

CHAPTER TWO

Heroes of Shaintar

The Immortal Legends of Shaintar are its heroes, and this chapter gives you all you need to create just such a hero for yourself. What kind of legend he leaves behind is another matter...

THE PATHS OF HEROES

Heroes in Shaintar come from all walks of life. What follows are some possible backgrounds, professions, or other starting places that a hero might come from. They are meant to inspire ideas, and to give you a sense of where heroes might come from in the lands of Shaintar.

Grayson's Grey Rangers. They defend the wilder parts of the Southern Kingdoms, the lands surrounded by Galea, Olara, the Malakar Dominion, the Elvish Nation, and the Freelands. Hundreds of city-states, independent duchies, and bandit kingdoms dot the lands, and the only source of law and protection many know is that administered by the brave and stalwart Rangers. Subsidized by the greater kingdoms (as a means of stabilizing the region), the Rangers are populated by all manners of servitors – folks of armed skill, those of mystical prowess, and some who simply have no place else to go and need a new start in life.

They make no bones about screening their ranks. Anyone can join who is willing to serve and has some capacity to do so, but those of dark impulses and intentions will not

be taken. The Rangers make ample use of the magical talents of priests and druids to sense Darkness or Flame in the souls of those who seek to join, and on more than one occasion they've even employed the more direct powers of adepts to know a man's mind before letting him sign on.

AN EXCELLENT PLACE TO START

This is an excellent "default" background for a character, because any other kind of background can be tied into it very easily. In fact, the campaign that is begun in this book is predicated on the fact that the characters are Rangers.

Grayson's Grey Rangers is a perfect tool for getting together diverse characters and giving them a reason to be together. That is, in fact, why I created them. The Rangers mix all types together, and they exist in an area that is fraught with danger and in need of heroes. The headquarters of the Rangers is in a location central to the Southern Kingdoms, and Rangers have a good reason to go just about anywhere.

Of course, players don't mind having characters that have some respect and authority right at the start, either. The charter of the Rangers is such that, in most towns and civilized areas of the Wildlands, they are recognized as legal authorities as well as armed protectors. In the wild, they are the only law that exists. Even outside of what is considered the Wildlands, the Rangers are treated with respect and acknowledgement of their role, usually treated

continued...

GM to GM as the equivalent of visiting soldiers of rank and distinction (and high-ranking or experienced Rangers are often treated as knights).

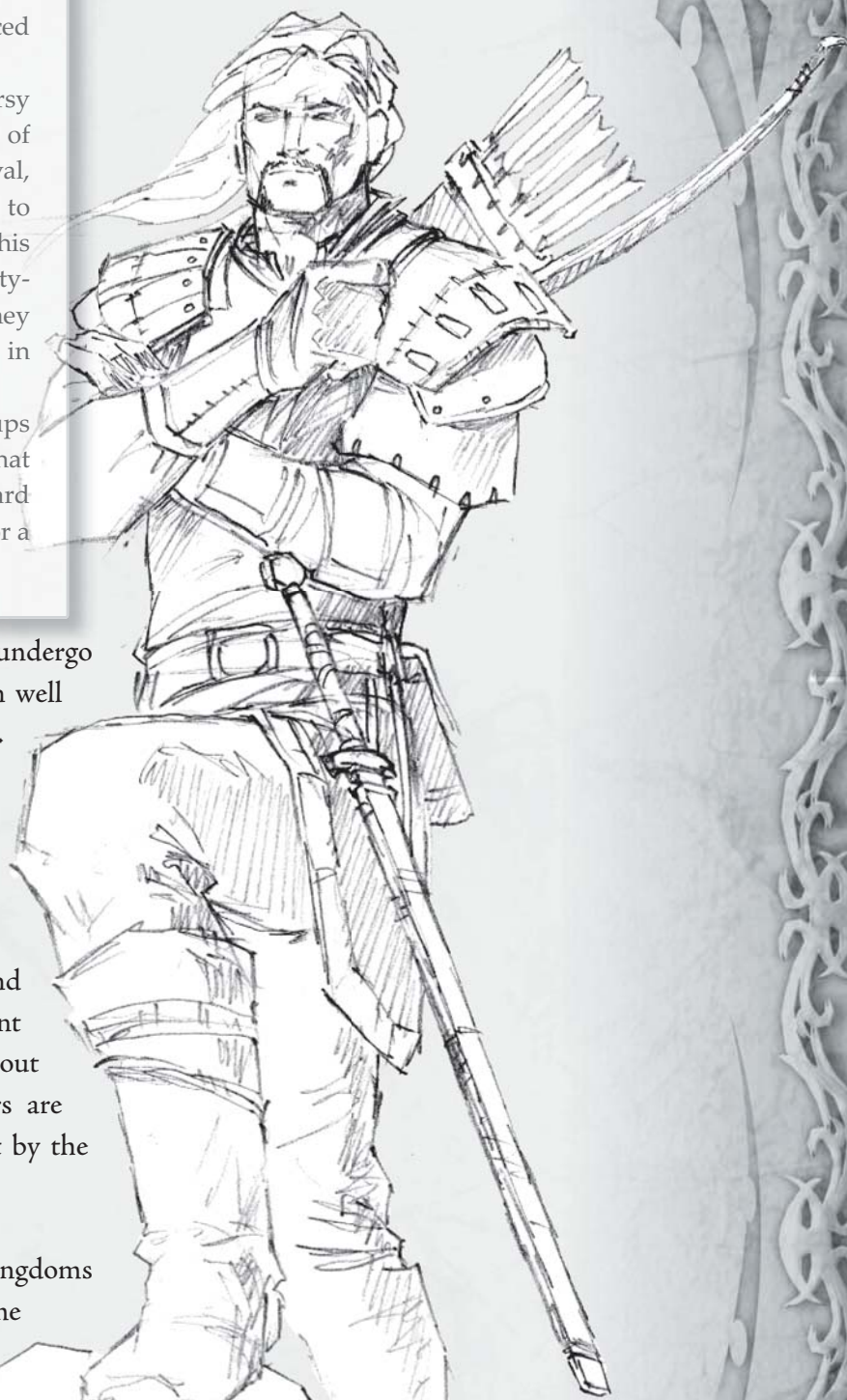
Rangers don't *have* to be woodsy-outdoorsy types; many aren't, in fact. However, the bulk of the rank-and-file are warriors skilled in survival, stealth, observation, and tracking. They tend to favor lighter armor, light weapons, and bows. This doesn't mean a heavily armored knight or city-bred sorcerer has no place in the Rangers, but they will stand out and tend to be used differently in some missions.


For this reason, most player character groups will tend to represent the "oddball" squads that sometimes get put together for non-standard Ranger missions... which is absolutely *perfect* for a good Shaintar campaign!

Those who become Rangers will undergo training that enables them to function well in outdoor settings and on long patrols. Characters who have been Rangers for a time will have some ability in Survival, and will likely have training in areas like Tracking, Healing, and Stealth.

As an interesting note (and something many players might want to work with), at any given time about 15-20% of the ranks of the Rangers are populated by soldiers and others sent by the supporting nations.

Knights. In the Southern Kingdoms (where most characters will likely come from), there are two nations that support orders of knights – Galea and Olara. In Galea, it normally requires noble blood to ascend





knighthood, though truly heroic service to the kingdom can result in being knighted. In Olara, it is far more common to earn knighthood through service, though one must truly serve in many military encounters with great distinction to do so.

If one is a knight in Galea, he is a member of one of three orders – the **Order of the Silver Unicorn**, the **Knights of the Golden Torch**, or the **Gleaming Shields**. More about these orders can be found later in this book; what follows are distinctions in the simplest terms. The Silver Unicorn knights are the rarest and most respected, having earned the role through great service (and sacrifice) to all of the Southern Kingdoms. No character is going to begin the game as one of these. The Gleaming Shields are the king's personal guard; as such, it is incredibly rare for one to be found outside of the capitol of Galadrea unless he is escorting the king (and, thus, they do not make for good player characters). The Knights of the Golden Torch, however, are very much charged with going out into the world and serving it to the best of their ability, while at the same time learning as much about it as they can. They are the classic warrior-scholars, and can be found wherever there is trouble and a mystery to uncover.

In Olara, things are

both more complex and simpler. Knights owe their allegiance to the noble house that knighted them (though, of course, they owe fealty to the King first). There are military orders (described later) to which an Olaran knight may belong, but his first duty will always be to his house. Furthermore, there are no “born” knights in Olara; a warrior cannot be knighted until they have more than a few battles under their belt. As such, almost no starting character will be able to be a knight of Olara.

It is *possible* to be a knight of some tiny nation within the bounds of the Wildlands. However, how far such a title will get you is by no means clear or guaranteed. Such “hedge knights” tend to be largely ignored outside of their home territories.

The only remaining path to knighthood is through the Church of Light (described just a little later in this section). Paladins of Light are considered knights in any country that recognizes the Church.

Regardless of background, knights are defined by how they live in the world. As such, a knight will almost certainly have a Code of Honor. Most are Heroic, or at least Loyal, and many have sworn some form of Vow. Knights know how to Ride, or they are no real knight. Of course, Fighting skill is highly important, though many knights are also quite adept at Persuasion. Though most knights are of Noble blood, a good enough back story may negate the need for this Edge.

Soldiers. The man-at-arms. The ex-mercenary. The farm boy called to war. The former guard of nobles or merchants. All men and women trained at arms and combat,

now looking for a way to parley their talents and experience to some means of living (and possibly a purpose).

Soldiers can come from anywhere in Shaintar, literally. A soldier may have served in the army of a nation, or in the garrison of a city-state, or as a mercenary guarding caravans. For beginning (Novice-ranked) characters, it is highly likely they had little experience before finding themselves in their current situation. They did, however, get training, and they have an understanding of what it means to serve alongside others for a purpose.

Soldiers will, of course, have training in Fighting, and many will also be decent at Shooting as well. Soldiers often know how to Ride, and a soldier with any campaigning experience is likely to know something about Survival and Healing.

Druids. Followers of the Four Paths can be found all over Shaintar, doing the work of the Ascended and promoting Life as they can. Many druids prefer the peaceful approach of teachers, guides, and nurturers, serving communities and caretaking the natural world of their immediate surroundings. Some, however, have taken up the causes of opposing Darkness and Flame, and consider themselves guardians of Shaintar and soldiers in service to the Ascended.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of druids come from the Southern Kingdoms, where reverence for the Ascended is primary. More than half receive their training at Mindoth's Tower, but a still very large percentage of them achieve a basic understanding of their connections to Life quite on their own. These folks usually find a druid somewhere along the

way to receive further training.

In more primal
cultures, where
the formal

Tower in the wake of the Bloody Iron Hand,
they formed the city-state of Archanaya
in the lands between the Kingdom of
Galea and the

teachings and rituals of the
druids are unknown,
such practitioners are
considered shamans. Many
of the northern Goblins
gather that still honor the
Ascended have shamans, as do
the barbarian tribes of the very
far north.

Anyone channeling the
gifts of Life will have a Vow
regarding their commitment to
the Ascended, and most tend to
be Heroic and Loyal as well. Not
a few druids are Pacifists (though
most, realizing the need to fight
monsters of Flame and Darkness,
take only the Minor level). Druids
will have a strong focus on their
Spirit and their Channeling skill,
and many have the Knowledge
(Cosmology) skill.

Priests. Though unable to establish
themselves in the lands of Camon
as they originally intended, the
followers of Archanon's new church,
the Church of Light, have been growing
in numbers and strength of purpose.
Aided by the druids of Mindoth's

Freelands,
and many have
flocked to their
temples and
schools over the
last century.

Now shrines
and even full-blown
churches are starting
to appear elsewhere
throughout Shaintar, as the
core leadership has begun
sending out missionaries
and evangelists throughout
the Southern Kingdoms. The
followers of the Light are
not out to change the
beliefs or anyone,
or to replace
existing

structures (at least, not most of them; a few have admittedly fanatical goals that the Church is trying to curtail). Instead, they want to supplement the support systems of the communities they enter, as well as provide guidance, sanctuary, and protection where it otherwise does not exist. Granted, they want very much for people to embrace the Light as a way of living, though most preach the faith as being compatible with honoring the Ascended.

Many young priests and paladins find themselves a part of this effort, delving into new areas and communities to serve in the best way they can. In that the Church of Light promotes justice, guardianship, and opposition to Darkness and Flame, many paladins and militant priests are sent where such goals are best put to the test.

The differences between a priest and a paladin of Light are mainly in title and long-term goals; a priest seeks, ultimately, to serve somewhere in the hierarchy of the Church, while a paladin seeks no other service than to defend the Church and innocent people from the forces of Darkness, Flame, and the basic evils of Man. Some few servants of Light actually attain status as both priest and paladin, and these dedicated souls are greatly treasured by the Church.

Servants of Light will have a Vow regarding their commitment to Archanon and the Church, and most will be Heroic and Loyal. Paladins often have a Code of Honor. Knowledge skills in Cosmology, History, and even Politics are considered good choices for priests, while Paladins are obviously trained in Fighting and related skills (and most will know a lot about Riding). Persuasion is also highly valued for such followers.

Adepts. Uncommon and often misunderstood, adepts have a difficult road to travel in Shaintar. While their skills and powers are clearly valuable to the Southern Kingdoms, those same skills and powers are greatly feared and often kept at arm's length (or greater).

The talent to manipulate powers of the mind and body is inherent; one is either born with it or not. As such, most adepts manifest some strange ability over the course of simply living their lives, and then they are faced with the task of trying to figure out how to control it. In more civilized regions, the various orders and training citadels of adepts are known of, and such a person will usually seek them out. Otherwise, he will have to figure out how to use his new powers on his own, or hope that a traveling adept finds him and teaches him.

Adepts who are formally trained somewhere in the Southern Kingdoms are usually encouraged to find ways to use their abilities for a greater purpose, in service to the kingdoms and people. The Warrior-Adepts of the Jade Flame are an excellent example of this approach, and their entire history has been about changing the perceptions of the populace at large towards adepts. The Order of the Azure Citadel is another such group.

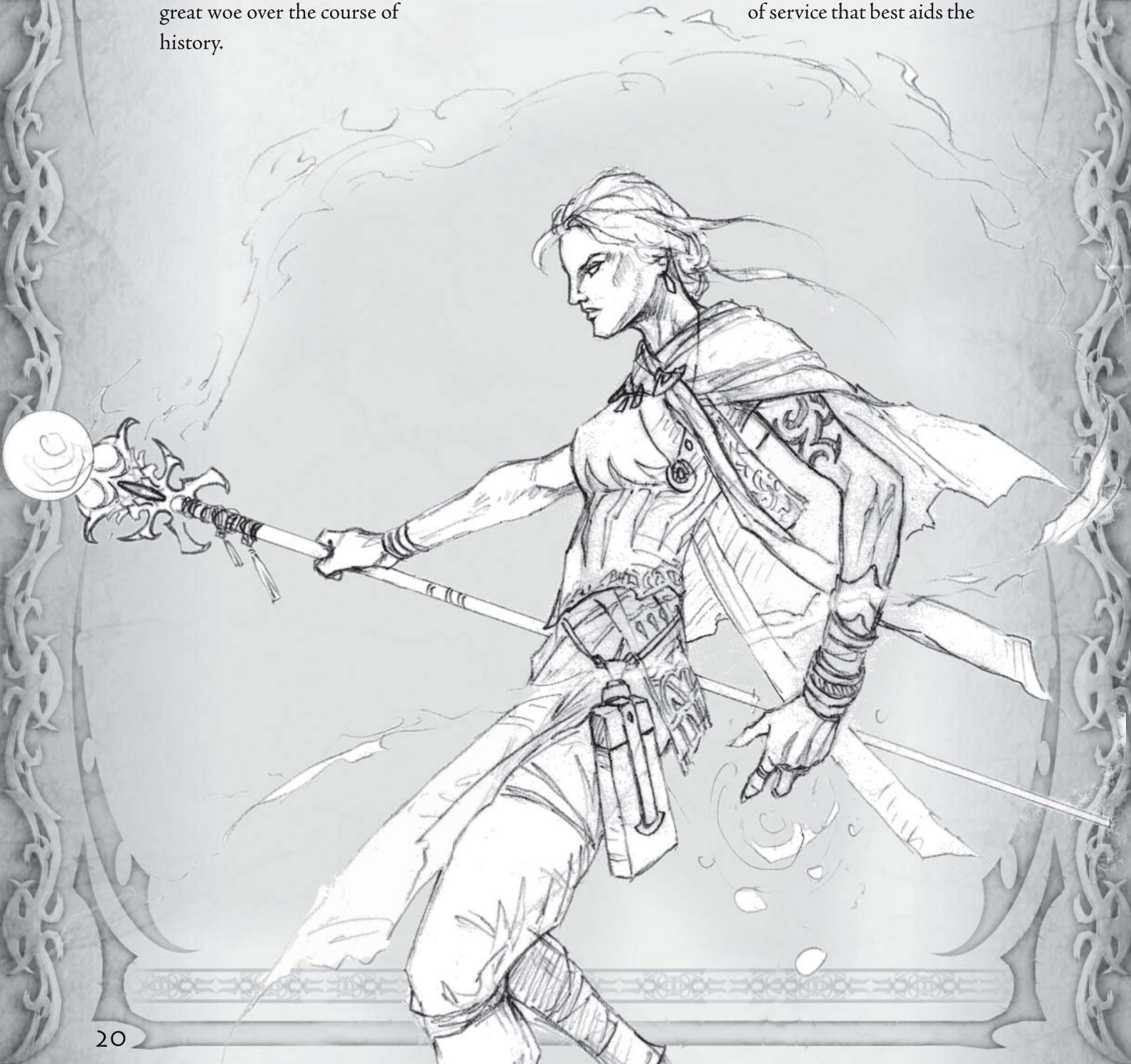
Adepts will have a strong focus on their Spirit, and almost as strong towards their Smarts. Not surprisingly, many adepts are skilled in Persuasion and Intimidation, happy to accomplish their goals through force of personality without resorting to their powers. Of course, they will also have a strong emphasis on their skill with The Way. Many adepts, trained in the citadels, will have a Vow of some kind, or at least be Heroic in their mentality. The nature of their powers, however, causes many adepts to develop strange behavioral

Quirks and other psychological Hindrances.

Sorcerers. Shapers of destiny and architects of the future – this is what many think of the practitioners of the eldritch arts. Of course, this is not always thought of as a positive thing, for as many who practice sorcery for the common good as there may be, there have been plenty such masters who have done so for great woe over the course of history.

The ability to see the Aether and make it respond to thought and will is inherent, and many begin their path as a sorcerer quite on their own. True mastery, however, comes only when one receives the formal training of a Mage, which almost all sorcerers seek out as soon as they are able.

Like adepts, formally-trained sorcerers are often encouraged to find a form of service that best aids the



common good, though the eldritch academies are less doctrinal about such matters than the citadels. Most sorcerers (especially those who achieve the status of Mage) find gainful employment within large merchant houses or under the banner of a nation, often enjoying a life of relative luxury for moderate effort. Quite a few, however, seek out even greater knowledge and understanding by exploring the world around them, and most of those who do come to understand that their gifts should be put in service against the forces that would destroy what they know.

Sorcerers will have a high Smarts score, and usually a very high Spirit as well. With a primary emphasis on their Sorcery skill and their powers, most sorcerers have little left to put towards other pursuits beyond Knowledge, but very often it is an emphasis on many Knowledge skills that proves the greatest worth of a sorcerer to companions. The Curious Hindrance is very common among sorcerers, as well.

Alchemists. Delvers of the secret places and students of the properties of all things, alchemists are those individuals driven to create wondrous concoctions and items from the gifts the world provides. The early days of any practicing alchemist are spent in deep study and practice, and most translate that to a business in one of the many towns or cities where their trade can net them a fine living.

Some, however, are called to the road, where their talents and skills can serve other purposes. With complex kits crammed into wooden satchels or backpacks, these hardy individuals go looking for the strange elements they need to make the most wondrous potions

and potent items of their trade.

Alchemists pretty much always have a decent Smarts score, as well as a strong Alchemy rating and lots of Knowledge skills. Like sorcerers, they are often quite Curious. Some, knowing the value of their efforts, can be a little Greedy at times, as well.

Rogues. Thieves. Burglars. Highwaymen. Spies. Pickpockets and néer-do-wells. More than a few such men and women have gone on to have grand careers as heroes, at some point in their lives choosing to use their talents and experience for a cause greater than that of filling their pockets or achieving personal power.

Nations are constantly at odds with other nations, even when there is no war declared. As such, someone with skills in stealth and subterfuge may well find himself in service to one king or another, or possibly a powerful merchant. Others coming from a rogue's background may well have simply had a ban run of luck, or been born in the worst part of town. What they do is done to survive, and becoming good at it was the only way to survive for any time at all.

A character with a roguish set of skills could be literally from anywhere, though the vast majority will be from more urbanized settings. One might even have been a pirate at some time, calling the sea his home and every port along the Southern Coasts his stomping grounds.

Rogues have high Agility ratings, and are skilled in Stealth, Lockpicking, Climbing, Notice, and Streetwise. Many are also good at Investigation and Persuasion (the latter primarily to deal with getting past guards or

out of trouble). Most rogues will have a bit of a Greedy nature, and many are Wanted by someone.

Ex-Slaves. It is a sad truth that there are parts of Shaintar where slavery is very much a normal part of society. The Kal-a-Nar Empire uses slaves for all the usual reasons, as well as to fight in their Blood Pits. In Shaya'Nor, slaves are cattle as much as anything, feeding the appetites of vampires, werewolves, and others. Some of the Desert Princes still maintains slaves to work their mines and otherwise maintain their lavish lifestyles. While slaves in the Malakar Dominion probably enjoy the best life that any yoked into another's service might ask for, still are they are denied freedom and forced to work.

Escaping the bonds of servitude is a powerful motivation, and those who manage it are often strong beyond their years and experience. Very often, an ex-slave will simply look for a place to be free and at peace, happily working as a laborer or farmer in exchange for being allowed to live as they choose. Some, however, have too much vengeance in their hearts, or else a deep and abiding need to see that others like them are freed as well. Such men and women will seek out groups of warriors who can help them towards such goals.

Finally, some ex-slaves simply don't know what to do with themselves. These folks will gravitate towards anyone who shows them some kindness and respect, and often they will take up the cause of anyone who calls them friend.

Former slaves will often have notable Strength and Vigor, and those who were forced

to fight for a living will be skilled in those ways. Having very limited experiences with life, ex-slaves will often be Clueless, and may have such psychological issues as being Mean, Vengeful, or Stubborn. Those who were worked to hard or fought too many difficult battles may have physical Hindrances as well.

DAMAGED CHARACTERS

This is not a regular occurrence in my games, but everyone once in a while a player can convince me to let them play someone with a little more experience under their belt. However, rather than give them straight-up experience points, I will instead let them take another Hindrance. This lets them get some added skills or such, but at the same time it represents that the character is a bit more "damaged" than most at the stage they are at. This option tends to make more sense with a character coming from an ex-slave (or similarly tragic) background.

Common Folk. Often, the most compelling heroes are those that come from normal, everyday backgrounds and somehow overcome impossible odds to save the day. The farmer, the laborer, the bookkeeper, the apprentice carpenter – each one of these might have some hidden spark that only needs one moment of destiny to fan into flames.

Such a character can come from literally anywhere, with only the imagination to limit your choices.

One trick to playing a character with a common (read: inexperienced and untrained) background is to hold over points from initial character creation. The Game Master can then permit such a character to spend them after an initial encounter or traumatic experience,

showing a rapid adaptation and ability to learn under fire. In order to better help them survive such an experience, the GM might let them have a couple of extra Bennies to start with (once used, they are gone, though, and these Bennies can **not** be used to roll for Experience).

GM to GM

STARTING AHEAD OF THE GAME

I always start the heroes of my games with a few experience points. "Right off the farm" is hard to pull off well, and most characters in other media - films, television, comics, and novels - actually have either some skill or raw talent over and above the average person to get by early on in their careers.

Granted, in *Savage Worlds*, even brand new Novice characters have a distinct edge in that they are Wild Cards. There's nothing wrong with starting a Shaintar-based campaign with 0 XP characters. I guess I just like giving new players a few more "toys" to play with. Starting character with 10 Experience Points, which is my standard, means they are still Novices, but they get a couple of added Edges, or a few more points in their Skills, or an Attribute raise to play with.

Since it is likely you are showing the SW rules to at least some of your players for the first time, I think it's valuable to get them a little more excited by saying "and now you have 10 Experience Points added to your character, which means you get two Level Ups to play with before we start." I promise you, this really adds to their excitement level and jazzes them up even more for the campaign.

High energy at the start of a campaign is a really, *really* good thing.

THE MAKING OF A HERO

Let's delve into the process of creating a character. You will need the core *Savage Worlds* book to accomplish this, as everything that follows is supplemental to that material. The flow is exactly the same - choose a Race, build up your base Traits (Attributes and Skills), choose some Hindrances and Edges, flesh out your Derived statistics, and work out your Gear.

You should also take the Background Details portion of the process very seriously. As a Game Master and as the designer of this setting, I encourage Shaintar GMs to rely on the Common Knowledge tool that was created for *Savage Worlds*. Where your character is from, what kind of culture he grew up in, and what kind of work he did before the call of being a hero came along will go a long way towards determining what you get a +2 on, and what you get a -2 on.

THE RACES OF SHAINSTAR

The fantasy genre is well known for having many different races that a player can choose from in creating their Character. The following are the "standard" Player Character races that may be chosen in Shaintar. However, it is possible for a Player to portray almost *anything*; the Game Master must simply decide what is fair and playable in the game to be run.

Some races have **Limited Attributes**. This means they must expend extra effort in raising these Attributes. Such an Attribute costs 2 points to raise at character creation,

and requires two “level ups” to raise during game play.

Some races have increased Attribute maximums. This means they can expend Level Ups to gain a +1 rating on top of the maximum d12, up to the listed Max. Linked Skills can benefit from these maximums as well, but the Attribute **must** be increased before the Skill can be taken to that level (unless the Legendary Edges, *Professional*, *Expert*, and *Master* are used; these Edges can also be used to push a Skill even higher past the Attribute maximum, if the Skill is raised through Level Ups first).



ALAKAR

The *Alakar* (“New Blooded” if translated to Glean) are members of the Fae (Elvish) race that are closely bound to the mortal realm of Shaintar. They are the result of massive breeding with the Humans many thousands of years ago (after the Fae were almost wiped out by a necromantic plague meant to destroy them). In fact, the *Alakar* are sometimes referred to as “half-bloods” by the more pure of the Fae (although this is rarely said to their face, and only by the haughtiest of their higher cousins). As all Fae, *Alakar* are highly sensitive to the negative properties of Black Iron and Blood Steel.

Alakar can be found throughout Shaintar in all walks of life, although they tend to prefer more natural settings over urban realms. The *Alakar* make up the bulk of the Fae in Shaintar (around 80%).

Alakar tend to be slightly shorter and of lighter builds than Humans. Their eye and hair colors, though most often of Human ranges, can be almost any color imaginable. *Alakar* tend to live about twice as long as Humans, though they mature at the same rate (early adulthood at 16-20).

Alakar:

- **Heritage:** *Alakar* have primarily Fae blood and are able to start with a d6 in either Agility or Spirit.
- **Low-light vision:** The blood of the Fae gives the *Alakar* the gift of night vision.
- **Keen Fae Senses:** *Alakar* begin with a d6 Notice skill for free.
- **Fae Beauty:** The Fae are inherently beautiful and graceful, and *Alakar* start with a +1 Charisma.

- **Weakness:** All Alakar are Vulnerable to Black Iron and Blood Steel (they suffer +2 Damage from those sources).
- **Enemy:** All Shayakar and Childer see the Alakar as a racial enemy.

AEVAKAR

The *Aevakar* are a very rare offshoot of the Fae. Their total population in Shaintar may number in the very few thousand (though no one actually knows for certain) and they tend to keep to themselves as a race. They were nearly wiped out by the Kalanar Empire

As they are Fae, *Aevakar* share the vulnerability to Black Iron and Blood Steel. In addition, being built for flight also comes with a price; their hollow bones and light frame make *Aevakar* particularly susceptible to damage and comparatively fragile next to most other races.

The rare individual that ventures away from their aerie will create a stir wherever they go, which is not always a good thing, since the species has a number of inherent and historical enemies. Any group traveling with a known *Aevakar* will be remembered for certain.

Aevakar have pretty much the same physical traits, size-wise, as *Alakar*. Their hair and eye colors can also extend through the spectrum; their feathers almost always match their hair in color scheme. *Aevakar* have the same life expectancy and maturation rate as *Alakar*.

Aevakar:

- **Graceful:** *Aevakar* begin with a d6 starting Agility.
- **Fragile:** *Aevakar* have the Limited Attribute - Vigor

- **Wings:** *Aevakar* have feathered wings that grant them a base Flight speed of 12" (with a "Run" speed of d10). Taking the Quick Edge (specified for Flight) increases this to 15" with a d12 "Run."
- **Fae Beauty:** The Fae are inherently beautiful and graceful, and *Aevakar* start with a +1 Charisma. Low-light vision
- **Keen Fae Senses:** *Aevakar* begin with a d6 Notice skill for free.
- **Light Frame:** *Aevakar* suffer a -1 to their Toughness.
- **Weakness:** All *Aevakar* are Vulnerable to Black Iron and Blood Steel (they suffer +3 Damage from those sources).
- **Enemy:** All Shayakar and Childer (especially gargoyles) see the *Aevakar* as a racial enemy.

BRINCHIE

The *Brinchie* are a bipedal race of sentient felineoids who are reputed to come from *Norcan Darr* (a dangerous realm of "demon children"). They are highly adaptable and fit in almost anywhere they find themselves. They are also highly prized warriors and bodyguards, although their tempers and chaotic nature sometimes hinder their performance in such roles (when the action is slow, at least).

Though gifted in the realms of combat, *Brinchie* are capable of following any path. Though not as numerous in Shaintar as some other races, they are easily found almost anywhere, doing almost anything. At one time, there was a significant population of *Brinchie* living as nomadic tribes throughout the southern portion of Shaintar. Those times have faded into history however, and there are very few *Brinchie* who follow the "old ways," or

even speak their own language. Most *Brinchie* are fully adapted to whatever culture and environment they are found in.

Brinchie are very much analogous to cats in terms of builds and fur color. Those bearing more domestic cat traits tend to be small and of light builds, while those showing colorations like those of big cats

(lions, panthers, tigers) tend

and towards more powerful builds as well.

Brinchie tend to have life spans about 80% that of Humans, but they physically mature by the age of 11 or so. Emotionally, they don't reach maturation much faster than Humans (unless they are of the rare nomadic upbringing, in which case they are pretty mature by age 13 or 14).

Brinchie:

- **Dextrous:** *Brinchie* are incredibly nimble and quick on their feet, beginning with a d6 Agility. Furthermore, their natural maximum Agility is d12+2, and they can reach this with normal Level Ups without applying the Professional or Legendary Edges (which can bump their Agility to d12+3 and +4, respectively). This advantage extends to any Agility-based skills they have, as well, though the natural Agility *must* be raised to these levels before the skills can go that high.

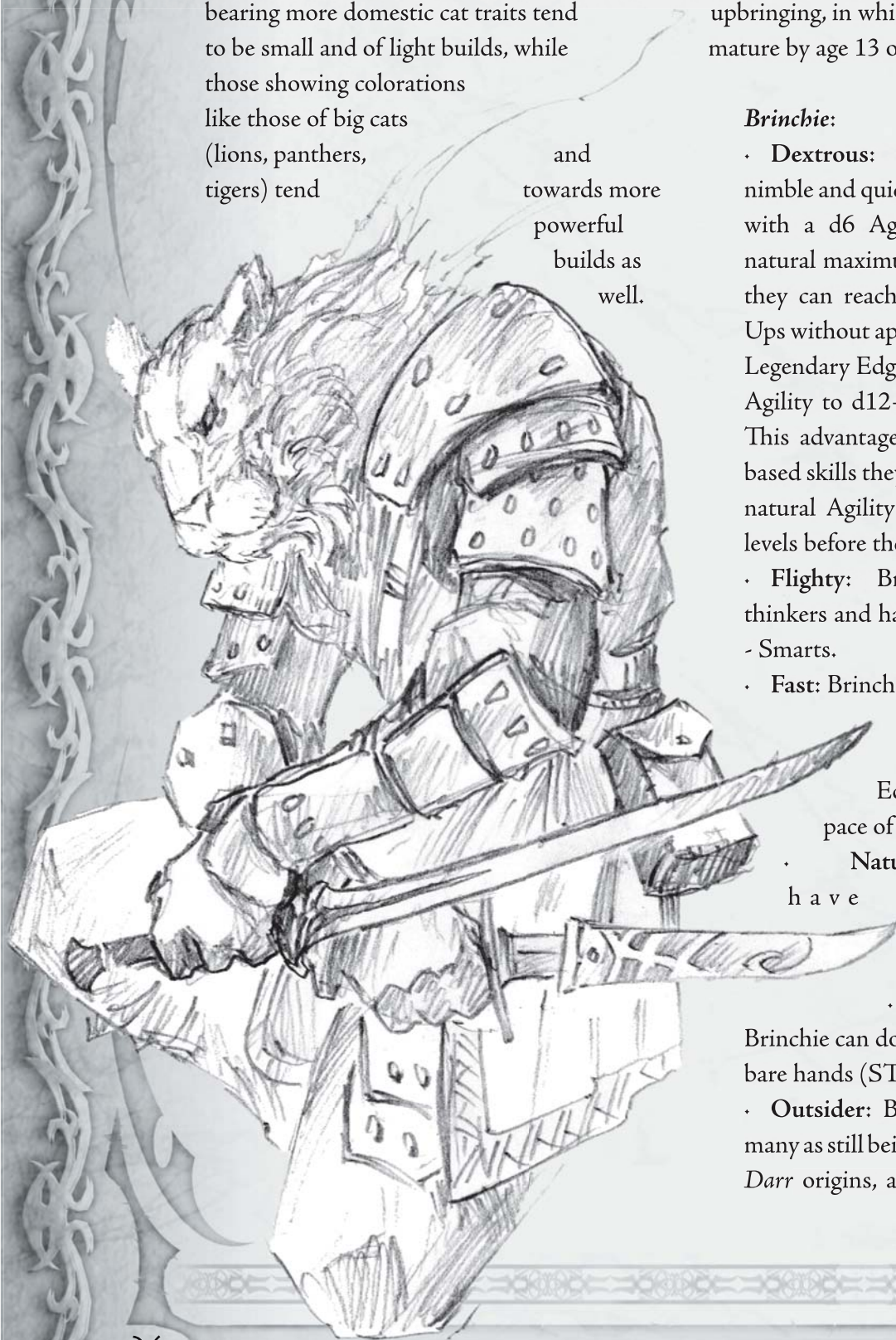
- **Flighty:** *Brinchie* are not deep thinkers and have the Limited Attribute - Smarts.

- **Fast:** *Brinchie* begin with a Pace of 8" and Run of d10. If they take the *Fleet-Footed* Edge, this is increased to a pace of 10" and a Run of d12.

- **Natural Acrobats:** *Brinchie* have the *Acrobat* Edge for free (no prerequisites required).

- **Natural Claws:** *Brinchie* can do lethal damage with their bare hands (STR+1).

- **Outsider:** *Brinchie* are still seen by many as still being tainted by their *Norcan Darr* origins, and the average person is



quite put off by their appearance.

- **Needs Action:** When times are slow, the GM may require a Spirit check; failure means the Brinchie character will become irritable and unfocused (temporarily gaining the *Mean Hindrance*, and suffering a -1 distraction penalty on all Trait Rolls until they get some kind of action.)

DREGORDIAN

The enigmatic and somewhat unnerving *Dregordians* have long mystified the other races of Shaintar. Physical powerhouses that rival Ogres in sheer strength and presence, these massive reptilian humanoids are nonetheless given to quiet introspection and cautious action.

This has much to do with the “Inner Beast” each of them must battle constantly - an inner blood rage that bespeaks of their violent, survival-of-the-fittest history. When they first began to move towards civilization, they strove to contain the beast within. To this end, they have developed a highly structured society and personal discipline to maintain what they have created - many *Dregordians*, in fact, have developed mental powers through their discipline. History supports the general belief that *Dregordians* were the first to develop The Way.

Dregordians have snout-like faces that look like a cross between a dinosaur and a crocodile, with rows of sharp teeth and small nostrils. They tend towards very large, very powerful builds, on average standing a foot-and-a-half taller than Humans. Their scale colors range from every shade of green to rich browns and earthen tones. *Dregordians*

live about 20% longer than Humans, and are considered physically and emotionally mature by the age of 15.

Dregordian:

- **Mighty:** Powerful and tough, *Dregordians* begin with a d6 starting Strength and Vigor. Furthermore, their natural maximum Strength is d12+3, and they can reach this with normal Level Ups without applying the Professional or Legendary Edges (which can bump their Strength to d12+4 and +5, respectively).
- **Ponderous:** *Dregordians* have the Limited Attribute - Agility.
- **Aquatic:** *Dregordians* are naturally amphibious, able to breathe underwater. Their swimming pace equals their *Swim* skill die type in inches.
- **Natural Swimmers:** *Dregordians* gain a d6 *Swim* skill at the start for free.
- **Tail and Claws:** *Dregordians* have natural claws that can do lethal damage (STR+1). Their tail is flexible enough to be used as a weapon, as well, doing STR+1 in non-lethal damage.
- **Outsider:** *Dregordians* are pretty much alien to every other race, both in appearance and mentality.
- **Weakness:** In cold weather conditions (40 degrees Fahrenheit or lower), *Dregordians* must make Fatigue-resisting Vigor checks every **hour**; they are automatically *Fatigued* in temperatures below 0 degrees.
- **Battle Rage:** *Dregordians* who are in battle must make a Spirit check every round. Failure means they have come

under the sway of their bestial nature; they must make *Wild Attacks* for the rest of the battle, and temporarily have the *Bloodthirsty Hindrance*. They can spend an action doing nothing else to make another Spirit check at -2 to get out of this state, but only if they are not directly threatened by an opponent.

DWARF

At once open and secretive, the *Dwarves* of Shaintar have played an enigmatic role in the development of the world, a role few outside of their Clanhomes can discern. Outwardly friendly and hospitable, they nonetheless keep everyone at arm's length when it comes to what they are up to deep in their caves.

Physically imposing despite their shorter stature, *Dwarves* give the impression of being immovable and unkillable. They have a fondness for all things mechanical, though they are at first warriors and defenders of their homes (having battled everyone for their place in the world at one point or another). Though given to grim dispositions, a *Dwarf* can be a wonderful companion to drink and sing with (if one doesn't mind horrid singing and the

occasional friendly brawl).

Dwarves tend to stand about 2/3 the height of humans, but have dense and powerful builds. Despite vicious rumors to the contrary, *Dwarven* women do **not** have beards, and can be quite attractive. Due to their penchant for underground dwelling, *Dwarves* run to the pale, unless they spend an inordinate amount of time outside. *Dwarves* live about twice as long as Humans, and reach emotional and physical maturity about the same time.



Dwarves:

- **Stalwart:** Powerful and tough, Dwarves begin with a d6 starting Strength and Vigor. Furthermore, their natural maximum Vigor is d12+3, and they can reach this with normal Level Ups without applying the Professional or Legendary Edges (which can bump their Vigor to d12+4 and +5, respectively).
- **Stoic:** Dwarves have the Limited Attribute - Spirit
- **Slow:** Short and stocky, their Pace is 5".
- **Low-light Vision:** The darkness of the caves requires keen eyes.
- **The Old Ways:** Dwarves gain a +2 to all checks (such as *Repair*, *Notice*, and *Knowledge*) involving stone, earth, metals, and mechanical devices.
- **Intestinal Fortitude:** Though not particularly spiritual, Dwarves are nonetheless very courageous. They draw strength from their connection with the mountains and stone. As such, the *Guts* skill for them is linked to Vigor instead of Spirit.
- **Cannot Swim:** So dense, a Dwarf sinks like a stone in any water.

ELDAKAR

The oldest and most influential of all the races of Shaintar, the magically-gifted *Eldakar* ("Old Blooded" as translated in Glean) are responsible for many of the social and political structures seen across the continent. They created language, laws, and customs that almost every other race use in some way. They are the greatest of the Fae (Elves), with the exception of the extremely rare *Faelakar*

DWARVES ARE COOL, THAT'S WHY

GM to GM

Some might wonder why I leave Dwarves pretty much as the "standard" they are in any setting. The simple answer is – why mess up a good thing? There are certain things you expect when you think "dwarf" in a fantasy setting, and I don't care to screw that up.

Alternately, I embrace their traditions and stereotypes and give them deeper meaning in Shaintar. Their very metaphysical nature roots them in the solidity of stone and earth, and they are the descendents of another race called the "Builders" that had a profound effect on the ancient world. There are, in fact, very deep and powerful mysteries about the nature of the world that the Dwarves are very connected to, mysteries that will be revealed over the course of tales and adventures to come...

Oh, and Dwarves of the far north have Nordic accents, Dwarves of Olara have Germanic accents, and southern Dwarves have Scottish accents. Just because.

(beings of mostly spirit who are almost unseen in Shaintar).

For all their influence, the power of the *Eldakar* has faded in the most recent years as the Humans ascend to dominance over the world. They have had to content themselves with advising and guiding the better of the Human leaders where they can. To this end, many *Eldakar* venture into the world, looking for causes and quests they can undertake to better help the world (although more than a few have washed their hands of such noble causes and, instead, use their gifts for personal gain or... worse).

Eldakar actually stand slightly taller than Humans, but tend to have much slighter builds. Their hair and eye colors range the gamut of hues, and their skin tones range from the

palest white to deep and rich browns. *Eldakar* are truly immortal; though they can die from trauma, disease, and the like, old age will never take a toll on them. Those whose ages reach into the thousands of years will start to show some strain in their features and some dulling of eye and hair colors, but only a trained eye can see it. They reach physical and emotional maturity somewhere around the age of 30 or so.

GM to GM MY VERSIONS OF "HIGH" AND "WOOD" ELVES

Elves, yes, but I believe they are significantly different enough to be interesting in the context of the world. Once again, this is my effort to mix classic traditions and expectations with some new ideas.

In this case, the "wood" elves – the earthy, less ethereal ones – are actually a result of interbreeding with humans. The "half-elf" issue is addressed elsewhere (see *Korindians*), but in effect, most of the elvish population is made up of those of mixed heritage. This creates some very deep and interesting social concepts to play with.

To break it down in simplistic terms – the *Faelakar* are the first Fae to enter Shaintar. They are spirits made flesh, and can generally be either as they choose. There are hardly any left, so don't be surprised if you never see one.

Eldakar are the first generations of children the *Faelakar* had. Born of Shaintar, they are still very strongly linked to their Fae heritage and spiritual natures.

Alakar are those born not only of Shaintar, but with the endurance and diversity of Humans flowing in their veins. They are more pragmatically "of the world."

Shayakar are those *Eldakar* (and, in some rarer cases, *Alakar* and *Aevakar*) who followed *Vainar* in his fall. **Note** – *they are not dark skinned; rather, they are quite porcelain and pale.*

And *Korindians*? Well, read on...

Eldakar:

- **Immortal Grace, Acumen, and Will:** *Eldakar* begin with d6 starting Agility, Smarts, and Spirit
- **Gossamer:** *Eldakar* have the Limited Attributes - Strength and Vigor
- **Low-light vision:** The blood of the Fae gives the *Eldakar* the gift of night vision.
- **Keen Fae Senses:** *Eldakar* begin with a d6 *Notice* skill for free.
- **Unearthly Fae Beauty:** So infused with the beauty of the Fae, *Eldakar* enjoy an inherent +2 Charisma.
- **Magically Sensitive:** *Eldakar* can use the *Detect Arcana* power at will (using their Spirit for their rolls). Those that take up an Arcane Background that provides the ability gain a +2 to *Detect Arcana* attempts.
- **The Price of Immortality:** Living forever takes a toll, as does being part of a culture steeped in mystery and mysticism. All *Eldakar* must choose one additional Major or two Minor Hindrances for no added benefits (*Young* is not an option).
- **Weakness:** All *Eldakar* are *deathly Vulnerable* to Black Iron and Blood Steel (they suffer +4 Damage from those sources!).
- **Enemies:** All creatures of Darkness and Flame will seek to kill an *Eldakar* given any chance.

GOBLIN

The most numerous of the *Gobliness* (which also counts the *Orcs* and *Ogres* among them), *Goblins* are the smallest and quickest of the species. Their natural gifts and incredible

olfactory senses (enabling them to track by scent) make them ideal scouts, trackers, and thieves. However, *Goblins* are quite capable of being anything they wish, and it is only the oppression of their own society that restricts many of them.

They have greenish to greyish skin tones, wide-set features, and large ears. Like most of the *Goblins*, they have very little to no body hair. Their eyes do tend to glow slightly in the dark, enhancing their generally frightening appearance. *Goblins* tend to physically and mentally mature about age 14, and they tend to live to around 65 or 70.

NO HOBBITS, BUT...

I am one of those people who believe the “wee, half-folk” should remain firmly within the lands of Tolkien’s Middle Earth. As such, you will find no such beings here. At the same time, I don’t much care for gnomes, seeing them as comical versions of dwarves in most settings, or alternate versions of halflings in others.

However, I do have a race of beings who are small, quick, and clever. *Goblins* fit the bill quite nicely, and can add a lot of depth to roleplay due to their outsider status amongst most people, and their diminished status among their own people.

Goblin:

- **Dextrous:** *Goblins* begin with a d6 starting Agility.
- **Thin-limbed:** *Goblins* have the Limited Attribute: Strength
- **Keen Sense of Smell:** *Goblins* are naturally blessed with d6 *Notice* and *Tracking Skills* at Start.
- **Thermal Vision:** *Goblins* have the Monstrous Ability, *Infravision*.
- **Small and Nimble:** *Goblins* are inherently smaller than everyone else, and grow up learning how to avoid being struck by those larger than themselves as a survival mechanism. Attackers subtract 2 from all attacks against *Goblins* so

On average, *Goblins* are cleverer than their larger cousins. However, their relatively frail nature in comparison to the *Orcs* and *Ogres* is such that only in the most enlightened gathers will a *Goblin* be found to be in a position of authority. This is why many of the most competent will wander into the world to seek their fortunes.

Although “grotesque” by Human standards, *Goblins* are not “hideous monsters.”

long as they are active and aware of the attack.

- **Size –1:** Goblins must subtract 1 from their Toughness for their small stature.
- **Outsider:** All goblins face some social stigmas, no matter how progressive the society they are in.

HUMAN

Arguably the rising race of Shaintar, the balanced physical and mental traits of Humans, combined with their inherent diversity and adaptability, has helped them weather the worst apocalyptic storms and come out stronger in the long run.

Although ubiquitous and well-known by any standards, it is worth pointing out that there are many “variants” of Humans:

- The massive, powerful, and aggressive *Kalinesh* (resembling the Norse Vikings of old Earth history).
- The dark and beautiful sea-going *Nazatirans* (combining classic Spanish and Mediterranean qualities).
- The proud and stalwart *Olarans* (very Old World Germanic in appearance and bearing).
- The exotic and swarthy *Youlin-Aradi* (classic “Arabian Nights” appearances).
- The angular and lithe *Camoners* (Old World French and Gallic appearances)
- The sturdy, diverse “average” folk of the rest of the Southern Kingdoms (comparable to the various folks of the British Isles).

Even with these general tendencies, though, there is a great deal of diversity within each cultural group – frail, bookwormish Kal and massive, giant-esque Nazatirans, for

example. It is also important to note that, especially within the Southern Kingdoms, it is highly possible to come across human bloodlines with noticeably Fae influences.

Human:

- **Adaptable:** Human heroes begin with one free starting Edge (though they must meet its pre-requisites).
- **Diverse:** Humans begin with one free d6 in one Skill.

KORINDIAN

One of the more unique races of Shaintar, the *Korindians* are the descendants of a veritable horde of “half-elves” that left the main continent of Shaintar and exiled themselves to a large island off of the southwest coast. They left the tyranny and intolerance of the mainland, led by one known simply as Kor, and founded a new society based on rejecting the ways of their ancestors.

The *Korindians*, as a society, have developed codes of behavior and ways of life that seem almost alien to their mainland “cousins” - they reject the use of metal for anything, rely heavily upon what Nature provides, and seek harmony with their environment and each other. Among the many things they have developed to this end, the martial art known as *Kor-In* is most famous (a combination of karate and aikido).

Korindians are a race unto themselves now, expressing many similar traits to Alakar, but with their Fae traits much less pronounced. They tend to have rich, light-brown complexions, pale-hued eyes, and darker hair, though the more diverse hair and eye colors of their Fae lineage are not wholly

uncommon. *Korindians* usually live half-again as long as a typical Human, though they come to mental and physical maturity at about the same time as Humans.

Korindian: These traits apply **only** to Korindians who follow traditional ways; non-traditional Korindians are simply Half-Elves (use the statistics in the core *Savage Worlds* book) –

- **Lithe:** Korindians have a starting Agility of d6.
- **Low-light vision:** Like their Fae cousins, Korindians can see very well in the dark.
- **Trained from Birth:** Korindians train in martial arts as soon as they are able to walk. All Korindians start with the *Block* and *Dodge* Edges, regardless of prerequisites.
- **The Law of Kor:** Traditional Korindians will eschew the use of metal in any form, including for money.
- **Outsider:** Korindians are odd by all mainlander standards
- **Weakness:** As all Fae, Korindians are vulnerable to Black Iron and Blood Steel (+2 Damage from these sources).

OGRE

The least numerous of the Goblinesh, *Ogres* are the largest and slowest of the species. Their great strength and size, natural toughness, and ferocity make them the greatest of the Goblinesh warriors (although they normally need a great deal of guidance and command structure). Like *Goblins* (and *Orcs*, for that matter), *Ogres* are capable of being anything they want.

Ogres are not inherently very bright or willful, and are thus generally easy to manipulate and control if handled correctly. However, there are plenty of examples of *Ogres* who defy such expectations and stand quite well for themselves. More than a few, in fact, have used the preconceived notions others have of *Ogres* to turn the tables on opponents in any endeavor.

By Human standards, *Ogres* seem quite monstrous (they are, in fact, the strongest and mightiest of all the races native to Shaintar). They are not monsters, though, and are an intelligent species quite capable of being a part of society. They have greenish to greyish skin tones (though they tend to be more brown than anything), wide-set features, and large ears. Like most of the Goblinesh, they have very little to no body hair. Their eyes do tend to glow slightly in the dark, enhancing their generally frightening appearance. *Ogres* are also the shortest-lived of the Goblinesh, typically reaching maturity in their early teens but only living to about 50 or so.

Ogre:

- **Mighty and Resilient:** *Ogres* begin with an impressive starting Strength of d8 and a starting Vigor of d6. Furthermore, their natural maximum Strength is d12+4, while their natural maximum Vigor is d12+1. They can reach these ratings with normal Level Ups without applying the Professional or Legendary Edges (which can bump their Strength up to d12+5 and +6, and their Vigor to d12+2 and +3, respectively).
- **Slow and Pliable:** *Ogres* have the Limited Attributes: Smarts and Spirit.

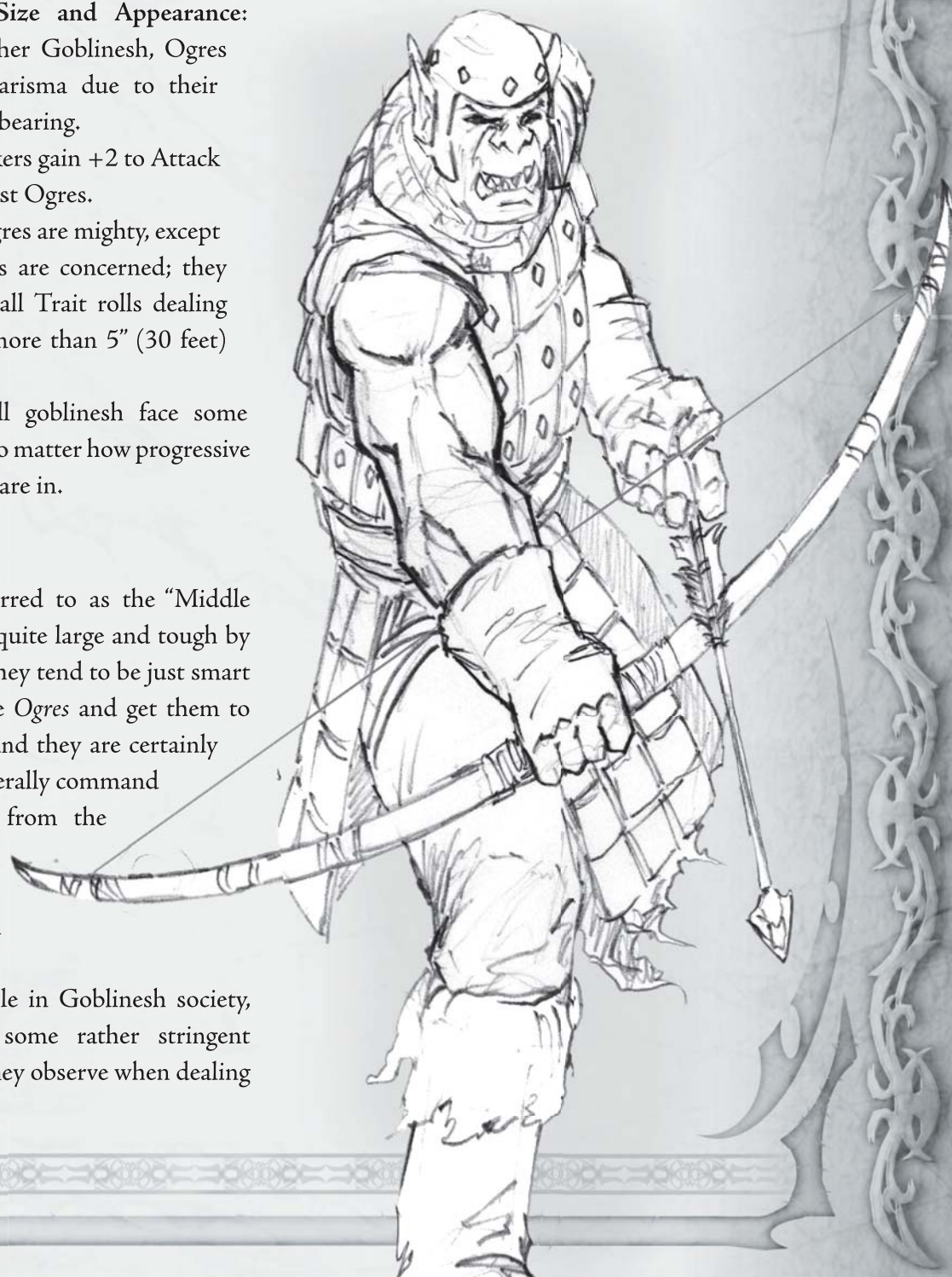
- **Great Strides:** Ogres have a natural Pace of 7" instead of 6".
- **Size +3:** Ogres add 3 to their natural Toughness due to their great bulk.
- **Thermal Vision:** Ogres have the Monstrous Ability, *Infravision*.
- **Keen Sense of Smell:** Like other Goblins, Ogres begin with d6 *Notice Skill* at the start.
- **Monstrous Size and Appearance:** Even among other Goblins, Ogres suffer a -3 Charisma due to their appearance and bearing.
- **Large:** Attackers gain +2 to Attack rolls made against Ogres.
- **Bad Eyes:** Ogres are mighty, except where their eyes are concerned; they suffer a -2 on all Trait rolls dealing with anything more than 5" (30 feet) away
- **Outsider:** All goblins face some social stigmas, no matter how progressive the society they are in.

with one another. Much as one might expect in a pack of wolves, *Orcs* have to determine dominance within their own ranks. When a new *Orc* arrives amongst a group of others *Orcs*, there is a period of time where he must establish his place in things, even if he is only visiting for a short while. More on this can be found later in the cultural sections of this book.

ORC

Commonly referred to as the "Middle Goblins," *Orcs* are quite large and tough by Human standards. They tend to be just smart enough to outwit the *Ogres* and get them to do what they want, and they are certainly strong enough to generally command respect and service from the *Goblins*. As such, *Orcs* tend to be the leaders of Goblins society.

Due to their role in Goblins society, *Orcs* actually have some rather stringent social customs that they observe when dealing



Like all Goblins, *Orcs* are quite capable of almost any pursuit, and they can be found with some regularity in most societies. They tend towards more combative roles, however, and they excel at them. They have the same green-brown-grey colorations as all Goblins, with the same wide-set features and large ears, as well as the lack of significant body hair. *Orcs* tend to live around 60-70 years, maturing a little more quickly than a Human of the same age.

Orc:

- **Strong and Tough:** *Orcs* begin with a starting Strength and Vigor of d6. Furthermore, their natural maximum Strength is d12+2 and they can reach this rating with normal Level Ups without applying the Professional or Legendary Edges (which can bump their Strength up to d12+3 and +4, respectively).
- **Dim:** *Orcs* have the Limited Attribute: Smarts
- **Thermal Vision:** *Orcs* have the Monstrous Ability, *Infravision*.
- **Keen Sense of Smell:** Like other Goblins, *Orcs* begin with d6 Notice Skill at the start.
- **Bestial Appearance:** Even among other Goblins, *Orcs* suffer a -2 Charisma due to their appearance and bearing.
- **Outsider:** All Goblins face some social stigmas, no matter how progressive the society they are in.

SKILLS IN SHAINSTAR

The Skill system of *Savage Worlds* works just fine for Shaintar, but there are a

few clarifications and suggestions that make the system sing a little more in tune with this setting.

A COUPLE OF NOTES ABOUT COMMON KNOWLEDGE

You should really push your players to come up with solid background stories and histories. Make sure they understand that their Common Knowledge benefits depend on the effort.

When I run Shaintar, I often allow "Common Knowledge" rolls that use something other than Smarts, if appropriate. If someone has a professional background in gem cutting, for example, I will let them use their Agility die for any attempt at cutting a gem. Someone with a background in heavy lifting (such as a dock worker) might gain a +2 "Common Knowledge" bonus to any Strength check that involves pure lifting.

One more thing – instead of adding a "Sleight of Hand" or "Pickpocketing" Skill, I've chosen to leave that in the realm of Common Knowledge. If someone has a thief-like background, they are going to get a +1 or +2 to such attempts, using their base Agility (usually opposed by Notice). Furthermore, anyone with the Thief Professional Edge will enjoy an added +2 for such activities.

Boating

This skill covers pretty much all *physical* tasks with the operation of a ship, to include manning the rudder or wheel. Finding's one way on the ocean, however, will require Knowledge (Navigation).

Driving

Don't bother having anyone waste points on this. If they have reason to be able to manage a cart, wagon, or coach, let it be a Common Knowledge default.

Healing

In Shaintar, this deals with the binding of wounds in a low-tech setting. However, there are magical concoctions, salves, and special plants that those with the right knowledge can make use of. As such, the base rules should work as written. Furthermore, others can make either Healing or Survival rolls to provide Cooperative rolls (possibly helping to find that special plant that will make the difference). Healing can also be used to treat Fatigue, Poison, and Disease in most cases.

Knowledge

The following are some Knowledge focuses that are of regular use in Shaintar.

- **Knowledge (Cosmology):** This skill means the character has understanding of the Four Powers, the greater beings that serve those powers, the Aether, Corelisia, and other major metaphysical concepts.
- **Knowledge (Magic):** This skill deals with the specific processes, theories, and results of all forms of magic. It is used to identify specific properties of what might be sensed with *Detect Arcana*, and to be able to come up with what magical effect might have caused a result being observed.
- **Knowledge (Flame Creatures):** The specific study of the monstrous creatures from *Norcan Darr*, as well as knowledge of other demons and demonic creatures that may invade the lands of Shaintar.
- **Knowledge (Dark Creatures):** The specific study of creatures both undead and beings otherwise corrupted by

Darkness.

- **Knowledge (Navigation):** The very specialized (and highly-prized) skill of navigating the seas surrounding Shaintar and the islands.
- **Knowledge (Legend Lore):** A variant of History knowledge that deals primarily with tales of heroic adventure, magic artifacts, and mysteries of the ancient world.
- **Knowledge (History):** An incredibly useful skill that would effectively permit the player to recall just about anything on the Timeline when needed.
- **Knowledge (Politics):** Another often-underestimated skill that indicates the character's knowledge of who is in charge, where, and what relations are like between nations and local authorities.

LANGUAGES

I generally agree that creating language barriers in a game is more trouble than it's worth. However, there are certain character concepts that are enhanced by the idea of being able to speak languages most other people don't know, and it *can* be interesting when there is something happening and being able to speak the language is part of the solution to the problem.

Plus, languages simply add a lot of depth and believability to the fantasy gaming experience. They are expressions of culture, and a sign that not everyone comes from the same place.

For your own campaign, you should feel free to ignore the language issues and just assume everyone can talk to each other that needs to. For *my* campaigns, however, I prefer a little structure.

First off, everyone can speak the language of whatever race or culture they are from (if that race has its own language). In addition, they can

continued...

speak the prevalent language of whatever region the campaign is based in. For most campaigns, this will be in the Southern Kingdoms, and Glean is the “common tongue.”

In addition to whatever regional language and cultural language the character should be able to speak, they may select one additional language for every die code of Smarts they have above d4. Thus, a character with a Smarts of d10 can speak their native tongue, the regional language (which, admittedly, may be the same thing in many cases), and three *additional* languages.

On top of that, a character may choose one additional language for every Knowledge skill they *start* with. Choosing a new Knowledge skill as a Level Up does not confer a new Language for the character. Thus, the above d10 Smarts character, having 2 Knowledge Skills at the end of character creation, will have a total of 5 *additional* languages on top of their native tongue and regional language.

If a player wants their character to learn a new language over the course of game play, and the character has reasonable access to a means of learning this language, they can spend a Level Up acquiring the new language. That's all they can do with that Level Up, though.

Languages of Shaintar

Glean. Human, “Common” language of the Southern Kingdoms, the Freelands, and the Wild Lands.

Olaran. Human, the language of the Kingdom of Olara and the surrounding areas. Strong linguistic links to Kalinesh.

Camonere. Human, the language of the Prelacy of Camon. Also spoken in many parts of Shaya’Nor by the Humans there.

Kalinesh. Human, language of the Empire, also spoken by the barbarian tribes east of the Empire.

Aradish. Human, the language of the Youlin Aradi (the desert people). Rarely spoken outside of that area.

Nazatir. Human, language of the island of the seafaring Nazatirans. Also very common in most

continued...

Lockpicking

It bears noting that Lockpicking would also be the appropriate skill for disabling or bypassing a trap. Notice, however, would be the appropriate skill for *finding* a trap.

Piloting

No character in the Shaintar setting would have reason to have this skill.

Repair

At first glance, this seems to have little bearing in a low-tech setting. However, it would apply to pretty much any application of tools to a task. Any smith is going to have this skill, as would any character with an “engineering” bent.

HINDRANCES IN SHAINSTAR

Hindrances are an exceptional way to add depth to a character, especially for players who have a little less experience with “immersive roleplaying.” In Shaintar, some Hindrances do an excellent job of representing certain specific elements and ideas, so some notes on the matter are warranted.

All Thumbs

There aren't many “devices” in Shaintar as compared to a modern or science fiction setting. However, this Hindrance can still have an impact. Their foibles apply to the use of any crossbow (and they suffer a –2 to their Shooting roll with any crossbow-like device). Doors with intricate locks should be beyond such a character.

Most importantly, there is a class of Gear that will come up in later books that a character with this Hindrance will have

certain difficulties with. That's pretty much all that can be said about it, for now...

GM to GM

of the southern waters.

Malakaran. Human, language of the Dominion. Linguistically a combination of Galean, Kalinesh, and Aradish, but anyone speaking just one of those will have a hard time following a native speaker.

Fae. The ancient language of the Elves and all faerie of Shaintar. The Aevakar speak a dialect so closely similar that there is little distinction, save in some pronunciations.

Shayae. Very close to Fae, but distinctly different thanks to influences of so many beings of Darkness. This is the main tongue of the lands of Shaya'Nor.

Korindian. Similar to Fae, but with many Galean, Kal, and unique words mixed in such a fashion to make it stand out.

Dwarvish. There are as many dialects as there are Clanhomes, but the distinctions are small enough to make common communication not a problem.

Dregordian. The odd language of the Dregordian people, difficult to master as an outsider (requires two Level Ups).

Goblinsesh. The language of Goblins, Orcs, and Ogres.

Brin. The ancient language of the Brinchie, not even commonly spoken by most of them anymore (unless the background story suggests otherwise, a Brinchie character's "native" language will be determined by whatever region they are from). There is no written component to the tongue.

"Childer". The "common" tongue spoken by most Childer (demonic humanoids, including Ratzin, Minotaurs, Thratches, and Gargoyles) who come into Shaintar. Difficult to learn, and each species of Childer has its own distinct dialect.

Code of Honor

See the "GM to GM – Good Guy Hindrances" note about this one.

Doubting Thomas

This Hindrance simply doesn't fit into a land like Shaintar, where magic and the supernatural are very much a part of every day life, or at least part of the common collective knowledge.

Enemy

There are some "stock enemies" that a character can take that make sense in the Shaintar setting. All of the following would classify as a Major Enemy (Minor Enemies are almost always going to be a small gang or lone figure).

- The Prelacy of Camon
- The Malakar Dominion
- The Kal-A-Nar Empire
 - The Az-agkar
 - The Tor-mastak
- Shaya'Nor
- The Brotherhood of the Fallen
- The Clan of the Night
- The Lords of Fire
- The Dragon Cult

All of these are described in greater detail later in this book.

Greedy

See the "GM to GM – Bad Guy Hindrances" note about this one.

Bloodthirsty

See the "GM to GM – Bad Guy Hindrances" note about this one.

BAD GUY HINDRANCES

Shaintar is very much designed to be a heroic fantasy setting, one where there are Good Guys and Bad Guys, and the players are meant to be the Good Guys. I make no bones about this; this is what I love, it's what the best stories in the world are based on, and it's what Shaintar is meant to be.

Does this mean it's impossible to set up and run a campaign based on Bad Guys in Shaintar? Not hardly. If that's what you as a GM want to do, there are certainly any number of approaches you can take to do it.

However, that's not what I do, it's not something I think I will *ever* do, and it's not how I designed the material.

Having said that, there are certain Hindrances that I identify as "Bad Guy" oriented. I do not permit them, or else I highly limit them in such a way that the player knows he's on a short leash with it. In many cases, players will take certain Hindrances and then use them as a license to create overwrought tension and discord in the gaming group. A certain level of internal conflict can lead to excellent roleplaying experiences. However, all too often, these conflicts are gratuitous and utterly destructive to the fun and sense of fellowship one want to create at their gaming table.

Bloodthirsty is one of those borderline Hindrances. There are some character backgrounds for which this makes a certain amount of sense.

continued...

Heroic

See the "GM to GM – Good Guy Hindrances" note about this one.

Illiterate

It may seem strange, but this Hindrance works just as written in the core *Savage Worlds* book. Most societies in Shaintar are very socially progressive, and as such, reading and writing is fairly common.

Loyal

See the "GM to GM – Good Guy Hindrances" note about this one.

Mean

See the "GM to GM – Bad Guy Hindrances" note about this one.

Outsider

This Hindrance is already built into certain races. Anyone playing a Human of Nazatiran stock, or from one of the other islands, or from the far North lands that lie between the Kal-A-Nar Empire and Shaya'Nor could easily take this Hindrance as well. As well, a Human raised in one of the "Bad Guy" cultures (see the Enemy Hindrance) who is trying to be a hero could conceivably be an Outsider.

Other uses of the Outsider Hindrance will be entirely contextual, based on the story and where the campaign is set.

Vengeful

See the "GM to GM – Bad Guy Hindrances" note about this one.

Vow

Some of the Professional Edges have a type of Vow attached to them, called "Vow: Tenets of Faith." It's pretty simple, really – the character is expected to be a devout and faithful follower of the spiritual path associated with the Professional Edge. The character must stay true to this vow or receive some sort of punishment (which could range from temporary loss of Bennies to losing the ability to use any Arcane Background abilities).

Additionally, some may have another type of vow common in Shaintar – “Vow: Organizational Obligations.” This vow would indicate that the character is part of some kind of group (an order of knights, a guild of specialists, or a military group) that they have duties they must perform for.

GM to GM If the player can be trusted to use the Hindrance as a touchstone for good roleplaying and non-destructive character-to-character conflict, you can probably let him take this Hindrance. If the player is likely to use it as an excuse to just be a blood-drenched killing machine, I recommend not allowing it.

The Major level of **Greedy** is another Hindrance I generally just don't allow; it is too primarily geared towards creating deadly character-to-character conflict over something that is not likely to be interesting or a lot of fun for most of the players.

The **Mean** Hindrance has the *potential* to be an interesting and defining aspect of a character. All too often, however, it can be abused as a “free pass” for the player to be a jerk and make the game not enjoyable for other players. I tend to not allow it unless the player impresses me with a good back story and I think I can trust them.

Vengeful is another borderline Hindrance. On the one hand, it can be an excellent backstory-defining element for a character. On the other, it can a license to be a vicious killing machine that goes counter to the goals of the rest of the group. Having a Major level of Vengeance against all undead is probably a pretty solid and allowable Hindrance. Having a Major sense of Vengeance against Dwarves, even if there aren't any in the party, is bound to create an untenable conflict.

GOOD GUY HINDRANCES

As said elsewhere, Shaintar is a Heroic Fantasy setting, and when I run campaigns in it, I urge my players to create characters that can fit into that thematic frame. This doesn't mean they all have to be white hat wearing goodie-two-shoes, not by a long shot. It just means they have to fit into the story in a way that puts them on the Good Guy side of things.

To that effort, I insist that each player choose at least one of the following three Hindrances as part of their Hindrance package – **Code of Honor**, **Heroic**, or **Loyal**. Each one of these Hindrances encourages the character to have some reasonable reason to “do the right thing” and pursue the storylines that come up.

There are plenty of sources of evil and plenty of wrong things to be righted. The sources are both supernatural and political in nature, and the characters can end up in some very deep, intricate plots. They don't have to be anti-heroes or secret villains (ready to backstab the rest of their party) to have in-depth experiences in Shaintar.

By requiring at least one of those Hindrances, I ensure that there is at least a significant reduction in unnecessary and destructive party conflict. Furthermore, I make it easier on myself in terms of motivating the characters to get involved in stories that are less about personal gain than they are about serving the cause of Good against very powerful Evil.