

# MYKOVNIA: A WANDERER'S GUIDE

## VOLUME I: PLAYER'S GUIDE FOR THE ICE-RIVAN REALM

*Being a summary of knowledge needed for adventuring using  
the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game.*

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References to the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game are for convenience only and no challenge to copyright or intellectual property is intended.

*Inspired by the works of E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, who gave the world the  
joy of fantasy roleplaying games.*

*May their souls find solace at the end of all things.*

*With thanks to the first roleplayers I met, Daniel and Brian.*

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## Introduction

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You are about to journey into the Ice-Rivan Realm, a fantasy setting inspired by the world's most popular roleplaying game. This setting was originally conceived within a dream, sometime around 1984, as the world of Mykovnia. It began as a hastily scrawled map and grew in the author's mind over a period of years. Occasionally, it received visitors.

You are about to enter that world as an adventurer.

### *The Least You Need To Know...*

*On the edges of civilisation, at the border fort of Ice Keep, a ragtag band of adventurers come together to explore the realm and overcome the ever-present threat of monstrous raiders.*

The setting is the homebrew world of *Mykovnia*, specifically the area around the Ice Keep. The key element of the setting area is the sub-arctic environment, featuring snow-covered mountains, taiga, and tundra. There is a copy of the player's map on the back of this booklet.

The setting is a sandbox hex-crawl style game of the Old School variety. There are evolving unique elements, such as the new priesthoods and the racial variants, which make the setting interesting. New players are encouraged to contribute to the collaborative development of the setting.

The game tends to be heavier on the action and combat scenes, with some significant moments of interaction. Exploration of the world is also paramount. The setting is a darker shade of *Swords and Sorcery* blended with some *Epic Fantasy* overtones. The world is very probably at stake but the heroes initially have limited ability to resist the awesome enemies facing them.

We are using *Dungeons & Dragons* 5th Edition. Allowable core books are the D&D Basic Rules, the Player's Handbook, the Monster Manual, and the Dungeon Master's Guide. Feats and multi-classing are in use.

## *House Rules*

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The Ice-Rivan Realm, and indeed all of the world of Mykovnia, is best played in the Old School spirit of high stakes and gritty action. In the spirit of making life generally harder for the heroes, there are a range of “House Rules” in play for this campaign setting. This section brings you, the player, up to speed.

### *Shields Shall Be Splintered!*

*With thanks to J. Brian Murphy*

Shields work. They are (along with the helmet) among the poor warrior’s most trusted items. In this setting, however, shields act as a form of ablative armour.

Shields still add +2 to your Armour Class, as per the main rules. In addition, any time that you take damage, you can opt to say that your shield bore the brunt of the blow. The shield then shatters, and must be discarded, but you don’t take any damage from that strike. This works against any damage caused by an attack roll, including spells.

If you have an enchanted shield (such as a +1 or +2 shield), every time you use the shield to absorb damage in this manner, it loses one of its plusses (or other magickal effects). Once reduced to +0, it becomes a mundane shield and will splinter the next time it bears the brunt of a blow as described above. You know, some adventurers whisper that some very talented armourers can repair magickal shields... but whether it’s true or not is up to the DM.

### *Crits Break Armour!*

Armour is great! It also gets battered and, from time to time, breaks. Your AC works just as described in the Player’s Handbook, meaning that armour usually makes you harder to hit, but there is an additional rule.

Every time you take damage from a critical hit (usually a natural 20 on the attack roll), your Armour Class is reduced by 1. The armour has been

damaged. If the armour's base value is reduced to 10, then the armour is ruined and must be discarded. *Thus, for example, a heroine wearing a chain shirt (13 + Dex modifier) can suffer three critical hits before her armour is ruined. She still gets to add her Dexterity modifier to her AC, but the armour is of no further use.*

Armour that is not ruined can be repaired – the DM will decide what the cost of such armour services might be in the local community – if you can find a suitably trained armorer. Sometimes the costs are very high.

This rule affects magick armour, such as from a Mage Armour spell, too. Magickal armour (such as +1 suits of armour) is never broken by crits, and cannot be reduced below an AC equal to 10 + the bonus of the armour. *Thus, for example, +1 Leather cannot be reduced below AC 11.*

### *Long Rests Don't Auto-Heal!*

*This is the "Slow Natural Healing" rule from the Dungeon Master's Guide, page 267.*

The long rest is still an 8-hour period of extended downtime, as described in the Player's Handbook on page 186. Characters don't, however, automatically regain all lost hit points at the end of a long rest. Instead, the hero can spend Hit Dice to heal at the end of a long rest, just like they can during a short rest.

Each character still regains spent Hit Dice (up to a number of dice equal to half their total Hit Dice) at the end of the long rest. If it seems appropriate, the DM can allow this to happen BEFORE they are spent for healing... but it's really up to the DM to decide.

Sometimes, the DM might be generous and award you a full Hit Point recovery after a long rest – for example, after staying in a completely safe and comfy inn instead of resting on the road – but it's totally at the DM's discretion. We've found that pestering the DM tends to make this less likely, however.

## *It's Iron Age Tech!*

Just to be clear, the setting's default technology level is Iron Age. This means that there are no crossbows or rapiers (unless the DM says otherwise), and you cannot learn those proficiencies without specific training. In other words, you can't be proficient with those weapons at character creation.

Additionally, weapons like the glaive, the halberd, and the lance are extremely rare and generally not available in most towns or villages. This is because the use of these weapons is long out of practice in the setting.

Longbows are still in use (especially by the Nyhi) and have remained present as one of the best hunting weapons in the Realm. We know it's not strictly speaking an Iron Age weapon – it's not that the above tech doesn't exist or isn't possible, it's just not in common use... but the longbow is an ever-popular weapon even in these less-enlightened times.

We'll leave it up to the DM to decide about other specific bits of equipment. Just consider that, while stuff might be available, specialist kit costs a lot of gold.

## *Character Options*

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As a player, the first thing you need to do is create for yourself a character. You'll need to use the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (5e) "Player's Handbook" to do so, although you can also access the free-to-download "Basic Rules" from <http://dnd.wizards.com/articles/features/basicrules>

### *Races*

The Ice-Rivan Realm is home to a wide variety of species (or "races") who live side-by-side with varying degrees of cooperation. This section orientates you to the setting's species and also provides additional options.

#### *Human*

Humans are the dominant species upon the face of Mykovnia, if not the most numerous. Their position arises from their flexibility and willingness to survive in just about any climate or circumstance in which there is profit to do so.

Humans average around five to six feet in height and are physically diverse, from the black-skinned Mantobyrns of the far southern plains to the pale-skinned Eskysi of the arctic tundras. They are hardy, brave and generally amenable to learning from their many mistakes.

The other races tend to either like or loathe Humans. Drax and Nyhi tolerate them, viewing them as brash and wild; Hobbytts tend to enjoy Human company because of their positive and outgoing traits; Orcs and other more feral species tend to fear them.

It's not too hard to play a Human hero, so if you are new to roleplaying this race makes a really good choice. Not only are you experienced as a Human already, they have a broad set of abilities that makes surviving the harsh world a little more bearable.

## Human Traits

You can use the Human Traits from the Player's Handbook, page 31.

Optionally, you can choose one of the two local tribal groups - Eskysi or Ruuz:

**Eskysi** gain +1 Constitution and +1 Wisdom, proficiency in the Survival skill, and the Mobile feat.

**Ruuz** gain +1 Strength and +1 Charisma, proficiency in the Intimidation skill, and the Charger feat.

## Human Names

*Male Names:* Achaikos, Agapetos, Agapios, Agathon, Akakios, Alexandros, Alexios, Alexis, Ambrosios, Ampelios, Amyntas, Anakletos, Anastasios, Anatolios, Anaxagoras, Andreas, Andronikos, Aniketos, Aphrodisios, Apollinaris, Apollodoros, Apollonios, Archelaos, Archimedes, Archippos, Argyros, Aristarchos, Aristеides, Aristodemos, Aristokles, Ariston, Aristophanes, Aristoteles, Arkadios, Arsenios, Artemidoros, Artemios, Artemisios, Artemon, Asklepiades, Athanas, Athanasios, Auxentios, Basileios, Bion, Chariton, Chrysanthos, Damianos, Dareios, Demetrios, Demon, Demosthenes, Diocles, Diodoros, Diodotos, Diogenes, Diokles, Dion, Dionysios, Dionysodoros, Drakon, Eirenaios, Epaphras, Epaphroditos, Epiktetos, Epiphanes, Epiphanios, Erasmos, Erastos, Euaristos, Euclid, Eugenios, Eukleides, Euphemios, Euphranor, Euripides, Eusebios, Eustathios, Eustorgios, Euthymios, Eutropios, Eutybios, Eutychos, Gaios, Galenos, Gennadios, Georgios, Heliodoros, Herakleides, Herakleios, Herakleitos, Hermes, Hermogenes, Hermokrates, Hermolaos, Herodes, Herodion, Heron, Hesiod, Hesperos, Hieronymos, Hilarion, Hippokrates, Hippolytos, Homer, Homeros, Hyakinthos, Hyginos, Hypatos, Iason, Irenaeus, Isidoros, Isocrates, Kallias, Kallikrates, Kallistos, Karpos, Kassandros, Kleisthenes, Kleitos, Kleon, Kleopatos, Kosmas, Kyriakos, Kyrillos, Kyros, Leon, Leonidas, Leontios, Linos, Loukianos, Loukios, Lykos, Lykourgos, Lysandros, Lysimachos, Markos, Melanthios, Meliton, Methodios, Metrophanes, Miltiades, Mnason, Myron, Neophytos, Nereus, Nikandros, Nikanor, Nikephoros, Niketas, Nikias, Nikodemos, Nikolaos,

Nikomacho, Nikomedes, Nikon, Nikostratos, Olympiodoros, Olympos, Onesimos, Onesiphoros, Origenes, Pamphilos, Pankratios, Pantaleon, Panther, Pantheras, Paramonos, Pelagios, Pericles, Phaidros, Philandros, Philippos, Philokrates, Philon, Philotheos, Phoibos, Phokas, Photios, Plato, Platon, Ploutarchos, Polycarp, Porphyrios, Praxiteles, Prochoros, Prokopios, Ptolemaios, Pyrrhos, Pythagoras, Seleukos, Simonides, Sokrates, Solon, Sophocles, Sophos, Sosigenes, Stephanos, Straton, Telesphoros, Thales, Themistocles, Theodoros, Theodosios, Theodotos, Theodoulos, Theokritos, Theophanes, Theophilos, Theophylaktos, Theron, Timaios, Timon, Timotheos, Tryphon, Tychon. Xenon, Xenophon, Zenobios, Zenon, Zephyros, Zopyros, Zosimos, Zotikos.

*Female Names:* Agape, Agathe, Agnes, Aikaterine, Alexandra, Ambrosia, Anastasia, Anthousa, Aphrodisia, Apollonia, Aristomache, Artemisia, Aspasia, Athanasia, Athenais, Berenike, Charis, Charmion, Chloe, Chrysanthe, Demetria, Demostrate, Eirene, Elpis, Euanthe, Eudokia, Eudoxia, Eugeneia, Eulalia, Eumelia, Eunike, Euphemia, Euphrasia, Eupraxia, Euthalia, Euthymia, Eutropial, Eutychia, Gaiane, Galene, Hagne, Helena, Helene, Hypatia, Irene, Isidora, Kallisto, Kallistrate, Kassandra, Kleopatra, Korinna, Ligeia, Lysandra, Melissa, Melitta, Menodora, Metrodora, Myrrine, Nike, Nikephoros, Nymphodora, Olympias, Pelagia, Pherenike, Phile, Phoibe, Photine, Ptolemais, Rhode, Roxane, Sappho, Sophia, Sostrate, Syntyche, Thais, Theodora, Theodosia, Theokleia, Theophania, Theophila, Timo, Timothea, Tryphaina, Tryphosa, Xanthe, Xanthippe, Xenia, Xeno, Zenais, Zenobia, Zoe, Zosime.

## *Bruxx*

Bruxx are a species of “rat-men”, taller than the Drax but shorter than a Human. They have a rat-shaped head, walk upright (usually) using their very long tails to balance. Highly sensitive to scent and sound, Bruxx have poor distance vision but a good sense of touch.

Although distasteful to some Humans (and often to Nyhi), Bruxx are a clean, well-ordered society with a clear hierarchy based on fitness and wits – the quickest brain and the strongest stomach. They are not (contrary to popular belief) evil creatures by nature.

Many Bruxx have been captured and enslaved by Humans over the years, leading to some distinct nervousness when visiting some of the larger settlements; rural relations, however, tend to be amicable.

Bruxx are quick-witted and agile, yet physically less strong than Humans. You can play them as furtive and quick-tongued, or as cautious and deliberate with equal ease. Think rats and you're on to a winning strategy for roleplay.

### **Bruxx Traits**

Bruxx are not in the Player's Handbook. They are a new race for the setting.

Your Bruxx character has certain characteristics in common with all other Bruxx.

***Ability Score Increase:*** Your Intelligence score increases by 2.

***Age:*** Bruxx mature quicker than Humans do, and most are expected to settle down to into an adult life by around age 10. They can live 40 to 50 years on average, with some very well-kept Bruxx going on to live 60 years.

***Alignment:*** Bruxx are free spirits and are most often Chaotic, tending to ignore rules that don't suit their tastes. They also tend towards Good, given that they prefer social groupings and generally value communal care over selfishness.

**Size:** Bruxx usually stand around 5 feet tall, with very little variation in overall height. Your size is Medium.

**Speed:** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Accustomed to life beneath the ground, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern colour in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Keen Senses:** You have proficiency in the Perception skill.

**Bruxx Resilience:** You have advantage on saving throws against poison, and you have resistance against poison damage.

**Languages:** You can speak, read, and write Common and Bruxxic. The Bruxxic language, which uses a unique script of vertically arranged marks similar to cuneiform, is renowned for its usefulness in communicating complex instructions in short phrases.

**Subrace:** Two subraces of Bruxx are found across the Ice-Rivan Realm: *snow bruxx* and *rock bruxx*. Choose one of these subraces.

### **Snow Bruxx**

As a Snow Bruxx, you have a natural knack for stealth and an inherent quickness. In the Ice-Rivan Realm, Snow Bruxx are rare and secretive, preferring the wild places away from human villages and towns. Living in underground burrows, Snow Bruxx find refuge from the harsh winters by stock-piling food and covering the entrances to their homes with disguised round doors. Snow Bruxx have good relations with wild things, especially with Wild Nyhi whom they have often aided in times of trouble.

**Ability Score Increase:** Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

**Wild Step:** You can cast the *misty step* spell once using this trait. You regain the ability to do so when you finish a long or short rest.

***Nimble Escape:*** You can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of your turns.

### **Rock Bruxx**

As a Rock Bruxx, you have a natural toughness and an inherently high speed. In the Ice-Rivan Realm, Rock Bruxx are equally rare but (perhaps) less secretive than their snowy brethren, preferring mountainous caves away from human villages and towns but being prepared to trade with all who live nearby. Rock Bruxx often have good relations with humans, often hiring themselves out as guides to adventurers who are tracking the more evil denizens of the under realms.

***Ability Score Increase:*** Your Constitution score increases by 1.

***Magickal Influence:*** You can cast the *suggestion* spell once using this trait. You regain the ability to do so when you finish a long or short rest. You use Intelligence as your spell casting ability for this spell.

***Fleet of Claw:*** Your base walking speed increases to 35 feet.

### **Bruxx Names**

Bruxx, both male and female, tend to use adjectives as names – especially those adjectives that suggest texture, such as Silk, or that metaphorically relate to stealth or intellect, such as Slyfoot or Creepclaw. Bruxx are also fond of adopting pet names that other races, such as Humans or Nyhi, might give them while they travel together.

## *Drax*

The Drax have been around longer than Humans can remember. Because they are shorter than Humans, they are sometimes known as “Dwarfs”. Drax are tough, resilient and often dour; many Humans stereotype them as grumpy and miserable, but this is a mistake which overlooks the Drax capacity for celebration.

Physically, Drax are shorter than Humans but also stout and tough. A Drax can usually work harder and longer, preferring to get stuck in rather than pussy-foot around. Well-adapted to high-altitudes, Drax have nevertheless often chosen to live underground in mining communities. As a consequence, Mountain Drax have become adapted to seeing in the darkness of underground places.

Since the incursion of Humans into the Realm over the few thousand years or so, many Drax have taken to living in the villages and towns; these are known as Hill Drax. These Drax retain many of their ancestral traits but have become more open to working alongside other races, and renowned for their wisdom.

Drax have wrestled with Orcs, Uruk, Goblins and Giants throughout most of their history; this fact has scarred relations with these brutal species. Mountain Drax harbor resentment and even hatred towards these tribal enemies, having long practiced the art of war against their raids and depredations.

In terms of faith, the Hill Drax have become more accustomed to worshipping the deities of the Great Treasury, although favoring the gods and goddesses of the Bright Pantheon. Mountain Drax, by contrast, have kept with the “old ways” and worship their ancestor spirits.

The Drax love for shiny things is a detail that cannot be overlooked. Gold, gems and other precious things are desired greatly by most Drax; it’s a fact that the average Mountain Drax would not be able to walk past a pile of Gold Sovereigns without pocketing at least a few of them... and he might not even notice that he has done so.

## Drax Traits

You can use the Dwarf Traits from the Player's Handbook, page 20. You can choose either the Hill Drax or Mountain Drax subraces.

Just remember to refer to these people as Drax, not "Dwarves". For example, it's Drax Resilience, and Drax Combat Training.

## Drax Names

*Mountain Drax Male:* Ahriman, Ahura-Mazda, Angra-Mainyu, Arash, Bahman, Bahram, Fereydoun, Govad, Hormazd, Hvare-Khshaeta, Jam, Jamshed, Jamsheed, Jamshid, Kaveh, Khurshid, Kshathra-Vairya, Mithra, Mithras, Nairyosangha, Ormazd, Rashn, Rashnu, Rostam, Sarosh, Shahrivar, Siavash, Sohrab, Sraosha, Tahmuras, Takhma-Urupi, Verethragna, Vohu-Manah, Yima, Yima Kshaeta, Zal.

*Mountain Drax Female:* Ameretat, Amordad, Amurdad, Anahita, Anaitis, Ashtad, Haurvatat, Khordad, Khurshid, Mordad.

*Hill Drax Male:* Adad, An, Anu, Baal, Dagan, Dagon, Ea, El, Ellil, Enki, Enlil, Gilgamesh, Hadad, Marduk, Melqart, Mot, Nabu, Yam.

*Hill Drax Female:* Anat, Anath, Anatu, Asherah, Ashtoret, Ashtoreth, Astarte, Cybele, Ereshkigal, Inanna, Ishtar, Lilith, Nanaea, Nanaia, Nanaya, Nina, Tanis, Tanit, Tanith, Tiamat.

## *Hobbit*

Hobbitts are short, lithe and generally energetic folk who enjoy good food and merry celebrations. Many are easily mistaken for Human children and, as a consequence, can be a little touchy about their height when teased by “the Big Folk”.

Hobbitts have lived among Humans for centuries, having first been traders who brought many curiosities and wonders to the towns and cities of the Old Empire. This long history gives Hobbitts a generally good reputation as trustworthy and friendly.

Physically, Hobbitts are more than simply shorter; they are hardy folk with a good stomach and a stout heart, capable of great feats when called upon. They have large, hairy feet which they absolutely refuse to cover with shoes and a tendency to grow their hair long.

### **Hobbitt Traits**

You can use the Halfling Traits from the Player’s Handbook, page 28. You can choose either the Lightfoot Hobbitt or Stout Hobbitt subraces.

Just remember to refer to these people as Hobbitts, not “Halflings”. For example, it’s Hobbitt Nimbleness.

### **Hobbitt Names**

Having lived with Humans throughout most of their history, Hobbitts tend to choose names from their Human friends. A few might choose Drax or Nyhi names as a rare alternative.

## *Nyhi*

Even the Nyhi themselves are not entirely sure of their origins, except to say that they are ancient. Ancient Nyhi sages claim that they were refugees from another world which had become beholden to an ancient Evil. Whatever the truth, the Nyhi (or “elves”, as some Humans call them) are divided into several cabals, each culturally distinct and more than a little competitive.

Nyhi tend to be tall and lithe, with long legs and fine features. The up-swept ears, the trait that most folk associate with them, are distinctive of all the Nyhi breeds. They are notoriously far-sighted and agile, but also fragile and more easily injured than some other species.

The haughty attitude of Nyhi comes from their long lives, being capable of life-spans of more than 10,000 years unless they are killed in battle. With such a long view, Nyhi tend to see the petty interests of Humans as short-term and reveal their disdain for even the long-term plans of the other races.

The Nyhi love for art and nature, especially prevalent among the nature-loving Wild Nyhi, is legendary. Craftsmanship is regarded highly by Nyhi; even the lowliest of forged daggers is likely to be named and treated with deep reverence, a fact which has allowed a deep respect to grow between Drax and Nyhi.

### **Nyhi Traits**

You can use the Elf Traits from the Player’s Handbook, pages 23-24.

You can choose either the High Nyhi, Wild Nyhi, or Moon Nyhi subraces – High Elf, Wood Elf, and Drow respectively.

Just remember to refer to these people as Nyhi, not “Elves”. For example, it’s Nyhi Weapon Training. Please also note that, as crossbows and rapiers are not available in the Ice-Rivan Realm, you cannot be proficient with these weapons; the Moon Nyhi should gain the same Nyhi Weapon Proficiency of the other two subraces.

## Nyhi Names

*High and Moon Nyhi Male:* Ali, Anar, Aslan, Elchin, Eldar, Elnur, Farid, Hüseyin, İlkin, Mahammad, Murad, Rashad, Ruslan, Rustam, Samir, Tarana, Tural, Vugar, Vüqar, Vüsal, Waqar, Yusif.

*High and Moon Nyhi Female:* Aygul, Aygün, Aylin, Aynur, Aysel, Fatma, Fidan, Firuza, Gulnar, Gulnara, Günay, Günel, Konul, Leyla, Parvana, Parvin, Sevda, Sevinc, Sevinj, Vüsala, Zemfira, Zeynab.

*Wild Nyhi Male:* Aeron, Arawn, Arthur, Bedivere, Bedwyr, Beli, Bran, Cai, Culhwch, Dylan, Geraint, Goronwy, Govannon, Gwalchmei, Gwydion, Kay, Llew, Llew, Llyr, Mabon, Math, Medraut, Medrod, Modred, Mordred, Myrddin, Nudd, Owain, Peredur, Pryderi, Urien, Uthyr.

*Wild Nyhi Female:* Aeron, Angharad, Aranrhod, Arianrhod, Blodeuwedd, Branwen, Ceridwen, Eigyr, Enid, Gwenhwyfar, Luned, Lunete, Rhiannon.

## *Sha-Nyhi*

Nyhi and Humans have lived together ever the two races arrived and they first built their villages and traded the supplies each needed. What was unusual was the ability of the two species to interbreed, a fact which has never quite sat well with either side. Sha-Nyhi are the result of Human and Nyhi matings, giving rise to an elegant and beautiful form which blends the strengths of both.

Nyhi tend to regard Sha-Nyhi as less than fey, whilst Humans tend to regard them as suspicious oddities. This has led to both species labelling these people as “Half” folk, whether it be “half-human” or “half-nyhi”. It is usual for a Sha-Nyhi to be raised by Humans, but this is not always the case. Thus, each hero of Sha-Nyhi blood can be distinctively raised and display very different heritage.

Physically, Sha-Nyhi are likely to have the ears of their Nyhi parent whilst retaining the heavier frame of their Human heritage. Overall, they are hardy and creative types with a deep respect for nature. Their outcast reputation will lead many to follow the path of adventurer.

### **Sha-Nyhi Traits**

You can use the Half-Elf Traits from the Player’s Handbook, page 39.

### **Sha Nyhi Names**

Raised by their half-parents, each Sha-Nyhi will take a name from their parent culture – Human or Nyhi names are most common.

## *Less Common Races*

Some species are either significantly less common within the Ice-Rivan Realm, or not as well-suited to heroic roleplaying. Nonetheless, over the years, players have asked to create characters from these races and so we've tended to oblige. Note however that there are NO gnomes in this setting, no matter how much pleading is heard at the table.

### *Dragonborn*

Because the idea of Dragonmen is so cool, and were such a large part of the original games we played back in 1984, players may create Dragonborn characters.

Ever since the Splinterfall, stories of "Dragonmen" have circulated the Ice-Rivan Realm. These stories which tell of Dragonborn sightings are especially prevalent in the areas nearest to the Dragon Heights. Most common of all are those of white or silver ancestry, presumably somehow connected to the legends surrounding the great dragons who slumber beneath the mountains.

Tales aside, however, Dragonborn are extremely rare. Should you choose to play one, you must expect some extreme suspicion and rudeness from polite society in the Human towns and villages. Don't be surprised if your shiny Dragonborn hero is treated more like a monster than a hero – except by those Drax who remember the old ways.

### **Dragonborn Traits**

You can use the Dragonborn traits from the Player's Handbook, page 34.

### **Dragonborn Names**

As one of the ancient races of the realm, Dragonborn follow similar traditions in language as the Drax. Most common are Mountain Drax names, which reflect the ancient traditions and friendships between Dragons and Drax.

## *Black Goblin*

Small, sneaky and often hairy, Goblins are seen by many other species as the rodents of the sentient races. They are one of the elder races, having been around at least as long as the Drax. Despite being quite intelligent and nimble creatures, who live in tribal groups based around the strongest male leader, they still make for fairly lousy characters as they aren't very strong... unless you're playing a Black Goblin

Black Goblins are the stronger members of the breed. Just as nimble as their weaker brothers, they are also somewhat wiser – better able to consider the longer-term consequences of their actions. They have a long-term enmity with both Nyhi and Drax, dating back over a long history of raids and wars led by Black Goblin leaders, and the Humans don't tend to like them much either.

Tending to be braver in groups, regular Goblins rarely go anywhere alone. Black Goblins are not so fearful and some of the smarter ones can learn magick, while many others choose to serve one of the deities. Black Goblin adventurers are rare indeed – they are often the unusual and outcast weirdos who prefer the company of “the Biggies” over the comfort of the tribal cave or camp – but they do exist.

### **Black Goblin Traits**

Black Goblins are not in the Player's Handbook. They are a new race for the setting.

Your Black Goblin character has certain characteristics in common with all other Black Goblins.

***Ability Score Increase:*** Your Dexterity score increases by 2, and your Wisdom score increases by 1.

***Age:*** Black Goblins mature quicker than Humans do, and most are expected to settle down to into an adult life by around age 7. They can live up to 30 or 40 years on average, assuming nobody skewers them first.

***Alignment:*** Black Goblins are free spirits and are most often Chaotic, and they also tend towards Evil, given that they delight

in inflicting suffering and are incessantly selfish. No, not very heroic... but there are probably exceptions.

***Size:*** Black Goblins usually stand around 4-5 feet tall. Your size is Small.

***Speed:*** Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

***Darkvision:*** Accustomed to life beneath the ground, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern colour in darkness, only shades of gray.

***Nimble Escape:*** You can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of your turns.

***Languages:*** You can speak, read, and write Common and Goblinese. The Goblinese language, which uses the Drax script, is really only ever used for insults and orders, or the occasional warning.

### **Black Goblin Names**

Yeah, we'll leave Goblin names to the player's imagination.

## *Uruk*

Legend says that the Orcs are a breed of Nyhi who became corrupted by Chaos, leaving their high civilisation behind and taking to the wild. Neither the Orcs nor the Nyhi would pay heed to such rumours.

Uruk are the tougher, meaner, bigger cousins of Orcs. Tradition states that Uruk were magickally forged by an ancient Mage who wanted to create a superior form of warrior. Whether or not this is true, Orcs fear Uruk and will often serve them willingly.

Powerfully built, the Uruk is a monstrous hulk of flesh and bone. Thankfully rare, the race is feared by most other species because of their tendency towards aggression.

The Uruk are generally matriarchal in organisation but they are rarely numerous. A mating couple may take refuge within an Orc or Goblin tribe, offering their strength in return for protection and food.

### **Uruk Traits**

Uruk are not in the Player's Handbook. They are a new race for the setting.

Your Uruk character has certain characteristics in common with all other Uruk.

***Ability Score Increase:*** Your Strength score increases by 2, and your Constitution score increases by 1.

***Age:*** Uruk mature at a similar rate to Humans and live about as long.

***Alignment:*** Uruk are free spirits and are most often Chaotic, and they also tend towards Evil, given that they delight in war and violence; most are selfish. Not the best choice for heroes, but some players enjoy the challenge.

***Size:*** Uruk usually stand between 5 and 7 feet tall. Your size is Medium.

***Speed:*** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

***Darkvision:*** Accustomed to life beneath the ground, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern colour in darkness, only shades of gray.

***Aggressive:*** As a bonus action, the Uruk can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature it can see.

***Uruk War Training:*** You have proficiency with the battleaxe, handaxe, throwing hammer, and warhammer. You also have proficiency with light and medium armour.

***Languages:*** You can speak, read, and write Common and Goblinese. The Goblinese language, which uses the Drax script, is really only ever used for insults and orders, or the occasional warning.

## **Uruk Names**

We'll leave Uruk names to the player's imagination too.

## *Sha-Uruk*

Yes, we allow Half-Orcs, but we call them Sha-Uruk. These are the spawn of Humans mating with Orcs or Uruk. Distasteful and mistrusted though many see them, some live within Human lands in peace. Shame haunts their souls, however, and tries to bring down their heroic intents.

### **Sha-Uruk Traits**

You can use the Half-Orc traits from the Player's Handbook, page 41.

### **Sha-Uruk Names**

Use the names from the tradition in which your character grew up. This is most likely a Human name... or a nasty nickname.

## *Sha-Abzu*

Abzu are the demons that haunt the nether regions of the Ice-Rivan Realm. Throughout the history of the lands, there have been those who have made pacts with demonic powers. Some Human bloodlines have become tainted with an ancient Abzu curse, a result of a past sin which led to the birthing of the Sha-Abzu – the “Half-Demon”.

### **Sha-Abzu Traits**

You can use the Tiefling traits from the Player's Handbook, page 43.

### **Sha-Abzu Names**

The “virtue” names from the Player's Handbook work well, as do the ancient Mountain Drax or High Nyhi names which reflect the ancient lineage of those touched by the Abzu.

## *Classes*

All of the character classes are available, although some are certainly more unusual than others. These notes comment on the role of each class in the setting.

### *Barbarian*

Barbarians are relatively common, as there are many tribal groups who hunt across the Ice-Rivan Realm in a semi-nomadic or nomadic lifestyle. Often these tribal groups are not as tolerant of other species as more civilized folk who live in villages and towns.

### *Bard*

Bards travel the lands in search of knowledge and lost lore. Many are drawn to the Ice-Rivan Realm from the southern kingdoms by the legends associated with the Splinterfall Mountains and the Dragon Heights. Some are treasure hunters who have come to locate and plunder the lost places, such as the rumoured Drax undercity of Dweomerdeep.

### *Cleric*

Clerics serve the gods. There is one major pantheon of deities in the Realm, but it is usually referred to as two separate groups: the Bright Pantheon and the Dark Pantheon. In short, the gods and goddesses of each of the groups are seen as allied and in opposition to those of the other group; that said, all the deities are recognized and even venerated by the majority of creatures in the Ice-Rivan Realm. Clerics, however, choose to serve one of the deities from the Pantheon and, by extension, ally themselves with one of the groups: Bright or Dark.

*In this campaign, player's Clerics may only serve the Bright Pantheon.*

## The Bright Pantheon (the “Brightlings”)

Deity Name	Influence	Alignment	Symbol	Domain
<b>Ishkur</b>	God of storms, venerated as head of the Bright Pantheon.	Chaotic Good	Hammer	Tempest domain
<b>Anu</b>	God of wisdom, prophecy, and writing.	Lawful Neutral	Step Pyramid	Knowledge domain
<b>Nanshe</b>	Goddess of social justice, fertility, and fishing.	Neutral Good	Ankh and Star	Life domain
<b>Aruru</b>	Earth and Mother Goddess.	Neutral	Cat	Nature domain
<b>Marduk</b>	Champion of the gods, and God of agriculture.	Lawful Neutral	Sword	War domain
<b>Shamash</b>	God of the sun, arbiter of justice, and patron of travellers.	Lawful Good	Solar Disc	Light domain

## The Dark Pantheon (the “Darklings”)

Deity Name	Influence	Alignment	Symbol	Domain
<b>Enlil</b>	God of the wind, leader of the Dark Pantheon.	Chaotic Neutral	Gold Coin	Tempest domain
<b>Enki</b>	God of the Abzu, crafts, water, intelligence, mischief and creation.	Lawful Evil	Flaming Snake	Trickery domain
<b>Ereshkigal</b>	Goddess of Irkalla, the Underworld.	Lawful Neutral	Black Jackal	Death domain
<b>Nergal</b>	Two-headed God of plague, war, and the sun in its destructive capacity.	Chaotic Evil	Solar Disc encircled by a Serpent	Light or War domains
<b>Sinn</b>	Goddess of the moon.	Neutral	Crescent Moon	Knowledge domain
<b>Tammuz</b>	God of food and vegetation	Neutral Evil	Bull	Nature domain
<b>Inanna</b>	Goddess of fertility, love, and war.	Chaotic Neutral	Two crossed spears	War or Life domains

## *Druid*

There is another deity worshipped outside of the Pantheons above, called The Weaver. A neutral god, The Weaver is worshipped by the Druids. Much of the cult is mysterious, dating back to the arrival of the Nyhi. The symbol of The Weaver is the Tree. Druids are generally of Neutral alignment, and must have Neutrality to at least one of the aspects of their alignment if they are not “true” Neutral.

Druids do not arise from villages and towns but from the wild places.

## *Fighter*

There are plenty of Fighters in the Realm. This is the best choice for beginning players because it's nice a simple to roleplay.

## *Monk*

There are not going to be many Monks in the Realm, but this class is possible. You **MUST** shed all the “eastern” and “oriental” baggage that players tend to bring to the class, however, as none of this fits the setting.

Monks are hermit types who wander the lands in search of enlightenment. They follow a mystical code that rejects the authority (but not the reality) of the gods. Instead, they seek to master the powers that arise from within the soul. Most Monks originate as disillusioned members of other societies who left home to discover the truth about themselves.

## *Paladin*

Paladins are holy warriors for the Bright and Dark Pantheons. See the Cleric notes above. You may only serve the Bright Pantheon.

## *Ranger*

More common in the Realms than in the less-wild places of Mykovnia, Rangers are the protectors of the lands. They generally arise from within the outlander communities, but often have good contacts within the villages and towns they travel between. This class arises from a gift said to originate with the gods, so many Rangers are considered blessed.

## *Rogue*

It's hard to be a thief or charlatan in the Realm, but these folk do exist. Most Rogues are scouts – people who hire themselves out as guides to travelers and explorers; some are professional criminals. Just remember that communities here are small and tight-knit, so getting caught usually leads to exile.

## *Sorcerer*

Although extremely rare, Sorcerers have arisen in the Realms. These are more common among the non-Human species, and almost always end up as outcasts at a young age because of their misunderstood power.

## *Warlock*

Doing deals with the Abzu (“demons”) is the most common form of Warlock pact... but not the only one. Discuss your concept with the DM.

## *Wizard*

Wizards are the most trusted of the arcane traditions... but not by many folk. Because magick is seen as the cause of the Spinterfall, few people would seek to recover the secrets of the arcane. You will have to find ancient tomes because there are no known organisations of Wizardry.

## *Alignment*

Alignment in fantasy roleplaying has been misunderstood by many. The idea of labelling behaviors and attitudes doesn't sit well in a post-modern pluralistic society. On the other hand, alignment is a useful tool for quantifying the actions of characters and responding to player choices with rewards or penalties. After all, shouldn't the hero who is sworn to uphold what is Good be held accountable if he should fail?

Instead of leaving the interpretation of alignment to chance, we suggest that it's useful to set a standard and explain what is meant by Law and Chaos, Good and Evil. These notes, then, present the moral compass for behaviors and attitudes in the World of Mykovnia.

These notes are not the author's code, and neither are they any judgment upon the lifestyle of the reader; they are simply a guide to the way things are in our fantasy world. Things in your fantasy world may well be very different.

### **Opposing Forces: Law versus Chaos**

The first opposition is between Law and Chaos. This is the tension between the ideals of Order and Liberty.

Law is that which seeks to bring order and safety. Lawful people follow the rules as they are laid down by society. Although local social rules can differ wildly, the peoples of Mykovnia share some universal laws: you shall not commit murder; you shall not steal; you shall not lie... and that's just for starters. Law seeks to bring control and is a positive force for creating a sense of safety. Taken to extremes, Law can lead to rigidity and stagnation as all stays uniform and unchanging.

Chaos is that which seeks to bring liberty and express individuality. Chaotic people follow their own individual standards instead of those laid down by others. Chaos likes to speak of "free will" and "self-expression". Chaos gives birth to art and curiosity; it is the positive force for creative endeavors which seek to push the boundaries of what is known or previously experienced. Chaos seeks to loosen shackles and explore for the sake of learning. Taken to extremes, Chaos can lead to anarchy and destruction as all form is swept away.

Between Law and Chaos sit those who would try to seek a balance between order and creativity. Neutral people are not simply those who are undecided about their attitudes: it's impossible to be Neutral without paying attention to both forces equally. Some say that the path of Neutrality is a foolish illusion because it is impossible to balance such oppositions as Law and Chaos. Neutrals, however, try to blend order with free expression. They say it is possible to bow to the laws provided within nature without giving in to artificial rules that have been imposed by society; Neutrals claim it is possible to embrace the natural course of change and entropy without seeking to extend yourself towards destructiveness.

### **Opposing Attitudes: Good versus Evil**

The second opposition is between the attitudes of service and self-centredness.

Good is that which seeks to bring aid, comfort and support to others. Good people do things for others; at the extreme, Good things are given unconditionally. It's the attitude of "paying it forward", the belief that giving is in itself the greatest reward. Some people are merely Good in the hope that their goodness will be repaid; truly Good folk are not interested in what they will receive in return for their kindnesses. Wherever you see generosity, self-sacrifice, sharing and openness is where you can witness the Good.

Evil is that which seeks to obtain aid, comfort and support for oneself. Evil people do things for themselves; at the extreme, things are traded unfairly in the interest of one "winning" side. It's the attitude of "pull up the ladder", the belief that you have to "look after Number 1". Some people are merely Evil in that they will seek to be repaid; truly Evil folk are only interested in what they will receive in return for their actions. Wherever you see selfishness, selling and brinkmanship is where you can witness Evil.

Of course, no everyone is actively Good or intensely Evil. Neutral folk are perhaps those who do what suits them one moment, whilst finding space for small kindnesses at another. Neutrals usually justify their evils by pointing at their good actions; they might be a tough bargainer at market but a generous parent at home. As you can see, it is far easier to be

Neutral in attitude than to uphold the ideal of Good or pursue one's own interests with extreme Evil.

## The Nine Alignments

From these notes we can begin to construct some basic ideas about how the alignments might combine.

- **Lawful Good** people are those who uphold the law, seeking order and harmony, whilst practicing generosity and kindness.
- **Lawful Neutral** folk are those who will obey the laws consistently but who might seek to please themselves as much as they seek to help others.
- **Lawful Evil** people will obey the laws strictly, seeking to squeeze every ounce of benefit from those rules for their own benefit; they would care little for those who suffer from the letter of the law.
- **Chaotic Good** folk pay little attention to the law but seek to do good to others. They might oppose restrictions on their actions, seeking to live freely, but use their liberty for spreading kindness and goodwill.
- **Chaotic Neutral** people are the true free spirits, ignoring laws and seeking to explore their own path; they will sometimes be selfish, seeking to please themselves, and at other times give in to whims of kindness.
- **Chaotic Evil** folk are those who ignore the rules and who seek to please themselves. They take what they want and care little about who might be affected or how they get it. These people enjoy the temptations of power while being unfettered by convention or law.
- **Neutral Good** people seek to follow natural law whilst rejecting those rules they see as artificial; they seek the general good of others, so often reject rules which they perceive as leading to

harm. Selfless in attitude, these folk can fall foul of the law if they view it as damaging to the natural order or harmful to innocents.

- **Neutral Evil** people seek to follow the law whilst rejecting rules that they see as getting in their way; they seek their own general well-being, often ignoring rules that they perceive as overly restrictive to their own ends. Selfish in attitude, these folk can choose to uphold rules when it suits them but break them when it is more convenient.
- **True Neutral** folk seek to maintain a genuine balance between Law and Chaos, Good and Evil. This is an active decision to uphold the natural order of things whilst rejecting the societal strictures which limit liberty artificially; it is the path of altruism when it does not get in the way of one's own needs.

*Generally speaking, the DM will not allow players to choose Chaotic Evil as an alignment because it is too disruptive to play.*

## *Gods Of The Ice-Rivan Realm*

*"No one alive knows when the realms fell into chaos. What is remembered is garbled and incomplete. Whether it was evil magick or the wrath of the Dark Gods, none can say. In truth, the reason is unimportant.*

*What is important, dear friends, is that we survive. Together, a community stranded on the wild edges of existence, we preserve what is good and lawful. Our challenge is to drive back the borders of anarchy and create a new beginning. And so, here dear friends, at Ice Keep. Here is where the flame of the Bright Gods burns boldly."*

- From a speech by Father Ebrahim, priest of the Bright Pantheon at Ice Keep.

## **The Brightlings and the Darklings**

The Bright Pantheon, aka The Bright Gods, are opposed in Mykovnia by the Dark Pantheon ("Dark Gods", or "Dark Ones"). Followers of the Bright

Gods are called “Brightlings”, whilst those of the Dark Gods are “Darklings”. That said, all of the gods and goddesses are honoured by mortals because to ignore any would be to deny them their rightful worship: mortals fear the gods and will serve them.

Each creature will, however, choose a patron deity to serve and to whom daily prayers are offered. Check out the Cleric notes for details on the deities.

### **The Weaver**

There is another deity worshipped outside of the Pantheons above, called The Weaver. A neutral god, The Weaver is usually worshipped by Druids. Much of the cult is mysterious, dating back to the arrival of the Nyhi.

*Symbol: Tree. Neutral alignment. Nature and Knowledge domains.*

### **The Maker**

Over all the other gods, say the Drax, is The Maker. This nameless God is said to have made the world and all the known realms. He is worshipped as the Father of the Drax, the original ancestor. His cult is very secretive and rarely encountered outside of the Drax holds, but The Maker’s worship is the root of all Drax ancestor worship.

*Lawful Good alignment. Any domain. No symbol.*

## *Background*

All of the Backgrounds are available. Some are, quite obviously, more common than others.

The most common backgrounds are: Acolyte; Folk Hero; Hermit; Outlander; Sailor (on the lakes and rivers); Soldier.

Nobles, Urchins, and Guild Artisans are going to hail from the towns of Khem or Lhemmot. There is a Guild Hall at the Ice Keep, but player characters would not be familiar with the place.

## *Known Locations*

*The player's map to the Ice-Rivan Realm is available as a separate electronic file, and can be found on the back cover of printed copies of this guide.*

### **Ice Keep**

Although you all know about the Ice Keep, none of you has ever been permitted inside. For such, you would need a Writ of Entry from one of the citizens of the Keep. That said, all of you has received an invitation to meet with such a citizen of the Keep – the Sage known as Metrophanes. The reason for your invitation is a subject best left for you to decide as you create your character, but suffice to say that the opportunity to receive a Writ of Entry to the Keep is reason enough to respond: in the depths of Winter, the Keep is the safest place in the Realm.

### **Zjemm**

Not far from Ice Keep, nestled on the south-western shore of the Onyx River, lies Zjemm. This small town (really a large village) is home to a mostly Human and Drax population. A wooden stockade surrounds the town, mostly to protect against the snows of Winter but also to guard against raiders. The road between the Ice Keep and Zjemm is patrolled by soldiers from the Keep, and ferries run across the river here for those

seeking the North. Most of the Drax here are exiles from the fallen undercity of Dweomerdeep, which lies to the north, and so both Mountain and Hill Drax live here.

## **Helix**

This small village lies along the road running westwards from the Ice Keep. It's a homely place with reasonable amenities. It's also rumoured to be haunted, although the locals deny it. North of Helix are said to lie the forbidden "Barrowmoors" of which no one who lives there will speak to outsiders.

## **Dweomerdeep**

It is said that Dweomerdeep is the oldest Drax undercity in the world. These days, however, most of its halls lie under the fell control of evil creatures. Only the very uppermost halls are inhabited by stubborn Mountain Drax... and most of their forebears left many years ago. Of course, the inhabitants are said to be suspicious of outsiders and guard against both the enemies beneath their feet and those who seek to plunder the deeps for treasures long lost.

## **Lhemmot**

As the western boundary of the Realm lies Lhemmot. A large village, this place is home to mostly Human and Hobbytt folk. They fish the great River Tamesis and trade with Ice Keep. Once an outpost of the fallen Western Empire, the place is now a shadow of former glory. It is rumoured that the folk of Lhemmot must guard against an evil undying scourge which occasionally crosses the Tamesis and pollutes the land with evil. Of course, that could just be tittle-tattle.

## **Khem**

The largest town in the Realm, Khem is a trading post that sits south-east of the Ice Keep. Caravans from the great southern kingdoms come here, selling grain and other food stuffs for the precious gems and metals mined in the Dragon Heights. Fishing is common on Sirath's Pool and the town also receives traders from the eastern communities that are said to lie far off beyond the mountains. All the races can be found in Khem as it is by

far the most cosmopolitan place in all the Ice-Rivan Realm. Folk from here are usually regarded as “soft” and “lazy” by those who live deeper in the Realm. That said, caravans from Khem to the Ice Keep are heavily guarded.

### **Isi’s Rest (“lizzy’s”)**

Isi’s Rest is a small village that acts as a trading post for traders from Khem and the southern kingdoms. The road from Isi’s Rest to the Ice Keep used to be patrolled by soldiers from the Keep, but in recent years this has proven too dangerous; now, caravans with lots of guards move north alone to supply the Keep. The problem has been raiders from the fabled Caves of Chaos.

### **Alumet**

Alumet is an ancient city once built by the Drax and now believed to be uninhabited and in ruins. Nobody lives there... at least, that’s what folk will tell you.

### **Pharat**

The people from Lhemmot say that Pharat is a village populated by a few hardy fishermen who are constantly raided by foul monsters from the fallen Western Empire. The people of Pharat are few indeed, hardy, and seem to know an awful lot about something they call “the Undying”.

### **The Caves of Chaos**

Lying south of the Ice Keep, this mountain cave system is believed to be home to several species of humanoid creatures who regularly raid the road east of their home. Caravans are almost guaranteed a raid and, consequently, recent trade has been damaged. This place is most likely what your first adventure will be about...

### **Southern Kingdoms**

Imagine a patchwork of city-states ruled by human kings. That’s all you’d likely know about the kingdoms. Oh, and that they are rich.