

# WALSUNG

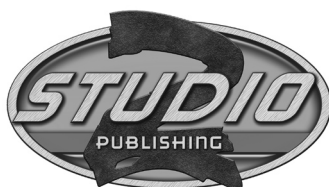
Steam Pulp Fantasy

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# SLAVIA

## The Slavian Commonwealth

**Capital:** Gniazdo

**Political system:** elective monarchy

**Ruler:** King John VII Piastun (human)

**Religion:** Pontificalism, Solarism, Eddism, Reformatism

**Languages:** Slavian

**Currency:** 1 orzel = 100 groszes

**Area:** 218,727 mi<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 22 million: 21% humans, 17% gnomes, 16% dwarves, 14% halflings, 12% orcs, 8% trolls, 6% ogres, 6% elves.



Slavia is placed between its ancient enemies: Morgovia, Wotany, the Trimonarchy, and the Monastic State, but it's not the constant wars with aggressive neighbors that influenced this ancient land the most.

Piastun, the first ruler of Slavia, was the only legendary hero who did not strike a pact with a dragon he defeated, but literally slew the beast. The Curse of the dying dragon is still looming over the kingdom. All ambitious plans are doomed to fail, victories bring no benefit, and any territorial gains are quickly lost.

Slavia of the Piastun dynasty is a backwards country of ancient woods among which you can find mansions and castles of powerful nobles, battlefields of ancient wars, and holy places of old pagan cults. The first signs of industrialization are visible only in a few developed regions. However, despite all adversities, the Slavians are proud and they never surrender, as befits the heirs of a true dragonslayer.

### CHARACTERS

Key ideas for heroes from Slavia are curse and stubbornness.

Slavians balance on a thin line between fatalism and bravery. When you know that Fate itself is working against you and all your plans are doomed to fail, you can either break down... or realize that you have nothing to lose. For

heroes from Slavia there are no impossible matters, especially when honor or motherland are involved. Slavians seldom change their minds, treat their world views (especially politics) very seriously, and fight at drop of the hat.

Character concepts typical for Slavia:

- a poet and bard sympathizing with anarchists, currently an expatriate.
- a hunter and traveler, trying to hunt a leshy, the spirit of the forest.
- a beautiful maiden, who's sworn to marry only a man who'll defeat her in a sword duel.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Slavia is Poland, which, despite a terrible Draconic Curse, has managed to fight off many invasions that often erased historical Poland from the map. Hardened by the Curse it proved to be too hard to swallow. Gniazdo, the capital city, is a combination of Gniezno, Cracow, and Warsaw. The Mermaid Fortress is a reference to the greatest fortifications in Europe – Warsaw Fortress and Festung Boyen, and also the spirit of Wizna and Westerplatte. Essentially, Slavia is equal parts Poland between the World Wars and the Commonwealth of Both Nations from the times of Golden Liberty. Piastun is a weak election monarch during the times of peace and invincible Sobieski during war, and every Slavian is ready to charge at dragons armed with only a lance—if he's sure he'll win, and that's at least half the time.

- a spiritualist ready to sell his soul to demons for the good of the Commonwealth.
- an ambitious industrialist trying to civilize the country despite all adversities.

## ADVENTURES

**Daring** – armed parties attacking neighbors. Border skirmishes. A war of intelligences between Wotany and Morgovia. Sailing the Wija. Trying to rescue a kidnapped fiancée. Stopping a half-golem assassin from the Order of the Iron Maiden.

**Exploration** – hunting bears in the Great Oak Forest. Excavations in pagan cemeteries and stone circles. Exploring the dungeons in the unfinished forts of the Mermaid Fortress. Hunting for sunken wrecks near Ujście.

**Investigation** – noblemen who sold their souls to devils. Wotanian separatists in Dymnik. Ways of breaking the Dragon's Curse. Mysteries of haunted courts. Groups of highlander robbers on the borders with Nordia.

**Society** – local parliament sessions. Ignoramuses and overambitious glory hounds nominated as ministers. Negotiating with rebelling confederates. Bringing peace to conflicted families. Rebel against the power of the king. Lobbying

## Slavian Hero in a Nutshell

Speak loudly, drink a lot, and consider everyone who is not a crowned monarch at least your equal. Don't allow others to offend your honor, be the first to fight and to defend your motherland. Never refuse a plea for help and be charming to the opposite sex.

**Male names:** Apolinary, Bazyli, Bogumil, Czibor, Dobrogost, Gaweł, Gniewomir, Iwo, Jan, Jarogniew, Leszek, Lubomir, Nikodem, Roch, Sulisław, Tymon, Wilkun, Ziemowit.

**Female names:** Alina, Aniela, Balladyna, Bogna, Celina, Donata, Elegia, Grazyna, Halina, Jadwiga, Jagoda, Kinga, Lila, Malwina, Otylia, Roza, Wanda, Wija, Zoja.

and corruption among industrialists. Intrigues of the Monastic State going to break fealty.

## SOCIETY

In Slavia guests are welcomed cheerfully, and the local saying goes "a visitor is a blessing to the house." People are honest and often drink during conversations, regardless whether they take part in homes, local councils, inns, or at



## Slavia in a Nutshell

**Opponents:** mad nobles, devils.

**Monsters:** leshy, river mermaids.

**Headline:** “When the Archduke Berthold Nimbelung decided to spend a few days hunting in the Great Oak Forest in Slavia, he did not expect that his stay will have such a dramatic finale. The hunters have met a leshy in the woods, and the spirit summoned a herd of bisons, sending it after the Duke. The being also summoned a powerful storm and heavy rains, and so the hunt had to be stopped.”

the royal court. When it's necessary people defend their honor with a sword or pistol.

People complain about the pointless projects of Minister Buczyna, about the weakness of the king, the power of the voyevods, and about their evil neighbors, both personal and rivaling nations. They tell tall tales about heroic ancestors, relatives that had to emigrate, great victories of the past, and glorious defeats.

No one talks about the enemies of the king in the family, pacts with devils, rebellious relatives, wars between aristocrats and the servitude of peasants. No one admits that the Curse might be the only thing that's saved the land from being partitioned. And no one bad-mouths religion, the army, or the land.

### PLACES OF INTEREST

**Gniazdo** – the capital city built around a hill, in which caves Piastun killed the dragon. The administrative center of the country, one of the few thoroughly modern cities in Slavia. Under the castle called Piasta there lies one of the most powerful nexuses in the world.

**Dymnik** – the industrial and technological motherlode of Slavia, won from Wotany (and the Trimonarchy) during the Great War. These areas have long been the bone of discontent among these nations, and it's not certain whether they'll stay Slavian for long.

**Great Oak Forest** – the largest forest in Vanadia, a popular place of hunting for Vanadian

bisons (zubr) and the dwelling of a legendary leshy. It's far too easy to cross the border here, and meet unhelpful Morgovian border guards.

**Mermaid Fortress** – This fort is placed near Gniazdo, near the part of river Via controlled by the river mermaids. Originally it was supposed to be the largest fortification in Vanadia, but it was never finished or fully manned. Even so the forts take up the area of a small town and no aggressor has ever managed to conquer the fortifications.

**Miedzianka** – “Copperhead” – the tallest mountain of the Old Mountains on the southeast border of the country. Thanks to massive deposits of iron and copper the mountains were already exploited in the prehistoric times. Thanks to Prime Minister Buczyna the corridors of such old mines are now being adapted to the needs of secret magical laboratories. According to Gniazdo University, a sufficiently thick protective cover of magically active ores could protect from the Dragon Curse.

## Scenery: Ancient Forest

**Special:** to enter the true heart of the forest you must make a *survival test* TN 15. Failure means a day of wandering through the forest.

**Elements:** thousand-year-old oaks. Ancient burial mounds. Ruins of forgotten castles, mansions and settlements. Places never seen by an intelligent creature. Holy places of pagan cults. Mysterious paths leading nowhere. Mushroom circles. Moss growing on trees. Dense undergrowth.

**Antagonists:** a sounder of wild boars. Giant royal bison. Wolves. Bandits. Morgovian marauders. A band of smugglers. A leshy. Demons. Pagan priests.

**Hazards:** getting lost in the forest, poisonous mushrooms, sudden storm, falling branches, thorns and nettles.

**Scandals:** picnic on an anthill. Not knowing the local history. Confusing a deer and a fallow.

**Goals:** hunt for wild animals. Trying to sneak over the border. Camping. Archeological trip. Finding lost friends.



# SOCIETY

The background of your characters' amazing adventures is the magical version of the 19th century, with its specific atmosphere, etiquette, and the view of the world so different from our modern one.

This chapter presents the most important aspects of Vanadian culture and the ways of employing them in your game sessions.

## Vanadian Etiquette

Everyday lives of people in Vanadia are determined by etiquette—stiff, commonly known, and usually observed. Fortunately for the characters, extraordinary people are forgiven more than the rest of the society and any faux pas can be simply put down to their eccentric personalities.

Ignoring etiquette carries the risk of causing a scandal and losing Reputation (**Scandals** 143). The more formal the situation, the more important following the protocol is. A faux pas that would go unnoticed during a party in a countryside residence could completely destroy one's life if made at an official audience with the Queen.

Below are some most diligently followed rules of everyday life in Vanadia:

- you call only your closest friends by their first name, sometimes even married couples address each other as “Sir” and “Madam”;
- you don't raise your voice in public places;
- smoking in the presence of ladies is inexcusably tactless;
- it is not seemly to express your emotions in public;
- bare skin is typical of savages; Civilized people wear hats and gloves;
- the place at a gentleman's right side is always reserved for his wife;
- discretion is essential; Much can be forgiven if it remains hidden.

## This Is How Vanadians See It:

### A Real Gentleman:

- is polite and, of course, gentle;
- is brave, as he has nothing to be afraid of when his conscience is clean;
- is never embarrassed, as he is always deeply aware of his good intentions;
- his honor and reputation stay untarnished, as he behaves in a civilized way;
- is never arrogant but also never shows his weaknesses;
- if he opposes something he does it without anger, if he gives in he does so graciously;
- is proud but not conceited;
- is too wise to hold little pleasures in contempt, but too noble to yield to them too often;
- respects his superiors but is not servile; is polite towards his equals and gentle to those of a lower status;
- is sociable but does not fraternize; is distinguished but without affectation;
- combines gentle manners with a strong mind;
- gives orders politely but imperiously; asks for favors with charm and confidence.

### A Real Lady:

- behaves naturally, discreetly, and kindly;
- avoids publicity, respects others' feelings;
- shares the riches of her pure mind with her friends;
- does not scold anyone openly but feels pity for those worse off, the unhappy, and the ignorant;
- with her innocence and purity of heart she thwarts any evil designs, and wins love, respect, and dedication of others.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The world of **Wolsung** pretends to be the Victorian era, but it isn't. It is rather a mixture of the most interesting, colorful and playable elements of a really wide period starting in the 19th century and ending somewhere in the 1930s.

You don't have to reconstruct the Victorian realities and the world view of the epoch during your game sessions. Just focus on the particular elements which build the specific old-fashioned atmosphere that we usually associate with the 19th century.

## Fashion

Mass production, cheap wool, and cotton from the colonies, as well as alchemical dyes and lacemaking golems have drastically changed Vanadians' way of dressing. However, what you wear still tells much about your material status (**Wealth** 69 and **Gadgets** 72).

### LOWER CLASS

Farmers, workers, and wastrels wear clothes made from the cheapest materials: linen, drill, sometimes cotton. A typical man's outfit consists of working trousers, a shirt, a jacket, shoes (not always) and a cap. Women usually wear simple dresses, long skirts, and mob caps. In some circumstances you may encounter ladies whose outfits differ significantly from this description, but it is neither prudent nor appropriate to go into the topic any further.

### MIDDLE CLASS

Townpeople, merchants, and officers can afford better materials, even high quality wool. Gentlemen wear vests, shirts with white collars, frock coats, and bowler hats. Ladies present all cuts of dresses, skirts, and blouses, and most wear a simple corset underneath. Little hats

and pillboxes are worn on the heads and faces are often hidden behind veils. Civilized people of both sexes wear gloves. Dresses always reach down to the ground while necks are covered by high collars, neckerchiefs, or scarves.

### UPPER CLASS

Wealthy men and aristocrats have access to all the benefits of the modern knitting industry: batiste, velvet, the softest wool of the highest quality—all this is made especially for them. Gentlemen parade around in tailcoats and best jackets (always appropriate for the situation), usually

with a top hat, a white scarf, and gloves. Ladies choose their attire according to their needs and current moods. A loose housedress with a mandarin collar and fitted cuffs is perfectly enough in the morning, but when a lady receives guests, it's good to wear black silk and some jewelry. A feast of colors, the flap of lace, and the glitter of diamonds accompany her at a party. Sometimes even an ankle in a delicate stocking can be seen, which is usually considered almost obscene. A fan makes the outfit complete. Its moves can sometimes say more than a thousand words.



## At the Seaside

It is worthwhile to say a few words about how we should dress while enjoying our vacation at the seaside. It is best to get a sports outfit of a fashionable cut. This season among the most popular beach outfits are knee-length tricots with sleeves reaching one's elbows. Models for ladies additionally have a short skirt. As usual, dark colors are more elegant, which is perfectly understandable, as light ones get embarrassingly transparent when wet. Stripes are extremely fashionable this season.

## Haircuts

As illustrated periodicals have become more common, fashion is now one of the major topics discussed in social situations. The haircuts of Princesses, marshals, actresses and generals are constantly commented upon, new fashions come and go, and the way you brushed your hair or cut your mustache may influence your future social career.

**Tips for a Lady:** Buns have loosened, moved down and to the back of the head. Only the most conservative traditionalists and hopeless old spinsters still have a parting in the front and a tight bun on the top of the head. Modern ladies allow their frizzes on the forehead and at the sides to fall in lovely curls and plaits. In progressive Aquitaine women sometimes let their hair down at the back or arrange them in loose loops. Braver ladies can cut their hair short as they do in the east or shorten it a bit and arrange in curls decorated with flowers—just like heroines from Aeolian mythology. Ladies who look for some change but who are not willing to take such drastic steps are advised to pull their hair into a loose bun and put ribbons or other decorations in the frizzes at the sides.

**Tips for a Gentleman:** Haircuts are supposed to be kept impeccably tidy. Curly hair should be arranged in delicate waves, straight hair—smoothed down. Brilliantine helps to keep the haircut: without it, you just don't look

## Good to Know

Brilliantine, so popular among fashionable gentlemen, almost doesn't exist for the working class. The reason for this is not the price, but a certain specific feature: during physical effort Brilliantine melts and streams down with sweat, creating greasy black trickles.

like a man of dignity. Partings are more often worn on the side rather than in the middle, but we suggest observing the latest fashions. They change all too often today.



Stylish facial hair ideally complements a gentleman's haircut. Sideburns are still fashionable, but their triumphal march seems to have lost momentum lately. Wide and bristly sideburns, so long that they almost meet at the chin, are especially popular among dwarves (especially in Ostria). Beards of all kinds are also considered stylish—from Coriolean ones, thin as the blade of a dagger, to those surrounding the face, worn in the north of Vanadia. Elves usually shave their faces clean, as they do not have particularly strong facial hair. Maybe under their influence people in Alfheim and Aquitaine, if they do so at all, wear a short

## BEHIND THE SCENES

To be honest, the attitude towards the role and rights of women in **Wolsung** is completely un-Victorian. Any attempts to stick to the realities of the period would make female characters actually unplayable.

The element that enables reconciling modern views and the atmosphere of the epoch is the dualistic church. The Church of the Goddess and the activity of priestesses made Vanadian society allow women more freedom than Victorian England did.



# CAST OF CHARACTERS

This chapter will provide you with lots of antagonists who can stand in the way of your characters: beasts and monsters, dangerous animals, hordes of the undead, and opponents who are completely human, but no less dangerous. Something special for everyone.

Although beasts and monsters constitute only a part of the **Wolsung** Cast, we sometimes—just to make things easier—use these terms as general categories. This chapter describes the following types of antagonists: the undead, beasts, monsters and abominations, machines, Astral beings and famous (or infamous) people you can read about in crime and gossip columns.

## GENERAL RULES

Antagonists are not the main characters in your stories; they only constitute challenges and obstacles for the actual heroes. That's why they are described in a simpler way than the players' characters.

### Facts and Myths

The description of each opponent is accompanied by additional information the characters may obtain while studying various sources or actually observing the antagonist. An appropriate **test** can be made during the first encounter. This lets the characters know for sure what beast they are dealing with. Game Masters, remember

some of the information provided may be myths, depending on what works best for the game.

The heroes get the first piece of information if they pass the **test**. They need a raise to get the second piece of information and two raises to get the third. Three raises give complete data. The knowledge can be especially useful for characters acting as a **backup** in a conflict.

### Opponent Template

All antagonists are presented in the same schematic way.

- **Default conflict:** if the antagonist can start a conflict on their terms, they will choose this type of conflict.
- **Type:** extras (**dice pool** 1d10), opponent (**dice pool** 2d10 and more) or final opponent (three stages). Moreover, here you will find how numerous the group is, the **challenge marker** value, and any additional information needed.
- **Abilities:** the opponent's Edges, Gadgets and other skills.
- **Combat:** Defense, skills, and Abilities used in combat.
- **Chase:** Endurance, skills, and Abilities used in chases, as well as typical **stakes**.
- **Discussion:** Confidence, skills, and Abilities used in discussions, as well as typical **stakes**.

## EXTRAS, OPPONENTS, AND FINAL OPPONENTS

There are three groups of antagonists: extras, opponents, and final opponents, depending on how big a challenge they are.

### Extras

Alone, extras are no threat for the characters. They work best as support for major opponents or as an obstacle whose aim is to slow down the heroes or not to let them escape.

Rules for Extras:

- The whole group of extras gets the same initiative card and acts at the same moment.
- Extras can declare **finishers** only if their opponent has no **challenge markers** left.
- Extras cannot **fumble**.
- To eliminate a single extra, you don't have to declare a **finisher**; it's enough to score a successful hit.
- Pool the **challenge markers** for the whole group—one marker for each extra.
- You can eliminate more than one extra in a single attack. Before the dice are rolled, declare how many extras you want to take out. Then raise the TN by 5 for each additional extra. If you succeed you eliminate all the extras you declared. If you fail you miss all of them.
- the GM may play cards to enhance extras' rolls according to the rules of their Abilities (see **Cards and Extras** below).



### Opponents

A single opponent constitutes a real threat for an average character. When the opponent is accompanied by a group of extras or the conflict takes place in their favorite scenery, they can cause trouble for the whole team.

Opponents have a **dice pool** of 2d10 or more and at least one Achievement (usually one that enhances conflicts in their favorite scenery).

### Final Opponents

Final opponents are absolutely unique: unusual monsters or outstanding people. They constitute a serious threat for the whole team. Conflicts with them have special rules and are usually divided into three stages (**Game Mastering** 323).

## TYPES OF ANTAGONISTS

Some antagonists belong to one of the groups presented below. Apart from the Abilities enumerated in the description, they also get additional skills of that type.

### Animals

If not written otherwise, every animal has the following skills: *survival*, *spot*, and *stealth* at 6/10+.

Animals usually attack only when very hungry or provoked. In the wilderness, characters may avoid an encounter passing an **opposed test** *survival* against the animal's *spot*.

### Constructs

Machines, golems, etc., are immune to poisons and illnesses, do not feel pain, and cannot be confused in this way. They have *technics* 6/10+.

### Mindless

Mindless creatures are immune to *empathy*, *expression*, *persuasion*, and *intimidation*—every attempt to use these skills against them results in an automatic failure. They do not make **Fear tests** and cannot participate in social conflicts.

### The Undead

**Aimed attacks** do not take away additional **challenge markers**. The undead are immune

to poisons, illnesses, and most **environmental hazards**. They sense the presence of living creatures. They cause Fear TN 10.

## OPPONENTS' ABILITIES

Many of the opponents have unique abilities but there are some commonalities.

The most common abilities of the antagonists are:

- **area attack** – the attack hits every target within its range. This usually requires spending a token or is available once per scene.
- **armor** – the character's Defense is increased by the armor value (+3, +5, or +10).
- **assistance** – the antagonist may call reinforcements (usually a group of extras) with a **use an item** action.
- **blinding** – apart from obviously affecting the narrative, blinding lowers the victim's **dice pool** by 1d10 to a minimum of 1d10. A blinded character can attack only at close range.
- **charge** – before an attack, the character may make a **move**, getting closer to the opponent. If the character makes an attack **test** with a raise, they may make another free move after the attack.
- **confusion** – the attack lowers the opponent's **dice pool** by 1d10.
- **finisher** – under some circumstances a **finisher** may be declared even after the dice are rolled.
- **first strike** – the antagonist may attack first before the conflict starts. The antagonist makes an **opposed test** and if a character loses, they are automatically hit. All raises in the **opposed test** count as raises in this automatic attack. If the attacking character loses, the conflict starts normally.
- **flying attack** – creatures which cannot fly may attack a flying opponent only as a response to the opponent's direct attack (on the same initiative card). In a chase, a flying character may spend a token to make an **undeclared finisher** against a non-flying creature.

## CARDS AND EXTRAS

♠ spades – **cooperation**: "Let's cut the ropes holding the bridge. One... Two... Now!" "Fire at my command!" "I will draw their attention, and you sneak behind their backs..."

♥ hearts – **zealotry**: "You shall not pass!" "Boss, run! We will stop them!" "Charge!" "Die, infidels!"

♦ diamonds – **reinforcement**: "We need reinforcements, now!" "My whole family supports me!" "We've found another two witnesses!"

♣ clubs – **sheer numbers**: "You are surrounded!" "That's not true! Am I right? Am I, brothers? – Yeah, he's right!" "Let's spread out, they cannot catch us all."

- **forceful blow** – the attack takes away an additional **challenge marker**.
- **frightening** – the opponents have to make a Fear **test** at the beginning of a conflict.
- **hide** – the character may disappear during a conflict and attack again when the opponents do not expect it. This is a **stunt** based on a **move** action. The antagonist may also perform a **first strike** again before the next round.
- **immobilize** – the attack immobilizes the opponent. Immobilized characters cannot **move** or **use items**, the bonus from the Attribute does not count for their resistance (so resistance usually drops to 10). Immobilization may be ended by winning an **opposed test**.
- **immune (attack type)** – the character is immune to attacks of a given type and they cannot affect this character.
- **impervious (attack/conflict type)** – making an attack against this person requires spending a token.
- **indestructible** – the character does not lose **challenge markers** from attacks and can be defeated only by a **finisher**.
- **isolate** – this attack picks out one target from the group. The companions cannot play cards to help the target or assist the

target acting as a **backup**. Isolation may be ended by winning an **opposed test**.

- **knockdown** – the attack knocks the opponent down. The bonus from the Attribute is not included in the lying character's resistance (so resistance usually drops to 10). Standing up requires two **move** actions.
- **poison** – the attack is poisonous. The first hit in the conflict results in losing 1 Constitution. Moreover, depending on the type of the poison, each hit has one or more additional effects: losing one die for a round, losing a card from your hand, losing an additional **challenge marker**, an **undeclared finisher**.
- **pull** – the attack pulls the opponent to the attacker, usually changing the range in this way. Going back to longer range requires a **move** action.
- **push back** – the attack pushes back the opponent, usually changing the range in

this way. Coming back to closer range requires a **move** action.

- **ranged attack (range)** – enables attacks at long or medium range.
- **ram** – after two **move** actions and a successful attack, the character may turn over a vehicle.
- **regeneration** – after fulfilling given conditions, the antagonist restores **challenge markers** lost in the conflict.
- **swipe** – the attack may hit more than one target in a given range. For every raise on the attack roll an additional target is hit whose resistance is not higher than the initial target's.
- **tough** – attacks against this antagonist require at least three raises to take a **challenge marker**. Hits that are weaker, but accurate, reduce the antagonist's **dice pool** by 1d10 for a given round (not cumulative).
- **weakness** – you may declare a **finisher** after each attack of a given type aimed at this antagonist.



# INDEX

- Ability 44, 44-49
- Achievement 105, 106-118
- actions 128
- active resistance** 128
- Advancement, Character 118
- adverse conditions** 135
- aether 167
- Agility (Ag) 50
- aimed attack** 129
- ally 31, 62, 104, 112, 150
- alvar 26, 291
- antiquity 257
- Archetype 11
  - daredevil 13
  - explorer 15
  - investigator 17
  - socialite 19
- argument 128
- Astral, the 103
- attack 128
- attitude** 148
- Attribute 50
- Backup** 135
- boost** 97
- Brawn (Br) 50
- Bruiser 150, 506
- Cards 11-19, 97, 122, 126
- challenge markers** 127, 130
- Charisma (Ch) 50
- chase 127, 137
- combat 127, 135
- Composure (Com) 50
- Confidence 51, 139
- conflict 127
- conjunction 151, 159
- Constitution 50, 142, 145
- contacts** 149
- creidmallen 26
- crystalograph 71, 165
- daze** 129
- Defense 51, 135
- demonology 161, 328
- dice pool** 119, 122
- disarm** 129
- discussion 127, 139
- distance 135
- dragons 248, 252
- dwarf 21, 22
- Edges 53, 54-68
  - Accurate Attack 54
  - Acrobat 57
  - Additional Racial Trait 62
  - Adrenaline Shot 57
  - Aggressive Discussion 60
  - All for Morgovian Motherland 65
  - Ambidextrous 54
  - Beater 57
  - Bloodhound 57
  - Bonded By Blood 65
  - Bowl of Tea 65
  - Camouflage 65
  - Challenge 62
  - Charming 60
  - Child of the Sea 66
  - Companion 62
  - Contact 62
  - Cool As a Cucumber 66
  - Counterargument 60
  - Crazy Maneuver 57
  - Create Magical Item 63
  - Defiant 54
  - Demonologist (NPC only) 328
  - Devastating Critique 60
  - Disarm 54
  - Dodge 54
  - Drain Life (NPC only) 328
  - Dream Theft (NPC only) 328
  - Extraordinary Competence 63
  - Extraordinary Reflexes 57
  - Fast Draw 54
  - Fast Reaction 58
  - Fast Recon 63
  - Fearless 66
  - Feint 54
  - Firm Eye, Sure Hand 54
- Artist's Toolbox 85
- Athlete's Outfit 81
- Autobiography of Feliciano Lunapiena, The* 92
- Automatic Steam Shotgun 78
- Bathyscaphe 80
- Behemoth, Light 80
- Bicycle 78
- Binoculars 85
- Black Coat 81
- Black Lilly Matchbox 93
- Black Lotus 85
- Black Mask 81
- Book of the Dead* 92
- Booze 84
- Bottle of Beer 84
- Boxing Gloves 77
- Brass Knuckles 75
- Breviary 89
- Burglar's Toolbox 88
- Cader's Uniform 80
- Calling Card 93
- Camera 85
- Carriage 78
- Cavalry Saber 75
- Ceremonial Uniform 81
- Chameleon Cloak 96
- Chloroform 86
- City Transportation Timetable 89
- Cleaver 75
- Collection of Medals 93
- Comfy Armchair 86
- Compass 86
- Corset 81
- Costume and Mask 82
- Coveralls 81
- Criminal and Civil Codes* 91
- Crystal Monocle 82
- Crystalograph 88
- Curious Cases of Chevalier Amaro* 91
- Dancer's Outfit 83
- Deerstalker 82
- Detective's Toolbox 86
- Diplomatic passport 93
- Disguise Kit 86
- Doctor's Bag 88
- Dumbbells, Pair of 87
- Elephant Gun 77
- Encyclopaedia Alfheimica* 89
- Exotic Magical Components 86
- Field Notes 90
- Financial Subscription, The* 91
- First Aid Kit 85
- Flamethrower 77
- Formal Outfit 82
- Gang Uniform 81
- General Eaglewood's Uniform 84
- Gold Medal 93
- Golden Unicorn 95
- Golemic Spider 80
- Guardian's Uniform 84
- Hairpins 76
- Handgun 76
- Harpoon Handgun 86
- Heimbürg Polytechnics Science Journal* 90
- Historical Weapon 95
- Holy Relic 96
- Holy Symbol 93
- Hunter's Outfit 82
- Hunting Rifle 76
- Hypnotic Pendulum 95
- Inconspicuous Steamobile 79
- Intelligence Agency Badge 94
- Introduction to Psychoanalysis* 89
- Inventors' Club Pin 94
- Jeeves III 88
- Lady in Front of a Mirror* 96
- Le Livre des Esprits* 90
- Leather Coat 82
- Librarian's Outfit 83
- Limousine 79
- Lockpicks, Set of 87
- Lodge Master's Ceremonial Robe 84
- Lorry 78
- Lupara 76
- Lyonesse Archeological Society Pin 94
- First Aid 63
- Flame of Faith 66
- Foreign Language 64
- Forest-Born 66
- Gadget 64
- Getting on One's Nerves 60
- Good Wotaner 66
- Grew-Up in Colonies 67
- Hard as Nails 55
- Higher Constitution 64
- Higher Reputation 64
- Imperial and Royal 67
- In a Flash 58
- In the Service of Her Majesty 67
- Inner Belief 60
- Light in the Darkness 67
- Lightning Reflexes 64
- Magical Power 64
- Magical Training 64
- Master of Rhetoric 60
- Natural-Born Negotiator 67
- Necromancer (NPC only) 329
- Nerves of Steel 60
- No Remorse 58
- Orator 60
- Ordnung Muss Sein 67
- Outrageous Liar 61
- Parry 55
- Passionate 67
- Perfect Bourgeois 67
- Pièce de Résistance 64
- Powerful Attack 55
- Provocation 61
- Regeneration 55
- Regular as Clockwork 67
- Relentless Assault 56
- Republican 68
- Restless Spirit 68
- Riposte 56
- Risky Maneuver 58
- Ritual Sacrifice (NPC only) 328
- Second Wind 59
- Secret Strike 56
- Shadow 59
- Sixth Sense 59
- Smoke and Mirrors 68
- Spell 65
- Strange Connections 68
- Stunt Driver 59
- Stuntman 59
- Sudden Acceleration 59
- Surprising Maneuver 59
- Swipe 57
- Ultimate Argument 61
- Unpredictable 59
- Veiled Threat 61
- Weak Spot 61
- Well-Aimed Riposte 62
- Wild Talent 65
- Wind of the Savannah 68
- Windfall 65
- Wotanian Technology 68
- Wrestler 57
- elf 21, 24
- Endurance 51, 137
- environmental hazards** 142
- Epic Achievements 115
- equipment** 69
- Experience Points (XP) 118
- Extraordinary Achievement 106
- extras 134, 408
- Fame 119
- Famous 119
- faux-pas** 143
- Fear 146
- filthy rich 69
- finisher** 128, 130
- forceful blow** 129
- fumble** 123
- Gadget 72-74, 75-96
  - Aether Goggles by Professor E. Car-rera 88
  - Airship 79
  - Amphibian 79
  - Antique Musket 75

Lyonesse Archeological Society Pin 94  
*Lyonesse Crystalgraph* 90  
 Machete 76  
 Machine Gun 77  
 Mad Invention 86  
*Magick in Theory and Practice* 90  
 Mana Batteries 86  
 Manuscript 91  
 Measuring Tools 87  
 Medal for Valor 94  
 Memoirs 89  
 Music Sheet 89  
 Notebook 91  
 Nunchaku 77  
 Officer's Saber 76  
 Order of Chivalry 94  
 Personal Difference Engine 89  
 Pince-nez 82  
 Platinum Globe 95  
 Pneumatic Umbrella 75  
 Police Badge 93  
 Press Pass 94  
 Priest's Cassock 82  
 Racing Bicycle 79  
 Rapier 76  
*Ravenotio's Memoirs* 92  
 Relic sword 77  
 Rickshaw 78  
 Ritual Outfit 82  
*Royal Geographic Bestiary* 91  
 RTKA Badge 94  
 Runner's Shoes 81  
 Saddled Horse 79  
 Satire Magazine 89  
 School Uniform 81  
 Scout's Badge 93  
 Self-Authored Textbook 91  
 Service Pistol 78  
 Shaman Mask 83  
 Signet Ring 93  
 Silver McRoth, Limited Edition 80  
 Silver Revolvers, Pair of 77  
 Snare 87  
 Socket Wrench 85  
 Spiritualist's Toolbox 87  
 Splendid Collection of Alcoholic Bever-  
 ages 85  
 Sports Steamobile 79  
 Spring Knife 75  
 Square and Compass Badge 94  
 St. Petruccio's Blessed Rapier 78  
 Steam Deltaplane 80  
 Steam-Powered Armor 78  
 Steamboat 78  
 Stocking Gun 76  
 Stunning Outfit 83  
 Sunglasses 83  
 Swordcane 76  
 Technomancer's Toolbox 87  
 Thaumometer 88  
 Throwing Knives 76  
 Tiger's Claws 78  
 Tobacco 84  
 Traveler's Kit 87  
 Trench Coat 83  
 Trophy 95  
 Truth Serum 96  
 Typewriter 88  
 Uniform 83  
 Walking Stick 75  
 Westrian Army Knife 85  
 Whip 77  
 Wyvern 79  
 Wyvern Pilot's Uniform 84  
 Wyvern, Postal 80  
 Game Master (GM) 12, 300, 318, 319  
 gnome 21, 27  
 godi 27, 289  
 Great War, the 252, 267  
**grip** 129  
 halfling 21, 29  
**help a friend** 128  
 human 21, 32  
 Initiative 126, 128  
 joint ventures 148  
 knockdown 130  
 Legendary 119  
 Losing In Conflicts 130  
 Magic 150  
 mana 154, 159

**maneuver** 129  
 Middle Ages 261  
**mixing conflict types** 130, 129  
 modern times 265  
 money 69, 147  
**move** 129  
 Nationality 42  
 necromancy 161, 329  
 Negotiator 150, 506  
 nexus 159  
 ogre 21, 34  
 orc 21, 37  
 Ordinary 119  
**Personnel** 149  
 Powers 152-153, 97-101  
 Awe 97  
 Blur 97  
 Command Death (forbidden) 330  
 Control Machines 98  
 Control Spirits 98  
 Flight 98  
 Helper 99  
 Human Spider 99  
 Illusions 99  
 Influence 99  
 Mental Shield 99  
 Missile 100  
 Perceive Magic 100  
 Shield 100  
 Smite 100  
 Suggestion 101  
 Supreme Agility 101  
 Supreme Brawn 101  
 Supreme Speed 101  
 Telekinesis 101  
 Temptation (forbidden) 330  
 Vision 101  
**polite request** 130  
 poor 69, 70  
 prehistory 256  
 Profession 44, 45-49  
 Actor 44  
 Antiquarian 44  
 Artist 44  
 Bon Vivant 45  
 Cleric 45  
 Criminal 45  
 Detective 46  
 Gunslinger 46  
 Hunter 46  
 Journalist 46  
 Noble 47  
 Officer 47  
 Ritualist 47  
 Scientist 47  
 Special Agent 48  
 Spiritualist 48  
 Sportsman 48  
 Technomancer 48  
 Traveler 49  
 Writer 49  
**push back** 130  
 Race 21  
 Racial Achievements 115, 116-118  
 racial traits 62, 115  
 Allegories and Parables 28  
 Animal Magnetism 35  
 Beginner's Luck 33  
 City Slicker 30  
 Cold Logic 23  
 Dancing With a Blade 25  
 Darkness Under Mountains 23  
 Dreams and Nightmares 26  
 Elusive 30  
 Elven Grace 26  
 Fiery Passion 41  
 Fireproof 41  
 Gadgeteer 23  
 Gnomish Wise Man 28  
 Hard as Nails 35  
 Heat Up the Atmosphere 41  
 Honesty of the Orcs 38  
 Hypnotic Charm 26  
 Inspired Mechanic 24  
 It's Just an Ogre 36  
 Kith and Kin 31  
 Mind's Eye 38  
 Noble Ancestors 39  
 Numerologist 28  
 One of Our Own 33

Rich Experience 33  
 Secret Runes 28  
 Secret Techniques of the Sunnirian Mas-  
 ters 39  
 Strongman 36  
 Superhuman Reflexes 31  
 With the Last Breath 33  
 Word of Honor 41  
 Racial Weaknesses 142  
 raise 123, 124, 135  
 range (close, medium, long) 135  
**recovery** 145  
 Reputation 50, 143, 145  
 re-rolls 50, 122  
 renaissance 263  
 resistance (Defense, Endurance, Confi-  
 dence) 51, 74, 126, 127  
 Retirement 119  
 rich 69, 71  
 ritualism 155, 156  
 route change 130  
**scandal** 143  
**scar** 132  
 Scholar 150, 507  
**scrutinize** 140  
 skills 51  
   *academics* 52  
   *athletics* 52  
   *bluff* 52  
   *brawl* 52  
   *courage* 52  
   *drive* 52  
   *empathy* 52  
   *expression* 52  
   *firearms* 52  
   *general knowledge* 54  
   *intimidation* 52  
   *larceny* 52  
   *occult* 52  
   *persuasion* 52  
   *research* 52  
   *spot* 52  
   *stealth* 52  
   *streetwise* 52  
   *survival* 52  
   *technics* 52  
 Slyboots 150, 507  
 specialties 51, 52  
 Spells 154, 102-105  
   Boost Attribute 102  
   Boost Power 102  
   Dispel Magic 102  
   Exorcism 103  
   Gate to Astral 103  
   Hold Magic 103  
   Magical Companion 104  
   Reflect Magic 104  
   Regeneration 104  
   Summon a Demon 104  
   Walk Through Walls 105  
   Weather Control 105  
 spiritualism 155, 156  
**stake** 125, 130, 132, 136, 138, 140  
**stunt** 129  
 surrender 134  
 Target Number (TN) 122  
 technomagic 155, 157  
 test base 51  
**test, opposed** 124  
**test, simple** 122  
**tests** 122, 124  
**threat** 130  
 timeline 269  
 tokens 122, 125  
**traps** 142  
 troll 21, 39  
 True Art 155, 157  
 True Name 105, 116, 442  
 use an item 129  
 va banque 132  
 weakness (opponents) 310, 410  
 Wealth 69, 145, 147  
 wealthy 69, 71  
 Well-known 119  
 well-off 69, 70  
 Wild Talent 155, 158  
 Wits (Wt) 50  
 Wound 131

# WOLSUNG

## Steampunk Skirmish Game



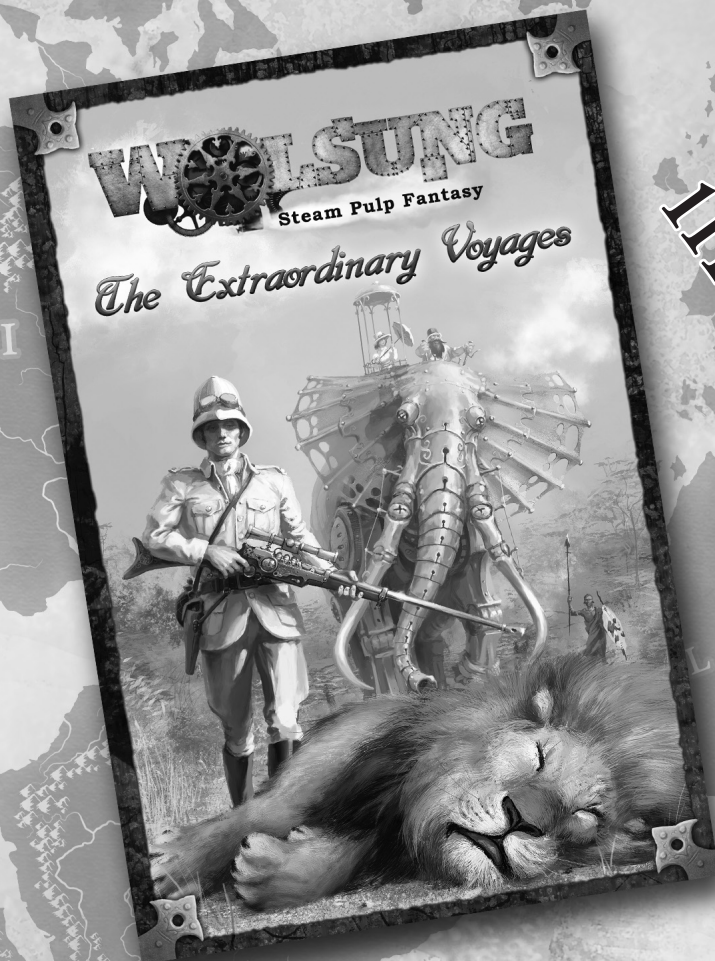
*Please do not take my remark  
as overly boorish, but is this your first duel,  
sir? I could not help but notice that you were  
not able to execute a single effective attack  
in the last hour. But please, you needn't  
hurry, I can devote a bit more time to you.  
It is not until seven that  
I have my bridge appointment."*

*- Sir Lance Oakroot*

The Wolsung steampunk skirmish game is a miniature combat game, where clubs of extraordinary ladies and gentlemen, as well as shadowy organisations and agents of obscure powers, solve their disputes by blade and gunshot rather than discussion. Each game represents a point where paths of two or more such clubs cross while they work on the same goal, but for opposite purpose. As such, the careful deduction and data gathering as well as social meetings that led them to this point are left for Wolsung roleplay narrative; a game of Wolsung skirmish game represents the point where the outcome is decided by a keen eye, reflexes and a bit of luck.

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