



13 TRUE WAYSTM

A FANTASY ROLEPLAYING BOOK BY
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13TH AGE IS A FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME BY
ROB HEINSOO, JONATHAN TWEET,
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DRUID

Druids are poised between the cycles of nature and the timelines of civilization. It's true that druids are attuned to the calm rhythms of natural creation, but as mortal humanoids they're also poised between the savagery of wild nature and the mercilessness of tribal warfare.

When the High Druid is weak, lesser druids get snared by hierarchy and competition, vying for mastery of each grove or cave complex. When the High Druid's strength grows, as it is happening in the 13th Age, lesser druids don't have to fight to prove dominance. The alpha female is clear to all, so the rest of the druids work together, or at least not so often at cross purposes.

Play Style: True to a heritage as a class that can flourish in a variety of roles, the druid has options. Depending on your talents, you can play as the Wild Wood's answer to the wizard, or as a warrior healer flourishing in the space traditionally defined by the cleric, or as a spellcasting magician who shapeshifts into animal forms to scout and fight.

Your choice of talents is key, because each druid talent unlocks a pool of spells or powers. You also have the choice of doubling up on one of your talents, spending two talents instead of one to be more focused on what the talent has to offer.

Druids are not the best characters for new players who want something easy to play. If you do have a new player who needs an easy character and still wants to play a druid, the Animal Companion and Wild Healer talents require fewer choices during play.

Ability Scores: Wisdom is important for most of your spellcasting. For melee combat you can use either Strength or Dexterity, your choice.

Druids gain a +2 bonus to Strength, Dexterity, or Wisdom, as long as it isn't the same ability you increase with your +2 racial bonus.

Races: Wood elves and half-elves are the iconic druids. Humans, halflings, and dwarves aren't far behind. Much to the Emperor's chagrin, heroes of nearly any great race seem capable of becoming mighty druids.

Backgrounds: Some sample druid backgrounds include orc-tribe hunter/gatherer, avalanche prophet, Koru cult zealot, river guide, Elk Tribe healer, failed shaman, escaped Hellhole gardener, champion Opals angler, wild temple priest, Concord urban planner, mystic waterfall guardian, seventh initiate of the Stalking Trees Circle, Moonwreck tunnel-dweller, and raised by wolverines.

Icons: We published a game that included an icon named the High Druid. You had to wait until this book to actually play a druid. Huzzah!

After the High Druid, the Elf Queen has the most to do with druids. Depending on your campaign, the Three, the Prince of Shadows, and the Dwarf King might have many followers among the druids. The Priestess is also a possibility. Not many druids follow the Orc Lord, but given the orcs' rampages in the frontier, druids frequently have antagonistic relationships with that icon.



MONK

Every monk that joins an adventuring party has a story about why they are not back at the monastery. Some chase a vision, while others have been driven out. For some, it's a temporary step in their training. For others, it's a permanent exile. And for a very few, a hard-won escape.



OVERVIEW

Play style: Monks are great fun for experienced players who like juggling significant decisions within the flow of moment-by-moment roleplaying. You'll make significant decisions when building your character out of interwoven options and fighting round-by-round using the diverse elements of the monk's attack forms. Some inexperienced players can handle playing a monk, others can't.

Ability Scores: Dexterity is the most important ability score for monks, determining your attack bonus and also contributing to AC. Strength and Wisdom are the other ability scores that will matter to you. Strength is the score that affects how much

damage you deal with most of your attacks. Wisdom determines how much ki you have and influences some talents and abilities.

Monastic training demands the best of its students. Rewards of the discipline are commensurately high: unlike other classes, monks gain a +2 class bonus to *two* of the following three ability scores: Strength, Dexterity, or Wisdom. You can't use either of those ability score bonuses on an ability you increase with your +2 racial bonus.

Races: When betting on the race of the champion and runners-up in one of the grand monastic tournaments, you are safest betting on wood elf, halfling, and human. But if there's a half-orc in the tournament who has mastered monastic discipline? Or a dwarf who has set aside the axe? They are your dark horses.

Backgrounds: Here are a few representative monk background options: Temple acolyte, mountain sanctuary guardsman, traveling circus acrobat, river guide, Cathedral runner, spider-cult assassin, tunnel vermin exterminator, bodyguard, farmer, hallucinogenic mushroom farmer, wild mountain ginseng harvester, traveling tournament organizer, Drakkenhall civil rights organizer, star pupil of the School of Unified Dragons.

Icons: The six icons most likely to inspire monasteries or monastic traditions are the Great Gold Wurm, Priestess, Crusader, High Druid, Elf Queen, and the Three. Disciplines devoted to the Lich King also persist, promising great power without necessarily requiring that the practitioner serve the icon. There has been enough cross-pollination between schools that monks may easily be acquainted with martial traditions that were originally conceived by enemy icons.

In ages past, an icon known as the Grandmaster of Flowers set the highest standards of monk discipline, but there has been no such grandmaster in the ages since the ogre magi utterly defeated the last one.

Great Gold Wurm: A time-honored path for those who serve the Wurm without taking on the burdensome oaths and armor of the paladin.

Priestess: The Cathedral holds many dojos and monasteries. Monks who prefer distance from the Cathedral's crowded social calendar carve new monasteries into the foothills of distant mountain ranges or the ruins of ancient cities.

Crusader: Not all demons can be defeated with steel. The Crusader understands the power of discipline and tradition. He also likes keeping an edge hanging over the Emperor. The conviction that you are better than other people isn't necessarily mistaken when you're a warrior who can tear monsters apart with your bare hands.

THE OCCULTIST

Who is the occultist? What powers does she wield? The world does not know, nor does the occultist. Not yet, anyway.



The default rule for classes is that your character is just one of many people with similar powers. The occultist breaks this rule. There is only one occultist, and as we mention in the class features, your one unique thing should account for this somehow. Of course, when I say that there is only one occultist, it should raise the dramatic possibility that the occultist in your campaign is going to someday encounter another one after all. And you're free to play all the classes your way in your campaign, so if you'd rather make the occultist merely rare rather than unique, I'm not going to stop you. Normally I use "they" as the third-person pronoun for a generic PC or anyone else of indeterminate gender; but there is only one occultist, and using "they" would give the wrong connotation. The occultist could be female, or male, or neither, so we'll switch back and forth between she and he.

OVERVIEW

Play style: The occultist is a class for the player who likes to pay attention and weigh options. You craftily watch as the battle plays out around you, waiting for the right moment to distort reality in your favor. In a split second, you can set back time and tweak reality just enough to have a devastating effect. The fates of your friends and of your foes are in your hands. It's a good class for an experienced player.

Ability scores: The occultist (and there is only one) uses Intelligence and Wisdom. His vision penetrates the veil of surface reality, and his discernment lets him retain his sanity when he does so. Intelligence gives him deftness and accuracy (attack roll bonus), while Wisdom gives him power (damage bonus). Intelligence is the more important of the two.

The occultist gains a +2 class bonus to Intelligence or Wisdom, as long as it isn't the same ability you increase with your +2 racial bonus.





GAMEMASTER

The five Superiors are likely to have a greater direct presence in your campaign than the Archmage. Inventing the personalities of the Superiors can be a major way for you to customize Horizon as it appears in your campaign. By default, the Superiors are obscure figures who keep tabs on everything pretty well. In one of our campaigns, the Archmage's organization was a soul-numbing bureaucracy. In this case, the Superiors were the faceless lords of five bureaucratic fiefdoms, engaged in ongoing office politics. A more standard option is to split their duties up, giving one of them "expeditionary authority." That Superior becomes a patron who sponsors the party on various adventures. This option lets you gradually reveal more and more of the Superior's personality. Or maybe the Superiors are inhuman spirit beings from an immaterial dimension, unwaveringly devoted to the Archmage for unknown reasons. Of course, don't feel like you have to figure all this out before the heroes show up in Horizon.

Navigation

If anyone can make sense of the routes that one takes to navigate Horizon, they're not telling. Those who grew up in the city can find their way, but others are liable to take a wrong turn or otherwise lose their way, often. Visitors hire guides to lead them around on foot, or hire carriages for a quicker and more comfortable option. Even natives, however, can't always get from here to there easily. On some journeys, everything simply takes much longer than it should, and wrong turns lead to hours of backtracking. It's as if the Archmage is hiding momentous secrets behind shifting walls and hidden gateways. Perhaps you never find anything in Horizon without the city's permission.

The one element of Horizon that confuses travelers the most is the multitude of teleportation arches called "gates." When you walk or ride through one of these free-standing stone and metal structures, you teleport to another arch somewhere in Horizon. Each arch connects to one of several destinations, which vary on an idiosyncratic schedule. These variable gates mean that any part of the city might be a short trip away from any other, at least temporarily. They also mean that two neighborhoods that are geographically close to each other are sometimes extraordinarily far apart.

Guardians guide travelers through each gate. These "guards" are more like functionaries, and the sabers on their hips are ceremonial fakes. If there's real trouble at a gate, stone golems and wizards quickly pop out of the portal to settle things. Since the Superiors' security teams can access any gate from any other gate, any trouble that starts near a gate usually doesn't last long.

HORIZON THE GROTESQUE

Typically, Horizon is the epitome of order, but maybe the Horizon in your campaign is baroque instead. In this case, Horizon presents the viewer with an uncertain skyline and an ambiguous visage. Jumbled together are towers, buildings, arches, plazas, and elevated roads. These structures would look improbable on their own, but juxtaposed against

each other they seem impossible. Most of these disparate architectural elements hail from ages past, each representing some part of the city that was so well constructed that it has survived the ages intact. Horizon is the only city with so many major architectural elements that have survived so long.

SANTA CORA, CITY OF TEMPLES

We're presenting a few different views of Santa Cora. We suspect they're not all part of the same campaign.

First we have three Santa Cora visions from Lee, two of them maps of a sort and one of them a card of unclear antiquity. Our thoughts are that the map from The Triumphant Order is how the Crusader would *like* to rebuild Santa Cora if he could conquer it. The amount of distribution this woefully inaccurate map receives could be a form of extended make-it-so ritual, but the followers of the Priestess aren't concerned.

The aetheric map is more in tune with the spirit of the city. As an artifact shown to players, perhaps it will help the characters navigate the Cathedral?

Second, there's a vision of Santa Cora from Jonathan that embraces the inspired works of the spirit. It is an essentially positive view, but it talks about how easily what is positive can be distorted, and people who are inclined to hate Santa Cora will find sustenance. Love it? Hate it? You might have to do both.

We have scattered excerpts from Kullis' little-known *Hymn of Bitter Mirth: Four Days and Three Nights in Santa Cora* throughout the text. Kullis is one of the people who simply hates Santa Cora and he doesn't think he should be in the minority. As always with Kullis, he may know what he's talking about, but he may also be trying to squeeze a few imperials out of the fact that he keeps an obsessive journal while having miserable non-adventures.

Lastly, we'll briefly touch on options for tuning that vision to campaigns that don't want that particular aspect of spirit-touched behavior mixed up in their fantasy rpg religion.

SANTA CORA, CITY OF THE SPIRIT

As with every other metropolis, there are plenty of reasons to go to Santa Cora, and may the gods bless you if you do. From a distance, Santa Cora sounds like a utopia where the Priestess has unified the priests, mystics, and sages of all the gods. Up close, however, the city can be something very different indeed. When you arrive, the streets throng with holy men, wise women, and songs of devotion. When you leave, you may be saying good riddance to a city of shysters and fanatics.

First and foremost, Santa Cora is the home of the Priestess and the site of her miraculous Cathedral. From across the Empire and beyond, spiritual seekers wend their ways to the city. Some report being changed to the soul by merely laying eyes on the Cathedral. Pilgrims and converts of all descriptions press onto

Santa Cora's streets, sometimes even including repentant monsters. Many of these visitors are looking for something more practical than spiritual elevation. They may hope for miraculous healing, divine omens, or the lifting of a curse. Renegades, fugitives, outlaws, and people who have crossed the wrong crime lords come here to seek sanctuary in the Cathedral or in a major temple. Finally, Santa Cora attracts those who seek the gods for knowledge, favor, or power. One thing hasn't changed—that the mysteries of the gods may be sought in the holy city. In Santa Cora, even the prostitutes ennoble their work with prayers and rituals, treating their business as a ministry of sorts.

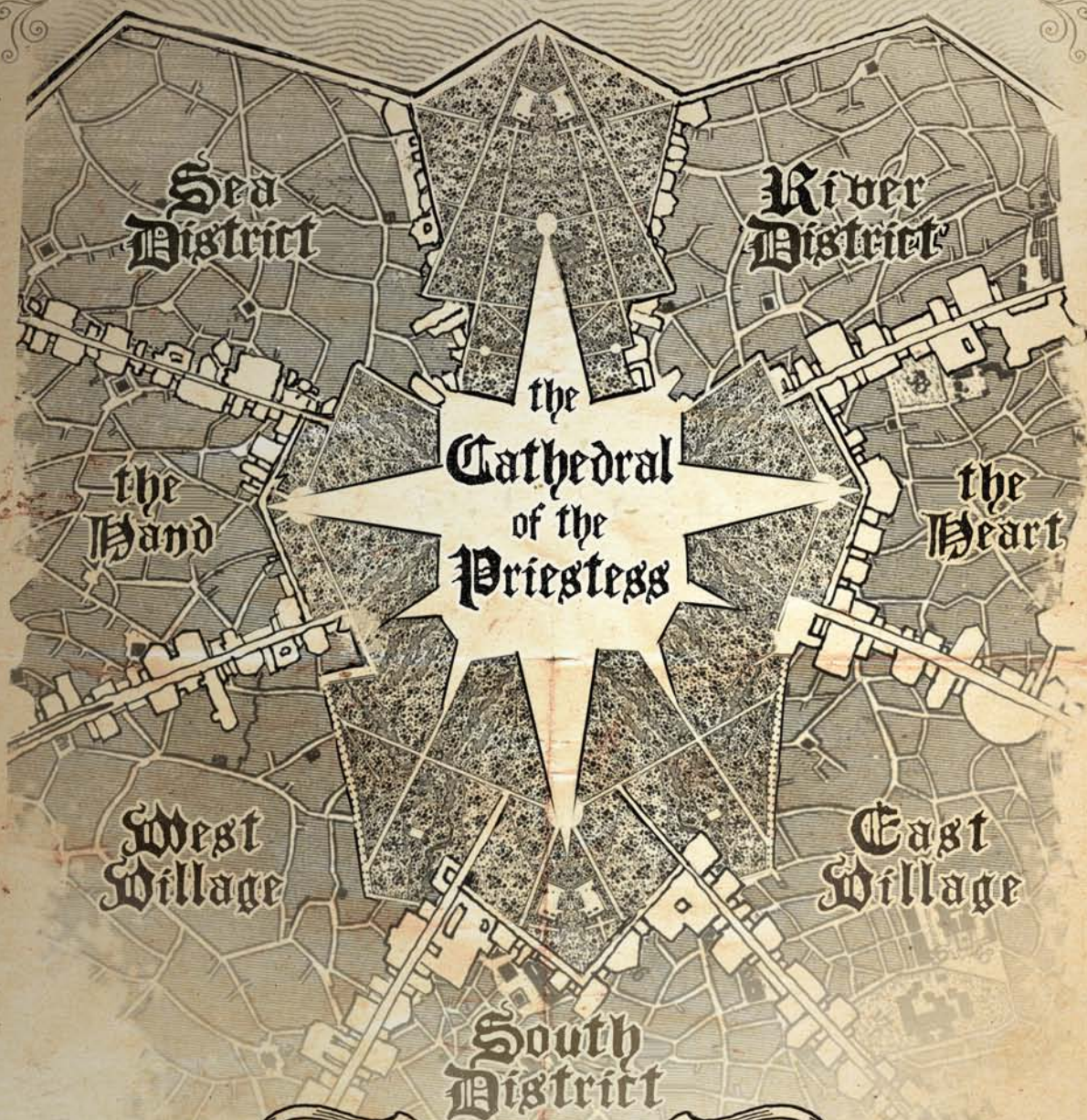
Pay a small bit of attention to our mighty wizard/lord/overseers and you'll understand that the 13th Age is a perilous time. The worst time. The age that could end it all. And we're supposed to be happy about the fact that the blessed Priestess has never been seen before and comes only in this terrible time of thirteen icons? Thank you so much, Priestess. You could have left it at twelve.

—Kullis the Cynic

Down through the ages, Santa Cora has always been the City of Temples. Today the city boasts countless temples to various gods and pantheons, but the Priestess has unified them. Where priests of different temples once competed for territory and privileges, they now join in shared rituals. Priests even borrow from their contemporaries' liturgies, symbols, and hymns, creating syncretic worship that old-school champions of the faith would not recognize or approve of. The streets have a buzz about them, as fresh ideas inspire ancient rites and sacred artifacts once locked away are paraded through broad daylight.

A crooked priest from a corrupt temple isn't a scary thing; it's a normal thing. Visionary priests from an all-singing all-dancing radiant Cathedral, they're the ones who are going to get us all killed.

the Midland Sea





SKIN DEVIL

The bloodhounds of the Pit, skin devils hunt for mortal weakness, so they can feed off it, amplify it, and finally alert the hierarchy to its presence.

Skin devils manifest as undifferentiated skin tissue arranged into crude humanoid shape. At rest they take on a flattened, nearly two-dimensional aspect. Gaping black ovals appear where their eyes and mouths should be. As needed, they can puff themselves out to approximate ordinary humanoid shape, or can flatten themselves even further to ooze through narrow openings.

They sense shame in the air like a hunting dog smells the spoor of a deer. Having detected the presence of forbidden passion or hypocritically indulged vice, they flow toward it. The skin devil follows the target, observing it, studying its habits, cataloging its weaknesses. It forms a psychic bond with the target, drawing unholy spiritual sustenance. This connection in turn intensifies the pleasure the subject gets from their greasy behavior of choice, and thus the time and effort spent pursuing it. The skin devil strikes against any force that threatens its target, or worse, tries to return it to the straight and narrow.

This *modus operandi* inspires the lore of possessing devils who lure the innocent into sin and consign their souls to hell. In truth, one can sometimes free an unsuspecting victim from a spiral of self-destruction by breaking the bond between that person and the skin devil that has latched onto them.

Eventually the subject reaches a stable state of depravity, at which point the bond breaks and the skin devil gains nothing more from it. With sad nostalgia, it passes the now perfectly seasoned victim along to a honey devil, who approaches it with the offer of a long-term deal.

Free-form covert ability—Unnoticed: For a mass of undifferentiated tissue, the skin devil has remarkable skill, luck, or mojo when it comes to not being noticed. It's routinely able to pass through civilized areas without alerting dogs, bouncers, city guards, or passersby. Sometimes people see it but take it for human and disregard it. If the thing attacks, that's when you notice that it's not a human but a monstrous pile of flesh. In addition to passing unnoticed in crowds, it uses its fluid shape to sneak through hidden places, and it doesn't make much noise unless it wants to. Assume that PCs looking for the devil won't find it unless they have some special information or advantage, and even then it's a ridiculously hard check (DC 25). Normally when PCs think they have the devil cornered, it escapes through a tight exit that it had previously identified.

This unworthy opponent fights desperately when forced to, but it will attempt to flee an altercation before it comes to a fight. It has a frustrating and frankly disgusting ability to ooze its shapeless skin into its minor wounds to heal them, but serious wounds are too much for it to handle.

2nd level troop [DEVIL]

Initiative: +6

Fleshy limb +7 vs. AC—6 damage

Stay whole: At the start of its turn, a skin devil heals 8 hp. If it doesn't heal up to its maximum hit points, it loses its ability to heal from this ability until the end of the battle.

Structural collapse: While the skin devil is staggered, when an enemy damages it, it loses an additional 4 hp as the hapless thing fails to hold its boneless, bulky mass together.

Weakling: When building battles using this monster, it only counts as half a normal monster.

AC 17
PD 16
MD 16

HP 28

CHAPTER 6

GAMEMASTERS' GRIMOIRE

There's a little bit of almost everything in this chapter. It's probably a betrayal of the little-bit-of-everything compendiums that inspired this chapter to organize the contents alphabetically. But what's more arbitrary than the alphabet? Contents include:

- Artifacts
- Dungeons & Ruins
- Flying Realms
- Inns, Taverns, and Roadhouses of Note
- Magic Items
- Monastic Tournaments
- Nonplayer Characters
- Underkrakens
- The Wild Garden

ARTIFACTS

Artifacts are a special type of unique magic item that have their own story. They're capable of providing multiple powers and benefits to their bearer, although that power comes at a cost. The decision to bring an artifact into a campaign is ultimately the GM's, though player lobbying and one unique thing destiny surely plays a role. Artifacts chew the scenery, so introducing an artifact early in a campaign seems unwise unless it's functioning as a major plot point.

As a rule, each artifact functions like a normal true magic item of its type, possessing the same default bonus, if any, and occupying one of its bearer's chakras, if that's how that type functions.

Unlike other true magic items, artifacts have more than one power, each with its associated quirk. When you first attune an artifact, choose one of its powers from your tier or lower. Each time you gain a level after that, you can choose to learn another of the artifact's powers from your tier or lower.

Note that the artifact's default bonus depends on the highest tier power you have chosen from the artifact. If you have an artifact magic weapon but have only attuned one of its adventurer-tier powers, it functions as an adventurer-tier weapon, granting only a +1 bonus to attack and damage. Attune one of its champion-tier powers and the weapon will blossom into its champion-tier potential, granting a +2 bonus to attack and damage.

On the other hand, you don't have to attune all of an artifact's powers and you don't have to take them in order.

Artifacts are jealous. No artifact is going to allow its bearer to carry another artifact unless that was the plan all along. In addition, each power you choose from an artifact counts as an additional magic item for the number of true magic items you are allowed to use before your item's quirks overpower you. Speaking of quirks, you and the GM should roleplay your artifact's quirks

more seriously than you might handle your other item's quirks. Simply keeping your items' quirks in control doesn't suffice to keep your artifact's quirks in control. They're going to be heard from at least once a level and the GM is within rights to ask you to succeed on a normal save when you want to act against a particularly obvious example of your artifact's quirks. Live up to your artifact and everyone will be happier.

Icon relationships: Obviously, acquiring an artifact is a major campaign event. In fact, it's such a big deal that the icons take notice. Each artifact has a section on icon relationships that the artifact more or less requires. If you attune an artifact and don't have the required relationships, you will soon, as fate and destiny reshape around you! If you resist the hammers of fate, you and the GM might be able to carve an alternate story or the artifact will eventually disappear on you, finding a bearer more to its taste.

THE FEATHERED CROWN

This wondrous crown marks its bearer as someone who is destined for great things. That's definitely what the crown tells its bearer anyway, and it's the message that comes through clearest.

Artifact description: This deceptively fragile-looking crown is made of feathers that glow with magical colors suggested by the crown bearer's own powers or heraldry.

History: Like the other artifacts, the *Feathered Crown's* history is up to your campaign, though we suspect that it was created by forces that had more in common with the light than the darkness. We have no idea if the feathers have a recognizable origin or if they're even truly feathers and not cunning enchantments of silk, mana, and gold.

Icon relationships: You aren't beholden to a particular icon but you must invest all your icon relationships with a single icon. The relationship is going to be positive or conflicted. It's obviously not going to be with a villainous icon unless you're playing one of those Evil-PCs campaigns we aren't really oriented toward. We'll refer to your chosen icon as your patron in the mechanics below.

Crown default bonus: +1 MD (adventurer); +2 MD (champion); +3 MD (epic).

ADVENTURER

There is always hope: When an enemy targets your Mental Defense with an attack and rolls a natural 1, you heal using a free recovery. Quirk: Compulsively eavesdrops, and also tends to misinterpret insults as compliments and bad news as good news.

