

# FAMILY

## OPTIONAL RULES



In most fantasy roleplaying games the characters operate in a small party of likeminded individuals. That they have families is largely an irrelevant detail and of little use when plundering tombs and slaying beasts. *Hellfrost*, however, has the potential to allow for families to play a role part in the characters' lives.

If you are electing to use these rules, then sibling characters become a distinct possibility. As any siblings are obviously from the same family, certain Edges and Hindrances must apply to them both equally unless adequate reasoning is provided as to why this is not the case. For instance, Dave and Rob decide their characters are to be brothers. Dave wants to play a Noble. Rob now has three choices—he must take the Noble Edge for his hero, convince Dave to drop the idea, or decide to play an illegitimate sibling who does not benefit from his father's title.

Heroes can also be more distantly related, perhaps playing cousins. In this case, although they belong to the same family, they needn't share the same Hindrances and Edges as they are from different branches and possibly live in different geographical areas. Similarly, more distant kin are members of the same clan but not the same family, and thus do not have to take the same Hindrances and Edges.

With some minor tweaks, these rules can easily be used to represent military or political alliances, support from temples, support gained via the Connections Edge.

**Important:** These rules require use of the *Hellfrost Bestiary*.

### NEW HINDRANCES

#### BLOOD FEUD (MINOR/MAJOR)

Your family has a feud with another family who lives nearby. If the Minor Hindrance is taken, the feud involves

cattle raids and bitter arguments, but has not yet resulted in bloodshed. You receive  $-2$  Charisma when dealing with members of the rival family and should not expect them to obey the laws of hospitality. Taking the Major version means the families are at war, and members attack each other on sight—the Charisma penalty increases to  $-4$ .

All sibling characters must take this Hindrance. The GM should create details of the other family. Stopping a blood feud requires dedicated effort.

#### OUTLAW (MAJOR)

The hero has been outlawed from his society. He may have committed a serious crime or been the victim of a miscarriage of justice. Cut off from his kin, he receives no roll on the Kinship Table. Outlaws found in their old community may legally be killed without their former kin being able to claim weregild. The hero has  $-20$  Glory.

Outlaws may not take any Edges or Hindrances relating to family, including Noble.

#### WEAK FAMILY (MINOR/MAJOR)

The character's family lacks resources both military and political. The character receives a  $-2$  penalty to rolls on the Kinship Table for the Minor Hindrance and  $-4$  for the Major version. Taking this Hindrance does not prohibit the character from being Noble. All sibling characters must take this Hindrance.

### NEW EDGES

These Edges are related to the idea of family and kinship.

While the new Background Edges have no part in a game not using kinship, the Huscarl Edge can be imported to a regular *Hellfrost* with the omission of references to the Kinship Table.

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## BACKGROUND EDGES

### LARGE FAMILY

**Requirements:** Novice

The character's family may not be particularly powerful, but there are lots of them.

The character receives a +2 bonus when rolling on the Kinship Table. Characters with Weak Family may not take this Edge. All sibling characters must take this Edge.

### POWERFUL FAMILY

**Requirements:** Novice

The character's family, whether large or small, holds great power in the land.

The character receives a +2 bonus when rolling on the Kinship Table. Characters with Weak Family may not take this Edge. All sibling characters must take this Edge.

## PROFESSIONAL EDGES

### HUSCARL \*

**Requirements:** Strength d8+, Vigor d6+, Boating d6+, Fighting d8+, Riding d6+, Throwing d6

Huscarls are professional soldiers, dedicated to serving their lord in return for him providing accommodation and equipment. They are not common soldiers, but rather bodyguards, advisors, and friends to their lord. Commoners greatly fear them for their combat prowess, and rightly so, for they form the core of the lord's army and spend their days training to kill.

A huscarl may benefit from any Leadership Edges his lord possesses as if the character were an Extra.

In addition, huscarls are provided with a chain shirt, an open helm, a long sword, three medium shields, and three short spears for free. Huscarls receive a +2 bonus to rolls on the Kinship Table and may ask their lord for aid rather than their families.

He also has the Connection (Lord) Edges and the Orders Hindrance. A huscarl cannot simply go off adventuring on a whim—he is tied to his lord, and must seek his lord's permission to travel. This may lead to his lord sending him on adventures to offset the huscarl's private ventures.

## ALTERED EDGE

### NOBLE

In addition to the regular benefits, the character gains a bonus to rolls on the Kinship Table dependent on his noble title. These stack with any other Kinship Table

modifiers. Note that only the male Anari titles are listed for brevity.

Title	Modifier
Knight	+0
Banneret	+1
Baron	+2
Count	+4
Duke	+6
Prince	+8
King	+10

## KINSHIP & FEALTY

The value of a man is measured as much by his kin as his personal actions. Family members are expected to stick together and support each other, no matter the circumstances. Even distant cousins, who are usually members of the same clan, are expected to answer a summons. Of course, this works both ways, and player characters are obliged to answer requests from family members.

Nobles can use this system in a slightly different manner. Noble characters wield temporal power. By the ancient laws, every citizen under their dominion owes the noble fealty. In times of great need, a noble can call upon his personal soldiers, as well as the local militia, hunters, and even the peasant farmers to fight for him. Together, this force is known as the *fyrð*, an Auld Saxa term. Every noble has his own *fyrð*, as do many guilds and temples.

These rules written with a certain spirit in mind, and are thus easily open to abuse by players. The GM has the absolute final word on whether a hero's family will even consider aiding his request—if the GM says no, then no die roll can be made to enlist support.

Typically, families will not assist in "dungeon crawls" (though a raid against an orc encampment might serve their interests) and the presence of so many Extras is likely to lessen any Glory rewards unless the enemy is particularly numerous.

The *fyrð* haven't signed up to go adventuring with their lord, either—they are summoned only in times of invasion. With the winters lengthening, it is more important that the *fyrð* remains on the land, plowing, sowing, and harvesting. Calling the *fyrð* at the wrong time or getting them slaughtered on some fool's errand is a surefire way to shatter the economy of a realm.

A good guideline is that a family only ever assists when the GM plans to use the Mass Battles rules to handle the adventure or when the aim of requesting aid is to borrow a ship for a quick trip.

To call upon his kin or *fyrð*, a character must approach the head of the family or clan and beseech his aid. If the request is approved, the leader calls for volunteers—no one is forced to go.

The petitioner must make a Persuasion roll with a -4 penalty. Additional modifiers are shown below. If suc-

cessful, the character rolls on the chart below, adding any Kinship Table modifiers. A raise on the request roll grants a +2 bonus on the Kinship Table.

## KINSHIP TABLE

Mod	Reason
<b>Petitioner</b>	
+X	Petitioner's Charisma
+1	For each Leadership Edge of the petitioner
+1	Per petitioner's Rank <i>above</i> Novice*
+1	For each whole 50 Glory of the petitioner
<b>Target</b>	
+2	Acting to safeguard the family's lands**
+2	Acting against family subject to a major blood feud
+1	Acting against family subject to a minor blood feud
-4	Acting against members of one's own clan
-6	Acting against members of one's own family
<b>Season</b>	
-2	Spring or fall
-4	Winter
<b>Distance</b>	
-2	Neighboring realm
-6	Journey into non-neighboring realm
-8	Journey to the Hellfrost
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
+2	Per additional character from same family in the party
+1	Per additional character from same clan in the party
-2	Per additional request made in the same year
-4	Per additional request made in the same season

\* *Seasoned gives +1 bonus, Veteran +2, and so on.*

\*\* *This includes the kingdom in which they live, as well as their immediate homes.*

**Petitioner:** The status of the petitioner has a great impact on whether he can enlist support for his cause. Charismatic individuals are likely popular among their people, and can muster support better than one who is disliked or unruly. A hero with Leadership Edges has proven abilities at commanding men, and is thus more likely to lead them safely home. Rank is a general reflection of overall combat skill, while a glorious hero has performed brave deeds and has a positive reputation.

**Target:** The nature of the target to be raided has a direct bearing on the character's ability to muster men. Few clans and families have any wish to wage war on their kinfolk, no matter the provocation. However, against rival families or foes who threaten their lands, the men folk are more willing to take up arms.

**Season:** Spring is the time of sowing and harvest of reaping, and men can ill afford to be away from their farms and homes. In winter the weather is too cold for volunteers to step forward. Summer is the traditional time for waging war.

**Distance:** The further afield the army must travel, the more risks and hardships are involved.

**Miscellaneous:** Having multiple characters from the same immediate or extended family adds weight to the petitioner's request. Since all the men are volunteers, they are loathe to be away from home too often, and thus frequent requests make it harder to garner support.

## KINSHIP TABLE

**Optional Modifier:** A character can plead for support when the need is great but his family is reluctant to volunteer. For each 5 points of permanent Glory he sacrifices, he gains a +1 bonus. This can be applied after the initial die is made.

d20	Men	Ship
0 or less	None	No ship
1-5	1d6 (3)	No ship
6-10	2d6 (7)	No ship
11-14	3d6 (10)	Smabyrding (10 crew)
15-17	3d6 x 2 (20)	Knarr (20 crew)
18-20	3d6 x 5 (50)	Busse (45 crew)
21-22	2d6 x 10 (70)	Drakkar (60 crew)
23-24	2d10 x 10 (110)	Snekke (100 crew)
25+	2d4 x 50 (250)	Skeid (200 crew)

Aid comes in the form of clan freemen or a ship and crew. Men covers farmers trained in basic combat arts. The GM can either roll the dice, or select the average (which is given in parentheses). Ships are only offered for overseas voyages or where ships are required for a raid, and then only if the family lives on a navigable river or the coast. Rather than using the Men column, a ship comes with a full crew compliment. Family members are treated as town/village militia. If a ship is available, they have Boating d6 as an additional skill.

Only noble families can afford to keep professional soldiers, known as huscarls (a Saxa word). A noble character may opt to exchange any or all of the listed freemen for huscarls at the rate of two militiamen for one typical huscarl or four militiamen for one veteran huscarl. At the GM's discretion, four militiamen can be swapped for a typical mage or priest and eight traded for an experienced or Wild Card mage or priest.

In all cases, command of the resources is given to the petitioner, who is responsible for their welfare. Characters may only approach their own family, but the party may pool resources from multiple families, even if they are in the same clan.

## ANCESTRY

While none of the civilized races practice true ancestor worship, the deeds of one's forefathers are extremely important to those alive in Rassilon today. The deeds of one's ancestors reflect on their descendants, for good

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or for ill, and regardless of how many generations have passed. Hence, folk tend to forget their disreputable forebears and speak only of those who achieved something notable. Many Saxa and frost dwarves, especially nobles, warriors, and heroes, introduce themselves by recounting their ancestral line, punctuated with short summaries of their major deeds.

For instance, a Saxa noble might say, *"I am Eossa, son of Uxfrea, who raided the lands far and wide, son of Cuthbert, who fought the orcs, son of Abo, who wrestled the great bear of Midmark, son of Beocca, who terrorized the White Sea, son of Ulfgar, who slew the fell frost giant of Ostmark, son of Hereward, who was smith to kings."*

From this we can learn several things. First, the man speaking is called Eossa. It is traditional to start with one's own name and work backward in chronological order. His father, Uxfrea, was a raider, an honored profession among the Saxa tribes.

His grandfather, Cuthbert, was renowned in his lifetime for battling orcs, though no specific deeds appears worthy of mention.

His great-grandfather, Abo, apparently wrestled a large bear troubling the Saxa kingdom of Midmark.

His great-great-grandfather was a pirate, another respected profession, at least in older times.

Ulfgar, Eossa's great-great-great-grandfather slew a frost giant. When such events are noted in this fashion they usually imply the act was completed single-handed.

The last ancestor Eossa names was a blacksmith to the ancient kings, an honored position. After this, it is most likely the family's stories fade into mythology and hearsay.

## ANCESTRY & GLORY

These optional rules allow a player character to quickly create notable ancestors, and in turn begin with positive Glory. Once a character has decided to use this system, he cannot halt until the process is created. Be warned: not every ancestor will be a hero or warriors—most ancestors are notable for very little.

Note that it is extremely bad manners to speak of one's own deeds when recounting an ancestral line.

The deeds of the character should be recorded by his children, not him personally.

## NUMBER OF ANCESTORS

The number of ancestors a family can recount depends on its social status. Nobles, for instance, have their lineage recorded by skalds, whereas peasants must rely on word of mouth and vague memories. Characters with the Noble Edge have 2d4 recorded ancestors. If they have the Old Family Edge as well, they receive an extra ancestor. All other characters have just 1d4+1 ancestors of any interest (or at least who can be remembered clearly).

Each ancestor must be named. Only their first name need be recalled, as to add in surnames typically repeats information unnecessarily (this is especially true among the Anari and Saxa). Modern sensibilities aside, *Hellfrost* is strongly male oriented, at least in terms of non-player characters. Thus, only male names are generally recorded, though there is no prohibition against a player having one notable female ancestor.

## NOTABLE DEEDS

Each ancestor performed one or more deeds, not all of which were necessarily great, but families cling to whatever interesting forebears they have. For each ancestor, taken in turn, from the hero's father down the family line, the player draws one card. Check this result against the table below and record any Glory. The entries are deliberately left vague, thus allowing the player opportunity to fill in the blanks as he wishes. The GM has final approval on whether the deed fits the category.

## RECORD ANCESTRAL LINE

Finally, the player records his ancestral line in a format similar to the example above. Each ancestral boast must begin, "son of <name>, who..." Naturally, daughters use "daughter of" as appropriate.

The notable deed should then be summarized in ten words or less—the aim is to provide listeners with a brief overview of the speaker's family, not bore him to death with endless details.

## NOTABLE DEEDS TABLE

Card	Event	Glory
Deuce	Despicable deed (such as slaying a nobleman)	-5 Glory
3-10	Very minor deed (aided a nobleman on a raid, served as a cleric)	0 Glory
Jack	Minor deed (slew some goblins or a wild beast, founded a temple, fought in a notable battle)	+1 Glory
Queen	Moderate deed (slew orcs or an ogre, founded a new settlement)	+2 Glory
King	Major deed (slew a troll, rescued a noble in battle, fought in a major battle)	+3 Glory
Ace	Great deed (slew a giant, found a relic)	+4 Glory
Joker	Legendary deed (slew a dragon, saved a king)	+5 Glory

Even the most minor deed should be recorded as if it were a major event. Adding in other names related to the deed is perfectly acceptable. For instance, recording "...who helped a noble on a raid" is very poor description. Replace that with "...who raided with Jarl Togsvig" and you've already added much more flavor. You've also hinted, but not specifically stated, that your ancestor played an important role (even if he didn't).

## EXAMPLE ANCESTRAL CREATION

Maggie's character is Beornwynn, a Saxa warrior noblewoman. She rolls 2d4 to determine the number of ancestors her family can recall and scores a six. Her card draw, in order, is a Joker, a Jack, two tens, and eight, and a three.

As we can see, her first ancestor, her father, is the most notable member of her family. First she picks a name—Cynewig. Next she needs a legendary deed.

Having access to the *Hellfrost Gazetteer*, she elects to have her most famous ancestor take place in a renowned battle. Unfortunately, that battle also means her father met an untimely end at the hands of an orc horde. Given the event took place exactly 20 years ago, her character must be at least 20 years old in order to use the event. Her father, she says, was the king's banner bearer at the Battle of Torn Ground, in which a Saxa army was annihilated.

Her next ancestor, her grandfather, Aethelhelm, performed a minor deed. She keeps the orc theme going by deciding he decapitated a notable orc chieftain.

Unfortunately, things then go downhill, with her remaining four ancestors being of little note. It seems her family's star is rising rather than fading—Beornwynn has a lot to live up to! She names her next four ancestors Edburgh, Thunraed, Leofgar, and Wulfhelm.

Edburgh, she decides, achieved nothing beyond living a good and virtuous life. Thunraed was a priest of Thunor his entire life, a worthy vocation. Leofgar she lists as serving a king. What she doesn't recount is that his duty was to serve the king's mead. Still, there is no falsehood in her statement—she has simply chosen to list the basic fact that he did serve a king. Lastly there is Wulfhelm, a raider of little renown. Again, she elects to word his deeds to imply he was more important than he really was.

Looking at the table, we see that only Cynewig and Aethelhelm earn her any Glory. She starts with +7 Glory, hardly an excessive amount, but she is a lot closer to achieving her first Glory reward than she was before she began the process.

Finally, she writes up her ancestral lineage:

*"I am Beornwynn, daughter of Cynewig, who carried the king's banner at the Battle of Torn Ground, son of Aethelhelm, who cut the head of Osrek the Vile, son of Edburgh, who honored his ancestors, son of Thunraed, who served Thunor to his last breath, son of Leofgar, who served King Eorwald, son of Wulfhelm, who raided with Thegn Sigeric."*

## LIES HAUNT YOU

Truth has a nasty way of bubbling to the surface. Any character who blatantly lies about his ancestry suffers a -2 Glory penalty for dishonoring his ancestors and insulting whoever is listening to his lineage being recounted. This isn't a one-time penalty—it is applied every time the lineage is falsely retold.

As seen above, leaving out certain facts is acceptable practice, so long as the deed can still be seen as the truth. In the example above, Leofgar was a serving boy for most of his life and ranked very lowly on the social ladder. However, his descendants are quite within their rights to only mention that he served a king, as this is a truthful statement by itself. Were they to say he was a mighty warrior in the king's service they would be guilty of lying.

## CHARACTER DEATH

Rich or poor, virtuous or wicked, renowned or infamous, the icy hand of death touches all men eventually.

Some will perish in battle, fighting fearsome monsters or aiding those helpless to defend themselves. Others will an untimely death from poison, a knife in the back, or an unfortunate accident. Famine and cold will claim countless souls. A small few will take their own lives, despite knowing they will likely be found wanting in the afterlife. For most citizens of Rassilon, their fate is to suffer the withering effects of old age or disease.

The deeds a character performed in life affect his Glory, which in turn affects how many Experience Points the player's next character begins with. Even after death, however, the deceased can earn one final amount of Glory to help boost this title.

As discussed in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*, every culture has its specific funerary rites. The extravagance of a funeral is the last method of earning Glory, though the character who just passed away has little say in how his friends and family bury him.

Typically, a funeral's expense is met by the family. In game terms, the amount of money they have to spend is equal to the gold scields possessed by the character at the time of his death, augmented by his annual income if he is Rich or Very Rich.

The cost of a funeral is detailed below, along with the Glory the deceased earns posthumously.

Funeral	Cost (gs)	Glory
Rudimentary	10	-5
Simple	100	+0
Generous	1,000	+5
Rich	10,000	+10
Extravagant	50,000	+20