
TUCKER FITZGERALD
Kinhaven
CORE RULES MANUAL
Playtester Preview 1.1

Welcome to the Kinhaven Playtest Preview

Thank you for taking a look at Kinhaven, a tabletop roleplaying game about community, courage, and stories.

What you're holding

This is a playtest preview edition, the complete rules, fully laid out and ready to play, but still a work in progress.

A few things to know going in:

- The mechanics, character options, and text are complete and ready to run at your table.
- The art is not. You'll see the finished cover alongside pencil sketches throughout, these are placeholders marking where finished illustrations will go.
- This game will change based on feedback from playtesters like you before the final release.

SCAN ME

We'd love your feedback

If you run Kinhaven we want to hear how it went. Scan the QR code or visit ***www.Rollplay.Studio/Feedback*** to fill out a short feedback form. It only takes a few minutes.

Stay in the loop

Want updates on the finished art, the Kickstarter launch, and future Kinhaven books? Sign up at ***www.Rollplay.Studio***.

Thank you for helping shape this world before it goes out into the world for good. We can't wait to see what your table discovers.

-Tucker,
summer 2026

Kinhaven

Core Rules Manual: Playtester Preview v 1.1

Designed by Tucker FitzGerald

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Dedicated to **Keith**, **Mak**, and **Jared**,
who taught me how to play.

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Character Creation

What Type of Game is This?

Creating a character in a role-playing game is like imagining a new hero for a story you help create. You get to choose what kind of person they are, what they look like, and what skills or abilities they have. Think about their personality, are they brave, shy, clever, or funny? You also decide their background, like where they came from and what their goals might be.

As you play, you'll use your character to explore a world, solve problems, and face challenges, making choices that can change the story. It's a way to become someone new and see how they would act in different adventures.

Want to dive right in?

Keep reading. The next few pages are designed to help you set up a character quickly.

Want to learn more about Kinhaven first?

Feel free to skip to **page 11** if you'd like to learn more about the world of Kinhaven before designing a character for the game.

Character Creation Worksheet

3 Custom Attribute Points

Core Attributes

Strength
- Species Modifier
- \+ Custom Attribute Points
- = **Strength**

Agility
- Species Modifier
- \+ Custom Attribute Points
- = **Agility**

Mind
- Custom Attribute Points
- = **Mind**

Seconday Attributes

Health Points (HP)
- Species Modifier
- \+ (Strength)
- \+ 14
- = **Health Points**

Evasion Level (EL)
- Species Modifier
- +/- Agility
- \+ 10
- = **Evasion Level**

Readiness
- Species Modifier
- \+ Mind
- = **Readiness**

Damage Max
- Strength
- \+ 4
- = ↑ **Damage Max**

Attack Modifier
- Agility
- = **Attack Modifier**

Skill Points
- Mind
- \+ 5
- = **General Skill Points**

○ **Guardian** *+5 Combat Skill Points*

○ **Cloak** *+5 Cloak Skill Points*

○ **Mystic** *+5 Mystic Skill Points*

Natural Armor
- Species Modifier
- = **Natural Armor**

Daily Mystic Energy
- 10 *Only for Mystics*
- \+ Mind
- = **Daily ME**

Skill Level	Unskilled	Basic	Advanced	Expert	Mastery
Skill Points	0	1	2	3	4
Roll Modifier	-5	0	+2	+3	+4

*The **Character Creation Worksheet** is designed to help newer players make the calculations needed to create their first few characters. After playing a bit you'll probably find that you don't need it when starting a fresh character.*

Kinhaven
Core Character Sheet

Player Name

Character Name | Age | Pronouns

Species | Archetype

Strength + - Mystic Modifyer

Agility + - Mystic Modifyer

Mind + - Mystic Modifyer

Defense

Evasion Level + - Mystic Modifyer

Worn Armor

Natural Armor

Armor Level + - Mystic Modifyer

Health Points

Current Health Points

Offense

Worn Armor Penalty

Natural Readiness

Readiness + - Mystic Modifyer

Attack Modifier + - Mystic Modifyer

Damage Max + - Mystic Modifyer

Equipment

Coins

Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Range	+
	↑		
	↑		
	↑		
	↑		

Skills +

Mystic Skills

ME		+

Daily ME

Current Mystic Energy

*A **Character Sheet** is helpful to have for every player.*

*Download these both of these printable forms at full size, along with other goodies at **www.Rollplay.Studio/Downloads***

SCAN ME

Character Creation Quick-Start

*New to Kinhaven? Download these forms. Use the **Character Creation Worksheet** first. When you're done, transfer your numbers to your **Character Sheet**.*

1. Choose a species

Learn more on page 25

Your Species choice will modify your character's attributes and determine whether or not you can **fly**.

- Write all **6 species' modifiers** on your Character Creation Worksheet.

Tip: The worksheet has the symbol next to every slot for your species modifiers.

2. Set Your Attributes

Learn more on page 6

Your three Core Attributes are **Strength**, **Agility**, and **Mind.** *Zero is average and negative numbers are normal.*

1. Start from zero and **add your species' modifiers**, which may be negative numbers.
2. Then **add 3 points**. You can spread them evenly, assign them all to one, or split them between two.

Now finish all of the **math** for **Secondary Attributes** on your **Character Creation Worksheet**. Then **copy** the final numbers over to your Character Sheet.



Illustration by theweirdo83

3. Choose an Archetype

Learn more on page 67

The archetypes are

- **Guardians** who are strong protectors of others
- **Mystics** who draw on magical forces
- **Cloaks** who operate with stealth and misdirection

*Tip: Each archetype gives you **5 skill points dedicated specifically to their craft**. Only Mystics may learn Mystic Skills, but anyone may learn Guardian or Cloak skills.*

4. Choose Skills

Learn more on page 73

More about Mystic Skills onpage 81

Start by putting your **5 Archetype Skill Points** into skills. *You can only use these on your Archetype's skills.*

Then **add 5 to your Mind score.** That's your starting number of general **Skill Points**. You can put these skill points into *any* skill available to you, including putting more in your Archetype skills.

Tip: You can put more than 1 point into the same skill to get better at it. The most you can put into one skill is 4 points.

5. Choose Equipment

Learn more on page 93

Your character starts with basic equipment and 100 coins. Spend the coins on weapons, armor, or other gear, or save them for later.

You'll also want to flesh out things like your name and backstory before you start playing.

Character Attributes

Attributes are the numbers that describe what your character is like, together they're what everything else about your character, skills, combat, magic, all builds on top of.

Core Attributes

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Your character has 3 core attributes. These will be impacted by your choice in **species**, and you can **customize your Core Attributes by adding three more points**.

Strength

Represents your overall physical power and stamina.

Agility

Represents your speed, accuracy, and coordination.

Mind

Represents your knowledge, perception, and awareness.

For these Core Attributes, a zero represents the **average**, *not the bare minimum.* ***It's common to have negative scores.***

Calculating Your Core Attributes

Species Modifiers: Find your **species modifiers** for **Strength** and **Agility**.

Attribute Customization Points: Then you get to customize your character by distributing **3 additional attribute points** among your three Core Attributes. You can spread them evenly, assign them all to one attribute, or split them between two.

Secondary Attributes

Secondary Attributes are based on your **Core Attributes**, your **Species**, and other **choices** you make.

Defense Attributes

Evasion Level: Your **EL** shows your character's ability to dodge or avoid incoming attacks, or **how hard it is for enemies to hit you**. Higher is more difficult to hit. To start with, add **10** to your **Agility score** (which may be positive or negative). Then factor in any **species modifier** you might have.

Natural Armor: This represents any inherent protection your have against damage, reducing harm from attacks and is based on your **species**.

Armor Level: Your **AL** absorbs impact, **reducing damage** from a successful attack against you. Record your **Natural Armor** (based on your species) combined with any **Worn Armor** you purchase.

Health Points: Your **HP** represents your resilience and how much damage you can survive. To start with, **add 14** to your **Strength score** (which may be positive or negative). Then factor in any **species modifier** you might have.

Offense Attributes

Readiness: Determines your character's place in the turn order when things get exciting. It reflects how **quickly you act** in urgent situations, such as combat. Start with your **Mind** score, then factor in any **species modifier** you might have.

Attack Modifier: Determines **your skill in attacking**. It modifies your attack rolls, positively or negatively, impacting your chance to successfully hit a target. It's easy to calculate, as it is equal to your agility.

Damage Max: The highest amount of damage you can normally inflict in a single physical attack. Stronger characters can do more damage. Simply add **4** to your **Strength score**.

Other Stats

- **Skill Points**: Used to choose your character's expertise across various skills, including combat, and, potentially, Mystic Acts.
- Mystic Energy: How much power a Mystic has to carry out magical acts in a given day.

Welcome to Kinhaven

A World Shaped by Many Traditions

Kinhaven is built on the belief that fantasy becomes richer when it draws inspiration from the breadth of human experience. Rather than imagining a world shaped by a single cultural tradition, Kinhaven draws inspiration from the many ways people across the world have built communities, celebrated life, cared for one another, solved problems, and found meaning.

Kinhaven is intended to be a world where players from many different backgrounds can find things that are a bit familiar: a festival that echoes home, a style of architecture, a way of welcoming guests, a proverb, a craft, or a shared value. No one culture defines the world, and none is treated as the default against which others are compared. Instead, Kinhaven is meant to be a tapestry woven from many different threads.

The world is inspired by real human cultures, but it is not meant to represent them. Traditions are re-imagined rather than reproduced, and the goal is that sacred or culturally closed practices are left untouched. The game is structured in a way that hopefully does not borrow people's identity, but instead celebrates the creativity, wisdom, and diversity found across human cultures.

Kinhaven has been reviewed by thoughtful readers from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and their insights have helped shape the setting in meaningful ways. Even with that care, this work will be ongoing. The world will continue to evolve over time, with revisions that strive to make it more thoughtful, more welcoming, and a place where more players can find echoes of their own traditions alongside those of others.

Special Thanks to Cultural Consultant Readers: Lois Ritter, Himani Kaushik, Ayomide, Alessandra M, and Amanda G.

What Kind of World is This?

Kinhaven is a vast and richly diverse land, inhabited by **sentient, anthropomorphic animal species** who live alongside their traditional animal counterparts. The technology of Kinhaven is a blend of ingenuity and resourcefulness, featuring glasswork, printing presses, and windmills, all reflective of the industrious spirit of its people. The landscape is as varied as it is beautiful, containing all the biomes and climates of the natural world, from scorching deserts in the north to icy tundras in the south, and everything in between, dense forests, sprawling grasslands, marshy wetlands, and towering mountains. Kinhaven is the size of a small continent, taking roughly ten days to cross on horseback, and is dotted with hundreds of small villages and farms, along with around a dozen larger towns, and even a few urban cities. Kinhaven is a land that thrives with community life and cooperative spirit.

The Three Kingdoms

The inhabitants of Kinhaven are organized into three primary groups: the **Mammalia**, **Aves**, and **Herpetón** kingdoms. Unlike typical geopolitical entities, these kingdoms are self-governing confederacies, defined more by species affinity than strict territorial borders. Each kingdom consists of many different tribes and communities, loosely allied under a common cultural banner. The societies of Kinhaven value balance, nature, and mutual respect, with each kingdom contributing to the health and prosperity of the land in its own way.

While the kingdoms of Mammalia, Aves, and Herpetón each maintain their autonomy, they have long worked together for the shared good of their lands, relying on the diverse strengths and skills that each community contributes.

The Hinterwatch

One of the land's most cherished traditions is the Hinterwatch, a vital **ranger network** that includes members from all three kingdoms. The Hinterwatch operates across the entirety of Kinhaven, offering protection,

information, and guidance to villages and travelers. Rangers move freely between regions, providing a sense of unity in the otherwise distinct territories, acting as scouts, protectors, and messengers.

Abbeys and the Spiritual Heart of Kinhaven



Illustration by Fiona

Kinhaven is also home to numerous abbeys, temples, and monasteries, devoted to various gods and spiritual practices. These abbeys are not only centers of religious devotion but also serve as **sanctuaries** offering healing, hospitality, schooling, and counsel to all inhabitants of Kinhaven. They are places where weary travelers find rest, the injured receive care, and the young are taught. The nuns, monks, and clerics of these abbeys play a crucial role in maintaining the social fabric of Kinhaven, nurturing both the body and the spirit of the community.

The Threat of the Kolumbidae Empire

In recent decades, a foreign power known as the Kolumbidae Empire has begun to encroach upon Kinhaven. Human soldiers and merchants, sent by the Empire, arrived by ship with ambitions of **colonization**. Drawn by the natural wealth of Kinhaven, the Kolumbidae Empire has established ports, mines, and logging operations, claiming Kinhaven's resources for their own gain. The Empire has shown a willingness to use **force and violence** to

achieve their aims, including their latest technology of cannons mounted on ships. Their presence has grown steadily, raising concerns among the locals that they may soon attempt to seize more control over Kinhaven.

Despite these troubling developments, the three kingdoms have responded with **unity and determination**. Recognizing the threat posed by the Kolumbidae Empire, the kingdoms of Mammalia, Aves, and Herpetón have put aside any differences to work together in defense of their shared home. **They remain vigilant,** with the Hinterwatch playing a crucial role in monitoring and resisting the Empire's advances, using their knowledge of the land to outmaneuver the newcomers.

Kolumbidae is off Kinhaven's Sunrise coast, about 10 days away when sailing, under good weather.

Allies and Resistance

Humans are not strangers to Kinhaven. For hundreds of years, respectful visitors and immigrants have traveled to Kinhaven, engaging in fair trade and exchanging knowledge, and these **humans have always been welcome**, so long as they are respectful to the land and its people. The current struggle is not with all humans, but specifically with the Kolumbidae Empire and those who seek to advance its goals of exploitation and domination.

Officially, the **Storm Watch towers** along the coast are being added to greatly by the Hinterwatch, allowing the people of Kinhaven to keep a closer eye on the Empire's naval activities, providing early warnings of any potential threats.

Unofficially, a growing network of **ocean raiders** has emerged. These raiders, popular in local songs and stories, are comprised of various species. They target the Empire's merchant ships, disrupting their exploitation Kinhaven, and redistribute the cargo to the more needy inhabitants of Kinhaven. These acts of defiance are a beacon of hope, ensuring that the Kolumbidae Empire's plans do not go unchecked.

The Struggle for Kinhaven's Future

The people of Kinhaven are at a crossroads. The encroaching presence of the Kolumbidae Empire threatens not only their land but also their way of life. Yet, despite the challenges, the spirit of Kinhaven endures, rooted in unity, respect for the natural world, and the shared determination to protect their home. From the ranger networks of the Hinterwatch to the defiant raiders on the high seas, from the wisdom of the abbeys to the watchful eyes of the Storm Watch towers, every community plays a part in the defense of Kinhaven.

The struggle is not merely about defending territory, it is about protecting a way of life that has been nurtured for generations, where each creature, no matter their size or species, has a place, and where the land is treated as a living, sacred entity. Kinhaven's story is one of resilience, unity, and the fight against exploitation, and every character in this world must decide where they stand in this unfolding tale.

Report from the Hinterwatch to the Kinhaven High Counsel

Esteemed High Counsel,

I write this report with a heavy heart, feeling both the weight of our land's beauty and the growing threat that looms over it. Over the past moons, the Kolumbidae Empire has tightened its grip along our coasts, and the signs of their presence have grown both numerous and deeply troubling.

The dozen Imperial docks now built along our shores are no small matter, especially as they serve as a foundation for the Empire's intentions. Near these docks, the test mines have expanded, leaving huge, gaping pits on our beloved mountainsides. Their explosive powders rip the earth apart, leaving nothing but destruction in their wake. The ancient trees in our forests are being cut down by the hundreds, their trunks dragged to the docks like carcasses. The earth itself seems to mourn the loss.

The soldiers who patrol these operations are no less of a problem. They are aggressive, armed, and entitled. I have spoken with villagers near the affected areas, and too many have stories of harassment, intimidation, and injury. Their attitude when approached by members of the Hinterwatch is one of possessiveness—like they believe the land is already theirs. There is no shame in their eyes for the harm they cause, and no sense that they even understand the land was never theirs to tend in the first place.

I urge you to consider sending members of our clergy or scholars to speak with the Imperial priests. Their intrusion has gone beyond the docks and mines; they have begun harassing our abbeys and covens. In the past weeks, I witnessed them disrupt a ceremony, threatening our healers and wise women, wielding weapons to intimidate our people. They speak of their True God and show no respect for the sanctity of our spaces or the spirits we honor.

Their arrogance is matched only by their firepower. Their soldiers carry explosive powder cannons and are well-armed, and they have numbers on their side. Confrontation seems increasingly inevitable. Perhaps it would be wiser to act sooner rather than later, but I must admit that even now, the Kolumbidae Empire presents a formidable challenge. Their forces are not only numerous, but confident, and their priests and soldiers are relentless in their attempts to force us into submission.

I ask you, most honorable Counsel, to consider our next steps carefully, but swiftly. The longer we wait, the deeper their roots grow, and the more difficult it will become to uproot them. I fear for our people and our lands, but I still believe that together, with the wisdom of our counsel and the strength of our allies, we can face what is coming.

May we find a path forward that honors our ancestors and preserves this land for those who come after us.

In service to Kinhaven,



Kolumbidae Imperial Report on Kinhaven

Prepared by: Officer Proave Scotrue

Date: 27th Day of the Fourth Month, Year of Our Glorious Empire

Assessment of Kinhaven

Kinhaven is a land of immense untapped potential. Its mountains are rich with metal, minerals, and coal, and vast swaths of ancient forest line the coast, perfect for logging. It is incomprehensible that these resources have not yet been harvested by the local inhabitants, who are nothing more than talking animals with no sense of progress or ambition.

On the Indigenous Inhabitants

These primitive creatures present themselves as civilized but lack any understanding of true civility. They form unnatural couples, such as tortoise with fox, hawk with bear, absurd pairings that yield no offspring. Their religions are no better, as they worship devils and spirits, rejecting the light of our True God. Even more alarming is their acceptance of women practicing magic, an open display of barbarity.

Exploitation Potential

Despite their backwardness, many of these creatures possess great physical strength, which could be harnessed in mining and logging operations. To achieve this, I propose a program of re-education for the local population, in Imperial history, law, and religion, turning them from ignorant primitives into useful subjects for the Empire.

In Conclusion

Kinhaven offers the Kolumbidae Empire vast resources and a labor force ripe for cultivation. It is a jewel waiting to be claimed, and I recommend immediate action to leverage its wealth and re-educate its inhabitants.

For the Glory of the Kolumbidae Empire,





Regions of Kinhaven

1. **Sunveil Canopy:** A dense, sweltering rainforest teeming with life, crowned by a towering volcanic peak.
2. **Suncradle:** A rich land of fertile soil, abundant fruit, and permanent summer warmth.
3. **Goldencrest Savanna:** Wide, fertile grassland prone to seasonal flooding each spring.
4. **The Glasswind Dunes:** A sparse, sun-scorched desert with towering dunes rolling toward the sea.
5. **Coralspring Isles:** A scatter of small isles with palm trees, coconuts, sandy beaches, and gurgling freshwater springs.
6. **Thornpalm Reach:** A scrubby borderland where palms and cacti grow side by side in the dry heat.
7. **The Brackwood Marsh:** Wooded swamps and wetlands threaded through patches of shadowed forest.
8. **Skybound Plains:** Rolling hills of open prairie and wildflower meadows.
9. **Mossgrove Woodland:** A deciduous forest floor blanketed in moss-covered rocks and fallen leaves.
10. **The Windrun Steppe:** Cool, dry grassland swept by wind, sparse but resilient.
11. **The Ironfell Highlands:** Windswept rolling hills and bare rocky plateaus.
12. **Shadowwood Expanse:** A dense old-growth forest of towering pines and ancient hardwoods.
13. **Mistmoor Isle:** A large island fogbound more often than not, its land cloaked in moor, bog, and heath.
14. **The Iceshorn Reach:** Frozen tundra and ice flats where hardy life clings on, home to glaciers, massive icebergs, and volcanoes lost in ice.

What the Elders Teach

I have buried as many of my kin as I have raised, and this is what my years have taught me. I write it down not as law, for I have no crown to enforce it, but as my testimony, to be carried from fire to fire, shared with the young until they are old enough to share it themselves.

We are not one people. We are winged and scaled and furred, we pray to different gods and to no god, we speak a hundred tongues and no one speaks all of them. I have long since stopped believing this is a problem to be solved. It is simply what we are, and what we are is enough.

What holds us is not sameness. It is a promise, plainly made and often tested:

1. No creature's mind or body belongs to another. Not by chain, not by custom, not by claim of blood or birth or rank.

2. No one's worth is measured by what can be taken from them, their labor, their land, their body, their voice.

3. A stranger's god is no threat to your own, and a stranger's lack of one is no threat either. Anxious, insecure, petty gods are no god at all.

4. The land feeds us because we care for it, not because we are owed it. Take only what you would ask our grandchildren to forgive.

5. When we have much we have the sacred opportunity to care for those who have little. When we have little we have the sacred opportunity to trust our inherent worthiness and receive what is shared by others.

6. When the strong, the fast, the wealthy, or the clever are treated with more dignity and respect than the weak, the slow, the poor, and the confused, darkness and injustice follows as sure as winter follows autumn.

7. When one kingdom suffers, it is not that kingdom's trouble alone. Solidarity is not a kindness we extend when it is easy. It is the whole of what protects us, and it costs nothing less than everything.

8. Those who tolerate or stoke injustice elsewhere and against those unlike them endanger every last one of us, for injustice is a fire that burns everything in its path and imagining that it can be controlled to only descend on those unlike us is a fatal illusion.

I have heard travelers speak of lands where the strong decide who is fully a person and who does not quality. I have no say in what they believe in those lands.. But I will not raise my kin to think that way, and I will not call it wisdom when I hear it.

Dignity is found only in shared life, fiercely protect it in all beings, or none of us survive. No one belongs to another, and all belong to the work of keeping each other whole.

— as spoken, and carried since

The Animal-Folk Species

Kinhaven is a land teeming with life, where many animals have sentient animal-folk counterpart. From burrows to treetops, these animal-folk have formed unique societies, deeply tied to nature. Kinhaven's inhabitants are organized into three loose kingdoms: **Mammalia** (furry creatures), **Herpetón** (cold-blooded creatures), and **Aves** (winged creatures). These kingdoms are built around species affinity rather than strict borders, with most small villages formed by kin-groups of the same species. In larger towns, diverse species live side by side, showcasing collaboration and solidarity.

A special connection exists between animal-folk and their non-sentient counterparts, such as Wolf Folk bonding with their natural wolf kin. Though not telepathic, this bond allows for limited silent communication and deep empathy.

Predatory species hunt, while herbivores follow plant-based diets, and it's a long-standing tradition to avoid eating meat in front of herbivores as a gesture of respect. Respect for their world extends to farming and hunting, ensuring animals and landscapes are treated with dignity. The balance between predator and prey is revered, with all life seen as interconnected and sacred. This bond shapes the culture and traditions of Kinhaven, where boundaries between people and nature are fluid, honoring every being's role in the great web of life.



A note on measurements: *Average animal-folk heights list both the Metric (meters) and Imperial (feet) system but* ***Kinhaven will only be using the metric most of the time.*** *An easy estimate (for role playing, not engineering bridges) is that* ***one meter is*** *about the same size as a yard, or* ***about three feet****.*

Understanding Species Modifiers

At the top of each Species' description is a bar that tells you some of the ways that choosing this species for your character will modify your scores, as well as a little about your size and whether or not you can fly.

Here's a quick reminder for each of the symbols:

Strength	*Agility*	*Readiness*	*Evasion Level*	*Natural Armor Level*	*Health Points*	*Size*	*Flight*

Transfer these modifiers to your Character Creation Worksheet to get your character up to speed.

Species Sizes

Heights vary widely among individuals, and **these size categories represent general averages, not requirements**. For example, the *average* Deer Folk are Medium size, but some may be Small or Large size.

Every species in Kinhaven includes natural diversity in height, and that includes people of short stature, including those with dwarfism. Play the height that feels right for your character, whatever species you've chosen.

Species Sizes

XS	*S*	*M*	*L*	*XL*
Extra-Small	Small	Medium	Large	Extra-Large
~ 1 m tall	*~ 1.5 m tall*	*~ 2 m tall*	*~ 2.5 m tall*	*~ 3m tall*
~ 3 ft tall	*~ 4.5 ft tall*	*~ 6 ft tall*	*~ 7.5 ft tall*	*~ 9 ft tall*

Members of the Aves Kingdom aren't the only ones who can fly, and not all members of Aves can fly, so this symbol shows up so you can see who can fly at a quick glance.

Species Modifiers

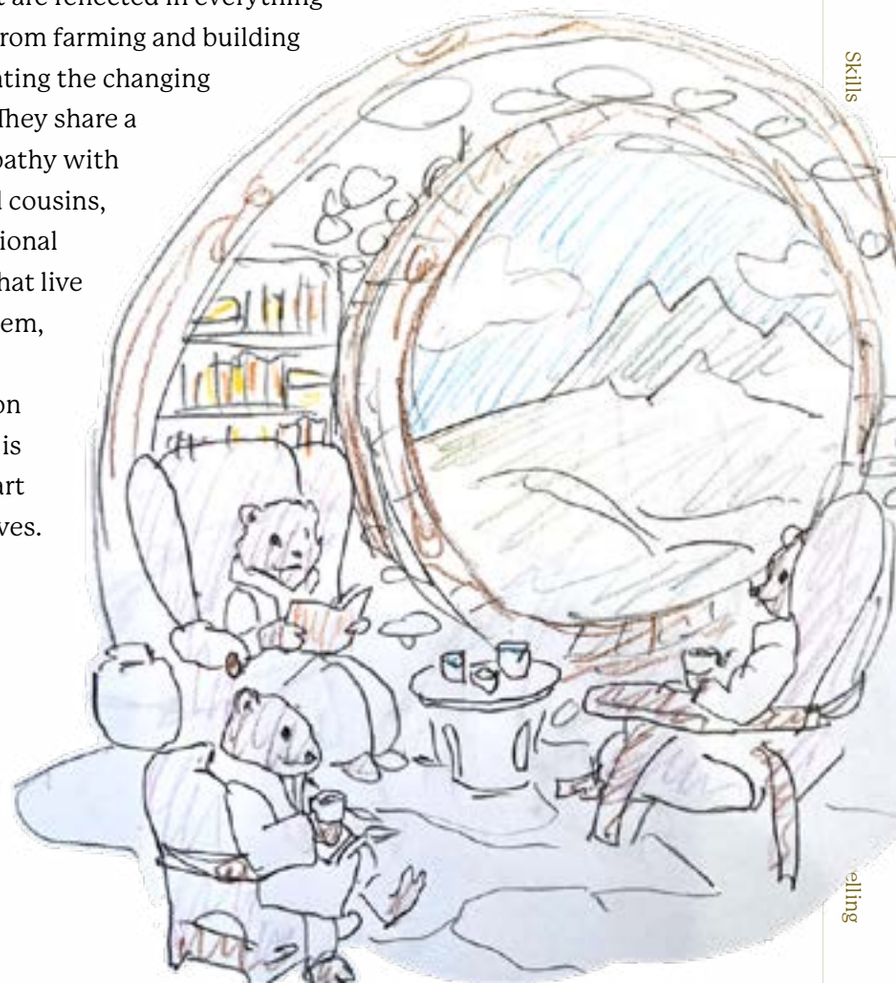
	Folk	Str	Agi	Ready	EL	AL	HP	Size	Fly
Mammalia	Bat	-2	+1	—	—	—	-2	*S*	✓
	Bear	+3	-2	—	-4	+2	—	*XL*	
	Bison	+4	-4	—	-4	+3	+1	*XL*	
	Chipmunk	-3	+2	+2	+2	—	-2	*XS*	
	Deer	-2	+1	—	+2	—	—	*M*	
	Elephant	+4	-3	-1	-3	+2	—	*XL*	
	Fox	-2	+1	+1	+1	—	—	*S*	
	Giraffe	+1	—	—	-2	—	—	*XL*	
	Hippo	+4	-4	-1	-3	+2	+2	*M*	
	Ibex	-2	+1	—	+2	—	—	*M*	
	Jaguar	—	+1	+1	-2	—	—	*M*	
	Otter	-2	+1	+1	+1	—	—	*S*	
	Panda	+2	0	-3	-2	+1	—	*L*	
	Porcupine	-1	-1	—	—	+3	+1	*S*	
	Rabbit	-2	+1	—	+2	—	—	*S*	
	Snow Leopard	—	+1	—	-2	—	—	*M*	
	Wolf	—	+1	+1	-2	—	—	*M*	
Aves	Emu	—	—	—	-1	+1	—	*L*	
	Flamingo	-2	+1	+1	—	—	-3	*M*	✓
	Hawk	-1	—	+1	—	—	-3	*M*	✓
	Hummingbird	-4	—	+4	+4	—	-4	*XS*	✓
	Owl	-2	+1	+1	—	—	-3	*S*	✓
	Raven	-2	+1	+1	—	—	-3	*S*	✓
Herpetón	Axolotl	-4	+1	+2	+2	—	+2	*XS*	
	Chameleon	-2	+1	—	+2	—	—	*S*	
	Crocodile	+2	-2	+1	-4	+3	—	*L*	
	Tortoise	—	—	-6	—	+6	—	*M*	
	Human	—	+1	-1	-1	—	—	*M*	

Mammalia

The Furry Folk

The Mammalia of Kinhaven are a diverse group of furry creatures, each bringing their own skills and warmth to their communities. From the swift-footed Fox Folk to the strong and dependable bear folk, these tribes share a natural bond that ties them together. They live in harmony with the forests, plains, and hills, often forming close-knit villages made up of those they call kin.

Mammalia societies value family, loyalty, and respect for the natural world, traits that are reflected in everything they do, from farming and building to celebrating the changing seasons. They share a deep empathy with their wild cousins, the traditional animals that live among them, and this connection to nature is at the heart of their lives.



Bat Folk

-2 | +1 | — | — | — | -2 | *S*

The **Pekapeka People**, keep to the hours between dusk and dawn, when the rest of Kinhaven has gone to sleep and the moon does most of the talking. Roosts gather in deep caves and hollow trees to read the night for omens, tracing the movement of stars and the shape of a shadow the way others read a page. Travelers heading into unfamiliar dark are sometimes advised to leave a small offering at a roost entrance and ask, politely, for a guide.

What a Bat Folk elder knows, and how they came to know it, is rarely explained. Some things, they believe, are better left unsaid until the moment they matter. Trust from them is quiet and total once it's given. They do not raise their voice, and they rarely raise a subject twice. Roost elders are chosen for how well they listen rather than how well they speak, and word moves through a roost the way it moves through the dark itself, passed carefully from one to the next until everyone who needs to know already does.

"The moon shows you only what you're ready to see."

Bat Folk can fly in leather armor, but not chain mail or plate.

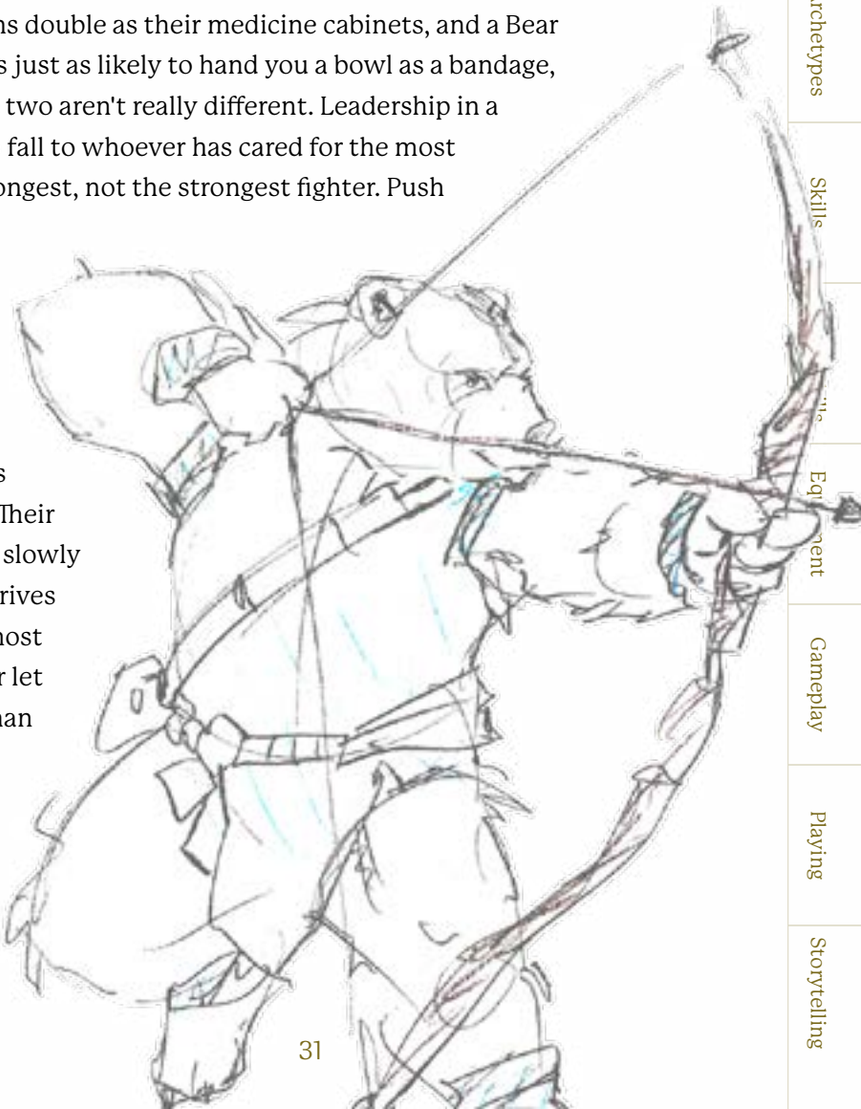


Bear Folk

+3 | -2 | — | -4 | +2 | — | *XL*

The **Karhu People** spend the long dark months of winter denned up together, and it's said the best stews in Kinhaven come out of a den just as the first thaw arrives, simmered for days from roots and mushrooms carefully stored the autumn before. Every child in Kinhaven, bear or otherwise, grows up knowing a Bear Folk mentor is worth seeking out. They take in strays, orphaned cubs, runaway apprentices, anyone hungry or lost, and feed them something warm before asking a single question.

Their kitchens double as their medicine cabinets, and a Bear Folk healer is just as likely to hand you a bowl as a bandage, insisting the two aren't really different. Leadership in a den tends to fall to whoever has cared for the most people the longest, not the strongest fighter. Push one too far, though, and you'll learn why every other species gives them room. Their anger builds slowly and rarely arrives twice, and most would rather let a slight go than let it curdle into a grudge.



Bison Folk

+4 | -4 | — | -4 | +3 | +1 | *XL*

The **Tatanka People** move across the plains in great migrating herds, and as they travel they scatter handfuls of seed into the turned earth behind them, a practice passed down through so many generations that no one remembers a time before it. Months later, following the same paths back, the herd returns to fields that seeded themselves in their wake, harvesting grain that grew wild and unattended, then burning back the old grass before the first frost so new growth has room to rise in spring. What grain they gather becomes bread traded well beyond their own plains, though they'll tell you the real harvest is the life lived on the journey.



Herds are led by whichever elders the group trusts most that season, not by birthright, and decisions get made the way meals do, everyone gathered, nobody rushed. They are slow to start an argument and even slower to lose one once they believe they're right. Their horns are mostly for show. Their patience is not. When the last field is burned and the first snow comes, the whole herd settles in together to share out what the land gave back to them.

"What you scatter in passing, you harvest in returning."

Chipmunk Folk

-3 | +2 | +2 | +2 | — | -2 | *XS*

The **Ajidamoo People** line their burrows with jars, hundreds of them, glazed and stacked, holding pickles, jams, and preserves for every season of the year. They throw their own pottery specifically to keep the hoarding organized, and a proud potter will absolutely point out whose jar sealed better this year. Caching food for others is considered the highest form of affection, and a Chipmunk who hasn't left a jar in your pack probably doesn't like you yet.

Every other kingdom quietly relies on their gossip networks to know what's happening two villages over, though nobody admits it outright, since admitting it only encourages them. Their burrows are loud, crowded, and constantly rearranged. One who's ever run out of things to say has probably just paused to think of more. Leadership, such as it is, tends to go to whoever remembers the most gossip and the most recipes at once.

"The hollow you fill in spring will shelter you in winter."

Deer Folk

-2 | +1 | — | +2 | — | — | *M*

The **Shika People** stitch the story of a family into quilts passed down for generations, adding a new patch at every wedding, birth, or hard winter survived. A household can trace three generations of history just by reading the quilt on the bed. That same careful attention makes them trusted traders and welcome additions in small villages and larger towns across the land. Those with antlers drop and regrow them every year in a steady, visible cycle, and villages across the land still set their planting and festival dates by when the local Deer Folk's antlers have dropped and regrown.

They travel in small, careful family groups, moving with the seasons rather than staying rooted in one place too long. They startle easily and don't apologize for it. Better to leap first and ask questions later, they say, than to be the one who didn't. Once the danger passes, though, few are as gentle, or as quick to check that everyone else is alright too. Herds follow whichever elder has kept the most family quilts, treating remembrance and care as the qualification for leading.

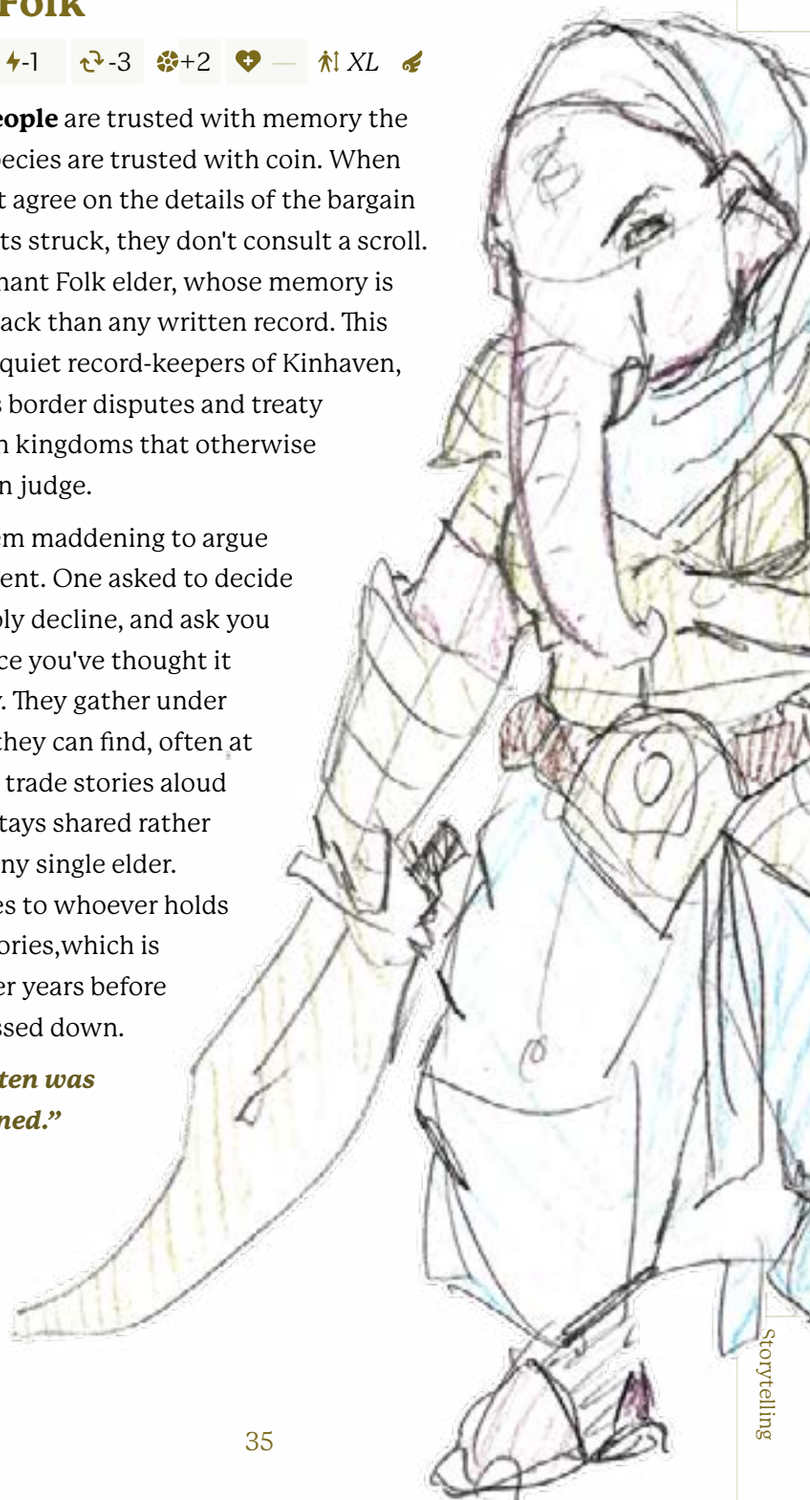
Elephant Folk

+4 | -3 | -1 | -3 | +2 | — | *XL*

The **Tembo People** are trusted with memory the way other species are trusted with coin. When two villages can't agree on the details of the bargain their grandparents struck, they don't consult a scroll. They ask an Elephant Folk elder, whose memory is trusted further back than any written record. This makes them the quiet record-keepers of Kinhaven, called to witness border disputes and treaty signings between kingdoms that otherwise share no common judge.

It also makes them maddening to argue with in the moment. One asked to decide quickly will simply decline, and ask you to come back once you've thought it through properly. They gather under the oldest trees they can find, often at the full moon, to trade stories aloud so the memory stays shared rather than resting on any single elder. Leadership passes to whoever holds the richest memories,which is tested gently over years before the mantle is passed down.

"What is forgotten was never truly learned."



Fox Folk

-2 | +1 | +1 | +1 | — | — | *S*

The **Yeou People** are Kinhaven's great talkers, traveling storytellers who trade a fresh tale for a meal and a bed in nearly any village they pass through. Ask one a straight question and you'll usually get a story instead, which, if you listen closely, was the straight answer all along. A good tale spreads faster than the one who told it, the mark of a well crafted tale and a well versed teller.

They rarely stay in one burrow for long. Restlessness runs in the blood, and most spend a season traveling for every season spent home. Leadership among them shifts to whoever's holding the room's attention at the time, a title that changes hands as often as the story does. It makes them wonderful company and unreliable correspondents. A Fox Folk friend might vanish for a year and reappear exactly where the story gets interesting, as if they'd never left.

"A clever tongue outmaneuvers a sharp blade every time."

Giraffe Folk

+1 | — | — | -2 | — | — | *XL*

The **Zarāfa People** tend the tallest orchards in Kinhaven, pruning and harvesting fruit no one else can reach, and their preserves and dried fruit are traded well beyond their own savanna. Standing head and shoulders above the grass has other uses too. They've spent generations charting the stars and watching weather roll in from the horizon days before it arrives, knowledge every farmer and sailor in the region quietly depends on.

Ask one a small question, though, and don't be surprised if you get a very large answer, since they have trouble seeing anything as separate from everything else. Asked "should we cross the river today," one might spend ten minutes on the shape of the clouds before finally saying yes. Orchard councils lead by rotating consensus, whoever's currently looking furthest ahead gets the floor. They mean well. They just live at a different scale than most people, and haven't quite learned how to come back down to it.

"See far, step gently."

Hippopotamus Folk

+4 | -4 | -1 | -3 | +2 | +2 | *XL*

The **Mvuu People** spend their days building the canals and irrigation channels that carry river water to fields far from any bank, patient work suited to a people who are, themselves, very hard to rattle. In their off hours they turn that same patience toward brewing, slow fermented ales and ciders that connoisseurs swear are worth the wait. Rushing their brew, they'll tell you flatly, only proves you didn't deserve to drink it yet.

Don't mistake that patience for slowness of mind. They're famous for a dry, deadpan sense of humor that catches visitors off guard, usually delivered so flatly that half the joke is watching someone realize, a beat too late, that they've been teased. Pods raise their young together, with the eldest aunt or uncle in the water treated as the pod's quiet final word on most decisions. One who feels their home river is threatened will defend it without a moment's hesitation, the only time they're ever in a hurry.

"Even still water changes everything it touches."

Ibex Folk

-2 | +1 | — | +2 | — | — | *M*

The **Boukri People** take their knitting seriously enough to argue about it. Every family has a signature pattern, and one will absolutely tell you, unprompted, why theirs is the best in the range. Wool trade keeps their small bands connected to the rest of Kinhaven even from the highest passes, alongside their other trade, guiding travelers across terrain most species won't attempt, knowing which ledge holds weight and which one doesn't.

Life on a cliff edge doesn't leave much room for complaint, and they rarely offer one. Hardship is just the shape their life takes. They gather only a few times a year, when bands cross paths at a shared high pass under whichever moon marks the turning of a season, and those brief meetings are treated as genuinely precious. Wool yarn is compared, news is traded, matches are made, and leadership for the coming season is decided by whoever the gathered bands trust most, before everyone quietly goes back to the work of living simply above the tree line.

Jaguar Folk

— | +1 | +1 | -2 | — | — | *M*

The **Yaguareté People** live scattered through the deepest rainforest, mostly alone or in small family groups, and value privacy the way other species value gold. You rarely see one before it's already seen you. Meeting one at all is rare enough that most Kinhaveners consider it a small honor, and rarer still is earning enough trust to see the tattoos they wear, every mark records something real, a hunt, a loss, a promise kept.

They keep their circle small on purpose, but for the few inside it, that loyalty runs as deep as the forest itself. They rarely raise their voice, and rarely explain themselves twice. There is no single leader among them, only whichever elder carries the most marked skin, trusted the way a well-kept record is trusted. Most other species have learned not to mistake their quiet for coldness. It's closer to the truth to say a Jaguar simply doesn't waste words on people who haven't earned them yet.

“What isn't seen is not the same as what isn't there.”

Otter Folk

-2 | +1 | +1 | +1 | — | — | *S*

The **Vidră People** live afloat as often as not, whole families crowded onto houseboats that drift the river network from town to town, tied up wherever there's work, music, or good company to be found. They are Kinhaven's river couriers, moving news, goods, and people between towns faster than almost anyone else, mostly because they genuinely love the trip. In the evenings, an Otter boat is rarely quiet. Someone is almost always playing a reed flute, a skill passed down so young that most can't actually remember learning it.

That warmth isn't performance. Their families are close, loud, and constantly underfoot in each other's business, quick to celebrate anything worth celebrating and just as quick to grieve together when they need to. Ask one to explain their affection and you'll probably just get tackled with a hug instead. Whoever's boat a family ties up beside becomes, for as long as they're moored there, part of the family too, no formal welcome required. They'll dive into real danger for one another without a second thought, the same eagerness they'd bring to diving into a river for fun.

"New water, same river."



Panda Folk

+2 | — | -3 | -2 | +1 | — | *L*



Illustration by thewerdo43

The **Xióngmāo People** grow and blend the finest tea in Kinhaven, and travelers who make the long trip to their bamboo mountain teahouses often say it's the first properly restful afternoon they've had in years. Their tea isn't just a drink, it's closer to an elixir. Ask for something calming and you'll get exactly that, blended on the spot for whatever's actually bothering you, no two cups quite the same.

Their communities decide things slowly and together, since nobody's willing to move forward until everyone genuinely agrees, a process that can take a very long time and is treated as entirely worth it. Once a decision is finally made, though, it's carried through with a quiet strength that surprises people who only ever saw the gentle side. Their teahouses double as the closest thing Kinhaven has to a neutral meeting ground, and more than one dispute between other kingdoms has been settled over a pot of their tea rather than at any formal table.

"Yesterday and tomorrow can only be understood today."

Porcupine Folk

-1 | -1 | — | — | +3 | +1 | *XS*

The **Sahi People** build the finest furniture in Kinhaven, alongside sturdy tool handles, dense walls, and homes that outlast the people who built them. They keep mostly to their own homesteads, and other species travel a long way to commission a chair or door from them, knowing it'll still be standing for their grandchildren. They say what they mean, plainly and without much cushioning, and expect the same courtesy back. They would rather hear an honest complaint than a polite lie.

That bluntness sometimes reads as unfriendliness to newcomers, but it isn't. One who lets you past their door has decided you're worth the trouble, and from there they're steady, generous, and quietly protective. The same quills that keep strangers at a respectful distance will absolutely be turned toward anyone who threatens someone they've claimed as family. Porcupine households answer to no one but themselves, and a Porcupine is more likely to fix a problem quietly than call a meeting about it.

If combat is up close (excluding ranged weapons, thrown weapons, and polearms), unsuccessful attacks against porcupines result in 1 point of damage to the attacker.

"A closed door isn't necessarily a locked one."

Rabit Folk

-2 | +1 | — | +2 | — | — | *S*

The **Khargosh People** farm small, intensely tended plots bursting with greens, root vegetables, and herbs, and nobody grows a better salad in Kinhaven, a fact they will absolutely tell you unprompted. Seeds and cuttings get traded back and forth so enthusiastically that a good growing season spreads through an entire warren within days. Evenings in a warren usually end the same way, with someone pulling out a banjo and half the family joining in on a chorus everyone already somehow knows.

They worry out loud, about everything, constantly, and somehow this makes their villages some of the warmest, most talkative places in Kinhaven rather than the most stressful. They rarely travel far from home, preferring the safety of a burrow full of family to the uncertainty of the open road. That doesn't mean they're timid where it counts. A threat to the warren turns every bit of that nervous energy into something sharp and fast, and more than one larger predator has been startled to learn just how far a cornered rabbit will go to protect the people they love.

Snow Leopard Folk

— | +1 | — | -2 | — | — | *M*

The **Hi'uṁ cituvā People** live scattered and mostly alone in the coldest reaches of Kinhaven's mountains, and most of them prefer it that way. The more social among them are deeply valued as mountain guides, spiritual guides, or deft trackers who can follow creatures accross great expanses. Their dried herbs and preserved trail food have saved more travelers than anyone keeps count of.

They aren't unfriendly, exactly, just economical. One will answer a question in as few words as it requires and not one more, which visitors sometimes mistake for coldness. It isn't. Those who make the long climb to trade for their preserves, or seek their counsel, usually find the silence itself was half the wisdom, and that the few words they finally offer, often timed to the first clear night of a new moon, tend to be worth every step of the climb.

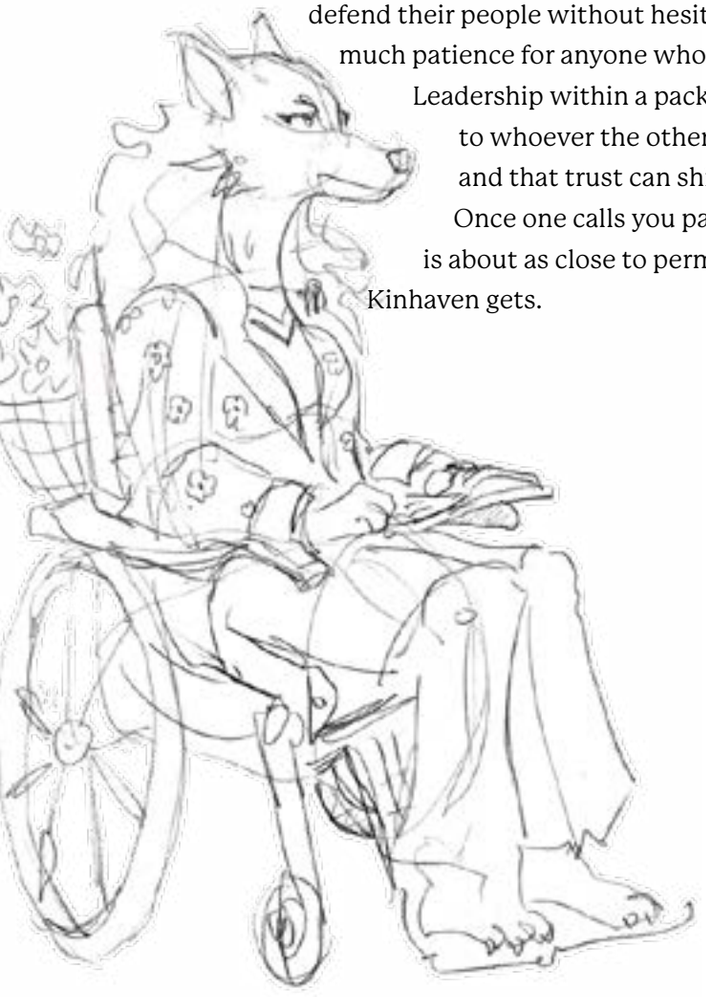
"Say only what the silence can't say better."

Wolf Folk,

— | +1 | +1 | -2 | — | — | *M*

The **Börü People** craft the hides, packs, and gear that Hinterwatch rangers across Kinhaven depend on, work that suits both their skill and their pack's constant need to be ready to move. Ask any ranger who they'd want beside them in real trouble, though, and a Wolf Folk name comes up just as often for the fighting as for the footwear, a bond that runs deeper than family and is earned through loyalty rather than blood.

That intensity can be a lot to stand next to. They say exactly what they think, defend their people without hesitation, and don't have much patience for anyone who wastes their pack's time. Leadership within a pack isn't inherited. It goes to whoever the others genuinely trust to lead, and that trust can shift if it's ever broken. Once one calls you pack, though, that loyalty is about as close to permanent as anything in Kinhaven gets.



Aves

The Winged Ones

The Aves are the winged creatures of Kinhaven, representing a wide range of birds, from the wise owls to the noble hawks. Many Aves live high in the trees or on mountain cliffs, crafting homes that bring them close to the sky they cherish. These folk are often found in small villages among their own kind, but some live in the more diverse towns where different species come together. The Aves value freedom, perspective, and exploration, traits that often draw them beyond their homes to see the world from above. They share a strong bond with their wild counterparts, able to sense the needs and emotions of the birds they live alongside. The Aves are often the messengers and scouts of Kinhaven, using their keen eyes and swift wings to help keep the land and its people connected.

Emu Folk

— | — | , | -1 | +1 | — | *L*

The **Murawung People** cover more ground on foot than almost anyone else in Kinhaven, moving in small nomadic bands across the open plains and scrublands where few others choose to live. Their waystations are known for delicious flatbread, mixed densely with nuts and seeds at dawn and cooked flat on the morning fire, simple enough to make on the move and filling enough to carry a traveler the rest of the way. When a message absolutely has to arrive, over land, in any weather, it's usually one of their runners who carries it, delivering the news exactly as given.

They don't waste breath on flourish, in speech or otherwise. Ask one a question and you'll get a plain, complete answer and nothing more, which suits people who've spent their lives moving efficiently across hard country. Bands are led by whoever knows the ground best, a role that shifts as the land does. They gather for festivals when their paths cross other bands, trading news and stories that they'll carry, unchanged, to the next place their feet take them.

Emu Folk cannot fly.

Flamingo Folk

-2 | , | +1 | +2 | — | -3 | *M*

The **Flamenco People** weave the finest baskets, hats, and bags in Kinhaven, working long grass and reed into patterns so fine that a piece is often carefully kept for a lifetime rather than used until worn. Their coastal colonies move with the seasons, following the shoreline in great migrating groups, and the weaving happens as they walk, hands never quite idle, patterns picked up and passed between weavers without a word needing to be said.



There's a stillness to how they carry themselves that other species sometimes mistake for shyness. It isn't. It's closer to formality. A Flamingo ceremony, held quietly at dawn when the light first touches the water, is a study in restraint rather than spectacle, precise movements and long silences that somehow say more than a louder display ever could. Leadership passes to whoever's weaving is most reliable, a quiet honor rather than a loud one. To them, beauty isn't about being seen. It's about being done properly, whether or not anyone's watching.

"Balance is the first beauty."

Flamingo Folk can fly in leather armor, but not chain mail or plate.

Hawk Folk

-1 | — | +1 | , | — | -3 | *M*

The **Elang People** claim wide territories and patrol them alone, which suits both their independent streak and their work, urgent scouting and emergency messages that can't wait for a slower courier. When something needs to be seen from above, fast, it's one of them who goes. They don't wait to be asked twice, and don't especially enjoy being asked at all. They'll take the job because it matters, not because you were polite about it.

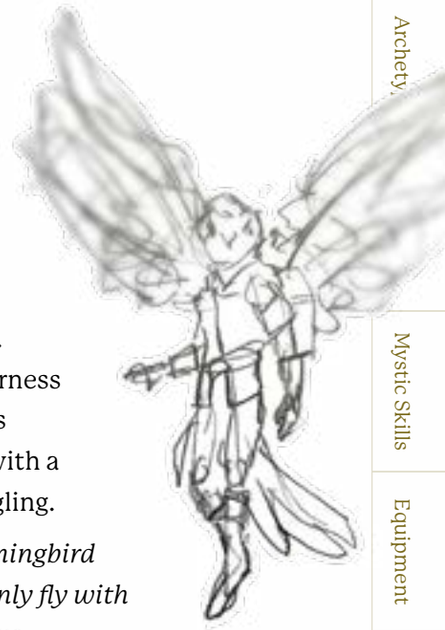
That confidence can come across as rudeness to people expecting more patience. Most of them don't much mind the reputation. They say what they see, plainly and quickly, and trust the people around them to keep up. Respect, to a Hawk, looks less like kindness and more like being told the truth without it being softened first. No one leads them for long. Each patrols their own sky, answering to reputation rather than rank.

Hawk Folk can fly in leather armor, but not chain mail or plate.

Hummingbird Folk

-4 | — | +4 | +4 | — | -4 | *XS*

The **Colibrí People** cluster tightly around territories rich with rare flowers, cultivating delicate plants that most Mystics and healers in Kinhaven rely on for ingredients nobody else knows how to find. Alongside the herbs, they're famous for nectar based sweets and pastries, a sweet cake worth the trip to find one, sold fast enough that it rarely travels far from where it was made.



A conversation with them moves just as quick as everything else about them, speech, mood, decisions, affection, all running hot. Keeping up with a Hummingbird friend can be genuinely tiring for anyone used to a slower pace, though they don't mean anything by it, that's simply their speed. Whoever's fastest to notice a problem tends to end up leading the moment, informally and briefly, until it's solved. Underneath the constant motion is a real tenderness for the small and overlooked, and one of them is often the first to notice, and fuss over, usually with a pastry, anyone in the group who's quietly struggling.

Due to their incredibly light body weight, Hummingbird Folk cannot fly with any armor, and they may only fly with wooden weapons, such as staffs, clubs, and bows.

Owl Folk

-2 | +1 | +1 | — | — | -3 | *S*

The **Būma People** make the finest paper and the sturdiest bound books in Kinhaven, and most of the land's important records eventually pass through their hands to be properly preserved. They live in small, elevated communities devoted to study, star charts, calendars, histories, and their astronomy is considered the most exact in the land, precise enough that farmers, sailors, and Mystics alike plan around their calculations without question, timed to the moon's phases as often as the sun's.

Precision matters more to them than speed, and they'd rather double check a figure three times than state it once and be wrong. This can read as coldness to visitors expecting quick, easy warmth. It isn't. Ask a real question, carefully, and one will give it their full attention for as long as it takes, which, once you've earned it, is a kind of respect all its own. Leadership in a scholarly order goes to whoever's records have proven most reliable over the years, a title earned slowly and lost quickly.

"A careless answer wastes a good question."

Owl Folk can fly in leather armor, but not chain mail or plate.

Raven Folk

-2 | +1 | +1 | — | — | -3 | *M*

The **Hrafn People** are Kinhaven's finest silversmiths, drawn to fine, precise work, rings, clasps, small mechanisms, anything that rewards a careful eye. They trade the pieces alongside something less tangible, secrets, omens, and information, the same way other species trade in coin, and one with a reputation for reliable readings can command real respect, and real payment.

Trusting a Raven takes a while, since their loyalty tends to follow whoever's earned it most recently rather than any fixed allegiance. But underestimating them is a mistake most people only make once. Behind the sharp riddles and slippery answers is a mind that misses very little. There's no formal leader among them, only whoever currently holds the most valuable secret, a position that changes hands often and without warning. One who decides to help you properly, with a blade, a bargain, or a secret, is one of the most useful allies in Kinhaven.

"Not every trick is a lie. Some are just truths wearing a disguise."

Raven Folk can fly in leather armor, but not chain mail or plate.



Illustration by Maya González

Herpetón

The Cold-Blooded Kin

The Herpetón are the cold-blooded creatures of Kinhaven, including tortoises, crocodiles, and lizards. These people are as diverse as the wetlands, deserts, and mountains they inhabit. They often live in tight-knit, species-specific tribes, but they are also seen in larger towns where different kinds come together. The Herpetón are known for their resilience, patience, and adaptability, qualities that help them thrive in both the hottest and driest parts of Kinhaven. They share an instinctive bond with their non-speaking animal kin, able to understand them on a level that goes beyond words. The Herpetón value wisdom and tradition, often taking time to reflect before making decisions, and their way of life emphasizes balance and a deep respect for the world they share with others.

Axolotl Folk

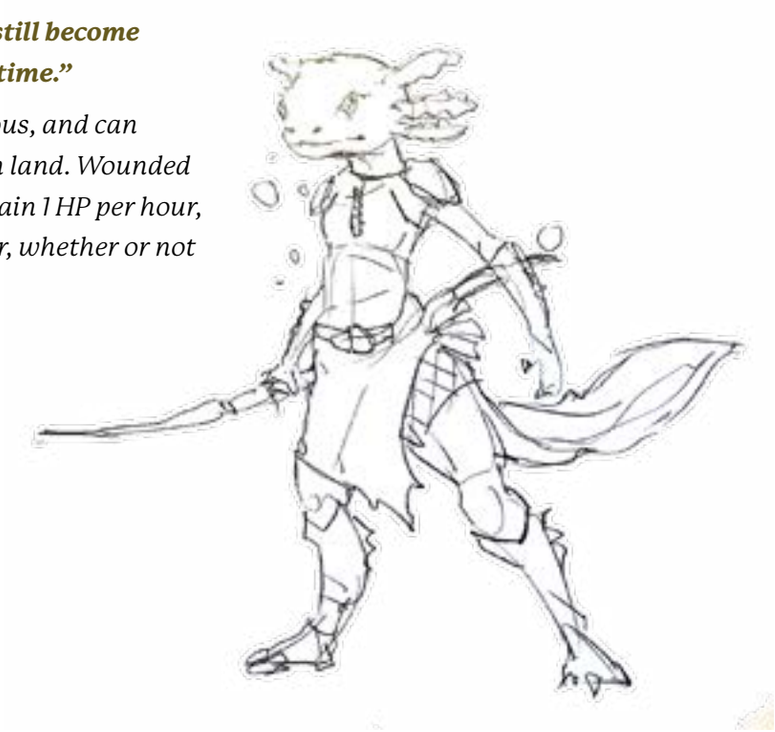
-4 | +1 | +2 | +2 | — | +2 | *XS*

The **Āxōlōtl People** live quietly in wetlands and underground lakes most travelers rarely visit, but their healing houses are sought out from every kingdom for injuries other treatments can't fix. Nobody who's badly hurt cares how far out of the way the marsh is, and their own gift for healing from almost anything seems to carry into their care for others.

They're gentle almost to a fault, speaking softly and moving slowly around anyone in pain, and their healing houses run on shared work rather than any one healer being in charge, decisions made by whoever's hands are free and needed most in the moment. One will tell you, without much drama, that nothing is ever really beyond repair. They've regrown their own limbs enough times to actually believe it, and it shows in how calmly they handle even the worst injuries that arrive at their door.

"What was broken can still become whole, given water and time."

Axolotl Folk are amphibious, and can breathe underwater or on land. Wounded Axolotl Folk naturally regain 1 HP per hour, when submerged in water, whether or not they are conscious.



Chameleon Folk

-2 | +1 | — | +2 | — | — | *S*

The **Kinyonga People** move through the dense jungle almost unseen, and put that same quiet, careful attention into herbalism, remedies, salves, and the occasional poison, prepared with a precision that comes from watching everything closely before ever touching a leaf. You've probably been near one without knowing it.

Their communities don't have one fixed leader. Whoever knows the most about the problem at hand simply leads until it's solved, then steps back without ceremony. Being constantly underestimated has given them a dry sense of humor about it, letting a stranger talk right past them, watching quietly, and mentioning days later, almost gently, everything they actually noticed. It isn't cruelty, just amusement. One who likes you will eventually let you see them clearly, which is its own small honor.

"Being overlooked is its own kind of freedom."

Chameleon Folk have a natural +5 to camouflage.

Crocodile Folk

+2 | -2 | +1 | -4 | +3 | — | *L*

The **Buwaya People** are Kinhaven's finest boatwrights, crafting river vessels so sturdy that a secondhand canoe of theirs is still considered a good investment decades later. That same patience shapes everything else about them. Their river lodges are rebuilt each flood season rather than defended against it, and leadership over a stretch of water passes to whoever has held that particular crossing the longest, a role earned by patience, not birth or strength.

When two villages disagree about exactly where a river has shifted, and therefore where their shared boundary actually lies, it's almost always one of the Crocodile Folk who's asked to settle it, since nobody has been watching that river's every bend and season longer than they have. Outsiders sometimes mistake their stillness for menace. They rarely bother to correct them. They speak rarely, and mean everything they say, which tends to make their silence in a negotiation worth more than anyone else's speech.



Tortoise Folk

— | — | -6 | — | +6 | — | *M*

The **Tartaruga People** are Kinhaven's foremost stonemasons, raising walls, bridges, and monuments that some of their villages have stood beside for longer than any other settlement in the land, and carving their history directly into the stone alongside them, laws and agreements meant to settle disputes long after everyone involved is gone. In the evenings, that same steady rhythm turns to drumming, slow, deep, patient beats that carry a long way across open ground and mark the turning of each season for villages well beyond their own.

Leadership simply falls to whoever's oldest, without much ceremony about it, since age is treated as the plainest kind of qualification. Once one has made up their mind about something, moving it again takes considerable effort. They've had a very long time to think it through, and don't feel much need to hurry back to the question. What looks like slowness to outsiders is closer to certainty. A Tortoise rarely does anything twice, because they rarely do it wrong the first time.

The Tortoise Folk can go into defensive mode, giving up their action in a round but gaining an additional +3 to AL.

Humans

Wandering Folk

— | +1 | -1 | -1 | — | — | *M*

Humans are known throughout Kinhaven as Wandering Folk, travelers, traders, and often the itinerant blacksmiths whose traveling forge carts are a welcome sight in any village needing tools mended or a blade sharpened. They don't have ancestral homelands in Kinhaven, but a skilled human armorer or tinker tends to find a warm welcome and a full worktable wherever they stop. Humans are adaptable and versatile, blending easily into various cultures and settings, which allows them to be found in bustling market towns, quiet forest villages, and remote outposts alike.

The Kolumbidae Empire and their soldiers and agents are usually unwelcome. This empire seeks to expand its reach, and its ambition stands in contrast to the independent and free-spirited nature of most humans in Kinhaven, including the very forges and metalwork the Empire has turned toward cannons instead of plowshares. Those who serve the Empire bring an air of tension wherever they go, their stern mannerisms and strict adherence to hierarchy contrasting sharply with the more open, egalitarian traditions of Kinhaven's peoples.

Despite this, the majority of humans maintain a positive reputation, known for their adaptability, eagerness to learn, and a certain stubborn optimism.

Designing your own species

As a general guideline, the smallest species average about 1 m (3 ft) tall, and the largest average about 3 m (9ft) tall. And all species have hands with opposable thumbs.

Two main rules

1. Benefits and weaknesses should roughly balance out

Strength and Agility are higher value modifiers. They are worth **twice** as much as Evasion Level (EL), Armor Level (AL), Health Points (HP), and Readiness. Flying is very valuable, worth twice as much as Strength and Agility.

Exchange Rules:

- **Strength** and **Agility** can be exchanged at a **1:1** ratio with each other.
- **EL**, **AL**, **HP,** and **Readiness** can also be exchanged at a **1:1** ratio.
- **Strength** or **Agility** can be exchanged at a 2:1 ratio with **EL**, **AL**, **HP,** or **Readiness** .
- **Flight** needs to reduce **Strength** and **Agility** by a total of **2 points**, or **EL**, **AL**, **HP,** and **Readiness** by a total of **4 points**, or a combination of the two.

Examples:

- If you reduce Strength by -1, you can increase Agility by +1, or alternatively increase HP by +2
- If you increase Agility by +2, you could balance it out by decreasing Strength by -1 and EL by -2
- If your species can fly, you could balance it out by decreasing Strength by -1 and HP by -2

2. No species has a mind modifier

All species have equal capacity for a healthy, strong mind.



The Archetypes

There are three archetypes you can choose between for your character. They are the **Guardian**, who operates with strength, courage, and strategy. The **Mystic**, whose abilities derive from mysticism, magic, or spiritual devotion. And the **Cloak**, who operates through stealth, subterfuge, and secrecy.

Guardian

+5 Combat Skills

Guardians are steadfast protectors who embody strength, courage, and tactical awareness. Their primary goal is to defend the lives and lands they hold dear, acting as shields for their companions and as defenders of the vulnerable. Whether standing at the front lines of battle or guarding a village against an impending threat, Guardians are capable fighters who use not only their physical power but also their strategic acumen to out think their foes and anticipate danger.

They prioritize defense and protection, often using their presence to bolster allies and deter enemies, creating a safe environment for those under their care. Their abilities might include defensive stances, rallying cries that inspire their allies, or maneuvers that divert attacks away from those less capable. Guardians are motivated by a deep sense of loyalty and duty, their strength serving not as a weapon of aggression, but as a force for safeguarding what matters most.



Illustration by Ariko Rondo

Mystic

+ 5 Mystic Skills, + Mystic Energy

Mystics are characters deeply connected to the mystical forces of the world, drawing their power from arcane knowledge, spiritual devotion, or an innate bond with the supernatural. They act as keepers of wisdom, using their abilities to tap into unseen energies, invoke magical spells, or channel divine power. Mystics can serve as healers, advisors, or conduits for the otherworld, offering insight into the mysteries of life and helping their companions navigate challenges through both knowledge and magic.

Their skills might involve healing wounds, casting protective enchantments, or calling upon spirits for guidance. Whether their abilities are rooted in ancient study, communion with nature, or devotion to a higher power, Mystics are highly respected for their intellect and supernatural strengths.

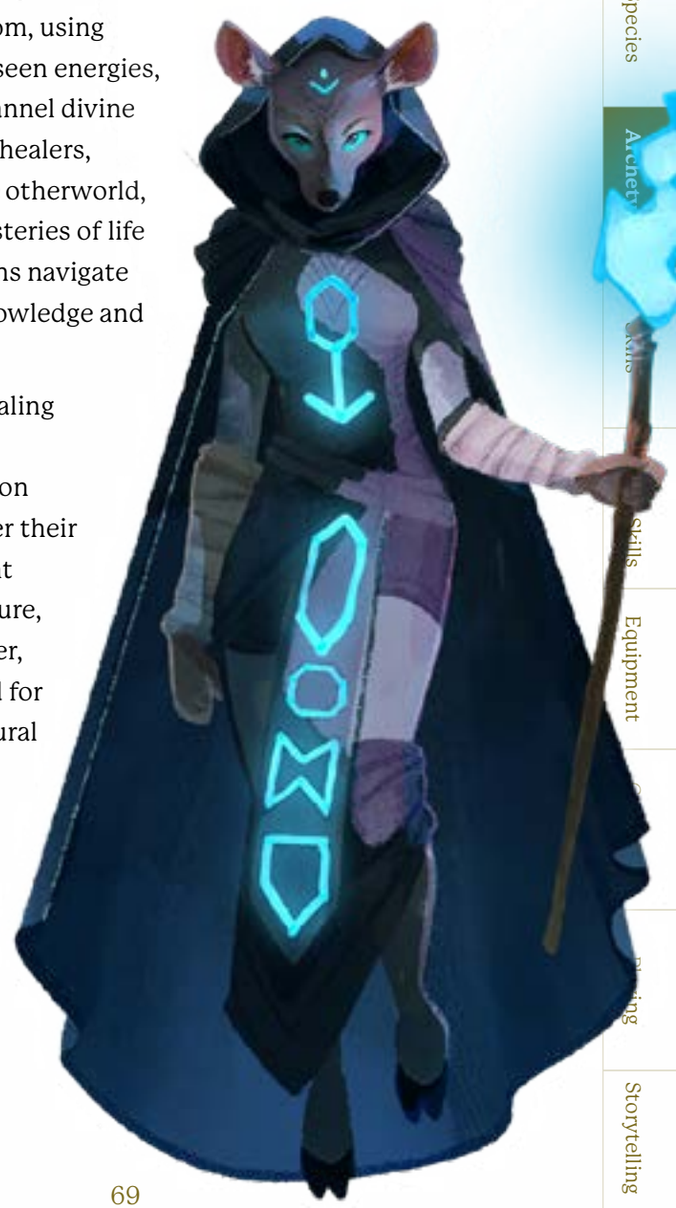


Illustration by Ariko Rondo

Cloak

+5 Cloak Skills

Cloaks are characters who operate in the shadows, thriving on stealth, subterfuge, and secrecy. Masters of deception and evasion, they are skilled in moving unnoticed, gathering information, and striking at the perfect moment. Cloaks excel in slipping past defenses, whether it's bypassing a guard post, stealing a valuable artifact, or listening in on important conversations. They use cunning and agility to achieve their goals, preferring indirect approaches over brute force.

A Cloak's abilities might include hiding in plain sight, picking locks, setting traps, or creating diversions to confuse or mislead enemies. Their role in a group is often one of reconnaissance, infiltration, or sabotage, making them invaluable when subtlety is required. Cloaks are often motivated by personal freedom, the thrill of the chase, or loyalty to a cause, and their understanding of the hidden currents of power and influence allows them to act where others cannot.



Illustration by Ariko Rowa

Fleshing out your archetype

Dwellers of Kinhaven don't usually go around introducing themselves as Cloaks, Mystics, or Guardians. These are just overarching categories we use for game play.

Take some time to flesh out your character's occupation. Perhaps your **Mystic** is a **hedge healer,** carrying ancient knowledge passed down from parent to child, gathering gifts from the wilderness and turning them into salves, medicines, and potent teas with incredible effects on the drinker. Or they might be a **medium**, reaching out to the spirits of ancestors for guidance and knowledge, using rituals and trances to gain insight into the unseen world. Some Mystics might be **witches**, practicing a blend of herbal magic and incantations, weaving spells that can bless crops, ward off misfortune, or even bend the weather to their will.

A **Cloak** might work as a **spy**, moving through the shadows to gather information for the village elders or a secretive organization. Or they could be a **detective**, hired by local townsfolk to uncover hidden truths, using their sharp mind and keen senses to solve mysteries and catch criminals. Perhaps your character is an orphaned **pick pocket**, providing for a band of street urchins with nimble fingers and an endearing smile.

Guardians, too, have varied roles. Your Guardian might serve as part of a village **militia**, patrolling the local roads and keeping the peace among their neighbors. Perhaps they're a **bounty hunter,** tracking down dangerous creatures or wanted outlaws who threaten the safety of the land. Or they could be a member of the **Hinterwatch,** a network of skilled rangers who monitor the remote and wild areas, keeping an eye out for threats that might slip past the eyes of settled communities.

Whatever the archetype, your character's job and role within the world can help you shape their skills, motivations, and unique way of interacting with others.

Skills

In this game, your character can learn **skills** that represent their abilities in different areas, such as using weapons, tracking, or crafting potions.

> *The storyteller may allow you to attempt to do something you are not skilled at, however you receive a* **-9 to your roll for being unskilled**.

Most skills are available to all Archetypes, however **only Mystics may learn Mystic Acts**, which have their own chapter.

Success and Difficulty Scores

For most skills players roll a d20 when attempting an action. To succeed, they must roll higher than the task's Difficulty Score (DS). **The standard DS is 5** but the Storyteller can adjust it based on the situation. For example, forging a letter might be much easier on a quiet day at home than it would be on a ship during a storm.

Combat Skills are similar, with your target's Evasion Level (EL) being the DS. Further details are under combat, in the Gameplay chapter.

Boosting Skills

You can put more than one skill point into a skill if you want to focus on it, up to 4 skill points. Each point you add improves your chance of success with that skill.

Skill Level	Unskilled	Basic	Advanced	Expert	Mastery
Skill Points	0	1	2	3	4
Roll Modifier	-9	0	+2	+3	+4

Cloak skills

You don't have to be a Cloak to acquire these skills, but Cloaks do get 5 automatic Cloak Skill Points.

Hiding

Quickly find and use cover to avoid being seen, whether in a crowded alley or behind a tree.

Stealth

Move silently and stay out of sight while navigating past guards, enemies, or obstacles.

Forgery

Create false documents or replicate handwriting to deceive others or gain unauthorized access.

Sleight of Hand

Skillfully take keys from someone's belt without them noticing, swap the real necklace with a fake one, or put an incriminating letter in someone's pocket.

Lock Picking

Open locks without a key using specialized tools, whether for breaking into places or escaping restraints.

Sneak Attack

+5 to your first roll against an unsuspecting target.

Master of Disguise

You can't impersonate a specific person. But with a few choice articles of clothing, you can pass as a barkeep, a soldier, a wizard, or a wandering bard.

Trap Setting

Set harmful traps or ensnaring traps for your enemies. And know how to spot traps set against your friends. *A harmful trap deals up to 4 damage, and is treated like an attack with no strength limitation. An ensnaring trap is also treated as an attack, with no damage limit, but instead of damage ensnares the victim for that many rounds.*

Deception

Lie or mislead others convincingly to manipulate their perceptions or hide the truth.

Climbing

Scale natural surfaces like cliffs or artificial ones like walls using physical strength, agility, and tools as needed.

Acrobatics

Perform agile feats like tumbling, leaping, and balancing, allowing you to navigate obstacles with dexterity.

Flee

If there's a way out of the predicament, you can find it. Leaping through a window into the moat, rolling under the guard's legs, or lighting the curtains on fire. It won't get you out of a locked room, but will get you out of a pinch.

Smuggle

You know how to get three kegs of ale to disappear into a hay wagon, two daggers past a pat down by the guards, and a diamond necklace or set of lock picks through a thorough search of your person.

Guardian skills

You don't have to be a Guardian to acquire these skills, but Guardians automatically get 5 Guardian Skill Points. For Guardian skills, the **Difficulty Score = Target's Evasion Level**.

Weapon training

When you gain this skill, choose one weapon it applies to. **Each weapon you train is a separate skill**, and you may learn as many different weapons as you like. A single weapon can receive up to 4 Skill Points, improving your attack rolls with that weapon according to the Skill Points table.

If you attack with a weapon you have no training in, you roll as unskilled, taking the usual −5 penalty.

Unarmed combat training

Allows you to fight without a weapon. Skill points here raise your unarmed attack roll the same way Weapon training does. Your unarmed **damage is capped at 3**, the same way a weapon's own damage cap limits you, no matter how many skill points you've put here.

Armor training

Each skill point here **reduces the Readiness penalty** from any armor you're wearing by 1, up to a maximum of 4. For example, a character with Mastery in Armor training removes even Plate Armor's full -4 penalty.

Wind

A martial art focused entirely on dodging and disarming rather than damage. While using Wind, you gain abonus to your Evasion Level. Instead of dealing damage, successful roll disarms your opponent for 1 round.

Wind	Unskilled	Basic	Advanced	Expert	Mastery
Skill Points	0	1	2	3	4
Evasion Level	—	+1	+2	+3	+4
Disarm Roll Modifier	-3	0	+2	+3	+4

Survival Skills

Healing

Allows you to heal yourself of others 1 point per day, or up to 3 with a healing kit.

Tracking

Follow the trail left behind by creatures or people, using signs like footprints, disturbed plants, or scent.

Wayfinding

Use the stars, landmarks, and tools to determine your position and direction, and create maps to document routes and locations.

Social Skills

Persuasion

Convince others to see things your way through charm, logic, or emotional appeal, often to gain favor or influence decisions.

Diplomacy

Navigate complex social or political situations with tact, aiming to resolve conflicts and build alliances peacefully.

Language

Every culture in Kinhaven has both spoken and signed traditions, though their use varies by community. Most characters know their species' native language and Kinhae, the shared language of the Kinhaven Isles. Learning the spoken or signed languages of other species, or the Imperial language of Kolumbidae, can open new opportunities, deepen relationships, and bridge cultural divides.

Crafting Skills

Weapon Making

Specialize in creating high-quality weapons, including swords, axes, and bows using advanced techniques. *Weapons cost you half as much to start with, or in the future if you have access to a forge and tools.*

Armor Smithing

Craft, repair, and maintain metal armor, ensuring both protection and flexibility for the wearer. You can also craft metal parts for wagons or other needs. *Metal armor costs you half as much to start with, or in the future if you have access to a forge and tools.*

Leather Working

Craft and repair leather goods, including leather armor, saddles, boots, bags, and other useful items, using tanning and stitching techniques. *Leather armor cost you half as much to start with, or in the future if you have access to tools.*

Creative

A chosen talent such as painting, sculpting, instrument playing, cooking, singing, or jewelry making.

Designing Your Own Skills

When creating custom skills, focus on abilities that enhance a character's role-playing options, provide new ways to solve problems, or deepen their unique strengths.

Start by identifying a specific need or gap in the current skill set, perhaps your game would benefit from a skill for social influence, animal communication, or advanced survival tactics. Be sure to balance each new skill's usefulness, thinking about how often it might come into play and if it overlaps too much with existing skills.

Consider setting limits, like specific conditions or requirements, to keep it challenging and fair. It can also be helpful to imagine how this skill might be creatively combined with other abilities or teamwork, adding versatility and making gameplay more dynamic.

Mystic Skills

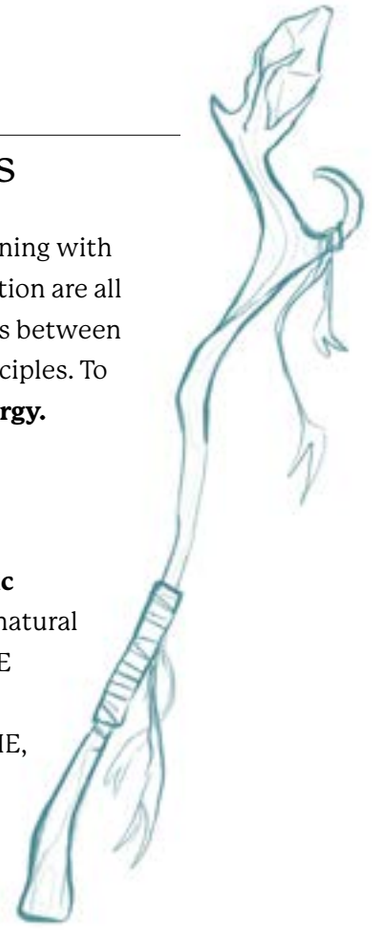


Illustration by Samara Paige

Mystical Powers

The invocation of a prayer or spell, communing with ancestors, or preparing an herbal formulation are all **Mystic Acts**. While there are some differences between them, they function with some common principles. To start with, all Mystic Acts require **Mystic Energy.**

Mystic Energy

Every day, a Mystic has a set amount of **Mystic Energy (ME)** that they can use toward supernatural ends. For example, a character may have 12 ME available each day. A spell, prayer, seance, or creating a potion costs a specific amount of ME, depending on its power.

- **Sleeping recharges ME.** For example, if a mystic gets half their required sleep, they start their day with half their typical ME. However oversleeping does not add additional ME.

> *In an emergency, a mystic may use their* **Health Points** *as* **Mystic Energy**, *draining their health to power their magic.*

Active and stored Mystic Energy

Active Mystic Energy involves the direct manipulation of mystical forces in the moment, requiring concentration and skill. Mystics draw upon raw Mystic Energy to cast spells, create illusions, or shape reality in real time.

Stored Mystic Energy involves imbuing objects like amulets, weapons, or herbal concoctions with magic to be used later. Mystics channel Mystic Energy into items, creating magical items that can be accessed later without casting a spell in the moment. This pre-planned magic is useful for empowering even non-magic users through enchanted items.

Learning the Mystic arts

Mystic powers require **learning Mystic Skills**. You must learn to cast a spell, commune with an ancestor, invoke a blessing, or mix an herbal concoction.

- **Only Mystics can learn Mystic Skills.** Mystics are given **5 Skill Points** to spend on their Mystic Skills and may spend any additional general Skill Points on Mystic Skills as well.

Like other skills, a Mystic can attempt a Mystic Skill you aren't skilled in at a -9 penalty to your attempt.

Rolling for Mystic Acts

Mystic Acts work like any other skill: roll a d20 against the DS to see if it succeeds. **You only spend Mystic Energy if the Act actually works.** A failed attempt costs you the moment, but your ME stays right where it was.

> *The standard **Difficulty Score** (DS) for a Mystic Act is **5**. The Storyteller may adjust this as they feel makes sense.*

Sources of Mystic Energy

In Kinhaven, mystical power can come from many sources, each offering a unique flavor for your Mystic. Try and flesh out what type of Mystic your character is.

For example, **magic users**, such as witches and magi, draw from the Arcane, pulling Mystic Energy **directly from the world around them** to cast spells, conjure illusions, or form magical defenses. The power flows through them and is shaped by their skill, learning, and focus as they harness the raw energy of the unseen.

The **Devout**, such as nuns, clerics, and monks, work within the domain of Miracles, channeling energy granted by their **deity or faith**. Through rituals, prayers, or meditation, these practitioners call on their beliefs to heal, bless, and enact divine acts, viewing themselves as instruments of a greater will.

Those in **Spirit Work**, such as elders or mediums, draw Mystic Energy through a connection with the **spirits of their ancestors**. Through meditation or ritual, they receive wisdom, uncover secrets, sense dangers, and gain strength from the presence of those who came before them.

Finally, **Herbalists**, such as alchemists, hedge healers, and apothecaries, connect with Mystic Energy through the natural world, working within the domain of Herbalism. Using herbs, fungi, minerals, and animal parts, they create potions, salves, and elixirs that heal, poison, or enhance abilities, grounding their magic in nature's deep-rooted powers.

How to Read a Mystic Skill's Information

1 ME (Mystic Energy) levitates (Action) 1 Person (Target) 1 Yard (Scale) for 1 Minute (Duration)

Each Mystic Act includes essential details on how the Mystic Act functions, breaking down its key elements: Mystic Energy (ME), Action, Target, Scale, and Duration.

Mystic Energy is the amount of energy a Mystic must expend to perform the Act, with higher amounts often leading to more powerful or lasting effects. **Action** describes what the Mystic Act actually does, such as enhancing strength, shielding an ally, or summoning light. **Target** specifies who or what the Mystic Act affects, which could be a single ally, a group, or even the Mystic themselves. **Scale** indicates the scope or range of the effect, whether it's limited to a small area, covers a larger field, or impacts a distant target. Finally, **Duration** tells how long the effect of the Mystic Act will last once cast, ranging from a few minutes to hours or even days, depending on the act.

Interpreting these together helps Mystics determine both the immediate impact and the resource cost of each Act, allowing them to make tactical choices during gameplay

Multiplying Mystic Acts

Spend more Mystic Energy, get more out of the Act. Double the ME, and you can double one of these:

- **Scale:** the range or area it covers
- **Duration:** how long it lasts
- **Targets:** how many people or things it affects
- **Impact:** how strong the effect is

Triple the ME, triple that same choice. Whatever multiple you spend, that's the multiple you get, on the one thing you pick.

Example: Mage Armor normally protects 1 ally. Spend double the ME, and it shields 2 allies, or protects that same ally twice as long. Your choice.

Invocations: Spells & Miracles

Invocations are often dramatic Mystic Acts that have an **immediate and tangible physical impact** on the world around the Mystic. Whether a spell or a divine miracle, these invocations are likely to leave an impression.

Wind Burst

1 ME | knocks | 1 person-sized target | ↑10m away | back | 2 m

A burst of wind pushes back a foe or clears a small area, great for creating distance or knocking an enemy off balance.

Fireball

1 ME | 3m radius | 1 damage | ↑10 m away

A classic mystic act that conjures a fiery explosion at a distance. Anyone in the radius is impacted.

Mage Armor

1 ME | protects | 1 person | +1 AL | for | 1 hour

A protective spell that surrounds the caster or an ally with an invisible barrier, providing extra defense against attacks.

Invisibility

1 ME | hides | 1 person-sized target | for | 1 minute

A stealth spell that renders the caster or a target unseen by the naked eye for a time, perfect for sneaking past enemies or avoiding detection.

Levitate

1 ME | levitates | 1 person | 1 m | for | 1 minute

A movement spell that allows the caster or a target to float around above the ground, bypassing obstacles or gaining a better vantage point.

Teleportation

1 ME | teleports | 1 person | 1 m away

A transportation spell that allows the caster to instantly move themselves or a small group to a nearby location they have seen before.

Herbal Concoctions

Herbal Concoctions are things that you can **make and save for later**. It takes about an hour to make a Herbal Concoction.

Healing Potion

2 ME | +1 HP | for | 1 person

Restores 1 Health Point quickly, up to the daily max of 3 HP, helping teammates regroup after combat or harm.

Strengthening Balm

3 ME | +1 strength | for | 1 person | for | 1 hour

Enhances the drinker's physical power, building up to a sustained strength boost for more enduring tasks or challenges.

Illustration by Samara Paige

Thunder Jar

5 ME | 2 damage | across | 3 m

The vapors in a thunder jar have an explosive reaction when exposed to the air. Their concussive damage ignores both worn and natural armor.



Sleep Mist

6 ME | Sleep | across | 3 m | for | 4 rounds

Puts targets to sleep, ideal for subduing without combat.

Fog of War

2 ME | -5 rolls | across | 10 m | for | 4 rounds

A dense, inky black fog that makes seeing incredibly difficult. Anyone acting within the fog, or anyone outside the fog attempting to attack someone within it, suffers a -5 to anything they attempt, *excepting for Bat Folk.*

Spirit Work

Spirit work involves cooperation with a **Spirit** to achieve a Mystic end. The Spirit's commonly worked with are either an **ancestor**, a **deity,** or lesser spirits such as **angels**, **demons**, and **jinn**.

Daily Intentions

Bless their Every Action

10 ME | +1 all rolls | for | 1 person | for | 1 day

A heartfelt plea to a Spirit, blessing the target with subtle guidance in every action, raising their success in all endeavors.

Shelter Them

3 ME | +1 EL | for | 1 person | for | 1 day

Shields the target in protective energy, helping them instinctively evade harm with greater ease.

Laying on of Hands

These Mystical Acts require being able to **touch** the character needing healing.

Healing

1 ME | +1 HP | for | 1 person

You can heal 1 Health Point per round, up to the daily max of 3 HP.

Raise the Dead

5 ME + *x* HP | Revive | 1 person | within | 1 hour

A costly and desperate way to bring back a friend. Expending 5 ME allows the Mystic to sacrifice most of their own HP to save a character who has been dead for less than an hour. After the resurrection, the Mystic is left with 1 HP and the resurrected character has the minimum HP necessary for them to be alive.

Omens

Discernment of Omens

6 ME | per | question | requires | 1 hour

Posing questions to Spirits about unknowns and receiving visions or images that hint at the answer. Techniques vary widely, and may include palm reading, tea leaves, cards, crystal balls, omen boards, trances, meditation, visions, and dreams.

The question must be framed as a simple sentence, and the Mystic must be in a calm quiet, hospitable space.

Enchantments

Enchantments give benefits to an object, regardless of user.

Blade of Force

3 ME | +1 damage | to | blade | lasts | 1 day

Adds damage to a bladed weapon's attacks, making each strike hit with extra force.

Seeker's Bow

3 ME | +1 attack | to | bow | lasts | 1 day

Increases a Long or Short Bow's accuracy, improving the odds of striking the target with each shot.

Ward-Infused Shield

2 ME | +1 AL | to | shield | lasts | 1 day

Absorbs additional impact when blocking attacks, reducing the damage the bearer takes.

Designing your own Mystic Acts

Principles for ME ratings.

Creating custom Mystic Acts lets you add unique abilities to your character while keeping balance in the game. When designing a new Mystic Act, consider its attributes, how long it lasts, how far it reaches, the size of the area it impacts, and how many targets it affects. Generally, a small, short-term effect close to the Mystic will require less ME than a powerful, long-lasting effect that impacts multiple targets over a large area.

Acts that affect only the Mystic or nearby allies are more accessible, requiring less energy than those that influence distant targets, while scale also matters: a single target has a lower ME cost than multiple or larger targets.

Small, momentary acts may cost around 1 ME, while broad or long-lasting effects could require 50 ME or more, needing multiple Mystics to cause it.

Use these guidelines to balance power with feasibility, creating Mystic Acts that enrich your character's story while staying grounded in the game world.

Equipment

Characters start out with 100 coins worth of belongings. Any coins not allocated to belongings remain with the player to spend in the future.

Characters' starting equipment

At no cost, every character starts with:

Backpack: Carries your gear.

Waterskin: Holds one day of water for one person.

Rope: 15 m. Good for climbing, tying, or setting traps.



Illustration by Samara Aikoe

Bedroll: A place to sleep.

Torches (5): Light for one evening each.

Tinderbox: Starts fires.

For Purchase

Tent, small	5 coins
Tent, large	10 coins
Horse	75 coins
Wagon	75 coins
Healer's Kit	5 coins
Lantern	10 coins
Grappling Hook	10 coins

Spyglass	50 coins
Map	15 coins
Compass	50 coins
Chest	15 coins
Lock	15 coins
Lock picks	25 coins

A small **Tent** fits up to two people, a large one up to five.

A **Horse** covers ground faster than walking. Ponies suit smaller species, draft horses suit larger ones.

A **Wagon** carries supplies, equipment, or a small group of travelers.

A **Healer's Kit** contains 5 HP worth of care, healing 1 HP per day per patient, or up to 3 HP with the Healing Skill.

A **Lantern** burns longer than a torch and holds up better against wind or rain.

A **Grappling Hook** attaches to rope for scaling walls or reaching hard-to-get-to places.

A **Spyglass** helps you see distant objects clearly, useful for scouting or tracking.

A **Map** adds +5 to wayfinding checks.

A **Compass** adds +9 to wayfinding checks.

A **Chest** stores valuables securely and can be locked.

A **Lock** secures a door, chest, or gate.

Lock picks add +5 to lock picking.

For Reference

Room for a night	5 coins
Common meal	1 coin
2-bedroom Home	15,000 coins
Small Castle	250,000 coins

Boat for 2	5,000 coins
Ship for 20	75,000 coins
Book	100 coins
Noble Outfit	100 coins

Weapons & Armor

Weapons

There are 5 basic types of weapons available, light, one-handed, two-handed, distance weapons, and unique weapons.

Light Weapons

	Cost	Damage	Range	Notes
Small Blade	10	↟4	6 m	*Daggers, throwing axes*
Thrown Blades	5	↟3	6 m	*Throwing stars, darts*
Weighted	5	↟4	*NA*	*Brass knuckles, saps,*
Wooden	5	↟4	*NA*	*Quarterstaff or one-handed club*

One-handed Weapons

	Cost	Damage
Short Sword	30	↟6
Hand Axe	30	↟6
Mace	30	↟6

Two-handed Weapons

	Cost	Damage
Long Sword	45	↟8
Battleaxe	45	↟8
Warhammer	45	↟8
Polearm	40	↟7

Distance Weapons

	Cost	Damage	Range	Notes
Sling	15	↟4	30 m	
Short Bow	25	↟6	35 m	
Long Bow	40	↟8	55 m	
Crossbow	60	↟10	15 m	*1 round to load, no strength limit*

Unique Weapons

	Cost	Damage	Notes
Whip	5	↟2	*Attempt to grab, incapacitate at -3, disarm no penalty*
Net	15	NA	*Incapacitates 1 round per initial damage, ↟6*
Bolas	15	1	*Incapacitates 1 round per initial damage, ↟4*

Light Weapons

Up to **4 damage**

These small, agile weapons are easy to wield in one hand.

Small Blades

10 | ↟4 | 6m

Dagger: A small, easily concealed blade with a narrow point, useful at close range or as a backup weapon.

Hatchet: A small, balanced axe shaped for throwing with precision at short to mid-range.

Thrown Blades

4 | ↟3 | 6m

Hunga Munga: A multi-bladed throwing knife with an irregular, angled profile, shaped to land true no matter which way it strikes the ground.

Chakram: A flat, edged throwing ring, thrown with a spin to keep it stable in flight.

Weighted Weapons

5 | ↟4

Brass Knuckles: Metal reinforcements worn over the knuckles, adding weight and shape to a closed fist.

Saps: A small, flexible weapon with a weighted end, built for a quick, controlled strike.

Wooden

5 | ↟4

Club: A simple, sturdy length of wood, shaped for close-range blunt strikes.

Quarterstaff: A long wooden staff offering excellent reach and versatility, used for both defense and controlled strikes.

Escrima Stick: A short wooden fighting stick, often used in matched pairs, shaped for fast, close strikes rather than sweeping reach.

One-handed Weapons

30 | ↑6

Balanced for versatility and control, these weapons allow for powerful attacks while keeping one hand free for defense or additional equipment.

Short Swords

A versatile, balanced blade that comes in various lengths and shapes, suited to many different fighting styles.

Kodachi: A short, curved sword with a single edge, shaped for precision and quick, close handling.

Scimitar: A curved, single-edged sword with a wide blade, shaped for sweeping motion.

Cutlass: A short, broad-bladed sword with a slightly curved edge, historically carried by sailors for its compact reach.

Khopesh: A hooked, sickle-shaped sword with a single edge, its curve suited to catching a shield or weapon aside.

Takouba: A straight, double-edged sword with a broad blade, favored across the Sahara for its reach and balance.

Hand Axes

Hand Axe: A versatile, one-handed axe, compact enough for close quarters.

Tabar: A slender-shafted war axe with a curved blade, shaped for speed and reach in a single hand.

Blunt

Mace: A heavy, flanged head on a short haft, its weight concentrated for blunt impact.

Gada: A weighted mace with a long haft, shaped for balance and reach in a two-handed grip.

Mere: A broad, flat-bladed club with a sharpened edge, shaped for both striking and cutting motion.

Iwisa: A round-headed fighting club, shaped for balance and quick, precise handling.

Two-handed Weapons

45 | ↑8

These larger weapons require both hands to wield but hit harder than one-handed weapons.

Long Swords

Large, powerful weapons shaped for sweeping or thrusting use in both hands.



Greatsword: A massive, double-edged sword shaped for two-handed use, with reach suited to sweeping or thrusting motion.

Odachi: A long, curved sword wielded with two hands, shaped for wide, sweeping motion.

Dadao: A broad, single-edged sword with a heavy blade, shaped for close-range chopping motion.

Axes

Battle Axe: A large, two-handed axe with a broad head, shaped for heavy, sweeping motion.

Ono: A broad-headed war axe with a hammer-like poll, combining a cutting edge with blunt weight.

Blunt

War Pick: A narrow, piercing spike balanced by a hammer face, its weight concentrated at a single point.

Zhua: A clawed, weighted head on a long haft, shaped to hook or catch an opponent's guard.

Illustration by Samara Adoge

Polearms

Spear: A simple, versatile point on a long shaft, favored for its reach and ease of use.

Naginata: A curved blade on a long pole, shaped for sweeping motion that keeps an opponent at range.

Guandao: A broad, heavy blade on a long staff, shaped for wide, sweeping motion.

Assegai: A long-shafted thrusting spear, favored for close, controlled use rather than sweeping motion.

Distance Weapons

Relying on accuracy and range, these weapons allow for strikes from afar, enabling combatants to engage foes without closing the gap.

Short bow

25 | ↑6 | 35m

Arrows: **5 per coin**

A compact bow designed for quick, accurate shots at shorter ranges, favored for its speed and mobility.

Long bow

40 | ↑8 | 55m

Arrows: **4 per coin**

A tall, powerful bow capable of shooting arrows over long distances with significant force.

Crossbow

60 | ↑10 | 15m

Bolts: **3 per coin**

A mechanical bow that delivers bolts with great force and accuracy, offering a powerful ranged alternative but with slower reload times.

Sling

15 | ↑4 | 30m

A simple ranged weapon using a small pouch and cord to hurl stones or other projectiles at high speeds.

Unique Weapons

Specialized tools that offer creative tactical options, these weapons focus on disabling or controlling opponents rather than dealing direct damage.

Whip

5 | ↑2 | 4m

A long, flexible weapon made of braided leather or cord, used to deliver sharp, stinging strikes from a distance.

User can declare they are attempting to wrap around a structure, grab an object, or entangle an opponent for 1 round, all with a -3 attack modifier. User can attempt to disarm an opponent with no penalty.

Net

20 | NA | 3m

No damage, up to **6 rounds incapacitation**

A throwable, weighted net designed to entangle and immobilize opponents or creatures.

Calculate damage as usual, excluding AC. Rather than a loss of HP, damage represents the number of rounds the target is incapacitated, up to 6.

Bolas

15 | 1 | 6m

Up to **4 rounds incapacitation**

A set of weighted cords thrown to entangle the legs of a target, imobilizing and causing the target to fall.

Calculate damage as usual, excluding AC. Rather than a loss of HP, damage represents the number of rounds the target is incapacitated, up to 4.

Additionally, a successful attack with bolas causes the target to suffer 1 point of traditional damage, which may be blocked by their AC.

Armor

Armor absorbs damage when your enemy successfully strikes you, but it can also slow you down, reducing your readiness. Putting skill points into **armor training** can help counteract those readiness penalties though.

There are 4 basic types of armor available, leather, chain, plate, and shields. Shields occupy one hand during combat, but they can be layered on top of the other armor types.

Shield

Armor Level +1 | Readiness -1 | Coins 25

A protective, handheld barrier used to block or deflect attacks, providing extra defense in combat while leaving one hand free for a weapon.

Leather armor

Armor Level +1 | Readiness -1 | Coins 35

A lightweight and flexible armor made from toughened leather, offering basic protection without sacrificing too much mobility, often worn by scouts or rogues.

Chain mail armor

Armor Level +2 | Readiness -2 | Coins 65

A mesh of interlocking metal rings that provides good defense against attacks while remaining relatively flexible, commonly worn by soldiers and guards.

Plate armor

Armor Level +3 | Readiness -4 | Coins 200

A heavy, solid armor made from large metal plates that offers superior protection from all types of attacks but limits mobility due to its weight.

Plate

Leather

Chain mail

Illustration by Samara Ange



Shield

How Gameplay Works

If you want to attack a shrub, scale a wall, or cause your friend to levitate, you're going to **roll a Die 20**. You must roll **higher than** the task's **Difficulty Score** (DS). You're likely to have **modifiers** that are added to, or subtracted from, your roll. The standard **DS is 5** but the Storyteller will adjust it based on the situation.

How Action is Organized

Rounds

When things get exciting, measuring time becomes more important. **A round** is a single unit of time in gameplay during which every character in the encounter has a chance to act. Each round represents a few moments within the game world, enough time for a quick action, a movement, or a brief exchange between characters. During a round, characters act in the order determined by their **Readiness**, and each player can choose how their character engages, whether attacking, using a skill, or moving to a new position. After everyone has taken their turn, a new round begins, allowing for ongoing interactions and responses to the evolving scene.

Readiness

Readiness determines the order in which characters act during each round, with those who have the highest readiness going first.



If two or more characters tie on Readiness, break the tie by highest Agility, then highest Mind, then a dice roll if it's still tied. Once a roll settles the order, keep it for the rest of the game.

How Combat Works

Attack

To attack, roll a d20 and add your **Attack Modifier**.

	15	Natural Roll
+	3	Attack Modifier
=	18	**Roll**

If the result beats your target's **Evasion Level**, you've hit them.

If	18	Total Roll
>	13	Target's EL
	✓	**Success**

Calculate Damage

The amount you beat their **Evasion Level** by is your initial **damage.**

↳	18	Roll
–	13	Target's EL
=	5	**Damage**

Limit by Damage Maxes

Damage can never be higher than the lowest of your:

- own **Damage Max** ↟
- **weapon's Damage Max** ↟.

↳	5	Damage
≤	6	↟ Your Damage Max ✓
≤	4	↟ Weapon's Damage Max ✗
=	4	**Damage**

Subtract Their Armor

Then **subtract** your target's **Armor Level** from what's left.

The remaining Actual Damage is subtracted from their Health Points.

↳	4	Damage
–	1	Target's AL
=	3	**Actual Damage**

Example 1

Attack	14	Natural Roll
+	3	Attack Modifier
=	17	**Roll**
Damage	12	Target's EL
=	5	**Damage**
Limit	≤ 4	↟ Damage Max ✗
	≤ 6	↟ Weapon Max ✓
=	4	**Damage**
Armor	3	Target's AL
=	1	**Actual Damage**

Example 2

Attack	17	Natural Roll
+	-1	Attack Modifier
=	16	**Roll**
Damage	10	Target's EL
=	6	**Damage**
Limit	≤ 7	↟ Damage Max ✓
	≤ 8	↟ Weapon Max ✓
=	6	**Damage**
Armor	1	Target's AL
=	5	**Actual Damage**

If you roll a **NATURAL 20** *(***the die actually says 20***), before any modifiers, then* **your attack is succesful**, *regardless of any other factors. Your attack also* **bypasses all natural and worn armor,** *so they are not subtracted from the damage.*

If you roll a **NATURAL 1** *(***the die actually says 1***), before any modifiers, then* **your attack goes very wrong**. *You trip and fall, or get tangled in the drapes, or drop your weapon. You'll have to spend the* **next round regrouping** *before you can dive back into the action.*

Special Attacks

Double Wielding

Two single-handed weapons can be wielded at once, but at **-5 attack** penalty for each weapon. Players can choose to have both attacks happen simultaneously on the character's turn, or for the second attack to happen at the end of the round.

Disarm

-3 penalty to your Attack Modifier. If you hit, your target drops the weapon they're holding for one round instead of taking damage.

Knock Outs and Death

Knocked Out

When a character's Health Points (HP) drop to **0**, they fall **unconscious** and can't take any further actions until they receive healing or rest.

Death

A character will **die** when they reach a **negative HP equal to their full HP** (e.g., -12 for a character with 12 HP).

Don't die.

How Healing works

Unconcsious

If a **comatose character** (0 or less HP) are kept warm and safe, They naturally heal **1 HP per day** until they get back up to 1 HP.

Conscious

Injured characters who are **conscious** heal naturally at a rate of **1 HP per week**.



Even with Mystic powers, **no character**, *other than Axolotl Folk,* **can heal more that 3 HP per day**.

How Advancement Works

When your character has accomplished a meaningful amount of growth, usually towards the end of accomplishing an important goal, retrieving the stolen crown, freeing the village from bandits, or bringing down the corrupt merchant's guild, your Storyteller will give you **an additional Skill Point**.

This reflects your character's growth. It can be used to improve upon a skill you already have, or to add a new skill to your arsenal.

Tips for Playing

Your Character

Creating your character is about bringing someone new to life in the world of Kinhaven, someone with their own desires, flaws, and dreams. This is your chance to explore what makes your character tick, from their deepest values to the things that keep them up at night. Maybe they have a goal they'd do anything to achieve, a painful past they can't quite shake, or a passion that sets their heart on fire. In this section, you'll discover how to shape your character's motivations, their unique perspective on the world, and how they fit into a team of characters. Whether you're new to role-playing or a seasoned player, this guide will help you create a character that feels alive and full of potential.

What Do You Value?

Your values are the guiding principles that shape how your character interacts with the world. They define their priorities and how they balance their views on authority, risk, and action. Values help you understand what drives your character and provide a framework for their choices during adventures. Staying true to these values makes your role-playing richer, making your character feel real and consistent to you and your fellow players. For example, a character who values freedom might resist rules, while one who values loyalty will stick by their allies. Other examples include "protect the innocent," "trust is earned," or "honor above all."

What's My Motivation?

Kurt Vonnegut famously said, "Make your characters want something right away even if it's only a glass of water." A character with a strong desire is easier to root for and care about. So give your character a want, maybe a burning passion or a handful of smaller goals. For example, your daring Otter Herbalist might want to find a plant that can heal their village, your clever Fox Spy could crave respect, or your gentle Deer Cleric might yearn to prove themselves to their family.

A Want and a Need

Interesting characters often know what they want, but not what they need. For instance, your Hawk Ranger might want to avenge her parents, but what she truly needs is to grieve and find a new family. Wants are easier to pinpoint, but needs are deeper and more complex. Your Otter Herbalist might need to learn patience, or your Fox Spy could need to open up to others. Understanding both their want and need can make your character's journey more meaningful.

A Deep Wound

Perfect characters can feel boring because they lack flaws or struggles. Think about what your character's sore spot might be, that inner wound that drives their actions. Batman's ongoing pain from losing his parents makes him more compelling than Superman's near invincibility. Your character might have a similar vulnerability, a Jaguar Warrior haunted by a past defeat, a Tortoise Alchemist carrying guilt over an experiment that had unintended consequences, or a Chameleon Spy slow to trust after betrayal. A deep wound makes your character's story more interesting and their choices more authentic.

Plays Well with Others

Even if your character is a loner, a cynic, or abrasive, they need a reason to stick with the group. Unlike single-player games, role-playing requires a shared experience and teamwork. A Storyteller can't effectively manage a group if players keep splitting up, it slows down the story and makes the

game less enjoyable. Give your character a reason to stay with the team, whether it's a shared goal, a debt to another character, or simply the belief that they're stronger together. Perhaps your Flamingo Scholar is researching an event tied to another character, your Jaguar Fighter owes a debt, or your Chipmunk Scout simply believes everyone needs friends.

Why Are We Together?

Unless your Storyteller is excited about a plot to get your team together, you'll likely want to work with the other players to establish how you know one another. You might all be on a quest to stop a growing threat, hunting the same treasure for different reasons, or part of an organization like the Hinterwatch. Maybe you're working as a peacekeeping team sent to resolve disputes between communities. Collaborating with the other players to create these connections will make the story richer and ensure everyone has a great time.

Being a Team Player

Two Layers of Roleplaying

Roleplaying has two layers that you need to balance: the fictional story with its characters and conflicts, and the real-life social experience shared among the players. It's a bit like when actors play lovers on screen but dislike each other off-camera, or when heroes and villains in movies are best friends behind the scenes. The interactions within the game might be filled with drama and tension, but the atmosphere around the table should still feel comfortable and fun for everyone.

Roleplaying Is a Team Sport

Roleplaying isn't about winning the most battles, it's about creating a story with your friends that everyone enjoys. It's a team effort where success is measured by the fun had, not by individual victories. Even if your character has hidden motives or clashes with another, remember to keep

the experience enjoyable for the real people sitting around the table. Work together to create memorable scenes, share the spotlight, and make sure that everyone feels involved in the story.

Reading the Room

Finding the right tone for your game might take time, but it's important to stay aware of what others are comfortable with. Is your group going for a lighthearted, silly vibe, or a more serious, dramatic atmosphere? How intense do you want your descriptions to be, do you enjoy vividly detailed battle scenes, or is a more straightforward "you take a hit" approach better? Noticing how people respond and adjusting accordingly helps ensure that everyone is on board with the game's tone. For example, one player might love playing a prankster while another prefers a serious character, making room for both styles can enrich the game.

Taking Up Space

Balancing your own engagement with being mindful of others is a skill. Sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the excitement of the moment, but try to pause occasionally and see how others are feeling. Who's staying quiet? Who might look tired or hesitant? It's normal for some players to speak more than others, but it's important to ensure that those who want to participate aren't being overshadowed. For instance, studies show that in group settings, some people may talk more than they realize. Consider other factors that might influence group dynamics, like familiarity, experience, or who's hosting. Ask yourself: do you tend to take up more space, or do you struggle to speak up? If you're often leading, look for moments to pass the spotlight to someone else.

Compromise and Balance

Compromise is about combining ideas to create something new and better, not just giving something up. If one player wants a serious mystery while another craves a lighthearted adventure, try blending both, a spooky setting with moments of humor can balance tension and fun. Or, if a player's

character is a lone wolf but others value teamwork, you might work towards a storyline where the loner slowly finds a place in the group. Finding a middle ground makes the game richer and allows everyone's ideas to shine.

Check In with Yourself

During long sessions, make sure you're taking care of your needs. Are you thirsty, hungry, or feeling tired? Taking a break to grab a snack, drink water, or stretch can help keep you focused and engaged. Also, be honest with yourself about how long you can comfortably stay engaged, it's better to pause and recharge than to push through and lose enjoyment.

Tips for Storytelling

The Big Picture

As a Storyteller in a role-playing game, your role isn't just about managing the rules or narrating a world, it's about creating an environment where players feel safe and inspired to let their imaginations run wild. You've set the scene, music playing softly, snacks ready, and the physical space or Zoom link prepared, but your real task is to foster a creative atmosphere. Curating a space for creativity, improvisation, and camaraderie. Your role blends both guiding the story and ensuring everyone is having a good time.

Participant-Observer

Storytellers are both participants and observers, a term that comes from anthropologists engaging with a community that they're learning about. You're not just running the game, you're playing it too. You have to manage practical aspects like keeping track of enemies' health points or prepping maps while staying present enough to share in the fun, laugh at jokes, and adapt to your players' unpredictable actions. Balancing these roles is a skill that takes time to master, but it's crucial for building an experience that's engaging for everyone. It's like being a coach rather than a player, you're not scoring touchdowns yourself, you're setting the stage for others to do so.

Being a Storyteller often feels like juggling, keeping track of different characters, their storylines, and the needs of your players. Between the in-game events and the out-of-game social dynamics, your priority is to ensure that the actual players feel comfortable and engaged. Anything that happens in the game world is only as successful as the enjoyment and engagement it brings to the people playing it.

Your job isn't to dictate the story, it's to provide the framework that lets your players create stories of their own. When you leave enough open space, you allow your players to fill in the blanks with their own dreams, fears, and

creativity. Pay attention to what excites them, and tailor the story to their interests. Build characters, settings, and plot twists that encourage them to lean in and explore what matters most to them.

Keeping the Spotlight on the Players

It's easy to get caught up in building intricate maps or developing complex villains, but remember that your players are the protagonists of this story. They control a handful of characters, while you control an entire world. Your job is to provide challenges and settings that allow your players to shine, not overshadow them. Think of yourself as a photo frame: the elements you add should enhance the players' experience and creativity, not distract from it.

Even if your group feels like a herd of cats sometimes, it's your job to keep them moving together. Roleplaying is a team game where your success is measured by whether everyone has fun. This means finding a balance between guiding the game and letting your players take the reins. Like a camp counselor, your most important task is to create an environment where everyone can thrive.

Staying Humble in a Role of Power

As the Storyteller, you might enjoy the power and praise that come with running a game, and there's no shame in that. Recognize your desire to be appreciated and the satisfaction of seeing your players react to your storytelling. But also remember that your authority comes with a responsibility to make the game enjoyable for everyone. Strive to use your role not as a chance to control the story, but as an opportunity to lift up your players and create memorable experiences together.

Setting Difficulty Scores

Do You Even Need a Roll?

Not everything needs a roll. Use your best judgment about when something is too easy (a simple lock with unlimited time to try picking it) or too difficult (a character with no lock picking skills trying to get past a royal vault's best lock). Save rolling for situations when chance would actually be part of the story.

How Hard Is It?

Use this as a starting point whenever you're not sure how to set a DS. The standard DS of 5 covers most everyday attempts, so lean on the rows around it more than the extremes.

You can set any difficulty score, these are just sample numbers to help you think through the challenge.

Difficulty	DS	Example
Trivial	1	Climbing a low fence with nothing chasing you.
Easy	3	Picking a lock you've picked a dozen times before.
Standard	5	Forging a letter under normal conditions. This is the default whenever you're not sure.
Hard	10	Forging that same letter on a rocking ship in a storm.
Very Hard	15	Forging a letter you've never seen a real sample of.
Nearly Impossible	19	Forging a letter you've never seen a real sample of, on that same ship in the storm.

Practical Advice

Running a roleplaying game can feel like juggling a dozen spinning plates, there's the plot, the pacing, the players, and all the details that bring the world to life. While it's a big task, there are some practical tricks that can help you keep your game interesting, engaging, and adaptable.

Structure Your Story

Even though roleplaying is all about flexibility, having a loose structure can help keep your story on track. Consider using a simple three-act structure for your story arcs: a beginning to introduce the adventure, a middle where challenges ramp up, and an ending that ties everything together. This approach gives players a sense of progress without locking them into a rigid path.

You'll also want to think about smaller arcs within bigger arcs. Think of it like a TV series, the season might have a clear arc, but each episode offers a new twist and space for player-driven storytelling. And then there's (hopefully) the larger arc of the entire series. Try to think about the different pieces of the puzzle, from the quick choices of a single round to the expansive arcs of a long-term campaign.

Rounds represent the smallest, most immediate unit of play, particularly in combat or other high-stakes moments where every action counts. In a round, players take turns in sequence, each deciding on a move that plays out in just seconds of game time, like drawing a weapon, casting a spell, or dodging an attack.

Together, rounds form **encounters**, which cover a sequence of interactions toward a specific goal. An encounter could be a skirmish against a band of thieves, a puzzle with multiple steps, or a high-stakes negotiation with a noble, taking place over minutes or hours of play. Encounters require teamwork and strategy, with players focusing on a shared goal while facing immediate risks and rewards.

Beyond encounters lie **adventures**, which are story arcs that may involve multiple encounters linked together toward a larger objective, typically unfolding over one or more sessions. An adventure might be the quest

to recover a stolen relic, escort a caravan through dangerous territory, or investigate strange happenings in a nearby village. Each adventure is a chance for the players to grow, gain skill points, and make meaningful choices that impact their world.

Finally, the most expansive level of planning is a **campaign:** a long-term storyline that encompasses multiple adventures united by a common theme, conflict, or evolving storyline. A campaign could last for months or even years, tracing a group of characters as they navigate a world's rising tensions, uncover the mysteries of an ancient prophecy, or work to defend their home from a looming threat.

By planning with this structure in mind, you can layer immediate player actions within a much larger journey, allowing room for spontaneous choices and character development across scales.

Focus on Flexibility, Not Perfection

No matter how much you plan, your players will always surprise you, and that's half the fun! Have a few key plot points you'd like to hit, but don't plan every detail. Instead, focus on creating rich locations, interesting Supporting Characters (non-player characters), and flexible challenges that can be reshaped based on player actions. This allows the story to adapt to the group's choices and keeps things feeling organic. When in doubt, go with the flow and see where your players take you.

Build Challenges with Multiple Solutions

Players love the freedom to come up with creative solutions, so design challenges that don't rely on one specific approach. If they need to sneak into a castle, they might bribe a guard, find a hidden tunnel, or create a distraction. Let them use their characters' strengths and ideas to surprise you. This makes their victories feel earned and keeps the game moving smoothly, no matter which direction they choose.

The Rule of Three

Similarly, give yourself three different ways to bring something to the player's attention. Maybe they hear a rumor in a tavern, find a letter, or spot a hidden symbol in a temple. This gives you flexibility and can allow for repeats if your clue, hint, or suggestion didn't take the first time.

Embrace the "Yes, And..." Approach

Take a cue from improv theater and try to say "Yes, and..." instead of shutting down player ideas. This doesn't mean letting them do whatever they want, but it does mean finding ways to let their creativity shine. If a player wants to try something unexpected, like persuading a guard with a heartfelt poem, say "Yes, and the guard seems confused. Roll for diplomacy" This keeps the game dynamic and rewards creative problem-solving.

Supporting Characters and Details

Keep three lists for Supporting Characters so you're never caught off guard when players asks for more detail. First, have a list of good **names**. Second, have a list of brief **physical descriptions.** "Scruffy with a tousled hair," "Neatly dressed but with a crooked scarf and scuffed boots," or "Tall and wiry with sharp, angular features"

And lastly a list of **personality traits** or quirks. "Grumpy but loyal," "cheerfully oblivious," or "overly suspicious." This way, when players unexpectedly focus on a background character, you can quickly give them some depth. It's a small thing, but it makes the world feel richer and prevents awkward pauses.

Build Mood Playlists

Curate different playlists for moods like tension, celebration, melancholy, or mystery. Having music ready to match the atmosphere can elevate a scene and draw players in more deeply.

Engage the Senses

Creating a sense of immersion is key to making the world of Kinhaven feel alive. Drop hints of history, like ancient ruins or tales of long-forgotten wars, to give your world depth. Describe how the market smells like spices or how the air feels cold and damp in the forest. However, don't get bogged down by trying to detail every single thing. Focus on a few vivid details and let your players fill in the rest with their imagination. A world that feels rich but not overwhelming is the perfect balance.

Bang Moments: Keep the Pace Exciting

If the energy is dipping or the players seem stuck, introduce a "bang" moment, something unexpected that shakes things up, like an ambush, a sudden storm, or a dramatic betrayal. These moments are great for injecting fresh energy and pushing the story in new directions. It's a way to keep everyone on their toes and make sure there's never a dull moment.

Use Player Backstories for Bonus Drama

Tap into your players' character backstories to add personal stakes to the story. Maybe an old rival of the Jaguar Warrior becomes a surprise antagonist, or the Otter Herbalist finds clues about a lost family member. Bringing elements from a character's past into the main plot makes the game feel more personal and rewarding for each player.

Make Big Things Little

To show big ideas in your game, focus on small, powerful details that hint at the bigger picture. Instead of saying outright that a place is sad or that a character feels alone, show it through little things, a single flower on a forgotten grave, a worn-out toy left behind, or a candle that's burned down to nothing. These tiny details help players feel the larger story without needing to spell it out. As the Storyteller, choose small, clear images that suggest the bigger themes, letting players discover the deeper meaning through what they see and experience in the game world.

Reward Detail

Rewarding players for being detailed and immersive in their descriptions is a great way to encourage richer roleplaying and make the world feel more alive. When a player takes the time to describe how they charm a guard with a witty story, or paints a vivid picture of how their character prepares a campsite, you can acknowledge their effort with good karma.

For example, if a player describes their character examining a room with extra care, you might let them notice a secret compartment or a subtle detail that others missed. Or you can reward detailed descriptions of casting a spell, attacking a bandit, or picking a lock with a **+1 detail bonus** to the roll.

These rewards don't have to be big, but they show that immersion and creativity make a difference, encouraging players to dive deeper into the world and their characters.

Take Breaks and Recap

Long sessions can be tiring, so don't be afraid to take a short break. Use this time to recap what's happened, remind players of their goals, and adjust your plans if needed. Attending to blood sugar, hydration, bathroom breaks, and stretching muscles can do wonders for focus, and recapping helps everyone stay on the same page, especially if the story has taken unexpected turns.

Crafting a Campaign to Remember

Storytelling in roleplaying is an art that balances preparation with spontaneity. It's about creating a rich world that adapts to the unexpected, where every session feels like a new chapter in a grand story. By keeping these practical tips in mind, you'll create a space where your players can explore, grow, and make memories they'll cherish long after the campaign ends.

So grab your dice, trust your instincts, and enjoy the adventure.

Credits

Game Design

Gameplay, design, and creative direction by **Tucker FitzGerald**. Kinhaven started as an independent solo project, crafted with care, in my home, just outside of Seattle.

I'm a user experience (UX) designer, visual designer, and draw a bit. UX design (essentially designing apps) turns out to be a great fit for designing gaming mechanics. Visual design lends itself to beautiful books and websites. And sketching helps me communicate with more experienced illustrators.

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Kinhaven illustration team:

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Uncredited sketches are by me.

Icon Credits

I designed some of the icons, but many of the icons used in this game come from The Noun Project (thenounproject.com), a delightful resource for designers. All of the following icons are from **Noun Project (CC BY 3.0)**

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- Backpack by Solid Icon Co

Font Credits

P22 Mackinac Pro

Most of this book is set in P22 Mackinac Pro, designed by **Mike Beens**, from *P22 Type Foundry*. He is a lettering artist, graphic designer, and educator. His work is a combo of his interest in paint, printmaking, hand lettering, and their digital expression.

Ode

Some of the headlines are set in Ode, designed by **Martin Wenzel**, from *supertype*. He lives and works in Berlin as a type designer and typography lecturer at the Berlin HTW.

Felt Tip

Designed by **Mark Simonson**

WW Pencil

Designed by **Michelle Laura**.

Milonguita

Designed by **Alejandro Paul** and **Valeria Duarte** at *Sudtipos*

Square Peg

Designed by **Robert Leuschke**

Hummingbird

Designed by **Laura Worthington**