Setting

The action takes place near the Village of Havock, which lies on the road between a few large cities (Ogden being the nearest) and various dwarven and gnomish mountain settlements. Havock is primarily a fishing village, while Ogden is a port city and cultural center with more racial diversity than is typical for large cities in this setting.

This place is part of the Thirteen Kingdoms, which is lightly defined by design. Each of the Kingdoms is run slightly differently, to accommodate various character backgrounds. A jaunt across the channel brings one to the Ithian Empire, with which the Kingdoms were at war (the Palantine wars) 70 years ago. There is a stable peace at the moment, though smuggling (of brandy and pharmaceuticals from Ithia and rare metals from the Kingdoms) are a constant problem.

This is a medium magic environment. The Kingdoms are known for their engineering and metallurgy, and Ithia for its alchemy, herbalism, and recently achieved (early) gunpowder technology.

Collaboration

The purpose of the game is to have fun. Collaborating on a story that is satisfying to everyone is job one. "But my character would do _____!" is a poor excuse at this table. Characters are complex, and part of your job is to find a thing that your character might do that doesn't step on everyone else's enjoyment. Compromise creatively, support one another, be cool.

Let me give you an example: your character is a Chaotic Neutral Barbarian, and you enjoy playing your 6 Wisdom and causing trouble. The party's Paladin, however, has no time for your shenanigans, and her player enjoys strategic play. Note that *you* have the power to make every encounter non-strategic - by running into battle, *pulling the rest of the party with you*. Your choice begins the initiative, whether the rest of the party wants that (yet) or not. If you're always rushing heedlessly ahead, it's going to make the game less fun for the Paladin's player - she will have no opportunity to flex her strategic muscles. Yet, if the

party is always strategic, you'll be robbed of opportunities to roleplay your legitimately imprudent Barbarian.

I would expect that the two of you would pay attention to each other's preferences, and work to accommodate each other. When the party's fun will be best served by strategy, choose to have your Barbarian impatiently endure the endless chatter of planning, have him distracted from immediately entering into melee, or...well, it's up to you. Creative avoidance of the expected or cliche for your character can be amazing RP.

Later, when you see an opportunity for some in-character foolhardiness that will bring you great joy - and you let the rest of the players know that - you should expect that the other players will give you this moment. You let them have their cunning plan before; now is the time when we enter the fray, screaming and slightly drunk.

This is just one example. Some folks aim to use their social skills, others their combat skills. Some folks enjoy deep politics and mysteries, others more straightforward goals. Your job is to accommodate what makes the game fun to the other players, while communicating to them what makes the game special to you, so you can be accommodated too.

You should also communicate the sorts of things that you *aren't* comfortable with in the game, and to respect those choices in others. If your style turns out to be incompatible with the rest of the table's - no judgment here. We want you to find a table that's right for you.

Tone

If the game were a movie, it would be PG-13, or an R somewhere between Logan or Deadpool. I'll adjust the seriousness vs. levity somewhat according to the players' preferences. The party should be good or neutral, though individuals within the party may struggle with that from time to time.

If there's something in the game that's making you uncomfortable in a way that is ruining your fun or making it difficult to engage in the game, please let the DM know. That's part of the job. Here's some language that might help: you may have certain things that you'd like to keep behind a *Veil*, and *Lines* that you don't want to see crossed.

If you're ok for a thing to happen in the game, but you wouldn't like to see it actively role-played - in effect, you'd prefer that a *Veil* is drawn on the scene and that thing happens "offscreen". If there's something that you don't want to contend with in the game at all, that's a *Line* in the sand for you. There is nothing wrong with having subjects that are Veils or Lines for you. For example: your DM has no interest in RPing sex or torture, though those things may happen in the background. (Sex specifically, since the world *is* populated.) These are veils. Sexual violence is a Line for him in his games.

Flavor

You have wide latitude regarding flavor, so long as the in-game effect is within the rule set. For example, feel free to suggest that your attempt to pick a lock is more about a quasi-mystical achievement of oneness with the lock than your mechanical aptitude. You'll roll your skill check just like anyone else, but how that result is expressed in game is (mostly) up to you.

Is your Warlock's Eldritch Blast a bolt of force, or a very brief summoning of an otherworldly pseudopod, lashing out? Is it a similarly brief manifestation of the dead, reaching from the ground to rake at your target? Something else? No problem, so long as it does the appropriate amount of force damage for the cantrip.

Keep in mind that, if you ask me for a custom feat, archetype, or class, I'm likely to ask, "could you achieve the same coolness with an existing feat/archetype/class, through flavor"? It takes me time to process these custom requests and make certain that they are fair and balanced, and I'd usually rather be playing.

Your character sheet is there to resolve situations, not define you. If you want your 18 Dexterity to be the result of a distant air genasi ancestor, great - you don't need an "Air Genasi Ancestor" feat to make that statement.

Metagaming

Good metagaming: informing the decisions of your character with your player's out-of-game knowledge of the story and the other player's preferences, with an aim to improve the game and generally be a mensch.

Bad metagaming: informing the decisions of your character with your player's out-of-game knowledge of the rules and stats, with an aim to "win" the game or beat the DM.

You know what you know, and your character knows what your character knows. And when you know something, and your character doesn't, it's natural to try and figure out an in-game way to *let* your character know. Just don't overdo it.

For my part, I will cheat very, *very* infrequently, and almost always in your favor, purely in service to the story. You will cheat not at all. Cheating is the exclusive province of the DM.

Suggestions

Choose at least one thing that your character is good at, and one thing that your character is bad at. Be as willing to RP being bad at the bad thing as you are willing to RP being good at the good thing. Use being bad at something to highlight how good another character is at that thing.

Have at least three relationships (with other PCs, NPCs, deities, concepts, nations, etc.) and what they are based upon (love, hate, fear, rivalry, beauty, etc.) defined for your character.

Pay attention and take notes

You may have childcare needs that require you to check your texts. Not a problem. Just minimize your distractions out of respect for the time and effort that the DM and the other players have invested in the game.

Take notes. Trust me on this. You're going to hear a lot of names and places and it's a lot more immersive when you can keep your nouns straight.

House Rules

Rolling to hit

When you roll to hit, roll your damage dice for the attack as well. It seems like a small thing, but it really helps to keep things moving.

Skill checks

If you tell me narratively why your Deception check should be based on Intelligence, not Charisma based ("I tell them a story, but I keep telling it out of order, and use ambiguous pronouns so it's deliberately hard to follow." or why your Intimidation check should be Wisdom, not Charisma based ("I do a cold reading on them, watching them closely to tailor the story and make them think I can see their future.") - I'll consider it!

These are usually Rule of Cool decisions, so I may say yes to the substitution once and and only once. No substitution should be considered a precedent.

Message me with: "Cthulhu naps in R'lyeh"

If you don't do this, I know you didn't read the dang document. Rude! It's like, 4 pages with a big-ass font.

Persistent effects

If you have a spell that persistently affects an enemy (e.g. paralyzes them, or does damage every round) it's up to you to remind me, even if the effect happens outside of your turn. If you forget, it doesn't happen.