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Culture and community play an important part in MYTHRAS character creation. Culture determines the kind of society in which the character was raised, and so prescribes certain outlooks and philosophies he or she might have. More practically, culture helps define the values of the various skills that shape your character's overall capabilities. Community details the family, both immediate and extended, which helps to define kinsfolk and relationships with them.

CULTURE

There are four basic human cultures: Barbarian, Civilised, Nomadic and Primitive.

A description of each cultural background follows and includes a view of the culture from the perspective of one of its members. Incorporated in the description is a list of skill bonuses and new skills appropriate to that culture. Players should apply the skill bonuses immediately to the Standard skills on their Character Sheet, and add the additional new skills, known as Professional Skills (introduced in the next chapter), to the appropriate section of the sheet. In many cases a cultural background lists a range of skills and invites the player to pick one, or more, that will gain a bonus: in this way players from the same cultural background can ensure that their adventurers are different in the areas they have developed.

Also note that each culture comes with several Passions (see page 82). Passions are optional rules for MYTHRAS but they can add a great deal of depth and characterisation to the adventurer you are creating. If Passions are being used, then the Cultural Passions define ingrained preferences and prejudices for that culture. If Passions are not required, then simply ignore the entries.

CULTURAL SKILL POINTS

Each culture lists a variety of Standard Skills that the character learns as part of his formative development within that society. These are core abilities which all characters from the same specific culture improve to some degree. Characters also learn a number of more specialised or esoteric Professional Skills according to their

personal interests, and have the option of learning a cultural Combat Style.

Professional skills are further explained in the Skills chapter on page 44, but in brief they represent those skills which cannot be attempted without years of rigorous study and specialised training. Whereas a character has a basic ability in all Standard Skills, they have zero ability in any Professional Skill unless chosen as part of their cultural upbringing or career.

When applying cultural skills perform the following steps:

- ❖ Apply the static bonuses to Customs and Native Tongue: these are +40% to each, irrespective of the culture chosen.
- ❖ Select three Professional Skills from the options offered
- ❖ If desired, select a single Combat Style
- ❖ Distribute 100 points amongst the listed Standard Skills, the chosen Professional Skills, and the Combat Style (if selected), increasing that skill by 1% for every point spent on improving it. Players are free to choose how much each skill is improved by, but each skill must receive a minimum of 5% and cannot receive more than 15%.

Chosen Professional Skills start off at their base characteristic value as per Standard Skills. Some Professional Skills such as Crafts, Languages or Lores offer choice of a specialisation. In these cases the speciality chosen should be one which suits that culture.

Characters need not invest any points into a Combat Style if they are disinclined to do so, as some cultures have non-combatant members whether due to gender, caste or philosophy. Cultural Combat Styles usually reflect the informal training received by the community for hunting, personal protection or civil defence.

Each culture comes with a range of evocative names for Combat Styles. However, no weapons are defined, because Combat Styles are intended to be flexible tools for the Games Master to tailor the weapons to the particular culture or setting. Refer to the Combat Style section in the Combat chapter for further guidance.

BARBARIAN

Tribal in nature, barbarians tend to shun civilisation, viewing those who live in large towns and cities as weak and corrupt. Although their own settlements are also sedentary, they tend to be far smaller and closer to nature. Barbarian tribes occupy distinct territories, often half tamed wilderness, which they regard as their own for hunting, grazing and farming purposes. Most are adept in the use of weaponry as they must overcome many dangers throughout their lives – facing creatures of the wilds or mustering to defend their lands against rival tribes. Since they live in small communities the ties of kinship and clan are strong elements of their society.



SKILLS

STANDARD SKILLS

Athletics, Brawn, Endurance, First Aid, Locale, Perception; and either Boating or Ride.

EXAMPLE COMBAT STYLES

Barbarian Fyrdman, Berserker, Horse Eater, Seaborne Reiver, Weapon Thegen, Wolf Hunter.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Craft (any), Healing, Lore (any), Musicianship, Navigate, Seamanship, Survival, Track.

CULTURAL PASSIONS

- « Loyalty to Clan Chieftain
- « Love (friend, sibling or romantic lover)
- « Hate (creature, rival or clan)

THE BARBARIAN'S VOICE

'The people of the towns and cities call us barbarians because our houses are not made of mortared stone, and we choose not to crush ourselves together like too many fish in a shallow pond. They call us barbarians because we choose not to write down what we see, hear and say, but to memorise it as song. They call us barbarians because we fight amongst ourselves sometimes. They call us barbarians because they simply do not understand. Living in brick boxes must do something to the wits.'

'We choose to be close to the ground that gave rise to all of us. Our homes are made from the things we can readily find and shape, and we do not believe in building high or covering the ground in dressed marble. Life is hard; we appreciate it that way. It is good to feel the rain on our cheeks and the sun on our backs as we go about our business. Why lock ourselves away? The gods created us to experience the world, and you can't do that if you spend all your time imprisoned within walls. We accept the world for what it is and how it is. Town and city folk seek to make it something else. We appreciate comfort and warmth just like they do, but we take life as it comes, not as how we would like it be. A bed of good, fresh straw is as comfortable as any slab stuffed with feathers – and probably cleaner, and certainly better for the back.'

'Do not believe what you hear from them about our lack of laws. Our laws are embodied in our customs and traditions. When we transgress we expect to be punished. When we transgress badly we expect the punishment to be bad, too. We believe in saying what we mean, meaning what we say and doing what we have promised. Some view this as harsh, such as when we stone liars to death, but this means we do not have liars in our midst. Those tempted to transgress know the consequences and think twice. This helps us to live in harmony.'

'You question our raids? Well, do the civilised folk not make wars? Of course they do! When they make war thousands die, innocent victims amongst them. For us, we raid to settle scores and to build our strength – not just the strength of the tribe but the strength of character too. We expect to be raided and our neighbours expect us to raid them. Just as the hawk takes the dove on the wing. Life is a cycle and we are part of it; and when we raid, a few might die, but most do not. And when we die we are ready for it and unafraid. Through raiding we understand our place and keep it, just as the wolf knows its territory and keeps that.'

'So come and break bread with us. We do not care that you live in the stinking, narrow, disease filled streets of Meeros; as a visitor to our hearth you are a guest and will be treated as such. You will be served first, above even the headman, and we will share with you all that we have, keeping nothing back. In return we ask for news and stories, and perhaps a small token of your appreciation for our hospitality in the form of a song or a dance. Come, the elders are waiting.'

CIVILISED

The Civilised culture is epitomised by a semblance of law and order, underpinned by complex social codes, and supported by a bureaucracy. Civilised people believe themselves superior to all other cultures because their achievements tend towards permanence: sprawling cities, imposing temples, celebratory monuments, and the recording of history and events in books, tomes, and scrolls. Of course, this is a thin veneer. The most civilised of cities can be

more lawless than any barbarian frontier settlement; and the social codes may be cruder than the hospitality rituals of nomads. But the Civilised culture prides itself on its achievements, its infrastructure, its professional artisans, and its ability to easily extend its reach to wherever it wishes to go.



SKILLS

STANDARD SKILLS

Conceal, Deceit, Drive, Influence, Insight, Locale, Willpower.

EXAMPLE COMBAT STYLES

Citizen Legionary, City-state Phalangite, Levied Archer, Light Skirmisher, Street Thug, Town Militia.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Art (any), Commerce, Craft (any), Courtesy, Language (any), Lore (any), Musicianship, Streetwise.

CULTURAL PASSIONS

- ❖ Loyalty to Town/City
- ❖ Love (friend, sibling or romantic lover)
- ❖ Hate (rival, gang, district or city)

THE CIVILISED VOICE

'Isn't this a fine city? I mean, isn't it the finest you've ever seen? Safe, too. The militia sees to that, and although you might see the odd beggar wandering around the marketplace you're as likely to be attacked as you are to get eaten by monsters. We have rules, you see. Without rules we're no better than animals. Rules help us live together without fighting, and to make things we can sell so that we can move up in the world.'

'It's about order and a certain degree of comfort. And it's about education. I have listened to the priests and studied with philosophers, which helps me run my business. Because I run my business I can buy education for my children so they can run businesses too, when they're older. I can buy my wife the things we need to bring up the children, and sometimes there's a little left over for a treat. Sometimes. And to pay the taxes. It's very important that we pay the taxes.'

'But mostly it's about protection. That wall around the city is there for more than show. It keeps the Badoshi out and lets us live in peace. The garrison patrols the borders, and the wall, and alerts us when enemies are near. Not that they'd

dare attack us! We have the most important city in the whole region. Attacking us would invite hatred from our allies. So we are safe.'

'Well, yes, of course there's crime. There's always someone who isn't prepared to work for it and steals instead. Why, only last week my shop was turned over, and the day's takings stolen. And yes, there are muggings, and murders too, but the militia always catch the perpetrators; and when they do! Well, then they'll see our marvellous court in action. The Queen herself presides, you know, and she's a fair woman. She can tell when someone's guilty just by staring at them. And don't bother appealing; if you're guilty, you're off to the quarries. That's unless you've been stealing, in which case you lose fingers.'

'What I like most about the city is the wider community. It's about meeting new people every day, each with a new story to tell. I like seeing my neighbours, even if they are a bit loud sometimes, and I like the atmosphere of market day or Gods' Day when everyone's excited and out for a good time. I like having a roof over my head, and a warm bed to lie in at night (even if it is damp). I like having a door I can close on the world when I get fed up with it, and knowing that I don't have to go out with a spear to hunt my next meal.'

'Me? Give up the city? No chance!'

NOMADIC

Nomadic people are constantly on the move, with no home and hearth to call their own. They may wander aimlessly about, or might have several camps they move to and from throughout the year. They raise few crops and instead follow the migrations of animals or fish, perhaps even herding their own domesticated beasts. Nomads are adept at subsisting on what they can quickly and easily scavenge from their surroundings, letting nothing go to waste. The skills of the nomad culture should be tailored to their environment. Some journey vast distances on foot, others live in caravans or ride strange creatures, and some drift across the oceans on great floating rafts.



SKILLS

STANDARD SKILLS

Endurance, First Aid, Locale, Perception, Stealth; and two of the following: Athletics, Boating, Swim, Drive or Ride depending on the primary mode of travel.

EXAMPLE COMBAT STYLES

Camel Cavalry, Feathered Death Flinger, Horse Lord, Whale Hunter, Wheeled Warrior, Wolf Runner.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Craft (any), Culture (any), Language (any), Lore (any), Musicianship, Navigate, Survival, Track.

CULTURAL PASSIONS

- « Loyalty to Tribal Chieftain/Khan
- « Love (friend, sibling or romantic lover)
- « Hate (creature, rival or tribe)

THE NOMAD'S VOICE

In the winter we move down to the shelter of the valleys where our people have made camp every year for fifty generations. We wait until the ground thaws, living all the while on the dried meats and fruits laid down in the autumn and protect ourselves from the snow and cold. Last year we arrived in the valley to find it had been occupied by savage, diseased wolves, and we had to drive them out and cleanse the place with fire. A dozen died in that fight. A dozen hands fewer to tend the herd and forage.

In the spring we move to the high plateau, where the hunting is good. The Great Hunt takes place in that time, when the strong go and find antelope, leopard, and yak, and the rest move the herd up out of the valley. Those are good days, and we give thanks to the spirits, and sacrifice a cow or two. We meet the other clans at the Great Sky Cairn, and exchange news, and gifts. There is always a feast, and many sore heads, but we agree the business for the year, and discuss what the game trails are like, and how the pasture holds out. Last year one clan brought with it a monster they had captured and tamed. It was a scaly thing with tusks and hide like tree bark; the shamans said it was unnatural, but the other clan kept it as a watchdog.

And then in the summer we move out across the high plateau where we graze our animals and gather fruits to prepare for the winter. Sometimes we battle, seeking to hold the best grasslands, or raid barbarian settlements lurking in the forest, but mostly we know peace. It is difficult to keep enemies when you're always on the move. Neither do we waste. Waste is an insult to the gods! We eat, or find a use, for everything we hunt. We honour what nature provides, and do not squander it. It brings tears to the eyes and heart to see the waste in the stinking cities.

Why do we follow this life? Because of the animals, because of the seasons! The world moves and so must we. If you stay in one place you sap the earth and it stops giving. Stay in one place and sooner or later enemies or monsters find you, and before you know it you're fighting every day instead of every now and again. By moving we learn the land and take its best. If you set down roots, you become like a plant and we are not plants. We have legs and we walk and run like the deer walk and run. We are free and being free we must move freely. Our hunters and herders are strong because we keep our blood moving and stay in time with the seasons, moving when the earth and the spirits say it is time to move. Never stop moving. Even when death claims us, we go to the Great Hunting where all is spring and the game is good, and the spirits look after us as we have looked after them.

We have a good life.

PRIMITIVE

Of all peoples primitives are those that live closest with the land, in tune with its hidden secrets. Other cultures commonly dismiss them as little more than animals, yet they merely eschew the technology that so many others take for granted; relying instead on flint spears and arrows, and their skill for survival in the wild. Living in extended family groups, primitive cultures gather around very simple dwellings that can range from caves and areas of natural shelter through to lean-tos or very basic huts. Primitives are typically hunter-gatherers with either few, or poorly developed, systems for farming and husbandry. However, certain cultural beliefs, often based on superstitions, can be very well defined. Few primitive cultures have developed anything approaching a written language although paintings and other pictorial symbols serve as a means of communication.

**SKILLS****STANDARD SKILLS**

Brawn, Endurance, Evade, Locale, Perception, Stealth; and one of either Athletics, Boating or Swim.

EXAMPLE COMBAT STYLES

Flint Death Dealer, Ghost Warrior, Head Hunter, Jaguar Brother, Jungle Savage, Savannah Hunter.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Craft (any), Healing, Lore (any), Musicianship, Navigate, Survival, Track.

CULTURAL PASSIONS

- ❖ Loyalty to Chief/Headman
- ❖ Love (friend, sibling or romantic lover)
- ❖ Hate (something that scares or intimidates you)

THE PRIMITIVE VOICE

The world is full of fear. It is a wrathful place and we know its wrath. So we hide. We try to keep the gods happy with sacrifices of blood but still they punish us. We asked the wise woman why the gods are so angry, and she told us it is because we are not perfect, like they are, and it is our fault. So now we know. Can we be perfect? I don't think so. I think the gods like it that way. I think they like having something to blame and then punish. So we fear them.

Our home is the great cave that runs deep into that mountain. When the gods send the monsters to eat us we flee deep inside while the warriors hurl their spears and the shaman makes her chants. We paint our victories on the cave wall and tell stories about them so the children will know that even though the gods are angry at us we are a strong people and want to make things good. We eat the monsters we kill and make weapons and tools from the bones.

Our wise woman told us that the people who live in the woodlands two days from us made the gods even angrier because they stole the secret of fire, so we went and killed them. We thought the gods would be pleased with us for killing the thieves but that night they sent a great plague and more monsters, so maybe the wise woman was wrong, but she probably wasn't. I wonder how you get to be a wise woman?

Our chieftain married the young woman who we took as a slave when we killed the enemies, and we know that is wrong because her hair is red. Red is the colour of the trickster god but the chieftain won't listen. He was challenged and killed the hunter who challenged him and ate his heart. He gave the brain to his new wife so she might eat and gain some wisdom. Perhaps that's how you get to be a wise woman? Because she has red hair we fear her, and we fear the chieftain because he's changed. She's put a spell on him, we think. That's probably how her people stole fire from the gods. I think she did it.

I made my first spear yesterday. I knapped the flint myself, and tied it firm with the twine I made from dried pig gut. It is very straight and very sharp. I went looking for an enemy to kill, and found someone lost in the hills not far from our cave. I tested my spear on him and it stuck so deep I nearly broke the haft getting it out. I ate his heart without bothering to make it hot, and now I have his soul. I'm not sure I want two souls, so I will go to the wise woman and give her the skull from the enemy I tested my spear on, and she will take the second soul from me. It will be my slave then, and I will make it worship me like a god, and I will make it fear me.

Because the world is full of fear.

BACKGROUND EVENTS

Background Events are notable things that have happened in the character's life before he began his career as an adventurer. Some are formative; some are fortunate and some are unfortunate. Background Events are optional, but using them adds to the character's history, and can be used by creative players and Games Masters as hooks for scenarios or even complete campaigns.

If using Background Events you may feel free to choose an event that appeals or roll randomly. Random rolls may produce very interesting, but potentially conflicting results. If a roll is not to your liking or seriously disrupts the idea and concept you have for

ANATHAYM'S SAGA

Steve, the GM has already decided that the characters are residents of a civilised city-state named Meeros, loosely based upon the myths of ancient Crete. Anathaym is therefore from a Civilised culture.

She begins by adding the default 40% bonus to Customs and Native Tongue, then chooses the three Professional Skills she learned growing up in Meeros; deciding upon Courtesy 23% (INT+CHA), Lore (Geography) 28% (INTx2), and Streetwise 16% (POW+CHA).

Anathaym now has 100 points to assign to the listed Standard Skills and the three Professional Skills she selected. She applies them thusly: Conceal +5, Deceit +5, Drive +5, Influence +10, Insight +10, Locale +5, Willpower +10, Courtesy +15, Lore (Geography) +10, and Streetwise +15. The remaining 10 points she withholds since she wishes to learn a Combat Style.

Steve says that, as a citizen of the city, Anathaym can take the Meerish Slinger style, learning as a child the art of slinging which was augmented with the city's civic training in shortsword and medium shield. The style starts with a base score of 27% (STR+DEX), and she adds her remaining 10 points to it.

Finally, for her Passions, Anathaym takes Loyalty (City), Love (Sibling), and Hate (Rival). These will be determined later.

After applying her cultural modifiers Anathaym's skills are: Athletics 27%, Boating 24%, Brawn 21%, Conceal 23%, Customs 68%, Dance 25%, Deceit 28%, Drive 28%, Endurance 26%, Evade 32%, First Aid 30%, Influence 28%, Insight 31%, Locale 33%, Native Tongue 63%, Perception 21%, Ride 23%, Sing 16%, Stealth 30%, Swim 24%, Unarmed 27%, Willpower 24%; Courtesy 38%, Lore (Geography) 38%, and Streetwise 31%; Combat Style (Meerish Slinger) 37%.



your character then do re-roll the event. Background Events should enrich the character – not disrupt it.

If your starting character is older than the MYTHRAS standard, then you may gain multiple rolls on this table (see Age, page 33). If you roll a result twice, re-roll one of the results. If two results contradict each other either discard both and roll again, or agree with the Games Master how best to make both results work together.

The Background Events tables begin on the next page.

BACKGROUND EVENTS

<i>1d100</i>	<i>Event</i>
01	A case of mistaken identity resulted in a period of imprisonment or some other punishment for your character. You have long wanted to find whoever it was who was responsible for the crime you were punished for.
02	A curse has been placed upon your family. For generations all children of the opposite gender to your character have died in tragic circumstances. It falls to each generation to select one who will find a way to lift the curse, and you are the chosen one.
03-04	A girl in your community wants you to carry messages to a boy in another community. She pays you well enough and you believe that the messages are love letters. But can you be sure? Why are these two not allowed to communicate directly? What would happen if they did? What would happen if anyone else found out? And why did she choose you to be her messenger?
05-06	A group of travelling players visited your community and stayed for several weeks. They performed feats of legerdemain, juggling and acrobatics. As a child you were enthralled, and spent as much time as you could with them. Then you were kidnapped, carried far away from your homeland and abandoned. How did you escape? Did you even make it home?
07-08	A priceless object owned or protected by your family was stolen by enemies. On his deathbed the head of the family made you swear to retrieve it from the thieves. You're not sure what the item is or why it is so special, but loyalty to your deceased relative drives you to complete your oath.
09-10	A relative or family member has bequeathed you a secret: the whereabouts of a lost legendary heirloom; the location of an imprisoned deity; or maybe the rituals for a special spell. The information is shrouded in family myth, and you have been oath-sworn to either protect this secret or find and awaken it.
11-12	A sibling has been betrothed to someone from your childhood that you consider an enemy. You are forced to make a sullen peace with this new in-law but your hatred still burns beneath. What is worse is that you fear your sibling is being turned against you. What can you do to set matters to rights?
13	You believe yourself to be suffering a divine or magical curse. Moan, groan and whinge at every opportunity, or remain completely stoic at every misfortune that befalls you in the future.
14-15	An old, warlike relative has died, bequeathing you a useless suit of armour which will fall apart the first time it's used. However the scratches and dents tell of great battles and a life of adventure. Despite the shoddiness of the armour you are very fond of it and, when wearing it, you feel as if the spirit of your relative is watching over you.
16-17	A scholar, priest or mystic visits your community, and demonstrates his almost supernatural wisdom. You are fascinated by what you see but the individual does not remain long enough for you to learn more. You do, however, receive dreams that show you meeting up with this person again and learning from him. When, where, and how will form a future part of the story.
18-19	Distant relatives demanded that you be sent to stay with them. Your father could not refuse – why was that? The relatives treated you well but were always cold and distant with you, despite insisting that you live with them for several years. On returning to your true family, they had also become distant with you. What is at the root of this strangeness? Why have you been caught in the middle?
20	Fate has closely watched over you as you grew to adulthood. Siblings have drowned, friends died from plague, parents disgraced, but you have emerged unscathed from everything. Are you truly blessed by the gods?
21-22	For some reason you have shamed your family and have been cast out. What did you do? Is there hope of reconciliation? Were you to blame or were you just a scapegoat for someone else? At first you lived on your wits, but people in your community grew suspicious and shunned you.
23-24	It transpires that one of your parents is, in fact, a member of a noble family (and possibly even a prince or princess) who has turned their back on their heritage to live a simple life. This does, however, mean you are an heir to a noble estate or title. Will you ever realise your inheritance?
25	On your birthday two years ago it rained frogs. Last birthday it rained lizards. What will it rain this year? More to the point, why does it rain strange things on your birthday?
26-27	Playing one day you discovered a dead man – a warrior – in the cellar or outbuildings. Who was he? And more importantly who killed him? Was it your father, or worse still your mother, who had been looking rather nervous of late...
28-29	Somehow you have picked up a loyal companion or retainer. Maybe a childhood friend; perhaps a hanger-on from some chance encounter. This does not necessarily make your companion a welcome presence, but the relationship has somehow endured over the years.
30-31	You come into possession of a mundane item that a friend or family member claims is magical. So far the item has not exhibited any magical properties, and it could well be that some form of quest is needed to activate its magical abilities. Worse, the item if known about may attract unwelcome attention. What the abilities are remain for the Games Master to determine at an appropriate time.

<i>1d100</i>	<i>Event</i>
32	You have been marked as special by the gods. You carry with you a symbol or marking that is of great reverence to a particular religion or cult. The gods and the cult in question may be very far from where you were born, and may even be an enemy of your culture, but this makes no difference.
33-34	You have a favoured and beloved pet which follows them everywhere. It has no abilities or special powers, but offers comfort and companionship.
35	You have studied with a noted master, scholar or wise man. Whenever you meet up with the teacher, you can request personal tuition for one or more of your related Professional Skills.
36-37	You have suffered some form of horrific attack that has left you psychologically scarred, and extremely wary about the situation or thing which harmed you. This might be nearly dying from drowning, man-eating lions or necromantic magic. Whatever it is, gain a new passion of Fear (thing which harmed you) or roleplay your subsequent trepidation.
38-39	You have sworn a fervent oath with a member of the opposite sex. You are compelled to help this person, and never betray him or her. By some intuition you are always aware of their presence in your dreams, and sense any danger he or she is subject to even when many miles apart.
40-41	You were born into a once rich and powerful family that has somehow fallen on rough times or suffered a severe blow to its reputation. Perhaps the family name is a mockery, or reviled, or even revered still by those who know the truth.
42-43	You were born with an unusual sensitivity to a particular substance, species of creature or type of supernatural power. When the subject in question is nearby, you suffer a mild physiological effect such as tingling fingers, sneezing or headaches. Upon a successful Perception roll you can determine the rough location of the detected thing.
44-45	You were either born with, or somehow received, a mark, blemish or scar that resembles a glyph. The symbol does not exhibit any power yet, but all who see it remark on it – some acting with wonder, and others fear. A quest of some kind is needed to awaken the glyph; but is this wise? Only time will tell.
46	You are magically gifted, attracting the attention of a scrying sorcerer, the priest of a cult or a wandering shaman. If permitted, you may choose to enter a magical profession. If magic-using characters are not permitted, you instead become the focus of that magician, who desires to extract your inherent power via some suitably nefarious, and possibly fatal, means.
47	You awoke one morning to find a valuable object, one with significant religious or ruling importance, lying in bed with you. The question of how precisely it got there aside, do you keep the object with the intent to sell or use it later, or do you return it, thus placing yourself under suspicion of its theft?
48-49	When you were a child you nearly died from a fatal disease, but since then you have never, ever been ill. Are you simply paranoid about any type of infection or do you believe you are immune to any form of contagion?
50	Several years ago you were attacked by an unidentifiable wild beast, which nearly killed you. The creature vanished but since that time you've felt an ominous presence when wandering the edges of your homelands. Thus far the beast has not reappeared, yet perhaps it's merely biding its time. What was the creature, and why is it hunting you?
51-52	You spent your childhood as a slave before either escaping or being freed. The experience had a significant effect upon you. How do you view slavery now? Do you hate and fear it, or did the experience institutionalise you?
53-54	The eldest surviving member of your family harbours a great secret, and many times they have told you that when you are old enough, it will be entrusted to you. What is this secret? When will the time be right? Your Games Master will decide, but until then you must be patient. Can you contain your curiosity?
55-56	As a child you witnessed some ceremony or ritual that had a profound effect on your psyche. The chants and dances haunt your dreams, and you feel compelled to discover what it was you witnessed. The outcome of the ritual is unknown, it might be for good or ill; you do not know. Its true nature must be discovered through adventuring.
57-58	Your family was hunted by powerful foes. Why is this? Why did your family need to keep moving and hiding? What do the pursuers want? Are they still following you? Should you confront them? You are sick and tired of being on the run.
59-60	You are a bastard-born. Your mother swears your father was a man of note and station, but she herself is of low status, and you are considered even lower than she is. Where your father is, no one knows, but you would love to meet him some day and discover the truth about him. Perhaps, if reunited with your father, the stigma of your birth might be erased.
61-62	You are adopted. Your true parents either abandoned you or were killed, and the family that raised you has always accepted you as one of their own – except for certain jealous relatives who see you as an imposter, and would gladly have you cast out of the family so their own offspring might benefit. You have had to fight their resentment for most of your life but now things appear to be coming to a head.
63-64	You came across a tinker or peddler on the road. He offered to read your fortune for a silver piece, but you had no money, and instead offered to share your meal with him, which he accepted. Reading your palm he declared you would become a great hero and travel the world, but not before encountering 'A great sorrow, a great victory, and a great reversal.' You have often wondered what he meant because none of those things have come to pass. Might the tinker have been lying?

<i>1d100</i>	<i>Event</i>
65-66	You come from a family that is artistically adept. Their fame has spread far and wide, granting you access to high status patrons if you yourself are an artist, craftsman or performer. Conversely it is a constant source of irritation when casual acquaintances are taken aback at your lack of talent.
67-68	A sibling committed a heinous crime that has brought shame on your family. They fled soon after, vanishing entirely, casting suspicion on you. Were you yourself falsely blamed for the crime? Or did you willingly confess, to preserve the remnants of your family's honour? Is blood truly thicker than water?
69-70	You are a twin. Your brother or sister has similar characteristics and skills to yourself but you are clearly different people. Are you close, as twins usually are, or estranged? You always seem to know where your sibling is, even if relations between you are not good.
71-72	You are the sole survivor of a horrific catastrophe. Your entire family was wiped out by some tragedy leaving you to fend completely for yourself.
73-74	You met a great hero (or villain) at a time when he or she was unknown. You suspected, perhaps, that this person was destined for greatness (or infamy), but you still became friends before you parted. Will they remember you? Will you still be friends?
75-76	Your elder brother or sister is (or was) a great hero for some reason, and you live somewhat in their shadow. You are desperate to prove that you are your sibling's equal, and want to outdo their deeds, proving that your family can produce more than one hero.
77-78	Your family crossed a wealthy or influential family and have suffered because of it. That family is now your Enemy.
79-80	Your family follows a religion or philosophy unaccepted by the rest of your community. Possibly they have kept their beliefs hidden, or perhaps they simply ignore the sneers and cold looks. Whatever, it marks you as different, and the increasing persecution has made your convictions stronger.
81-82	Your family has a reputation for luck. Everything your family does turns-out splendidly; it has wealth it has never seemed to work for; it has a strong reputation; no ill has ever befallen it. You have, however, heard something that makes you suspicious of this charmed life you've led. How did your family come by this luck? Was a much higher price – perhaps a darker price – paid for it?
83-84	Your family performed a great service for a wealthy noble or person of influence. As a reward you were taken into that person's service. You gain this powerful patron as an Ally.
85-86	Your family was ever cruel to you. Why, you do not know, but your siblings always seemed to receive better treatment and more favour. You have always been denied. That is why, at the first opportunity, you left them behind, forgetting them and seeking the life of an adventurer.
87-88	Your hereditary line is slowly becoming extinct, every year one member of the diminishing family dies in a frightful and twisted 'accident'. What is behind this run of misfortune? Are you family cursed or has some evil agency taken to expunging your blood line? Are you next?
89-90	Your family was involved in some community event that has made them either famous or infamous. The legacy of what they did follows you everywhere. What did your family do? Can you shake the reputation? Do you want to?
91-92	Your family was wealthy once, but is now reduced to poverty. How did it lose its fortune? Was it due to circumstance or the actions of others? If others, how did they ruin you – and how will you make them pay?
93-94	Your family, previously poor and beggared, has ever struggled to survive. Yet when you were a lad somehow your father attained great wealth. How did they come by this money? What effect did it have on the family? Will somebody arrive to reclaim or perhaps terminate the mysterious fortune?
95-96	Your family, through financial need, sent you into service with another family of some prestige. As their ward you have learned many things about them including a dire secret that, if revealed, would get you killed. What is this hidden truth? What damage could it do? Decide with your Games Master.
97-98	You accidentally killed a close friend or sibling when playing together. The horror of the situation caused you to flee, remaining silent about the tragedy. When the adults finally went out to search for the missing adolescent no trace could be found, although they searched the area where you left the body. You have lived with the guilt ever since, but whatever became of you compatriot? Did they escape death or did something unspeakable happen to the body?
99-00	You recently experienced a supernatural epiphany which shook you. Whilst out alone a god personally came to speak with you, or perhaps a host of spirits manifested and danced about you. The event, whatever it was, may be seen as a blessing by the local community or conversely deemed blasphemous. In more secular societies the experience, if reported, could be viewed as the onset of insanity.

COMMUNITY

Having determined the character's culture it is now time to develop his community ties. Community consists of a number of related elements: family, contacts, background events and passions. Passions have been mentioned in the Culture section earlier, but you will find the rules for them here.

Work through each of the Community elements as described below adding the details to your character sheet. This is an opportunity to really bring your character to life – to work out what family he has, what friends and enemies he might have made, what strange or odd things may have happened to him in his past, and what things drive his loyalty, his loves and his hates.

CHARACTER SOCIAL CLASS

Social Class measures the prosperity, resources and social position of characters. Their class influences the starting money available to them, and likely Background Resources – things to which the character has access and can return to when not adventuring. It is additionally used to determine income between adventures (see the Economics and Equipment chapter).

Unless it has been predefined as the consequence of a Background Event or specifically decided by the Games Master, a character's Social Class is rolled randomly – although it can be chosen or re-rolled if the Games Master permits. There are four separate tables, one for each culture, which determine the class the character or his family have enjoyed for most of their life.

Class defines broad categories of social strata, but may have more subdivisions as determined by the game setting. In general the more advanced the culture, the more complex its social structure. Players should confer with the Games Master to decide what precise title or rank is appropriate for their character.

The Social Class tables start on page [24](#).

STARTING MONEY

All characters begin the game with commodities or currency worth:

- ❖ Barbarians: 4d6 x50 silver pieces
- ❖ Civilised: 4d6 x75 silver pieces
- ❖ Nomadic: 4d6 x25 silver pieces
- ❖ Primitive: 4d6 x10 silver pieces

Multiply the character's starting money by the Money Modifier to determine the available cash or commodities the character has. At the Games Master's discretion additional money generated by the Money Modifier may be in the form of goods or chattels rather than ready coin.

The Background Resources reflect additional items the character either can start the game with – such as a mount (horse, camel or beast appropriate to culture) – and things he can call upon, such as servants or slaves.

FAMILIES

Every character comes from a family. The family might be rambling with dozens of members or small and tightknit with only a handful of kin. The family's reputation might help or hinder

ANATHAYM'S SAGA

To determine her Social Class, Anathaym rolls d100 and gets 97. Fortune has smiled upon the heroine since she is descended from the Aristocracy. The Games Master decides she is closely related to one of the city's ruling oligarchs, granting her a privileged position in society and allowing her to live in her family's well appointed home.

For her starting money Anathaym has 4d6 x75 SP - her roll is 9 which gives her 675 SP in total. As a member of the aristocracy her Money Modifier of 5 increases this to 3,375 SP personal wealth. The Games Master says that Anathaym has 1,000 SP in ready coin, with the remaining 2,375 SP being in the form of jewellery and clothes.

Next Anathaym checks the status of her parents – her roll of 67 indicates that only her father remains alive, her mother dying whilst she was a little girl. She then rolls 19 on the siblings table and gets a 1 on the 1d4 for how many brothers and sisters she has. Emma decides her character's one sibling is a sister by the name of Kara.

The Games Master thinks it is wise to delay the generation of her extended family until later. However a roll of 51 on the Family Reputation table shows that whilst Anathaym's family is not prominent, it has no black marks against it. A further roll of 77 on the Connections table results in one Rival.

The Games Master decides that Xenos will be Anathaym's Rival. They come from families of a similar background, and even grew up together. But, as Xenos has matured he has become something of a debauched wastrel who constantly mocks Anathaym's diligence. He also harbours designs for her sister, Kara, and Anathaym is determined to protect Kara from this rat. Xenos has broken many hearts, caring nothing for the wreckage he leaves behind. Anathaym is determined this will not happen to her sister...



the character, or its connections might prove useful for all sorts of reasons now or in the future.

If desired, roll 1d100 on each of the Family tables below to determine parental status, the number of siblings the character has, and the extended family's structure. Next determine the family's connections and reputation. Does the family enjoy respect in its community? Do its connections bring it a level of power or prestige? Are there any skeletons in the closet that might threaten stigma or ostracism? Does reputation bring allies or enemies?

It is recommended to leave the details of large families vague. One way of developing a story for MYTHRAS characters is to introduce family members – such as that shrewish aunt or roguish cousin – through roleplaying and scenario development. Keeping details vague at this stage gives the Games Master the flexibility for creating such introductions. Family tables start on page [25](#).

ALLIES, CONTACTS, RIVALS AND ENEMIES

Allies, Contacts, Rivals and Enemies are people, or perhaps organisations, that a character has developed a relationship with for either good or ill. At this stage all one needs to do is give these supporting characters a name (Contact: Gundleus the Sage, for example, does just fine; or, Enemy: Cult of Yethis); fleshing out the details can come later.

- ❖ Ally: a friend, colleague or relation who shares the same cause as the character and will offer help and guidance when called upon. Depending on their personality the Ally may want a favour in return or might provide aid for free.
- ❖ Contacts: people of potential influence the character knows. A Contact is an acquaintance who can help, not one who will.
- ❖ Rival: those who oppose the character for the same or similar goals, and will attempt to interfere with or harass him.
- ❖ Enemy: someone who wishes the character harm, and will go to lengths to ensure the character suffers in some way. Enemies may take direct or indirect action, possibly trying to influence contacts and allies to bring about the character's misfortune.

Allies, Contacts, Rivals and Enemies are intended to act in the background, providing occasional interactions with the character but not always being prominent in their lives. These can be good sources of background information and, in certain circumstances, drive crucial parts of a scenario, but they are generally intended to be bit-players in the characters' stories rather than fully-fleshed non-player characters. Of course, they may well develop into fully-formed non-player characters as a campaign develops, and so Games Masters should keep careful note of who they are, how they look and act, what they know, and how they have (and will) interact with the character. This will maintain consistency in how they are portrayed.

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Why are the characters adventuring together? What connects them and forms the companionship? It is recommended that each player choose at least one of his fellows and, working with the chosen colleague, devise a reason for the relationship. Some examples:

- ❖ Childhood friends who have continued together into adulthood.
- ❖ Members of the same community or culture.
- ❖ Members of the same profession, or, if from different professions, have had chance to meet and do business.
- ❖ A lucky encounter in a tavern, inn or other social establishment.
- ❖ A shared acquaintance (such as a third character in the group).

Starting characters wishing to form a personal connection as part of their background are rewarded with a pool of Luck Points available to the entire party, rather than just a single individual. The number of Luck Points starts at two and increases by 1 per character who has formed a personal connection within the group. This pool of points functions in a very similar way to the individual Luck Points a character has, but are there for the benefit of all those within the group. They can only be drawn upon by a character when he is actively helping, or intends to help, another character (this can be anyone in the group needing help; not just the character with whom a relationship has been established).

For example, the players in Steve's game decide that they will all hail from the same city, Meeros, and belong to families that have known each other for years, the characters growing-up together. There are four players altogether: Emma (playing Anathaym), Kathrine (playing Kara), James (playing Hallax), and Rob (playing Tor-Irdeen, a minotaur character). Clearly Rob's character is unlikely to have grown-up with the humans, so Steve rules that connections will come later, through play. But for the humans of Meeros the Group's Luck Points equal 5: two points to start with, plus one point for each human, and the connections they have formed. Steve tells Rob that in the first session of game play, Tor-Irdeen will be introduced and given a chance to form a connection with the humans. Depending on how successful this plays out, then the Group Luck Points will increase to 6.

PASSIONS

Using Passions in MYTHRAS is optional but their use can greatly assist players and Games Masters in deepening the nature of the character, introducing plot hooks based on a character's desire or prejudices, and helping the player to understand who his character is, what drives him, and so on.

Passions are measured in the same way as skills; they have a starting value based on two characteristics and are rated between 1 and 100 (or higher). Passions represent several things:

- ❖ Loyalties and allegiances
- ❖ Strongly held beliefs or ideals
- ❖ Emotion felt towards someone or something

A Passion can be improved in the same way as a skill or it can be either increased or decreased by the Games Master depending on circumstances. *Aild, for example, may have Loyalty to Achaius, his clan chief, at 70%. However if Aild were to make an alliance with an enemy clan that Achaius disapproves of, then the Games Master could, quite reasonably, have Aild's Loyalty drop to 50%, representing an erosion of his fidelity. Conversely,*

PASSIONS TABLE

<i>Object of Passion</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Starting Percentage</i>
A person, in a romantic or familial context	Lover, Sibling, Wife, Parent, Aloof or Unsuspecting Object of Desire	30% plus Loved one's POW+CHA
A person in a platonic context (a friendship or loyalty, for example)	Leader, Teacher, Ruler, Master, Rescuer, Priest, Enemy	30% plus Character's POW and subject's CHA
A person in an averse context	Enemy leader, Rival worker, Husband of Desired Lover, Murderer of Friend, Thief	30% plus Character's POW and subject's CHA
An organisation or group of people	Family, School, Temple, Religion, Local Community, Military Unit, Guild, Nobles	30% plus Character's POW+INT
A race or species	Foreigners, Non Humans, Tigers, Supernatural Beasts, Ghosts, Primitives	30% plus Character's POW x 2
A place	A Country, Home Town, Holy Place, Capital City, Graveyards, Mountains	30% plus Character's POW+INT
An object or substance	The Iron Throne, Diabolic Relic, Magic, Darkness, Ancient Heirloom, Gemstones	30% plus Character's POW x 2
A concept or ideal	An Ethic, Moral Code, Freedom, Personal Honour, Betrayal, Dishonesty	30% plus Character's POW+INT

Achais might grant Aild a favour which increases the Loyalty to 80%, demonstrating the strengthening bond.

A Passion can be for anything – a person, an organisation, an ideal, even an object. Passions are typically described by a verb such as: *Comfort, Desire, Despise, Destroy, Espouse, Fear, Flee, Foreswear, Hate, Love, Loyalty to, Protect, Repudiate, Respect, Seek, Subvert, Torment or Uphold*.

The verb describes the nature of the relationship. Loyalty, for instance, does not always indicate respect; Respect does not always indicate love; Despising something is not the same as hating it; Loving someone is not the same as being loyal to them. The verb used should therefore reflect how the character feels either personally or culturally towards the subject.

A Passion can be established at any point in the game – either during this phase of character creation or, and perhaps most interestingly, during game play. All a character needs to do to establish a Passion is stipulate that he intends to form the passion and give it an appropriate adjective: Love (Elissa), for example; or Shun (Sorcery).

The starting value of the Passion varies according to its type - see the Passions Table, opposite.

All the Starting Percentages may be modified by the Games Master to reflect deeper or lesser devotion; thus, Love (Elissa) might begin for a character at 55%, using the above Starting Percentage calculation, but, because the character is so faithful to Elissa (a childhood sweetheart), the Games Master decides to increase the Starting Percentage to 75%, taking into account the lifelong devotion.

Where a person or people are concerned, the Passion does not need to be reciprocated. It is up to the Games Master to decide if it is or not, and the Player must decide if unreciprocated love will strengthen his character's Passion, or weaken it. If the decision is made to strengthen the Passion (unrequited love often drives the heart to deeper fondness or infatuation), then the Passion value can be increased (or decreased, if the depth of feeling is diminished) by 1d10%.

This section only details what Passions represent and their default values. How Passions are used in the game is discussed in Chapter 6.

MARRIAGE

This is purely optional, but is the character married or betrothed to be married? Marriage is the most common way for families to advance their status, position and power, and so making marriage arrangements, even for children who are not yet old enough to be married, is common. To decide Marital Status roll 1d100 for the character and compare it with the character's base value Influence skill. If the result is equal to or less than base value Influence then the character is Betrothed – that is, has been promised into a marriage. If the 1d100 roll is equal to or less than 10% of the character's Influence then the character is already married.

How happy or prosperous this marriage is depends entirely on the player and Games Master. Take a little time to think about the nature of the relationship: is it a political or economic betrothal? Does Social Class play a part? Do the two partners love each other? Perhaps they hate each other. If love or hate are involved then consider establishing a Passion to represent the depth and nature of the relationship.

And, if the character is married, have any children formed from the union? Again this can be an agreed situation between the player and Games Master. Or the player can roll 1d4-1 to determine the number of children present. If there are children, then roll 1d4 to determine the ages of the children. If the age rolls are identical, then the character has produced twins or even triplets. If the character starts play middle aged or older, roll the children's ages on the Age Table (see page 34) as if they were one category younger.

SOCIAL CLASS TABLES

BARBARIAN SOCIAL CLASS

1d100	Class	Example Title	Money Mod	Background Resources
01-05	Outcast	Exile, Outlaw	0.25	Nothing but the clothes on their back, and maybe some personal armament
06-15	Slave	Bondsman, Caxtos, Peon, Serf, Thrall	0.5	Resides on owners property; owns a few keepsakes
16-80	Freeman	Churl, Commoner, Feine, Freedman, Karl, Labourer	1	Rented accommodation or farmland; possesses own tools or livestock, simple weapons
81-95	Gentry	Ealdormen, Flaith, Hauldr, Reeve, Thane	3	Owes a house, and either a farmstead, business or ship; furniture; tools, weapons & armour, mount, several servant or slave retainers; support from locals
96-100	Ruling	Chieftain, Cyning, Earl, Jarl, King	5	As above but lives in a great hall and possessions are of excellent quality; fealty from a country or smaller region

CIVILISED SOCIAL CLASS

1d100	Class	Example Title	Money Mod	Background Resources
01-02	Outcast	Beggar, Mendicant, Vagabond, Vagrant	0.25	Nothing but the clothes on their back, and maybe some personal armament
03-20	Slave	Chattel, Captive, Helot, Servant	0.5	Resides on owners property; owns a few keepsakes
21-70	Freeman	Citizen, Peasant, Proletariat, Tenant, Vassal	1	Rented accommodation or farmland; possesses own tools or livestock; simple weapons
71-95	Gentry	Bailiff, Equite, Master, Official, Steward, Warden	3	Owes property, farm or business; furniture, tools, weapons & armour, mount, several servant or slave retainers; support from locals
96-99	Aristocracy	Archon, Baron, Count, Duke, Lord, Nawab, Noble, Oligarch, Patrician, Satrap	5	Owes several properties, extensive farmlands or multiple businesses; expensive furniture, tools, weapons & armour, mounts, many servants or slaves; fealty from regional inhabitants
100	Ruling	Caliph, Czar, Dictator, Emperor, Imperator, Maharajah, Mogul, Pasha, Pharaoh, Potentate, Prince, Rajah, Shah, Sultan, Tyrant	10	As above but of priceless quality; fealty from a dominion or nation

NOMAD SOCIAL CLASS

1d100	Class	Example Title	Money Mod	Background Resources
01-05	Outcast	Outlaw, Rebel	0.25	Nothing but the clothes on their back, maybe some personal armament, and mount or small boat if suitable
06-10	Slave	Bool, Convict, Prisoner, Thrall	0.5	Resides on conquered lands, or in owner's yurt or vessel, owns a few keepsakes, plus tools or simple weapon
11-90	Freeman	Arad, Haran, Kinsmen, Subjects	1	Possesses own mounts, cart or small boat; owns yurt or similar, half a dozen livestock, weapons, simple armour, a slave or two
91-100	Ruling	Chieftain, Emir, Khan, Khaqan, Sea Lord, Sheikh	3	Owes many mounts, carts or boats; large yurt or similar, several dozen livestock, good weapons, good armour, some slaves, fealty from tribe and conquered peoples

PRIMITIVE SOCIAL CLASS

1d100	Class	Example Title	Money Mod	Background Resources
01-05	Outcast	Outlaw	0.25	A weapon and a few knickknacks
06-80	Freeman	Tribesman	1	Simple home, tools, and primitive weapons
81-100	Ruling	Chieftain, Elder	2	Large hall; valuable skins, totems, trophies, tools, cooking implements, decorated primitive weapons, simple armour; support from tribe

FAMILY & CONNECTIONS TABLES

PARENTS TABLE

<i>1d100</i>	<i>Parents</i>
01-20	Both Parents living
21-40	Single Parent – Father
41-60	One birth parent plus step-parent
61-80	Single Parent – Mother
81-00	Both parents dead

CONNECTIONS TABLE

<i>1d100</i>	<i>Connections</i>	<i>Allies, Contacts, Enemies and Rivals</i>
01-20	No connections of note	None
21-80	Family enjoys reasonable connections within its community	Roll 1d4. On a 1 you gain an Ally; 2 a Contact; 3 an Enemy; 4 a Rival
81-90	Family is well connected in the community and is known to those commanding local power	As above but roll twice
91-95	As above, but the family also enjoys some status with those commanding regional power	As above but roll thrice
96-00	As above but the family also enjoys some status with those commanding national power	As above but roll four times

SIBLINGS TABLE

<i>1d100</i>	<i>Siblings</i>
01-10	None
11-30	1d4
31-70	1d6
71-90	1d8
91-00	1d10

EXTENDED FAMILY TABLE

<i>1d100</i>	<i>Grandparents</i>	<i>Aunts & Uncles</i>	<i>Cousins</i>
01-10	None	None	None
11-30	1d2-1	1d2	1d3
31-70	1d3-1	1d3	1d4
71-90	1d3	1d4	1d6
91-00	1d3+1	1d6	1d8

REPUTATION TABLE

<i>1d100</i>	<i>Reputation</i>	<i>Allies, Contacts, Enemies and Rivals</i>
01-15	Family has a poor reputation	1d3 Enemies or Rivals
16-35	Family's reputation is sound, but there may be a few skeletons and secrets better left locked away	1 Enemy or Rival
36-65	A sound family reputation	-
66-85	Family enjoys a good reputation although there may be those either inside or outside the family who could tarnish it	1 Contact or Ally
86-00	Family's reputation is untarnished and of excellent standing	1d3 Contacts or Allies