

# Wakare Water Woes

A Quick-Song from *The  
Ballad of Heroes Tabletop  
Roleplaying Game*



A Combat-Focused story, told in the  
lowland bogs & farms of Vardare, about

*Common Folk with  
Uncommon Daring in  
Rare Times*



# Welcome Heroes, Old and New!

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→ We learned 'Hafted' is not a common term for Axes and Maces!

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# Welcome Heroes, Old and New!

## Who's on Stage?

This is an introduction to the world and system The Ballad of Heroes, a role-playing game of unexpected Heroes drawn toward their Journey. This is a game for 2-6 friends to hold Audiences, engage in Combat, and Travel the Free Lands. It requires this booklet, pencils, and dice (ten-sided and six-sided); two paperclips are recommended if printing these pages out.

In short, it is a game for friends that want to ACT together.

## What's the Tone?

The Ballad of Heroes operates with the following tonal and thematic expectations:

- ♥ The Free Lands are Old, but not Dark. Most people are warm and bright. Protect them from points of darkness.
- ♥ This is a world of Unexpected Heroes, not Adventurers. Heroes have home and community. Keep it safe.
- ♥ Personality Matters. Instinct and behavior has mechanical value. Use yours to pursue victory.
- ♥ Combat is Dangerous. No one has Plot Armor, and no one wants to die. Consider and enter fights carefully.
- ♥ Apply Reason to Discern Worth. Why couldn't you rush to your ally's side to deflect an incoming attack on their behalf? You just need to reach them.

## What's the Song?

This booklet contains everything you need to get started for a one- or two-night introduction to The Ballad of Heroes:

- ♥ Basic Rules
  - How to make Checks and use Traits
- ♥ How to Play
  - How to engage in Interactions, Combat, and Travel
- ♥ Wakare Water Woes
  - Players are participating in the springtime dredging of the local Vardaren fields, when they hear a call from a distant farm full of excitement!
- ♥ Pre-Generated Characters
  - Six (6) ready to go Unexpected Heroes already out and about in the town of Wakare.



# How to Sing this Song

This is an *even-* or *left-page*. This page is purely for the **Ballad-Singer (Singer)** and provides tips, advice, or **Non-Hero Character (NHC)** information.

**Tips** will focus on providing perspectives of play for the Singer, and sometimes for **Player Hero-Characters (PHCs)**.

**Advice** will focus on mechanics. This may be a reminder of a game mechanic or provide an scene-relevant idea for using a mechanic.

**Information** will be **Singer-Facing Only** if it is listed on *Left-Pages*. This will include **NHC** information or non-essential context for the Singer to be able to reference. This is here to help the Singer expand outward from the basic scene details in the event a **PHC** pushes on the boundaries of this Quick-Song.

## Info – Read Right-Pages Aloud

Specifically, scene information and setup is provided on the *odd-* or *right-pages*.

If the words are in a box on *Right-pages*, that is **Scene Setup**; it will include major sights, sounds, smells, etc. to give everyone starting point for the scene.

If the words are *italicized*, they are revealed on a character action or skill check.

**Bold** is used to ‘call out’ a specific action or skill, such as ‘**(Difficult) Listen to understand the sound**’ or ‘**Once the party decides to leave:**’, for you (the Singer) to call as the scene progresses.

(If the words are in parentheses, this is a **Hero-facing** example. Use this to help alleviate confusion for yourself or others!)

## Advice – When to Skill Check?

Most actions and tasks do not use a Skill Check!

Rather first check for the 3T’s: Training, Time, and Tools. Lacking any of these will require a skill check.

- ♥ A Skill <50 is considered to not meet Training

In addition, call for a check if there is Threat being applied to the character.

- ♥ Examples would be acting in Combat, or attempting to open a lock before a guard arrives.

## Why?

- ♥ Character advancement only may occur by rolling a success on a Skill
- ♥ All characters, Player or otherwise, are assumed to be competent by default
  - Do not Check for Competence through unnecessary Skill Checks

## Advice – Fun with Fractions

Any there is a fraction of a number, round UP unless specifically told otherwise!

## Tip – Sing Loud & Proud

You are playing the **Ballad-Singer (Singer)**, which means you play a slightly different game than your friends at the table (the **Player-Hero Characters**).

To hone in on the mindset of your play:

- ♥ Assume you are performing the Tale of the **PHCs**
- ♥ You are playing to an audience, and they like hyperbole, drama, and grand descriptions
  - **Elevate Actions**
  - **Aggrandize Adversaries**
  - **Celebrate Success**
  - **Bemoan Failure**
- ♥ You are collaborative with the **PHCs**, even as you use your **Adversaries** to imperil and defeat them.
- ♥ This is *your performance*, but it stars *none of your characters, ever*

# Basic Rules: Skills & Challenge

## Making Checks

Checks are used for Skills, Traits, and Consumables. They always use ten-sided dice (D10) or hundred-sided dice (D100).

Skill Checks:

- ♥ Roll  $D100 \leq \text{Skill}$  (after modifiers) to succeed.
- ♥ Skill Checks often have Levels of Success, by allowing multiple Successes.

Trait Checks:

- ♥ Roll  $2D10 \leq \text{Trait}$  to succeed.
- ♥ May be combined with a Skill Check, by adding the D100 digits.

Consumable Checks:

- ♥ Roll  $D10 \leq \text{Quantity}$  or reduce by 1.
- ♥ May be combined with a Skill Check, by using just the ones-place of the D100.

## Helping on Checks

Any character can help another character on a Check, as long as they:

- ♥ Have the Skill being used in the Check.
- ♥ Must be able to reasonably describe 'how' they are helping.
- ♥ If these are met, the character making the Check adds 1/10th of the helper's Skill to theirs.

## Opposed Checks

Both characters make a Skill Check. Whichever scores more Successes wins, and resolves based on their remaining successes after subtracting those scored by the other character.

(Example: Character A scores 2 successes, but Character B scores 3 successes. Character B wins, and resolves with  $(3 - 2) = 1$  Success.)

In the case of a tie, resolve half in favor for both characters. They both partially succeed, and partially fail.

(Example: Character A attempts to grab Character B as they flee, with Athletics opposed by Dodge. They tie, so they land in-between goals; Character A manages to make Character B fall to the ground, but does not maintain a hold of them.)

## Skill Checks: Levels of Success

- ♥ Normal Success (1 Success)  
→ Roll  $D100 \leq \text{Skill Value}$
- ♥ Hard Success (2 Successes)  
→ Roll  $D100 \leq \frac{1}{2} \text{Skill Value}$
- ♥ Heroic Success (3 Successes)  
→ Any Success that is a multiple of 10 (10, 20, etc)
- ♥ Failure (0 Successes)  
→ Roll  $D100 > \text{Skill Value}$
- ♥ Fumble (-1 Successes)  
→ A Failure that is a multiple of 10 (10, 20, etc)

Only 1 Success is needed on a Skill Check, additional Successes may provide additional effects or bonuses.

## Check Challenge Modifiers

- ♥ 'Automatic' (Free Success)  
→ No roll, gain 1 Success
- ♥ 'Easy' (Skill $\times 2$ )  
→ Target value is double for this Check.
- ♥ 'Normal' (default)  
→ Target value is unchanged for this Check.
- ♥ 'Difficult' (Skill/2)  
→ Target value is halved for this Check.
- ♥ 'Heroic' (Skill/10)  
→ Target value is one-tenth for this Check.
- ♥ 'Impossible' (No Success)  
→ No roll, automatic Failure.

↑ 'Easier'  
↓ 'Harder'

Modifiers that adjust Challenge may result in Automatic +1/+2/etc. This means there is no roll but the character gains the listed number of Additional Successes.

Modifiers that adjust Challenge may result in Impossible -1/-2/etc. This means there is no roll but the character gains the listed number of Negative Additional Successes.

# How to Sing this Song

## Tip – Promote Personality!

Personality Traits are incredibly potent ways to intermingle the Roleplay and Gameplay aspects of Tabletop Roleplaying Games.

If this is the first time playing The Ballad of Heroes for anyone at the table, take a moment when calling for a Check to remind the PHCs they can bolster (potentially doubling!) their Skills by narrating a way for a Personality Trait to apply!

The only rule on whether a Trait will apply is if the narration is Reasonable.

Reasonable will vary between play-tables, and their own interpretation of the Free Lands of Eiras.

## Tip – Help Their Hearts!

Heart can be incredibly potent, but it is a bit of a devil's bargain: the more then spend, the closer they come to losing their character.

In this Quicksong, the only risks to their Heart come from Weather Effects during travel or the player themselves. Be willing to push them to go a little harder than normal on their Heart; they can probably take it!

A good thought to put in the other player's heads: Heart can turn a Fumble into a Hard Success (e.g. -1 swaps all the way to +2 successes)

## Tip – Talk about Tenacity!

Tenacity only has two uses, but they are both very powerful and can be decided after the roll!

Characters typically only have 1 or 2 points at any time, but do not let your friends treat them like special items in a video game! ('I might need it later!', then dies)

Also, feel free to remind your friends they may use a Tenacity *even if they succeeded on a Check*; they can use Tenacity to buy additional successes!

## Tip – Revel in Reason

This Quicksong is very simple. Things are defined in more outline than procedure, except where a specific procedure is necessitated.

Promote within yourself, and amongst the table, acceptance of Reasonability.

- ♥ If an idea or action, when made in good faith, is Reasonable to achieve:
  - Allow it, with a Check if appropriate
- ♥ When deciding the Challenge of an action:
  - Base it on how Reasonable it would be for any person to attempt: Easy, Normal, Difficult, Heroic, etc.
  - You can always say "Yes" (Automatic) or "No" (Impossible) when reasonable to maintain Good Faith at the table.
- ♥ You are not *Absolute*, but do get preference in how the Ballad is sung.

# Basic Rules: Traits, Heart, Tenacity

## Personality Trait Pairs

Adaptable | Steadfast

- ♥ How do you respond to Change?

Bold | Cautious.

- ♥ How do you respond to Risk?

Impulsive | Deliberate

- ♥ How do you respond to Pressure?

Altruistic | Egoistic

- ♥ Who is your Priority?

Confident | Humble

- ♥ How do you view Yourself?

Empathetic | Detached

- ♥ How do you view Others?

## What is Personality?

Your personality describes how your Hero-Character naturally responds to different situations.

(An Altruistic and Cautious person may be a “guardian person,” that tries to protect friends and family; an Egoistic and Cautious person may work to protect themselves first.)

## Heart

Each Hero has Heart, with a maximum ranging from 16 to 20. Heart has a number of effects and uses:

- ♥ A character may reverse the digits of their D100 roll at a cost of (-1) Heart
- ♥ Any Personality Traits > your current Heart are treated to be equal to your current Heart
- ♥ A character may regain +1 Heart by choosing to make any Opposed Check they participate in +1 Challenge Harder
- ♥ If a character has 0 Heart, that character becomes Heartbroken; they become an adversarial NHC under the control of the Singer

## Tenacity

Tenacity allows a character a small burst of determination, either adding +1 Success to their Skill Check or taking +1 Action in a single combat round.

Regain +1 Tenacity each game session.

## Ways to Use Personality

### Guidance

A character’s Personality Trait Pairs act as a guide for general roleplay and decision-making. This is especially helpful for new players, who can rely on their Hero-Character to guide them “how to act.”

Remember: Heroes are the ones who step forward when others do not.

### Bolster

A Player-Hero can attempt to gain a bonus on a Skill Check by describing how they attempt to tie in one of their Traits. If both the Player-Hero and Ballad-Singer agree the Trait (or another, if offered) can reasonably apply to the Check:

- ♥ Make the Skill Check, and note the D100 result.
- ♥ Add the digits of the D100 roll together.
- ♥ Compare this value to the Trait.
  - If the sum is  $\leq$  Trait, double your Skill for the check.
  - If the sum is  $>$  Trait, halve your Skill for the check.
- ♥ Resolve the original D100 roll against your new Skill value for the check.

### Dilemma

Sometimes a character finds themselves in a “fight-or-flight” situation, such as encountering a terrifying monster. In this circumstance, they will have a conflict between a Personality Trait Pair.

Roll 2D10 against the primary Trait.

- ♥ If it Succeeds, make actions in-line with that Trait normally (modified by other effects as normal) and actions in-line to the opposite Trait at +1 Challenge Harder.
- ♥ If it Fails, the opposite effect results: The opposing Trait-type actions are normal, but the tested Trait-type actions are +1 Challenge Harder.



# Set the Stage: Singer Reference

## Tip – Set Expectations

This adventure is the first in a series of six (6) anthological introductions to The Ballad of Heroes. Each takes place in a different nation of the Free Lands of Eiras at the same general time frame, but with different Heroes.

The introductory gameplay focus of this Quick-Song is:

- ♥ Combat in The Ballad of Heroes
  - This will give the playgroup a reasonable starting point to familiarize with combat flow, cooperative efforts, and perspective of how/when to engage in Combat
  - Combat is dangerous; a reckless combatant will die quickly, a confident combatant will survive bloody, and a clever combatant will fight smart & dirty

## Tip – Heroes Aren't Super

Keep in mind, and remind other players as needed, the followings truths of the game:

- ♥ Characters are competent in their trade; e.g. a Guard can reliably work to protect a town from threats
- ♥ There are no 'Chosen Ones,' only the Ones Who Chose

## Info – About Wakare

Wakare is a ferry-town in the lowlands, the wide sweeping peat bogs and marshlands that serve as the breadbasket for most of the Free Lands. It is on the southwestern border, with the Split-Tail river blocking it to the west and south.

Wakare operates two major post-line ferries, the western leading to the Kingdom of Valenia and the southern to the crimson steppe known as the Blade-glass Plain.

It serves as a major pass-through town for travelers and merchants, making it a place well accustomed to disparate peoples. Most of the townsfolk, from simple Maker-caste rice and taro farmers to even the Militant-Caste guard-sergeant herself, collect trinkets to peddle to passerby.

As Vardarens are known to say: 'Every item has a purpose, and often that can become a profit'.

## Info – About Vardare

This Song takes place in the central-northern nation known as the Heptarchy of Vardare. Vardare is a caste-based society built around Seven Seats: Miner, Maker, Metalsmith, Monetarist, Militant, Mystic, and Magi.

There is a focus on industry and hard commerce to designate the honor and value of a caste-citizen.

Wakare is a town in the Hirno-Sayr, or 'Hirno State'. It is on the border to Valenia (west ferry) and the Carvo Nomads (south ferry), but is far from its capital (Hirno).

This leaves Wakare, like many towns in Vardare, often left to fend for themselves unless there are major events to call for aid.



# Set the Stage

It is currently the day after Fallow's End (New Year's Day), and the Planting Season (Spring) has begun.

The townsfolk have all gathered in the nearby paddies to begin the Salt-Dredge. This is a yearly ritual across Vardare where all townsfolk assist in dredging contaminants, trinkets, and oddities from the local paddies so they may be re-seeded safely. Any oddities or trinkets found are often shouted out excitedly for people to marvel over. Vardarens relish these finds, as they convert them into sightseeing oddities or tourist merchandise.

It is morning, perhaps 8 or 9 a.m., and the whole town has made semi-competitive teams with good cheer and full bellies to dredge various farm paddies.

The day has a slight chill but the weather is bright and sunny, promising a beautiful day through the afternoon.

**Introduce the Player-Hero Characters, allowing your friends to choose which to play if they have not chosen already:**

**Abelard sun-Hiltrim, the Soldier.** Abelard often winters in Wakare, ensuring the Valgard Watch has fresh supplies through the following year. He is currently pulling a dredge-comb with Isabet and a few local townsfolk, as this has become a second home to him.

- ♥ Abelard has good Armor but is untested in Combat.
- ♥ Abelard is good for players that like: Being a Tank/Guardian, Being Intimidating

**Asavellana-Mithika, the Apothecary.** Asavellana is new to Wakare thanks to her new husband, Niklaus. She is acting as medical assistant to Life-Maker Brendin Steddyand, the town healer, and standing by her husband Niklaus and his pack-donkey, Associates.

- ♥ Asavellana has medical skills but has low Carry Capacity.
- ♥ Asavellana is good for players that like: Being Supportive, Staying at Range.

**Heydar-Breathless-Face, the Scholar.** Heydar is an old scholar-mage who moved to Wakare two years ago. He is currently chatting with Asavellana, trying to wheedle out any information about her home, the Emerald Sea.

- ♥ Heydar knows powerful Arcanisms but is fragile.
- ♥ Heydar is good for players that like: Thinking Outside the Box, Feeling like a Wizard.

**Isabet Fleethaven, the Agent.** Isabet is a boastful and cheerful face amongst the Dredgers. She's sharing loud, possibly false, stories of her foreign exploits. She has been hired by Niklaus to be the first eyes (and hands) if any interesting trinkets get pulled up. She doesn't particularly care about the trinkets, but it's a nice distraction until the ferry opens.

- ♥ Isabet is a daring Swashbuckler but lacks strong Personality Traits.
- ♥ Isabet is good for players that like: Being a Melee Aggressor, Lying with a Smile.

**Niklaus Harbargin, Merchant-caste Caravanner.** Niklaus is a Wakare native, so has provided a case of famed Black Dragon Ale to the Dredgers as a morale boost. He is flirting with his wife and glancing to Isabet for signs of 'trinket collection.'

- ♥ Niklaus is a sturdy Artillerist but is not an armored warrior.
- ♥ Niklaus is good for players that like: Saving Party Funds, Sniping at Range.

**Thaddeus Ombrefeu, Priest of the Pale Flame.** Thaddeus is a foreign diplomat from The Holy Kingdom of Paran, far to the southeast. He's been in Wakare for eight years espousing the Searing Truth of the Pale Flame to anyone who will listen (and everyone who won't).

- ♥ Thaddeus is a walking Apocalypse of Power but is prone to collateral damage.
- ♥ Thaddeus is good for players that like: Explosions, Inspirational Speeches

# Call to Action

## Advice – Use Personality

For this first Skill Check, recommend PHCs use a Personality Trait.

This may bolster their Skill Level and is good early practice in using self-narration as a mechanical boon.

They must specify the Trait and how/why it applies before they roll.

Helpful examples:

- ♥ **Altruistic** or **Empathetic** for a character such as Asavellana (healer) or Niklaus (neighborly)
- ♥ **Impulsive** or **Cautious** for a character such as Heydar (curious) or Thaddeus (holy shepherd)
- ♥ **Deliberate** or **Steadfast** for a character such as Isabet (attentive) or Abelard (guardian)

Allow any Trait to be used if the player gives at least some effort to justify.

## Info – Guards & Townsfolk

The general response of the town is mild curiosity with some grumbling that the Fallowfields must have gotten a ‘neat find before them,’ and the like.

**Guard Buldric** will begin to ask for volunteers to go offer the Fallowfields a help with their new find.

Most people will either Fail or score 1 Success (Normal Success) when hearing the Shout. There have been plenty of shouts, hollers, and yells through the morning as different dredgers have found trinkets, injured themselves, or had small scuffles.

However, once the Guards leave to answer the town alarm bell, the repeated shouts coming from the farm will begin to raise concerns.

“Someone should go see what they’re yelling about” or other similar sentiments can be used to push the PHCs into action, if needed.

## Advice – Levels of Success

- ♥ Normal Success (1 Success)  
→ Roll  $D100 \leq \text{Skill Value}$
- ♥ Hard Success (2 Successes)  
→ Roll  $D100 \leq \frac{1}{2} \text{Skill Value}$
- ♥ Heroic Success (3 Successes)  
→ Any Success that is a multiple of 10 (10, 20, etc)
- ♥ Failure (0 Successes)  
→ Roll  $D100 > \text{Skill Value}$
- ♥ Fumble (-1 Successes)  
→ A Failure that is a multiple of 10 (10, 20, etc)

## Tip – Let the Guard, Guard

Experienced TTRPG players may scoff at the idea they should not go deal with the alarm ringing in the town.

Remind them they are playing Townsfolk, not Adventurers, if needed.

There are 24 Smith-Guard in Wakare, charged with protecting the town. When the alarm rings, they respond as they are trained and are fully competent in their duty.

They will not allow townsfolk to add risk and chaos to their duty by coming along and getting in their way.

**If needed, use an example of modern police forces responding to an active shooter situation while random citizens argue they should be allowed to help tackle the shooter.**

Guard Buldric will tell the PHCs, if pressed, to ‘grab Asavellana and the foreign soldier Abelard then’ if he is pressed about the shouts at the Fallowfield farm.

The Smith-Guards are more interested in saving the town as a whole rather than send a contingent to a possible issue at a single farm.

# A Distant Shout, A Local Bell

Spirits are high throughout the fields and paddies as dredge-comb teams race each other, townsfolk catch their breath while enjoying Niklaus's Black Dragon Ale stock, and various shouts and calls ring out as dredgers find trinkets and oddities of various potential value in the muck.

Members of the Smith-Guard patrol around, chat with their neighbors, and keep an eye out for potential injury or other trouble.

As people chatter and work, a distant shout drifts from the Fallowfield farm far to the east. It sounds magically amplified by the Shout Ritual Spell, commonly favored by parents of troublesome children.

**Call for a Listen Check, to determine which, if any, PHC can make out specifics of the Shout.** Results to the right →

Most of the townsfolk, including the local Smith-Guard, will hear the Shout as well.

One, Guard Buldric, will understand it as a call for assistance; he will call for volunteers to go with him to give a hand at the Fallowfield farm.

**As the volunteer group is formed, the town alarm bell will begin to ring in the west.**

The Smith-Guard will respond to the town alarm bell, telling the townsfolk to stay in the fields until the all clear is given and they return.

*Smith-Guard Buldric, waving the townsfolk to say safe until the Guard gives the all-clear.*



## Listen Check Results

- ♥ **Fumble** – *You were distracted from noticing the Shout at all, but notices others move to investigate.*
- ♥ **Failure** – *You heard the Shout as described. It sounds like the next farm over made a big find!*
- ♥ **Success** – *You can make out some fading words. It sounds like a call for extra hands or help; they must have found something big and need extra hands to pull it out!*
- ♥ **Hard Success** – *As a Success above + The message carries a tone of distress or tension; perhaps a heavy find, and someone was hurt trying to pull it out.*
- ♥ **Heroic Success** – *As a Hard Success above + You hear physical pain in the Shouter's voice; this is a wounded person calling for help.*

**After the town Smith-Guard have left to deal with the town alarm, another Shout will drift from the Fallowfield farm.**

This Shout will repeat every minute or so, growing weaker with time, until the PHCs decide to investigate.

# The Farm: Reference

Celine Fallowfield (17 yrs old, she/her)						NHC Notes	
Daze	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		Starts at 5/5 Daze and 1 Wound.  If PHCs arrive after first Shout, or Rush to farm on second Shout, she is not Down.  If PHCs do not Rush after Second Shout or arrive later, she is unconscious and Dying.				
Wound	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>						
Skills		Personality Traits					
Willpower	45	Altruistic	14	6	Egoistic		
Endurance	45	Confident	14	6	Humble		
Others	25	Other	10	10	Traits		
Makes Willpower (to avoid going Down) and Endurance (to resist Dying) Checks augmented with her Confident (14) as she puts on a brave face. She wants her dad, Jonatan, rescued more than she wants medical care.							

## Info – Jonatan Fallowfield

Jonatan is Celine's father, and a regular fixture at the Wakare Miner's Market (a farmer's market). He is known as a decent neighbor, a hard worker, and a father that does his best.

He is also a Curan-blooded man, which means he is short (about 4' 11" or ~1.5m).

Because of his short stride, he cannot outrun the creatures that came from the paddy.

## Info – Celine Fallowfield

Celine is heavily Wounded and Dazed, but can be stabilized through the First Aid skill.

Each First Aid success scored will unmark 1 Daze from Celine; only one First Aid attempt may be made unless Celine receives a new injury.

Asavellana may also think to perform Chirurgy, a skill that converts a Wound into a Daze for each success scored. If this is considered, **inform Asavellana's Player this will take 1D6 hours.**

Celine herself will put on a confident face and claim she is fine enough; she is more interested in her father being found.

## Info – Foul Times at Fallowfield

Celine will be able to explain the dredge-comb became caught on something in the paddy. As the dredgers pulled hard, 'smelly fish-like monsters' lunged out and attacked.

The dredgers died quickly, and Celine was attacked as she turned to flee. Something tugged at her arm (she is in shock and unaware it is missing), but her father Jonatan hit it with a shovel.

He then shouted loudly and growled at the things, drawing them away from his daughter and he led them away. Celine did not see which direction, as she grew faint and 'had to sit to gather herself.'

She has been slowly exhausting herself by scrawling out the Shout Ritual spell to get help ever since.

# The Fallowfield Farm

**As the PHCs head out to investigate the Shouts coming from the Fallowfield farm, ask their Travel Pace.**

- ♥ If they do not state they are Rushing or other similar statement, tell them it will take about 10 minutes to walk there.
- ♥ If they decide to rush or move quickly, tell them it will take about 5 minutes to reach the farm and they will need to make an Endurance Check or gain 1 Fatigue.

Arriving at the Fallowfield farm reveals a terrible sight.

Torn bodies of multiple townsfolk are strewn about the paddy nearest the farmhouse, their blood mingling with the mud. They are clearly dead.

There is a dead horse, its leg broken and throat torn out. The wagon to which it had been hitched is tipped over on its side. A dredge-comb is halfway through the bloody paddy and looks to be damaged as well.

As they approach, the party sees Celine Fallowfield weakly propped against the overturned wagon. Her left arm is missing in a ragged tear just above the elbow and she is incredibly pale from blood loss.

**If the PHCs set out shortly after the first Shout, or Rushed to the farm:**

**If the PHCs waited until after the second Shout AND did not Rush to the farm:**

Celine is conscious and weakly trying to complete the ritual to weakly Shout again for help.

Celine has fallen unconscious from her Wounds and is currently Dying

**Any characters that search the area, or look for Jonatan's trail, will need to make either an Easy Hunt Check or a Normal Spot Check to discover:**

- ♥ Success – *His trail leads north-east to some nearby woods.*
- ♥ Hard Success – *There are blood drops in the trail; Jonatan is also injured.*
- ♥ Heroic Success – *It looks like he has three pursuers with webbed feet.*



# The Hunt for Jonatan

## Info – Placing the Pieces

At this point, the party will be 2 Zones away from the Jonatan and the two Water-Eaters. It will take a total of 4 MOV (or 40 Paces of movement if using a battle grid) to reach them.

The first zone will be the edge of the clearing with the party, the second zone is the small clearing, and the third/final zone is the opposite edge of the clearing with the Water-Eaters and Jonatan in the tree.

The third Water-Eater is in the woods off to the right of the clearing; this can be treated as a 'side zone' that can be reached with 2 MOV (or 20 Paces on a battle grid) from any other zone.

## Info – Water-Eaters

Water-Eaters are a Creature, a type of fantastical beast native to the world. They are ambush predators, that hide in tide-pools near the ocean and use their three webbed legs to leap out at anything that gets close.

They are clumsy movers on land, with a vaguely humanoid shape. Long arms end in webbed fore-claws that help swim and rend, with a fanged mouth and flat eyes buried into their thorax (upper chest region).

As ambush predators, they will not fight to death unless they have no other option. They prefer a meal with low-risk of injury.

## Info – Ramifications & Consequences

### **If at least 5 Successes were scored on the Lightfoot Check:**

The Water-Eaters will begin Ambushed for the first Combat Round.

→ Ambushed Characters go at the very end of the Round, have only 1 Action, and cannot move unless they spend their Action to do so.

### **If the party did not delay to look for Jonatan, he is alive and will cling to the tree.**

→ The Water-Eaters will attack the tree unless a PHC attacks or otherwise distracts them

→ They must succeed a Heroic Attack Check to tear down the tree

### **If the party spent hours performing Surgery on Celine, Jonatan's exhaustion and wounds caused him to fall from the tree and his corpse is being eaten by the Water-Eaters.**

→ The Water-Eaters will defend themselves and try to flee with their meal if attacked by the party.

→ The party will be able to recover Jonatan's Miner-caste mark from his body.

# The Hunt for Jonatan

Jonatan's trail leads a brisk 5-minute walk to the northeast into some nearby woods used by local hunters. The ringing of the town alarm bell continues to drift on the spring air in the distance.

**At the edge of the woods, have the party make a Difficult Spot, or a Normal Hunt, Check.**

- ♥ **Any Success** – *The character will find more blood on leaves, tree trunks, etc.; it looks like Jonatan is heavily injured.*
- ♥ **Heroic Success** – *As above + 'It looks like one of the pursuers has taken an odd direction, not directly following Jonatan but instead veering off toward the right.'*

**As the party heads into the woods, ask them 'how.' Then have them all make a Lightfoot Check, bolstered by a Trait that best fits their answer.** (For example, if a character says they will move slowly and carefully, they would bolster with Cautious or Deliberate; if they are pushing forward fast, have them bolster with Bold or Impulsive)

If the party has a combined 5 Successes or more, they will Ambush the creatures deeper in the woods.

Otherwise, the creatures will be aware of those who Failed as they arrive.

**As the party travels deeper into the woods call for the following Checks:**

Listen Check:

- ♥ **Success** – *There are the whispers of a commotion somewhere ahead*
- ♥ **Hard Success** – *You hear some burbling growling noises + (No Chirurgy on Celine) You hear occasional excited curses*
- ♥ **Heroic Success** – *You hear another point of burbling growls, further in and off to the right*

Further along, a Sense Check (smell):

- ♥ **Success** – *A distinct smell of sea-water hints at your nostrils*
- ♥ **Hard Success** – *As above + There is a fetid, rotting odor as well*
- ♥ **Heroic Success** – *As above + There is a coppery hint of blood on the air*

**If a character scores a Hard or greater Success here, have them make a Folklore Check:**

On any success, the character will find identify the creatures as Water-Eaters. However, they seem to 'smell wrong' and are normally found in saltwater tide-pools.

As they near a small clearing, a Spot Check:

- ♥ **Failure** – *You see motion in the clearing up ahead*
- ♥ **Success** – *You can make out two fish-like bipedal creatures clustered around a tree past the clearing*
- ♥ **Hard Success** – *Off to the right, you see a hunched creature away from the others, it looks like it is eating something + (If No Chirurgy on Celine) Happily, you can see a bloody and wounded Jonatan desperately clinging to the upper branches of the tree above the two creatures*

**Once the party has arrived, Combat ordering and responses will begin (next page).**





# Singer Combat Side-Notes

## Info – Adversaries

Water-Eater #1						Notes  Flee when Wounded.  Recovers 1 Daze on Bite Attacks that deal at least 1 Daze to a target.
Daze	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wound	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Threshold	14 Damage	
Skills		Attack	DMG	Type	Effect	
Attack	60	Claws	4D6	S	Bleed	
Dodge	60	Bite	4D6	P	Puncture	
Brawn	60	Defense	AV	Special		
Athletics	60	Creature	3	-1 damage dice from weapons, regenerate 1AV/Round.		
Others	40	MOV	1	11	← Knockdown (Succeed Brawn or go Prone)	
Focus (D6 at Start of Round)						
Even	Frenzy. Makes 2 Attacks per Action, will not Dodge/Deflect.					
Odd	Drown. Those engaged must succeed Endurance or take 1 Daze and lose 1 Action this turn.					
Water-Eater #2						Notes  Water-Eater #3 will attempt to Charge and Attack any character that gets separated. Otherwise, it will attempt to gang up on a character that is Engaged with other Water-Eaters.
Daze	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wound	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Threshold	14 Damage	
Water-Eater #3						
Daze	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wound	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Threshold	14 Damage	
If outnumbered Water-Eaters can be Coerced to flee. Reduce the Challenge if they are Wounded, and again if one or more is Dead.						

## Tip – Try to Kill Them to Ensure Your Survival

When controlling the Water-Eaters, or any predatory Beast/Creature, act as you best believe a dangerous animal would.

Dodge if you must, pounce and strike unless it will risk your life.

You are an ambush predator. You want to strike fast, hard, and before being struck.

If you are wounded, escape if able. A Wound means recovery time, and an empty belly.

# The Fight for Jonatan – Setup

Regardless of intended actions by the party, resolve the next course of events through the Conflict system.

<p>Glade Entry Zone (Zone 1) Party Starts Here</p>	<p>Small Glade Zone (Zone 2)</p>	<p>Tall Tree Zone (Zone 3) Jonatan is Climbing the Tree Two Water-Eaters are here</p>
		<p>Right-Hand Woods Zone (Zone 4) One Water-Eater hides here</p>

# Singer Side-Notes

## Tip – Collaborate toward Creativity

*The Ballad of Heroes Tabletop Roleplaying* does not hard-specify many aspects of combat, such as grappling and wrestling. Grappling will be used in this discussion.

This is intentional design, and refers back to Good Faith and Reasonability.

Grappling is complicated and context-reliant; providing a limited selection of specific skill interactions and results would only limit emerging story beats.

- ♥ A brown bear may use Brawn to represent its raw muscle power to grapple a character. That character may reasonably respond by trying to Dodge. If the bear wins, it may apply the Prone condition as it tackles them. It may then Attack with a bite to do (P)ierce damage through the character's armor, etc.

→ So Grappling is like muddier, bloodier contests of strength and power.

- ♥ A soldier might instead use Athletics to grab a creature in a body-lock, since they want to keep away from claws and fangs; it may respond with its own Athletics to twist around on the soldier instead. If the soldier succeeds, the creature cannot attack them but is also made (-1) Challenge Easier to hit by the soldier's allies. If the creature succeeds, it gets wrapped around the soldier and might Automatically Succeed on attacks against them. Either might need a Brawn to maintain or break free.

→ So Grappling is like focused, clever contests of positioning and agility.

The point is: let things go off script. Promote it, even. Workshop ideas with your friends. Get everyone involved in figuring out how to do awesome stuff, in a way that is Reasonable and interpreted in Good Faith.

## Advice – Different Damage

Sometimes you just have to smack someone with the pommel of your sword instead of slash them with the blade.

To do so, simply make the attack (+1) Challenge Harder to represent using the weapon in an awkward or non-standard manner.

# Combat - Order & Flow

## Combat Round Order

Each combat round uses this order:

- ♥ Statements of Intent
  - (Singer) States intent of Adversaries, including Creature Focus Rolls
  - (PHCs) State if they will Focus, which lets them act before the Adversaries
- ♥ Turn Resolution
  - Focused PHCs – They get 1 Action at (-1) Challenge Easier
  - Adversaries – Have 2 Actions, and may move as part of these actions
  - Any character that is Dying makes and Endurance Check, gaining +1 Wound on any failure
  - PHCs & Allies – Have 2 Actions and may move as part of these actions
  - Ambushed – Characters may take 1 Action.

## Focused & Regular Turns

If a character decides to Focus, they:

- ♥ Act before the Adversaries
- ♥ Have 1 Action, plus any Extra Actions listed on their character sheet
  - All Actions they take are (-1) Challenge Easier
  - (Example: A Normal Action would become Easy)

Otherwise, they:

- ♥ Act after the Adversaries and any Endurance Checks for Dying characters
- ♥ Have 2 Actions, plus any Extra Actions listed on their character sheet
- ♥ May move during any Action they take
  - This movement may be split between any number of Actions, but is limited to a total of your MOV
  - (Example: A character may move to Deflect an attack on a nearby ally!)

## Zone Position & Movement

There are three general “spacings” and MOV required to achieve them.

- ♥ Engaged – (0 MOV away) In the same Zone & **can strike** with a melee attack
- ♥ Adjacent – (1 MOV away) In the same Zone & **cannot strike** with a melee attack
- ♥ 1 Zones Away – (2 MOV away) Not in the same Zone and must spend 2 MOV to become Adjacent OR Engaged (moving character's choice)

If a character is more than 1 Zone away, they must spend an additional 2 MOV/Zone to reach their target.



# Combat - Actions

## On Your Turn Action Examples

- ♥ **Move** – Move up to your MOV, and be [Running] until your next turn
  - [Running] makes ranged attacks from/against you +1 Challenge Harder
- ♥ **Attack** – Make an opposed Melee Weapon Skill if Engaged with the target, or an opposed Ranged Weapon Skill if not
  - Each Additional Success in your favor add +1D6 Damage and +1 Effect
- ♥ **Reload** – Ranged Weapons have a 'Load' value, which is how many Actions must be spent Reloading before attacking with it again.
- ♥ **Rally** – Instill hope and focus to allies; make an appropriate Skill check, giving allies that can hear you +5/Success to all Skills until your next turn.
- ♥ **Swap** – Draw a weapon, change the wielded weapon, pull out a decoction, etc.
- ♥ **Use First Aid** – Must be Engaged with the target, who convert +1 Daze/Success into a Fatigue.
- ♥ **Use Magic** – Cast a Spell, Calculate an Arcane Form, or Invoke an element
  - Specifics are given on relevant character sheets
- ♥ **Use** – Use a held item, a Skill, something in the environment, etc.

## Reactive to Other's Actions

- ♥ **Melee Attack** – Make an opposed Melee Weapon Skill against a character Engaged with you that is moving away
  - Each Additional Success in your favor add +1D6 Damage and +1 Effect
- ♥ **Use Magic** – Some Ritual Spells are marked [Reactive], allowing you to use them as a response to another action
  - Specifics are given on relevant character sheets
- ♥ **Dodge** – Make a Dodge Check to oppose an Attack targeting you, but leaves you Prone
  - Additional Successes add +1 Effect [General/Defensive Only]
- ♥ **Deflect** – Make a Weapon or Shield Skill check to oppose an Attack targeting you or an ally Engaged with you.
  - Additional Success add +1 Effect [General/Defensive Only]

# Combat - Effects & Conditions

Combat Effects		
General		
Name	Requires	Effect
Cow	Target is disadvantaged	Target makes Opposed Willpower against your Coerce and flees/surrenders if you win
Rise	Prone	You stand up
Shove	Engaged	Target becomes Adjacent to you
Stagger		Target Dodges/Deflects at +1 Challenge Harder until your next turn
Trip		Target becomes Prone
Attacker Only		
Bleed	(S)lash Damage	Double all damage that exceeds target's AV for this attack
Impale	(P)ierce Damage	Reduce target's Wound Threshold by the number of damage dice you rolled for this attack
Crush	(B)ludgeon Damage	Reduce target's armor by (-1) AV/
Defender Only		
Disengage		Become Adjacent with Attacker
Riposte	Engaged	Deal your melee weapon damage to attacker

## Conditions

- ♥ **[Down]** - You have been knocked out of the fight.
  - You cannot take Actions until you recover/unmark at least 1 Daze
  - You cannot eat, drink, or speak
- ♥ **[Dying]** - Your life is fading due to grievous Wounds.
  - You are also [Down], as above
  - You make an Endurance Check after the Adversaries Turn in combat, or every 10 seconds out of combat. Each Wound makes this +1 Challenge Harder, and on any Fail you gain +1 Wounds
- ♥ **[Prone]** - You are on your back or belly.
  - You cannot move until you stand up for 1 MOV
  - Your Attacks, Deflects, and Dodges are +1 Challenge Harder
  - Your Wound Threshold is halved against melee attacks
- ♥ **[Running]** - You are a moving target.
  - Ranged Attacks targeting you are +1 Challenge Harder until your next turn.
  - Ranged Attacks you make are +1 Challenge Harder until your next turn.

# Combat - Damage & Armor

## Dealing Damage

Attack damage is based on how many successes (or net successes if opposed by Dodge/Deflect) the attacker scores:

- ♥ <0 Success - No damage, defender may have Effects against you.
- ♥ 0 Success - Graze for ½ Damage Dice, defender partially defended.
- ♥ 1 Success - Listed damage for wielded weapon.
- ♥ 2+ Success - +1D6 damage for each additional success scored.

Rolled damage is reduced by a character's Armor Value (AV), then compared to their Wound Threshold.

The target marks +1 Wound for each multiple of their Wound Threshold taken.

Any residual damage that is less than their Wound Threshold marks +1 Daze.

## Using & Breaking Armor

Armor provides two main benefits, based on its Armor Value (AV):

- ♥ AV is deducted from all incoming damage (unless stated otherwise)
- ♥ AV may be sacrificed to downgrade Wounds → Daze, or Daze → Fatigue.

To sacrifice AV to downgrade Wounds or Daze, known as 'Breaking,' there must be room to mark the Daze or Fatigue:

- ♥ If a character's Daze Track is full, they cannot downgrade a Wound
- ♥ If a character's Carry Capacity is full, they cannot downgrade a Daze

AV does not regenerate in this Quick-song; however, in the full rules AV may be recovered through crafting skills or paying for repairs.

Some armors have extra stated effects.



# Combat - Dying & Healing

## Going Down

When a character's Daze Track is filled, they must make a Willpower Check.

- ♥ On any fail, they go [Down] and [Prone].

As long as their Daze Track is full and are not [Down], they must make a Willpower Check every time they are hit.

- ♥ The check gains +1 Challenge for each Wound and Daze the hit deals

[Down] – The character is knocked out of the fight.

- ♥ They cannot take Actions until they recover at least 1 Daze
- ♥ They cannot eat, drink, or speak

[Prone] – The character is on their back or belly.

- ♥ They cannot move until they stand up for 1 MOV
- ♥ Your Attacks, Deflects, and Dodges are +1 Challenge Harder
- ♥ Your Wound Threshold is halved against melee attacks

If a character is [Down] and has at least 1 Wound, they are also [Dying].

## Dying

If a character goes [Down] and has at least 1 Wound, they begin [Dying].

[Dying] – The character's life is fading due to grievous Wounds.

- ♥ They are also [Down], as above
- ♥ After the Adversary Turn, or every 10 seconds outside combat, make an Endurance Check.
  - This check is +1 Challenge Harder for every current Wound
  - Gain +1 Wound on any fail

If a character recovers at least 1 Daze through any means, remove the [Dying] Condition.

## Fatigue, Daze, & Wounds

Fatigue fills a character's Carry Capacity.

- ♥ When Carry Capacity is full, extra Fatigue gained becomes Daze.
- ♥ When Carry Capacity and Daze are full, extra Fatigue gained becomes Wounds.

Daze is mental clarity and ability withstand minor cuts and bruises.

- ♥ Daze naturally recovers with sleep.
- ♥ If a character's Daze Track fills, they risk going [Down].

Wounds are a character's capacity to withstand grievous injury.

- ♥ Wounds require Chirurgy or rare magical treatment.
- ♥ If a character goes [Down] with at least 1 Wound, they also begin [Dying].
- ♥ Each marked Wound causes (-10) to all Skills.
- ♥ Each marked Wound makes the Endurance Check when [Dying] +1 Challenge Harder.
- ♥ If a character is unable to mark a gained Wound, they die.

## Healing & Recovery

Fatigue and Daze recover through safe night's rest, using a character's Recovery Rate on their character sheet.

- ♥ If they sleep at an inn, their home, etc. they recover double the listed value

Wounds can be converted to Daze through the Chirurgy Skill, requiring a Healer's Kit.

Wounds can also be removed by an Arcanist through careful use of the *Commuto* Form.

- ♥ See Heydar's Character sheet for more information



# Return to Fallowfield Farm

## Tip – Replace the Fallen

There is a distinct possibility for one or more characters to die in the conflict with the Water-Eaters, especially if they are reckless.

If available, hand the player an unused pre-gen character.

## Info – Questions Arise

The PHCs may be curious to the nature of the attack, as are Alderman Lazul and Sergeant-Guard Hafting.

Abelard, Heydar, and Isabet can determine with a Folklore Check (Difficult for others) that the Water-Eaters are:

- ♥ **Not native to Vardaren lands.** They are coastal by nature, and more a sea-sailor's nightmare than anyone inland. Why are they here?
- ♥ **The smell was wrong.** Water-Eaters are creatures of corrupted elemental Water and normally smell of strong seawater. Why did these Water-Eaters smelled of rotting plant matter and brackish marsh?
- ♥ **They acted strange.** Water-Eaters are ambush creatures of the sea, not land. Why were some in an isolated paddy field? Why did they stalk onto land so readily?

Lazul and Hafting are interested in compiling information from the PHCs, and are compiling a report and request for aid from the capital.

## Tip – Fleeing & Chased?

There is a curious case where the PHCs may devise a reckless gambit to distract the Water-Eaters long enough to gather Jonatan and flee back toward town.

Abelard is the only character Hale enough to carry Jonatan without issue; any two other characters can work together to carry him, however.

- ♥ This would make actions +1 Challenge Harder, since they would be juggling Jonatan at the same time.

If the party flees, they each need to make an Athletics Check; each character will gain +5 Fatigue minus each success they score.

- ♥ A character would be caught by the Water-Eaters if they Fumble and have MOV: 2.
- ♥ A character would be caught by the Water-Eaters if they Fail/Fumble and have MOV:1.

If more than one character is caught, the Water-Eaters will only take one of them. The caught PHCs may discuss who will be sacrificed so the others will live.

## Info – Wakare Recovers

The rest of the day will be spent rebuilding damaged property and administering medical treatment.

There is a funeral pyre needed for Spaldre, the dead townsfolk at Fallowfield's Farm, and possibly for others (Jonatan or any PHC that died).

The players should be encouraged to pursue points of personal interest and light inquiry of the town attack if interested and relax from the day's chaos and terror at the local tavern.

→ Fogwater Pub: 'Stocking Black Dragon Ale using the crystal waters of the Split-Tail itself! It may split the nations, but our ale brings friends together!'

# Return to Fallowfield Farm

Once the conflict with the Water-Eaters is resolved, the PHCs will need to return Jonatan (or his body, if the situation went poorly) to his daughter and farm.

As the PHCs near the Fallowfield farm and return to Celine, the distant ringing of alarm bells from Wakare will fade. Whatever the worry was, it has been dealt with.

During the reunion (happy or sad) with Celine, Guard Buldric and Guard-Sergeant Hafting will arrive. They look worn but alert, and each has various minor injuries and blue-black ichor splattered on their chain hauberks.

If asked, they explain:

- The town was attacked by 12 Water-Eaters.
- There are multiple injured, and Guard Spaldre was killed while protecting the smashed front door of the Waterway Inn.
- They will assist in escorting the PHCs, Celine, and Jonatan into town to see Life-Maker Steddyand.
- They came looking for Asavellana to assist Steddyand, as he is overwhelmed.

With assistance of Guard Buldric and Guard-Sergeant Hafting, the party and the Fallowfields are escorted into Wakare so they may rest, recuperate, and report their actions to Alderman Lazul.

In Wakare Ferry-Town there are clear signs of fighting, but Vardaren folk are strong-willed and industrious:

- ♥ The Water-Eater corpses are being dragged into a pile outside of town and are being burned. Abelard, known for his strength, may be asked to assist (if a PHC).
- ♥ Wood-Maker Rosin is sawing stored lumber into planks to make a new door for the Waterway Inn.
- ♥ Life-Maker Steddyand is treating some wounded Smith-Guard at their clinic, and townsfolk will call to Asavellana (if a PHC) that he would like her assistance when able.

Most folk are relaxing their nerves at the Fogwater Pub. **If a PHC decides to go drinking at the Pub, have them make a Carouse Check:**

- ♥ Success – *A married couple was traveling to Wakare from the northeast to catch the western ferry to Croswin in Valenia. They camped in a small wood just west of Hirno, but had to flee due to a late-night infestation of Creakers (wood gremlins)*
- ♥ Hard Success – *They thought it was odd, since Creakers normally grow in the thick forests of the Nystearn Marches to the west.*
- ♥ Heroic Success – *‘Some of the damned things ran right through the campfire! They didn’t even seem to react to fire!’*



# Wakare Examined

## Info – Other Inquiries

**Robeart Harback.** The laborer that pulled alarm duty yesterday is the only person to see the Water-Eaters as they came out of the Split-Tail and attacked the town. He's pretty open to talking, although acquaintances (**Thaddeus, Heydar, and Isabet**) need a **Sincerity check** to put him at ease:

- ♥ He counted about eleven of the 'boggy devils' come out on the western river-edge.
- ♥ It was odd, though. They moved in two rows of three, like a formation, with one off to the side like when Sergeant Hafting runs drills.
- ♥ They then split into two groups and went north/south to search the town or something.

**Other Caravanners/Merchants.** A merchant-caste caravanner has pulled into town from a jump-start on trade from Rujair, the clay quarry town to the east. A **Bargain (or Difficult Carouse)** check can get them talking while they market their wares:

- ♥ *A night sentry noticed what looked like a figure dancing in the moonlight atop a boulder a few hundred paces away about two nights ago.*
- ♥ *The merchant figures it was a Horizon-Dancer, and broke camp to put some distance from the creature.*
- ♥ *'They normally form from windstorms on the Bladeglass Plain to the south across the river, so now that they think about it... yeah it is odd to see one around here.'*

## Info – PHC homes & hearths

Every character has a place to stay:

**Niklaus and Asavellana** have a nice turf-roofed home in the city center, and **Isabet** has been staying in their spare room.

**Thaddeus** has a modest home afforded his position as foreign emissary on the north side of Wakare (chosen by Alderman Lazul so he can at least finish breakfast before Thaddeus arrives to discuss politics).

**Heydar** has a long-stay reservation at the Waterway Inn on the first floor, close to the stable. He likes to chat with his zebra, Sparkle, rather than other people to clear his mind when marking his notes as a scholar.

**Abelard** has a standing reservation at the Waterway Inn, on the upper floor in what can be described as a "Pretend Penthouse." A small apartment, it is held for the representative of the Valgard Watch per a contract made over a century ago.

These all provide a Safe Night's Rest (the inn's door is repaired by bedtime) for the characters. They may remove a combined number of Daze and Fatigue equal to their Recovery Rate as they rest through the night.

On the following day, Alderman Lazul and Sergeant-Guard Hafting will want to meet with them in the early afternoon (as they finish up pressing security matters). Until then, the characters can ask around about yesterday's events.

# Rest in Wakare

Eventually, evening will fall in Wakare

As the first sunset of the new year draws light from the land, the people of Wakare gather on the edge of town. Those neighbors, friends, and acquaintances who have died are laid upon pyre-mounds.

Prayers to Cold Mother and Silent Father are said over the bodies, as torches are used to light the bodies. Members of the Smith-Guard protect the bodies until they have been burned to ash, to prevent foul magics from being twisted upon them.

As the evening continues, the PHCs will return to their homes to rest and recover.

Each PHC may remove a total number of Daze and/or Fatigue equal to double their Recovery Rate listed on their character sheet.

**In the morning, the PHCs are asked to meet with Alderman Lazul and Guard-Sergeant Hafting:**

- ♥ While the immediate threat has been dealt with, it is an odd occurrence and has the Alderman worried about the long-term safety of Wakare.
- ♥ Alderman Lazul wants the PHCs to deliver his report and request for aid to the Alderman in the capital, Hirno.
- ♥ Guard-Sergeant Hafting would normally send some members of the Smith-Guard to escort, but wants to ensure the town's security until the PHCs can return; they will ask Abelard to escort the PHCs (if Abelard is alive and not already a PHC).

**If this is played as a One-Shot, this is a good stopping point. Otherwise, the PHCs should be willing to assist their neighbors and take the report to Hirno.**

**The road to Hirno and delivery of the report occur on the following pages.**



# Travel Notes

## Advice – Getting There

At the start of Travel or after resolving a Travel Event, the Lead makes a Navigate Check (or Difficult Folklore).

- ♥ The next Travel Event occurs after (2 + Successes) Standard Travel Days.
- ♥ If the ones-place is  $\geq 7$ , they must add a Weather Effect
- ♥ If the ones-place is  $\leq 3$ , they may remove a Weather Effect

If the number of travel days until the next event is less than the remaining days, there will be a brief event to resolve:

- ♥ Determine Role – The Singer rolls a 1D3 to find which Role has a notable event.
- ♥ Determine Event – The Singer rolls a 1D6 to find what the notable event was.
  - The Role will make their check,
  - The Party will update their Fatigue
  - Additional effects will resolve per the Event Outcome

D6	Event Role
1-2	Quartermaster
3-4	Sentry
5-6	Scout

## Advice – Arriving Tired

Once the party reaches their destination, the fatigue of traveling sets into their body.

Each party member:

- ♥ Adds +1 Fatigue for every seven (7) days of Travel.

This is the total travel Fatigue gained by each character.

Each character then adjusts this value, personally, based on the following:

- ♥ If the character rode a mount or in a vehicle, they reduce the Fatigue they take by the mount or vehicle's Quality value.
- ♥ Each character may then make an Endurance Check, and reduce the Fatigue they will take by (-1)/Success.

## Tip – Describing Events

Allow the Player that resolves the Travel Event to describe the situation that occurred.

Have them describe it after they have rolled, so they know the outcome.

Any other player at the table, including yourself, may offer ideas; for example, the party is traveling through marshland so events relating to getting stuck in bogs or being harassed by insects are great choices!

Travel Events			
D6	Event Type	Outcome	Fatigue
$\leq 1$	Terrible Danger	Role takes 1 Wound on any Fail.	3
2	Heavy Weariness	Role makes Heart Check or loses 1 Heart.	2
3	Risky Gambit	Party takes 1 Daze on any Fail.	2
4	Possible Opportunity	+1 Travel Days and Fatigue on any Fail.	2
5	Potential Shortcut	-1 Remaining Travel Days per Success.	1
$\geq 6$	Momentary Respite	Party gains +1 Heart/Success (up to max).	0

# Road to Hirno

The road to Hirno will take the PHCs about 7 Travel Days.

As they head out, the weather will be Clear.

**Ask the PHCs to designate a Lead, a Scout, a Sentry, and a Quartermaster for the Travel.**

There are 4 Roles for Travel:

- ♥ **Lead** – Makes a Navigate or Difficult Folklore Check at the start, and after each Event.
  - Events occur every **2 + Successes** Travel Days
  - If the ones-place of their Check is  $\geq 7$ , they must choose to add a Weather Effect
  - If the ones-place of their Check is  $\leq 3$ , they may remove a Weather Effect
- ♥ **Scout** – Resolves Events using either a Hunt or Difficult Spot Check.
- ♥ **Sentry** – Resolves Events using either a Forage or Difficult Listen Check.
- ♥ **Quartermaster** – Resolves Events using Fieldcraft or Difficult Sense Check.

Weather Table	
Weather	Effect
Gloomy	Succeed a Heart Check or lose (-1) Heart.
Windy	Succeed a Willpower Check or gain +1 Fatigue; wearing a Cloak makes this (-1) Challenge Easier.
Hazy	Spot and Navigate Checks are +1 Challenge Harder.
Wet	Succeed an Endurance Check or gain +1 Fatigue; wearing a Cloak makes this (-1) Challenge Easier.
Harsh	All Weather-related Checks are affected by [Cold]. Succeed an Endurance Check or gain +1 Fatigue.

Once the Travel is resolved, the party will arrive in Hirno in the early evening as the sun sets. **Welcome to Hirno!**

As the Planting day's light fades toward the evening, the party arrives along the main road into Hirno. This is the local capital of this Sayr, but looks to be little more than a large farming town. The town is split into thirds by the main road: it runs East-West, with an intersection turning North.

There is a local inn, The Heavy-Hander, that can provide warm savory pudding, some light drink, and lumpy beds for the night. It sits at the intersection, across the way from the Magisterial offices where the party is likely to find the Anderman in the morning.

The party will likely be looking forward to a meal and a comfortable bed after traveling along the road for a week.

There is a simple blacksmith and a leatherworker town, but they will be closed until mid-morning.

When the party goes to sleep, they will awake in the morning and apply double their Recovery Rate to remove Daze and/or Fatigue as before.





# Formal Interaction Notes

## Advice – Formal Interactions

A Formal Interaction allows swaying a character's bearing when the simpler binary social case of Yes/No poorly applies.

Before making any statements, checks, or other major efforts, the stage must be set properly.

The Player-Heroes will

- ♥ State which of them are 'there,' if it is unclear.
  - PHCs not present cannot contribute, but also prevent bringing 'too many cooks.'

The Ballad-Singer will

- ♥ Determine the initial Bearing based on a reasonable guess of the NHC's mood and feelings.
  - Hystura is Apathetic to the Player-Heroes unless they give him a reason to be Dismissive.
  - If the PHCs outnumber the Hystura by more than 1, they will assume a defensive stance and reduce their Bearing by 1 in response.
- ♥ Determine the initial Concern based on the general attitude and circumstances of the Interaction.
  - Magistrate Hystura will have a Concern of 1 if Apathetic, or Concern of 2 if Dismissive.
  - If the PHCs outnumber Hystura by more than 1, increase their Concern by 1.

Once established, each involved Player-Hero chooses a Personality Trait and Skill to form their influencing effort. They must explain, however they find most comfortable, the manner in which both apply in their effort to sway Magistrate Hystura.

Count the total number of Successes scored by all PHC, and subtract the Hystura's Concern.

- ♥ Resolution – Adjust Hystura's overall Bearing based on the final result.

## Advice – NHC Interaction Bearing

- ♥ Agreeable
  - Checks are Easy. Need 1 net Success to keep Bearing.
- ♥ Considerate
  - Checks are Normal. Need 1 Success/Participant to shift Bearing.
- ♥ Apathetic
  - Checks are Difficult. Need 2 Success/Participant to shift Bearing.
- ♥ Dismissive
  - Checks are Heroic. Need 3 Success/Participant to shift Bearing.
- ♥ Hostile
  - Checks are Impossible. Participants are rebuked.

## Advice – Interaction Resolutions

- ♥ Agreeable
  - Hystura is willing to assist as much as able.
- ♥ Considerate
  - Hystura will offer minor assistance.
- ♥ Apathetic
  - Hystura is unmoved to assist without equitable compensation or favors.
- ♥ Dismissive
  - Hystura is nonplussed and unwilling to provide assistance unless compelled from their authorities.
- ♥ Hostile
  - Hystura is actively aggravated against the Party. They will take hostile action, such as calling the local guard and authorities.

# The Last Roadblock

## Getting to Business

Their report is being delivered to Mystic-Oracle Aoife Grayson, who is the acting Anderman of the Hirno-Sayr (e.g. State Governor).

Unfortunately, their primary Administrator is Magi-strata Paul Hystura, a Confident (14) and Deliberate (14) man that takes the concept of proper paperwork a little too seriously.

He does not question the legitimacy of the report, or the need to deliver.

No, he is more concerned with proper paperwork completion [**Difficult Literacy, or Normal Statecraft**] and will then explain it will be resolved in order of arrival. By his estimation, the request and report of Wakare will be presented to Anderman Grayson by mid-Harvest (e.g. in roughly 8 months).

The party is quite free to leave it at that; they were asked to deliver a report and request on behalf of their friends and neighbors and have done just that. This Quick-song will conclude with them making an additional Travel back to Wakare (see prior Travel for marking the way back), and Alderman Lazul and Sergeant Hafting grumbling about Magi-caste members and their paperwork.

## No, people died!

If the party is not content to let the wheels of bureaucracy slowly spin to fruition, they can attempt to push the issue.

This may be as simple as getting the report to the top of the pile (and seen within a day) or even to convince Magistrate Hystura to take them to Anderman Grayson immediately.

In either case, this is a Social Interaction, an attempt to sway an NHC for a significant purpose. Hystura will begin as either **Apathetic** if a Small Ask (e.g. put the report on top of pile) or **Dismissive** if a Large Ask (e.g. 'take us to Anderman Grayson, now!').

If Magistrate Hystura is moved to at least **Considerate**, he will be willing to put the Wakare report on the top of the pile. It will be reviewed by the Anderman within the next week.

- ♥ They will send a reinforcement of six (6) Smith-Guardsmen along with an apprentice Life-Maker. They arrive with a wagon carrying some basic supplies to help ease the stresses on Wakare.
- ♥ If the party waits, they can freely travel under the additional security back home.

If Magistrate Hystura is moved to **Agreeable**, he will be flustered and exasperated but take them to Anderman Grayson directly. They can hand deliver the Wakare report, which gives the same results as Considerate above.

- ♥ The PHCs are also able to bring up further information about the additional Creaker and Horizon-Dancer activity in the area, if known. This will raise additional concerns and spur Anderman Grayson to write her own reports to take to the Blackstone Cliffs.

If Magistrate Hystura is unmoved or at most **Apathetic**, he will rebuff the PHCs and dig into his bureaucratic formalism. The PHCs will be left to return to Wakare under their own means and security to inform Alderman Lazul and Sergeant Hafting of their technical, but disappointing, success.

- ♥ The Party will re-perform the 7 Travel Days on the preceding pages to return to Wakare.

This concludes the introductory Quick-Song Wakare Water Woes, a simple first look at some gameplay elements of The Ballad of Heroes TTRPG.

We wholeheartedly thank you for taking a look, playing this far, and look forward to your thoughts (tag us on BlueSky @armen-legg-games.bsky.social with all your love, hate, or indifference!)

# Wakare Ferry-Town

*Art by Azukail Games, with minor edits by Kyle 'Kel' Elsasser as allowed*

