

GHOSTS OF ALBION

ROLEPLAYING GAME

Created by Amber Benson and Christopher Golden

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Reader discretion is advised.

Comments and questions can be directed via the Internet at www.edenstudios.net, via e-mail at edenprod@aol.com or via letter with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

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Almasti

By Amber Benson and Christopher Golden

It had been an unusually cold day even for Norwich, on the eastern coast of England—a day when the wind bit into exposed flesh, purpling lips and numbing fingers and toes. Now the sun was gone and only a pale sliver of moon illuminated the narrow roads that wound through the city. The temperature was well below freezing this night and anyone with sense was in bed, huddled under a pile of heavy blankets, trying not to freeze to death.

Peter Baker opened the door to the shabby cottage he shared with his young wife, Mary, and the frozen air stole the breath from his lungs. He shivered, the icy chill crawling up his spine, but did not stop. Quietly, he shut the door behind him and stepped out into the moonlit night.

He had walked barely fifty yards when he realised that he had misjudged the cold; it was not simply freezing, it was life stealing. Lethargy was slyly sneaking up on him—he knew that if he surrendered to it, he would be done for. Part of him was more than willing to simply sit down on the hard frozen earth and let the cold consume him. It was only the image of Mary that drove him on. If he were to die, there would be no one left to look after his wife. As things were, he wasn't a very good provider. Still, she would never survive alone.

Mary was barely sixteen and had been cruelly mistreated during her time in the orphanage. Peter, only a few years her elder, had saved her from that life, but he had been out of work for weeks. There was no money and precious little food. He would not let his wife go hungry. He would die first. And that was what drove him on this freezing night. Peter was out in the darkness, scavenging for something to fill their larder.

His feet crunched on frozen grass as he skirted the walls of the city, walls that had fascinated him as a child. He had daydreamed about Roman centurions walking the length of stone and Saxon warriors carousing in the shadow of the city. Now as he passed by, he could reach out and touch that same stone.

A gust of wind rocked him backward, nearly blowing him off his feet. Peter shuddered, hugging himself against the cold, his teeth chattering. Another gust whipped through him and suddenly he was in the middle of a gale. His fingers grabbed the branch of a rowan tree, the only thing they could find in the confusion, and he was lifted up into the air, his body waving like a masted flag.

The frigid air leached strength and reason from him, colder than any chill he had ever felt. Even in his partial delirium, he knew that this sudden wind was like nothing he had ever known. It simply wasn't natural.

A loud growl filled the air, blocking out even the roar of the wind. Peter shut his eyes, praying that the sound was only his imagination.

The wind stopped almost as abruptly as it started and Peter dropped to the ground, the tree branch still clutched tightly in his hands. Another growl sent spears of terror shooting through his heart. He swallowed hard, his throat raw from the impossible cold, and forced open eyes whose lashes had frozen together.

There before him—above him—was a man. Yet it was not a man. He recognised that even before the truth of it had reached his conscious mind. Dense silver-black fur covered its thick torso and too long arms left wrists hanging level with its knees. Its sole garment was a long piece of animal hide wrapped loosely around its thick waist.

Its skull was narrow, its brow and jaw prominent—jagged teeth as smooth and clear as ice reflected cruelly in the moonlight. Yet, it was the creature's eyes that arrested Peter's breathing. Its gaze was not dull like an animal's, but keen with intelligence. It growled again as though it was intent upon imparting to him some vital knowledge . . . and then it was gone. With a wisp of smoke and a sudden gust of icy wind, it evaporated into the darkness as though it had never been.

Then the pain began—cold and sharp, stabbing into his flesh like the fangs of winter itself. It rendered Peter senseless almost immediately. His body shuddered and a scream escaped from his frozen lips. Then Peter knew no more.

The grand foyer at the entrance to Ludlow House—ancestral home to the Swift family—echoed with the sound of banging. It begun as a flat pounding, but then diminished as if the knocker were quickly weakening. Farris, the Swift family's butler, felt a certain trepidation as he approached door. Still, in the time he had assumed his duties here at Ludlow House, he had come to expect almost anything on the other side of that door.

Boldly, he swung the door open to discover not some strange threat, but a wisp of a girl wrapped in a frayed shawl. It would have been better suited to an animal. Her eyes were wild and her lower lip trembled. She began to speak, but tears filled her eyes and only a sob escaped her thin, chapped lips.

William never knew how to handle hysterical women. They frightened him. And this girl frightened him even more so with her white, pinched face and clutching fingers. She held the handkerchief that his sister, Tamara, had given her as if it were trying to escape her grasp.

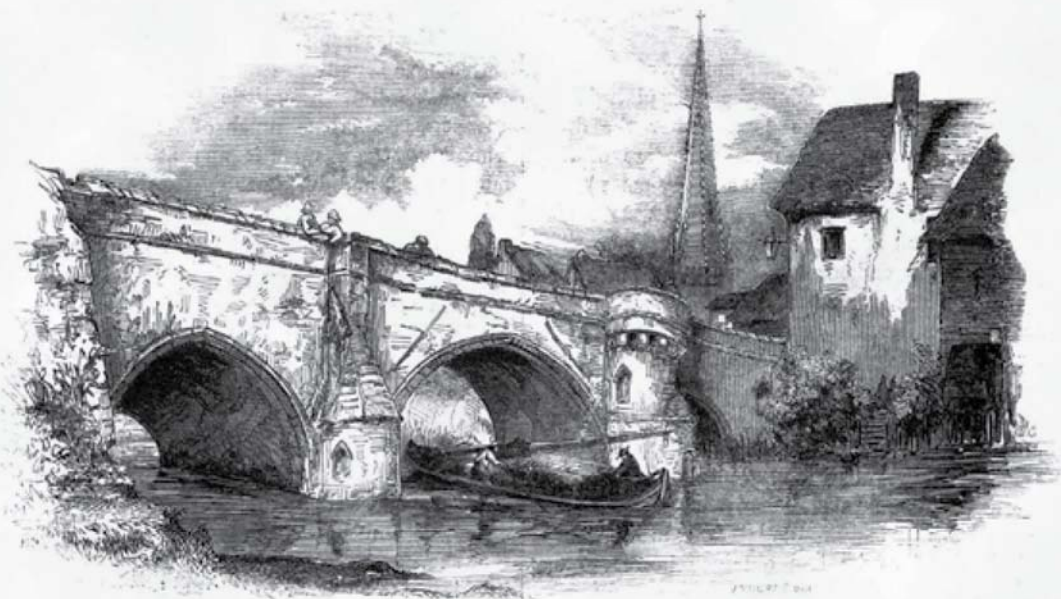
Tamara sat listening intently to Mary Baker's story. Out of the corner of her eye, she caught William's annoyed stare. Compassion, not rudeness, was called for. She made a mental note to chide him when next they were alone.

She turned her attention back to the girl on their settee. Something terrible had come to Norwich and had murdered her husband Peter, but he had only been the first. The icy cold had returned night after night, with death blowing on the wind. Mary had neither work nor food, but had been offered sanctuary by the wife of Edward Wentworth, editor of the local newspaper. Mr. Wentworth had heard of her situation from the local constabulary. And it was from him that she had first heard the name Ludlow Swift. Wentworth had told Mary that Ludlow—William and Tamara's grandfather—was Norwich's only hope. Distraught as she was by the ill events in Norwich, the girl had been positively stricken by the news of Ludlow's death. She thought now that the murder of her husband would remain a mystery and that no one could bring the terror in Norwich to heal.

"Don't worry Mary," Tamara said, soothing the girl. "My brother and I would never send you back to Norwich alone. We'll accompany you and see what we may be able to do to help."

The tearful girl shook her head and gazed at Tamara. "But . . . your grandfather, he understood things like this . . ."

Tamara smiled. "And we do our best to carry on in his stead."



Chapter One: And So It Begins

The cold visitor ... introductions made ... a journey begins.



Everything has a beginning ...

Whether commencing small or signalling the end of something else, everything starts anew. At times, the differences between what was before and what is now are so profound that it becomes difficult to see the world the same way again.

So it was for Tamara and William Swift—the latest in a long line of Protectors of Albion. For years, they enjoyed privileged, yet unremarkable lives as the heirs of a banking scion in London's early Victorian age. Suddenly, they found their grandfather had passed on, their father was possessed by a demon, and they were the only ones with the wherewithal to halt the resurrection of a Demon Prince. To make matters more unsettling, their only allies were long since dead. Such was the beginning of their story.

The Swifts would soon learn that supernatural threats were not new to the world. Protectors had been defending Albion for generations. A shroud had passed from their eyes—their destiny had become magic and struggle. Success was mandatory.

Without it, darkness could not be gainsaid.

Let The Games Begin

The following serves to shed light on role-playing and how one goes about it. Those privy to this information are free to venture to the chapters beyond. For the rest, heed these words. One might have perused the *Ghosts of Albion* dramatisations, read the books, or browsed the web site. Now, this exceedingly attractive book comes to call—a tome that calls itself a role-playing game. What-ever could this mean?

A role-playing game amounts to shared storytelling. Several sophisticates gather to create a tale. In *Ghosts of Albion Role-playing Game*, the setting is the Victorian age and supernatural elements—evil and otherwise—are commonplace. During play sessions, eldritch magic may be entwined with daring fight scenes, but so much more is involved. Unlike any other sort of game, a role-playing game grants the freedom to take the story, the characters—indeed, the entire setting—anywhere one wishes. The action occurs in one's imagination; interactions between the characters tell the story.

Characters

Each player chooses or creates a character—an alternative persona that establishes his role in the game. Characters governed by players are called Cast Members. A player decides the Cast Member's strengths and weaknesses, abilities and limitations, and—most importantly—personality. During the course of the game, each player describes his particular Cast Member's decisions, utterances, and actions.

A loyal participant might choose to take the role of a worthy Original Cast Member from *Ghosts of Albion*. The game specifics of each have been provided elsewhere between these covers. Alternatively, one might assume another role—one created from whole cloth. The Victorian age overflows with literary characters of all types. Any could form the basis of a stimulating and entertaining Cast Member. Alternatively still, an entirely new character could be devised. Recall that each play group brings to life its own stories. Each member must find a most suitable voice.

Regardless of the persona played, know that the fight extends beyond any one character, no matter how heroic. The Protectors and their allies are central to the forces of good and light. They fight not just for Creator, Queen, and Country, but also for the land's mystical soul.

The Director

One amongst the group assumes a most vital role. That stalwart bears the title Director. He sets the scene, plots the plot, details the descriptions, and engages in other artistically important alterations.

The Director casts and speaks for the populace—anyone that the Cast Members meet in their travails. Guest Personae are unassuming, unthreatening (at present), or even helpful to the Cast. They enter the stage, do their part for the grand tale, then exit. A few recur, providing familiar faces, steadfast aid, and bonhomie. Some are strictly buffoons, while others constructively challenge and inspire. Treasured are those few that pull at heartstrings.

Adversaries are Director-enlivened blackguards whom, it is hoped, the Cast Members foil. These include the most vicious—demons, ferals, and other foul things—and the most venal—humans who have sold their immortal souls for a taste of power.

The Director issues all rules and decisions within the game. He opines on how and when to use the game mechanics and determines the in-story outcomes of certain rolls. Details on these vital Director-affiliated tasks scurry from other pages of this expose.

Play Sessions

Play sessions in *Ghosts of Albion* may while away mere minutes or embolden days. No formal start or end mars the pulchritude of a session—that is for the Director and players to set. Further, in role-playing, no “winner” is sought or declared. Conversely, no loser is branded. The game's objective is the creation of a narrative, the engagement of spontaneity and hilarity, and the cherishment of time with friends.

But hold! Structure in some form does carry the day. The game is parcelled into Episodes (or adventures), resolved in one or more several-hour gaming sessions. These plot lines or linked subplots form a single story—like the acts of a play or the serial episodes of a penny dreadful. Strings of Episodes and their related story arcs together give life to a Serial. Several Serials form a Series, in which larger themes of life, love, and largesse are explored.

For those more cognisant of Father Time, a single play session may be scheduled during which simple demonic activity is thwarted. No epic arcs, no intricate plot—simply old-fashioned evil evisceration. Still, once a session has passed, likelihood is that one finds the game enchanting and nigh unto addictive. Role-playing games can be notorious that way.

Getting Started

So, ready to sally forth? Well, the Director should peruse several sections of this manual—particularly Chapters Two: Dramatis Personae, Three: Rules for Play, Four: Arts Arcane, and Seven: All The World's A Stage. Then he must gather some companions, and all must be equipped with paper, pencils, and some dice.

Ah dice! Role-players tend to be a tad over fond of their dice. Any gentleman of note has witnessed the small cubes with dots (called pips by the cognoscenti) or numbers on them. Six-sided dice is the name given to these cubes. They are also known as D6s. D6s are smashing, but almost useless for the *Ghosts of Albion RPG*. The real ships of the line in this game are the ten-sided dice, or D10s. One can find these tatts in hobby game stores much like the one privileged to stock this tome. A plethora of bookstores and department stores also carry such polygons. If all else fails, do call upon yours truly. It is our pleasure to serve you.

As an added supplement, spend time gathering some markers or baubles. These represent Drama Points, explained more fully in **Chapter Three: Rules for Play**.

That should suffice by way of introduction. Enjoy the play sessions but be certain to bar the doors. Evil lurks in these halls.

Cards

An easy substitute for D10s is playing cards. Procure a deck or decks, divvy out the four suits, present one set of Ace through 10 to each player, and commence the game. “Rolling” can be accomplished by shuffling the ten cards quickly and drawing one. Ace equals one and the rest match up cleanly.

For style, or to set the mood, a Victorian age deck of cards or even a Victorian Tarot deck serves nicely. While generally more expensive than dice, what gentlepeople concern themselves with base matters such as cost?

The Unisystem

The **Unisystem** handles the mechanics of the *Ghosts of Albion* *RPG*. The **Unisystem** aids players and Directors alike in determining what options are available at any given moment in the game, and the success or failure of the choices and actions made. **Chapter Two: Dramatis Personae** and **Chapter Three: Rules for Play** presents these rules in detail.

Though the mechanics are designed to handle any sort of role-playing story—in any setting, with any theme—each particular **Unisystem** game has its own flavour. For the *Ghosts of Albion* *RPG*, a darkly cinematic, high-adventure tone should carry the day. The good people of William and Tamara's world see and do in manners that more pedestrian types simply cannot. Mechanical details and calculations are set aside to maintain a better story flow. None should worry minutiae when an epic story awaits!

The **Unisystem** is the heart of several other games, some involving the very same magic and horror themes found herein. Discover the **Unisystem** world at www.edenstudios.net.

Summary of Chapters

Much is laid bare in the *Ghosts of Albion* *RPG*. From rules to stats, to descriptions and backgrounds, a world is defined. Do maintain a keen eye so no treasure lies undiscovered.

Chapter One: And So It Begins is, at present, all about. It features the introductory material necessary to start play, and recapitulates the prior *Ghosts of Albion* publications for those fresh to its delights.

Chapter Two: Dramatis Personae breathes life into the cornerstones of the story—the characters. Whether playing a creditable soul from the Original Cast, a pre-prepared novice guardian (called Archetypes), or Cast Members of unique design—this chapter is the source.

Chapter Three: Rules for Play elucidates participants on the game mechanics. It erects the loom of play, upon which the tale is woven.

Chapter Four: Magic; Arts Arcane addresses just that. Aspiring magicians reference eldritch scrolls and arcane tomes to acquire power. Maleficence surfaces when the enemy wields these very powers. Thus, magical struggle arises and must be essayed.

Chapter Five: This Blessed Plot; This England recreates *Ghosts of Albion* England and the Victorian Era. The age is rich and not overly familiar. London is detailed from Buckingham Palace to the gas and oil lit streets, including the seedier dens of intrigue. Learn to convert pence to pounds, and to avoid the toolers and other trass of the age. Mundane and supernatural events are mentioned, but to each his own counsel on the “true” events.

Chapter Six: The Supernatural; Friend, Foe, and Fiend introduces the foe in all its evilness. Vampires, demons, ferals, and other malevolent agents of the supernatural appear. A number might be counted upon as allies—such as a vampire familiar to some—and not all faeries and ghosts detest humans. Still, best tread with care where the supernatural abides.

Chapter Seven: All the World's a Stage is for noble Directors. Sheet music for conducting the symphony that is a *Ghosts of Albion* session rests upon a music stand of instructions concerning plotlines and their preparation.

Chapter Eight: Almasti is a complete adventure enabling players quick enjoyment of this delightful pastime. Better yet, the story was scribed by none other than *Ghosts of Albion* creators Amber Benson and Christopher Golden. Huzzah!

Annex fills the interstices by presenting a guide to Victorian slang for those wishing period verisimilitude. Furthermore, conversion notes for other **Unisystem** games, a glossary, character sheets, and other game aids are provided.

Conventions

Certain liberties have been taken amongst these pages to illuminate the path. Do try to follow along—ridicule at the game table could be in store for the inattentive.

Text

Some readers—those who hale from the American colonies—might notice various peculiarities in language and spelling. This stems from a lack of familiarity with the Queen's English. This text uses British-English spelling and diction as befitting a game set in the Victorian Age.

Furthermore, when the words change their appearance, rest assured something of note has occurred. This text is standard text. It covers the bulk of these pages.

Text of this sort issues from the Journal of Tamara Swift herself. It provides accounts of people, places, times, and things from that Protector's perspective.

These words are set off from the standard text. Such boxes contain additional, but tangential information, or supplemental charts and tables.

This mode expresses simplified forms illustrating various Guest Personae and Adversaries that perchance are encountered by the Cast.

Quick illustrative examples appear in standard text. When they are more lengthy, they are set apart using this text.

Tamara: *Just because you're working as a lackey for that architect—*

William: *I'm his apprentice.*

Tamara: *You're fetching tea and scones. I'd hardly say that makes you more an adult than I am. One of us is being well paid for their work, and it isn't you. For the last novel I sold—*

William: *Novel? That penny dreadful of yours, you mean?*

—LEGACY, ACT I

Quotes appear with the speaker's name foremost. The citation includes the publication title, act, and other information where required.

Dice

The thorough and astute have learned that D10 means a ten-sided die. Other dice are wholly irrelevant to the game.

Gender

Every role-playing game struggles with the decision about third person pronouns and possessives. The male reference is customarily used for both male and female, but is unquestionably exclusive. On the other hand, the "he or she" structure is clumsy and unattractive. As the Victorian age was unapologetically patriarchal despite the gender of the world's most powerful ruler, this book uses the conventional male designation throughout.

Currency

England of the 1830s–40s used the Imperial monetary system, which divided currency into pence (d, for the Roman *denarius*), shillings (s, for the Roman *solidi*), and pounds sterling (£). 12 pence make a shilling and 20 shillings a pound (240 pence to a pound). A coin common among the lower classes, the farthing, is also used, and equals one-quarter pence (4 farthings = 1 pence). Money is typically written £/s/d, so one pound, two shillings, fivepence was written £1/2/5. For amounts less than one pound the first term was dropped; for example, two shillings and fivepence would be written 2/5.

Measurements

As Britain plays such a central role in *Ghosts of Albion*, a version of the Imperial System of measurement is employed in this book. That is inches, feet, yards, and pounds for those of ill schooling. For those of a more worldly metric, rough conversions may be found by multiplying miles by 1.5 to get kilometres (instead of 1.609), equating meters with yards (instead of 1.094 yards), halving pounds to get kilograms (instead of multiplied by 0.4536), and so on.

Devotees of trivial irony may note that the U.K. uses the *real* Imperial system (not the garbled U.S. version) for many purposes, despite having officially gone metric some years ago. The differences are minor but real; amongst other things, a U.K. pint is 20 fluid ounces rather than 16. Happily these games are about the narrative, not measurement. Simply use whichever version of scale serves best.

About the Creators

Amber Benson was born in Birmingham, Alabama where she enjoyed an imaginative childhood before moving to California to pursue a career as an actor, writer, and director for film and television. Though best known for her three seasons portraying the white witch "Tara" on the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Amber also appeared on television as Brian Dennehy's daughter in a trio of Jack Reed tele-films. Amongst her film credits are *The Crush*, *Bye Bye Love*, *Imaginary Crimes*, *Latter Days*, and Steven Soderbergh's *King of the Hill*. In addition to her acting roles, Amber wrote, directed and produced the romantic comedy *Chance*, in which she also stars, and is the co-writer of *Ghosts of Albion: Accursed*, *Ghosts of Albion: A stray* and the BBCi *Ghosts of Albion* serials (she also directed the latter).

Christopher Golden is a Bram Stoker Award-winning writer best known for his novels *The Boys Are Back in Town*, *The Ferryman*, *Strangewood*, *Of Saints and Shadows*, the *Body of Evidence* series of teen thrillers, and co-author of the youth fantasy series *OutCast*. He has written or co-written a great many books, comic books, and video games related to the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*. In the comic book field, Christopher has written tales of Batman, Spider-Man, Doctor Fate, and Hellboy. He, as well, co-authored *Ghosts of Albion: Accursed*, *Ghosts of Albion: A stray* and the BBCi *Ghosts of Albion* serials.

Timothy S. Brannan has worked for universities, the Navy, dot coms, and mental institutions. Less than imagined separates these places. He has graduate degrees in education and psychology, but pushed aside the loving arms of academia to help draft this game. When not writing, Tim can be found in the northwest suburbs of Chicago with his beautiful wife and two wonderful sons.

Garner Johnson has worked with Task Force Games and Time Line Ltd., written and run adventures at numerous game conventions, and now finally has committed some of his ideas to print. He is an historian with a specialization in military history. Garner resides in Lincoln, Nebraska where he helps run a local comic and gaming store.

M. Alexander Jurkat has been writing, developing, editing and publishing games for far too long. His credits can be found in dozens of gaming products, including the *Angel*, *Army of Darkness*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and *Dungeons & Dragons* role-playing games, several card games, and one computer game.

George Matzen was born and raised in eastern Nebraska. He is a lifelong fan of comic books, science fiction, and fantasy. Geo studied Graphic Design at Doane College. Like many graphic artists, he is a man of few words.

Albion

Much like the ever developing and expanding stories of a role-playing game, *Ghosts of Albion* truly lives and breaths. Mademoiselle Benson and Monsieur Golden contemplate novel surprises and delights for all as time passes, including books and DVDs. The role-playing game, too, serves to enliven and elucidate the *Ghosts of Albion* universe, granting each player the opportunity and honour of adding to this unique setting. To better facilitate what is to come, it behoves one to explore that which has been.

The principal glimpses of the *Ghosts of Albion* world, prior to the novel series, unfolded in the form of two web casts and two stories. The web dramatisation *Legacy* introduces the latest Albion Protectors, Tamara and William Swift, pitting them against the Demon Lord Balberith. The web novella *Astray* continues the supernatural exploits of these stalwarts, revealing much about matters of faerie. The web short story *Illusions* peers into the unlife of Nigel, one-time student of the Swift's grandfather, Ludlow Swift, burdened with the exquisite curse of vampirism. The web dramatisation *Embers* returns to the lives of Tamara and William, presenting a quest for an ancient artefact. All can be experienced at www.bbc.co.uk/cult/ghosts and www.ghostsofalbion.net.

After a brief foray into profound cosmological matters, each instalment of the *Ghosts of Albion* saga is addressed in turn.

Cosmology

Ghosts of Albion is set during the early Victorian Age. The times are much like those of history, as viewed through a dark and supernatural lens. The major events of history remain still, an undercurrent of the supernatural tinges all. Vampires exist, as do ghosts, faeries, and aye, even demons.

Scratching the surface of the world one realizes that "the truth" is merely a façade, that the true history of England—Albion, is much darker. Each land has a soul, one that feels the trials and tribulations of its people and suffers from the darkness that inhabits it. Each land's soul is guarded by one or more mystical champions. These Protectors fight the enemies of humanity, and arise anew when the prior one perishes. The Protectors of Albion, William and Tamara Swift, protect the mystical soul of England. They do not campaign unaided, but the calling is theirs alone.

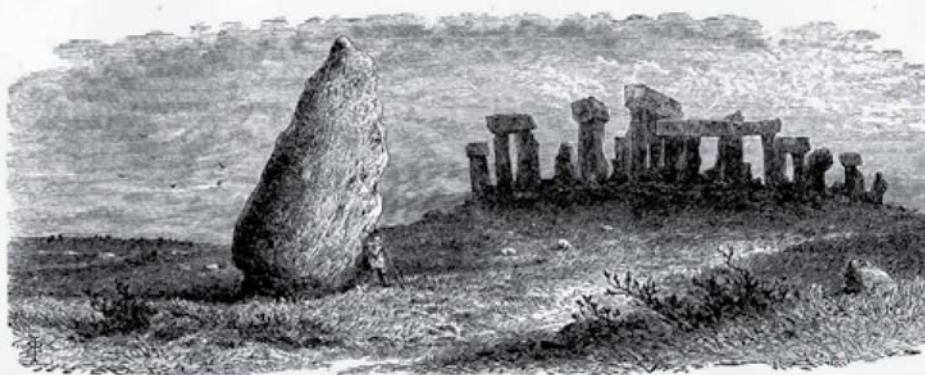
Legacy

William and Tamara Swift are siblings living in London during 1837. They are the grandchildren of a banking magnate, Sir Ludlow Swift, and they enjoy a privileged life. William is an apprentice with an up-and-coming architect while Tamara is a talented writer, publishing some of the Victorian age's first "penny dreadfuls". Their complacent lives are shattered by the grave infirmity of their beloved grandfather. Although disheartening enough, it is not approaching death itself that unsettles them so, but what their elder chooses to pass on to them. Sir Ludlow Swift, lord of Ludlow House and founder of the Swift family fortune, was also the latest in a long line of Protectors of Albion. These Protectors, which William and Tamara soon become, are dedicated to preserving the mystical soul of their region. The soul of England is Albion. Seeing his young heirs doubtful of his revelation, Ludlow summons the ghost of Lord Byron to convince them. Byron, along with the ghosts of Queen Bodicea and Admiral Lord Nelson, has aided Ludlow for years in his battles against the forces of darkness.

Unfortunately, the moment they learn their destiny, Ludlow is killed by demonic ferals and the sibling's father possessed by a demon. Fleeing the only home they have ever known, the Swifts seek the aid of their grandfather's old friend Nigel Townsend. Although he has only limited proficiency himself, Nigel introduces them to the world of magic.

The Swifts struggle with their new mantle of power and change in circumstances. They learn of the imminent return of the ancient demon Balberith, a horror that Ludlow had fought before. The two siblings must face this monstrosity, but not before dealing with their own problems, both magical and mundane. Their plight is exacerbated when their new mentor turns out to be far more . . . and far less . . . than they imagined. The Swifts fight a score of demons, retake their home, and even destroy Balberith's chief servant Vauturm, but they are still unable to remove the demon possessing their father.

The final battle begins with the Protectors and the Ghosts of Albion rising up to stop the return of Balberith. Initially, they fail and must then force the ancient demon through the gate he has opened and back into Hell. The celebration is short-lived for William and Tamara. They now know that their battles are only just beginning.



Astray

Many months after their battle with Balberith, life approaches something closer to normal for the Swifts. That is, if the possession of your father by a demon and having several ghosts as your constant companions passes for mundane. Their severest problem is keeping servants for the estate. A normal life is just not for the Swifts.

A stranger comes to visit and brings with him a disturbing tale. He is Dr. John Nichols of Blackbriar, Herefordshire, and he has heard of William and Tamara's exploits with Balberith. He is not here to expose them, but rather asks for help. It appears that some of the local girls have been having children out of wedlock. Although an unfortunate situation, it is not unheard of. That the children are bastards is not what draws the good doctor to seek out the siblings, it is that they are not human.

On their way to Blackbriar accompanied by Dr. Nichols and Queen Bodicea, the supernatural Wild Edric and his ghostly legion confront William and his sister. His spell begins to enthrall Tamara, but her own will carries the day and the Protectors escape. Their arrival in Blackbriar reveals only more mysteries. The crazed mothers of the children have not noticed their differences.

The Swifts quickly determine that the babies are changelings, fey babies left in place of the stolen human ones. During their investigations, Bodicea captures a sprite, who reluctantly agrees to take the Swifts to where the real human babies are.

They find the babies, but it is a trap.

Separated from William, Bodicea and Tamara encounter Godda, a faerie princess, and her court. Princess Godda is enraged and threatens Tamara after she rescues two of the human babies. In an attempt to protect Tamara, so she might help William and the other babies, Bodicea attacks the faerie court. Even Bodicea proves vulnerable to harm in this area of faerie magic. Tamara escapes only to re-encounter the deadly Wild Edric.

William, trapped, with no aid from Tamara or the ghosts, decides that he must rescue the other crying babies on his own. And so it is that William finally comes into his own—not in just magic, but in his role as a Protector as well.

Edric takes Tamara back to Godda. It is then Tamara discovers that these two are not in league with each other, but are instead estranged lovers. Discarding magic, Tamara relies on her own keen mind and quick wit to resolve the situation. Godda and Edric promise Tamara that they will take no more human babies. William returns the remaining babies to Blackbriar, and Bodicea rejoins the group with a court of defeated faerie women in tow.

No demons manifest. The Protectors of Albion learn that not all threats take the form of gigantic demons that threaten all of creation.

Illusions

Stepping away from tales about the Swift youngsters, this narrative deals with the falling out between Nigel Townsend and Ludlow Swift. This story is told from the vampire's perspective and provides insight into Nigel's own private hell.

Years before William and Tamara were born, Ludlow trained Nigel in the ways of magic and possibly as his successor as Protector of Albion. However, this ends when Nigel enters into an affair with Ludlow's young ward Louise. Louise, who is as intelligent as she is beautiful, learns not only of the truth of magic, but of her paramour's nature. Not horror but fascination accompany her discovery; she begs him to change her into a vampire. Nigel refuses, but in her passion, Louise commits suicide, hoping that Nigel will "save" her.

Ludlow finds them, but Louise is already dead. He learns the truth and doesn't blame Nigel for her death, but the girl's passing fractures their friendship beyond repair.

Embers

What begins innocently enough as a party for Lord Simon Winchell, father of William's paramour Sophia Winchell, quickly turns into a battle with the walking dead and a quest for an ancient artefact so powerful it took the power of three Protectors to create it.

William and Tamara engage in an around-the-world quest to discover the missing elements of the artefact in order to stop the evil machinations of the mysterious Necromancer. William and Tamara are joined in their fight by their faithful man-servant Farris, and the sharp tongued wood-sprite Serena (who accosted the Swifts in *Astray*). Together they fight zombies, un-dead monkeys, even the reanimated remains of ancient dragons, all summoned by the Necromancer's will and the magic of the Crown of Charlemagne.

More secrets and threats from within are brought to light. Bodicea and Nigel fight with Oblis, still inhabiting the body of Henry Swift. Lord Nelson is turned against them and must be vanquished. Sophia and Lord Simon are hiding more secrets than the Swifts realise, until it is too late.

The sibling Protectors of Albion defeat the Necromancer, but not without great cost. William and Tamara learn that their lives will never be "normal", not as long as there are horrors in the world.

The Tale Continues . . .

What future evil faces the Protectors of Albion? What dire circumstances plague their peace? What of the other Protectors and their trials? Time, as well as Mademoiselle Benson and Monsieur Golden, will surely tell.

On the other hand, mayhap you, gentle reader, will enlighten us.

Chapter Two: Dramatis Personae

The cast is called . . . powers are made known . . . a test of skills



This chapter elucidates the devising of a cast of exemplary characters so necessary in the battle against the nefarious agents of darkness.

Casting Call

Casting is a most crucial step. Just as in any piece of fiction, the characters in the game give measure to the story. One needs a captivating Cast to make a good Series, and the casting process is the route to this end.

The Director should guide valiant players through the character creation process. He should start by giving each a notion of the setting and the needs of the Series. This may be as unencumbered as “the game is set in Early Victorian London, and the characters have to be in the city for this reason.” On the other hand, he could restrict it to “a group of Protectors, ghosts, and faeries in Ireland during the Blight of ‘47; I want two Journeyman types, three Apprentices, and no vampires allowed.”

Alternatively, the Director may simply hand out the Original Cast (see pp. 67–73) or pre-generated character sheets (see pp. 58–66), and let players announce their choices. This is a most expeditious approach. Still, some players may express a desire

to create their own personas. As long as one does not arrive at something utterly ludicrous as “I’m the world’s greatest detective, and I run around with my personal physician solving crimes that Scotland Yard cannot decipher,” the Director shall likely acquiesce to such designs. Of course, in a world populated with vampires, ghosts, and all sorts of supernatural beasts, “credible” is a relative term.

Depending on the type of game envisioned, some choices may not be entirely appropriate. If the game is contingent upon stopping supernatural incursions, a human-hating faerie or a blood-thirsty vampire strain the fabric of the tale. Then again, perchance this is a game in which such types are the only ones that can aid. Teamwork between players and the Director is very important here—a thin line separates unnecessary limits on player imagination and entirely incompatible characters rendering a carefully plotted game unplayable. Not everyone can be a Protector, and certainly not everyone can play a ghost. Yes gentle sirs, it is best to forgo the limelight at times. That’s the life of those keeping the forces of darkness at bay.

Chapter Seven: All the World’s A Stage provides the Director with advice for developing a *Ghosts of Albion* RPG Series and creating storyline-appropriate characters. Directors and players both should read through this chapter first.

The Swifts and the Ghosts

With this option, the players assume the roles of William and Tamara Swift and their cohorts. Listed later one can find information for the Original Cast (see pp. 67–73). The Director should essay the explanation of each character sheet (see p. 13) so everyone learns the lay of the land before starting. This should not take overly long.

This approach engenders familiar roles in a rapid manner. Nonetheless, it does limit options. Truly there is only one Tamara, one Nigel, and one William and they may not be divided. Another difficulty is that the Original Cast is highly accomplished. Although William and Tamara are still relative novices, their powers are great. Furthermore, the ghosts are champions who have fought this war for years (centuries in Bodicea's case). For those not wholly familiar with the game system, a less able character may be best at the beginning. One option is to use earlier versions of the existing characters. What of the real story behind Bodicea's death? What transpired in the first years of "Her Naked Highness"? Elsewise, just imagine some of Byron's more *interesting* exploits.

Archetypes

Rather than engaging in the longer process of creating a character from scratch, players might accept the prefabricated Archetypes (see pp. 58–66). These pre-generated Cast Members may be taken as is or customised quickly. As with any new character, one should be sure to peruse the meaning of the terms and numbers (see p. 13).

Archetypes are less skilled and therefore easier to play. They also enjoy role-playing tips concerning outlooks, ideas, and attitudes. This too aids novice gamers. This approach provides several choices for a player to peruse before determining which strikes his fancy.

A New Cast

Devising an untested character can be the most engaging and rewarding option. The world of *Ghosts of Albion* is a large and varied place. There is room for all.

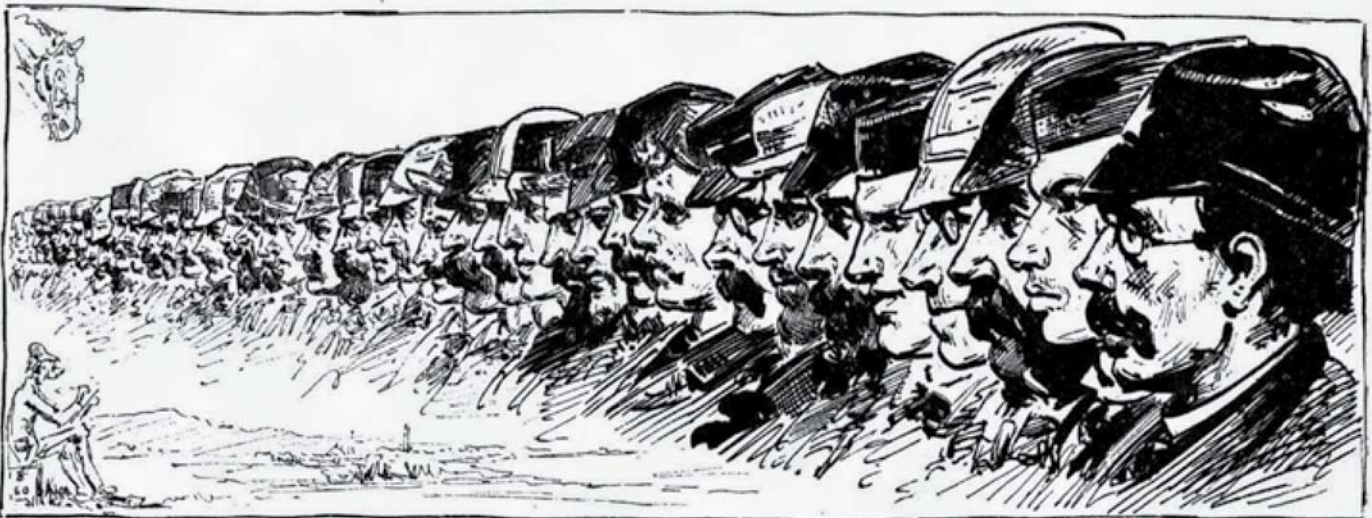
Before creating a bold new Cast Member, one ought consider the basic concepts behind him. What kind of role does he play? What can he bestow to the Cast? What worth is he in the great struggle? Is he a ghost of a righteous knight from the Dark Ages still fighting the war, a Parliamentary Lord, a street-wise dodger or Peeler, or something else entirely?

The characters from *Ghosts of Albion* may serve as inspiration. For instance, one could say, "I want a rakish scoundrel like Byron or Nigel, only not dead." Alternatively, one could devise an original concept, and build a character from that. Do not fret if inspiration is lacking. Sometimes the concept behind the Cast Member develops after character creation, and during the course of the game. If this is the case, work toward securing the character's basic features, and sketch out his personality. Mayhap the character is as oblivious to the supernatural as William and Tamara were in the beginning. After all, even great heroes must start somewhere.

Sources of inspiration for new characters might include cinema, TV shows, comics, and novels, even history classes if one's marks were sufficient. Perchance a famous historical figure could join the fight? If the Director approves—smashing. Of course, some characters suit more than others. Journeyman types best befit games with more experienced Cast Members, supernatural detectives, ghost hunters, mythical heroes, and the like. Apprentices are equitable when dealing with minor threats. No need to summon an Archduke of Hell when two or three pixies flitting about Westminster cause chaos enough.

The Combination

If none of these options are ideal, the Director may allow some to select members of the Original Cast, others to fill archetypes, and still others to create their own. That option should satisfy everybody. Again, remember that the Official Cast are more skilled and powerful than any newly created characters. If William and Tamara are about, most others must accept supporting roles. To address this the Director could use weaker versions of the Cast, or allow new characters to start out with higher abilities and skills (i.e., the Master Character Type, see p. 14).



The Creation Process

The **Unisystem** uses a point system to create characters. Essentially, one buys different abilities by spending character points. The better or more powerful a characteristic is, the more expensive it is. Some negative features, known as Drawbacks, give rather than cost points. They have a negative value, and by acquiring them one receives in turn more points to purchase other aspects. Keep in mind that these Drawbacks do limit or hurt the character in some way; overly burdening a character is not wise.

Points do not determine all however. Some character elements are creativity-driven: the character's concept (what kind of person he is) and personality, as well as his name and history. These depend wholly on one's imagination and the limits the Director imposes.

The Character Elements

William: You understand I'm just trying to look out for you, Tam? For our family. I know it seems childish, but I confess. You're just so much better at all this than me.

Architecture I understand, but magic? It'll take a lot more time before that becomes second nature, I'm afraid.

—LEGACY, ACT IV

1. **Type:** Determines the power level and nature of a character. Apprentices are a cut-above people who depend on their wits and luck to survive. Journeymen are decidedly robust and learned. Masters are people about whom legends are written.
2. **Attributes:** The character's natural abilities—both mental and physical.
3. **Qualities and Drawbacks:** The innate advantages or penalties that affect the character.
4. **Skills:** The character's training and learned abilities.
5. **Finishing Touches:** The character's name, appearance, and other characteristics.

Characters in the *Ghosts of Albion RPG* have four basic elements. As one makes each selection, the possibilities of the character dwindle until one arrives at a clearly defined fictional individual ready to go out and win the war for the Empire! Huzzah!

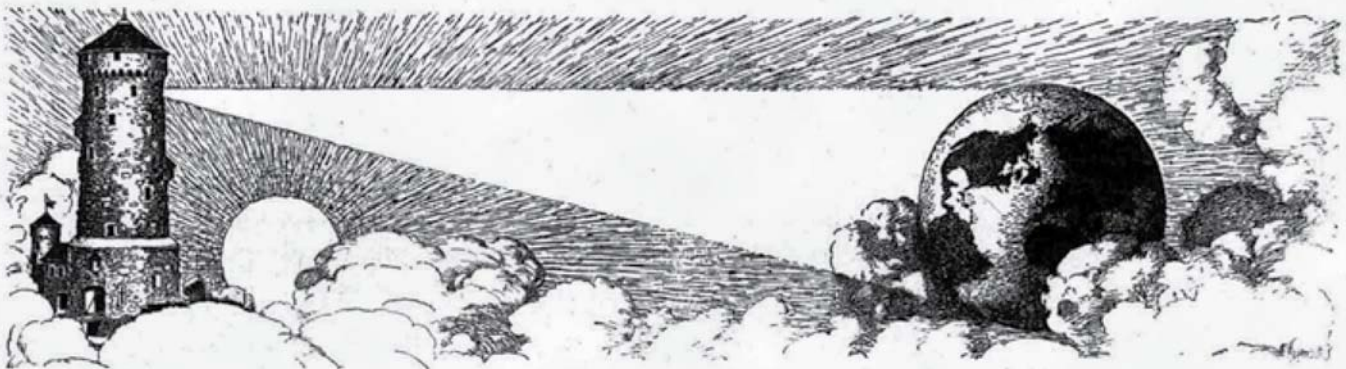
Character Type

The Character Type determines how many points may be “spent” on components of the character, be it attributes, skills, or qualities. Type is also related to the level of power the Director is running in his game. The more dangerous the Adversaries, the more powerful the characters must be to survive, much less triumph. Players should cogitate with their Directors for appropriate types. Unless specified by the Director, Apprentice and Journeymen Types are ideal for most games. If the storyline is significantly more dire, Master levels might be best. Note that Apprentice and Journeymen characters are preferable for longer running sessions as more room for growth and development exists; Masters are more conducive for single sessions or tales of short duration.

Directors should note that Apprentice and Journeyman Character Types tend to work well together. Although the Journeyman obviously has the advantage in terms of raw power, the Apprentice's higher Drama Points bridge a good deal of that difference. Do not use Masters alongside Apprentice and Journeyman characters unless a decided difference between Cast Members is desired, or sufficient dramatic reason exists.

Ghosts of Albion RPG and Other Unisystem Character Types

If one fancies the point allocations of the *Ghosts of Albion* Character Types, know that they are similar to other cinematic **Unisystem** role-playing games. This eases the use of such games in conjunction with this one. This may allow a Protector to join forces with, or even oppose, that special stake-wielding maiden, a loud-mouthed braggart rambling on about the evil dead, or those even more outlandish.



The Character Sheet

GHOSTS OF ALBION

ROLEPLAYING GAME

Life Points: The amount of harm the character can withstand. Tamara is tough but far more hardy specimens exist.

Life Points	39
Drama Points	10
Experience Points	
Additional Actions	1 Mental

Drama Points: Parcels of narrative power able to bend rules, plotlines, and (when need be) the very nature of the cosmos. Woe to she without them.

Character Name Tamara Swift
Character Type Protector of Albion
Description See next page

Attributes: The measure of a body's strength, quickness, and acumen. The human average is two. Tamara's fortitude lies in her dedication; with a Willpower 6, she has an iron disposition.

Attributes

Strength	2
Dexterity	3
Constitution	3
Intelligence	5
Perception	3
Willpower	6

Skills

Armed Mayhem	4
Art	3
Athletics	2
Crime	0
Drive / Ride	0
Engineering	0
Fisticuffs	0
Influence	3
Knowledge	3
Languages	3
Marksmanship	0
Notice	4
Occultism	6
Physician	1
Science	0
Wild Card	0

Skills: The character's knowledge and training. A competent mage has Occultism 3; Tamara surpasses that.

Qualities

Attractiveness—2	Resources (Well Off)
Bookish	Status—3
Hard to Kill—3	
Magic—4	
Nerves of Steel	
Occult Library (Impressive)	
Protector—Albion	
Quick Reflexes	

Drawbacks

Adversary—3	Mental Problems
Honourable (Serious)	(Mild—Obsession)
Love (Platonic—William)	Mental Problems
Minority (Woman)	(Mild—Recklessness)
Naive	
Obligation (To Albion)	

Qualities and Drawbacks: The character's commendations and shortcomings. Tamara is attractive, financially secure, and magically blessed. She is a bit naïve, targeted by malevolent forces, and a woman (in her time, a fault in the eyes of those in power).

Useful Information

OBSERVATION:	d10 + 7	Languages:	English, French,
INITIATIVE:	d10 + 5	Latin	
APPEARANCE:	+1		
ARMOUR:			
FEAR:	+4		
SURVIVAL / KO	12 / 9		

Combat Maneuvers

NAME	TO HIT BONUS	DAMAGE	DESCRIPTION
Dodge / Parry	+7	—	Defence Action
Grapple	+5	—	Resisted by Dodge
Punch	+3	4	Bash
Sword	+7	8	Slash / Stab
Spellcasting	+16	Varies	By Spell (see next page)
Counterspell	+13	—	Magic defence action; dispels spell
Deflect	+16	—	Magic defence action; deflects spell 45°
Hold	+15	—	Magic defence action; delays spell SL turns
Lesser Sensing	+11	—	Notice magical effects, nature, or possession
Volley	+10	—	Magic defence action; returns spell to caster

Combat Manoeuvres: A list of commonly used actions, complete with roll modifiers, damage output (if any), and notes. This list is separated into the mundane and the supernatural.

Monetary Conversion

4 Farthings / Pence
12 Pence / Shilling
20 Shillings / Pound

Success Level Table

ROLL TOTAL	SUCCESS LEVELS	DESCRIPTION
9-10	1	Modest
11-12	2	First Rate
13-14	3	Jolly Good
15-16	4	Topping
17-20	5	Brilliant
21-23	6	Extraordinary
24-26	7	Magnificent
27-29	8	Outstanding
30-32	9	Smashing
33-35	10	Ripping
+3	+1	

Apprentice

Ludlow: *Beware, children. When I pass from this world, the power and responsibility of your inheritance will remain. And death will seek you out the rest of your days.*

—LEGACY, ACT I

Apprentice types do not necessarily toil for another, but they are just beginning their struggle against the supernatural. The typical human is here, but so are newly dead ghosts and vampires as well as some faeries. This is the level at which most games commence. Apprentices make up for their limited features by having more Drama Points.

Attribute Points: 15
Quality Points: 15
Drawback Points: up to 10
Skill Points: 20
Drama Points: 20



Journeyman

Nelson: *Just another ghost now, as you can see. Another soldier in the greatest war of all. My duty for the Empire!*

—LEGACY, ACT II

Journeyman are not old salts yet, but they have seen some action or by their nature are more powerful. They have more points to devote to features, but fewer Drama Points. Characters at this level are trained Protectors, older ghosts, or even big game hunters and world travellers who know little of the supernatural, but are well acquainted with danger.

Attribute Points: 20
Quality Points: 20
Drawback Points: up to 10
Skill Points: 25
Drama Points: 10



Master

Bodicea: *You forget yourself, Horatio. I was spilling the blood of invaders on these shores centuries before you were a lustful glimmer in your father's eye.*

—LEGACY, ACT IV

These are full-fledged champions with incredible skills and abilities. This type is appropriate for centuries-old ghosts who vanquish entire coterie of faerie warriors or world-weary vampires who have seen lifetimes of conflict. Their antagonists are of equal and dangerous mettle.

Attribute Points: 25
Quality Points: 25
Drawback Points: up to 10
Skill Points: 30
Drama Points: 10



Attributes

Attributes are inborn specifications such as strength, intelligence, willpower, and the like. By selecting a set of Attributes, one defines the limits of what a character can accomplish. A character with low Willpower should not be surprised if the demon he confronts ignores his magical entreaties.

Purchasing Attributes

One purchases Attributes by expending Attribute points. Character Type allocates these points (see p. [?]).

Attributes can be purchased to level five on a one-for-one basis (i.e., Strength 3 costs three points in total). Attributes above level five are more dear: three points per additional level (e.g., Willpower 6 costs eight points in total). A human character must receive specific approval from the Director before applying any purchase, effect, or bonus that brings an Attribute beyond level six; such is the normal limit for humankind. Attributes of supernatural ilk (vampires, ghosts, faeries, and the like) plateau at level nine, and even then, such an expenditure taxes mightily.

At base, each Attribute must carry one point. Even so, this is greatly to be avoided. Such a weakness shall without a doubt be exploited when events are dire.

An Apprentice enjoys fifteen points for his six Attributes. He could list three Attributes at level two (average), and three at level three (above average). Rather, he could decrease an Attribute to one, and bring another to four. This character would shine in one aspect, be above average in most others, but be a liability in one manner.

A Journeyman traffics in twenty points. With that he could designate four Attributes at level three and two at level four. This creates a balanced character able in most aspects. He might also keep three Attributes at average, have two at level five, and one at level four. This creates an extremely gifted character in certain areas.

Primary Attributes

Strength: A measure of the character's physical power, Strength governs how much damage he imposes, how much weight he can carry, and how much punishment he can endure. Strength is a physical Attribute.

Strength Table

Strength	Lifting Capacity
1-5	50 lbs x Strength (Strength 5: 250 lbs)
6-10	200 x (Strength - 5) + 250 lbs (Strength 10: 1,250 lbs)
11-15	500 x (Strength - 10) + 1500 lbs (Strength 15: 4,000 lbs/2 tons)
16-20	1,000 x (Strength - 15) + 5,000 lbs (Strength 20: 10,000 lbs/5 tons)
21-25	1 ton x (Strength - 20) + 5 tons (Strength 25: 10 tons)
26-30	2 ton x (Strength - 25) + 10 tons (Strength 30: 20 tons)

The Strength Table notes Lifting Capacity, the amount a character can bear without great efforts. This load may be carried for a time but such encumbrance degrades dexterity. A character's maximum lifting weight, for brief periods of time, is double his Lifting Capacity. Such a weight significantly slows and encumbers a body.

Dexterity: Dexterity reflects physical co-ordination, agility, and gracefulness. This attribute aids in such tasks as riding a horse, dodging an attack, and exhibiting the social graces necessary for a proper gentleman. Dexterity determines whether a blow connects whereas Strength determines how much the blow injures. Dexterity is a physical Attribute.

Constitution: The hardness of a character, important when it comes to resisting disease, damage, and fatigue. Constitution is useful for those in strenuous and dangerous jobs, such as big game hunting and working for the Swifts. Constitution is a physical Attribute.

Intelligence: A character's ability to learn, correlate, and retain data. Note that intelligence and education are two separate things—Aristotle himself would be illiterate if he was given no opportunity to learn. Character skills reflect education. Intelligence is a mental Attribute.

Perception: This mental Attribute governs the usual five senses and any extra that a character might have. Peelers or detectives (to spot those important clues), people with persistent enemies (to see or hear them coming), and mystical types live longer when they are highly aware of their surroundings. Perception is a mental Attribute.

Willpower: This Attribute measures mental strength and self-control, and the capacity to resist fear, intimidation, and temptation. The strong-willed maintain their composure when a faerie drops its glamour, but matters much wilder and woollier than faerie glammers exist. Willpower is a mental Attribute.

