

WOLVES OF GOD

GRIM HEROISM IN ENGLAND'S DARK AGES

BETA 0.2

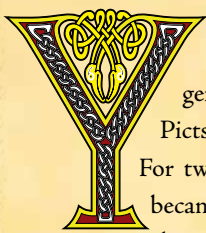
Wolves of God is a brief fragment of an intended future RPG set in England circa 710 AD, during the middle period of Anglo-Saxon rule. I'm using it chiefly as an occasional respite from my work on *Stars Without Number* and as a convenient test text for assorted typographic experiments.

The conceit of the book, and of my other planned historical games, is that there has existed a persistent historical tradition of role-playing gaming. This particular game was written by the venerable Brother Cornix, a Saxon monk of Wessex in the year 710 AD. It was intended as an introductory volume for benighted foreigners wishing to play out the roles of mighty English heroes among the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

These historical games are intended to remain fairly close to history as it was known, or at least to make defensible suppositions about the time. All of them will include magic and the supernatural as a thread, but it's my intent that the games should be playable as straight historical fiction if a group so wishes.

BETA 0.2

I've added some additional character creation tweaks, rules on advancement, and combat and healing rules. The major difference here from conventional OSR is that PCs gain fewer hit points per level, but heal much more rapidly. There's also likely to be a distinct paucity of magical healing available to PCs, and what there is is most likely to revolve around mending battle injuries and curing plagues.



YOU WERE THE END OF THE WORLD. YOUR

fathers had been *foederati* for the men of Rome for ten generations, bleeding in the north to hold back the painted Picts and warring on the coasts to drive off your pirate kin. For two centuries your numbers swelled. Your encampments became homes, your homes became settlements, and your sons became warriors in a foreign land.

Then the men of Rome became weak and wicked. Emperors changed in Rome with the turning of the seasons, and the legions marched south from British cities, never to return. The cities of Britain swore obedience to tyrants, and they warred against each other over the roads that Rome had built. Rich were their markets, full the hulls of their ships, and proud beyond God the pride of their lords.

Their tyrants claimed to be Christian men, to be followers of the godly truth, but they were thieves and brigands and lechers, drowned in their iniquity as Saint Gildas has written. They lavished gold upon their harlots and sins upon their people, and the *Artifexes* of Rome that remained among them worked dark wonders with their magic.

Your fathers saw the weakness of the Rome-forsaken lords of Britain, the weakness that would hire barbarians to make war on their own kin. They saw gold in the hands of tyrants and rich cloth on the backs of their drunken sons. Your fathers were pagans, but they were men. They would not be dogs for the scraps from a weakling's table.

They were not dogs, but wolves. Three ships came, then seven, then more. The Jutes and the Angles and the Saxons, the kin of all the *foederati* who had served the Roman British so long, all came to take their share of the Roman lands. The British were soft men, of a soft land, full of sweetness and rot, for the legions had gone away and British hands were no longer schooled to war.

They were slaughtered where they fought, made thralls where there were hands to seize them, and left to cower in their villages where your forebears did not trouble to go.

How few your fathers, but how great their conquest! The rich province of Britain, the jewel of the Roman North, was reduced to subjection and broken beneath your ancestor's hard hands. Roman cities were crushed and made empty and Roman towns scattered like corn at the sowing.

The British were driven from the good lands and cast into the hills of the west and north, made to hide in the shadow of the mountains and cower in the hollows of the hills. Some were made to flee into the *Arcem* crafted by the *Artifexes*, hiding themselves away in un-worlds and not-places fashioned in the darkness by Roman sorcerers.

It has been two hundred years since your fathers waxed great in the land. *Wael* kings curse you in the western hills, and savage Picts and Scots threaten Northumbria's land in the shadow of Roman walls, but the English are the worst foe to their own kind. The *Wael* lords may sleep, and the northern tribes may grow wary at times, but the din of English spears on English shields never dies away.

Kings struggle now from their carven halls, warring first with one neighbor and then another, and all the while their bands ride forth to steal and pillage whatever their grasping hands can seize. Noble men are done to death in terrible ways and the holy houses of God are profaned by shed blood. Your fathers have been Christians for generations, but many have no more dread of Christ and His awful judgment than they bear for mortal men.

And still the *wergild* of former war must be paid. The old *Arcem* of the Roman cities are beginning to break open, the old seals withering and their ancient prisoners emerging once more into the world. It is not good to dwell overlong within an *Arx*, and men are changed by the air within those strange realms. Things that once were men and things that never knew clean sunlight now hunt in the streets of dead Roman cities.

Even pagan superstition and heretical evil is waxing within the English lands. Saxon heathens in Sussex still resent the holy work of Christian conversion, and rebels against God yet hide deep in the forest to plot their unholy deeds. Heretics among the *Wael* have been led to Satan's service by their hatred of your ancestors, and make awful bargains with damnable powers to avenge themselves upon you.

The old heroes are dead. Hengest and Horsa are no more, and the tribes they led to this fair isle now war with each other as if they were but strangers. The Picts have ravaged the north and the *Wael* kingdoms war whenever they have the strength to kill your kin. The Roman *Arcem* disgorge their horrors and heathens and heretics assail your holy monasteries. Truly it is a dark age for your people.

Yet God shall not abandon His servants, and you and your kinsmen have ever served God's will. Once, you were His Wolves upon a wicked people. Now, yours is the wickedness that He must cleanse. It is an hour for rising and for wakening glory. It is an hour for mighty deeds and a hero's song. Go forth, young warrior. England cries out for your aid!



ome would say that

this book is a vain labor and a profane indulgence unbecoming a monk of God. I, Brother Cornix, instead reply that it is a good and useful labor

to share knowledge of English customs and English ways with others in our great confraternity.

I cannot say what manner of reader should hold this book, whether it be another of England or a far man of Byzantium or one of the distant land of the Tang. Gamesmen are to be found in all such places, and it is my great desire that they should find some understanding of the English in this small book, as their own games teach us of their ways.

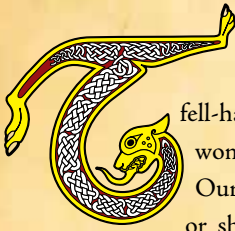
To play this game, you must have one well-versed in this book and all it contains, one who can conjure up the English Lands with ease and wise understanding. He shall be the Great Magister of the game, or “GM”. Where his friends shall play the heroes of their tale, the GM shall be every churl and thane and lord they encounter, and every awful *orc* and giant and *Arx*-born foe they face as well. He will listen to the plans and intentions of his friends, and fashion them adventures by which they might carry out their great ambitions.

Aside from the GM, you must have two or three or four or more companions to play the heroes of the game. They need not know the book so well, and it suffices if they are able to read the first small portion, enough to fashion their chosen hero and know a little of their role in the English Lands. What else they have to learn, they may learn by playing.

You must also have Roman dice to play. You have perhaps seen the twenty-sided dice that the Romans used for their games, and the six-sided dice you know, but also you must have dice of four and eight and ten and twelve sides, familiar to geometers and the wise.

Here and there in the book, you will see dice notation, such as “3D6” or “2D10+2”. Such markings mean “Roll three six-sided dice and add them together”, or “Roll two ten-sided dice together and add two to the sum”. On occasion you may be asked to roll a hundred-sided die. Do not suppose that you require such an ungainly implement. Instead, simply roll two ten-sided dice and read the first die as the tens and the second as the ones, with double-zero read as one hundred.

OF PLAYING THIS GAME



he English are a

fierce and mighty host,
fell-handed and grim, and our
women bring forth heroes.
Our folk are not without sin
or shame, but our spears are

swift to battle and our scop's sing long of our great deeds. If you would play at being a hero of England, you must make one worthy of such a great name. Mudfooted thralls and gibbering foreigners will not serve to earn the glory of our English story and song.

Remember also that a hero does not stand alone in their story. The scop's have many tales to tell, and a mere name or glimpse in one may glint of a different legend, one equally proud. You will have companions around the hall-fire, friends at mead and meat, and you must not seek so much glory that there is none left for them. Together you must make your heroes, and together you must gain your fame. To desire to go alone is to shame your spear-brothers and be over-proud of ambition. What is a war-leader without his warband, or a king without his beloved thanes? Do not be a mere gray-clad wanderer, treading the whale-roads and walking the hart's highway, alone and without friend or faith.

Listen, and I will tell you how to make an English hero. From the first strong sinews of the mortal body to the crown of reason and high ambition, you will learn what makes a mighty champion of our people.

Nota Bene: While Brother Cornix assumes a male audience, Anglo-Saxons were not as patriarchal as some other societies of the time. Women had rights by law and custom, and they were considered people in their own right, and not merely the dependent of a father or husband. They owned property and disposed of it as they saw fit, and their oaths were credited in legal matters. Wives traditionally managed a family's resources, and abbesses invariably ruled the "double monasteries" that held both monks and nuns.

Women, however, were traditionally part of the domestic sphere of Anglo-Saxon society. They were not normally warriors or adventurers, and while the occasional spear-maiden might know something of war, they were not expected to fight or be fought. As many players will wish to play female characters in more than political or domestic roles, GMs are advised to make room for "remarkable women", war-heroines and battle-queens and galdorwives who fill roles that might have been reserved for men. If a player wishes to play such a remarkable woman, let the world treat her as befits her chosen role.

On The Making OF Heroes

ATTRIBUTES

God grants men their lot in unequal shares, some with many gifts of grace and others going forth with empty hands. It is not mete for men to be all alike in ability. It is by struggling with what we have not that we often come closest to pleasing God, while those who are greatly gifted most easily plunge into pride and a foolish fall. So do not be saddened if you learn that your hero is not so graced as you might wish.

*Attributes range
from 3 to 18*

There are six numbers by which we measure the might of a man's mind and limbs. These are the **ATTRIBUTES**. They are measured on a scale from three to eighteen. Three is the least and worst, signifying a weakness so great that the hero must rely on the Holy Trinity alone to support him in it, for only God's grace can help him if he be thrown upon its need. Eighteen is the greatest and strongest, for it is twice nine, signifying double completion of all natural fullness. Now I will name for you these six attributes.

*Strength measures
bodily might*

STRENGTH is a measure of the hero's might of arm. Three means that they are a weakling, scarce able to lift a man's spear and given to groan under the weight of a burden. Eighteen is for a bull of a man, one who can lift a strong warrior from his feet with but one arm and break an oaken hall-table with one great blow.

*Dexterity is agility
and speed*

DEXTERITY marks the swiftness of their limbs and keenness of their aim. Three is a palsied man, clumsy and numb-handed, untrustworthy with a bow or hurled spear. Eighteen is for one light-footed as the breeze and swift as a spring flood, who knocks starlings from the air with pebbles and passes laughing through the bared blades of foemen.

*Constitution is
health and stamina*

CONSTITUTION is the heart and hardiness of a man. Three is one sickly and nigh to death, who groans at small pains and falls in the furrow before half the field is ploughed. Eighteen is for a man who scorns sleep, who will swim the whale-roads for hours without pause and who will fight for half a day without asking halt for rest.

*Intelligence is
memory and wit*

INTELLIGENCE is the reason and memory of a man, his power to learn and retain what he has learned. Three is a simpleton, who understands nothing that does not stand before him or rest within his own hands, who can be taught nothing of letters or cunning thought. Eighteen is a man of great learning, more read than a *Wael* bishop and swift to remember all the words he has stored up in his heart.

*Wisdom is insight
and judgment*

WISDOM is for judgment and keen perception, the understanding that shows the truth of a matter and the right road to go. Three is a fool, incontinent in passions and blind in perceiving what is about him. Eighteen is a sign

like a saint's own clear understanding, seeing the truths in men's hearts and counting every leaf on a tree with but a passing glance.

CHARISMA is the attribute of kingliness and faithful friendship, the grace that makes men yearn to follow and obey. Three is for a scorned and contemptible man, such that even sound speech he utters is disdained because it comes from his mouth. Eighteen is for one mantled in lordly bearing, bright and heart-helping, such that men would liefer follow his folly than go a wiser way.

Charisma is charm and presence

Roll 3d6 six times and place scores as you wish

To mark the gifts of your hero, roll 3d6 six times and place the numbers where you will, choosing for yourself how your hero is to be measured. If none of the numbers are 14 or greater, there has been a mistake, for no English hero is wholly without gifts. Change one of your numbers to 14, and tell your companions a few words about how your real gift became clear to your kinsmen.

If you would prefer not to trust your hero's doom to God's pleasure, you may instead put these numbers into your attributes in whatever order you desire: 14, 13, 12, 10, 8, 7.

Or place these six numbers as you desire

ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Now that you have marked the attributes of your hero, you must mark their **ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS**. This is the number which is added to or subtracted from your die rolls when your attribute modifies a roll. I will guide and instruct you on when you are to apply the modifier, so do not fear your present ignorance.

Write down the modifier next to each attribute

ATTRIBUTE		MODIFIER
3	is	-2
4-7	is	-1
8-13	is	+0
14-17	is	+1
18	is	+2

Attribute modifiers range from -2 to +2, with most as +0

If your hero suffers the scars of battle and is crippled in body, or your hero's history grants them an improvement to an attribute, you should adjust your modifier accordingly.

Change your modifier if your attribute changes

THE SKILLS OF THE ENGLISH

We of the English do not command the great skills of old. We have not the stone-cunning of the Romans, nor the sorcerous arts of their Artifexes, nor the secrets of silk-making as do the far-distant Tang. Our halls are simple, of carven wood and painted forms, and our wares are fashioned by humble hands. But we have our skills, and they were art enough for our fathers to take this land for their sons.

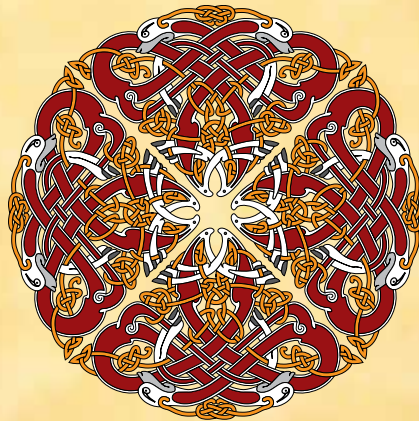
Skills are rated from level-0 to level-4

Each skill is named and measured in degree. The smallest degree of competence is level-0, the proficiency of an ordinary practitioner without exceptional skill. Level-1 belongs to the veteran of the skill, one that others respect for their craft. Level-2 is a splendid artist in the work, the finest in his Hundred. Level-3 marks one so skilled that there is likely not his match in all his kingdom, and level-4 signifies the soul who is perhaps the greatest of that art in all Britain.

You gain skills from your background and role

As your hero is but young in their story, their own skills will be at level-0 or level-1, to grow better with time and great deeds. As you choose your past and decide your present, you will be told which of these skills your hero can claim to possess.

Here I describe these skills to you, so you may know what manner of arts we practice in the English Lands.



BUILD, the raising of halls, the digging of pit-houses, and the making of oak trees into sturdy buildings.

CRAFT, a skill to represent weaving, carpentry, smithing, carving, painting, and all the other arts of hand by which we make and live. Your hero knows only those arts that are fitting for his past.

EXERT, to run, climb, swim, balance, and show command of one's bodily frame.

FARM, to grow good crops even in hard seasons, and to know the ways of feeding kin and followers.

FIGHT, to struggle with spear and sword and engage in all forms of hand-to-hand battle.

HEAL, to cure grievous wounds and banish sicknesses by prayer and poultice and wise herbals.

HERD, to tend flocks and herds and deal with the wild beasts of forest and fell.

KEN, to know the things befitting a scholar and learned monk, of history, mathematics, and such. At level-o, you read and write Latin. You could write English, for not a few men can read it, but that is less often done.

LEAD, to win the confidence of men and keep their friendship, that they might follow you loyally.

PERFORM, to sing heroic lays, to dance with grace and skill, and to compose poetry of all kinds.

PRAY, to know such things as a priest or monk or nun should know and to say good prayers that lift the heart.

RIDE, to course well on a horse, keep a mount hale and sound, and tell good horses from bad.

SAIL, to navigate by boat or ship and to know the ways of sailors.

SENSE, to see and hear and sense other things well and swiftly, lest you be taken unawares.

SHOOT, to contend with bow and hurled spear, and fight with all manner of thrown or shot weaponry.

SNEAK, to prowl unnoticed, whether as a contemptible thief or cunning huntsman.

SPEAK, to utter fair words and move hearts to agree with what you have said.

TRADE, to barter and bargain, though hardly any man in England lives solely through his skill at getting a good exchange.

WAR, to know the cunning stratagems of a good war-leader and the marshaling of band or army.

A HERO'S PAST

A hero is made by his own hands. The English have little interest in a man's fathers, and an earl's son has little name until he earns glory and a king's friendship. Land, wealth, fame... these things must be earned anew every generation, and the feckless fall swiftly from old glory.

Pick a background and gain the four listed skills at level-0 Choose one of the backgrounds below to describe your hero's heritage or his personal past. Each one will grant you four skills fit for your history. If you choose to be an Artifex or a galdorcrafter you may learn those magical arts as described later in this book, though you will be feared and mistrusted by all but your closest companions.

Artifexes can learn the Roman magic of Artifice **ARTIFEX**, a man taught the Roman secrets of sorcery and building. Precious few have these arts in the English Lands, as the few remaining Artifexes were of the *Wael*, and the *Wael* oft hate the English. Still, you were taken young by one such magister and taught the essentials of the art. Other English fear and mistrust you, but you may practice the magic of Artifice. Your beginning skills are Build-o, Craft-o, Ken-o, and Sense-o.

Most men in England are free churls and farmers **CHURL**, a free man of the English. Your parents did not have much land, but they had a hide of it, or two, or perhaps three if they were wealthy. They had honor in the settlement and the right to bear a spear as befits a free man, and if they owed labor and tribute to a lord, it was not a shameful service. Your beginning skills are Farm-o, Herd-o, Exert-o, and Fight-o.

Shops are unknown in England and traders nearly so outside the wics **CRAFTER**, one raised to know the chisel and the axe. Your family farmed, as virtually all men do, but they also had skill in some useful craft, whether as blacksmiths, carvers, tanners, shieldwrights, bowyers, or other arts. Many came from other places to barter for their work, and their skills were prized by their lord. Your beginning skills are Farm-o, Craft-o, Trade-o, and Fight-o.

Galdorcrafter can learn the old English magic of galdor **GALDORCRAFTER**, one versed in the old magic of the English. The Artifexes are not the only ones who know something of the hidden world, and you were raised by one wise in the songs of *galdor* and willing to teach the crafting of its tokens and charms. Galdorcraft is subtle in its effects, but useful in many ways. It is also despised by the pious, despite its common use of Christian prayer, and men who sing its chants are never well-trusted. Your beginning skills are Craft-o, Heal-o, Perform-o, and Sense-o.

- GESITH**, one heir to a proud companionship in war. Your father was *gesith*, a companion to a lord and a friend in his hall and his battles. You were raised to be fit to follow him, but you must prove your worth in the world before any lord will consent to include you in his retinue and give you gifts of land and wealth. Your beginning skills are Fight-o, Shoot-o, Ride-o, and War-o. *All free men know something of war. Gesith make a life of it.*
- MINSTERKIND**, a monk or nun for Christ. Pledged young to a minster or a double monastery, your youth passed in a holy and pious circumstance. Some calamity in the monastery or call from God has sent you out into the world, surrounded by sin and sorrow. Men honor and respect you, but you must act rightly if you are to keep that respect. Your beginning skills are Farm-o, Pray-o, Ken-o, and Heal-o. *Monks can be ordained priests, but often are not. They pray apart from the world.*
- PRIEST**, a man permitted to offer the holy sacraments and tend the souls of his community. A secular priest has much to do with the world, forever managing the woes and quarrels of his neighbors and providing the rites that help them in this world and the next. There are times when disaster or divine will sends them forth, however, and they must do God's work afar. Your beginning skills are Farm-o, Pray-o, Speak-o, and Lead-o. *Priests dress and live much like their neighbors. Not a few take a wife and sire heirs.*
- REEVE**, one who represents a lord and tends to his interests in a steading. An earl must often be at the service of his king or be at war on behalf of his lord, so a reeve must tend to the daily affairs of his lands. Your father was a reeve to a man of importance, and so you learned much of the concerns of great men. Your beginning skills are Farm-o, Trade-o, Speak-o, and Fight-o. *Reeves are rarely loved by the other common folk.*
- THRALL**, a slave owned by another man. Thralls are common among the English, the product of the many raids and wars between kingdoms. A warrior can expect death if captured, but a common churl or a woman is worth more for their toil. You were a thrall, but you have escaped the reach of your former master and can make whatever future you dare. Your beginning skills are Farm-o, Exert-o, Sneak-o, and Fight-o. *Anyone can be made a thrall. It lasts until they are freed or flee their master's grasp.*
- WANDERER**, outlaw or foreigner. You have no home, either for crimes you have committed, because you are a foreigner from over the sea, or because your hall has fallen in flame and battle-smoke. You are friendless save for your spear-companions and can expect no more justice than your right hand can take. Your beginning skills are Sneak-o, Fight-o, Shoot-o, and Exert-o. *Foreigners usually have a king's protection. Outlaws can be killed with impunity.*

NAMING YOUR WYRD

No hero is without his **WYRD**, the destiny that awaits him before he sleeps in grave-grasp. Every man has his *wyrd*, but those of common churls and ignoble thralls are of little consequence and small glory. Their virtues are small and their vices of little account, petty in good and trifling in evil. But a hero is different, for his *wyrd* promises greatness in valor or in terrible crime, and not uncommonly in both.

*All have a wyrd,
and it cannot be
denied*

A man's *wyrd* is not the whole of his story. He may be a good man or a wicked one, he may do many great deeds or many foul crimes, but his *wyrd* is what is inescapable. He will not die until he has drunk its cup to the lees, and his measure is in how bravely he bears what he cannot change.

*Pick two noble
wyrds and one
ignoble one, or one
noble and three
ignoble*

Now you must choose or roll two noble *wyrds* and one ignoble one to shape your hero's destiny. These *wyrds* describe your hero's character and mood, the passions that press them on to glory and the flaws that goad them to infamous deeds. If you would wish to give the devil more than his due, you may exchange one of your noble *wyrds* for two additional ignoble ones, but this concession may be made only once. A man without noble nature can be no hero, nor worthy of words of memory.

*Call upon a fitting
wyrd to win victory
in a trial or battle*

The *wyrds* tell you of your hero, but what place do they have in the game? When your hero faces a terrible foe, or strives to do a mighty deed, or is forestalled by some impossible challenge, he may invoke his *wyrd*, naming the destiny he calls upon to defeat the foe, do the deed, or best the challenge. He must describe the way in which his *wyrd* will help him, though the skein of the tale can bend greatly to make it so. Once the foe has been bested or the deed achieved, the *wyrd* is marked as fulfilled. The hero may still show its traits or bear its mark, but he can never again invoke it to aid him.

*The GM may
compel an ignoble
wyrd*

A hero chooses the time for invoking his *wyrd*. The GM cannot compel him to call on his destiny, with the exception of his ignoble *wyrds*. The GM can force him to succumb to his flaws if the alternative is certain death, obliging him to pay *wergild* for his life through his cowardice, treachery, or shame.

*You shall not die
until all wyrds have
been invoked*

A hero cannot die until every *wyrd* he bears has been invoked. He may suffer scars, bear grave wounds, lose kin and hall and spear-companions, but he will not know God's judgment until his *wyrd* has been lived out to the last. Let him meet it bravely. Those who cringe away from their destiny rarely find a rich reward for their timid heart.

ᏔᏔ NOBLE WYRDS

- 1-4 An angel guards me from above.
5-8 False words do not deceive me.
9-12 Fear has no power over me.
13-16 God loves my piety.
17-20 I am a bane of monsters.
21-24 I am a fearsome warrior.
25-28 I am stoic in my pain.
29-32 I am true to my spear-brothers.
33-36 I avenge wrongs done to me.
37-40 I defend my own.
41-44 I keep my oaths.
45-48 I know the right time to act.
49-52 Men follow my lead.
53-56 Men tremble at my wrath.
57-60 Men's hearts are lifted by my words.
61-64 My wrath is aimed at the deserving.
65-68 My deeds know no weariness.
69-72 My gifts win true loyalty.
73-76 My judgment is just.
77-80 My memory is long.
81-84 My people love me well.
85-88 My skill is great.
89-92 My word is trusted.
93-96 No lie can hinder me.
97-00 Wisdom is in my words.

IGNOBLE WYRDS

- Anger blinds me to good sense.
I abandon my own.
I aid strangers before my own people.
I am a coward at moments of peril.
I am a friend to outlaws and monsters.
I am treacherous to my spear-brothers.
I begrudge the giving of gifts.
I betray my own people.
I claim glory that belongs to another.
I do evil in secret ways.
I fear pain and suffering.
I love the telling of lies.
I pray to the old pagan gods.
I seduce the women of other men.
I speak reckless insults without cause.
I suffer wrongs and do not avenge them.
I take more than I am due.
I wound friends to gain my desire.
I wrong God and Church to get my will.
Men hold me in contempt.
My boasts outstrip my skill.
My deeds are full of folly.
My lust for riches is past reason.
My oaths mean nothing.
My people love me not at all.

When you invoke a *wyrd*, you may describe the way in which it helps you, and if the GM does not find it too implausible or unseemly, it will come to pass as you have said. For example, if you lie defeated beneath the spears of a savage band of pagans, you may choose to invoke “My gifts win true loyalty” and describe how their leader once received a golden ring from your hand, a chance find gifted to him in careless generosity. Recognizing you at last, he commands his men to spare you and bind your wounds. *Invoking a wyrd can shape a situation*

A hero who has a different *wyrd* in mind, one not written here, may choose it if the GM finds it a seemly desire.

GAINING GRACES IN YOUR PAST

Your hero may have been but a common churl, one alike to all his neighbors in life and livelihood, but there was yet something unusual about him. His arm was stronger, his limbs more lithesome, his wisdom more wary to tell of deceit. Your hero was more skilled than his kinsmen, and now you must decide how this was so.

Increase an attribute by +2 for each ignoble wyrd, For every ignoble *wyrd* you bear, increase an attribute score by +2. The devil makes men strong in their evil, and the better you love Hell's ways, the greater your stature in this unhappy world. This increase may not bring an attribute over 18, though if you have more than one ignoble *wyrd*, you may raise more than one attribute, or the same one more than once. Remember to amend your attribute modifiers if needful.

Gain a bonus skill for each noble wyrd, one connected to it For each noble *wyrd* you bear, choose one skill. Describe in a few words how this *wyrd* aided you in obtaining the skill. Perhaps a *wyrd* destining you to glory in battle granted you gifts in spear-play, while a *wyrd* of cunning insight sharpened your senses. Perhaps you might tell a little tale of some deed your hero did, hinting at his destiny and demonstrating his gift in the skill. This connection must make sense to the GM, but it need not be more than a sentence or two.

Bonus skills are level-0, or level-1 if already level-0 You gain that chosen skill at level-0. If you already possess it at level-0, either from your background or from having chosen it before, it becomes level-1. A skill cannot be raised above level-1 for novice heroes, for the full flower of their prowess has yet to bloom with their tales.

OF GLORIES, SHAMES AND SPLENDOUR

The mark of a hero is in his **GLORIES**, in the magnificence of his deeds and the wisdom of his words. You are but a young hero yet, so you have no Glories to your name. When you achieve mighty deeds or do such great things as other men praise, your GM will instruct you to record the Glory in your hero's chronicle. You must attain many Glories if you are to be accepted as a king's companion, to be deemed worthy of land and the loyalty of brave men.

Gain a Glory when you do something heroic

Yet you may also fall to fell ambitions, to evil urges and wicked acts. When you commit an act of great baseness and scandal, you must record a **SHAME** in your chronicle if any man lives to tell of your crime. If you hide it from all who would speak of it, God will still reckon it in your grave but mortal men will know nothing of your sin.

Gain a Shame when you do something vile that is discovered

Shames do not blot out Glories. A great king may have a score of Glories to his name and near as many terrible crimes in turn, but he is still a great king, and proud warriors will still seek his hall. His command upon their loyalty will be lighter, however, and his people less loving of their lord. If his Shames should outnumber his Glories, they may cast him off in disgust at his base and ignoble ways.

Aside from Glories and Shames, a hero also has **SPLENDOUR**. A man's importance and prowess is shown by the magnificence of his harness, by the weight of gold he bears and the fineness of his armaments. One who wears bright rings and jeweled brooches, who bears a ring-hilted sword and a hauberk of shining mail, must of certainty be a great hero. He must have won great plunder from fallen foes, or received the rich thanks of kings for loyal service. All men can tell at a glance that he is a fell-handed warrior, worthy of caution and respect.

Splendour comes from wearing rich ornaments and fine gear. Total the pieces of finery to get your Splendour score.

One gathers Splendour by wearing rich garments, by bearing fine weapons, and by adorning one's form with shining silver and bright gold. For each piece of fine wealth you wear, add one point to your Splendour.

If you face a man of inferior Splendour, your magnificence will weaken his will and chill his heart. You gain +4 to all attack rolls against such a man, +2 to all damage rolls, and +1 to all opposed skill checks. But be wary, for if you face a more splendid foe, you yourself shall feel the fear and suffer the penalties in turn.

Get bonuses against a human foe with less Splendour

Wild beasts, demons, and Arx-born monstrosities care nothing of Splendour, and never inflict nor suffer the penalties for facing a richly adorned foe. Saints care nothing for bright rings when warring against devils.

Beasts and devils ignore Splendour

FINAL ADORNMENTS

Your hero is nigh to completion, and only a few more measures must be taken to ready them for glorious adventures.

Your maximum hit points are 8 plus your Constitution modifier Record their **HIT POINTS**, the measure of how close they are to grievous defeat. You begin with a maximum of 8 hit points, to which you add your Constitution modifier. When wounds or woes cost you all of these points, you fall, either slain or sword-scarred by your misfortunes. It requires time and a healer's care to mend these grave wounds, but if you win through a battle without falling, your lost points will swiftly return.

Your attack bonus is +1 Note down your **ATTACK BONUS**, the score you add to every thrust of your spear or goose-feathered shaft you loose. Whenever you roll a d20 to hit a foe, you will add this attack bonus to it. Your hero's attack bonus is +1, but may rise with time and great deeds.

Your saving throws for Might, Swiftmess, and Will are 16 minus the best of two attribute modifiers Write carefully your **SAVING THROWS**, each one equal to 16 minus the better of two modifiers. For Might, subtract the better of your Strength or Constitution modifiers. For Swiftmess, subtract the better of Dexterity or Intelligence. For Will, subtract the better of Wisdom or Charisma. When your hero is faced with grim peril and the GM calls upon you to roll a saving throw, take up a d20 and roll it against such save as he thinks good. If you roll equal or over the number, you withstand the danger, and so overcome it or suffer less gravely from it.

Get a knife, a spear, a suit of common clothing, and five items from the following gear list While your hero may have come from a wealthy family, he has been forced to shift for himself in this new settlement, and so has little more than a poor man does. You carry a knife, as all do, a spear, as all free men have, one set of common garb, and five items from the list in the following section. England has little use for traders and common markets, and if you wish to have more than these few things, you must either find a friendly crafter to make them for you, get them in gift from another, or take them from the possessions of your conquered foes.

Name your hero from the table on the next page Lastly, you must crown your hero with a good English name. The list on the facing page gives you guidance in this. Roll or pick a part from the first column and add to it a part from the second to make an English name, one fit for either man or woman. If you must name a place, like that of your settlement, do the same with the second two columns, choosing first one piece and adding to it another. Some place-names are fashioned from their founder's name to which is added a suffix from the rightmost column.

A WORD ON SPEAKING

Foreign tongues find little ease in English words. Do not seek to speak them perfectly unless it gives you pleasure. To give every rule for correct utterance is a task beyond this little book, and beyond the patience of its reader. Where certainty fails you, pronounce each letter as it is pronounced in your own tongue, and merely trouble to be consistent in your choice. And if you be a gamesman of the Tang or a Greek-spoken Byzantine, then utter them any way you please, for your comrades will hardly know better to correct you.

ÐOO	FIRST NAME	SECONÐ	FIRST PLACE	SECONÐ
1-4	Aedel	bald	Ac	barrow
5-8	Aelf	bert	Ald	broc
9-12	Ald	den	Baec	burh
13-16	Athel	frith	Bearu	bury
17-20	Bald	gar	Beo	camb
21-24	Behrt	gis	Bere	dun
25-28	Beo	hard	Cald	end
29-32	Beor	heard	Cild	ern
33-36	Cene	helm	Dael	feld
37-40	Cuth	here	Denu	ford
41-44	Cyne	man	East	ham
45-48	Dag	mar	Fald	hurst
49-52	Ead	mund	Fenn	ley
53-56	Eofor	red	Folc	mer
57-60	Eor	ric	Gos	moor
61-64	Ethel	stan	Hame	ney
65-68	Hild	thel	Hrither	port
69-72	Hrod	ulf	Loc	rod
73-76	Hroth	wald	Mere	stan
77-80	Hun	ward	Salt	stead
81-84	Ken	weald	Sid	stow
85-88	Os	whit	Stocc	tun
89-92	Rad	wig	Thorn	weg
93-96	Sel	wine	Wella	wic
97-00	Wig	wulf	Wether	wig

INSTRUMENTS OF LIFE AND DEATH

These pages name for you those humble implements that a young hero might have for his own. Each hero has a knife for his meat, a spear for his foes, a good suit of woolen clothes to warm him, and five items from those listed here.

Take a knife and either a barbed or broad spear. Other weapons count as a choice

First, choose either a barbed spear or a broad-bladed *gar* for your hero. If you have want of yet another weapon, pick it accordingly. Record the damage die for the weapon, and the attributes it relies upon. If two are named, you may use the attribute at which you better excel.

WEAPONS	DMG	ATTR	COMMENT
Axe	1d6	Str	An uncommon war-weapon, but gain +2 to hit a foe who bears a shield
Barbed Spear	1d6	Str/Dex	A lighter, barbed-headed spear that can be thrown up to 60 feet away
Bow	1d6	Dex	Oft for hunting, rarely for war, with a range of 600 feet
Broad Spear	1d8	Str	Every free man has his spear, six and a half feet long as custom requires
Knife	1d4	Str/Dex	More for meat than merciless war, all have a knife close to hand
Seax	1d6	Str/Dex	A great single-edged knife to hew hunted prey and fight foes

Choose a shield if you wish, and a wise warrior so wishes

A warrior most often bears a shield as well, a wood-wall against woe and wounds. A shield will improve your **ARMOR CLASS**, the measure of how difficult it is to harm you with spear or sword. Without a shield, your Armor Class is 10 plus your Dexterity modifier.

SHIELDS	COMMENT
Heavy Shield	Proud-bossed with iron to batter a foe, when you hit an enemy in combat while bearing a heavy shield, add 2 points of damage to your blow. Your Armor Class is 14 plus your Dex modifier while you bear this shield.
Broad Shield	Fashioned more lightly to be more nimble to interpose between flesh and foeman's steel, your Armor Class is 15 plus your Dex modifier while you bear this shield.

If a foe's strike would cost you the last of your hit points, you may let your shield shatter to avert the blow, but only once in each battle.

Where, you ask, is the coat of bright mail and the helm that crowns the warrior's head? They are on the backs and brows of the friends of kings, not the shoulders of unproven men. Armor and helms are precious treasures, most often from over the sea or won from *Arx*-troves and nighted places. I have heard stories of Greek armor made of linen, and of tribes that wrap their bodies in boiled hides, but such outlandish harness is not used in England. Men who have no iron war-shirts fight in woolen ones, with their shields to defend their lives.

The English rarely wear any armor or helmet. If they do, it's a costly mail-shirt or Roman salvage

But spear and shield are not enough for an adventurer's deeds. Pick the remainder of your items from the lists below, or ask for something else that seems mete to your GM's mind. Items marked with an asterisk increase the bearer's Splendour. While a man may wear many rings and armllets, he may wear only one tunic, brooch pair, or cloak at a time.

ITEM	COMMENT	
Candles	Six fine beeswax candles to burn for an hour each	<i>None of these items are very costly, but some may make a polite and respected gift. Even a simple gift of cloaks to a dozen monks was honor enough to bear mention in a king's history</i>
Carving tools	Small chisels and picks fit to carve wood and stone	
Common garb	Tunic and trousers and knee-length cloak, all wool	
Cowhide	A tanned cowhide to wrap a thing or shelter under	
Dried meat	Three days' sustenance in dried flesh	
Fine brooches*	Cloak-brooches of finely-worked copper	
Fine tunic*	A brightly-colored tunic of good linen	
Harp	A small harp of middling virtue	
Hide thongs	Twenty feet of tough leather thongs for binding	
Iron prybar	A bar for prying loose that which is stuck fast	
Iron pot	A sturdy little iron pot, fit for cooking	
Jar of wine	A half-gallon of prized Frankish wine	
Leather sack	A stout sack to bear over your shoulder	
Medicine bag	A small leather bag of herbs and wool bandages	
Pouched girdle	A broad belt with many small pouches attached	
Quiver of arrows	A leather quiver and twenty goosefeathered shafts	
Rich cloak*	Knee-length wool decorated in good brocade	
Rope, 25 feet	Stout hempen rope coiled well	
Sturdy boots	Good leather boots, better than common shoes	
Tinderbox	Fire-flints and embers for quick flame	
Torches	Eight resinous torches, each burning thirty minutes	
Waterskin	Holds water enough to slake a man for two days	

WAXING IN MIGHT

In these pages I have instructed you in the making of a young hero. He is one bold and capable and graced beyond common men, but he is still without name or followers, nor does he stand so proudly as old heroes like Beowulf or Saint Oswine. How may you increase his power?

Increase your character level by gaining Glories

Seek Glories. When you have accumulated Glories, you will have been hardened by your trials and sharpened by the steel of your foes. You will have earned your might and increased in **LEVEL**, the measure of a hero's prowess. You begin at level 1, and the greatest heroes of song and legend stand at level 10, or perhaps even higher.

You need a certain number of total Glories to go up a character level

To reach level 2, you must obtain one Glory. I write here in the margin a table showing you how many Glories in total you must obtain in order to reach a particular level. When you have finally obtained enough Glories to reach a new level, you will gain all the blessings of that new might after the current evening's gaming is done.

LEVEL	GLORIES
1	None
2	1
3	2
4	4
5	6
6	8
7	11
8	14
9	17
10	20

You can substitute one self-interested Shame for a Glory once a level

I hesitate to write it here, but a monk must always relate the truth. There is yet another way to get power, though God pity those that succumb to it. When one commits a Shame directly for one's own benefit, and it becomes known to men and a scandal to common morality, then that Shame may count as if it were a Glory. Hell rewards those that mock righteousness, and the most base and terrible men have arms made strong by Satan. God grants that there is a limit to the aid that the devil may give, however, and only one such Shame may help a man until he reaches the next level.

The means I write are only those that grant personal power and strength to a man's own right arm. Friendship, land, wealth, and all the other good things that come to the mighty must be earned in other ways, either through fair words, an open hand, or a strong help in times of need. These things do not come simply because a man can strike more swiftly with his spear or bear more bravely his wounds.

BENEFITS OF INCREASING YOUR LEVEL

When you advance a character level, your hero becomes stronger. You gain these benefits after the current evening's play is complete.

Primus, increase your hero's maximum hit points by two, to which you add your Constitution modifier. *Gain more HP*

Secundus, gain two new skills at level-o, or increase an existing skill you have by one level. You must explain how you bolstered these arts in your last level. You may not increase a skill if the new level would be greater than one third your character level, rounded down, plus one. *Gain two new skills at level-o or raise one skill by 1*

Tertius, add one point to your Splendour score. This benefit persists even if you lack all adornment, for the majesty of your proven might is bourne like a mantle upon your shoulders. A king in rags is yet a king. *Gain one permanent Splendour*



Right understanding

of the English Lands is needed if your heroes would prosper in these realms. As the men who read this little book may be of many lands, I have written this chapter to instruct you in what you must know. To the GM, I address more on these things in later pages, but for you who would desire only to play, this chapter is sufficient to teach you.

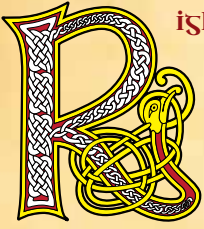
Of The English Lands

Nota Bene: Brother Cornix's description of Anglo-Saxon culture and politics is perhaps best described as "defensible". Premodern game authors have been known to take considerable liberties with their native civilizations in order to make it "more interesting", or more amenable to heroic adventure, and while they usually do not depart entirely from provable fact, they have been known to be rather exuberant with available evidence.

My own limited learning suggests that Brother Cornix has mostly kept to a truthful description of his society, with some simplifications put in where he thinks foreigners would neither care for nor understand the more complex elements.

His history, on the other hand, is patently fanciful. Certainly, the historical invasion or migration of Anglo-Saxon tribes may have happened as he describes, and evidence does suggest that the English avoided living in abandoned Roman cities, and numerous ecclesiastical sites have been found overlapping Roman towns, but the idea that this was due to "magical seals" and "otherworldly horrors" is clearly a device of dramatic fiction.

OF WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE



Right understanding

of the law brings light to men and their dealings. Herein I describe to you the means by which you may overcome your foes, best your great challeng-

es, and prove yourself a worthy bearer of a hero's bright mantle.

The Rule of the Game

HEROIC COMBAT

Here I write for you the way by which men may fight, either foes of a foreign folk or bloodthirsty beasts or enemies of otherworldly kind. These rules are for the encounters of a small band at most, for if a full *here* of summoned Hundreds clashes on the battlefield the struggle is different, and will be described in a different place.

Battle begins when someone decides that it does. Fair words may have failed, or old wrath been owed, or in some other way the peaceful meeting of men has gone astray. All that is needed is for one man to level his spear and the battle will be joined.

A round lasts about six seconds

Battles are measured out in **ROUNDS**, each one lasting no longer than three or four easy breaths. In a round, every warrior acts once. When all have acted, the round ends, and the next one begins.

Initiative is a d8 plus Dexterity modifier. Roll it once for each side, then each side acts in order

To discern which side may first act, either the heroes or their foes, roll a d8 and add to it the best Dexterity modifier from among the heroes. This is their **INITIATIVE**. Now roll again a d8 for their foes, adding nothing unless you decide that they are uncommonly swift. This is the foe's initiative. If it is a three-cornered battle or a melee of many bands, roll once for each group. The highest initiative roll goes first, with the heroes winning ties. Then the members of the next may act, and so forth. Repeat this sequence in each new round. When it is a side's turn to act, its members may go in whatever sequence pleases them, or clockwise around the hall-table if no better desire is had.

With surprise, ambushers get a free round before initiative is rolled

Sometimes a side is taken by surprise, by treacherous blades or a sudden charge from amidst forest bracken. If the prey is wary at the time, and has reason to suspect that battle may be near, they may make an opposed skill check to discern the ambush in time. The assailants check Dexterity/Sneak versus the defender's Wisdom/Notice. Let the best-talented of each group roll; if the assailant wins, all are surprised, and if the defender wins, none are. If the surprise is successful, the assailants get a free round to act before initiative is rolled.

ACTING IN BATTLE

When it is a warrior's turn to act in combat, he may both move and fight.

If he moves, it is ten paces, or thirty feet, and this assumes he is being wary of wounds and quick to dodge perils as he crosses the battlefield. If he must climb or pass difficult terrain, this distance is halved. If he refrains from fighting this round and does nothing but move, he may move twice as far.

Move 30 feet a round, or twice that if you do no more

If he moves away from a foe who has engaged him with spear or sword, he cannot attack or act otherwise this round, or he will give his adjacent foes a free strike as he recklessly withdraws from them.

Lose your attack to disengage safely

If he fights, he may strike a foe within reach, or loose an arrow, or hurl a barbed spear. In place of fighting, he may do something else that takes only a few breaths to complete, such as drawing out an object buried in a sack, or barring shut a door against a terrible beast.

Attack or perform some other action once per round

When a warrior fights a foe, he rolls a d20, to which he adds his attack bonus, his Fight or Shoot skill as the circumstances require, and the attribute modifier appropriate to his weapon. If he fights a man and his Splendour is greater than his foe's, he adds +4 to this roll. If he lacks even level-0 in the needed Fight or Shoot skill, being one ignorant of war, he suffers -2 to his roll.

Roll d20 + attack bonus + skill level + attribute modifier to hit

If your hit roll is equal or higher than their AC, you succeed

If the roll is equal or greater than his enemy's Armor Class, then he has succeeded in his attack, and wearied or frightened or perhaps struck his foe. An unarmored man's Armor Class is 10, better if he bears a shield, and better still if he has been honored by a coat of shining mail. A man's Armor Class is always modified by his Dexterity modifier.

To roll damage, roll the weapon's damage die plus your attribute modifier

If his attack is successful, roll the weapon's damage die, and add to it the attribute modifier fit for that weapon. If his Splendour is greater than his foe's, add 2 points more, and if he bears a heavy shield, add 2 again. Take this number from the enemy's hit points. If they still have any remaining, then they are bruised, or nicked, or wearied, or dismayed, but they are not yet gravely harmed or overwhelmed. If this takes the last of their hit points, however, they have been felled.

Common sorts die at zero hit points, while greater ones might survive with a healer's aid

If a common beast or man loses all of his hit points, he will almost certainly die. Perhaps swiftly, perhaps after long moments of groanings and cries, but few so hurt can be helped to live. If a hero or brave-hearted man is brought to zero hit points, however, they may yet be saved, and if their *wyrd* is unfinished, they cannot die, but only be scarred and wounded, as I shall write after this.

Sacrifice your shield to negate a hit once per battle

A hero who bears a shield may sacrifice it to save his skin if a blow would cost him the last of his hit points. The shield is shattered by the fell-handed stroke, but the hero escapes unharmed. While such a man might snatch up another shield, he can invoke this fortune only once in each battle. Common men and ordinary warriors cannot do this to evade their doom.

WYRD AND BATTLE

*A hero may invoke a fitting *wyrd* to unfailingly win a battle*

Some heroes may invoke their *wyrd* to win a battle, and this is right. Let them explain how they use their destiny to slay a mighty foe or drive off an enemy warband, their doom strengthening their arm. They may not receive all they desire with the invocation, but they should be victorious in all the greater points. An invoked *wyrd* may not suffice to best an army single-handedly or conquer a prince of Hell without a price, but any lesser foe must surely be overcome.

If more than one hero seeks to invoke their *wyrd* in the same battle in a way that would be contradictory, only the first-spoken invocation is allowed. The other hero must await a different opportunity to express his certain doom.

MORALE AND BRAVERY

The courage of men is not endless. When his allies fall wounded, crying out for help, and when the foe has broken the shield wall and slain his lord, it is a courageous man who stands and fights to the end. More like it is that he will turn and flee, casting aside his shield to quicken his flight and praying to God to spare him this day.

MORALE is the measure of a man's bravery. Heroes do not have Morale, for they will always fight until their gamesman decides that they will flee. Other men, however, must test their Morale when the fight turns against them or the foe seems overwhelming.

Morale is measured from 2 to 12, with 2 being a cowardice so great that an angry ram is sufficient to send him fleeing, while 12 means that the man will stand even should all the hosts of Hell confront him. To test Morale, the GM rolls 2d6, and if the number is greater than their Morale, they will abandon the field.

A man must check Morale on two occasions, and any additional that the GM thinks right to exact. He must check Morale when his first companion falls, and he must check Morale when his allies first seem to be losing the fight. If he passes both, he will continue to fight until it is clear folly to persist, and perhaps even then if his honor compels him.

A fleeing man will act as his best reason tells him. On a battlefield, a *gesith* will run away or seek shelter behind walls, because in a battle captured warriors are slain while churls are taken as thralls. In a forest skirmish, he may surrender and ask mercy of raiders. They dislike to kill a man for sport, as his kinsmen will more hotly seek *wergild* for a life than a wound. A churl compelled into his Hundred's *fyrð* may run madly from the enemy, while an old *gesith* may draw back in careful order with his comrades.

Churls have Morale 8, gesith have 9, and the valiant 10 or 11

Heroes never check Morale

Those who fail a Morale check will act with such sense as their steadiness allows

HURT AND HEALING

After a short rest, regain lost hit points up to half full, rounded up

A man who has lost hit points but has not been deprived of all of them is not seriously injured. He may be bruised, battered, and dismayed, but he suffers no real hurts. If he has five minutes in which to catch his breath, unpressed by foes and unharried by dangers, his hit points are restored to half their maximum, rounded up, if they are not already higher than that.

Eat and drink and rest for an hour to regain all

If he spends an hour at rest, drinking half a waterskin of something better than water and eating meat sufficient for a day's ration, all his lost hit points are restored. So also does he regain lost strength if he gets a peaceful night's rest.

Men who are Gravely Wounded cannot regain hit points this way. They must be nursed slowly back to health as I describe below.

MORTAL INJURY

Common men die at zero hit points, though some can be saved by skill

An ordinary man deprived of all his hit points may expect to die. If the GM finds it mete, a determined hero may attempt to save him with bandages and bindings, if he acts immediately upon the battle's end. Let this surgeon make a Dex/Heal or Int/Heal skill check against difficulty 10, or against 12 if he lacks a medicine bag or similar implements of care. If he succeeds, the man he succors becomes Gravely Wounded, but may yet live. If he fails, let him pray for God's mercy on his patient's soul and dig a decent grave.

Heroes are Gravely Wounded at zero hit points

A hero who has lost all his hit points is felled, having been smote sorely and made Gravely Wounded. If his hateful foeman strikes him again, or if the injury that laid him low is too terrible for any man to endure, he will die there upon the field. If he is left without further harm, he may yet survive.

Gravely Wounded men can do nothing but be tended by healers

A Gravely Wounded man must be tended if he is to live. Such care requires a half-hour of labor each day by a healer to cleanse his wounds, apply poultices, and help him with such things as he cannot do himself. After the first night, the healer makes an Int/Heal skill check against difficulty 10, or 12 if he has no medicine nor bandages. If he succeeds, the patient will survive for a time. If he fails, the patient must make a Might saving throw or die before dawn. Only one healer may make this roll, though others may aid him as described in the rules of skill checks.

It takes a week before a man's life can be safely secured

After a further week of care, the healer must make another skill check, this time at difficulty 8, or 10 if deprived of tools. If he succeeds, the man will begin to mend, whereas if he fails, the patient must make a Might saving throw once more or be soon carried off by purulent infections or grievous fevers.

If a patient has survived this long, he rolls once on the Scars table on the following page to learn the consequences of his great wound, and regains a single hit point. He may now be up and about, doing but light labor and nursing his strength. A month later, he finally loses the Gravely Wounded condition and is restored to his full hit points, though the Scar will linger. Let him gain one permanent point of Splendour if this is his first Scar, for it is proof that he has suffered a terrible wound yet has not died. Scars after this are not so glorious, for they show that he has not learned much from the first.

Those who are Gravely Wounded will always gain a Scar

WYRD AND DEATH

A man who has not lived out his *wyrd* cannot die. He may become Gravely Wounded, he may suffer the hands of incompetent healers, he may bear great torment from many Scars, but he will not die. Let him be wounded and recover as other men, but if his healer fails in his skill checks and his Might saving throws are for naught, let him suffer two Scars from the wound instead of one.

One with unspent wyrd cannot die

If the play of the adventure seems to promise certain death for a hero that yet retains a *wyrd*, the GM must bend the circumstances so the hero yet survives. Perhaps a pagan warrior leaves him for dead, or a plunge into a crevasse finds him on a small ledge, or a poison he has swallowed merely puts him to an hour's torment instead of death. Let him be Gravely Wounded if it seems a fair return, but do not let him die.

Yet he may suffer so greatly that he wishes death would come

Remember also that a GM may compel a man to invoke his ignoble *wyrds* when facing certain death. If the sullen gamesman cannot explain how his ignoble *wyrd* will save him, the GM may tell him how his hero falls prey to his flaws.

Ignoble wyrds can be compelled when death looms

SUFFERING SCARS

Style Scars to fit the nature of the injury that caused them

When a hero suffers a Scar, roll on the table below to learn what evil the foe-man's blade did him. If he was brought near to death by some other hazard, such as a great flame or plunge from a cliff, then use the Scar's penalty but describe it in some more fitting way. Where a sword may lop fingers, a flame may sear them to useless char.

Scars can be cured only by magic or miracles

Scars cannot be cured by mortal arts. It may be that a holy monk or a nun blessed by God may be able to undo the hurt, though few are the pious souls who can do this, and hard the road to find them. Other maimed heroes may seek relief in sorcerous *galdor* or lost Roman arts.

A Scar can only be suffered once

The same Scar cannot be suffered twice, even to apply to a different limb. If you so roll, you have luck, as it is only a flesh wound after all.

∞∞∞ SCAR

Wounds cannot lower an attribute below 3. If Constitution is lost, reduce the hero's maximum hit points if the modifier changes

- 1—4 **BLINDED EYE**, that what you hurl or shoot suffers -4 to hit
- 5—9 **BRAIN-BRUISED**, lessening Wisdom by 2
- 10—15 **BROKEN KNEE**, for -2 Dexterity and halved movement
- 16—19 **COLLAPSED LUNG**, losing you 4 Constitution
- 20—23 **DESTROYED NOSE**, -2 Charisma and you can no longer smell
- 24—37 **FLESH WOUND**, without lingering woe
- 38—39 **GUT WOUND**, miraculously you live, but lose 4 Constitution
- 40—43 **INCONTINENT**, oft stinking of piss, with -2 Charisma
- 44—46 **MAN-WOUNDED**, unable to sire heirs
- 47—50 **MANGLED FINGERS**, but a few, but costing your bow fingers
- 51—53 **MISSING ARM**, depriving you of its use for -4 Dexterity
- 54—57 **MISSING HAND**, lessening Dexterity by 2
- 58—59 **MISSING LEG**, hobbling at 10 feet a round and -4 Dexterity
- 60—64 **RIPPED MUSCLE**, worsening Strength by 2
- 65—68 **RUINED EAR**, so that you suffer -1 on all Sense checks to hear
- 69—72 **SHATTERED ELBOW**, costing use of an arm and -2 Dexterity
- 73—77 **SKULL-CRACKED**, worsening Intelligence by 2
- 78—81 **SMASHED RIBS**, worsening Constitution by 2
- 82—87 **STIFFENED SCARS**, costing 1 Charisma and 1 Dexterity
- 88—91 **THROAT WOUND**, unable to speak above a whisper
- 92—95 **TORN FACE**, unsightly to behold for -2 Charisma
- 96—∞∞ **UNHEALING ABSCESS**, at -1 Charisma and Constitution

Heroes need both hand and arm to usefully bear a shield