with maggots. The player characters must make a Fear test against Fear 2. If they have seen Oscar before, for example in the attic, the Fear value is 1 instead of 2.

OSCAR HJORT

"*I...should not...only loved...cannot sleep!...Dreaming, dreaming, dreaming...*"

Oscar was born in Upsala but moved to France at a young age to follow his dream of being an artist. He learned to build shadow theaters from the great master Francois Dominique Seraphin and became famous in his own right. When the revolution broke out, Oscar was forced to leave France and return home. In Upsala he was nobody and had to beg to survive. This difficult time made him a Thursday's Child. Albert Wredenhielm found him on the street and recruited him into the Society. Oscar loved Albert, but refused to cooperate when he heard of the Death of Ballads and the plans of Albert, Katja, and Hilma. Albert sent the innkeeper Pyri to kill him, and the body was buried in the unconsecrated ground of the root cellar.

Oscar the revenant is confused and filled with hatred. He wants to frighten and torment the player characters before killing them – believing them to be Albert, Katja, and Hilma. Likewise, he has mistaken the innkeeper Sami for Sami's long-departed grandfather, Pyri, and wants to make him kill himself.

Oscar has the stats of a revenant (see chapter 8). He uses the enchantments **ENCHANTED SLEEP**, **ENTHRALL** and **STORM**, and the curses **ENTHRALL** and **DEATHLY COLD**.

Oscar will summon the sleeping people from the inn to attack the player characters. The player characters can talk to Oscar or show him things that indicate their intentions to bury the body in consecrated ground and bring him peace. A successful **MANIPULATION** test makes Oscar understand that he is no longer alive and that it has been many years

SLEEPWALKER

"Albert!...Katja...Hilma..."

When Oscar wakes the sleeping people at the Witch Cat Inn, they gradually regain consciousness with twitching movements. They have strange expressions on their faces and seem to be dancing to an inaudible rhythm. The sleepwalkers will attack the player characters with fists, chairs, or whatever they can get their hands on. They want to force the characters into a part of the house where they cannot escape, on the second floor or in the attic. They will then set fire to the house and burn to death along with the player characters. The sleepwalkers are not affected by **MANIPULATION**.

- Physique 3 Precision 2
  Logic 1 Empathy 1
- **AGILITY** 1 **CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **FORCE** 2
  VIGILANCE 1
- Mental Toughness 0 Physical Toughness 1

since he was murdered. He realizes that the player characters are not the people he hates, and directs the sleeping to back off. The player characters can now bury the body.

Player characters digging at the center of the root cellar will find Oscar's skeleton. It must be buried in consecrated ground. If any of the player characters are priests or versed in religious rituals, they can consecrate the ground themselves and bury the body – ask the player to describe what she says and does. While performing the ritual the wind can be heard howling, mixed with the screaming voice of Oscar Hjort. When the ritual is completed, all goes quiet.

Another option is to take the body to Billby Church two kilometers south of the inn. The church itself is locked, but one can easily enter the cemetery.

HEALING CONDITIONS

If the player characters want to perform an activity to heal Conditions, they must go somewhere quiet and safe, such as the stable.

As they are digging in the cemetery, the player characters can see Oscar's spirit watching them gratefully from a distance. No Fear test is required.

IF THE PLAYER CHARACTERS ESCAPE

Should they leave the inn, the player characters will find that the horses in the stable have fallen asleep as well. The only way to leave is by foot, and the closest community is Sigtuna, "the sleeping town," whose glory days were in the middle ages. Sigtuna is an idyllic community of 300 inhabitants. It takes one and a half hours to walk there.

Oscar will target one of the player characters and attack her at night, from a distance, with **DEATHLY COLD** until she becomes Broken or the Curse fails. Describe how the player character's teeth chatter with cold, how her face goes pale and her hair starts to freeze. If she manages to resist **MAGIC**, the character has a vision of Oscar being murdered, plotting his revenge from the grave, and coming back to life as a revenant.

If the player characters return to the inn the following day, the NPCs have woken up and most cannot remember falling asleep. Only Sami and Sophia remember what happened and ask for help. Oscar will not show himself again until nightfall.

AFTERMATH

When Oscar's body is buried in consecrated ground, his soul is finally put to rest. Oscar disappears and his magic ceases. The NPCs wake up but cannot remember what happened. If the player characters have killed any of them, they may have to explain what has transpired in a way that does not lead to murder charges. Failure to solve the mystery means that Oscar continues to haunt the inn. The sleeping NPCs wake up the next day with no recollection of what happened.

The player characters return to headquarters, and you must assign Experience Points by having the players answer questions (see chapter 2). If any player character has become Broken you must decide whether her Defects or Insights become permanent.

THE DANCE OF DREAMS

A shadow play of horror,
murder, and revenge!

Let yourself be enraptured and terrified
by shadow theater with clockwork
as amazing as that of the master's
constructions on the continent. Watch
as evil smiles, good people go to their
doom, and spirits come to life! Follow
Oscar Hjort's encounter with the
Black One, his struggle, and finally
the betrayal which claimed his life.
Hear the tunes of the enchanted flute
that sends souls dancing to hell.

The show will premiere shortly
at the Witch Cat Inn.
Not for the faint of heart!

Meet me tonight at the Witch Cat Inn / Olaus

A: *The note from Olaus Klint*

ENTHRALLED

A vengeful creature has taken control of your body for a few moments. You think the other player characters are responsible for a terrible crime committed against you, and you want to kill them. Perhaps this is reflected in your breathing and posture? Try to build a scary atmosphere by portraying how your character has changed. You might tell the other characters you hate them and that none of them will leave the inn alive. Draw your weapon and attack one of them. After one round of combat the creature loses control of your body.

B: *Instructions to a possibly enthralled character's player*

January 15th

I saw it again last night, as I was on my way to empty the widower Rutger's chamber pot. The candle in my hand went out and, standing still in the dark corridor on the second floor, I could hear the floorboards move. Someone was walking toward me. I whispered my husband's name, and an unknown voice responded with a word I couldn't understand. The hairs on my arms stood up and the blood throbbed in my veins. Finally I dropped the pot and ran downstairs. My footsteps woke several of the guests. I had to spend more than an hour on my knees scrubbing the stench of Rutger's excrement off the floorboards. Sami was angry. I didn't tell him I'd seen a ghost – it would be adding fuel to the fire.

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Do I really have myself to blame? I know what I did to Sami, but that was almost twenty years ago. He gets so different when he's angry, and I go mute with fear – whilst he demands answers. Perhaps I should know better than to upset him? But all I did was suggest that the sudden falling apart of the inn might have occult causes. I definitely shouldn't have mentioned the ghost. Now I won't be able to show myself to the guests for a week – the bruises around my neck can be concealed with a collar, and no one can see the pain in my chest and stomach, but my left eye is purple like a plum and my nose is swollen.
I fear for Sophia. She is so much like me, and I'd like to tell her everything – but I'm afraid of what Sami would say. He wants to eradicate all things artistic and sublime from his daughter's body – that which came from me.

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February 8th

I now know who the dead man is. Pyri writes of his guilt and feelings of remorse over a murder he committed. He killed a man named Oscar Kjort by slitting his throat. This happened during a meeting with three people from Upsala. One of them was named Albert. Oscar was unwilling to cooperate, but what he was meant to do I am unsure of. They buried his body somewhere in our garden. Pyri says that, instead of having a priest consecrate the ground, they desecrated his body with magic. He fears that he has damned the inn and condemned himself to hell.

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I have sent an invitation to the Troll Dreams theater troupe, mostly to attract customers but also to inspire Sophia. They will pass through here in early April. This time I won't let Sami get his way.

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April 3rd

If I stay here he'll kill me. Tonight I'm packing my things, and I'm taking Pyri's letters with me. I'll show them to Sophia when I come for her. Perhaps we will return to the Witch Cat one day, when Sami has died or come to his senses. Then we can go looking for ghosts together.

C: *Nora's journal*

BACKGROUND TABLES

IN THIS SECTION, an alternate method for creating player characters by rolling on tables is presented. By letting the dice decide, you can get unexpected and exciting results. To increase variation in the life path tables, we introduce a number of occupations in this method. These are variations of the various archetypes found in Chapter 2 and have no rules effect otherwise.

CHEAT SHEET FOR ROLLING A PLAYER CHARACTER

1. Roll on or choose from the *Class* Table.
   a. Write down your starting Resources.
2. Roll on the *Upbringing* table for the class your character belongs to.
   a. Write down your attributes based on the roll.
   b. Write down your skills based on the roll.
3. Roll on or choose from the *Profession* Table.
   a. Add your points in Resources to what you wrote down earlier.
4. Roll on the *Life Events* table for your profession.
   a. Write down the skills you get based on the roll. If you get more than 2 in a skill that is not your profession's main skill, you must raise your profession's main skill instead (up to 3). If your profession's main skill reaches 3, you may instead raise a skill of your choice up to 2.
   b. Write down the equipment you get based on the roll.
5. You are now Young. You may now start the game (go to step 8) or make another roll for *Life Events* and become Middle-Aged (repeat step 4, then go to step 6).
6. You are now Middle-Aged. Lower an attribute of your choice by one. You may now start the game (go to step 8) or make another roll on *Life Events* and become Old (repeat step 4, then go to step 7).
7. You are now Old. Lower an attribute of your choice by one. No attribute may start at zero. You must now start the game (go to step 8).
8. You may move one attribute point as you see fit, up to 5 in your profession's main attribute.
9. You may spend two extra skill points as you see fit, up to 3 in your profession's main skill.
10. Roll D3 for each of the following or choose your own Motivation, Trauma, Dark Secret and Talent. Count from the top down, based on the examples in the profession descriptions in chapter 2.
11. Choose an extra item from the equipment listed under the profession descriptions in chapter 2.

1. CLASS

D66	CLASS	RESOURCES
11–16	Poor	1
21–31	Worker	2
32–56	Burgher	3
61–66	Aristocrat	5

2. UPBRINGING: POOR

D6	UPBRINGING	ATTRIBUTES	SKILLS
1	**SICKLY.** Drafty windows, vermin, and poor diet did a number on you. From childhood you were often sick and weak. You did what you could to help out anyway, but it took its toll. That you survived into adulthood is something of a miracle.	Physique 2 Precision 4 Logic 5 Empathy 4	**MEDICINE** 1 **STEALTH** 1 **INVESTIGATION** 1 **LEARNING** 1 **VIGILANCE** 2
2	**GANG MEMBER.** You found a community in a youth gang. Perhaps you engaged in innocent mischief, or crossed the line into crime. The bond you shared remains in you to this day.	Physique 4 Precision 4 Logic 3 Empathy 4	**AGILITY** 1 **CLOSE COMBAT** 2 **FORCE** 1 **STEALTH** 2
3	**HARD WORK.** Even as a youth you had to earn a living for yourself or your family. Long days of hard and thankless toil left their mark on your body and soul. You were hardened by labor, for better or worse.	Physique 5 Precision 3 Logic 3 Empathy 4	**AGILITY** 2 **CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **FORCE** 2 **VIGILANCE** 1
4	**SERVANT.** You served the upper class. Perhaps you were part of a family that all worked for the same employer, perhaps you were a farmhand or kitchen maid. You saw inequality, oppression, and wealth first-hand.	Physique 4 Precision 4 Logic 3 Empathy 4	**STEALTH** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1 **MANIPULATION** 2 **OBSERVATION** 2
5	**CROFTER.** You grew up on a croft in the countryside and learned early on how to work the land and live in harmony with nature. The long, hard, and chilly days in the fields shaped you. You know the importance of work and being able to provide for yourself and your family.	Physique 5 Precision 3 Logic 3 Empathy 4	**AGILITY** 1 **CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **FORCE** 2 **INVESTIGATION** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1
6	**UNDERGROUND.** Everyone in the village you grew up in did it, and so did you. The mine was your destiny. In its hot tunnels, deep beneath the earth, you toiled in the dark. You watched comrades get hurt and even killed. But you persevered and came to know the tunnels like the back of your hand.	Physique 3 Precision 5 Logic 3 Empathy 4	**AGILITY** 2 **FORCE** 1 **INVESTIGATION** 1 **VIGILANCE** 2

2. UPBRINGING: WORKER

D6	UPBRINGING	ATTRIBUTES	SKILLS
1	**SICKLY.** Drafty windows, vermin, and poor diet did a number on you. From childhood you were often sick and weak. You did what you could to help out anyway, but it took its toll. That you survived into adulthood is something of a miracle.	Physique 2 Precision 4 Logic 5 Empathy 4	**MEDICINE** 1 **STEALTH** 1 **INVESTIGATION** 1 **LEARNING** 1 **VIGILANCE** 2
2	**SENT AWAY.** Your parents sent you away. Perhaps to live with a relative in the country, or to a school. You quickly found your footing in the situation and learned to look after yourself. Over the years, the memory of your family faded as you built a life for yourself.	Physique 4 Precision 4 Logic 4 Empathy 3	**AGILITY** 1 **CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **LEARNING** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1
3	**BOOKISH.** Even as a small child, people around you knew that you were brighter than other children. You quickly learned to read and devoured any book that came your way. In the books you found a purpose in life, and between the covers was a world you could not get enough of.	Physique 3 Precision 3 Logic 5 Empathy 4	**MEDICINE** 1 **INVESTIGATION** 2 **LEARNING** 2 **VIGILANCE** 1
4	**IN THE FACTORY.** You started working at an early age, and the factory became your second home. You learned to operate machinery and equipment, and the workers quickly accepted you as one of their own. You worked long hours for meager wages, but at least you made your own money.	Physique 5 Precision 3 Logic 3 Empathy 4	**AGILITY** 2 **CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **FORCE** 2 **VIGILANCE** 1
5	**RELIGIOUS.** You grew up in a religious home where God's Word was the principle by which you lived. You learned the Catechism and quickly became a favorite with the local priest. The stories of the bible gave you comfort and hope. Perhaps you kept your faith, or maybe something sowed doubt in your mind.	Physique 3 Precision 3 Logic 4 Empathy 5	**MEDICINE** 1 **STEALTH** 1 **LEARNING** 1 **INSPIRATION** 2 **MANIPULATION** 1
6	**UNDERGROUND.** Everyone in the village you grew up in did it, and so did you. The mine was your destiny. In its hot tunnels, deep beneath the earth, you toiled in the dark. You watched comrades get hurt and even killed. But you persevered and came to know the tunnels like the back of your hand.	Physique 3 Precision 5 Logic 3 Empathy 4	**AGILITY** 2 **FORCE** 1 **INVESTIGATION** 1 **VIGILANCE** 2

2. UPBRINGING: BURGHER

D6	UPBRINGING	ATTRIBUTES	SKILLS
1	**SICKLY.** As a child you were often ill. Despite good medical care and the best of circumstances, much of your youth was spent in your room, weak and bedridden. You dreamed of stronger days and found refuge in your imagination.	Physique 2 Precision 4 Logic 5 Empathy 4	**MEDICINE** 1 **STEALTH** 1 **INVESTIGATION** 1 **LEARNING** 2 **VIGILANCE** 1
2	**BOARDING SCHOOL.** You were sent away to boarding school at an early age to get the best possible education, both physical and spiritual. It was a tough time with many challenges, but you found allies in like-minded individuals. You went through the years together and became lifelong friends.	Physique 3 Precision 4 Logic 4 Empathy 4	**AGILITY** 1 **CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **LEARNING** 2 **VIGILANCE** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1
3	**UPSTART.** You saw an opportunity and took it. All your friends came from better families than you, and you learned how to behave in polite company. By playing your cards right and being a bit cleverer than everyone else, you managed to establish yourself in the right circles. Perhaps you made a powerful enemy or ally in the process?	Physique 4 Precision 4 Logic 4 Empathy 3	**STEALTH** 1 **LEARNING** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1 **MANIPULATION** 2 **OBSERVATION** 1
4	**IN FATHER'S/MOTHER'S FOOTSTEPS.** Ever since you were little, you knew that much was expected of you. You were drilled relentlessly and learned the family business at a young age. It was clear that you would follow in your father's/mother's footsteps without complaint. You learned that family always comes first, and that everything you do is done in the name of the family. That is something you will never forget.	Physique 3 Precision 3 Logic 5 Empathy 4	**INVESTIGATION** 1 **LEARNING** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1 **MANIPULATION** 2 **OBSERVATION** 1
5	**PARTY ANIMAL.** Your life was one big party. There was always a dance or dinner around the corner, always a bottle of wine or a drunken pub crawl to help pass the time. You made lots of friends during your partying days, and possibly an enemy or two.	Physique 3 Precision 3 Logic 4 Empathy 5	**CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **STEALTH** 1 **LEARNING** 1 **INSPIRATION** 1 **MANIPULATION** 2
6	**IN THE CORRIDORS OF POWER.** Your mother or father was a government official, and even as a child you had access to influential people and important places. Perhaps you spent the summers among politicians and diplomats on a beautiful country estate, or helped your father/mother with their work.	Physique 3 Precision 3 Logic 5 Empathy 4	**LEARNING** 2 **INSPIRATION** 1 **MANIPULATION** 2 **OBSERVATION** 1

2. UPBRINGING: ARISTOCRAT

D6	UPBRINGING	ATTR	SKILLS
1	**SICKLY.** As a child you were often ill. Despite good medical care and the best of circumstances, much of your youth was spent in your room, weak and bedridden. You dreamed of stronger days and found refuge in books.	Physique 2 Precision 4 Logic 5 Empathy 4	**STEALTH** 1 **INVESTIGATION** 1 **LEARNING** 2 **VIGILANCE** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1
2	**DREAMER.** Ever since you were little, you lived in your own little world. You fantasized about other times, imaginary friends, and even other worlds. It was as if your ordinary life was not enough.	Physique 3 Precision 4 Logic 3 Empathy 5	**STEALTH** 1 **LEARNING** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1 **INSPIRATION** 1 **INVESTIGATION** 1
3	**REBEL.** You knew very well what was expected of someone in your position, and you hated it. Since childhood you have always opposed convention, power, and your family. Having money is certainly comfortable, but that does not mean you have to follow in your parents' footsteps.	Physique 4 Precision 4 Logic 3 Empathy 4	**LEARNING** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1 **INSPIRATION** 2 **MANIPULATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1
4	**SPOILED.** As a child you got everything you wanted, no matter the cost. You learned that only the best is good enough for you, and expect others to share this view. After all, it is what you deserve by virtue of your family's good name.	Physique 4 Precision 4 Logic 4 Empathy 3	**RANGED COMBAT** 1 **STEALTH** 1 **LEARNING** 2 **MANIPULATION** 2
5	**RUINED.** You will never forget it. The year you lost everything. You were forced to sell the family estate and heirlooms that had been passed down through generations. The shame never really went away, even though you set a new path for your life in the shadow of the disaster. (Reduce your Resources by 3)	Physique 3 Precision 4 Logic 4 Empathy 4	**RANGED COMBAT** 1 **STEALTH** 1 **LEARNING** 2 **VIGILANCE** 2
6	**TRAVELED EUROPE.** You always wanted to see the world, and your parents indulged you. You set out on a grand tour of Europe. Perhaps you went to the opera in Vienna, frolicked in London, and danced the waltz in St. Petersburg. You learned a great deal about life and often long for your next trip.	Physique 3 Precision 3 Logic 4 Empathy 5	**AGILITY** 1 **LEARNING** 2 **INSPIRATION** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1

3. PROFESSION

POOR	WORKER	BURGHER	ARISTOCRAT	PROFESSION	SEE TABLE	RESOURCES
11–16	—	—	—	Vagabond	Vagabond (A)	0
21–24	11	—	—	Thief	Vagabond (A)	+1
25–32	12–16	—	—	Enforcer	Servant (B)	+2
33–34	21–23	—	—	Magician	Occultist (D)	+1
35–43	24–32	—	—	Day laborer	Vagabond (A)	+1
44–46	33–35	—	—	Sailor	Officer (E)	+2
51–52	36–41	—	—	Preacher	Priest (J)	+1
53–56	42–44	11–12	—	Soldier	Officer (E)	+2
61–62	45–46	—	—	Butler	Servant (B)	+2
63	51–53	—	—	Chef	Servant (B)	+2
64	54–56	—	—	Psychic	Occultist (D)	+2
—	61–62	13–14	—	Police officer	Private detective (F)	+2
65–66	63–64	—	—	Hunter	Hunter (C)	+2
—	65–66	15	—	Forest ranger	Hunter (C)	+2
—	—	16–21	11–14	Explorer	Hunter (C)	+3
—	—	22	15–16	Illusionist	Occultist (D)	+2
—	—	23–24	—	Surgeon	Doctor (I)	+2
—	—	25–26	—	Vicar	Priest (J)	+2
—	—	31–32	—	Detective	Private detective (F)	+2
—	—	33–34	—	Lawyer	Private detective (F)	+3
—	—	35–36	21–25	Author	Writer (G)	+1
—	—	41–42	—	Journalist	Writer (G)	+2
—	—	43	26–31	Poet	Writer (G)	+1
—	—	44	—	Psychiatrist	Doctor (I)	+2
—	—	45–46	32–33	Academic	Academic (H)	+3
—	—	51–54	34–36	Public servant	Academic (H)	+3
—	—	55–62	41–43	Doctor	Doctor (I)	+3
—	—	63–64	44–52	Bohemian	Academic (H)	+1
—	—	—	53–55	Dean	Priest (J)	+3
—	—	65–66	56–66	Military officer	Officer (E)	+3

4. LIFE EVENT TABLE A

Vagabond, thief, day laborer (archetype: Vagabond, page 34)

D6	EVENT	SKILLS	EQUIPMENT
1	**PRISON.** You were arrested and sent to prison. Perhaps you deserved it, or maybe you were framed. You spent years in a cold and damp stone cell, and learned that you can survive anything.	**CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **FORCE** 1	Lockpicks
2	**HARD WORK.** You took an honest job and made a decent living for once in your life. It was hard work, getting up at the crack of dawn and going to bed at dusk, aching and sore. But you were finally your own master.	**FORCE** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Axe
3	**RIVAL.** Perhaps it was a close friendship that soured, or a stranger who crossed your path one too many times. You gained a rival who hates you just as much as you hate him/her.	**STEALTH** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Knuckle duster
4	**ACCIDENT.** You were scarred for life in a serious accident. Perhaps you were run over by a burgher's carriage, or fell from a scaffold. You fought your way back to life and will never let anyone take advantage of you ever again.	**MEDICINE** 1 **LEARNING** 1	Simple bandages
5	**FORBIDDEN LOVE.** You fell madly in love with the wrong person. Perhaps it was someone from a distinguished family, or perhaps the spouse of a friend. Your love was as passionate as it was doomed. You will never forget it.	**STEALTH** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Writing utensils and paper
6	**FOUR-LEGGED FRIEND.** You saved a puppy from certain death and have had a loyal companion by your side ever since. You have been through a lot together and one thing is certain: you would both die for each other.	**INVESTIGATION** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Guard dog

4. LIFE EVENT TABLE B

Butler, chef, enforcer (archetype: Servant, page 33)

D6	EVENT	SKILLS	EQUIPMENT
1	**ACCUSED.** You were falsely accused of a serious crime. You lost your job and went into debt. Perhaps you know who was behind the accusation, or maybe you have no idea. Either way, you learned not to trust other people.	**VIGILANCE** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Aquavit
2	**IMPORTANT SERVICE.** You were hired for an important mission. Perhaps you worked for a high-ranking politician, or did a secret favor for an important person. You gained a powerful ally and learned the importance of discretion.	**STEALTH** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Fancy disguise
3	**RIVAL.** You got into a lengthy conflict with a professional rival. You can barely remember how it started, but the conflict kept growing until it took over your life. Perhaps you got over it and became friends; perhaps you made an enemy for life.	**STEALTH** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Strong poison
4	**ACCOMPLISHMENT.** You performed a great feat that impressed those around you. Perhaps you rescued someone from a fire, or took a bullet for your employer. Whatever it was, people looked up to you. You certainly proved your mettle.	**INSPIRATION** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Fine wines
5	**SECRET RELATIONSHIP.** You met someone you should not have. Your relationship was as sudden as it was passionate, but circumstances required that it be kept secret. Perhaps the relationship and the secret are still important to you. Perhaps it is just a bittersweet memory.	**STEALTH** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Opera glasses
6	**SELF-EMPLOYED.** You got sick and tired of working for others and built your own business. Perhaps you started a restaurant or ran your own company. You learned hard lessons, but finally found success. Perhaps it still lasts.	**INSPIRATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Slipstick

4. LIFE EVENT TABLE C

Hunter, forest ranger, explorer (archetype: Hunter, page 28)

D6	EVENT	SKILLS	EQUIPMENT
1	**INJURED.** You were badly injured and convalesced for a long period of time. Perhaps you got stuck in a hunting trap or slashed by a wild animal. You still have the scars to prove it.	**MEDICINE** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Hunting equipment
2	**FARAWAY LANDS.** You spent some time abroad or somewhere far away. You saw things you will never forget and met people who made a great impression on you. Sometimes you dream of going back there.	**LEARNING** 1 **INSPIRATION** 1	Compass
3	**BORDER TROUBLE.** You got caught up in a border dispute. Perhaps you accidentally crossed over into forbidden territory, or came into conflict with shady individuals who were secretly crossing the border. Did you make a friend or an enemy?	**AGILITY** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Rifle
4	**GREAT FIND.** You found something very valuable; perhaps an animal presumed extinct, or a buried treasure. It soon turned out that others wanted a piece of your find. Maybe you were mentioned in the press or accused of being a fraud.	**INVESTIGATION** 1 **LEARNING** 1	Field kitchen
5	**SWEETHEART.** You met someone that made you happy and the love was reciprocated. Love gave your life meaning, and the future looked sparkling bright. Perhaps you are still together, or maybe you went your separate ways when the passion faded.	**STEALTH** 1 **INSPIRATION** 1	Writing utensils and paper
6	**YOUR OWN EXPEDITION.** You planned and carried out an expedition of some kind. Perhaps you traveled to the mountains to slay a mythical beast. Or maybe you went looking for the lost tomb of an ancient king. Whether it succeeded or failed, you won renown and made a name for yourself.	**INVESTIGATION** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Strong horse

4. LIFE EVENT TABLE D

Magician, illusionist, psychic (archetype: Occultist, page 29)

D6	EVENT	SKILLS	EQUIPMENT
1	**ENCOUNTER WITH VAESEN.** It came in the night. Suddenly you were face-to-face with a vaesen. Time seemed to stand still, and you did not know if you would survive the encounter. That was a long time ago, but you often think about the encounter and what it did to you.	**LEARNING** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Hurricane lantern
2	**DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYER.** Fortune smiled on you and you were hired by a distinguished person who was fascinated by your knowledge. You developed a taste for the good life, but also learned about intrigue and deceit the hard way.	**MANIPULATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Fancy disguise
3	**RIVAL.** You got into a lengthy conflict with a professional rival. You can barely remember how it started, but the conflict kept growing until it took over your life. Perhaps you got over it and became friends; perhaps you made an enemy for life.	**STEALTH** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Strong poison
4	**RENOWNED.** You suddenly became famous. Perhaps the newspapers wrote stories about your knowledge, or maybe you saved someone's life. With fame came both happiness and problems.	**INSPIRATION** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Musical instrument
5	**GRIEF.** Tragedy left you grief-stricken for a long time. Perhaps you lost a partner or close friend. Or maybe one or several family members died within a short span of time. Now you have moved on, but the memory of those you lost remains forever.	**MEDICINE** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Liquor
6	**PUT ON A SHOW.** You combined your gift with business acumen and put on a show that left the audience stunned. You created a stage name and become someone else for a moment. Perhaps you still slip back into the role from time to time.	**INSPIRATION** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Fancy disguise

4. LIFE EVENT TABLE E

Military officer, soldier, sailor (archetype: Officer, page 30)

D6	EVENT	SKILLS	EQUIPMENT
1	**INJURED.** You were badly injured and convalesced for a long period of time. Perhaps you got stuck in a hunting trap or slashed by a wild animal. You still have the scars to prove it.	**FORCE** 1 **MEDICINE** 1	Field kitchen
2	**EXPEDITION.** You were part of a major expedition – a military campaign, a journey around the world, or a scientific expedition. You were tested to your limits and lost many friends along the way. But you made it home safely, with memories that will last forever.	**FORCE** 1 **RANGED COMBAT** 1	Rifle
3	**RIVAL.** You got into a lengthy conflict with a professional rival. You can barely remember how it started, but the conflict kept growing until it took over your life. Perhaps you got over it and became friends; perhaps you made an enemy for life.	**CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Knuckle duster
4	**RESCUED.** You were in serious trouble – perhaps badly injured and left to die or imprisoned under horrific conditions. But just when you thought the end was near, your luck changed. Someone rescued you and gave you your life back. You will never forget what that person did for you.	**AGILITY** 1 **STEALTH** 1	Bayonet
5	**SWEETHEART.** You met someone that made you happy and the love was reciprocated. Love gave your life meaning, and the future looked sparkling bright. Perhaps you are still together, or maybe you went your separate ways when the passion faded.	**INSPIRATION** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Field glasses
6	**VALOR.** You performed a heroic feat that attracted much attention. Perhaps you led a charge on the battlefield, or saved the crew of a sinking ship. People looked up to you for what you did. For a time you were a hero.	**FORCE** 1 **RANGED COMBAT** 1	Pistol

4. LIFE EVENT TABLE F

Private investigator, police officer, lawyer (archetype: Private detective, page 32)

D6	EVENT	SKILLS	EQUIPMENT
1	**FAILED CASE.** You worked on a case that ended in terrible failure. Whether it was a murderer that got off or a person who was wrongly convicted, it had a profound effect on you. You swore that you would never let it happen again.	**INVESTIGATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Liquor
2	**SECRET CLIENT.** You took on a client of the shadowy variety. Your collaboration proved fruitful, but also riddled with danger and intrigue. Whatever the outcome was, the collaboration gave you insight into other spheres of influence, and perhaps a powerful ally or enemy?	**STEALTH** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Pistol
3	**RIVAL.** You got into a lengthy conflict with a professional rival. You can barely remember how it started, but the conflict kept growing until it took over your life. Perhaps you got over it and became friends; perhaps you made an enemy for life.	**CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Knuckle duster
4	**HIGH-PROFILE CASE.** You took on a high-profile case and suddenly found yourself in the limelight. It may have been a missing heir or a gruesome murder. You were under great pressure and learned a lot about the darker side of human nature.	**INVESTIGATION** 1 **INSPIRATION** 1	Book collection
5	**SWEETHEART.** You met someone that made you happy and the love was reciprocated. Love gave your life meaning, and the future looked sparkling bright. Perhaps you are still together, or maybe you went your separate ways when the passion faded.	**LEARNING** 1 **INSPIRATION** 1	Musical instrument
6	**YOUR OWN AGENCY.** You took the opportunity to start your own firm. It was not long before you got your first client, and over the years you took on the most extraordinary cases. Perhaps you are still running the agency.	**INVESTIGATION** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Chemical equipment

4. LIFE EVENT TABLE G

Author, poet, journalist (archetype: Writer, page 35)

D6	EVENT	SKILLS	EQUIPMENT
1	**ADDICTION.** You developed a severe addiction to some kind of substance. The need for the next fix consumed your life for some time. You made contacts in the underworld who ensured you got what you needed. Perhaps you finally broke free of your addiction, or maybe you remain its slave.	**MEDICINE** 1 **STEALTH** 1	Liquor
2	**PATRON.** You were chosen by a wealthy benefactor who paid and housed you on the condition that you would produce art. It was a strange collaboration; you were so different, yet lived in symbiosis for a period of time.	**MANIPULATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Pet dog
3	**RIVAL.** You got into a lengthy conflict with a professional rival. You can barely remember how it started, but the conflict kept growing until it took over your life. Perhaps you got over it and became friends; perhaps you made an enemy for life.	**CLOSE COMBAT** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Pistol
4	**UNEXPECTED SUCCESS.** Suddenly it happened. You had your breakthrough and received a lot of publicity in the papers. Perhaps you wrote a sensational novel or a widely read article. Whatever it was, your time in the limelight was short. Perhaps it gave you a taste for more?	**MANIPULATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Book collection
5	**SWEETHEART.** You met someone that made you happy and the love was reciprocated. Love gave your life meaning, and the future looked sparkling bright. Perhaps you are still together, or maybe you went your separate ways when the passion faded.	**INSPIRATION** 2	Writing utensils and paper
6	**CREATED A MASTERPIECE.** After years of hard work, you finally did it. You created a true masterpiece in the genre. Perhaps it was even a commercial success, or maybe its brilliance was only appreciated by a few people close to you. But you know. The question is, where do you go from here?	**LEARNING** 1 **INSPIRATION** 1	Fine wines

4. LIFE EVENT TABLE H

Academic, public servant, bohemian (archetype: Academic, page 26)

D6	EVENT	SKILLS	EQUIPMENT
1	**SCANDAL.** You found yourself in the eye of the storm. A great scandal came to light and you were caught up in it. You learned who your real friends were and what matters most in life.	**VIGILANCE** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Fine wines
2	**DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYER.** Fortune smiled on you and you were hired by a distinguished person who was fascinated by your knowledge. You developed a taste for the good life, but also learned about intrigue and deceit the hard way.	**LEARNING** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Writing utensils and paper
3	**RIVAL.** You got into a lengthy conflict with a professional rival. You can barely remember how it started, but the conflict kept growing until it took over your life. Perhaps you got over it and became friends; perhaps you made an enemy for life.	**STEALTH** 1 **LEARNING** 1	Strong poison
4	**SOCIALITE.** You mingled with high society, made powerful friends, and lived a life of luxury. Perhaps you made yourself insufferable at dinner parties; perhaps you just grew tired of the shallow life.	**INSPIRATION** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Musical instrument
5	**SWEETHEART.** You met someone that made you happy and the love was reciprocated. Love gave your life meaning, and the future looked sparkling bright. Perhaps you are still together, or maybe you went your separate ways when the passion faded.	**LEARNING** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Opera glasses
6	**INFLUENTIAL WORK.** You did work that proved to be groundbreaking in your field. Colleagues lined up to work with you, and you received funding and invitations beyond your wildest dreams.	**LEARNING** 1 **INSPIRATION** 1	Book collection

4. LIFE EVENT TABLE I

Doctor, surgeon, psychiatrist (archetype: Doctor, page 27)

D6	EVENT	SKILLS	EQUIPMENT
1	**ADDICTION.** You developed a severe addiction to some kind of substance. The need for the next fix consumed your life for some time. You made contacts in the underworld who ensured you got what you needed. Perhaps you finally broke free of your addiction, or maybe you remain its slave.	**MANIPULATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Chemical equipment
2	**COMPLEX CASE.** You took on a complex case that came to dominate your life for some time. Perhaps it was someone you thought you could save, but who ended up dead. Perhaps it was a strange disease that has never been seen before or since.	**MEDICINE** 1 **LEARNING** 1	Medical equipment
3	**RIVAL.** You got into a lengthy conflict with a professional rival. You can barely remember how it started, but the conflict kept growing until it took over your life. Perhaps you got over it and became friends; perhaps you made an enemy for life.	**MEDICINE** 1 **STEALTH** 1	Extremely strong poison
4	**SOCIALITE.** You mingled with high society, made powerful friends, and lived a life of luxury. Perhaps you made yourself insufferable at dinner parties; perhaps you just grew tired of the shallow life.	**INSPIRATION** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Fine wines
5	**SWEETHEART.** You met someone that made you happy and the love was reciprocated. Love gave your life meaning, and the future looked sparkling bright. Perhaps you are still together, or maybe you went your separate ways when the passion faded.	**MEDICINE** 1 **LEARNING** 1	Opera glasses
6	**OPENED A PRACTICE.** You decided it was time to become your own boss and opened a small practice. For a while everything went well, and you became a respected figure in town. Perhaps you are still running your practice, or maybe you sold it to a colleague.	**MANIPULATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Book collection

4. LIFE EVENT TABLE J

Preacher, vicar, dean (archetype: Priest, page 31)

D6	EVENT	SKILLS	EQUIPMENT
1	**DOUBT.** You experienced something traumatic that made you doubt the existence of God. Perhaps you lost someone in a terrible disease, or someone who might have been a role model for you in the church was found guilty of a horrible crime. Whatever the cause, you still carry doubt within you.	**VIGILANCE** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Liquor
2	**POPULAR.** You worked hard to spread the word of God and help those less fortunate. As a result, you became very appreciated in your parish and people considered you someone they could trust.	**INSPIRATION** 2	Musical instrument
3	**ENEMY IN THE CHURCH.** You made an enemy within the church. It might have been a close colleague who turned against you when you got promoted. Or maybe someone higher up in the hierarchy disapproved of your methods and tried to get rid of you. Regardless, this conflict lingers on.	**STEALTH** 1 **VIGILANCE** 1	Fancy disguise
4	**THEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY.** Your theological work met with great acclaim. You might have discovered a long-lost relic. Or perhaps you wrote a key biography of an important religious figure.	**LEARNING** 2	Collection of books
5	**FORBIDDEN LOVE.** You fell madly in love with the wrong person. Perhaps it was someone from a distinguished family, or perhaps the spouse of a friend. Your love was as passionate as it was doomed. You will never forget it.	**STEALTH** 1 **MANIPULATION** 1	Writing utensils and paper
6	**IN GOD'S SERVICE.** You were bestowed with an important position. You might have been awarded with an important parish or put in charge of a key church or cathedral. You took your calling seriously and poured your soul into the work.	**MANIPULATION** 1 **OBSERVATION** 1	Horse and carriage

VAESEN

CHARACTER SHEET

NAME

AGE/AGE GROUP

ARCHETYPE

MOTIVATION

TRAUMA

DARK SECRET

RELATIONSHIPS

PC 1:

PC 2:

PC 3:

PC 4:

TALENTS

INSIGHTS & DEFECTS

ADVANTAGES

EQUIPMENT

	BONUS

ARMOR

	PROTECTION	AGILITY

WEAPONS

	DAMAGE	RANGE	BONUS

MEMENTO

ATTRIBUTES

Physique	
Precision	
Logic	
Empathy	

RESOURCES

CONDITIONS

PHYSICAL	Exhausted	
	Battered	
	Wounded	
	Broken	
MENTAL	Angry	
	Frightened	
	Hopeless	
	Broken	

SKILLS

Agility (Physique)	
Close Combat (Physique)	
Force (Physique)	
Medicine (Precision)	
Ranged Combat (Precision)	
Stealth (Precision)	
Investigation (Logic)	
Learning (Logic)	
Vigilance (Logic)	
Inspiration (Empathy)	
Manipulation (Empathy)	
Observation (Empathy)	

EXPERIENCE

VAESEN

HEADQUARTERS SHEET

NAME

TYPE OF BUILDING

LOCATION

DEVELOPMENT POINTS

HISTORY

UPGRADES

FACILITIES

FUNCTION

ASSET

DISCOVERED FACILITIES

FUNCTION

ASSET

CONTACTS

FUNCTION

ASSET

PERSONNEL

FUNCTION

ASSET

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In dark forests
and forlorn mountains,
by black lakes and hidden
groves. At your doorstep. In the
shadows, something stirs. Strange
beings. Twisted creatures, lurking
at the edge of vision. Watching.
Waiting. Unseen by most, but
not by you. You see them for
what they really are.
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