

Telgrathia 1st Edition

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Introduction-

Welcome to Telgrathia, a land torn by war and famine. For many years, the people have grown restless. Now, under the watchful leadership of King Kelak, Telgrathia has entered a new time of prosperity. But not all people are content under the leadership of King Kelak, whose rise to power was filled with bloodshed and reprisals against his political enemies. Every day the opposition to the new king grows. Old warlords who were coerced into swearing fealty to the king cease paying tribute. Bandits grow more brazen. Treasure hunters freely roam the crypts of Old Telgrathia, finding artifacts which were not meant to be found by such self-serving men. Telgrathia needs saviors, adventurers brave enough to save it from its newfound enemies.

Drawing-

Telgrathia is based on blackjack, with some differences. For one, the number of cards to draw is determined before drawing (by declaration of player or referee). The other is that busting has its penalties reduced. For every point over 21, the drawing actor (see below) loses 2 points. The lowest possible draw is 3, regardless of how far a draw busted, or if the result was originally 1 or 2 while the highest possible draw is 21. A natural draw of 21 means automatic success regardless of the difficulty. Aces always count as 1, regardless of when drawn. There is no automatic 21.

Actors-

Most everything in Telgrathia is treated as an actor. Whether it is an inanimate barricade or a very animated dragon, it follows some basic rules.

Attributes-

Actors may have (but do not need to have) certain attributes. These generally are represented as physical presence and non-physical attributes. Attributes are used to determine how many cards you are allowed to draw for an action.

Physical Attributes-

Physical attributes reflect an actor's direct ability to influence the world. They take the form of two pairs.

SE Pair-

The SE (Strength/Endurance) pair is a dual pair. The statistic of strength is used for short actions, while the statistic of endurance is used after a strength draw to sustain actions or by itself to prevent some types of situational damage.

DA Pair-

The DA (Dexterity/Agility) pair is an pseudo-related pair. Dexterity is used for feats involving the usage of fingers or hands, Agility is used for whole body agile movement.

Nonphysical Attributes-

Nonphysical attributes reflect the ability to think or modify the universe through paranormal means.

IS Pair-

The IS (Intelligence/Sense pair) is an unlinked pair. They represent two different things that are similar but unrelated. Intelligence is the ability to perform very complex mental actions (such as are required by magic), while Sense is actually the ability to think quick on one's feet, avoid dangerous situations, et cetera.

TF Pair-

The TF (Trinh/Force pair) is an unlinked pair. They represent two different things that are similar but unrelated. Trinh is the measure of the ability to use the underlying fabric of the world to bend matter and energy to one's whims, while Force represents the ability of sheer will to change oneself from within, using similar but different energies. The TF pair functions differently from other attributes.

Determining Player Attributes-

Player attributes are determined by drawing 2 cards valued from 5-10 each, ignoring any face cards. This number determines how many attribute points the actor gets. For solo adventurers or small parties, you may wish to give each player 3 cards for their actor. The attribute points are then sent into each pair at a cost of 1.5 (rounding down) for physical attributes or the IS pair, or a cost of 3 for the TF pair. For instance, raising SE to 4 would cost 6 points. Raising SE to 3 would cost 4 points. Raising IS to 4 would also cost 6 points, though raising TF to 4 would cost 12 points. This is to prohibit magic use. At least one point must be bought in everything but the TF pair.

Optional: Actors may be set up to use 12 or 18 points, without drawing at all.

Optional: For having a detailed (as determined by referee) backstory, the actor may have 3 additional points.

Each point taken in a pair is used to buy 2 levels of an attribute. They need not be distributed equally, though there must be at least 1 point in every attribute not in the TF pair.

Example actor-

As an example, I am creating Inem. Because I am using him as a solo adventurer I draw 3 cards. Being lucky today, I receive a 10, 9, and 8 (all from diamonds, coincidentally). This gives me 27 points for Inem. Since I have a backstory (see small text below) for Inem that explains his place in the world, I gain 3 points, for a total of 30. These points can be saved for later to buy additional skills or TF abilities.

A career soldier, Inem was raised by a blacksmith in a small town on the outskirts of Telgrathia. Here he learned his trade. He would fight with the other local boys, partly due to being unliked, but partly due to a competitive spirit. At the age of fourteen, he was selected by a local warlord to become a soldier. He quickly rose through the ranks, despite being uncomfortable with some of his duties. At the same time, his mother, a local priestess to Alethia, planted the seeds of later religious devotion in him.

He had formal training in the warlord's keep. He was trained in lore of all sorts, many tongues, athletics, and prepared for the noble court. He was destined to be either an infiltrator or an officer, but the tides of war swept over him before he was able to be trained in all but the most basic fighting.

Inem would march to war towards the end of the Warring Age of Telgrathia, when King Kelak was just beginning his march. His actions would shape the world on a large scale. He never saw combat on the front lines, however, being chosen for officer standing before his forces ever saw real battle, on account of his dependability, loyalty, and skill.

At a small village now forgotten by history, he was the commander of a force of men. They overcame Kelak's men, and burned and looted the village. Inem ordered the killing of civilians to send a message to Kelak, after receiving a message from the warlord he served that there were to be no survivors. He surveyed the destruction and desolation afterwards, and was filled with regret.

In a following battle, Inem watched his home fall to the forces of Kelak, and receive the same treatment that he had ordered. He was captured by forces of Kelak, and branded on the chest, then he taken to a cell. Motivated by a vision of Alethia, he found a gap in the cell's wall and escaped stealthily from the keep. To this day, a bounty stands on his head to be claimed by any who find him.

After his escape, Inem fled Telgrathia, but visions of Alethia prompted him to return to do penance. Since then, he has searched for any survivors of his orders, helping them financially and socially to the full extent of his abilities, while bringing to justice any of his peers (no small feat for one who is himself hunted). Many of them are powerful mages who have yet to be found.

I devote 18 of these points to Inem's SE, DA, and IS pairs equally, and 9 to the TF pair. Since I want him to be well rounded, I let all the abilities be equal, except for the TF pair, where has only Force (but 6! points of it). There are 3 remaining points. I save them to buy Inem some Force abilities.

As you can see, creating a actor is relatively simple, but a backstory can be intriguing and interesting, providing motivation for an actor.

Skills-

Skills provide a useful function, they negate penalties for drawing too high. Each point of a skill lowers the bust penalty by 2 points (so drawing 22 in an area with 1 skill would translate to 21, or 23 to 19, while normally it would be 19 or 17 respectively). They generally will not protect from dramatic overdrawing (winding up drawing 35 would still be a death blow to all but the most skilled), but will provide a safety net for actors who want to play it safe and still get high draws. Skills depend on certain attributes for their use, which determines how many cards may be drawn. Skills may use either an attribute pair (take the average of both attributes) or both attributes. Some pair-use attributes may be limited. This means that the maximum number of cards drawn is equal to that attribute (though having extreme imbalances the other way will hurt as well)

What follows are some basic skills, separated into pairs by use, though this is by no means a complete list:

SE Pair Skills-

Lifting (SE-limited by Strength) - The ability to hold and move heavy objects without hurting oneself. For just lifting off the ground for a few seconds, use Strength, not the SE pair. Each point is worth 40 pounds, and each point of SE (limited by Strength) adds 40 pounds. A draw is required for every ten pounds over capacity and each minute the object is held, but can be overridden by taking damage equal to the number of draws required.

Throwing (Strength) - The usage of throwing weapons. Failure of this means weapon falls short. This is only used when distance is in question, otherwise Light Weapons is used.

Large Weapons (Strength) - The usage of large, heavy weapons, including longwords. Unlike Heavy Throwing, this skill is never used in a complement

Long Distance Running (Endurance) - This skill permits the user to travel long distances at an optimal speed. A failure would indicate that optimal speed was not reached, generally by a 10% addition per point failed.

Carrying (SE- limited by Endurance) - This skill is used for determining weight capacity. It is rarely used in situations requiring a draw, but each point is worth 10 pounds, and each point of SE (limited by Endurance) adds 20 pounds. This is for long-distances, for shorter stretches (a few minutes), lifting may be substituted.

DA Pair Skills-

Acrobatics (Agility) - This is the ability to move gracefully in any situation, used to fall long distances (add 3 to difficulty for every 5 feet to avoid damage) or avoid traps after they've triggered. May also be used to dodge certain ranged attacks automatically by an unarmored actor, or dodge any attack, if he is using martial arts.

Dodge (Agility) - This ability allows actors to spend a turn of combat to avoid a blow.

Lockpick (Dexterity) - This ability permits the user to open locks.

Climb (DA, limited by Dexterity) - Climbing is the art of scaling a surface and holding on.

Thievery (Dexterity) - Thievery is the combined skill check for pickpocketing, sneaking, and hiding.

Small Weapons (Dexterity) - Small weapons are generally objects like daggers used to stealthily attack or find weak spots for a kill. It is also used for throwing smaller objects.

Martial Arts (Agility) - Whether wrestling or fighting with Oriental-style martial arts, Martial Arts is the skill for fighting unarmed (or with improvised weapons, in the case of brawlers).

IS Pair Skills-

Lore (Intelligence) - Lore is a measure of knowledge of politics and stories, history, and other collected human knowledge.

Arcana (Intelligence) - Arcana is the skill of identification of all Trinh or Force powers. This is only really useful for mundanes who wish to be able to identify arcane activity, or for Hermetics.

Repair (Intelligence) - Repair is used to build or repair objects, which are generally pretty simple in the feudal state of Telgrathia.

Relic Repair (Intelligence) - Relic repair is used to repair more advanced objects as would be found in Badlands ruins. It does not reflect the ability to build or repair more mundane objects, as it is more focused on the fine parts found in relics.

Investigation (Sense) - Investigation is used to find clues or hints that something is out of place, whether in another's behavior or a hidden trap.

Notice (Sense) - Notice is used to hear or see something that is being concealed.

TF Pair Skills-

NOTE: the TF Pair is innately different, as are the skills dependent upon it. They are handled as a threshold for certain actions, and every point combined over that threshold counts as one skill point for any required draws. These skills are not mutually exclusive, as many can be picked as are desired, though this will hinder development.

Hermetics (Trinh) - Hermetics use pre-determined formulae to harness their powers. Each level of Hermetics unlocks the potential for new formulae to be accessed. It is more well-rounded.

Thaumaturgy (Trinh) - Thaumaturgic powers are determined on the fly by drawing from Trinh. A thaumaturge tries to select a number of different elements to unleash energies upon opponents. It is heavily offensive, though it can be used for tactical defenses.

Healing (Trinh) - Healing is a school of magic oriented on healing or enhancing abilities. It is used by many clergy, and healers are found all over, whether in military service or working for villages.

Way of the Eagle (Force) - The Way of the Eagle is a school of martial arts based upon channeling personal energy to avoid the blows of an opponent and return with much more accurate blows.

Way of the Bear (Force) - The Way of the Bear is a school of martial arts focused on dealing maximum damage to an opponent, using inner energy to empower strikes. It is also focused on shrugging off damage, rather than avoiding it outright.

Determining Player Skills-

Each player actor gets IS*5 skill points, regardless of which area the skills they desire lay in. Actors get an additional 5 each for small-party or solo play and having a background story. They also get skill points equal to their TF rating for Trinh or Force based skills only.

It comes time for Inem to chose his skills. He is going to be used for solo play, and has an IS rating of 4. As thus, he winds up with 30 skill points for all skills, and with his TF rating of 3, he gets 3 points for TF skills.

With 30 skill points to distribute among his non-TF skills, he chooses to acquire 3 points of Carrying, 3 of Acrobatics, 3 of Heavy Weapons because of his background, 5 of Martial Arts, 3 of Dodge, 3 of Climb, 3 of Thievery, 3 of Lore, and 3 of Notice, and 3 of Arcana. He spends his 4 points for TF skills [one from his non-TF skills, which he spent 29 on] on 3 levels in the Way of the Eagle and 1 in the Way of the Bear.

Inem is now through with attribute and skill selections. It is now time to move on to his Character Points.

Character Points-

Character points are used to acquire a +1/point bonus to certain actions' results (generally in the same manner as skills). They can be acquired in certain ways, but at the start each actor has 5. They represent a combination of experience, wealth, and adventuring. For instance, a weapon or special martial arts training might give a +1 bonus to damage or to hit, but not both. A lockpick set would give +1/2 to lockpicking, while a skeleton key might give as much as +4. Ultimately, the flavor is not important, though it is useful for determining how narrative flows, though all things modifying TF require double points to buy. Damage reduction can be bought for 2 points per level, and always is armor. (3 points for non-armor damage reduction, which is more compatible with certain Force techniques).

Example Actor-

With his character points, Inem buys a special martial arts style that provides +1 to hit and damage (for 2 points) in Martial Arts based combat. He buys a +1 to acrobatics with a magical talisman, and a +1 to his Way of the Eagle skill through a set of magical inscriptions on his back (also 2 points).

Money in Telgrathia-

In Telgrathia, the standard measure of currency is 1 copper piece. Kelak, upon taking rule, minted coins named after himself, each worth 1000 copper pieces, but made out of metal from outside Telgrathia, which he had imported. Other currencies are available, but frowned upon for various reasons, among them being a tradition of most other types of metal used in coins being associated with certain dynasties. As a general rule, money is not used for anything beneficial to actors, though basic items may be acquired through it, like weapons. Each actor gets 5 Kelaks upon creation, and a high quality (no penalty) weapon costs 1 Kelak. 25 throwing weapons of similarly high quality cost 1 Kelak. Remember that things get lost, so it is often beneficial to carry backups. Room and board costs about 50 coppers/night on average. A standard adventurer's kit containing a torch, rope, pack, and various gear costs 3 Kelak.

Combat-

Combat in Telgrathia is meant to be conducted in as few rounds as possible. The goal is to hit the opponent. Actors draw based on one of their weapon skills. The draw result needed to hit is determined by two different methods. Either the goal is fourteen plus the Agility of the target, or the draw result of the opponent's Dodge or Acrobatics skill (if he is unarmored) plus seven. A bonus is added for each point of Dexterity for the attacker, or Agility for Martial Arts. Attacks deal damage equal to the strength of the attacker (or dexterity for ranged attacks and some martial arts), while an attacker can take 5 times his endurance worth of damage before being knocked out, and 6 times that before dying (though outside of combat, finishing off an unconscious foe requires no attack, just a conscious effort). Not all blows can kill, blunt weapons and martial arts may knock an actor into a coma which he will die from shortly.

Example- Inem is fighting a thug, who has a strength of 3, endurance of 1 (common for foes meant to be filler in an adventure), agility and dexterity of 2, and a nasty club. He uses his martial arts (he is unarmed), and draws 3 cards, for a result of 26. He has a 5 for martial arts, meaning he winds up with an effective 21, until his bonus of +1 to hit is applied. His foe dodges, but lacks any dodge skill or acrobatics. He draws two cards. His draw of nine adds to seven, giving him a result of 16. It is time to check his condition. He can take 6 points of damage, 5 before becoming unconscious. Inem has 4 strength, but a +1 bonus to damage. The thug is knocked unconscious. Inem is victorious, and the thug is humiliated.

Groups can be fought as one foe by adding any skills or attributes together, or fought separately. If a foe is in a group, you may add the attributes of all together, then multiply the health by five-sixths.

Actors in combat move by order of player actors first, then non-player actors. Oldest players move first.

Trinh Magic-

Trinh magic is divided into three schools. There is a hermetic school which is based on learning, a thaumaturgic school based on emotion, and a healing school which is based on a mix of both. All schools are different in terms of how they function, but all draw from Trinh energy, which is accrued at a rate of 5 per day per point of Trinh attribute, though it is limited to an amount equal to 10 times the Trinh attribute of an actor.

Hermetic Magic-

Hermetic magic is based upon formulas memorized and focused on. It requires a certain amount of Intelligence to perform, but permits consistent results and is used by many famous nobles, generals, and scientists (or what settles for them in Telgrathia), as well as scholars. Example formulae will come later. A draw is required to use hermetic magic, if it fails, nothing happens (no Trinh energy loss, no effect).

Thaumaturgic Magic-

Thaumaturgic magic is composed of elements. Each level of skill taken in Thaumaturgic magic adds one element, and all thaumaturgic magic gets one element free. Elements are divided into three categories: agent and area; then effect. All thaumaturgic magic takes an agent and area, while different effects or additional agents or area are permitted by increased skill (Assume an ace for effect). All elemental selections are determined by a draw of card, though spending a potential element for the spell can allow a thaumaturge to select the result. Each element added (or element selection spent to allow a thaumaturge to select a result) costs 1 Trinh point.

Healing Magic-

Healing magic is very similar to Hermetic Magic in that it has the same basic principle, but it is focused on Sense as a requirement. It does have inconsistent numerical results for each different technique, but each technique will have the same qualitative result each time. (Healing magic will always heal, strengthen, or drain, but it can be adjusted to lesser strength or be lowered by restrictions)

Sample Hermetic Formulae-

Firebolt- Costs 1 Trinh energy, requires 2 Intelligence. The firebolt is a simple fire-based formula that is used for a variety of purposes. It will create fire reliably on impact, travels up to 20 feet, and will deal 2 points of damage to a living creature, or 4 to anything wooden or plantlike. A draw of 10 using Arcana or Hermetic Magic as a skill is required to cast.

Fireball- Costs 2 Trinh energy, requires 3 Intelligence. Fireball is a more advanced fire formula, which is primarily used in combat (though it has some uses, such as at festivals, it is not an everyman's formula). It can travel 20 feet, but it will also hit a whole group for 3 points of damage each (up to 3) or 5 points of damage to an individual (if only one individual is attacked). A draw of 16 using Arcana or Hermetic Magic as a skill is required to cast. Anything flammable is incinerated by a direct hit, except for large objects, which take 10 damage.

Firewall- Costs 1 Trinh energy, requires 3 Intelligence. Firewall is a formula based on defense. Should the target be attacked while he has firewall cast upon him, the attacker will take 1 point of damage from fire. Each combat round draws 1 Trinh point to maintain the shield. A draw of 10 using Arcana or Hermetic Magic as a skill is required to cast, but not maintain.

Doom- Costs 1 Trinh energy, requires 2 Intelligence. Doom reduces all draw results of a target by 1 for three draws. A draw of 14 using Arcana or Hermetic Magic is required to cast Doom.

Thaumaturgic Elements-

Each element is based upon a draw of one card. Suit does not matter. Notice that there are multiple effect elements, this is for targeting an ally or enemy. The effect is chosen before choosing area, though, so it may be possible to heal a foe. Notice that health is not effected by duration. If it is removed, it's gone for good (until it is recovered). A duration means that the number removed is multiplied. Attributes cannot be lowered past 1. Notice that adding is temporary but unlimited, restoring will restore to the original number from damage.

Standard Agent Results:

Ace- Health

2- Strength Attribute (or related skill)

3- Endurance Attribute (or related skill)

4- Dexterity Attribute (or related skill)

5- Agility Attribute (or related skill)

6- Intelligence Attribute (or related skill)

7- Sense Attribute (or related skill)

8- Health

9- Health

10- Health

Jack- SE Attribute (Chosen, or related skill)

Queen- DA Attribute (Chosen, or related skill)

King- IS Attribute (Chosen, or related skill)

Negative Effect Results:

Ace- remove 1 point, 1 round

2- remove 2 points, 1 round

3- remove 3 points, 1 round

4- remove 1 points, 2 rounds

5- remove 2 points, 2 rounds

6- remove 3 points, 2 rounds

7- remove 1 points, 3 rounds

8- remove 2 points, 3 rounds

9- remove 3 points, 3 rounds

10- remove 5 points, 1 round

Jack- No effect

Queen- No effect

King- No effect

Standard Area Results:

Ace- Self

2- Self

3- Self

4- Target (Chosen) [1, must be aware of target]

5- Target (Chosen) [1, must be aware of target]

6- Target (Chosen) [1, must be aware of target]

7- Target (Chosen) [1, must be aware of target]

8- Area (Hostile) [Up to 3, must be aware]

9- Area (Hostile) [Up to 3, must be aware]

10- Area (Friendly) [Up to 3, must be aware]

Jack- Choice (Ace-4)

Queen- Choice (5-7)

King- Choice (8-10)

Positive Effect Results:

Ace- add 1 point (1 Trinh Point/Round to keep)

2- add 2 points (1 Trinh Point/Round to keep)

3- add 3 points (1 Trinh Point/Round to keep)

4- add 4 points (1 Trinh Point/Round to keep)

5- add 5 points (1 Trinh Point/Round to keep)

6- restore 1 points

7- restore 2 points

8- restore 3 points

9- restore 4 points

10- restore 5 points

Jack- No effect

Queen- No effect

King- No effect

NOTE: These are all first edition numbers, so it may be necessary to beat them up a little 'till they work. Also, thaumaturgy is intentionally massively random. It may do one thing very heavily in a short burst, or it may slowly simmer over a time, or some mix of the two.

Healer Incantations-

Restoration- Permits a healer to restore health to actors equal to the number of hours they rest. If the healer is resting at the same time, he may do this for a number of actors equal to his Trinh attribute for free, if he is not resting, or if he exceeds this limit, he must pay 1 Trinh energy per hour the incantation is sustained. The actors must remain within a reasonable (25 meter) distance at all times.

Patch- Patch is an urgent healing incantation. Draw a card and divide the result by three (rounding up, face cards counting as 10). This number is restored to one actor's attribute if it has been damaged by an attack or magic, or to health, at the healer's decision. If a king is drawn, another card may be drawn and its result is then treated like the first card. This incantation costs 2 Trinh points.

Mend- Mend is a miracle working incantation. At any time, a healer can heal 10 damage plus the result of a draw, to health of himself or a target only. Mend costs 5 Trinh points to invoke.

Paths of Force-

Force is a mix of sheer will and mystical energy that combine to permit a person to commit ordinarily mundane seeming actions in a superhuman capacity (for instance, lifting a large stone slab). While this would normally be too difficult, it is easy for a follower of the Paths of Force. For every other point assigned to the Force Attribute (staged up at 1, 3, 5, etc.), a follower of the Paths of Force gains 1 point of Force Power, which he can use to sustain abilities. Force Power points do not expire, they are used or not used depending on which Force Maneuvers are active. Maneuvers may be activated or deactivated at any time with no cost.

Way of the Eagle-

The Way of the Eagle is focused on being impossible to hit in combat, and delivering blows to an opponent's weak spots. It is an unarmed, unarmored martial-arts focused path exclusively, though some abilities are usable at all times (or whenever unarmored, depending on maneuver). It relies more on boosting skill and harnessing magic than physical force, and is the only path to have obviously arcane outpourings. Each point in the skill permits 1 Force Point worth of abilities to be active.

Way of the Bear-

The Way of the Bear is focused on dealing a lot of damage and absorbing it like a sponge in return. It relies more on interior physical augmentation, not functioning in any blatantly supernatural manners. Followers of the Way of the Bear tend to be like berserkers, taking and dealing heavy blows and relying on inner strength to carry them through battles. Each point in this skill permits 1 Force Point worth of abilities to be activated. However, it is also used to be fierce and ferocious, some of its applications are used to help the user get into fights in one piece.

Sample Way of the Eagle Maneuvers-

Ghostfist- Ghostfist allows a Way of the Eagle combatant to resist any damage that he would take for hitting something (or being hit on his hands). It works by turning his actual hands incorporeal, and generating a field of energy to take the blow. It costs 1 Force Power point to use. It is worthless for armed combatants.

Guided Blow- Guided blow permits a Way of the Eagle combatant to add the equivalent of 1 point to his weapon skill for each force point he invests in it. It does work with all weapons, though heavy armor would restrict the movement.

Eagle's Feathers- Eagle's Feathers permits a Way of the Eagle trained actor to fall safely. One Force Power point will allow him to fall safely, regardless of distance, while two points will allow him to glide down slowly, permitting him to travel a significant distance (about 5 times as far as he falls) and have actions every 5 feet he falls, while out of the reach of some combatants. Practitioners wearing armor cannot glide.

Eagle's Talons- Eagle's Talons permits a Way of the Eagle combatant to add one damage point to his blows for every two points of Force Power he spends. This damage does not have to be lethal, but it defaults to lethal, and the two may be switched between at will.

Sample Way of the Bear Maneuvers-

Thick Hide- Thick Hide negates 1 point of damage for every two points put into it.

Bear's Strength- For each point of Force Power, Bear's Strength increases combat damage by 1 (though it will not change the type of damage dealt).

Bear's Fury- This is a dangerous ability. For 2 points of Force Power, it will grant the combatant a bonus of 2 points with his weapon skill, and 2 points of damage, but it must be used for a whole combat, and each turn the combatant loses five health (which can be reduced by Thick Hide). The combatant will not fall unconscious, but will die, and can die from the effects of Bear's Fury.

Hunt- For one point of Force Power spent, the actor using the Hunt ability is capable of remaining undetected by animals. For two points, he will remain undetected by a particular person, and for three points, he can remain undetected by up to four people, until such a time as he directly approaches or attacks them.

Guide to Playing Telgrathia-

Telgrathia is meant to be simple, and for the sake of convenience I left out a lot during the rules. These are continued here. These include example difficulties, more solid health details, exact Character Point costs for a lot of things, et cetera. Let the clarification begin!

Example difficulties:

| | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 3 | Menial; standing, walking, et cetera; Should be impossible to fail except via extreme repetition or other penalties. | 15 | Very Hard; keeping up with a school bus as it drives away, resisting a phobia, painting with rollers without getting any on yourself; needs training and skill. |
| 6 | Simple; opening a tight lid, tying shoes, climbing a ladder; may require training or practice, but not difficult | 18 | Near Impossible: Dodging a bullet a split second before it is fired, composing like Mozart with no inspiration; possible with training, skill, and luck. |
| 9 | Doable; carrying a fair weight, pouring between things, typing a sentence with eyes closed (for a familiar non-touch typist), requires practice | 21 | Impossible; Reach a shelf three feet higher than you and remove something without climbing on anything (for people who can't jump very well); requires training, skill, and divine aid |
| 12 | Hard; playing unfamiliar music by ear, performing surgery, giving a lengthy speech from memory, improvising a leak-proof roof in a forest; possible, but not for a novice. | | |

These example difficulties are not really set in stone, but they provide a stepping stone for getting started. Notice that this is actually easier in Telgrathia than it would be in real life (to some degrees, Very Hard things might actually be disadvantaged); Telgrathia is a more cinematic than realistic setting. It's meant to be a fun game.

Healing-

Health was only very briefly discussed in the core rules. To calculate health, take endurance times six. If at any time, the current health falls to or below one-sixth of the maximum, the actor falls unconscious. So, for example, Inem has 24 health with an consciousness threshold of 20, on account of his Endurance of 4.

Healing is handled two ways- during an adventure, every eight hours of peace heals up to half of the maximum immediately, and for every successive eight hours, five points are gained. If the actor's health is just under half, five points may be gained instead. Alternatively, at the end of an adventure, any actor's health is immediately regained, unless there is a reason for it not to be restored.

Character Points Clarified-

Here are some sample ways to spend character points, and their cost. Notice that some benefits come from items. Should the item be lost or broken, it can be replaced at the end of an adventure or at a time at the adventure/game master's discretion.

| | |
|---|--|
| Equiv. 1 level of skill- 1 Character Point (Gear or training) | +1 damage/to hit on combat draws (universal)- 1 Character Point |
| Equiv. 1 level of (non-magical) attribute- 3 Character Points (for full effect) | 1 point damage reduction- 2/3, depending on whether or not bonus comes from armor† |
| Equiv. 1 level of magical attribute- 4 Character Point (for full effect) | Secure hideout (criteria to enter for foes) |
| +1 damage (not universal)*- 1 Character Point | 1 point- Requires Investigation draw (15) |
| +1 to hit on combat draws (not universal)- 1 Character Point | 2 points- <u>Only</u> the actor and his guests can enter |
| | Gain a card to draw for any specific attribute- 1 Character Point |

* The difference between universal and non-universal is quite simply the difference of whether or not it effects all combat skills, or just one. This is because actors may be forced to fight in one style or another for optimal results. For weapon skills, this may take the form of a specific weapon, or it may be a style. Universal benefits are always styles or blessings.

† Armor can be lost during an adventure (by imprisonment, for example), and may restrict certain skills (acrobatics). If the benefit comes from clothing-like armor, it costs 3 points.

Earning Character Points-

Character points are rewarded for a number of reasons. The players may have completed an adventure or committed some heroic deed. Alternatively, they could have roleplayed well. As a general rule, be stingy rather than generous, giving one or two character points. If the characters have a good reason to come across a magical item, though, allow them to roleplay it, customizing their character and being rewarded without requiring a separate break for players to do bookkeeping outside the normal necessity. For instance, for the following adventure, I'd give no more than 1 character point, unless the players really engaged, because it's simple, linear, and pretty much all fighting.

Troubles at Westernthane-

Troubles at Westernthane is a short starter adventure made to provide a basis for a further knowledge of the Telgrathia universe and rules. There is a referee's edition and a player's edition, written so that a solo player does not need to worry about the things a referee would. The Player's Edition will have some content removed to make the adventure play more like a game-book would. It's more combat centered, since the goal of role-playing in a group is to meet people and discover them, and the goal of role-playing solo is generally to have fun. And because it's hard to say to an individual "If you draw 15 or more, you discover that the enemies are outside. If not, too bad!", because it ruins the feel and suspense.

Referee's Edition

Notice: This adventure can be run in a variety of ways, but I recommend playing up the horror aspect, and potentially not mentioning that Othanyae and his constructs are machines, just dropping subtle hints, to increase the terror of the players.

The players' (or player's) actor(s) are at the Inn at Wayside, a small inn located in Telgrathia's Westernthane province, having been summoned by a mysterious benefactor. Upon reaching the inn they are told that their benefactor should arrive in the morning. They are invited to stay in the common room, though they may stay in a private room for some coppers, if they wish to do so. The inn is divided into three parts, a main entrance hall, with tables and a bar, a common room, and a hallway lined with private rooms. The private rooms are small but clean, and although they appear to have been gathering dust, the beds have been made recently. There is nobody but the innkeeper, who won't talk very much. If one were to examine him from behind, he has a small tattoo on his back. A Lore draw against 15 will reveal that the emblem belongs to a small, but dangerous cult. If asked about the state of the inn, he will comment on how a bad reputation has been scaring away visitors. If pestered further, he will talk about how people have been disappearing from a nearby village.

If at this point, the players try to leave, the doors will be barred, from the outside. Should they try to confront the innkeeper, the entire inn will fill with a fog, and he will disappear in the frenzy. Should they go to their rooms and rest, this step will be skipped. A grinding noise roars through the building and a sense of vertigo fills the adventurers, the building seems to be moving downwards underground, as if on a giant, crude elevator. After a few minutes, the building will stop descending, and will land upon a floor with a thud. A noise comes from the entrance of the inn. A Notice draw of 15 will reveal that someone has opened a door.

The door opens to a gigantic cavern. From above, starlight shines into the labyrinth, pools of stagnant water and moist stalactites and stalagmites reflect light deeper into the cave. Various varieties of fluorescent creatures light up the environment so that several human forms can clearly be seen fleeing rapidly away from the door which their master made them open. They are not human, but not beast, they are something else, pawns of a dark master. A successful Lore (18) draw will reveal the knowledge that these creatures are gremlins, summoned by a cult leader to do his bidding.

Should the players pursue the gremlins, they will find themselves deep in the cave, with an ominous drumming sound all around them. They have been surrounded by cultists, and trapped in a field of energy. Should they remain at the inn, a similar result happens, though the drumming will become apparent after the energy field, whereas in the cave the effects are simultaneous.

Five cultists attack for each actor the players have. Each cultist has 1 in each nonmagical attribute, and no magical training. They are handled as a group (take the statistics of four added together). They use daggers, and have one point in the applicable skill. Fleeing these foes is impossible. They attack each turn. As a group, they require a draw of 18 to hit, have 20 health, and have a plus four bonus to hit, and deal 4 damage.

There is no way to reason with or evade the cultists, they must be fought. If the cultists are defeated, the players may continue on through the cave. They are drawn by a mysterious force to a dark altar. If not, the cultists leave them alive (with two-sixths of their health left), and take them to their leader, who the players will recognize as the innkeeper.

If the players beat the cultists, he will snarl at them, if not, he will focus his attention on the cultists, praising them for their skill and devotion. Either way, he launches into a monologue.

“The world grows dark. Our great father, Othanyae, has abandoned us. But he comes again, to cleanse our world. Only the faithful will be permitted to live. And, unfortunately, you are not faithful. I will do the will of Othanyae, and purge you!”

As may be anticipated by his speech, he attacks, turning any remaining cultists to dust to power his attacks. He advances menacingly, and the adventurers find themselves trapped by another wall of force.

The innkeeper is an imposing figure. Wearing the robes of a cultist, he looks imposing. He has 36 health, attacks with a skill of 3 with his large axe, and requires a draw of 19 to hit, and is further empowered as if he had the Bear's Fury ability, only without any health loss, as he has drawn power from the cultists. He will fight viciously to the end, whether the players die or he does. All his attributes are at 4, except his endurance, which is at 6.

Should he die, he falls to the ground. He has been hit hard in the chest, and his lungs are damaged. He gasps out a final sentence, before collapsing, and turning into dust.

“Othanyae... will... avenge... me.”

The cavern goes dark. There is a rumbling noise, and the players find themselves falling through smoke and fire. Should one of the players be able to glide, he will notice that he still seems to be falling at the same speed.

After several minutes, and quite a bit of coughing, the players will find themselves in an infernal landscape filled with fire and stone. The thunderous echoes of a massive forge drone on in the distance, masking a more sinister (but quickly easily audible) slithering sound behind the players.

The giant snake is too large to fight, standing two stories tall and taking up the entire width of a fairly large hall. Should the players attempt to fight it, it turns out to be an illusion, there is a small snake emblem surrounded by incoherent characters on a plain wall.

Either way, the players are left with only one path- deeper into a stony labyrinth. Other hazards here, should the players try to say, wade through fire, prove to be less illusionary. This is apparent before they try, so if they really insist, let them get hurt a little, but warn them first.

Eventually, the players make their way out of the labyrinth, into a gigantic chamber, which appears to be empty. However, arcane runes around the chamber begin to glow, and an ethereal form of Othanyae appears, hideous and dark. The door the players entered through closes in the confusion (Notice 14 draw).

“Foolish mortals, you would tread upon my domain? You will feel my wrath.”

Strange wolf-like constructs detach themselves from the walls, where they had been making up the glowing runes. The image of Othanyae fades out, and the wolves attack.

The wolves can take 50 damage, but they're pretty average otherwise. Treat them like they have a two in all statistics, and no skills. They get no bonuses to attack or defense, and always attack, with a draw of 2 cards, and they deal 2 damage.

An inspection of the constructs after they have been defeated shows that they have not been maintained for quite some time, and the natural wear on their exterior shows this. They were obviously not fighting at full capacity.

A door opens on one end of the chamber, but it is not the one the players entered through.

When the players move on into the room, they make out Othanyae in his physical form. The hideous machine clatters towards them, his tentacles no longer lifting him off the floor so much as dragging him. The construct whirs loudly, and it is clear that it has not been maintained much as the other constructs have not. It rears up, but falls to the ground with a final, fatal clattering. Othanyae is dead.

That still leaves the players in the lair, but they will notice stairs that lead out of the lair. They find themselves in the cave system that the inn is in, able to see it clearly in daylight. When they return to the inn, it begins to move upwards, returning them to the surface.

Player's Edition

You have come to the Inn at Wayside, a small inn in Telgrathia's Westernthane provence, in response to a summons from a mysterious benefactor. You are told that the benefactor will arrive in the morning, and are invited to stay in the common room, or, if you wish, you may purchase a private room for a handful of coppers. The common room seems eerily like a crypt, devoid of all activity, and the private rooms, while clean and recently tended to, still have a layer of dust over some of the floors and dressers. The innkeeper, while friendly, does not talk much, and you feel it is best to go to rest. You are awakened by a grinding noise roaring through the building.

Your stomach is on edge, a sense of vertigo fills you. The building seems to be moving downwards, and you are trapped in it! The grinding continues on downwards for several minutes, then stops with a thud. You can hear a door opening from the entrance of the inn.

Rushing out, you find yourself going from the wooden floor of the inn to a to a gigantic cavern. From above, starlight shines into the labyrinth, pools of stagnant water and moist stalactites and stalagmites reflect light deeper into the cave. Various varieties of fluorescent creatures light up the environment so that several human forms can clearly be seen fleeing rapidly away from you. The forms are misshapen, and low.

You chase the gremlins further into the cave, hoping to find their master. You suddenly find yourself surrounded by a light wall of energy, glowing blue in the cave. The sound of drumming fills the caverns. You have a fight on your hands. Cultists surround you, the short blades in their hands glistening from the light of the field. They attack.

The cultists are treated as one individual with 20 health, and a defensive score of 18. They attack with a bonus of 4, and deal four damage with a hit, drawing 3 cards. Continue on after the battle is finished.

If you succeeded in defeating the cultists, you are drawn further into the cave by a mysterious feeling of dread, until you come to a dark altar. Should you have failed, you are delivered by the cultists to their leader. Your health is restored by the strange environment of the cave, and you have two-sixths of it restored by the time you are brought to the leader.

You recognize the rough form of the innkeeper looking at you. He looks at you, and seeing that you are alone, begins to speak.

“The world grows dark. Our great father, Othanyae, has abandoned us. But he comes again, to cleanse our world. Only the faithful will be permitted to live. And, unfortunately, you are not faithful. I will do the will of Othanyae, and purge you!”

The innkeeper attacks, any remaining cultists turning to dust as he draws power from their bodies. A wall of force similar to the one you encountered earlier forms around you, trapping you with your assailant.

The innkeeper is an imposing figure. Wearing the robes of a cultist, he looks imposing. He has 24 health, attacks with a skill of 3 with his large axe, and requires a draw of 17 to hit, and is further empowered as if he had the Bear's Fury ability, only without any health loss, as he has drawn power from the cultists. He will fight viciously until either he or you die. All his attributes are at 4.

Should you be victorious, the innkeeper will fall to the ground and disintegrate into dust. However, before he does so, he gasps out a final sentence, as his lungs begin to fail. If not, you have failed, and you are sacrificed to Othanyae.

“Othanyae... will... avenge... me.”

You find yourself panicked, falling through smoke into darkness. For several seconds, you cannot breathe, then you find yourself in another place, an infernal land of fire and stone.

You hear the thunderous droning of a giant forge, then suddenly, the forge's roar is replaced by a sinister slithering sound behind you. You turn, and see a giant snake, two stories tall, rearing up. It hisses at you, and you decide that discretion is better than valor, fleeing down the hall.

The paved floor below you makes quite a bit of noise as you progress; several of the tiles have come loose from the floor, and clatter noisily into the wall, down the hall, or back into place. Frantically, you run through the maze until you come to a large chamber, which appears to be empty.

Suddenly, arcane runes around the chamber begin to glow, and an ethereal form of Othanyae appears. The form is hideous and looking at it hurts your eyes and head. Yet you are drawn to look at it more. Othanyae speaks, like nothing you have ever heard before, like his voice is coming from within your head.

“Foolish mortal, you dare to tread upon my domain? I will devour your soul.”

The arcane “runes” pop out of the wall in the form of wolf-like constructs. They move as one swarm. They will take 30 damage to kill all of them, but are treated as having no defensive value. They always attack, with a draw of 2 cards, and 2 damage.

After defeating the constructs, it becomes clear that they have not been maintained for quite some time, and despite the lack of apparent external moving parts, they show signs of rust and wear that indicate they were at lowered efficiency.

A door opens at one end of the chamber. Looking around, you realize that the door you originally came through has closed in the confusion. You go into the chamber, preparing for a battle.

You see Othanyae's form in the middle of a large room, and he lumbers towards you. He is dragging himself on the ground with his tentacles, and the sound is grating to your ears. You make out a loud whirring coming from his core, the giant squid-like form is obviously damaged, but he still attempts to attack you. He rears up on his tentacles, for a brief moment becoming something terrible and powerful. Then he collapses to the ground. A loud noise comes from Othanyae, and for a moment he glows brightly through cracks in his armor, but he falls to the ground, defeated. When he hits the ground, his core rolls for a moment; long enough to find a structurally unstable spot in the floor. With a crash, the great monster falls into the crevice. A light comes from below, but when you look down, you cannot discern anything, not even Othanyae's remains, against the glowing field. You decide to leave, and find a ladder that takes you up to the cave system. The inn is sitting there, now wreathed in daylight.

As you enter the inn, it begins to ascend. Your adventure is over.

Sample Play-through: Inem

Inem is my Telgrathia character, and he'll be used to demonstrate some solo gameplay. Notice that these numbers are all truly randomly generated (courtesy of Random.org/Counton.org's random playing card selector).

I made his stats above-average [by legitimate randomness, I swear], but all equal. Here's his abridged character sheet.

-E

Name: Inem

SE: 4(4/4) DA: 4(4/4) IS: 4(4/4) TF: 3(0/6)

Character Point Expenditures:

+1 to hit and damage (each) with Martial Arts (training)

+1 to acrobatics (magical talisman)

+1 to Way of the Eagle skill (magical inscription)

Skills:

Carrying-3

Acrobatics-3

Heavy Weapons-3

Martial Arts-5

Dodge-3

Climb-3

Thievery-3

Lore-3

Notice-3

Arcana-3

Way of Bear-1

Way of the Eagle-3(4)

Money: 5 Kelaks

And with that I'll begin. I'll reference the paragraphs that Inem takes actions from, so I don't have to reprint the whole storyline.

Paragraph 5: Cultists

Inem opens up by choosing Force Abilities to activate. He activates Guided Strike (4 points), and Bear's Strike (1 point). This means that he will deal 6 damage with each hit (4 strength + 1 for character points + 1 for Bear's Strike) He also is capable of ignoring 10 points drawn over 21 and still take 21 (5 skill + 4 Guided Strike +1 for his character points). This way, he can fight all out without worrying too much (This means if he draws 3 cards, he will never go too far over, because 31 is his top safe draw, and he can draw 30 max that way).

He draws a 23 for his first attack, translating it to 21 (players always go first in solo mode), hitting the mob and reducing them to 14 health. They strike back, drawing 3 cards with 4 skill. They get a natural

21, dealing 4 damage to Inem, who now has 22 health remaining. He hits back, drawing his 3 cards to the tune of 12. Not enough to hit the Cultists' static defenses of 18. They swing back, drawing 19. Inem draws Acrobatics + 7 for defense. He gets a natural 21. The cultists don't hit, so the round is a stalemate. Inem goes to hit the cultists again, drawing four cards instead of three this time. He gets 25, which translates to 21. The cultists don't block that, and take another 6 damage, putting them at 8. Inem decides to change from his Way of the Eagle fueled hit bonus to an additional 2 damage (using Eagle's Talons), meaning he'd do 8.

The cultists draw 13. They fail. Inem draws 3 cards with a natural 21. Goodbye, cultists!

Inem has 22 health now. He moves on to confront the innkeeper from paragraph 10.

Inem moves first, and he decides to keep the high-damage loadout. He swings at the innkeeper, drawing 17. He misses. The innkeeper swings back, drawing a 19. Inem draws his acrobatics for defense, drawing 19+7, so he's safe this round. Inem swings back, draws 25, but gets the four overflow reduced, meaning he hits. He does eight damage, putting the innkeeper at 16 health.

The fight continues, the innkeeper draws 15, below Inem's static defense. Inem swings back, but the paltry 8 is too low to count. The innkeeper draws 28. He gets 3 points removed, meaning he gets an end result of 25, or $21 - (4 \times 2)$, which comes to 13. Not enough to scratch anyone's static defenses. The next move goes to Inem, who draws another low number, a 12. The innkeeper has better luck, drawing a 24 (effectively 21). Inem leaps to evade, drawing a 18, which adds to 7. The innkeeper has horrible luck.

Inem gets a 25, equaling 21, reducing the innkeeper to 8 health. The innkeeper frantically hits back, drawing a 18. Inem attempts an acrobatics draw to evade, drawing a 19+7, getting him safely out of the arc of the battleaxe. He returns with a blow that draws 14, slipping past the innkeeper as he swings, the vicious axe failing to connect after a draw of 29 (26 effective; 11 result). Inem comes back with a swing backwards, drawing a 24 (which is reduced to 21), smashing his opponent in the back, shattering his spine. The innkeeper falls to the ground, spitting out incoherent last words.

Inem still has 22 health, and he moves on to confront the constructs from paragraph 18. Inem opens up on them with a flurry of blows, drawing a 16 and smashing the constructs. They still have 22 health, though, and return with biting and clattering. They draw a 19, but Inem evades with an acrobatics draw of $23(=21)+7$. Inem kicks out at them, drawing a 15, further thinning the pack, which now has 14 health.

However, the pack still rages, attacking him with a draw of 18. But Inem dodges again with another draw of $23(=21)+7$, meaning that he remains unhurt by the mechanical beasts. He returns with another blow of his own, $24(=21)+7$. The beasts yet again are beaten back, they now have 6 health remaining, but they muster up force for yet another attack. The 13 is too low to hit, so Inem is safe, while he finishes off the rest of the constructs with an embarrassing, but successful 15.

Telgrathia Character Sheet

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| Name: | | Character Points left: | |
| Character Points total: | | | |
| SE: | DA: | IS: | TF: |
| Gear: | | | |
| Character Point Purchases | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Skills

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Lifting (SE-S) | | Lore (I) | |
| Throwing (S) | | Arcana (I) | |
| Large Weapons (S) | | Repair (I) | |
| Running (E) | | Relic Repair (I) | |
| Carrying (SE-E) | | Investigation (S) | |
| Acrobatics (A) | | Notice (S) | |
| Dodge (A) | | Hermetics (T) | |
| Lockpick (D) | | Thaumaturgy (T) | |
| Climb (DA-D) | | Healing (T) | |
| Thievery (D) | | Way of the Eagle (F) | |
| Small Weapons (D) | | Way of the Bear (F) | |
| Martial Arts (A) | | | |

Story: