

The Hallowed Vales

“Come sit a while by the fire while I tell you a tale...”

There is a world where magic is the tool of the monstrous, and bestial howls ring out through the night and it is known as the Hallowed Vales. What do you do when the fires grow low and the shadows grow long? What do you do when the wind howls and the wolf is at the door? These are more than hypotheticals for those in the Hallowed Vale: they are simply a part of life in the Vales. Monstrous Fabelwessen roam the land, ready to prey upon those who do not keep their wits about them. The human denizens of the Vales cling to their superstitions and scour their lore to show them how to survive in this treacherous world. When you live in a place where monsters roam the night, sometimes the only thing you can arm yourself with is a story and a blade. This is exactly what those in the Vales do. Their traditions and superstitions keep them safe, and should those fail, they put their faith in the power of silver.

The Vales themselves are nestled amidst wild and unforgiving wilderness. To the north lies the verdant expanse of the Furchtwald where the trees grow foreboding and strange. To the south, the jagged peaks of the Gaddartoppe mountain range stretch out until the edges meet when the bounds of the twisted forest begins and the two fully encompass the Vales. The region is limited to the three Vales with their walled cities and surrounding sprawling farmlands. The ruins of what was once the fourth Vale lie at the central point between the three Vales. Its remnants stand silent and entirely overgrown with beautiful but thorned roses.

A story worth the telling...

Long, long, ago when all was wild, and humans spent their nights huddled ‘round the fire, the monstrous ruled over all. Life was short and blood ran freely. Days were short, nights were long, and no one was safe from the horrors that roamed the night. This was a time before the safety of the walled cities, before the tales of survival and cunning that we pass down with each new generation of children, and before we turned to face that which inspires fear in us to this very day. What do you mean you don’t fear monsters? Don’t be stupid, child, fear is what keeps you alive. It’s ok to be afraid so long as you don’t let it stop you from doing the things that need to get done. Now where was I? Ah yes, we were a people ruled by fear, disorganized and hopeless. Then one day they appeared, the first Lords. There were six in total: the Clever Sister, the Blessed Fool, the Noble Smith, the Silent Maiden, the Wise Mother, and the Gallant Huntsman. They taught us how to fight back the monsters and they created the settled regions that would come to be known as the Hallowed Vales.

They ruled over and guided the Vales for a century and a day. It is said that the time during their rule was one of peace and prosperity free from the tyranny of nightmarish monsters. Perhaps, it is because of this extended respite that we began to forget the danger. We stopped telling our stories for fear of scaring our children and our children’s children. We let our guards

down and our weapons grow dull. We stopped believing the monsters were real. No one expected several within Rozenmuur to ally themselves with the Furchtwald. No one expected them to open the doors to the monsters and invite them in. No one expected Rozenmuur to fall.

No survivors were found in the aftermath of the fall, all that remained was blood on the snow of that cold winter morning. The six Lords were found to have vanished with the rising sun, undoubtedly disgusted by the betrayal that had occurred. They taught us everything we knew, showed us how to survive, and we failed them. Now we had to take that knowledge and learn to survive without them. If you're looking for a happy ending child, I cannot give you one. Our story as a people continues to be written so long as a single one of us draws breath. So believe in your stories and silver, dear child, and for one day they might just save your life.

The First Lords of the Vales

Many a generation have passed since the First Lords graced the Vales. All that remains of them are their stories, Vales, and items of power they left behind.

The Noble Smith

The Noble Smith, the First Lord of Zilverenburg, created his Vale at the base of the Gaddar mountain range. Bedecked in a mantle of metal feathers, he was a towering man with a presence to match, and some say his laugh could shake the very mountains. The Noble Smith was the one who introduced the knowledge of shaping metal to Zilverenburg and the rest of the Vales. It is his hammer that is now wielded by every Lord of Zilverenburg after the First Lords disappeared.

The Clever Sister

Sharp of eye and keen of wit, the First Lord of Marchenfell was the Clever Sister. She is said to have always worn a cloak made of one thousand furs and moved about without a sound. She laid Marchenfell so close to the Furchtwald as a taunt to any of the Fabelwessen that might think the Vale an easy target. Any that did generally found themselves on the wrong end of a bladed trap or railcaster shot in short order. The Clever Sister was quite knowledgeable in creating lethal surprises for the monsters that roamed the land and made sure to impart her wisdom of such things upon those that lived in Marchenfell. Each Elde of Marchenfell after her would all wield her railcaster, inlaid with True Silver and a single black jewel, as a symbol of their station.

The Wise Mother

The First Lord of Flussrand was the Wise Mother. Her hair was white as snow and within her gaze she held the wisdom of ages. The Wise Mother always sought to share her knowledge with the people of her Vale, especially the children, for within them is hope unburdened by cynicism. The main way she shared her knowledge was through stories. She recited them,

wrote them down, and collected them so that the people of her Vale might look to them later. Upon her disappearance, stories say that her favorite quill continued to write after she was gone. While most agree this is more tale than true, her book of tales did remain behind and is now left in the possession of each new Lord of Marchenfell for wisdom when they need it most.

The Silent Maiden

Another of the six was The Silent Maiden, the First Lord of Rozenmuur. With a face radiant as the dawn, she was unfailingly kind and beloved of all who met her. It is said that from her footsteps the first roses sprung up and she in turn showed others how to grow and cultivate them so that they too could better protect themselves. Even though she could not speak, she still possessed the ability to communicate with people using gesture and written word. However, far more interesting was her ability to communicate with the local fauna, especially birds, with nary a spoken word. It is unclear if anything was left behind upon the Silent Maiden's disappearance as all that is left of Rozenmuur is a thorny overgrowth of roses.

The Blessed Fool

The most carefree of the First Lords, the Blessed Fool was forever prone to wanderlust. He far preferred a life of traveling the roads testing his luck and whistling a jaunty tune. The Blessed Fool was uninterested in setting up a Vale and ruling over people within it. He instead wanted to create something to let people forget their humdrum everyday lives, even if it's just for a little bit. And so, he created the Thrice-bound Revels, a traveling faire of wondrous and terrifying curiosities that he collected along his travels. The current leader of the Thrice-bound Revels is said to have a lucky coin of the Blessed Fool but the Revels move around so much it is hard to confirm.

The Gallant Huntsman

Much like the Blessed Fool, the Gallant Huntsman did not wish to be bound to a stationary life as a leader of a Vale. Tenacious and strong of arm, every inch of them was clad in vibrant colors as a not so subtle challenge to anything dangerous that might be near. They too took to the road, however, it was not revelry that the Gallant Huntsman sought. Oh no, what they desired was to hunt those that hunt the people of the Vales, and so they did. Occasionally, individuals would travel with them to learn their methods of hunting and then go their own way, putting to use what they learned. Though the Gallant Huntsman was not a part of a Vale when the First Lords vanished, their sword of True Silver has been passed between the most skilled and strongest of those that follow in their path.

The Vales and Beyond

Marchenfell (Mare-tchen-fehl)

The Vale of Marchenfell was founded by the Clever Sister. It is the closest of all the Vales to the Furchtwald with the furthest borders of this Vale only a day's ride from where the

trees grow foreboding and most fear to tread. Such proximity was of course intentional on the part of the Clever Sister as this provided fertile grounds for individuals skilled in combating Fabelwessen through various means. A unique feature of this Vale is the series of three watchtower walls, spaced out next to each other and attached by bridges, that are regularly patrolled by marksmen especially skilled in combating fabelwessen and serve as added lines of defense between the people of the Vale and the Furchtwald. Should a series of watch towers be at risk of being overcome, the marksmen fall back to the next wall. It is no wonder that many skilled hunters and sharp shooting tinkers have come from this Vale. While not everyone finds their calling in the martial aspects of life, one would be hard pressed to find someone from this Vale who did not have at least a little skill in wielding a weapon or setting a trap. Life in this Vale can be particularly dangerous and those living here quickly learn if they are ill suited to this life. Those that are often either leave to settle in one of the other two Vales or find themselves eventually running afoul of one of the Fabelwessen.

The Ruling family of Marchenfell

The ruling family of Marchenfell boasts that they are able to trace their lineage all the way back to the Clever Sister. A claim that is further bolstered by the fact that their Elde wields the Clever Sister's fabled railcaster. This railcaster with its unique design was said to be the bane of any Fabelwessen. It is said that because of their family's lineage, every last member is a superb shot from a young age and puts their skill to good use serving their community either as a dedicated Hunter for Marchenfell or as a marksman in the watchtowers.

Flussrand (floos-rahnd)

To the Southwest of Marchenfell is the Vale of Flussrand, founded by the Wise Mother. The Vale itself was settled along the Lorelei River with the length of it spanning along all but the portion of the river that lies just before the edge of the Furchtwald the breadth of it stretching out to about a day's travel on horseback east from the river's edge. There are many smaller rivers and streams that flow and weave throughout the Vale and can serve as an additional layer of protection against certain dangers posed by the Fabelwessen. While the travel along this river can be dangerous, the denizens of Flussrand have learned to harness the ferocity of the river to power water mills to process their grain. Its walled city was built along the upper part of the Lorelei, where the tempestuous river first emerges from the jagged peaks of the Gaddartoppe mountains. Within this city is the Repository, the scholastic feather in the cap of Flussrand, and is watched over by the ruling family of Flussrand as well as a dedicated team of Talekeepers.

The Ruling Family of Flussrand

The ruling family of Flussrand are said to be descendants of the Wise Mother and are custodians of the sacred Repository of Flussrand, aided by dedicated Talekeepers. It is here that the collected words, tales, schematics, and even songs passed down through the generations are kept and researched by those who seek to uncover new insight, perhaps hidden within an obscure tale, on the Fabelwessen and how best to defeat them and help those that have fallen prey to their terrible magic. Anyone is allowed to research within the Repository so long as they are respectful and do not remove anything they have not copied themselves. It

is not uncommon for Hunters to come here in search of a story that might share information about a particularly vexing Fabelwessen they might be tracking. The Elde of Flussrand maintains a book of tales that once belonged to the Wise Mother herself. This, however, is no ordinary book. It is said that the book does not have a set amount of stories written within it. Instead, it is said that it shows the Elde a story that is presently significant and will linger in the book long enough to be copied down for the records.

Zilverenburg (zihl-vehr-en-berg)

Southeast of Marchenfell, Zilverenburg sits in the shadow of the Gaddartoppe mountains. This Vale was founded by the Noble Smith whose influence can be seen throughout the Vale. Zilverenburg is known for its mining industry and fine craftsmanship. It is due to the prevalence of crafters and materials that every structure is made of stone, except for the windows and doors, with any cracks sealed with metal and mortar. This construction keeps the icy winds that blow in from the Gaddartoppe mountains, and the creatures that ride in along with them, at bay. It is also because of this abundance of resources that the majority of metals, especially silver and True Silver, in the Vales come from here and are shipped to the other Vales through various negotiations and deals. It is said that the Noble Smith had a workshop with notes on smithing and craft that anyone in the Repository would give their eyeteeth for. However, no one can ever agree if the workshop is hidden in the mines or if it is perhaps high atop the tallest peak of the Gaddartoppe mountains. Needless to say, the workshop remains unfound, lost within the confines of tales.

The Ruling Family of Zilverenburg

The ruling family of Zilverenburg is said to have started with the Noble Smith. He showed his descendants the secrets of metal working and they in turn shared these secrets with the Vale. When the Noble Smith disappeared from the Vales, his smithing hammer was left behind and it would go on to be wielded by every Elde of Zilverenburg from then on. This hammer is said to be able to shape exquisite works in one swing and crush skulls in the next.

Rozenmuur (roh-zenh-moo-er)

Once a place of vibrant life, the Vale of the Silent Maiden now lies as silent as its founder. Positioned at the central point between the other three Vales, Rozenmuur now stands as a former shell of itself completely overtaken by the thorny overgrowth of roses. While roses are harvested from here for use in transplantation elsewhere or use in festivals and alchemical concoctions, nothing else seems to be able to grow here. Any attempts to settle in this Vale and rebuild have been met with absolute failure as the roses regrow quickly and overtake and structures that people attempt to construct. Several over time have attempted to live among the roses without any structures and found the terrain inhospitable and the roses, while useful for alchemical concoctions, completely unsuitable for use as food. Those who have traversed this Vale have noted the distinct lack of any wildlife or Fabelwessen within its boundaries and also observed that no matter how dense and wild the roses grow, they never grow beyond the boundaries of the Vale. Interestingly enough, though unfortunately, after the Silent Maiden disappeared, roses from the Vale became unable to grow anywhere else. People from other

Vales frequently come to harvest roses for alchemy and protection and the blooms can survive thirteen days after being cut before withering away. Thankfully, the ever growing vines seem to assure an endless supply if one is careful not to grasp the wrong plant.

The Ruling Family of Rozenmuur

There is no ruling family for the Vale of Rozenmuur as anyone who might have been able to tie their lineage to the Silent Maiden are said to have been wiped out along with the rest of the Vale. Furthermore, an artifact that could have belonged to the Silent Maiden has never been found though there are those that brave the overgrowth of the Vale to try luck and search.

Thrice-Bound Revels

It is well known that four of the First Lords each created a Vale while the Gallant Huntsman chose to remain untethered and alone in their travels. This then begs the question, what of the Blessed Fool? Was there some lost Vale that he founded? The Blessed Fool was never said to be one to follow an easy or logical path and his legacy quite reflects that. He did, in fact, found a fantastical traveling faire known by all as the Thrice-bound Revels. The story goes that he created the Thrice-Bound Revels because he found the idea of being bound to one place dreadfully uninteresting. He could think of nothing worse than an uninteresting life...and what could be more interesting than a faire made up of nothing but Fabelwessen.

The Revels today

Since the disappearance of the Blessed Fool, the Thrice-Bound Revels have been run by a mysterious individual known as the Master of Revels who is said to wear a mirrored mask given to them by the Blessed Fool himself. Additionally, while no one is certain how the Blessed Fool convinced these creatures to even travel with him let alone participate and interact with humans, they still travel with the Revels even after the Blessed Fool disappeared. Regardless, it appears those that travel with the Revels are bound by agreements that force them to behave, mostly, so long as hospitality is observed and the people in the Vale do not ignore them entirely for that is gravely rude. While the Revels absolutely adore children, many people do not bring children until they can be trusted to follow the rules. The individual Fabelwessen might have minor rules for interacting with them but the defined and unchangeable rules human visitors must follow with the Thrice-Bound Revels are:

- 1) Commit no act of aggression within the bounds of the Revels
- 2) Take nothing from the Revels you have not paid for.
- 3) All deals are final and must be honored.

These rules are enforced by the Master of Revels and the Thrice-Bound Revels itself. The Master of Revels also is the individual that directs where the Revels travel to which is especially important because on one night of the year the denizens seem to set down the rules and hospitality and ride through the night as the Infernal Hunt, guided by the Master of Revels.

Furchtwald (furkt-vahld)

Where the trees grow dense and men fear to tread, Hexen gather to perform profane rites while the Infernal Hunt rides through. This is the area known as the Furchtwald. The

Furchtwald is the forest that borders the northern half of the Vales and is home to many Fabelwessen. The trees and plants of this area are markedly strange and threatening, with their coloring being vibrant and strangely hued. Those from the Vales know not to hunt for food in the Furchtwald, despite how plentiful it is, due to the significant danger of entering into the territory of the monsters. This does not mean there have not been individuals desperate enough to try. Some even managed to bring food home, but always at a cost.

The Gaddartoppe Mountains (gad-dahr-tahp) and the Lorelei (lore-reh-lye)

Jutting up like the jagged teeth of a gargantuan beast, the peaks of the Gaddartoppe Mountains strike an impressive and intimidating silhouette against the sky. While many of the Fabelwessen congregate in the Furchtwald, there are some that make their homes in the mountains such as the icy Windsbrauten. Their presence of such vicious creatures along with the incredibly hazardous terrain makes traversing the mountain range a fool's endeavor at best and brutally hazardous at worst as no one who travels far into the mountains is ever seen or heard from again.

The Lorelei is the vast and turbulent river that flows down from Gaddartoppe Mountain, bisecting the range in half, and disappears into the verdant wild of the Furchtwald. On one side of the river lies the Flussrand Vale and on the opposite side stretches the portion of the Gaddartoppe range cut off from the Vales. While no Fabelwessen live within it, the waters are turbulent and dangerous to traverse. It is also because of these turbulent waters that watermills can be found at various points along the Vale side of the river. The waters are harnessed to aid in the production of timber and other things.

Society within the Vales

Denizens of the Hallowed Vales intermingle between cities and farmlands easily, though some might find a small pride in the Vale of their birth. Cultural aspects are spread with traveling merchants and troubadours while those with less wanderlust tend to more domestic pursuits of crafting, fine arts, and farming.

Government

Each Vale has a ruling family who reside in the great manor of the walled city of their Vale. Each family can trace their lineage back to the First Lord of their Vale. The oldest in the family holds the title of Elde (el-deh) and possesses the circlet of silver and artifact of power, that belonged to the First Lord of their Vale, as signs of their station. The surname of the ruling family is based on the Vale that they rule. The families work within their city and Vale, with the Elde being the final judge of any disputes that cannot otherwise be settled.

Life within the Walled City

Within the walled city of each Vale, life is thought to be somewhat safer. The ruling families along with individuals who do not wish to live outside the walls call this area home. It is the main center of commerce and many farmers from outside come to sell the surplus of their harvests within the walls. Furthermore, it is more commonplace for people within the city to wear dark or muted colors rather than blacks or browns because of the added degree of safety.

Life Outside the Walls

Seeing the added safety that the walls provide, one might wonder why anyone would live outside those walls. There is definitely more danger but there are those who are willing to take that risk in return for land to farm as they so choose. Farmstead inns dot the countryside, taking in both Hunters and travelers. Those living outside the walls usually dress in colors that are thought to not draw attention such as black, brown, and gray. Furthermore, people living outside the walls look out for each other, signaling danger to one another with fires and lanterns. Sometimes, if the danger is too great, those living outside the walls will seek refuge within the walls of a city until the danger is passed.

Hunters

Sometimes it is not enough to stay in one's home when danger is about and hope the lock is enough to keep you safe. Sometimes, it is prudent for one to take up arms and turn the predators into prey. It is for this reason that Hunters exist. There is no centralized organization for these Hunters. Some work alone, and others work in small group. Many operate solely out of their own home areas, but some travel about lending their services for pay. One particularly famous group is known as the Hounds, a legendary group of mercenary Hunters. It is said that their group is composed of the best Hunters around. They even lean into this reputation by the attire that they wear. Normally, garb of vibrant colors is liable to be a quick way for a tragic fate, but every member of the Hounds wears bright, garish coloring to signal their fearlessness. It is also said that the leader of the Hounds is the current wielder of the sword of the Gallant Huntsman.

Important Cultural Note

Superstitions

Superstitions and stories are considered incredibly important in the culture of the Vale. Even the keenest and critical scholar of the Vales holds tightly to superstitions. The exceedingly rare individual that does not hold to is viewed as though they are a simple fool or courting death. Those in the Vale observe a variety of superstitions with no two people necessarily holding to the same exact superstitions. However, there are several superstitions that are universally known throughout the entirety of the Vales:

- Wearing red draws the attention of the monsters to you, people with Red hair have a connection to the supernatural and are destined to become one of the Fabelwessen
- Names have power. You have a common name and a hidden name, never reveal your hidden name to anyone that you wouldn't trust with your life. If you can get a monster's True Name then you have power over it.
- Running water guards against magic and Nachtblut
- Trailing stones behind you will always ensure you find your way home
- Roses and silver ward off evil

Festivals & Culture

Food

The people of the Vales obtain much of what they eat from the surrounding farmlands though some living within the walled cities have their own personal gardens to grow things in. Farms provide a variety of grain and produce. A typical meal is very hearty, commonly consisting of meat, bread, a bit of cheese, and some sort of root vegetable. Some people also supplement their diets with fish from the river, foraged plants, and trapped small game such as rabbit.

Marriage and Family

While observed traditions vary depending on where in the Vales you are, marriage is always a joyous celebration for those in the Vales. Arranged marriages do take place among the Vales and are just as common as marriages borne of love. Regardless of how the match came to be, it is always preceded by a period of courtship.

Families in the Vales tend to be on the larger side. However, no one is promised tomorrow, not even children. These families can fluctuate in number of children and parents through unfortunate ends and possible remarriages.

Death

A denizen of the Hallowed Vales can live on average about 70-80 years if nothing kills them first. Dead are buried in barrows (most respectful, able to eternally rest with their loved ones) or burned on a pyre if they cannot be buried within 24 hours. In the meantime, bodies are laid out and a family member or person paid by the family will stand vigil to make sure nothing happens to the body (like take it or possess it or eat it), and that the body doesn't try to rise or worse. Improperly buried bodies could rise as nachtblut or it could be stolen away for fell rituals.

Holidays

There are many holidays surrounding the planting, cultivating, and harvesting of the farmlands. As there are regional variances, each Vale commemorates these on their own schedules. There are two major holidays recognized throughout all Vales.

Festival of Roses

On the longest day of the year there is much drinking and merriment to celebrate the one day the people of the Vales can consider themselves safe while also remembering the lesson of

Rozenmuur and how important it is to never forget danger exists. In preparation for this holiday, each Vale sends out caravans throughout the week leading up to the holiday to harvest roses and vines from Rozenmuur for the festival. Every individual no matter the age dresses in vibrantly hued clothing and masks meant to symbolize a figure from a story, though, red is still not a color that is worn outside of incorporating actual roses. It is common on this day for children and young people to scribe wishes on rose petals and throw them into a nearby river or stream to keep it safe from any Fabelwessen that might bring them ill fate. Babies born on this day are considered lucky. Each Vale also works together to construct a giant figure constructed of roses, vines, and gathered branches to symbolize the Silent Maiden and Rozenmuur. When the sun finally sets and the second star can be seen in the sky the great structure is set ablaze, to symbolize the fall of that Vale, to burn through the night until morning.

Festival of Midwinter

The festival of Midwinter is a feast to celebrate a year in full. One common superstition among children during this time is that those that are wicked get taken by the Infernal Hunt, who are known to roam this night, and those who are good receive a sweet treat placed within a small bowl they lay out by their bed when they go to sleep. Every so often it is said that a particularly exceptional child has been known to receive a coin of True Silver and is said to be destined for a charmed life. However, some think this is a story spread by the adults to get them to behave extra well as no one has heard of anyone receiving a coin within, at least, the most recent generations.

Here there be monsters: the Fabelwessen

Hexen

Magic is the providence of the monstrous, but what happens if a person should truck with the Fabelwessen to learn the vile workings from them? One need not look further than the Hexen. The Hexen are people that have forsaken life in the Vale and live in the Wild among the Fabelwessen. They wear red as a mark of pride and are as lethal to humans as any of the other Fabelwessen.

Nachtblut

There are many reasons why those in the Vale are so fastidious about their burial rites. Perhaps one of the most important reasons is that sometimes a body will disappear and the body will reappear moving about as if the individual had never died. These creatures are known as the Nachtblut. Their visage is the epitome of death and they rise from the dead to drain the blood of the living.

Ulfen

When a howl rings out in the night, those in the Vales know to stay indoors for the Ulfen are about. Ulfen were once human, but no longer. They appear human at some point but have the ability to transform into a monstrous form that turns them into a lethal predator. No one is sure how one becomes one of the Ulfen but it does not appear to be some sickness that one can catch from a bite or scratch. If that were the case, there would be even more Ulfen than there already are.

Marchen

There are creatures that have divested themselves of the vestiges of humanity, and then there are those that never had them to begin with. They look human...until you look in their eyes, Their strange, unsettling eyes are the one thing they can never disguise. Such are the ways of the beguiling terrors known as Marchen. Dealmakers on their best days and predators on their worst, they are teachers of magic and it is they who rule the Furchtwald. No two seem to be the same in appearance or ability but they are all said to be unable to lie. It is also said that Marchen have the ability to sense a person's willingness to make a deal. Perhaps it is a person's desperation, greed, or something else that draws them, but whatever it is, it draws them to a likely target to draw them away into the forest or make a deal they can't refuse.

Windsbrauten

Ill winds blow down from the mountains and on them ride the Windsbrauten. Said to be formed from the very winds they travel upon, they've an icy bite and chilling claws. Tales of them warn to lock the doors when they're about, for they steal the breath of poor souls caught unawares. The mountains are thought to be their natural habitat which in turn increases the danger surrounding exploring the Gaddartoppe mountain range.

Valserozen

The Vale of Rozenmuur is known to be entirely encompassed in the tangle of rose vines. However, within the last generation or two, whispers have been spreading about something else starting to take root in that Vale among the roses of Rozenmuur. The invasive plant is called Valserozen and is said to prey upon those that might come to harvest roses from the area. The plant mimics the beneficial flowers though, there is a distinguishing feature. Unlike them, Valserozen have many sharp thorns that secrete a poisonous sap that induces a deep slumber in anyone that is unfortunate enough to get it into their system. Should anyone fall victim to this poison, the vines of the Valserozen plant will curl around them and drain the victim of all blood unless someone intervenes. As of right now, it remains within the confines of that Vale but who knows what could happen should it ever grow beyond Rozenmuur.

An Out of Play Discussion of the New Packet

Clothing

Those living in the Hallowed Vales generally wear clothing in muted, darker colors, or black made from either fabric or leather. People in the farmlands surrounding the walled cities tend to dress in simple variations of tunics, pants, dresses, and/or skirts. Those living in the walled cities are more likely to wear finer, more elaborate clothing. Red is a taboo color and wearing it is considered to draw the gaze of the supernatural (people with red hair are viewed with suspicion). Clothing worn is from the European Dark Ages to Renaissance periods in cottons and linens. Laces and buttons are appropriate, as are hooks, clasps, ribbons, and leather accessories.

All denizens of the Hallowed Vales wear silver as part of their superstitions, unless they have a very good reason. Silver jewelry is prevalent as silver is said to ward off monsters and everyone wears at least a necklace with a small silver pendant. This does not need to be real silver. Silver metallic coloring is fine. In general, this can take the form of jewelry, clasps, armor, and other trinkets. It does not need to be tagged.

Makeup requirements

None

Advantages:

Denizens of the Vales have a 5 CP discount on purchasing the first level of the following skills:

Scholarship: Stories and the knowledge they hold are pivotal to life in the Vales and there is an abundance of both for any who seek out stories for a variety of scholastic endeavors. It is common for anyone from the Vales to educate themselves on the stories of their world regardless of if they wish to dedicate their life to such pursuits.

Tinkering: Magic belongs to the monsters, but that does not mean humans are without their ingenuity. The Clever Sister passed on her knowledge of gadgets and traps and many in the Vales prove themselves formidable students of her legacy.

Sword: With Fabelwessen roaming about, people learn from the example of the Gallant Hunter and take up the sword to protect their homes. Some only learn enough to defend themselves in an emergency while others embrace the dangerous opportunity of their world to become Hunters and perhaps even become as skilled as their gallant predecessor.

Advanced Fighting Style: Vicious Marksman: So long as they have a teacher and the required Tinkering 6, those from the Vale may purchase the first level of Vicious Marksman for 15 CP.

Names and Fashion

Names are important to those of the Vales, as there is the common belief that names hold power and if you know something or someone's entire name, then you have power over them. As such, every child born from the Vale is given a name they go by, and a hidden name that they do not disclose to anyone but those they trust, by their parents. For instance, a child could go by the name Helga and have Gretchen as their hidden name.

Examples:

Masculine: Olaf, Sigmund, Wolfram, Bertrand, Albrecht, Friedrich, Johann, Magnus, Donar, Niklaus

Feminine: Rosamund, Heidi, Saskia, Anneliese, Gisele, Lotte, Mathilda, Adelheid, Olga, Brigitta

Five things every player knows:

Every person knows...

Every story has a grain of truth in it, even if it's just that the storyteller is a liar...

Many stories, even children's tales, that have been collected over time contain a wealth of knowledge about how to handle the dangers of the outside world. That knowledge can often be oblique but much can be learned if one is clever enough.

Where you hail from...

Regardless of if one lives a stationary life in a Vale or lives the wandering life of a Hunter, everyone knows the importance and stability of home and the story a family writes with each new generation.

Magic belongs to the monsters...

To wield the vile magics is to be marked by the forest and turn away from humanity. Magic is never trusted among the human populace of the Vales.

Superstitions keep you safe ...

There are so many superstitions passed through the generations that it can be difficult sometimes to know which ones work and in what circumstance. It is known that it is best to err on the side of caution and not ignore any, one never knows when an obscure superstition might save a life. And above all else, you always wear silver.

Standing out leads to great fortune or great tragedy...

It is common knowledge that those who stand out are destined for a grand fate or a grim demise...and all too often it turns out to be the latter.

Setting Inspirations

Castlevania (video game and show)

The Brothers Grimm (movie)

Central and Northern european folklore