

Chapter 3: Characters and Their Origins

Cultures

Each character has one of three cultures. Depending on your origin your culture will be more civilized, **Hearth**, more mobile, **Road**, sea/water faring, **Sailborne**, or survive away from the others, **Wild**.

Culture	CP	Effect	Cost
Hearth	0	Sustain 1 Extra Magic Item	-
Road	0	"Avoid" 1x per event.	-
Sailborne	0	Gain 4 random rare crafting ingredients per event.	-
Wild	0	"Disengage" 3x per event.	-

Hearth

You were raised in a village or city with many neighbors. Your life has been full of trade and barter of skill or time for food or goods.

Bonus -- Sustain 1 extra magic item between events.
Sustains a single item with any number of effects on it.

Road

You were raised on the road. Perhaps in a caravan, or a ship, or just traveling. You may have family and friends around or explore wherever your feet lead you. From facing a wide range of situations you know some tricks.

Bonus -- Gain "Avoid" once per event.

Sailborne

You were raised under the flapping of the sail cloth. Whether surfing the dunes of sand on a low skiff or the deep waters of the world's waters, you feel at home, the wind ever your guide.

Bonus -- Gain 4 random rare crafting ingredients at the start of each event.

Wild

You were raised in the wild, solo, or with a family or tribe. There was no village of houses around you nor a market to visit but you make up for this in survival instinct.

Bonus -- Gain "Disengage" three times per event.

Heritages

You must choose one of these at character creation. Paired with culture this defines what kind of person you are.

Header	Skill	CP	Effect	Cost
Elbaels	<i>Element</i> Alignment	0	Gain one bonus point of the Attribute you choose.	-
Gnome	Obsessed	0	"Purge [Effect] by Heritage" . Death, Maim, Paralyze, Repel, Root, and Stun.	
Greenskins	Survivor	0	Gain one bonus point of Vitality	-
Humans	Resourceful	0	May sustain 1 additional item at the end of each event.	-
Lacuna	Abnormal Mind	0	"Reflect"	
Pacted	Compact	0	"With my pact, By my voice, Grant Extra Defense, Resist"	
Weirkin	Sturdy	0	Gain one bonus point of Armor	-

Elbaels

The Elbael are a long-living heritage tied to the primal elements of the world - fire, water, air, and earth. Those of light and shadow are not uncommon as well. Elbael are drawn to places of elemental power, for reasons even they cannot always explain. When asking a Fire Elbael, for example, why they were drawn to an active volcano during a time of crisis, they may just respond that "it felt right". Those more in tune with magic theory have mentioned, vaguely, something about ley line nexuses; there are rumors that the Elbael can detect them. Elbael have shadowed eyes that are ringed with the color of their element (fire- red, earth- green, water- blue, and air- white, light- yellow, shadow- purple) and pointed ears.

Wild Elbael are drawn most typically to places of great primal power not established on an average map. Road Elbael travel along well-worn paths, carving roads to populated Elbael cities. These cities, home to Hearth Elbael, are rumoured to be located atop great places of primal power. One such city is simply known as Caldera, placed atop a large, sleeping volcano. Water Elbael can often be seen taking to the open seas, their children on these wanderings being Sailborne, learn to trade and locate goods.

Types: Fire (red), Water (blue), Earth (green), Air (white), Light (yellow), Shadow (purple)
 Makeup Req: visible eye markings in your element color (like this: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/506514289312793918/>), elf ears

Bonus: Permanent pool increases by 1 in the base attribute pool of your choice. Does not count against pool totals when purchasing more points.

Gnomes

These genial folk often dwell underground and their primary Culture is Hearth. Most gnomes live in clans with a common focus and personality traits. Many of these clans make their homes in the mountains, but there are some clans, notably the Zvezdaria, who make their home elsewhere. They wear facial gems indicating some of those aspects, noted below.

The Zvezdaria clan, for example, study the stars and live amidst the peaks rather than below ground. Their facial gems are green, blue, and white.

It is said, however, that if a gnome decides to go against family tradition, that they are cast out from their ancestral homes. Therefore, pockets of banished gnomes do exist, working together to assure their mutual survival among the other heritages and cultures of the world.

An example of a banish-clan is the Unified Artisans Cooperative, operating from Greenborough Bend. They trade their goods along the rivers of that area.

Makeup Req: 3 face gems required. Each clan has a focus in a particular trade, and a personality associated with their face gems (like this: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/500744052292213836/>). Families/clans specialize in different trades depending on the gems on their face. No two families/clans specialize in the same trade.

<u>Gem</u>	<u>Personality</u>
Red:	Familial, Loving, Passionate
Pink:	Kind, Open, Positivity
Orange:	Successful, Joyful, Cautious
Yellow:	Friendly, Innocent, Superstitious
Green:	Hopeful, Logical, Healthy
Blue:	Joyful, Harmonious, Peaceful
White:	Pure, Enduring, Zealous

Bonus: At the start of the event and when performing a Full Refresh of your Base Attributes you gain "Purge [Effect] by Heritage". Can be used on Death, Maim, Paralyze, Repel, Root, and Stun.

Greenskins

Goblins are a shamanistic people, with green tinted faces, and large ears. They live in small villages with yurts and other animal skin or mud structures. They form tight-knit Hearth communities with one person in each village held responsible for maintaining the village's knowledge, known as the Elder. The elder has many apprentices, one of which will assume the role of elder at any point should the elder fall ill or die. Goblins chant around fires and follow common superstitions in day to day life. To break an ill omen, it is said that you must carry salt and iron.

Orcs have grey tinted faces and tend to be scarred. They spend their lives on the road in search of battle and foes. They train regularly for battle, stopping only to replenish supplies. They leave their youngest and oldest in towns to grow food and train, using what strength they have to prepare the next army or keep the army going. They tend to fall under the Road and Hearth cultures, but there has been word of a retired Orc Captain who, grieving for the losses he caused, disappeared deep into the wilds and has not been heard of since. He was from the infamous Copper Legion.

Ogres have clear yellow tints to their skin tones mixed in with the contouring, Tusks or makeup tusks and tend towards wearing clothing made of plants, reeds, and animal skins. They spend their lives in the forest and other natural places. They hold a strong respect for the land around them, and despite their size and somewhat frightening appearance, hold to a life of minimal impact and burden to the land and creatures around them. They perform rituals to restore the land around them and help their people thrive in the environs around them, and always seek to right wrongs that outsiders have committed against nature. Ogres tend to favor the Wild, but they can be at home on the Road or in a quiet Hearth life, so long as they are surrounded by nature in some way.

Note: as with all makeup heritages you must ensure they can be recognized at a medium distance and there is no risk of mistaking them for a human with that real world skin tone or vica versa. When it doubt err on the side of politeness and inclusivity. Staff will work with you to craft a backstory that meets your needs and lets you use a safe makeup pattern.

There is a rumor that in the past, all greenskins looked the same, but most greenskins claim that tale comes from a traveler who did not recognize a birth defect when they met three green brothers. One was a goblin, one an orc, and one an ogre. All of them claimed to have the same mother and argued constantly about their father.

Types: Orcs (grey), Goblins (green), Ogres (yellow)

Makeup Req: green/grey/yellow skin dependent on choice. Contouring that evokes the feel of the skin tone may be acceptable. (Like this: <https://bit.ly/2qUN5Dr>, or this: <https://bit.ly/2KhMvsa>, <https://bit.ly/2ToTeVo>, <https://bit.ly/2KkbGuk>)

Bonus: Permanent 1 Vitality increase.

Humans

Willful and determined, humans are the most numerous of the heritages. They tend to be highly adaptable and creative and form communities, though they themselves vary within them. Their personality and disposition vary greatly, so it's a mixed bag on who you'll meet. The humans, like all the mortal heritages, are capable of great empathy and great cruelty.

A Human of the Wild can be a hermit, living apart from others, or of a clan that reveres natural things banding together in the wilds of the world. A Human of the Road could be a traveling musician or salesman, and find value in open sky and familiar (or not) paths. A Human of the Hearth often enjoys being surrounded by other people, in communities large or small, and doesn't take to traveling often. **Sailborne humans often travel the seas as explorers, fisherfolk, merchants, and some may even turn to piracy to accomplish their goals.**

Makeup Req: None

Bonus: You may sustain 1 additional item at the end of each event.

Sustains a single item with any number of effects on it.

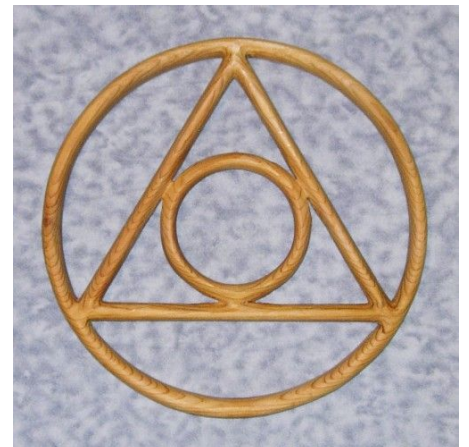
Lacuna

They say the first Lacuna was formed when a child wished so strongly for a playmate that their mind created a physical manifestation of their wish. All this manifestation wanted was to play; enjoyment was its singular focus. As the years turned and the child grew older, this manifestation stayed the same.

Lacuna do not often form communities, being very singularly-driven beings. They will, however, take on the culture that best suits their needs in achieving their goals. For example, there is a sea captain, a Sailborne, rumoured to be a Lacuna searching for the lost sword of the deity of War. That sword is rumoured to grant its wielder power over nature. This captain searches without cessation; who knows if the sword truly exists..?

A Lacuna is a strong thought given form. They can be a driving force for revenge against a particular person. They can be a never-ending quest for the magic of runes. Because of their one-track minds and singular focus, their ability to emote is limited by what they discover in the world around them. They have no memories of who they once were or, rather, whose thoughts they were. ((Author's Note: Playing a Lacuna is NOT an opportunity to play with mental illness. Please see "Safety and -isms", "Inclusivity", and "Code of Conduct" .))

Makeup Req: This alchemical symbol, visible. ----->



Bonus: Once per event “Reflect” any packet, missile, or melee attack.

Pacted

The Pacted are a mixed heritage that has been twisted by the great power within them. Power granted by beings whose motives are unknown. These powers, a conduit for greatness which all Pacted share, make them a unique heritage.

There are four types of Pact known- the Willful, the Paragon, the Guide, and the Burdened- and each of them have their own purpose in the pattern of the world. People of all heritages are drawn to or revile these Pacted, whose bond with higher powers makes them mysterious and has altered their forms from their original states. Some people are born Pacted and they appear across every other heritage, always looking the same. These pacts are not just linked in their lifetimes. A family member or creator, for example, could have made the pact with the power from which their strength is drawn. Or, more commonly, they could have made the Pact themselves and given up who they were and become one of the Pacted.

Sometimes becoming Pacted is hereditary and sometimes Pacted will bear children of their original heritage. In either case, they care for their children as any other would, acknowledging that their choices have had a lasting impact on the lives of everyone around them.

Pacted of the Willful have horns upon their brow, and some even have fur covered legs. Pacted of the Paragon have golden eyes and cheekbones and some even have wings. Pacted of the Guide have orange eyes and horns and some even have tails. Pacted of the Burdened are always life created from inanimate objects, but they always have a humanoid form to them.

The Pact of the Willful

The Pact of the Willful focuses primarily on the existence of free will, the pact made was to ensure themselves and others will not be subjugated by another’s will, whether that subjugation helps or hinders the one subjugated. One could find themselves as a champion for the enslaved and downtrodden, or the one who ends what little tie holds a person to sanity. They come from a culture that fears the mental subjugation of all free minds in the world. They move in small groups to keep from drawing attention to their work in freeing others. They are often self reliant in nature and have a strong leaning towards crafting, but they are also heavily focused on protecting their communal groups. Often, once they establish a home, they will set up their community with guards and watch and focus on ensuring none can entrap their minds. Their Pact makes horns grow from their head, a witness to their stubbornness and refusal to submit to the will of any being, both a warning, and a promise.

The Pact of the Paragon

The Pact of the Paragon focuses primarily on mastery of the self, the pact made was to be in service to others, whether others wish it or not. One could find themselves as a bastion against all evil, or creating opportunities for themselves through being the “best” at a chosen craft. They are very self-assured and motivated, always pushing themselves forward to achieve their goals, possibly even at the expense of others desires. Their Pact makes their form shimmer around the eyes in gold, and they may have iridescent wings, often causing others to stare at them in adoration and ignore the effects of what they do.

The Pact of the Guide

The Pact of the Guide focuses primarily on imposing their will on others, the pact made was to touch the world in a broad manner, sacrificing the self for the benefit of the many. A Guide may have made a pact in order to find a cure to save a village from a plague, or may be the only one who knows the cure. They focus on leading others by persuasion and example and seek to have a lasting legacy for the benefit of others. Their Pact makes their form glow orange or shrouded in black around the eyes, they grow horns on their heads, and they may have tails, often causing others to look away from them, and towards the work they do.

The Pact of the Burdened

The Pact of the Burdened is unique in that their creator’s will was imposed upon them to bring them to life. They could be constructs of wood, porcelain, iron, or stone, crafted with loving care. Many of these, when discovered to be living, have been abandoned, but others were specifically brought about by their masters and Burdened with intelligent thought. Their Pact makes their form appear as man-made constructions in the shape of their creators (dolls, armour, scarecrows, etc.).

Makeup Req:

Willful: Horns on head, no marks on face, may include fuzzy legs.

Paragon: Gold around eyes and cheekbones, may include wings.

Guide: Horns on head and orange or black around eyes and on cheekbones but not your whole face, may include a tail.

Burdened: Must look artificial (example- scarecrow, living armour, bone golem).

Bonus: Once per event “With my pact, By my voice, Grant Extra Defense, Resist”

Weirkin

Weirkin, over all, are plants or animals uplifted to a state of intelligent thought. They have anthropomorphic features that become more prominent after dark, unique to one another and by subspecies. They are a hardy people, and living in this naturalistic way has given the Weirkin tougher skin, strong enough to protect them in dire need. Their strength is also greater than their former selves', a product of their harsh upbringing in the wilds. Rumor is that Weirkin used to be the animals and plants they look similar to before something uplifted them and made them like the other heritages.

Some plant Weirkin, such as the Banyan Weirkin, live together in swampy woods, clustered together and living life off the land; these Banyans live as a Wild culture, avoiding building homes. Others run through the plains chasing food and seasons, like the Zebra Weirkin of the Humming Reeds; they are similar to those of the Road, migrating and moving about over establishing a single home. Others still live in cities with other Weirkin taking advantage of each others' particular skills to live the best life they can, often to great prosperity or, at the least, joy. These Weirkin of the Hearth find great company in one another and their neighbors. An example of Sailborne Weirkin is found in the crew of the Serrated Dreadnaught- a group of shark and manta weirkin have taken to piracy, knowing the waters better than anyone.

Makeup Req: Day: minor flora/fauna features. Night: full flora/fauna features.
Bonus: Permanent 1 Armor increase.

Importing Previous Characters

Existing characters either from Kaurath or places linked to it in the past or visitors from other worlds who play our game will find their bodies adjusting to the power and magics of the new world. Similarly their items of power and any exotic pieces of equipment they are carrying may be affected by the new world.

The process of conversion is discussed in more detail in the companion document on **Importing Existing Characters.**

Remember you always have the choice to keep your existing character on hold and play a new character while getting a feel for the world, then attempt the conversion, possibly with the bonus of points earned by the new character but Banked to be spent on the conversion.

Chapter 3b: Homelands

The **High Kingdom of Kaurath** is a royal union of twelve realms including the original Kingdom of Kaurath and has spent half its millennium of existence fighting a (sort of civil) war with the undead Kingdom of the Barrowheart, which was born in curse and misunderstanding (and the hidden hand of the ancient enemy Zoradieth). That war is over, the ancient curse that caused it now abated, though the consequences and ill feelings of five centuries linger. In a great ritual Kaurath fled an unstoppable enemy across the multiverse to a new home on a new world, Erúmír. The flux of the magics involved changed people, the land itself, and the way magic worked.

The High Kingdom is divided into five Royal Provinces. Within each province knights of the realm deal with problems and magistrates administer justice and handle many simple mundane matters. Each province has a chief knight, called the Skald, who works with the Royal Peer, handles issues for Humans in that province, and acts as liaison with the other kingdoms in the province and with the Guilds and the Viisas Talos (Houses of the Wise)

Kaurath, while used as the name for the entire region, is most properly the human monarchy, which holds the High Kingship among the Twelve Kingdoms. Humans are found everywhere in the twelve kingdoms and the Barrowheart but are rare in the Plains of Morathel. They may have any Culture but Hearth is most common in settled areas.

Innos Halal, an elven kingdom in central Haltia east of the Lake, is ruled by the Haran Quinar and Harani Ruthiel. It is heavily forested, ancient, and rich in lore and skill. Its people are mostly Earth Elbaels and Forestfolks (human heritage).

The **Gythai** are a reptilian **Magocracy** in the south of Haltia, ruled by the Kawei and a council of clan leaders. It is mostly water and swampland with dry land reserved for purposes that require it, such as trade and libraries. They engage in aquaculture of all sorts and trade up and down the river. They are mostly Hearth but trader culture is often present.

Seannaught in the north (Western Kasember near the Lake) and **Briar Hollow** (Southern Kasember along the river) in the south are similar agrarian realms of Hillfolk and Riverfolk. They are human with hearth and sailborne cultures common. Formerly a unique heritage of slightly shorter stature they are still more often marked by unibrows, mutton chops, and hair on the backs of hands and feet, but are now part of the melange that is human. The realms are ruled by the Grand Foreman or Grand Sheriff, respectively, who are elected for a seven-year term by the constituent regions of the realms. The Major merchant houses are based in these realms so most script is issued against deposits of gold and silver in their banks. The realms are also known for their beer and pies.

The **Vaeltaa** are a people who are often found traveling along the roads and rivers throughout Kaurath. Because a single voice was required to speak with the High King in council during the Barrowheart War they have chosen a leader as King of the Vaeltaa to coordinate the clans. That may change now that the long war is over. They are respected for their prowess and efficiency and often supply members of the royal guard. Most have a Human heritage with a Road culture.

The **Vorlonal** are a union of tribes who have established a kingdom with a fixed capital and a unified rule. They live, herd, and farm in Harcos to the east of the Dragonspine Mountains but as part of the High Kingdom they provided a strong backbone of the army fighting the Barrowheart during much of the 500-year long war. They are known to clash with the **Vanastagg**, the totemic and nomadic tribes, who view settlements as a betrayal of their way of life and tribe's spirit and emblem. Most have a Human heritage with a Town (Vorlonal) or Wild (Vanastagg) culture. Some became Weirkin of a form that matched the tribe's traditional emblem.

The **Razioch** are the Orcs native to Kaurath. They have a martial culture after 500 years of war with the Barrowheart and its minions and continually fighting with the monsters that used to spawn in the Plains of Morathel. They are deeply tied to the land of Kaurath and take pride in being its defenders both in the past and

recently (since Bulzaric won their allegiance for the kingdom while he was a Prince.) They have a Greenskin heritage with various cultures, mostly Hearth.

The **Ograth** are the Ogres native to Kaurath and occupy the forests in the south and south west of Kaurath. They have a somewhat mystical culture, which might have been peaceful save for constant conflicts with the Troll Masters of the Dubhember Peaks and the Razioch. They have a Greenskin heritage with various cultures, mostly Wild and Road.

The newly peaceful **Barrowheart** occupies a large area to the west of **Haltia** through and past the mountains as was recently “conquered” despite being an ally to become the 10th kingdom. They are a mixture of Human and Weirkin and other Heritages, their common factor is that they are or were undead or related groups. Most were a hearth culture during the war although things are changing now that pressure has ended and they have joined the High Kingdom. Somewhere under the Duhember Peaks on the border of the Barrowheart lies the realm of the Dubhember, once Kaurath’s sworn but secret enemies, now neutral or allies, a multi-heritage realm, home to Shadow Elbael and other underground dwelling groups such as Batkin..

The new realms, **Malmiheim** (beneath **Kasember**) and **Āmurs Akmens** (beneath **Haltia**) were formed by those (mostly Clan Iron and Clan Copper respectively) fleeing unrest in Kulta Kerros, actively digging tunnels, and asserting sovereignty by the ancient law of their folks over those diggings. They swore fealty to the High King and joined the High Kingdom as the 11th and 12th kingdoms. Many are now Gnomes and the rest Mountainfolks (humans) and Hearth is the normal culture.

Provinces

The province of **Haltia** lies in the west of the High Kingdom between the two great rivers flowing from the Lake of Ice and from the Dragonspine Mountains. It is heavily forested and produces a wide range of timber, wood products, fruits and vegetables. The current capital, **Kaurath City**, lies within its borders just down the Royal Road from the Gatetown of **Celtios** where many Gathers have taken place. It is the province with the longest border with the Barrowheart. Much of the Royal Road, and the Gatetowns spaced all along it, which saw combat in the war, lie in Haltia on the border or separated from it by Lake Haltia and its associated river.

The province of **Kasember** lies north and west of the Dragonspine Mountains and the river connecting them to Haltia. It is primarily plains and a source of much of the grain that can be forced from the rock soil of Kaurath. Its large size permits it to support the same population as the denser but richer lands of Haltia. The plains (and forests) of **Rensvarvas** lies to the north and west and the ‘Eastern’ mountains mark the north east edge of Kasember. Passes have been discovered leading to new lands north. Somewhere under Kasember is a city of Shadow-aligned Elbael, Spiderkin and related creatures. Little is known of them.

The province of **Harcos** lies east of the Dragonspine Mountains. It is primarily plains and a major source of meat as much of the land is occupied by herding barbarian tribes. The rich grasslands support numerous clans of Barbarian’s, many of which are part of the Vorlonal Kingdom, as well as towns and trading posts. The only city Vahnakard is the capital of Vorlonal. The **Keskaur forest** is home to a closed foreign kingdom of elves. It lies against the Kalivan Mountains and marks the eastern border of the 12 Kingdoms.

The province of The **Plains of Morathel** lies south of the Dragonspine Mountains. It is a land of wondrous profusions of growth and creatures never seen elsewhere. It was once infested with monsters and echoes of the past and dangers, resisting all efforts to colonize or improve. Since the Great Ritual it is an even stronger source of rare herbs, exotic plants, strange beasts, and things which die there no longer rise as undead. This is where one can find most of the Razioch and the Ograth.

Nearby Realms

South of the Plains one finds the Southern Waste. Most of Kaurath's external trade used to flow south down the Royal Road to the South end, the great fortified gate called the Etelamuuri, and across the Southern Wastes to the kingdoms there. Now what lies beyond the wastes is unknown.

Other realms are known to lie beyond the mighty mountains to the north east and west but there were few passes and little trade there. We now know of two, the **Beyzor Imperium** and the mysterious **Ascendancy**, but have seen hints there may be more beyond.

There are many unincorporated barbarian tribes throughout **Kaurath**, especially in the north and east. Most are reasonable if fierce. Some are ferocious beyond measure.

The elven kingdom of the **Keskaurani** lies in the Keskaur Forest against the **Kalivan Mountains** in the east. They are Gnomes and Elbaels of many flavors and Hearth and Wild cultures. Those who enter their lands uninvited are not normally seen again.

The mysterious **Dubhember** reside under the **Dubhember Peaks** and had been rarely seen or at least noticed even before the effort to exterminate them at the end of the war against Zoradieth. Adventurers tried to exterminate them and adventurers rescued them from extermination. They now appear as Shadow Elbael with a Hearth Culture but much of their society remains closed to outsiders.

Two independent kingdoms are found to the north and south of the Barrowheart, **Kulta Kerros** and **Eltor Szakal** respectively. Many of these became Gnomes during the move to Erúmír, most of the rest became Mountainfolk (Human heritage known for elaborate beards) and almost all are Hearth culture.

There are also a fair number of the unaffiliated **Ahkerá** (who were the same people) working individually throughout the High Kingdom. They are more likely to be Road culture or to have adopted the local ways.

North of Kasember are Pacted and the nomadic Ferrishyn of the land of **Rensvarvas**. They have been wracked by war for several years.

The mountain borders and the central Dragonspine Mountains are lightly populated, and the locals do not necessarily give allegiance to the High Kingdom in any useful sense.

Small groups of other people have migrated to Kaurath (such as the underground town of Webspire who seem to be Shadow Elbael with a Hearth culture) but the details of how they survived the transitions are often not yet well known.