





It's been more than a year since Wanderhome came out in PDF, and Grub and I wanted to go through and provide our Director's Commentary on the whole game. We'll be reading through the PDF and leaving comments on funny memories, weird stories, game dessign notes, art director decisions, and so one and so forth. Think of this as one part helpful design advice document, one part a collection of the memories that surrounde 2020-2021 for us as we created this massive beast.

I'm Jay Dragon, and I'm the author of Wanderhome. I'll be leaving my comments in pt. 9 Arial.

hello i'm grub (Ruby Lavin, art director, the mean one) and i'll be around in georgia which was specifically designed to be read on screens:)



now. absolutely inescapable. shoutouts to the menu at the pennsylvania ren faire

Jay Dragon

Wanderhome

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To all the kids with their whole life in a backpack on their shoulders, survivors who find friends everywhere they can, drivers grabbing coffee at a rest stop with many miles left to go, and everyone else searching for a place to call home: *this one's for you*.

I wrote this dedication at the start of the project, right into the very first draft. It's an important anchor point for the whole project, so no one can forget what this is about and who this is for.

> i feel like people really do not talk enough about the very obvious context that jay wrote wanderhome while homeless

why r these backgrounds tilted i am going to become the joker. have u guys noticed the very slight variation in color from one page to the next? i think from 20% to 40% opacity. it was actually like quite difficult to print these page backgrounds with full color—generally that is not what full color printing means be a flat field of ink can get so streaky and variegated. it was a big ask! i'm glad i made the decision before i knew that lol. i would never create a manufacturing headache like that on purpose now

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almost all of these titles are just me winging it lol







Introduction €

Kazumi and I went back and forth on these first two paragraphs about 20 times. It was really important to us that this paragraph conveys the emotional heart of Wanderhome, and that it sounded good to read out loud. The last line ("The road is a river that carries me home") I read out loud over and over, trying to find the right meter. In a book full

of heavily-edited text,

this is probably the most edited.

The road has a song all to its own. Press your ear against my chest and you'll hear it. It is always with me, soaring across mountaintops and sleeping in the gutter where the small and forgotten gods live. It tangles through my hair and sits heavy in my boots. Some days that song roars through my bones louder than any storm, and other days it hums its tune so quietly that I could forget it's even there. But I will always hold tight to it, and I'll throw on my cloak, grab my walking stick, and set foot once more.

I trust the song. I trust the road. I trust that someday, I will arrive at a town and lay down in the grass and know that this is where I was meant to be. The road is a river that carries me home.

When I run Wanderhome, I always read these first two paragraphs out loud at the start of play. It feels like a ritual entrance to a new space, and I view this whole introduction as a way to "open a portal" into another world. I'll read it out loud even if it's our twentieth session together — it's an important way to facilitate us entering the Wanderhome Space.

Inside this book that you hold in your hands is the start of a new journey. Together, we'll set forth into a world of grassy fields, mossy shrines, herds of bumblebees, rabbits in sundresses, geckos with suspenders, starry night skies, and the most beautiful sunsets you can imagine. We will befriend stag beetles the size of houses, argue with the King of the Floating Mountain, fall in love in the basket of a hot air balloon up in the clouds, and make friends with some of the most amazing people you could ask for. The journey will continue across the months and seasons and years, and while we wander we will watch the leaves fall from the trees and grow again. Where will we go? What will we see? We'll have to find out together. Will you join me?

The Land of Næth €

These paragraphs are my way to hint at the lore buried in the setting without explicitly revealing anything. "But they are not mine to tell" is my way to keep from overloading new players, but also to show that there are these paths, if you want to follow them.

"Haeth" is a fake old

english - sounding

word inspired by

words like heath.

There's no official

pronunciation. It's

made-up words in

one of the only

Wanderhome.

hearth, and the

Welsh hiraeth.

It is not my place to describe the entire history of the land of Hæth. After all, it wouldn't make for a good journey if I were to tell you such a thing, before we even put on our shoes.

Instead, I will simply mention that there are legends about this place that hang from the lips of every old shrew, a legend buried in every crevice of every stone. I will tell you there is a tale of the Slobbering God, and the Heavenblade used to kill her. I will tell you there are stories of the Lightning Dancers and their twirling bodies, stories of the North Wind God and the one brave mouse who stood against him. And there is, too, the tale of the great death that all dragons feared and faced.

These tales live on to this day in the land of Hæth, but they are not mine to tell.

More importantly, there are some facts you'll need to know about the Hæthland for your own journeys. And this may be the most important part of it all.

The Hæth is a **beautiful and boundless land, full of life and soul.** It is composed

This entire section is all about a concept that I call "Axiomatic Worldbuilding" which is a very fancy way to say that Wanderhome is composed of a set of first principles that all other setting choices are derived from. The bolded phrases in these pages reflect the base ideas that Wanderhome is built on, and I view them as the columns that hold the whole structure together. My rule for myself was that if I didn't mention something in these two pages, then I couldn't assume it was canon across game sessions. While playbooks hint at a deeper, more defined world, if it's not on these pages, it's not universally true, and I can't build it into a core reality of the setting.

of small communities separated by vast stretches of wilderness, and these communities are connected by dirt paths, waterways, and the rare hot air balloon passage. Beauty lives in endless shapes and forms in the Hæth: everything in this land holds the capacity to be appreciated and admired. Gods and spirits can be found everywhere, from the small, forgotten gods hidden behind rocks and waves, to the fish-headed crossroads daemons and even the great sky gods themselves.

The Hæth is a land of animal-folk. I've seen pigeon merchants, squirrel musicians, gecko fishermen, and at least one very distinctive bartending toad. In the Hæth, you can't assume much about someone based on their look. Both meat-eaters and herbivores are likely considerate and kind, and even the smallest mouse can have a lion's heart. The families of the Hæth may look fairly similar to one another, or they may look wildly different (and it's frankly none of your business to inquire where familial lines end and begin.)

The Haeth as a physical location is the most important part of Wanderhome. It's why the game was first written, and I want players to enter the game with an immediate relationship with the land, and to view it as a character in its own right.

Originally Wanderhome wasn't about animal-folk, but as I wrote the first draft I realized humans felt out of place in the world I was constructing. I went with anthropomorphic animals as a way to create new relationships with vour characters' bodies. "You can't fatshame a toad" is my common answer, and that's because the animal people allow players to treat their characters with a sense of compassion we often struggle to extend to our own body.

hæth exists almost entirely as a mashup of "heath" and my enduring obsession with his dark materials. if grub was king all names in all media would be "The Propernoun" Bugs were added to Wanderhome as livestock in order to solve the "Goofy-Pluto Problem" — I don't want sheep herding other sheep, that feels weird, but also symbiotic livestock relationships are a really important part of pre-industrial societies and I wanted to capture that compassionate and codependent relationship.

> i loove explaining the wanderhome species taxonomy to people especially down to "fish are demons"

The Hæth is **full of buggy livestock**, **pets**, **and wild creatures**. From herds of chubby bumbles to stag beetles the size of houses, from the striders dancing across water to moon-lit carrier moths carrying letters from tower to tower, bugs and animal-folk live together in harmony. You'll encounter plenty of references to these buggy creatures throughout this book, and while they tend to do their best to make clear both their look and role in Hæth, interpret generously and use your imagination to fill in the gaps.

The Hæth boasts a widespread **culture of hospitality.** A traveler who arrives in a new town will always be able to find some sort of lodging (even if it's sleeping in a barn with some bumbles) and will always be given food and water of some sort. There is, however, a trust within this hospitality—if you hurt or lash out at your

hosts, they'll have no problems kicking you out. But if you're kind and mean well, you'll be welcomed with open arms.

In the Hæth, we'll be meeting people who are **fundamentally good.** This will not be true of all the places you go in your life, but on the journey contained within this book, nearly everyone can be trusted to be kind. The exceptions are the mighty—generals, lords, heroes, soldiers, and all those whose souls have become weighed down by power. While they may still be good, that goodness has likely been poisoned by struggle. Thankfully, folks of this nature are exceedingly rare nowadays, and most everyone knows to give these lonely conquerors a wide berth.

The Hæthland was **recently caught in** war, but is no longer. There is no violence here anymore.

"People in the Haeth are fundamentally good" was an important axiom to include when during playtesting I realized people were still falling back on stock tropes like the bandit or the warlord without compassion. It's important for Wanderhome to understand that even people who have or who currently act in harmful ways are coming from a wellintentioned or sympathetic place. It's also very critical for understanding Wanderhome's philosophy on power and heroism, which I'll talk more about later.

I went back and forth on the rule against combat for a really long time. I don't like including restrictive rules in my games unless they're really important, and after a while I decided it was important here. It was important to me to frame this in terms of the passage of time — it wasn't always peaceful, and it might not always be, but for a moment we exist in a world where we can heal.

Our Journey ←

Many modern Western philosophers frame all narrative (and in some extreme cases, the structure of our entire world) through a lens of conflict and domination. Wanderhome explicitly dismisses that entire framework, and argues that the notion that this Western idea that a story is a process of conflict is an ideological imposition, and that it would be more productive to understand Wanderhome as a journey — the purpose of a journey is not one of conflict but rather of experience. There's no Heroic Arc to Wanderhome, but rather a longform road trip.

Most books contain stories within them, and they often know where the story will go and what, exactly, will happen. But one must be careful with stories—they are violent and cruel things after all, full of heroes and villains and triumph and conquest. Stories are for kings and dragonslayers and for the blood-soaked hungry blades. It is easy, I have found, to seek to imprison the world inside our stories. To glorify the lives of powerful men, to celebrate their victories and mourn their tragedies. To build a reality where everything ties up neatly with a bow, and everything makes sense. There is a comfort in stories like these, disconnected from what it means to be alive.

But I'm not here for a story. I'm here for the journey.

As we follow this book along its winding path, we will create characters, imagine new worlds, and take note of the passing of the seasons. This book is ours, born from We can understand this process — asking questions and idly dreaming about the world — to be the core mechanical structure that we use to interface with the world of Wanderhome. That's the oil that we use to keep the engine running, basically. Wanderhome helps us build a shared environment, gives us the tools to navigate it, and then inspires us to ask questions about it and use our characters to explore it. An underrated part of playing Wanderhome is speculating on what the place you're in is like — you can spend an hour chatting about goat architecture or the Floating Mountain and you're engaging with the journey just the same as you would be if you were speaking in-character.

our conversations and our dreams. As we journey, I will ask you all an abundance of questions, and you will ask each other questions as well. These questions serve as our foundation: they give a voice to everything around us. As we ask questions, propose answers, make statements, and offer idle speculation, we will develop our own Hæth and build something that feels alive in our hands.

As we travel together, future choices will contradict earlier ones, narrative threads will crop up and be abandoned, and we'll often get brief snippets into matters far larger than any of us. But we shouldn't let that stop us from committing hard to earlier decisions. And we can even find comfort in knowing we'll never know precisely what happened. On our journey, we must trust, in the end, that all the paths we've chosen were the right ones. Remember: no matter what we do, the road will carry us home.

I think one of the hardest instincts to overcome when playing Wanderhome is the impulse to resolve every single plot thread and connect all the dots together. I think this impulse (and a lot of the advice in this section) can be the hardest for people into PBTA-style Story Games to get used to, as it requires a pretty big shift in what a "satisfying session" feels like.

This section used to be far louder and more passionate, with multiple pages decrying "stories" as structures that restrict true emotional traveling by imposing a structure that doesn't need to be there. I ultimately cut most of that because it was very preachy, but I think that the core ideology is still way more important than people realize. Wanderhome isn't a narrative game — you're not using the mechanics to construct a story. You can apply a story post-hoc onto the game, but Wanderhome is most enjoyable when there's no real thought about character arcs or plot beats, and when events happen softly over time.



we spent so long justifying the hefty wonderful breathey thick borders and white space in this book but it definitely introduced a challenge when designing a new page that had to looks different

The first time I played Wanderhome was with friends outside, sitting in the grass by the creek. I brought pencils and tokens, while Charlie printed out copies of the playbooks. Socks baked cookies and had a pitcher of punch, and Mel didn't have the energy to bring anything—xyr presence was a present. While I had read Wanderhome plenty of times, I had never facilitated it. The rest of my friends were going in completely fresh-faced.

A few months later, we welcomed a new friend to our group—this time digitally. I curled up with a PDF of the game and a plate of crackers, while we all said hello to Maeve. While we were all familiar with the game, we wanted to take some time to welcome her into our little traveling party. Mel spent fifteen minutes showing off all the art xe had drawn of our characters (the most xe had talked in months!) and Socks helped Maeve figure out what character she wanted.

I originally didn't want to add examples of play to Wanderhome, hoping instead that the text could stand on its own (I felt weird dictating what it's like to play when there are more approaches to play than I could imagine). Rae convinced me to do it as part of playtesting, and I found it a good space to set examples for what someone could be like and how nonverbal or low energy play is totally acceptable and welcome in Wanderhome.



Journeying Gools €

We're going to be talking a lot as we journey: our journey can only take place through conversation. This conversation may be about the paths we wish to take, or the things we want to do. Sometimes, we may describe our characters, their actions, or the world as it flutters by around us.

It's good and healthy to treat this conversation itself as a journey in which the future is unknown. As we often do not know where we are going, it is vital that we care for each other along this path, along this journey. I've described a few basic tools as to how we might do so below. Please

remember that all of these tools are not fundamentally conversation-enders, but are instead important ways to continue the conversation healthily. Whenever someone uses one, it's vital to accept that with compassion and with grace.

"Let's do this instead."

Sometimes on a journey you'll reach an impasse, where continuing down a particular path will put you in danger or discomfort. You are always empowered to speak up, say "Let's do this instead!" and provide an alternate path through the situation. If



These Journey Tools

are one of the many

adjusted to fit the

framework of the journey itself. I often

jokingly call them "common sense safety

tools" because I

people.

created a lot of them by watching how I play

and communicate with

safety tools embedded in Wanderhome,

the body text for this book was almost entirely chosen for these incredible glyphs; longtime possum creek fans can spot some of them also used in sleepaway having Fun Gogether

We all have different ways we travel. Some of us love to chatter away, describing everything we see and starting up conversations with every stranger on the road. Other people prefer to sit back and let the world pass by them. Some of us might not even want to ever go to a table, and would prefer to sit with the book and read by the fire. By checking in with each other and letting each other know how we feel, we can make sure we're all having fun. If one of our friends isn't really chatting much, they might be bored—but they might also just be sleepy, or maybe they'd just rather draw pictures in their sketchbook.

this 80% opacity illustration is so much more of a convincing match for the slightly grey text next to it in print

I find it odd how so many games and tables expect every single play to be high-energy and high-engagement for play. In my experience, players (especially disabled players) can't keep up with the emotional expectations of a high-energy game. I try to use this section ot underscore that there are many ways to play, and many models of an engaged player. Don't expect everyone to be super chatty.

someone else doesn't want to do that, we can work together to figure out where to go next.

- → "Let's take the safer path instead."
- → "Let's not talk about this right now, and change the topic."
- "Let's not have my character lose this thing I care about. Instead, I'm going to let go of something I don't mind losing." god i would never allow this many orphans in layout now but thank god i didn't care back then, an entire book of 2-inch lists

"Do we want to?"

When you're journeying, it's polite to ask before traveling into uncharted territory. If someone asks "Do we want to?" it means they're interested in going somewhere new and potentially hazardous, and they want everyone's buy-in first. If you don't want to go there with them, you have every right to say so (perhaps by offering something else instead) and the conversation can avoid that area.

- → "Do we want to talk about what just happened?"
- → "Do we want to grapple with themes of health in our journey?"

→ "Do we want to have trauma in my character's backstory?"

"Where to next?"

When we journey together, we might get lost or stuck. This happens all the time, and we might feel like we have nowhere to go from here, or that we have to keep sitting in the mud. Whenever we feel like that's happening, we can just ask "Where to next?" and go where seems best.

- → "We're at a fork in the road. Where to next?"
- → "I think this is a good spot to cut away from this scene. Where to next?"
- → "So it feels like we're stuck in a rut, and we should talk about what kind of journey we want this to be. Where to next?"

"What do you think?"

When I walk with friends, I tend to move a bit slower and need a bit more time than they do. In those moments, just as with all journeys, we often need people to look around and spot those who could use a bit I think a lot of safety tools are designed to prevent harm rather than foster a community of compassion at the table. This is one of my favorites — making sure that everyone is being listened to, and putting the burden on more talkative or highenergy players to engage with the mechanics and check in with lower-energy players.

This is probably the tool I use the most often — if you're unsure about whether the content you're putting into the game would match people's expectations, check in with them about it!

of focus and more space to express themselves and breathe. Keep an eye out for people who seem to be talking less than you are, and check in with them by asking them "What do you think?"

- → "There's a couple different paths we could take. What do you think we should do?"
- → "I was considering this nature for our place, but I feel like I've been talking a lot. What do you think it should be?"
- → "I've been the focus too much lately. What do you think about a moment with your character and the shopkeep?"

"Hold on."

We all need to take breaks. Sometimes it's because we've been journeying for a while and we need some water, or it's because we want to go back and look at something from earlier, or maybe something happened that hurt us and we need to tackle it. "Hold on" is something we can always say to halt what's happening and switch gears to another topic.

- → "Hold on. Before we travel to the village, I need to use the bathroom."
- → "Hold on. I want to cut back to the scene with the fisher, I still have more I want to say."
- → "Hold on. What happened earlier made me feel minimized and spoken over, and we should talk about it."

"No."

No one can ever make you do something you don't want to do. If some aspect of the journey doesn't fit your needs, you can *always* change it. While it's important to respect where everyone is at, it's just as important that you feel like you have agency over your character and the world around you. You have the complete authority, both as a group and as individuals, to reject anything that we don't want.

- → "No, I don't want to go to the *swamp*."
- → "No, I don't want someone to treat my character like this."
- → "No, this passage from the book doesn't seem right for the journey we're on. Let's change it."

"No" was inspired by some tweets / twitter discourse my friend Taylor LaBresh had a couple years ago about saying "No" while playing Dungeons & Dragons. I expected this section to cause more issues, but I think people accept it pretty well.

"Hold On" (and a couple other Safety Tools) are based on the Script Change safety toolkit Beau Sheldon created. It's really handy, and I strongly prefer it to the X-Card.

Walking away.

All of these journeying tools assume that the game is healthy and productive for you. There is the base assumption that a conversation is the core way of navigating these issues, and that talking things through will handle most problems. This isn't always true, though. If you ever feel like you don't want to keep going on right now, you can leave.

Just walk out! You can leave!

Other Tools

There are plenty of other tools we can use on our journey, including the X-Card, Script Change, Lines and Veils, and the Safety Checklist (among others.) Some of them overlap with the tools included in Wanderhome, while others give additional guidance to helping everyone feel safe. We can use whatever tools feel right for us.

When I play basically any game these days, I use Wanderhome's Journeying Tools just as part of how I consciously navigate the space. I don't enforce them on everyone, but if you need an internal framework to help inspire selfconfidence and compassion within yourself at the gaming table, I strongly recommend taking these principles and just applying them to your entire playstyle.

Your First Few Steps ←

One of the exercises I did while figuring out how to structure Wanderhome's rules section was to map out the process of getting ready and embarking on a hike, and using that as the model for explaining the structure. This is the equivalent of finding your hiking boots and grabbing water.

Wanderhome uses plural 1st person pronouns as a teaching tool when the text is specifically addressing the reader, and 2nd person pronouns when describing an activity that the readers should do without the involvement of the text. "We" is often used by teachers as a way to create a shared bond of instruction. People feel more responsive to "we should clean up" instead of "you should clean up."

There are a few things we're going to need for our journey. We'll need this book right here, paper or digital copies of all the materials we need, writing utensils, and some tokens. Tokens can be small stones, gambling chips, sunflower seeds, or anything else that is small and plentiful. While I also recommend snacks, water, comfortable chairs, and a friendly camaraderie, none are required.

After we've gone through the introduction and familiarized ourselves with the Hæth, we'll want to take a moment and talk about the kind of journey we hope to embark on. Here's a few questions to start the conversation and make sure everyone's on the same page. And remember, you can always return to these questions, or the conversation they sparked, at any time.

- → How long are we expecting this journey to last, if we have any expectations at all?
- → Do we want a more pastoral and upbeat journey, or a world that lingers more heavily on trauma and recovery?

- → Do we want a more personal journey, focused on mundane issues and quandaries, or do we want a more tangled journey filled with mysterious and magical forces?
- → Do we want a single person to act as a guide, multiple rotating guides, or no guide at all?
- → Is there anything else that might come up that we want to watch out for?

Once you feel set for now, everyone should pick a playbook and create their character.

This entire section is secretly just lines and veils. Because of the way Wanderhome is, these questions capture most (if not all) the topics that would be relevant for lines and veils during Wanderhome. I don't know if people realize these questions are safety tools, but they're just as vital as the journeying tools for safety and belonging in a game.

Playbooks

Each of us will be playing travelers journeying across the Hæthland. Your characters may be from wildly different places and have wildly different destinations, but they each are united by the journey they're taking together, in this moment.

To make a character, the first thing we'll need to do is choose a playbook. The playbook you choose represents a specific kind of person you might find across the Hæth.

Characters are called Playbooks in Wanderhome because when I wrote Sleepaway I called them "Character Sheets" instead and everyone ignored me and called them Playbooks. Now I get people asking me why they're called Playbooks, instead of Classes or something. I can never win!



Once we all sat down, we took a moment to look through the playbooks. Charlie was immediately drawn to the Ragamuffin. For a while, Mel was torn between a few options, but eventually chose the Shepherd. Socks found some playbooks online, and decided to play the Dreamer. I chose the Firelight last, to complement everyone else's choices. Charlie leapt through the prompts, checking things off based on gut reaction. Socks talked through their choices as they went and bounced ideas off of everyone else. Mel struggled on picking a name. "I have a couple name thoughts. Do you want my ideas?" Charlie asked, and Mel shook xyr head. "I'll come back to it later."



Part of the process for writing Wanderhome was finding the narrative voice, this particular rambling tale-teller who can describe the rules in a conversational way. I find this makes it a lot easier to read, as it has more in common with a narrator than an **IKEA** furniture manufacturer, and it helps communicate that the rules are not this infallible force, but rather a fluid structure that is rooted in interpretation and personality.

Your playbook serves as your representation in the world and the main tool you have to move through the Hæthland. *Wanderhome* contains fifteen playbooks, which can be found beginning on page 45.

Your playbook will tell you to make some choices about your character. As you make these choices, tell your fellow travelers about the decisions you're making. Don't be afraid to commit to concepts early and hard, to ask your other travelers if they think a certain choice is a good idea, or to follow your most self-indulgent heart.

Many of these choices will involve inversions (such as "Choose 2 you are and 2 you're not.") These choices are a space to contemplate and interpret words as you see fit. And, while you may occasionally notice

options that use gendered language, these are chances to either embrace, reject, or ignore the presence of that gender. Journeys, as liminal and complicated environments, are spaces for queer self-reflection.

Once everyone feels settled with the choices they've made, go around the circle and ask your choice of questions to the person on your left and on your right. And, of course, you can always ask more questions to flesh out how everyone feels and to figure out how your characters connect.

Finally, take a moment to look over the things your character can always do. As you travel, you will be reaching into this toolbox a lot, to hit beats and communicate how your character exists in relationship to the world around them. These are not

A few conservative parents have had some choice words for me over my decision to include the word "queer" in this rules section. It makes me wish Wanderhome was more openly and explicitly queer in more places.



A Incidental Companionship

Stories tend to involve groups of people who have gathered for a reason and set forth on a quest with a purpose and a goal. But life is not always like that, nor is Wanderhome. In Wanderhome, we'll often find people who are coincidentally going the same way as us, and perhaps we'll travel together for a while before parting. Remember, here, the focus is always on the journey, and not with where we're going. Don't get too hung up on why we're all traveling together—if it matters, the answer will reveal itself in time.

This section is arguably one of the most important parts of the entire game book — and it can be really hard for players to get used to. In Dungeons & Dragons or similar games, there's the idea that our characters have to all be on a shared mission, but in Wanderhome it's okay for them to just be random strangers whose paths happen to overlap. They often share a background together, and if you play for a while they might get attached, but they don't have to start that way.

In most games, the rules are the core systematic framework for engaging in play. In Wanderhome, the tokens are a guidepost, a metronome you can use to set your play if you'd like to. The consistent use of the word "rhythm" in this section is really important — these rules don't exist to bind and enforce play but rather provide a sense of percussion to play, taking what would otherwise be freeform play and giving it some gentle pacing. You could replace the tokens with any other simple system and create a functional game, and I've played a lot of sessions of Wanderhome where people have fun and never touch the tokens at all. They are intentionally nonessential.

necessarily ways to solve problems or take decisive action, nor are they a complete list of everything your character can do. Instead, they are gestures towards the kind of person your character is.

Gokens

There is a rhythm to the way we move through the world. Sometimes we give others all we have to offer, and through that we can find strength. Here this rhythm is represented through tokens. Whenever one of us makes a personal sacrifice, sticks our neck outside our comfort zone, or pays close attention to the world around us, we'll get a token. It might be easier or more natural for some of us to do these things than it is for others, but that's no matter, as we'll all get tokens regardless.

After gaining tokens, we can then turn around and spend these tokens to shape the world. These actions always push on or solve something important which might not be easy to resolve on its own. We'll sometimes catch ourselves inadvertently

doing these anyway, but there's an important difference between "following a course of action that hopefully will help someone out" and spending a token to declare "I am taking a stance here." There is strength in that sort of fundamental truth.

There are other ways you might get tokens, but you'll learn about that later.

Get A Token Whenever You:

- → Inconvenience yourself to help someone else.
- → Give away something you hold dear.
- → Pause for a moment and get some rest.
- → Leave an offering to a small or forgotten god.
- → Speak your true feelings on a subject.
- → Take a moment to bask in the grandeur of the world, and describe it to the table.
- → Take a moment to watch a tiny moment of beauty, and describe it to the table.
- → Take a moment to marvel at something no one has ever seen before, and ask the table to describe it.

The first thing I did for Wanderhome when I first started working on the project was to make a list of how I imagined every single failure state playing out, and every single success. It made me realize that I wanted to make a game with an extremely limited range of play failure involves personal sacrifice. and success can't solve systemic problems singlehandedly. This was the baseline for the rhythm of tokens, and the "getting tokens" actions are modeled around stepping outside your comfort zone in some way.

You spend a token in order to position yourself in the fictional world and assert your personal narrative authority within it. Many of them are very situational, and the act of placing a token back into the bowl at the center of the table is often more emotionally impactful than the actual action itself. This sense of rhythm is lost when playing online, but I think it manages to emerge in other ways, as players seek out excuses to spend their tokens and create situations where these somewhat niche abilities are productive.

The phrase "material or immediate" is very important in this first action, because I didn't feel it was correct for someone to spend a token and solve a village's problems. If you want to solve an immaterial or systemic problem in Wanderhome, the mechanics cannot help you — you have to look outside them for guidance.

Spend A Token In Order To:

- → Provide a solution for an aspect of a material or immediate problem.
- → Ease someone's pain, if only for a moment.
- → Keep someone safe from the difficulties of the world.
- → Offer someone the chance to connect with you on a personal level.
- → Find what someone needs to give them a chance to change fundamentally.

- → Reveal something hidden about the person in front of you, and ask them what it is.
- → Know something important about the place you're in, and tell the table about it.
- → Listen to the shared wisdom of the many small and forgotten gods, and ask the table what they tell you.

The small and forgotten gods are some of my favorite parts of Wanderhome, and I think they'd be easy to forget about entirely if they weren't a) featured in Jennie's gorgeous art on the first couple of pages and b) called to explicitly by the moves, framing everyone as existing in this microcosm of animism.



孫 Failure

You might notice that nothing Wanderhome tells you to do concerns itself with failure. This doesn't mean you can't fail. Indeed, you can choose to fail whenever you'd like. Instead, Wanderhome as a game isn't preoccupied with failure. Often, in life, we don't fail. Sometimes, we struggle to do something, get passed over, do something we wish we hadn't, or give up. But even those moments aren't truly failures in a pejorative sense. Mistakes, maybe. Suffering at the cruelty of others. Listening to your body and your brain and accepting their natural limitations. But it doesn't mean you're a disaster, and it doesn't mean you've failed. Your journey will just continue on another path.

It's weird how so many gamers and narratives are preoccupied by failure as if failure is a meaningful or productive way to understand the world around us or our relationships with our selves. I'm not saying it's bad (I've written games with fail states before and I'll do it again) but I do think it should be discussed as an artifact of a particular model of storytelling, and not the norm for human behavior. This is one of my favorite paragraphs in Wanderhome for that reason.



"I wanna start by describing the view we see as we crest the mountain, looking down at the Thistlesong Valley," Socks announced. They continued to tell us all about the new place in which we'd found ourselves, and took a token for describing a tiny moment of beauty to the table.

Mel drew a picture of the Thistlesong Valley, and in xyr picture we spotted a house with curling smoke rising from the chimney. Xe also took a token for describing a tiny moment of beauty. Charlie suggested that we stay there for the night, and we agreed.

As our party approached the old house, I described a thatched roof crumbling from disrepair. When Socks asked why it was in disrepair, I told them this house belonged to an old dormouse widow with an aching back; the roof was damaged by a recent storm, and she'd been unable to fix it since then.

After chatting with her for a bit, Socks wanted to fix it up—but they didn't have any tokens. Instead, Charlie's character pressed one of the many bells on her person into the hands of the old widow. "Oh, did I just give something that I hold dear away?" Realizing this, she took a token. "I think I'm gonna spend this token to solve a material problem…wait, no! I want to find what she needs and help her change." Her decision made, Charlie's character set out through the valley, gathering together folks to help the old widow fix up her house and make a proper dinner.

While the house was being fixed, my character stepped away from everyone else and lay down in the grass. I took some dust from my snuffbox and scattered it on the ground as an offering to the small and forgotten gods, taking a token in the process. "Hello?" I asked the air, but I received no response. My character tried to make contact with the gods of this place, but after a moment I realized what I really wanted was to ask them for advice. "If you're there," I said, "I have something I'd like to ask."



Ruby named the kith "kith" after we spent way too long debating what they should be called categorically, as I think NPC is a somewhat rotten word and nothing else really worked. It's an actual english word (you see it in phrases like "kith and kin" referring to friends and family) but people often misinterpret "kith" as referring to the animal-folk in general. I think that's a cool idea, but it wasn't my intent! "Kith" is an alternative to "NPC" or "minor character" that emphasizes their status as just as important and aware as the playbook characters.

The Kith Around You

Our characters aren't the only people in Hæth. You're going to encounter a lot of folk, from powerful monarchs to nervous kids, from gentle innkeeps to snarky ship captains, from friendly farmers to cruel commanders. As you're making your characters, you're probably even making choices about the sort of kith and kin you already know. Whenever you bring someone up, write down some information about them. You don't have to write down much, but if you ever encounter them on your journey, you should take a moment and figure out a bit more.

Traits

All the kith and kin you encounter, from the mightiest gods to the smallest vole, have traits. Traits are character descriptions, but they're also ways for whoever is currently playing as that kith to make choices and breathe life into them. As we make choices about our characters, it'll often suggest traits for the kith in our lives to have, written in *italics*. You can find all the traits in the Traits section on page 113.

For each kith you have, write down the following information on a card:

- → Name and some pronouns
- → Animal-form (or species of bug, or godly manifestation, etc.)
- → Relationship to another character
- → A single detail (occupation, quirky trait, interest, etc.)
- → At least two traits, and what those let the kith do
- → We can always write down more or less than this, but those five bullet points should get us pretty far.



A Magical and Graumatized Graits

Some traits have a small \P symbol next to them. This means they're explicitly magical or supernatural. If we want our journey to be more mundane and grounded, we can ignore those traits or use them sparingly. Other traits have a \pm by them. This means they're born from trauma, and reflect a darker side to the world. We can ignore these traits or be mindful of them if we want to keep the Hæth more upbeat and lighthearted.

ominously, the traumatized trait symbol is the only decorative glyph in the book that is a standard unicode symbol. it's the "double dagger", often used for a deep set of footnotes. i like to think of it in referenced to the traumatized traits as "needing context"

Our First Place €

We will always begin our journey by arriving in a new place. In order to create such a place, pick out three of the following natures, or choose randomly. Each of these natures will serve as one of the building blocks of that place. Natures are the elements that—literally or metaphorically—represent various aspects of our place.

After you've selected three natures, consult them (starting on Page 131) and make choices for them. Make a conversation out of it, tossing around ideas and mixing things together. These natures determine the look and feeling of a place, and you are welcome to interpret these natures as literally or as metaphorically as you'd like. For example, while your place might literally be a *hillock*, it might also metaphorically be a *tower*.

Only the first three sets of natures are included here because I was thinking about the book as an onboarding process for a new facilitator, and I didn't want to overwhelm them with options while they were first starting out.

1. Comfortable

1. Farm

- 4. Monastery
- 2. Garden
- 5. Tower
- 3. Market
- 6. Workshop

2. Verdant

1. Field

4. Hillock

2. Glen

- 5. Lagoon
- 3. Hallow
- 6. Swamp

3. Liminal

- 1. Bridge
- 4. Port

- 2. Island
- 5. Road

3. Lake

6. Tavern

Once we've got a pretty good idea of what this place is like, we'll go around and have everyone say one common type



祭 Folklore

The folklore of a place might openly contradict the stories you've always heard about your homes, or they might clash against other folklore from neighboring places. Folklore isn't consistent, but folklore shouldn't be proven wrong. It's just part of the conversation between the soil and the people who dwell on top of it, and it should be both taken with a grain of salt and given just respect.

Folklore are fascinating wildcards in play — I think people often use them for kith inspiration, setting inspiration, rules around magic, or just stories themselves. I love them as these kind of frameworks to breathe life and history into a place that goes beyond our visual impression when we arrive.

I love this small process, as a way to ensure that the leastverbal person still has a vital say in how the setting functions. It helps if someone has been checked out and you want to help them reorient themselves in the space, and it means quiet or more hesitant players who are still very invested get a chance to share their ideas that they might not have felt confident sharing on their own.

of animal-folk that live in the area. This doesn't mean everyone in this place is, for example, a salamander; it just means that if we're in a hurry, we can quickly imagine some newtish friends.

Then, the person who's spoken the least during this entire process describes what forms the many small and forgotten gods of this place take.

Last but not least, give the place a name.

And Now We Embark

Once we have our place, some kith, and each other, we are nearly ready to play. All we have to do is answer some questions together.

Every time we gather, we will answer these questions together before playing:

- → What sort of place did we just travel from?
- → Do we feel our journey has been long?
- → Is there somewhere we hope to go?

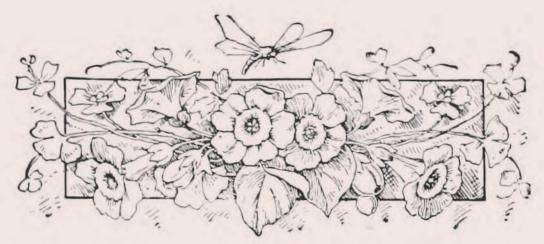
We will then spend a quiet moment and each answer this question silently, in our heads:

→ Where is my home?

And with that, our journey begins.

These questions are part of the same category of ritual actions as the first two paragraphs of the Introduction. Their secret real purpose is to anchor the players in the fiction and ritually indicate that we are moving from the threshold (pure creation from outside) into the fantasy world itself, where our creative action exists in relation to our selves. After we answer these questions, we have crossed from our world into the Haeth. This practice comes from the larp summer camp I used to work at, where the act of roleplaying involved up to twenty minutes of ritual circles and grounding moments before entering the play space. I still feel weird when I play a TTRPG that expects me to just hop in without metaphorically crossing the rubicon into the play environment.

The first three questions were chosen also as narrative anchors, so people can orient themselves in the world. They're effectively our compass, showing the past, present, and future of our travel. The final question is silent because the answer doesn't matter, and its purpose is to anchor you internally with the character you're embodying. All questions are phrased very vaguely, and there's multiple ways to interpret and answer each one.



As the group prepared to leave the valley, Charlie asked, "Do we want to roll to see which natures we should use next?"

"I want an island." Mel tapped on the printout. Socks nodded.

"Let's have an island, and then roll for the other two...Oh! Tower and...Swamp?" Socks frowned. "I have no idea how a swamp fits into the rest of it."

Charlie perked up. "What if it's metaphorically a swamp? So people always end up getting stuck here and can't find a way out."

"How about a town built into a lighthouse?"

After picking through the natures, choosing aesthetic elements and getting very hyped about the spectral weasel that haunts the central staircase, we paused. "What on earth do we name this place?"

"Let's not overthink it." Socks shrugged. "We can just call it Lighthouse Island." "Let's not overthink it" is a reminder to all players to not sweat place names, as that's often the least important part of a place.



This section is titled "giving a voice" instead of "how to play" because its purpose is not to explain the correct way to play Wanderhome, but rather to provide a framework for articulating how the world exists. We've already been playing Wanderhome long before we reach this point, and there are many ways to play Wanderhome which don't involve this section.

This entire section (literally the "How To Play" section of Wanderhome) is so brief because I wanted people to feel comfortable coming in and inserting their own perspectives on play. Someone who loves D&D5E is going to play Wanderhome completely differently than a Masks fan or a Mork Borg enthusiast, and I wanted all that energy to make it into how people approach the text. I didn't want to tell you how to play, but I still wanted to create a comfortable framework for play.

Giving The World A Voice &

We are all responsible for giving a voice to the world we travel through, in one form or another. Anyone can pick up a current place's nature or a kith card to start acting on their behalf. You can also put them down or hand them off at any time, and over the course of a journey many people might end up giving a voice to a single nature or kith.

As we travel on our journey, keep an eye out and make sure everyone has enough space to express themselves. Use the journeying tools to check in and step back, or assert yourself when you want to. Use these tools to follow your curiosity as well—seek out what interests you, and invite everyone else to do the same.

Voicing Our Characters

We are going to spend a lot of time with our playbooks. Their eyes are the eyes we will most often use to see what's around us, and they will grow and change as we do. Our characters are mutable and fallible, constantly exploring new lives and forms. If you're ever unsure of what you can do, check if there's anything in your playbook or any ways to get tokens. Use those as the punctuation for the conversation, and as a way of grounding yourself in the world of Hæth.

As we give voices to our characters, it'll serve us well to make strong choices about



A Problems In All Their Forms

Nowhere is without problems. When you arrive at a place, you might not yet know what those problems are, but they're still there under the surface. Problems form naturally, as natures and kith slam against each other. However, you must remember: you are never going to solve a place's problems. You are travelers from beyond. As welcome as you are, this is not your home, and the locals know far more than you do about how to resolve their struggles and worries. The best you can do is ease pain, tackle short-term challenges, and give someone tools that might someday help out. Be ready and prepared to leave somewhere without resolving any of that place's problems.

Originally the rules structure made a lot more space for explicitly definingt the struggles thatr the Haeth is going through, but I cut it as it felt hollow and weird. This is a counterpart to the Falure sidebar, as bothy exist to communicate that the purpose of wanderhome is not about struggling against some evil force, or solving problems, but rather about reflection and journeying. You don't go for a hike in ordeer to defeat the lich king.

communicate that the PCs are not heroes arriving to save the day, which is the default narrative structure in a lot of exploration fiction. When you arrive somewhere, you are a guest, and you are not more enlightened or power than the people you stay with. You aren't going to be the ones to solve a centuries old feud, and it's kinda weird that you thought you could fix that in the first place.

I want to



Charlie paused. "Does anyone want to play the mayor here?"

"Oh yeah, I got it." Socks grabbed the kith sheet. "Since the mayor is proper, I'm going to explain how something was handled in the past, so... 'Well umm, young man I'll have you know this is a very important hat. It's my grandfather's hat, and it's a sign of how important I am!'"

"Through the clearing you spot it...the last monarch butterfly, perched on a tree stump. It looks at you and you can tell it's curious about you." Charlie grinned. "Even though it can't talk, you can tell it's like, who the hell are all of you?"



There is a common fixation among nervous players about ensuring their character sticks to some kind of canon or correct personality, but real people selfcontradict constantly. and we are defined not through a limited structure of personality traits but rather through the sum and scope of our experiences as living people. This is part of what the phrase "you are alive" is trying to say - your characters contain multitudes and flaws because they are alive.

them. These range from making decisions about their personality and philosophy, to reshaping the world itself. It's okay if you contradict an earlier choice—that happens often in life, as well.

If your character isn't doing anything or you feel restless, you can always take a break, pick up a kith or place, and lend them your voice.

Voicing Kith

Anyone can pick up a kith and give them a voice. This is exactly the same as playing your character. Always fall back on a kith's relationships and traits. You can always think of their traits as the way in which they approach and react to the world around them. If that kith comes back at a later time, it's likely that someone else in the group will end up playing them. That's okay—try to take notes on anything you think is really important, such as their dreams or desires.

When you're holding a kith in your hands, give them just as much compassion and respect as you would give your playbook character. Just because they're not represented by a playbook, doesn't mean they are less-than. It can often be hard to remember this, but you can easily find tools to grant them a heart. I often try to find something distinctive and unique that they are deeply passionate about, so that they can be anchored by their love.



Different Styles

We all have our own styles of guiding people on a journey, and there are countless different approaches you can take. I once met a guide who would build a playbook along with everyone else, and handed out pieces of places and kith frequently. I once traveled with a group who would pick a new guide every time they met up. I once traveled with a group where one player would prepare all the materials beforehand but everyone would take charge equally. And of course, I have traveled with many groups with no guides at all. All of these approaches and more are valuable ways to travel.



"So my character is sitting on top of the lighthouse and... Hey, can someone pick up the tower?" Socks looked around. I picked it up and glanced it over.

"I want to describe something very small and far away. When you sit on the edge of the tower, you can see a tiny ship in the distance. It's got a white flag, and it might not get here for a while."

"My character frowns. I recognize that sail—that's my father's ship. We need to get out of here before he docks."

"'We gotta go, we gotta go!' My character screams as they scramble down the stairs."

Recognizing her opportunity, Charlie grinned. "So I'm holding the swamp right now, and I think I'm going to metaphorically bog you down," she said, taking a token from the middle and handing it to Socks. "The sailors can't leave the island right now, because the customs of this place refuse to set sail at any time besides dawn."



if you're reading this surely you already know that i owe a life debt and my career to the public domain book scans from the british library flickr account. when we released the hæth grant i got to include so many little decorative elements i had processed for clarity but hadn't found a place to use in the book:)

A big part of how Wanderhome developed was rooted in the idea that the place is just as much as fundamental character as the people living on it. Wanderhome is not a game about travelers, but rather about the interplay between travelers, inhabitants, the natural world, and the passage of time. It's the emotional friction between these four interlocking components that generates engaging gameplay.

Voicing Places

Giving a place a voice is similar to giving voices to your kith and kin. The fundamental difference lies in quantity—a place contains three natures, each of which exist both independently and in relation to each other. At any time, someone can hold any number of those natures, and show their presence in the world either literally or metaphorically.

While you hold that nature, you have complete dominion over that piece of the place. Do the things your nature does, generate problems within the place, describe the world found on the journey, and ask other players questions. When you're not sure what to do with a nature, check that nature's section. Use the tools it gives you to describe features of what's around the group, introduce conflict and tension, and give tokens to the other players.

Guides

Sometimes, when we're on a journey together, we want to travel together with no clue about what's next. Sometimes, however, we want a guide. A guide is a player who

has agreed to not build a playbook. Instead, they handle all the places, kith, and seasonal changes. This doesn't give them any special authority or power over the rules or text of *Wanderhome*. It just means that they can do all the things places and kith can do, and they manage all the voices and reflections of those pieces of the game. There are many different reasons you might or might not want a guide for your journey, and you can always change your mind—even in the middle of a journey.

Playing with a guide allows us to:

- → Introduce new or less confident players to Wanderhome. A guide helps new players focus more on their own character.
- → Build a world for the journey to take place in. This world will often feel more cohesive than the one that emerges from a group bouncing ideas off of each other.
- → Find harmony between a variety of playstyles and comfort levels. This is especially useful on journeys where we all don't know each other as well.

Guides were included pretty much as an afterthought — I was reading BALIKLBAYAN by Rae Nedjadi and realized you could have a GM-like figure in an otherwise GMless game. Wanderhome works really well with a Guide though, and I know a lot of people play it that way. More power to them! It's a good way to introduce the game to less experienced players.



"Hey, would it be okay if I was the guide today?" Socks asked. "I have a cool idea for a place and I wanna try it out!"

"Okay, let's cut away from Mel's scene with the scorpion-riders, and go over to Charlie and Jay." Socks picked up a different kith. "Mel, do you want to play as the cliff-priest?" Mel shook xyr head, and Socks continued. "That's chill! Okay, so both of you find yourselves on a small ledge overlooking a vast cliff plummeting down to a really big waterfall. Like, huge. Sitting with you is an old rat in a purple robe smoking a pipe. What do you do?



Playing without a guide allows us to:

- → Introduce excited or energetic players to Wanderhome. When we distribute the role held by a guide between us, all players can take a more active role in worldbuilding.
- → Give every player shared control over the journey. This allows for a story that might better reflect the shared imagination of everyone involved.
- → Empower players to feel comfortable making bold choices. It is often easier to develop our ideas about things without feeling like a "referee" is watching us.

Settling In For The Night

Trying to journey continuously will exhaust you. Beyond taking breaks while you're all together, it's also important to find natural spots to wrap up for the day. Sometimes, you'll be getting back together again later to continue the journey. Sometimes, this will be it for your little group. Either way, you want to help the break find some kind of resolution. This might involve stopping and looking at the sunset, or giving one final epilogue for how everything resolves. Once you've wrapped up, you can all take a moment and check in. Give yourselves a moment to shift the conversation from the journey itself, back to the real world.

Here's that narrative voice once again. A strangely large number of games don't discuss how to end sessions of play. This section is important as a framework for concluding play and ushering players back into the real world outside the magic circle.



"...Okay, as we crest the mountaintop, what if we see the Floating Mountain itself?" Maeve asked the group.

"I don't know." Mel frowned.

"What do you think, Mel?"

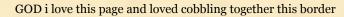
"What if it's not the Floating Mountain, but instead...hmm." Xe paused. "Let's find something happier instead."

"Sounds good! Okay, what if it's a garden among the mountains, like a Hanging Gardens of Babylon sorta situation?" Maeve pulled up some pictures for reference.

"Yeah, love that. And what if it's technically the home of the King of the Floating Mountain, but he's at his capital right now so everyone's really chill." Socks added.







Quick Start

If we're in a hurry to get out the door, we can use this as a reminder of what to pack and what to do before we can hit the road.

- 1. Make sure we have all the supplies we need to play (copies of the play materials, something to jot ideas onto, tokens, and snacks.)
- 2. Read the opening paragraphs, and cover the tools we have available to us.
- 3. Start chatting about the journey questions.
- 4. Introduce everyone to playbooks and go over how tokens work.
- 5. Pick out our playbooks and make choices about our characters.
- 6. Create our first place, choosing three natures for it.
- 7. We can decide what month it is if we'd like, although we don't have to.
- 8. Describe a couple kith who inhabit that place, or who are traveling with us.
- 9. Answer the final four questions:

First: What sort of place did we just travel from?

Then: Do we feel our journey has been long?

Then: Is there somewhere we hope to go?

And finally (but silently, in our heads):

Where is my home?





Continuing the Journey &

Wanderhome spends a lot of time describing rules for multi-part campaigns. Some of these rules could take inuniverse or real-life years to come up, and are weird edge cases that probably don't matter. This is all to create the sensation that the world of Wanderhome is a continuous path, and so that you can imagine your characters having a shared future together, even if they don't reach that future in the moment. It grounds us not only

in the past but also in

the future.

Wherever The Road Takes Us

Not all journeys want to go on for a while. Some wrap up quickly, in the span of a few hours and a single place. Many journeys will want to last much longer, and will involve many places and many people. These journeys are the most rewarding, and carrying your own Hæth for many months and years in your own heart is a beautiful thing.

When you come back together again after a break, talk through where you've been so far and how you want to approach the road ahead. Decide as a group whether you're traveling somewhere new or staying in the places you've been before. It's okay if you're not sure exactly how your characters left the last place you were in—you're always able to skip ahead.

Before you start creating anything new, decide whether you want to advance the season based on the Great Arc of the Year on page 40, or if you'd rather remain in the same month or season. Once you've figured that out, decide if you're in the same place as before, or if you've arrived somewhere new. If you're in the same place as before, talk about how that place has changed since you all last met. If you've arrived somewhere new, create it just as you created your first place. Choose three natures, find the associated nature sheets, and for each nature you've selected, choose two aesthetic elements and a folklore. Ask the quietest person to give the small and forgotten gods a form, and give the place a name.

As you venture across the Hæth, you'll encounter even stranger and more elaborate places. On the next page are the natures of such places, and they will likely push against what you're familiar with in *Wanderhome*. Mix these natures among the familiar sparingly.

When I play Wanderhome as a long-form campaign, I treat each session as a new month or holiday, meaning in four sessions we can make it from Tillsoil to Bloommeadow. This gives the games of Wanderhome I play a slightly vignette-y quality, that I think works really well for the structure of play.

1. Sprawling

- 1. Carnival
- 4. Metropolis

- 2. Castle
- 5. Palace
- 3. Furnace
- 6. University

2. Lonely

1. Cave

- 4. Mirror
- 2. Graveyard
- 5. Moor
- 3. Mirage
- 6. Wilderness

3. Desolate

- 1. Desert
- 4. Mountain
- 2. Labyrinth
- 5. Ruin
- 3. Maelstrom
- 6. Waste

Even as you leave places or take breaks, you should hold onto all the old places and kith you've encountered—you never know when you might need them again. If you've been traveling for long enough, you might have accumulated a number of places you hope to visit again. Feel free to travel there once more and say hello to old friends, but don't get trapped in repetition. It's always good to have new places to go to.

Going Your Own Way

Not all journeys last forever, and, after one journey you've taken with a character has ended, you might wish to start another journey with the same character. You are fully empowered to pick up your playbook and bring them to any other journey of *Wanderhome* you find yourself in, fitting them right in. Remember to adjust your playbook to the rest of the table, but you never have to abandon a character to a journey that faded too quickly.

Similarly, you can easily reuse places and kith that came up in previous journeys. Whenever you take something from one group and bring it to another, you'll want to keep in mind the way different tables have different needs. Remember that the present is not imprisoned by the past, and things might change and grow in ways you never could have expected.

Part of Dungeons & Dragons play culture I really adore is people bringing characters from one table to another. I love that sense of coherent memory across space and time, and I think more games should make space for that explicitly within its structure. My default vWanderhome character is a ragamuffin named Tomtim, and I will bring them into basically any game I can if I'm given the chance to.

Solo play! This transforms Wanderhome into effectively a series of journaling prompts, but that can still be a lot of fun if that's what you're looking for. I always think its kinda silly how many people ask if Wanderhome has solo play compatibility — every game does! But it seems like the explicit language in the rules matter, so I wrote this section based on some experimentation I did with a couple friends. It's basically a guide on how to write Wanderhome fanfiction.

Journeying Solo

Sometimes the road is long and quiet, and you might not have anyone to walk with. It's okay—we can journey together. *Wanderhome* can be played solo, with just your own imagination and the text itself to keep you company. You can always invite others to journey with you in the future. The solitary road can be a lonely one, but it also has so much beauty to offer.

A few things I've learned about journeying solo are:

- → Invite randomness into your journey.

 Roll dice or draw from a deck of tarot cards to see how kith feel about you, or to uncover the natures of the place.
- → Grab a journal to document your travels, and take notes on your journey. This will make it easier to tell your friends about it as you go.
- → Sketch, write about, and sing little songs about what you find. Don't worry about quality—these are just for you.

Large Events

When we have a lot of friends, we might want to all play together. Even though *Wanderhome* was written assuming five or six travelers, you can play with plenty more. This can feel crowded, but it's fun to make a big occasion of it. Some of my fondest memories can be found in the chaos of a crowded trail.

A few things I've learned about large events are:

- → You're not going to get everyone together all the time. Between sleepy days and hectic lives, it'll be unlikely that everyone will be in the same room at the same time. I like to invite people to drop in or out at their own convenience.
- → Encourage side conversations and splitting off from the main group. If a few travelers want to explore a mysterious side path, let them go—they can come back later and tell everyone else about what they found.
- → Bring lots of snacks for the trip!

I got started in TTRPGs through large west marches style, drop in drop out sessions, often with up to 20 people at a table. Wanderhome thrives in this sort of environment, and while I love the intimate Wanderhome sessions that are possible among a small group of people, I can't wait until the pandemic is over so I can finally run my 15 person Wanderhome hex crawl.

I've found seasons to be really useful when playing Wanderhome even if you're not going to do a larger arc. They serve as a way to ground the community of people who live on the land you're arriving in, by discussing their customs and traditions in relation to the changing year. I often find sessions of Wanderhome that lack seasons will often feel empty, the places missing people and missing a sign of coherent time. The Arc of the Year provides a way to anchor yourself within time.

The Great Arc of the Year ←

The great arc of the year is vital to our longer journeys through *Wanderhome*. This cycle of months and years shapes the Hæth, informs every place we arrive at, and the temperament of everyone we meet. It is also a reflection of how our characters grow over time, and eventually depart.

Each season lasts two months and closes out with a holiday festival announcing the end of that season. During a holiday's festival, you will choose a new advancement that pushes your character

forward in new and exciting ways. While shorter journeys might not care about seasons, any journey that expects the months to pass by should keep some sort of calendar to track them.

You can find a more detailed description of each month starting on page 192. We generally begin in the month of *Tillsoil,* in the Year of the Waterlily. Whenever you complete a full rotation of the seasons, a new year begins. Give that new year a name that feels fitting.

Someone has been kind enough to create a Twitter account that tracks the process of months across the real life year. After designating 2021 the Year of the Water Lily, they've informed me this new year (2022-2023) is the Year of the Magnolia. I love that! I love thinking about how these Wanderhome seasons relate to my real life.



發Phenomena

Some phenomena might come about every other year. Others might never come about. But if you've been playing Wanderhome for long enough, you will inevitably feel the seasons change over time. Sometimes Tillsoil is warm and gentle, and sometimes it is far colder than it should be. Sometimes Snowblanket is soft, and other times it's overwhelming. Once in a while, the cicadas will emerge from the ground and cover the world. Whenever a new month begins, we'll be prompted to answer a question and mark off symbols based on our answers. Whenever we've marked as many symbols as there are symbols on that page, a unique seasonal phenomenon will occur.

These phenomena take a lot of bookkeeping, and can often feel la little annoying when playing in real life. I find their questions really useful as a preceding question to the four ritual questions that start play, and they set the expectation that you can play Wanderhome for a really really long time. I think they're a lot of fun,m but if I had been able to come up with an easier way to track timeover multiple years I would've used that instead.



"It's Tillsoil in the valley right now. How does that look here?" Charlie grabbed the paper.

"Do we like the thought of there not really being any fertile soil here? Maybe it's been a really cold Chill..."

"Yeah I like that. And so everyone's doing a ton of hard work and there's farm tools lying all over the place."

"Wait, so it's Monsoon, but we're in a desert." Charlie paused. "Should it be something other than a desert?"

Mel shook xyr head. "It's still about rain, right? It's just...the place wants it to rain, but it can't. You know?"

"Woah."



The Five Seasons ←

The first full moon to shine over the Hæth marks the start of **Leap**, the first season of the year. It is composed of *Tillsoil*, when it is time to unthaw the ground and plant crops, and *Monsoon*, when the rains are heavy and constant. The holiday after this is called the Sun Parade, which marks the start of Bright.

Bright has two months—*Bloom-meadow*, when fields and trees are covered in flowers, and *Devildays*, a month of relaxation, sleep, and escape from the burning heat. The conclusion of Bright and the start of Breathe

arrives with the Day of Song.

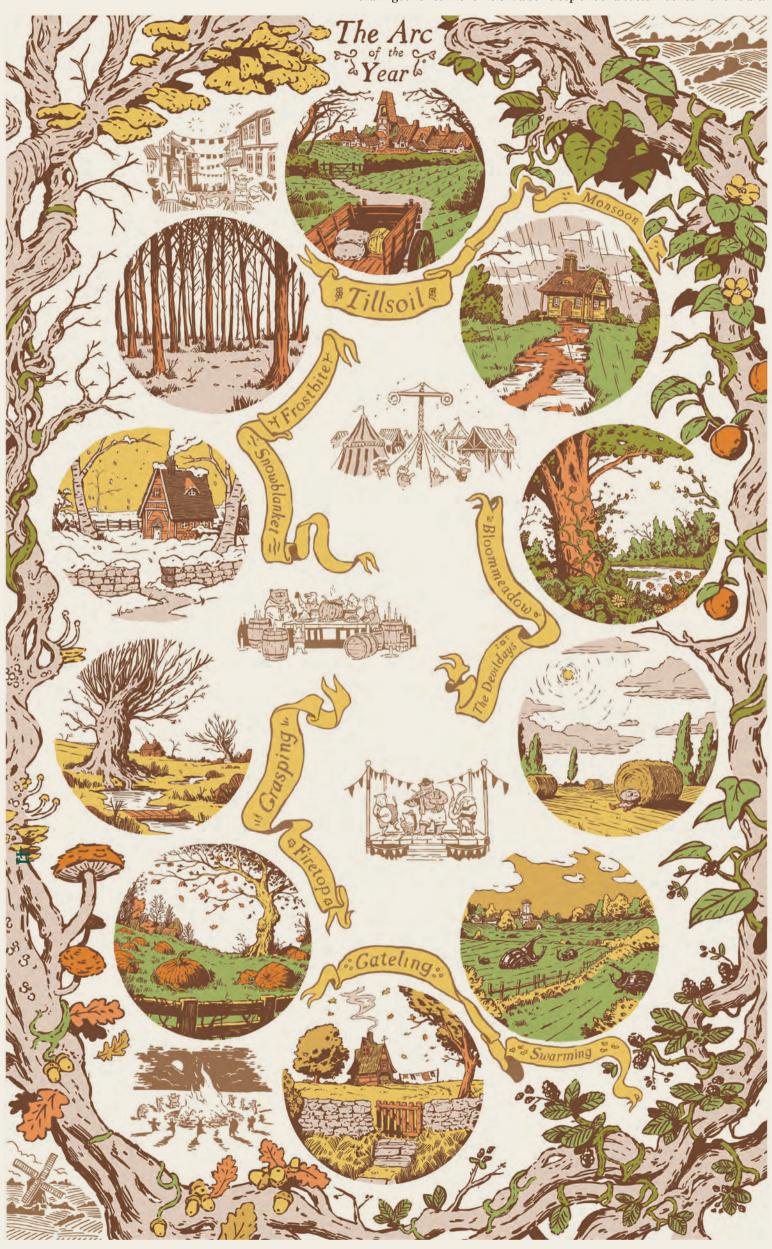
The season of **Breathe**, a quieter respite from the harshness of Bright, starts with *Swarming*, the traditional mating season for many bugs and a time when the air is filled with music. It is followed by *Gateling*, the shortest month of the year, a month of cold nights but hot days. The last day of Breathe is always the Moon Dance, which honors the season of Silt.

The first month of **Silt** is *Firetop*, when all the trees turn red and orange and it is customary to light bonfires. After Firetop comes *Grasping*, when

the leaves fall from the trees and the plants look like claws pointing towards the heavens. The final season, Chill, is welcomed by the Candlefeast.

Chill first arrives with the month of *Snowblanket*, when the world goes quiet and calm under the weight of heavy snow. This tender month is followed by *Frostbite*, when the air is bitter and dreadfully cold, and few dare travel from town to town. The final week of Chill is the week of New Years.

originally i tried to make my own version of this calendar—horrendous, thank god for conner's vision. also i sleep under a custom duvet with this art!





"So it's the end of Silt, which means this town is celebrating Candle Feast." Maeve shuffled through the PDF. "What if there's some reason they don't light candles here or leave offerings? But they still have a feast, you just eat the main course in silence."

"Tommie looks around at the festivities. They've never seen so many people having so much fun before. I mean, they've been to Sun Parades before but this one just hits different." Charlie looked over her list. "I think from now on out, they'll get a token whenever they learn something new. I think they've realized that there's a reason to explore the world and believe in it."



There is probably no page in Wanderhome more divisive than this one. Some people tell me it made them cry, while others dismiss it as maudlin or overwrought. These last paragraphs do become very personal, as the narrative voice is revealed to not just be an artifice of rules explanation but a character with desires and dreams that we as readers cannot access. The sudden shift into first person singular, as the narrator speaks from the heart about one of the most slow-paced and painful concepts in the game, can be really disorienting for readers. I find it incredibly important that all artifice is dropped at this moment in order to discuss one of the hardest themes in the game — that the passage of time also involves deathg.

Entering A New Month

When a month begins or ends is up to you; work together to decide when you all will observe the changing of the months and seasons. When I play, the month generally changes every time I travel from one place to another. Alternately, you might want to spend large chunks of your journey in the same month, or experience consecutive months in the same place. Whenever a month begins, go around and answer the question provided by the month. Follow its instructions, and ask the question it prompts you to.

Holidays, Growth & Goodbyes

When a seasonal holiday arrives, make choices as a group about what traditions are celebrated in your current place, and keep an eye on what you can do during this holiday. If this isn't your first time celebrating, you should also take a moment and figure out how this place treats holiday differently than you might be used to. The world is full of different traditions, and every place has a different relationship to holidays and the seasons.

Holidays in *Wanderhome* are liminal times, perfect for self-reflection and contemplation. At some point during each holiday,

you'll make a choice about how you grow, and check off a box in your playbook. These choices reflect how you think your character has grown and changed over the months. For most of our playbooks, we'll someday have to choose to leave their playbook and the journey behind. This might be because a character has found somewhere to finally settle down, set forth along their own path, or simply has grown and changed so much that they must grab hold of a new playbook. This doesn't mean they can't show up again in the story—on the contrary, you're welcome to seek them out and run into them occasionally. But they're no longer traveling with all of you.

The journey is bigger than any of us. Someday we'll all step away, die, retire, or just go along a separate path. There will come a day when I'm not the person you fall asleep next to, and that's okay. *Wanderhome* is a journey about the long arc of it all, and that sometimes means your character will depart. Your one character is not the center of this journey, and it's important to hold onto the ways it will continue past you.

I know it's still hard to say goodbye. I'm sorry.

A lot of playtesters didn't like the rule that one of the advancements involves leaving the rest of the group, but thematically it's really important. I felt it was good to apologize to the readers for this slight tragedy, that time marches on even if all of us wish we could preserve this moment forever.

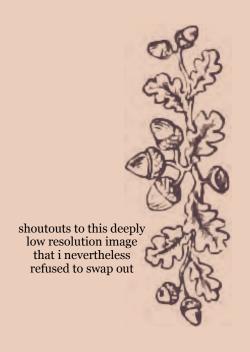
Brennan Lee Mulligan once told me that the critical difference between Wanderhome and other pastoral media (like Wind In The Willows or Frog And Toad) is that while those stories depict an unchangin halcyon, Wanderhome is about a world that has experienced hardship, and that the primordial meadow of the Haeth is something that a lot of people died to create. In a world where healing is possible, we have to accept death and separation as fundamental properties of the passage of time. It has to be okay to say goodbye, and let your character leave behind the other ones. I think the impulse to create an unchanging world with unchanging people to be somewhat dull, and that Wanderhome shines when it focuses on people happy in a moment that might not last, that goodbyes are as essential and powerful as

greetings.



On the previous page, you can see some floating rocks in the background. The Haeth was originally going to have floating geology occasionally, but most of it was cut due to being distracting. The only part of it that still remains is in a couple illustrations, a couple setting prompts, and the Floating Mountain itself.





Each playbook represents a specific kind of person you might find across the Hæth. We use our playbooks to create our characters, which we will use to explore the Hæth. This is not an exhaustive list of all playbooks—plenty of people have written their own, and if you search far and wide I'm sure you can find playbooks that suit your needs. The fifteen playbooks contained within this book should serve us well for now.

Caretaker, *p.* 48. The Caretaker pays attention and tends to the small and forgotten gods, helping each one find a home.

Dancer, p. 52. The Dancer opens up to all the magical and strange forces in the world, inviting them to dance and exist in the moment.

Exile, *p.* 56. Banished from their homeland, the Exile travels through the Hæth looking for somewhere that can take them in and help them heal.

Firelight, *p.* 60. The Firelight is accompanied by a firefly that lights their path and helps guide people through the world.

Fool, *p.* 64. The Fool is unused to and unfamiliar with the complicated and tangled world outside, and approaches everything with the same naïve optimism.

Guardian, *p*. 68. The Guardian takes care of a ward, a young child with a difficult past and in desperate need of care.

Moth-Tender, *p.* 72. The Moth-Tender assists the carrier moths that fly across the Hæth, delivering letters and parcels to everyone who needs them.

Peddler, *p.* 76. The Peddler transports supplies and wares from place to place, ensuring that each community has access to everything they need to survive.

Pilgrim, *p.* 80. In search of a faraway place, the Pilgrim is carried by their faith and desire to reach a home that might not even exist.

Poet, *p.* 84. The Poet is a writer using their journeys as inspiration for their project, trying to tie together the threads that intertwine the history of this land with their own heart.

Ragamuffin, *p*. 88. The Ragamuffin is a little rascal of a kid who just wants to cause problems and have fun.

Shepherd, *p*. 92. The Shepherd tends to a herd of bumblebees, keeping an eye out with them as they travel to different pastures.

Teacher, *p*. 96. The Teacher is a traveling professor, who visits kids throughout the Hæth to instruct them on specialized knowledge and hidden secrets.

Vagabond, *p. 100*. The Vagabond was once convicted by a faraway and cruel authority, and has been forced to reinvent themself on the road.

Veteran, *p.* 104. The Veteran was once a great hero, who held the entire world on the tip of their blade. No longer.

One way to understand playbooks / classes / etc. is that they are a reflection of how people within this world choose to divide themselves up. In Wanderhome, playbooks are based around how you present to others while traveling and what impulse leads you to seek out a home. Some of them are job oriented, but others are just "some guy wandering around."



I consulted with my wheelchair-using friends to make sure this wheelchair is practical to use. It was important to us that in a game about traveling, the first character encountered by the reader is not focused on walking.

The aretaker

Someone must pay attention to all the small and forgotten things in the world. Someone must listen to the voiceless.

You are alive. Your care is tender, supportive, and silent.

Choose a name and some pronouns.

Choose an animal.

- **Stoat**
- Salamander
- Lemur
- Crow

- A Reflective Animal
- A Quiet Animal

Choose 2 you value being and 2 that feel exhausting to be.

- Alert
- Reflective
- Patient
- Friendly
- **Expressive**

- Organized
- Gentle
- Masculine
- Feminine

This little moment at the end of the "choose 2 and 2" list creating space for gender is a small detail, but it gives people space to play with gender in a game that isn't really about gender. This isn't a game where queerness is oppressed, and therefore gender becomes a meaningful background note, but it wouldn't make sense to center gender here like we do in Sleepaway.

The phrase "you are

phrase that positions the character as

fundamentally alive

in their context, that they aren't an agent

of story or a puppet you toss around, but

rather an investiture

of care that deserves your compassion and respect. Each

character's care foregrounds their

same way that the axioms at the start of

the book explain the

fundamental principles in the

Haeth.

alive" is a ritual

48

to me these starburst bullet points are a little sparkle of magic or a firefly or a dandelion clock. also they glitched for 8 months straight--turns out my font file was corrupted. thank you possum creek layout channel for testing the limits of indesign with me.

Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

Wooden Sandals
 Huge Glasses
 Scratchy Cloak
 Wheelchair
 Loose Papers Covered In Sketches And Notes
 Ceremonial Robes
 Paint-Stained Pants
 Sea-Blue Clay Canteen
 Flowing Dress
 Faded Shawl
 Plain Ceramic Mask
 A Constant Rhythmic Tapping

Choose up to 5 friends that hide in the many shrines you carry with you.

- Dulcet, a god of tiny melodies. They are *dramatic* and/or *Pglamorous*.
- Furtive, a god of dust bunnies and cobwebs. They are *quiet* and/or *\Pinvisible*.
- Guile, a god of Gateling winds. They are watchful and/or *\Poracular.
- ☐ Ia, a god of a misplaced kiss. They are caring and/or *Pglamorous*.
- Lilt, a god of a tossed-aside creature. They are *†nervous* and/or *‡dead*.
- Nadir, a god of a single shadow. They are pensive and/or ₱invisible.
- Os, a god of an empty stomach. They are *‡lost* and/or *‡starving*.
- Ravel, a god of tangled yarn. They are *cheerful* and/or *\Phiwitchy*.
- Ston, a coal-tapping god. They are wise and/or ₱miraculous.
- Talk, a chalk god. They are *sturdy* and/or *₹venerable*.
- ₩ick, a candle god. They are passionate and/or *\Pluminescent*.
- ☼ Woad, a god of a mossy boulder. They are resolute and/or ₱mighty.
- Yot, a god of a child's first snow. They are *chill* and/or *intertwined*.
- ☐ Zenith, a god of a single sunbeam. They are *confident* and/or *\Pluminescent*.
- A family of cloud gods, who are all *imaginative* and/or *₱oracular*.
- A family of sapling gods, who are all raucous and/or ₱intertwined.
- \bigcirc A nameless, ancient god seeking refuge within your shrine, who is \triangledown feral and/or \dagger hurt.
- A very small buggy friend, who has no place among gods, and is *friendly*.
- A god of your own creation.

This long list of Small and Forgotten Gods was a big impulse for the creation of magical traits. I wanted each god to wield small pieces of magic, and be present as a cacophony of gestures around the caretaker. Each one was named when I went through a list of "Beautiful English Words" and picked out fragments I thought were aesthetically appealing.

These "inventory" lists were the hardest to write in the entire book, and I revised them by hand multiple times during the editing process. Their challenge comes from all the different tasks they're doing — they are items you possess, but they're also relationships with outside characters. or they're connections to broader mysteries in the deep recesses of the lore, or they're ways to connect you to a homeland or entangle yourself into other player relationships. And they have to do all that in two different ways, as the prompt forces you to interpret them in two completely different models. It's really

hard!

Choose 1 ceremonial object you still honor and 1 you cannot treasure any longer. Gell the table about them.

- A box of beeswax candles, handmade by your *learned* mentor as part of their final lesson.
- A series of wind chimes of increasing size, rescued from a flaming temple with the help of a *‡cautious* priest.
- A beautiful wooden walking stick adorned with feathers and runes, passed down through generations.
- ∴ A deck of oracular cards, hand-painted by an *Pempathetic* childhood friend who could hear the gods whispering.
- A handbook attempting to name all the gods, written by a *poetic* writer you once loved.
- A wide ceramic dish always filled with golden light, bestowed upon you by the many small and forgotten gods who witnessed you as you faced certain death.
- A rock with a hole worn in it, gifted by the mysterious stranger with one white eye who has watched over you all your life.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- Which of my small and forgotten gods did you rescue and give to me?
- ∠ What do you know about the world that I don't?
- What is something I knew about you that I had no right to know?
- ∠ Do I listen to you when you feel small and forgotten?

The first appearance of the mysterious stranger with one white eye, who shows up throughout the lists. I imagine them as being like Odin, some kind of primordial being of trickery and wisdom both, but there's no canon on what they are like or what their intention is within your world.

the starburst bullets also function as a selection bubble to track your choices, whereas these leaf bullet points are a list that you might interact with all of

One of my favorite
"you can always"
actions is this first
one ("Pause...")
because it's
effectively an "idle
animation", allowing
you to express part
of the character's
personality through

mechanics.

Some things you can always do:

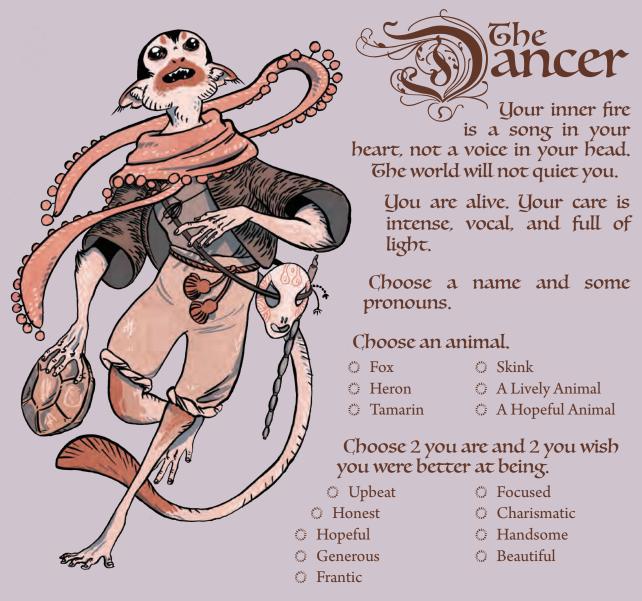
- ∠ Pause, tilt your head to the side, and keep going.
- ∠ Play with one of your gods.
- ∠ Say something in silence better than words can.
- ∠ Notice a little friend everyone else overlooked.
- ∠ Say: "Hold this."
- Ask: "Hush, can you hear that?" They get a token if they try their best to hear what you do.

During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before.

- Choose something a playbook can do. One of your gods learns how to do it.
- Choose something a place's nature can do. One of your gods learns how to do it.
- Choose something anything can do. One of your gods learns how to do it.
- Let go of something that only served to exhaust you.
- Get a token whenever you find a safe home for one of your gods and help it settle down.
- Spend a token to transform an empty or abandoned place into a shrine. This place becomes a *hallow*, in addition to whatever else it was.
- You can always ask: "Would you like to travel with me?"
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- You retire from wandering, settling down somewhere that makes you happy. Tell the other players which of your gods still need homes, and ask them if they want to take any with them. Pick up a new playbook and make a new character.

The Caretaker is one of the playbooks that can change very dramatically over the seasonal holidays. In fact, you could even argue that their playbook isn't even complete until they've had a few seasons to learn how to create hallows and give new gods home.

my god the varying background colors for all the playbooks.... mainly they are based on contrast with the illustration, then changed so no two consecutive playbooks have the same background color, then in order of which ones i want to look prettiest



This was the first playbook I wrote, and it served as the emotional template for other playbooks to follow. I think they feel a little loose in comparison to future polaybooks, especially as "dancing as a mystical art" isn't really explored later in Wanderhome, but I think they set a valuable precedent for the way small magic is expressed, and they're the closest thing there is to a witch in the base game.

Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Sunset-Shade Robes
- Golden Jewelry
- Loose-Fitting Pants
- Outrageously Long Scarf
- Elaborate Silks
- Cloak Covered In Glowing Fungi

- Stylized Mask
- Wicker Basket Full Of Costumes
- Trekking Pole
- Bandage-Wrapped Feet
- Necklace Of Huge Strung Beads
- A Gleam In Your Eye

While editing these lists with Luke, they would constantly select options and yell "this needs more juice!" when a section lacked emotional punch. We worked really hard to make sure each look option says something about the character, and I think the Dancer is the best example of that.

Choose 3 dances you will gladly dance, and 1 you'll never dance again.

- A dance you dance with wild creatures, to calm them and rejoice.
- A dance you dance with the small and forgotten gods, to earn luck and wisdom.
- A dance you dance with an unfamiliar place, to listen and befriend.
- A dance you dance with all the winds in the sky, to invite the weather to change.
- A dance you dance with the heavens high above, to get perspective on the world below.
- A dance you dance with fire, to spark hope and inspiration.
- A dance you dance with the plants beneath the soil, to inspire them to grow.
- A dance you dance with the water and the waves, to bring calm and tranquility.
- A dance you dance with the deepest dark, to bridge the gates of life and death.
- A dance you dance with the broken and crumbling, to remind it what was and could be.
- A dance you dance with time itself, to teach an ancient story.
- A dance you dance with your friends, to celebrate life and all that it gives us.

These dances are effectively magic, but consensual magic, which I think is really cool and underutilized in Wanderhome, I love the framing of dancing as a continuous emotional process. A lot of the Dancer's dances are inspired by conversations I had with Maria Mison. who is also a TTRPG designer of no small talent.

In the first several drafts, these items weren't specifically musical instruments, and the idea to shape them all around a theme helped bring them to life. The prompt was hard to construct, but the goal was to communicate a distinction between open and closed musical practices. The Dancer is happy to share some traditions, but other traditions are much more personal — and that's okay!

Choose I you teach anyone who wants to learn and I you'll only ever dance to alone. Gell the table about them.

- A battered iron handpan drum, forged by a *cheerful* friend who you miss terribly.
- ☼ A cheap tambourine, stolen from a bitter and ‡ furious merchant.
- A beautiful golden lyre, the symbol of your noble birth.
- A soft and gentle reed flute, snatched from the North Wind God himself.
- An ocarina carved from a seashell, gifted by an *imaginative* child.
- A rhythmic work song, a tradition from a life you have no desire to return to.
- A lovely whistled tune, the last song your mother ever sang for you.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- ∠ Why do I call you my best friend?
- Why won't you ever dance with me?
- ∠ Why did I come with you when we left home?
- When was the last time we stayed up all night to watch the sun rise?

That last question about sunrises was preserved from the earliest drafts of Wanderhome, and I think is noteable because it's somewhat "off script" — i.e it doesn't say much about the dancer specifically, and anyone could be theoretically asking that questyion of anyone. I find it a really powerful question, however, becvause it creates a relationship between two characters that feels very rich but also almost a little secret — what do they do together while watching the sunrise? What is this purpose? That's not for us to know right away.`

Asking to dance with someone else is a critical part of the dancer's character, because it frames dancing in this very fundamental collaborative way, even if the force you're asking is fire, the trees, or the land itself. The action doesn't allow you to coercively dance with someone, it has to be

consensual.

Some things you can always do:

- ∠ Dance idly.
- Laugh and smile.
- Leap up on top of something.
- ∠ Give a song to those around you.
- ∠ Ask: "Will you dance a dance with me?"
- ∠ Ask: "Do you want to be my friend?" They get a token if they say yes.

During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before.

- Learn a new dance, from your list.
- Learn another new dance, from your list.
- Invent a new dance, learn it, and add it to your list.
- Realize you're good at being something you worried you weren't.
- Get a token whenever you dance for no reason other than your own love of dancing.
- Spend a token to offer to dance a dance with someone else, which reminds them of who they are and breathes life back into their heart.
- You can always ask: "What song still sings in your heart, that you will always be moved by?"
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- The road calls you along a new path, pulling you in a new direction, away from everyone else. You must travel your own way now. Pick up a new playbook and make a new character.

I love how for most people, their final advance is about some kind of deep growth or finding a home, but for the Dancer it's just like "okay time for me to leave!"

— they're very much the Gandalf of Wanderhome.

the text color for each playbook is individually drawn from the illustration and used nowhere else in the book This illustration is an Ghe instance of transness in Wanderhome, where we worked really hard to communicate gender through subtle sexual Your past clings to your dimorphism within an shoulders like an old woolen cloak. animal species. She's ... really Someday, perhaps, you can return to your pretty... home. REALLY PRETTY You are alive. Your care is fragile, skittish, and terrified of being broken again. Choose a name and some pronouns. Choose an animal. Deer A Rare Animal Tiger A Nomadic Eagle Animal Skunk Choose 2 you are and 2 you try not to be. Pragmatic Careless Pessimistic Jumpy Damaged Sharp Explosive Ladylike Tired

Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Cloak Big Enough To Hide In
- Carefully-Carved Wooden Mask
- Stolen Lace
- Shirt No One Knows How To Repair
- Ornate Ceremonial Scepter
- Traditional Marriage Gown

- Brutal Scar
- Intricate Tattoos From Your Home
- Fancy Pipe
- Improvised Crutches
- A Sacred Text From Your People
- A Deep And Profound Loneliness

You once had a place you called home. It's gone now. Choose 1 true reason why you cannot return, 1 reason you tell everyone else, and 1 reason you worry is the truth.

- You were banished for going against its monarch. It is a *castle* or a *metropolis*.
- You were banished because you couldn't prove yourself. It is a *workshop* or a *furnace*.
- You were banished for accusations of theft or murder. It is a *market* or a *port*.
- You were banished because you betrayed the one you love. It is a university or a carnival.
- You fled to escape familial obligations. It is a *palace* or a *labyrinth*.
- You fled out of shame, to help the land heal. It is a garden or a glen.
- You fled because you were declared an omen of death. It is a *farm* or a *wilderness*.
- You fled because you rejected the gods of the land. It is a *hallow* or a *maelstrom*.
- Your people fled from the wrath of the gods. It is a *waste*.
- Your people fled when it was destroyed by outside hands. It is a *graveyard*.
- Your people fled as their civilization crumbled. It is a *ruin*.
- Your people fled from natural disaster. It is a *swamp*.
- You cannot remember why you are in exile. It is a *mirror*.
- The place never existed. It is a *mirage*.

This list took a lot of work — both to balance all the options well (so you could create a place that feels meaningful even if you never end up going there) but also to consult with diasporic friends to make sure the Exile has space for those themes without being a toxic depiction of diaspora. I love how the three choices you can make about each option radically recontextualizes those options — Wanderhome uses that trick a lot to

secretly double or triple a list in length, but here it feels most apparent. The fact that most of these reasons are false or uncertain is important

as well.

The Exile has a secret second role as a funky jazz musician, and while both it and the Dancer use music to contextualize their characters, the exile has a very different relationship with music. For the Dancer, music becomes a representation of their heart's desire and their spiritual practice, while for the Exile, music is a reminder of home and a relic of a struggling memory.

Choose 1 you still play and 1 you can no longer understand, Gell the table about them.

- A carapace-carved horn with a haunting melody, said to have been taught to your people (and your people alone) by the wind-gods.
- A steel drum that would always resonate in harmony with the lakes and rivers of your home.
- An ancient violin that you once spent hours practicing as a kid while waiting for your mother to come back.
- A cheap lute, gifted by a *caring* innkeep who gave you shelter after you left.
- The small golden harp that only the royal family of your home could play.
- The lullaby your father would sing to you as you fell asleep.
- The song you'd always sing with your ‡*grieving* ex-fiancé, the tune of which still calls you back home.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- ∠ How old were you when you traveled to my home?
- ∠ How did you help me when I felt like no one else would?
- What did you do to earn my trust?
- ∠ Do you miss our home as much as I do?

These questions are a good example of how Wanderhome can use leading questions to force you to make important character choices. If I ask you if you miss our home as much as I do, it bonds us together but in a way that's also extremely open-ended — there are many reasons why you might both miss the same home, and home is a very flexible concept.

I love to keep an eye on the exits — it's not active or even something other characters can notice, but by announcing that you're doing that you communicate your hypervigilance and your discomfort.

Some things you can always do:

- ∠ Say an expression in your traditional language.
- Keep an eye on the exits.
- ∠ Push something out of sight or out of mind.
- ∠ Play a tune that reminds you of home.
- ∠ Say: "You look familiar."
- ∠ Ask: "Can I tell you a story about my home?" They get a token if they say yes.

During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before.

- Meet someone from your home, and reach out to them.
- Meet someone else from your home, and reach out to them.
- Find an exclave of people from your home, and reach out to them.
- Realize you're not something you were scared of being.
- Get a token whenever you honor a holiday or tradition from your home.
- Spend a token to remember something you assumed you had forgotten.
- You can always ask: "Can I stay here for a while?"
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- You find a place you feel can be home, at least for a while. Pick up a new playbook and make a new character.

The Exile never manages to return home, but they do manage to form connections with their home outside home, and I think that really rules.

The Firelight is one of the only playbooks that doesn't have a direct equivalent to a role in modern society. I imagine them as a social role that would naturally emerge in a society that prioritizes traveling and has giant bioluminescent bugs floating around. They're basically "the guy with the big dog" but if the dog could glow.



the orientation of text for the playbooks (illustration to the left or right) is mainly based on which side of the illustration will create an interesting shape to abut the text

Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Mud-Soaked Cloak
- Reliable Wooden Staff
- Wide-Brimmed Hat That Covers Your Eyes
- Warm And Comfortable Gloves
- Patchwork Work Pants
- Deck Of Playing Cards

- Well-Loved Fiddle
- Badly Ripped Dress
- Box Of Medical Supplies
- Small And Practical Knife
- Book Of Small Rituals
- Shining Eyes That Pierce Through Darkness

You have a firefly, your companion that stays by your side no matter what. They sleep during the day and light up at night. They are *₱luminescent*. Choose 1-2 to describe how you met.

- The two of you grew up together. They are *caring* and/or *honest*.
- You rescued them from a bush when they were small. They are *wise* and/or ‡*nervous*.
- Fireflies have always helped your family. They are proper and/or chill.
- They led you out of danger at your darkest moment, and have stuck with you ever since. They are *confident* and/or *pensive*.
- Your uncle gave them to you as a service bug, so you could always have light to guide you. They are *watchful* and/or *resolute*.
- It's a whole story—too long to tell, and with plenty of incredible mishaps along the way. They are *adventurous* and/or *inquisitive*.
- They came to you in a dream, and when you woke up they were real. They are *Poracular*, and you're not sure they're really a firefly.
- They are one of the Lightning Dancers, and they fell from the sky into your hands. They are *Pmiraculous*, and you're not sure they're really a firefly.
- You found them in a place of death and pain, and rescued them. They are \neq dead, and you're not sure they're really a firefly.

I'm always so happy when someone makes a Firelight who has a ghost or something weird like that. The Firelight is really well-equipped to run the gamut between very slice of life games of Wanderhome and very weird and magical games of Wanderhome.

This is one of the first references to the Rebellion, which is a concept that slowly grows to fill the background of the entire deep lore of Wanderhome. The metaphor of keeping lit vs. letting die out was what prompted me to design the inventory picklists as this double-choice in the first place. When they let one of their items die out. it frames their relationship also with the person or community that gave them that light. The Firelight is often a strange character, and I think this list herlps humanize and ground them in a loop of a) providing care for others and b) tending to the

flame in their heart.

Choose 1 light you still keep lit and 1 that died out long ago. Gell the table about them.

- A rusted iron lantern that your mother carried before you.
- An ornate bronze oil lamp, your last memory of your childhood home.
- A box of expensive beeswax candles, gifted by an *adventurous* ex-love as a going-away present.
- A simple wooden incense holder shaped like a crashing wave, that anchors you to your faith.
- A pack of smokes that reminds you of sitting on a porch with your *poetic* love.
- ₩isp, a small and forgotten *\Pmany-faced* god who is in love with your firefly.
- The passion in your heart that burned for the rebellion.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- When did you lead me back into the light?
- What did I show you that you didn't want to see?
- ∠ Why does my firefly like you so much?
- ∠ Where do you wish I could guide you, and why can't I?

Some things you can always do:

- K Shrug.
- Let Your firefly.
- Illuminate all that is hard to see.
- Keep walking.
- ∠ Say: "Watch your step."
- ∠ Ask: "Do you need a hand?" They get a token if they accept your help.

During each seasonal holiday, choose I you haven't chosen before.

- Teach your firefly something new they can always do.
- Teach your firefly something else new they can always do.
- Learn from your firefly an important life lesson, and get a new thing you can always do from any playbook.
- Realize you don't have to be something you always forced yourself to be.
- Get a token whenever you put your trust in someone else's hands.
- Spend a token to know how to get where you're trying to go, no matter how far away.
- You can always ask: "Can you lead the way?"
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- You met someone new who needs your guidance more than your friends do, and you need to part ways. Pick up a new playbook and make a new character.



This playbook is really fun, and is one of the playbooks with the most thematic range. Your Fool can be a harlequin-style jester, a dingbat who was basically just born yesterday, or a Siddhartha Gautama Buddha sort of sacred innocent. Their art is an intentional reference to the Rider-Wait Tarot deck, showing the duality of the fool as both an overdressed clown who's going to get intro trouble, and a fresh receptacle for wisdom and understanding that more world-weary characters might not be able to access.

Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Garishly Purple Pants
- Pet Ant
- Noble Attire
- Flamboyant Hat
- Elaborate Makeup
- Polka-Dot Bindle

- Flowing Cape
- Lots And Lots Of Beads
- Flower Behind Your Ear
- Cloak Unsuitable For The Weather
- Trick Deck Of Cards
- A Complete Lack Of Foresight

Choose 2 that are true about you, and 1 that everyone assumes is true.

- You don't know a lot about the world. The place you are from is a *farm* or a *tower*.
- You were spoiled rotten as a kid. The place you are from is a *palace* or a *garden*.
- You've spent much of your life making other people happy. The place you are from is a carnival or a tavern.
- You have a surprising secret talent. The place you are from is a *workshop* or a *port*.
- You grew up familiar with chaos and disorganization. The place you are from is a *maelstrom* or a *market*.
- You have a mysterious and heroic destiny. The place you are from is a *lagoon* or a *castle*.
- You had a lot of expectations placed on you as a kid. The place you are from is a *hallow* or a *university*.
- Most people you meet around here don't make any sense to you. The place you are from is a *wilderness* or a *metropolis*.
- You had a really upsetting childhood that you hate talking about. The place you are from is a *waste* or a *labyrinth*.
- You cannot remember much about your childhood. The place you are from is a *ruin* or a *mirage*.

The Fool is a contrast to the Exile, in that both construct where they're from, but for very different reasons. The Exile creates a place to long for, whereas the Fool has a defined origin point to create context for their naiveté and help understand how other people perceive them.

Choose 1 you carry with you and 1 you're confident is around here somewhere (you're just not sure where.) Gell the table about them.

- A beautiful golden brooch, gifted by your proper parents.
- A purse full of valuables that can buy basically anything you want, obtained through your noble birth.
- Cedie, a small and forgotten \(\Psi\) witchy god who has decided to accompany you on your journeys.
- A handful of tickets from the *carnival* you used to work for.
- A puzzle box you can't quite figure out, given by a wise teacher you met on the road.
- A ceremonial shawl, given by a traveler who has decided your foolishness disguises wisdom.
- A now-dull knife, given by someone who you later realized is the opposite of everything you want to be in life.

on this list was sorta controversial among the creative team, since money doesn't canonically exist in Wanderhome. I feel like if you choose that option and introduce money to Wanderhome,that's all for you.

The second option

originally there was a merchant playbook but! no money!

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- What do I say that you've gotten so tired of?
- What did you show me, that no one else could?
- ∠ Why are you so patient with me?
- ∠ How did you help me get out of my old home?

fools exist to question pre-existing social structures and challenge our social norms and conceptions. They also exist to be funny and make us laugh. I think this list manages to balance it well.

the Fool's final transformation is also about self-actualization, as they become someone else within the context of their world. They're one of the only playbooks that can do this.

Some things you can always do:

- Meander around.
- Give great advice.
- Give terrible advice.
- ∠ Do something that's actually pretty funny.
- ∠ Ask: "But why?"
- ∠ Ask: "What's going on?" They get a token if they help explain.

During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before:

- Learn something important from someone else. Invent a new thing you can always do.
- Learn something else important from someone else. Invent a new thing you can always do.
- Realize you don't have to be something you always thought you were.
- Realize it's okay to not be something you were scared you weren't.
- Get a token whenever you sit down and listen, really listen, to someone.
- Spend a token in order to ask: "Why can't things be different?"
- You can always provide a new perspective that no one else could see.
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- The world has changed you, and you have grown. Choose an unused playbook, and transfer as much as makes sense from this playbook to that one.

Suardian

heart. Someday the world will hurt them, but this will not be that day.

You are alive. Your care is parental, protective, and unconditional.

Choose a name and some pronouns.

Choose an animal.

Bear

Rabbit

Hen

- A Wary Animal
- Wolf A Strong Animal

Choose 2 you generally are and 2 people assume you always are.

- Level-Headed
- Cheery

Hopeful

Correct

Organized

Mothering

68

Openhearted

Fatherly

Laid-Back

That cat is actually the cat of one of our kickstarter backers. The cat passed away during the Kickstarter, and we wrote the cat into the Ward. I rewroter a couple Ward options to even match the personality of the cat, so that he could create Cocoa in Wanderhome easily.

could create Cocoa in Wanderhome we knew that if we opened up a tier of "your precious pet in wanderhome" we'd be flooded with cats and dogs and existing creatures with their own personalities but couldn't turn down this one request... cocoa's owner ended up making a big donation to a local animal sanctuary in the hudson valley where wanderhome was made (and very inspired by)



Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Cloak Big Enough To Hide Your Ward
- Stained Apron
- Pots & Pans
- Thick Muddy Boots
- Fishing Kit
- Shield Almost As Big As You

- Forged Paperwork
- Austere Formal-Wear
- Reading Glasses
- Sturdy Cane
- Heavy Earrings
- Seemingly Endless Patience

You have a ward, a child who you watch over. Choose how you found them...

- You've cared for them since their birth. They are *chill* or *cheerful*.
- Their parents entrusted you with them for their safety. They are *dramatic* or ‡*cautious*.
- \bigcirc You rescued them from a cruel situation. They are *quiet* or $\neq hurt$.
- You found them near a battlefield, hidden away. They are *‡furious* or *‡lost*.
- They grew up at a *university*, surrounded by knowledge. They are *inquisitive* or *wise*.
- ☐ They grew up alone in the *wilderness*. They are *adventurous* or *\Pferal*.
- ∴ A mysterious stranger with one white eye arrived on your doorstep and gave them to you. They are *₱luminescent* or *₱witchy*.
- \odot You found them among the ruins of a lost civilization. They are $\pm dead$ or $\pm empty$.

The Guardian is notso-secretly two characters in a single playbook, and it's pretty obvious when creating your guardian that your ward is just as important to who they are. Your Ward is an enormous reflection of your Wanderhome group's emotional tone — creating a deeply traumatized orphan or your adventurous little kid are both really important ways to build the character.

The fact that you can go full Naruto with your Ward and turn them into an avatar of a reincarnated death god is really funny to me. I always pick that option just because I love having this sad kid with a messed up backstory that ties into a bunch of big important lore elements that don't have a clear purpose. The Ward has an outrageous emotional range, and because of all the picklists about developing the Ward specifically, the Guardian themself often feels a little underdeveloped in comparison. This is in some ways on purpose — kids often struggle to see their Guardians as fullyrealized people until they get older.

...and choose what about them you'd die to defend.

- They can always find the beauty in the world. They are *crafty* or *poetic*.
- They're a good kid, and a goofball, and they have a million little eccentricities. They are *imaginative* or *caring*.
- They want to be friend everyone (and everything) they meet. They are *friendly* or *Pglamorous*.
- You know there's still a spark of light in their heart, despite everything. They are *sturdy* or *‡grieving*.
- They stick by the side of the ones they care for, like a shadow. They are *quiet* or *Poracular*.
- They're the true heir to the Throne of the Floating Mountain. They are *proper* or ‡*nervous*.
- ∴ They are uniquely capable of communicating with the small and forgotten gods. They are *₱empathetic* or *₱intertwined*.
- They contain the very soul of the Slobbering God. They are *Pmighty* or *†starving*.
- ∴ They're not like other kids. They are *\Prinvisible* or *\Pr*

Choose 2 your ward carries with them. Gell the table about them.

- A notebook and set of charcoals, gifted by a caring old teacher.
- A cap too large for their head, gifted by their godparents as they fled the authorities.
- A stuffed animal they'll never let go of, gifted by a *cheerful* shopkeep.
- The *inquisitive* bug that lives in their pocket, that's stuck by them all their life.
- A gender-affirming outfit that they're too insecure to wear, gifted by an *honest* kid they once met.
- A poncho the color of shadows, gifted by a *crafty* vagabond you assumed was untrustworthy.
- A mysterious scar on the nape of their neck, placed there by an *Poracular* and *pensive* god.

Tiny moments of queerness, like this gender affirming outfit, help frame Wanderhome as a queer work in subtle ways. I debated for a while whether or not the game should leave space for nongender based affirmation in those clothes, but the bills being passed in Texas and Florida have reaffirmed my commitment to depicting trans kids being happy in their world.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- Why does my ward look up to you and why does that bother me?
- ∠ What was I like before I found my ward?
- When was the last time my ward really irritated you?
- ∠ Do you follow through with your responsibilities to my ward? What are they?

Some things you can always do:

- ∠ Sigh and shake your head.
- Keep both eyes on someone.
- Derive a practical lesson from a situation.
- ✓ Tell a story that makes someone embarrassed.
- ∠ Ask: "Where do you think you're going?"
- ∠ Ask: "Where is my ward?" They get a token if they help you find your ward.

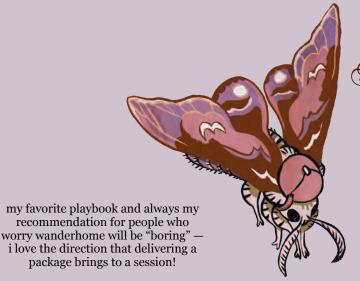
During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before:

- Teach your ward a new thing they can do from any playbook.
- Teach your ward another new thing they can do from any playbook.
- Teach your ward a third new thing they can do from any playbook.
- Become something you previously said you were not.
- Get a token whenever you follow your ward's advice, even when it's terrible advice.
- Get a token whenever you sit back and let your ward handle a problem.
- You can always ask: "Can you give me a hand with this?"
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- You retire from wandering and your ward ventures forth as their own person. Pick up a playbook and create your ward in that playbook.

Character growth for the guardian is about giving space for your ward to self-actualize — they start with a set of actions that center around monitoring and fretting over your ward, and by the end of it the ward has become their own

person independent

of you.





Carrier moths travel across the hæth, bringing news, letters, and tiny boxes. You wander the land, keeping an eye on these moths and their towers.

You are alive. Your care is consistent, prompt, and arrives in small packages. Choose a name and some pronouns.

Choose an animal.

- ∵ Bat
- Horse

A Persistent Animal

Pigeon

A Dogged Animal

Choose 2 your job asks you to be and 2 you actually are.

- Calm
- Trusting
- Curious
- Proper
- Studious

Cheerful

Rabbit

- Blunt
- Strong
- Pretty

The moth tender evolved slowly during editing to care more and more about their job, and be defined in terms of their job's expectations.



The Moth Tender is based on my personal fascination with the logistics of mail transit in preindustrial times, and my love for carrier pigeons and semaphore technology. I enjoy creating narrative space for characters that can exist when combat isn't centered in a game space, where the Moth Tender can have a iob and function that is vital for the existence of basically any civilization but that has no connection to conflict. The Moth Tender has a really "Arthur Dent" or "Bilbo Baggins" sort of protagonist energy, the kind of vibes that make them feel like they've bumbled out of a desk job into a way more complicated situation. Their look does a lot to sell that, describing a character who is a bit oddly dressed for a longterm traveling environment. I think if I was to write a novel set in the world of Wanderhome it would focus on a Moth tender.

Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Tweed Vest
- Well-Worn Moth-Tending Uniform
- Shining Lantern
- Small Reading Glasses
- Satchel Full Of Papers
- Ink-Stained Gloves
- Mottled Bark-Colored Cloak

- Finely-Tailored Tie
- Out-Of-Place Dress
- Nearly-Threadbare Gloves
- Map Of Local Moth Towers
- A Deep Sense That You're In Over Your Head

Choose I you would devote your life to protecting and I that's in danger of falling apart. Gell the table about them.

- A decoder for the secret Moth-Tending cipher, an ancient relic gifted by your *imaginative* mentor.
- A chart of lunar phases, a going-away present from your childhood best friend.
- A beautiful letter from a distant lover, who you hope someday to meet.
- The ring on your finger, matched by your *confident* fiancé back home.
- A sterling silver pin affixed to your vest, representing your oath to the Moth-Tending organization.
- The wisdom of your *caring* adoptive mother, who reminded you to always be yourself.
- A pink orchid, constantly reminding you of the promises you made to your fellow revolutionaries.

While Moth Towers aren't clearly described in Wanderhome, they're probably the area of lore I have most fleshed out in my head that didn't make it into the book. I imagine them as being similar to Iranian dovecotes, these tall towers with room for lots of moths, that are used as mailing hubs by the organization. I often like to imagine where in each place I arrive in the Moth Tower is kept, if there is one.

The Moth Tender is Ruby's favorite playbook, and I totally understand why. They're able to create a lot of prompts all around them, a ton of excess narrative fluff that can be pulled in different directions. They also give their journey a sense of purpose, as each place they arrive in gives them a new activity.

This sort of "mix and match" list building is a lot of fun. It's another trick Wanderhome uses to make a very large possibility space out of a finite set of options. Some of the combinations feel very obvious, which is good if you're new or overwhelmed, but more imaginative players can construct combinations that create some very odd possibilities.

Choose 3 letters or packages you're carrying with you...

- A royal summons from the King of the Floating Mountain...
- A wax-sealed love letter...
- An envelope stuffed with a whole village's worth of care...
- A scroll of ancient and mysterious magic...
- A hand-knit sweater...
- A basket of homemade candies...
- A letter checking in from an old friend...
- \triangle A \neq *lost* kid you're helping to escape a bad situation...
- A book with dangerous and illicit information...
- A bottle of rare and vitally important medicine...
- A package or letter of your own description...

...and for each, choose where they're going. Whenever a letter or package reaches its destination, choose another.

- ...for a *\psi witchy* and shrewish witch deep in the Miremuck Swamp.
- ...for a *cheerful* young rabbit who just moved to a big city.
- ...for a *poetic* blue jay you once dated.
- ... for a wandering and *Pmiraculous* wizard-in-exile.
- ∴ ...for the *‡royal* commander of the Lead Fortress.
- for a ‡ furious spy in a distant city.
- ∴ for the *Pvenerable* god that dwells in the ancient forest.
- …for the proper mayor of a hidden village.
- :...for the *‡heroic* leader of the last outposts of the rebellion.
- ...for a *chill* old farmer with a big family.
- …for someone of your own description.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- What is it about my job that so appeals to you?
- When did I realize that I could trust you?
- ∠ Why did I risk my job and career to help you?
- ∠ Do you think the moths are as beautiful as I do?

Some things you can always do:

- Write something down on a piece of paper.
- ✓ Tell everyone what phase the moon is in right now.
- ∠ Ask: "Have you heard the news?"
- ∠ Say: "I have a letter for you!" They get a token if they accept the letter.

During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before:

- Create a new letter or package from your lists.
- Create another new letter or package from your lists.
- Create a third new letter or package from your lists.
- Reject something you were expected to be.
- Get a token whenever you take your time and make sure you know exactly which way you're going.
- Spend a token to have already prepared for this situation.
- You can always ask: "Do you have a letter for me?" They get a token if they do.
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- You find a tower you want to help operate, retiring from wandering. Pick up a new playbook and make a new character.

The moth-tender, despite having "moth" in their name, is much less connected to their namesake bug than the Shepherd or the Firelight. I think people who pick the moth tender sometimes expect more involvement with their packagecarrying moths, but I think there's a version of the moth tender who doesn't really interact with moths.



The eddler

with merchants, traders, and everyone else doing their part to make sure everywhere in the Næth is provided for. No one's home can stand alone.

You are alive. Your care is material, solid, and dependable.

Choose a name and some pronouns.

Choose an animal.

- Donkey
- Crocodile
- Condor
- A Rugged Animal

The road is long and filled

- Llama
- A Tireless Animal

Choose 2 you are and 2 you feel you need to be.

- Stingy
- Calculating
- Stern
- Experienced
- Watchful
- Manly
- Extroverted
- Womanly
- Sustainable

The Peddler was a really challenging playbook. It's one of the logistics playbooks, created to discuss resource allocation in this agrarian world. However it was really hard for playtesters to decouple the playbook from their framework of market capitalim, and the peddler went through a lot of changes in order to help them articulate their noncapitalist function. Merchants have existed before capitalism and they will continue to exist after capitalism, but one of the greatest weapons capitalism wields is the limitation of our own imagination. The peddler tries to take a concept deeply enmeshed with our understanding of capitalism and free it into a new space.

Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Patched-Up Mustard CloakDress From A Distant LandAbacus
- Fingers Adorned With Rings
 Overburdened Backpack
- Glasses With Many Adjusting Lenses Ledgers
- Once-Fancy Hat
 Fine Silk Handkerchief
- Manual Wheelchair
 Non-Stop Banter

The beetle is one of my favorite parts of the peddler. Any time there's big bugs in Wanderhome I go absolutely wild.

You have a sturdy and resolute beetle who carries your supplies on its back. Choose 4 wares you regularly barter with and tell the table which is the one you value most.

- Fruit, vegetables, and any other dependable produce.
- Honey, wool, and anything else created by bugs.
- Fish, pearls, and anything else gifted by the sea.
- Flowers, tea, and anything beautiful yet fleeting.
- Novels, manuscripts, and anything else crafted by storytellers.
- Toys, dolls, and anything else that brings joy wherever you go.
- Smokes, drink, or anything people might need to soothe their nerves.
- Incense, statues, and anything else that appeares the many small and forgotten gods.
- Tomes, tapestries, and any other vessels of ancient magic.
- Nails, tools, and anything else forged from melted-down weapons.
- Gossip, secrets, and anything else valued by the rebellion.
- Security, hope, or anything else that struggling people desperately need.
- Clouds, dreams, or any other miracles that no one else could offer.
- Knickknacks, tchotchkes, and any other useless trinkets.

While character ages are very flexible in playbooks, this list works similarly to a leading question, in that it frames the peddler as someone with enough time to have a past they've lost sight of. I think it helps ground them as a traveler with many friends in many places.

Choose 1 you'll never abandon and 1 you parted with a long time ago. Gell the table about them.

- A map that leads to wealth beyond anyone's imagination, given by an old friend before they disappeared.
- A hand-carved flute that your father made when you set forth into the world.
- A wilted orchid you must keep secret, a sign of your time helping the rebellion.
- Zo, a small and forgotten
 ₱miraculous god who lives in a shrine on your beetle.
- The *inquisitive* young teen who tags along for the ride.
- A key that is said to be able to free the Slobbering God from its cursed prison.
- A sealed box you've sworn never to open, gifted to you by your old trademaster when you first set off.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- ∠ How do I help you decompress when the days are long?
- Why did we start traveling together, all those years ago?
- What do you give me that I can't get anywhere else?
- Are you still working with me?

Some things you can always do:

- ₭ Know someone who can help.
- Intensely examine something.
- ∠ Sit down and do the math.
- ∠ Trade for or trade away one of your many wares.
- ∠ Ask: "What can I do for you?"
- ∠ Say: "I have a deal for you." Give them a token if they hear you out and consider it.

During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before:

- Change the wares you barter with or value.
- Change the wares you barter with or value, again.
- Procure the perfect gift for someone, and give it to them.
- Procure the perfect gift for someone, and give it to them.
- Get a token whenever you give something away and expect nothing in return.
- Spend a token to acquire something rare, valuable, or important.
- You can always run into an old friend in an unexpected place.
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- You're taking a break from traveling, setting up shop somewhere a bit more permanent. Pick up a new playbook and make a new character.

There are multiple models of faith throughout Wanderhome, and an important part of Wanderhome thematically is its relationship with faith. The pilgrim is the most goaloriented of all the playbooks, being the only one actually explicitly striving for something that they need to travel to, but the fact that this journey is about devotion helps make it clear to the player that the point of the journey is more about the sights they see along the way, rather than the destination.

ilgrim

The gods have given you a path forward, a place you hope can finally give you what you seek. Some days you worry you'll never make it there at all.

You are alive. Your care is enduring, faithful, and expressed one step at a time.

Choose a name and some pronouns.

Choose an animal.

- ibis
- Bison
- Ferret
- Newt

- A Devoted
 - Animal
- A Ceaseless Animal

Choose 2 you try to be and 2 you've given up on.

Patient

Wise Wise

Reflective

Healthy

Proper

- Masculine
- Unobtrusive
- Feminine

Stoic Stoic



Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Battered Gray Cloak
- Sturdy Walking Stick
- Fresh Bandages
- Weather-Beaten Hood
- Leather-Bound Book Of Poems
- Straw Hat

- Practical Walking Boots
- Patchwork Jacket
- Frayed Gloves
- Slightly Inaccurate Map Of The Area
- The Bare Minimum Needed To Get By
- Fundamental Confidence In The World

A god or omen instructed you to pack your bags and travel somewhere very far from the land you called home. Choose 2 rumors or stories you've heard about this place, and 1 that is actually true.

- You seek a land of great bounty, where the trees offer endless fruit, fish leap from the rivers, and no one ever has to work. It is a *carnival* or a *garden*.
- You seek the home of the one teacher who knows the secret to pure serenity. It is a *lagoon* or a *monastery*.
- You seek where the countless small and forgotten gods are loudest and clearest. It is a hallow or a graveyard.
- You seek where the gods taught artists the secret of creation, and nothing can compare to the objects made there. It is a *furnace* or a *workshop*.
- You seek a place that scrapes against the very sky itself, and from up there you can see the whole of the Hæth. It is a *mountain* or a *tower*.
- You seek the home of the heart of the world itself. It is a *cave* or a *wilderness*.
- You seek a place older than anywhere else in the world, that carries secrets from an ancient time. It is an *island* or a *ruin*.
- You seek a place at the very edge of the world, where nothing lies beyond it. It is a *desert* or a *mirror*.
- The place you seek isn't the end of your journey. It is a *bridge* or a *port*.
- The place you seek doesn't exist. It is a *mirage*.

The Pilgrim is the third of the "place-based" characters, and the only one who is trying to reach their created place.

The Pilgrim is the only character who only has one inventory choice instead of two. This is so that the pilgrim is both more limited in possessions than the other characters, and to give the sense that the pilgrim is emotionally entirely connected to their singular path.

Choose the sign of your faith. Gell the table why you believe it'll never lead you astray.

- An ancient iron necklace forged by an ancestor, anchoring you to your village and its gods.
- A deck of oracular cards, which has plenty of opinions on what's next in store.
- A brass compass, gifted by the mysterious stranger with one white eye who set you forth on this quest.
- ∴ A single word, whispered in your ear by a *\Phi\liminescent* elk before she fled into the night, and the only tool you have to find your way.
- A beautiful pink orchid, a sign of the rebellion that always blooms.
- A book of poetry, with passages so powerful that their very existence is a miracle.
- The ceremonial language of your distant home, every word a spoken prayer for your culture's survival.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- ∠ How did you save me when my inexperience tripped me up?
- What is it about you that makes me comfortable telling you my doubts?
- What do you know about the place that I seek, that I haven't yet grasped?
- Less Does our faith still fill your heart with hope?

Some things you can always do:

- Recite a small prayer.
- Chatter away.
- Shield yourself from harsh conditions.
- ∠ Place your fate in improbable coincidence, and have it work out.
- ∠ Ask: "Do you think we'll make it?"
- ∠ Say: "Lead the way." They get a token if they do.

During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before:

- Learn that a rumor you've heard about your pilgrimage is false, and replace it with something else from the list.
- Learn that another rumor you've heard about your pilgrimage is false, and replace it with something else from the list.
- Learn something that you once thought was true about your pilgrimage is false, and replace it with something else from the list.
- Realize you've been led astray by something you thought would never let you down.
- Find a way to be something you'd given up on ever being.
- Spend a token to look at a difficult choice, and propose an alternate path.
- You can always find a sign of your faith, even in an unfamiliar place.
- You've given up on your pilgrimage, and you have no choice but to admit that it was never going to be. Choose an unused playbook, and transfer as much as makes sense from this playbook to that one.
- Your pilgrimage has finally concluded. The journey has brought you to the place you've been seeking. Pick up a new playbook and make a new character when everyone else leaves that place.
- The pilgrim's ability to rewrite and warp their entire understanding of their pilgrimage site is one of my favorite parts about their advancement. It becomes true over time that their journey is more about emotional and internal selffulfillment, rather than where they're going. Their two choices at the end of their advancements reflect this duality

while they can reach their location,

are equally weighted in their importance.

they can also

abandon their pilgrimage, and both





world is a poem that can be captured by ink and paper, if only you could find the right words.

You are alive. Your care is eloquent, observant, and occasionally overwrought.

Choose a name and some pronouns.

Choose an animal.

- © Porcupine © Toad
- Rook
 A Lyrical Animal

Choose 2 people assume you are based on your writing and 2 you actually are.

- Romantic
- Obscure
- Strident
- Casual
- Pithy

- Formal
- Pretentious
- A Man
- A Woman

my favorite of the "choose 2 and 2" picklists are the ones that shape the character through a second lens in addition to their self-erception. The Poet is shaped by their writing, and is defined partially though the gap between author and audience.

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The Poet was (unsurprisingly) the last playbook I wrote for Wanderhome, and they're in large part about the selfreflection process that went into creating Wanderhome itself. Their opening description references the Dancer's opening description, as a small nod to how the two playbooks open and close the creative process for

the game.

A lot of the poet emerges from folk historians who have been responsible for preserving a lot of American rural culture. I'm endlessly charmed by the little linguist in a tweed jacket asking old men drinking moonshine on porches how they pronounce random nouns.

It was tricky to frame

the creative variety possible in the Poet

— they might be an

actual poet, but they might also be an

author, musician,

really want to call

them the "Poet", I just simply didn't find

another suiting word.

capture the thematic

project, and how a lot

of the act of creation

is about continuously

complexity that can

get woven into a

complicating the

original proces.

single creative

This picklist tries to

journalist, or scientist. I didn't

Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Delicate Spectacles
- Argyle Sweater Vest
- Cloak Full Of Pockets
- Coarse Button Down
- Practical Plaid Skirt
- Pockets Full Of Burnt Smokes

- Battered Briefcase
- Tweed Jacket With Shoulder Pads
- Fashionable Cap
- Cane With A Comfortable Grip
- Ink-Stained Hands
- A Literary Quote For Every Occasion

You're writing a novel, autobiography, thesis, song, or collection of poems based on your journey. Choose I you're writing about, I that is metaphorically intertwined, and I that unintentionally crept its way into your project.

- Another person's journey, that you follow in the footsteps of.
- Your memories of your parents, scattered and hard to piece together.
- The small and forgotten gods, that you hope someday won't be forgotten.
- The bones of the once-mighty dragons and what has become of them.
- A community you consider yourself a part of, who once could be found everywhere.
- The migratory patterns of the moths and the news they bring with them.
- A fallen star who visits you in your dreams, always one step ahead of you.
- The nameless god-slayer who once wielded the Heavenblade, and the ruin left in their wake.
- The Slobbering God, the great beast whose bones are scattered across the world.
- A place that doesn't exist but you hope someday to spot in the clouds, and the people who claim to have been there.
- The rebellion and what happened to its adherents.
- The trees, bugs, stars, and all the creatures alive around you.
- The seasons and how their changes change you.
- The everyday lives of your fellow travelers.

This is my favorite picklist in the game, probably. I love choosing all the themes of my creative project and how they entangle — it does a really cool job setting context for the ongoing journey.

Choose 1 you read from constantly and 1 you have memorized. Gell the table about them.

- A tiny guidebook full of practical life advice, gifted by your local bookseller when you set foot.
- A cheap paperback you found on the side of the road, whose author you wonder about constantly.
- A fantastical novel, waterlogged and stained from years of rereading, gifted by your father before he left.
- The last text written by your mentor before their death, that reflects on their life.
- A mostly-finished manuscript written by your *passionate* best friend, that you think can revolutionize everything.
- A translation of a book of poems written in a language your ancestors spoke, that you've been teaching yourself.
- Your mother's journal, written in her spidery handwriting and full of pressed flowers.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- ∠ What did your style of storytelling teach me?
- What's your favorite part of my writing?
- Are you okay with the way I write about you?
- ∠ What do you have to keep explaining to me about the world?

The poet is one of the most mature and well-seasoned playbooks in Wanderhome, and I think that especially comes through in how resonant their actions are.

Some things you can always do:

- ∠ Self-deprecate.
- Cite your sources, in hopes that they can help.
- Write down a moment that feels relevant to your project.
- ∠ Provide a new perspective others might not have.
- ∠ Ask: "What used to be here?"
- ∠ Ask: "Can you explain?" They get a token if they sit down and talk you through it.

During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before:

- Choose a new topic from the list and incorporate it into your project.
- Invent a new topic and incorporate it into your project.
- Cut the chaff from your project and remove a topic from it.
- Change your writing style dramatically, to more accurately reflect who you are.
- Get a token whenever you take pride in your work.
- Spend a token to ask: "Would you like to read my project?" They get a token if they sit down and spend some time with it.
- You can always ask: "Is it okay for me to write about this?"
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- Finish your project and go back home. Tell everyone what the dedications page says, pick up a new playbook, and make a new character.

"Tell everyone what the dedications page says" was Luke's idea, and it still rips me apart on the inside when I imagine it in play.

The Ragamuffin is basically a stock Jay Dragon character, like a TTRPG commedia dell'arte presence. The rambunctious and hyperactive young child with a heavy past but a hopeful heart shows up all over my games, and often feels like a calling card. I think I love the archetype so much because they're incredible motivators for events ot occur, where they're precocious enough to ask random strangers invasive personal questions, but also young enough that they need other characters to step in and help them. This Ragamuiffin archetype is also perfect because they are always engaged in transformation, a coming of age ritual that drives their character growth over time. Is there anything more meaningful than watching a child grow up before your eyes?

Tagamuffin

Run! Scream! Play! Steal! And above all, live!

You are alive. Your care is young, exuberant, and naïve.

Choose a name and some pronouns.

Choose an animal.

- Otter Kitten
- Gecko A Cute Animal
- Capuchin A Young Animal

Choose 2 you are and 2 you refuse to be.

- Attentive Smart
- Respectful Scared
- Adorable A Boy
- Quiet A Girl
- Friendly



Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Grass-Stained Jeans
- Bandages
- Stuffed Animal
- Suspenders
- Cap That's Always Worn Backwards
- Awkwardly-Sized Maroon Cloak
- Flowers Forever In Hand

- Ocarina
- Sundress That Whooshes When You Spin
- Pokin' Stick
- Stompin' Boots
- An Overwhelming Love For Life

Choose 2 life lessons you've been taught and 2 you have rejected.

- You can't stop the world from hurting you.
- Kindness is stronger than anything else.
- There will come a time when you must fight back.
- It's better to give a gift than to receive it.
- Your parents made you who you are now.
- The world is bigger than you can wrap your head around.
- Authority figures cannot be trusted.
- All stories are lies.
- Your heroes will always let you down.
- Everything must someday die.
- Even this will end.

The pokin' stick is a crowd favorite (I rarely see a Ragamuffin who doesn't pick it) and the spinny sundress is another small moment of trans euphoria, as "making dresses go whoosh" is both a popular meme among transfeminine communities but also a popular activity for trans girls to do when they first try on a dress. It's another nod to gender without explicitly framing that gender in transness.

Wanderhome itself.

thesis for

This is one of the

most personally

brutal picklists in

agency to shape

of the world, but

Wanderhome. The

Ragamuffin has the

their understanding

they've been taught

some pretty harsh lessons as they've

grown up, and it's

painful to imagine how they discovered

that. These lessons

Wanderhome itself, pushing and pulling on each other to create some of the ideological tensions that underpin the entire game. In a lot of ways, the Ragamuiffin is the

also reflect the existential conflicts of

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This big long list is longer than most inventory picklists as a way to help the Ragamuffin really self-identify through a variety of potential lore connections. The Ragamuffin has this sense of heroism to them, that in another story they'd be a young dragonslayer, but here they're just a kid.

"How do you feel about the fact that I've decided you're my new parent" is one of my favorite leading questions, because it's one of the most agencyremoving questions of the game while still preserving agency. By focusing on the other person's feelings it keeps the question from being overwhelming, but lets the ragamuffin assert a fun found family dynamic.

Choose I you carry with you openly and I you carry with you secretly. Gell the table about them.

- \triangle A ‡*nervous* young paradise mantis, the last of its kind.
- A necklace with a painting of your birth family in it.
- A pan-flute that reveals your heritage from a forgotten and hidden community.
- An encoded scroll that you can't read, pressed into your hands by one of the last heroes of the rebellion.
- Nak, a small and *₱luminescent* god that once dwelled in the center of the holiest shrine in all of the Hæth.
- The capacity to see brief snippets of the future, which always revolve around a mysterious stranger with one white eye.
- Dreams about a vast and bloody war, always centered around a powerful hero.
- The Ring of 99 Vengeful Daemons, the greatest treasure of the King of the Floating Mountain.
- The Heavenblade, lost after slaying the Slobbering God, that you would never use to hurt another soul.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- ∠ How do you feel about the fact that I've decided you're my new parent?
- What went wrong the last time I dragged you along on a misadventure?
- What endearing nickname have you given me?
- What do I do that really, truly, next-level gets on your nerves?

In many fantasy stories it can feel somewhat disorienting to have a young child wandering around, as it puts them in intense danger. This threat of true harm often forces children out of stories, or puts them in contexts where they get deeply traumatized. It's nice how Wanderhome gets to have space for all these kids wandering around, as it allows people to discuss the hardship and complexity around being a homeless child or teenager without that complexity existing in a context of fantastical violence or death. Wanderhome removes violence from its gamespace to make room for more subtle, more quiet experiences, that often get drowned out by the din of battle.

Some things you can always do:

- ✓ Get distracted.
- Get really invested in a new interest.
- Blurt out a secret.
- Somehow manage to squeeze yourself out of trouble.
- ∠ Ask: "Do you wanna hang out with me?" They get a token if they say yes.
- ∠ Ask: "Do you wanna see something really cool?" They get a token if they say yes.

During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before:

- Learn a new lesson, or reject a lesson you've previously learned.
- Learn another new lesson, or reject a lesson you've previously learned.
- Decide you're something no one thought you were.
- Refuse to be something you once considered yourself to be.
- Get a token whenever you learn something new.
- Spend a token to ask: "Why can't things be different?"
- You can always ask: "How did you do that?"
- You can always provide a new perspective.
- You have grown up, and come into your own. Choose an unused playbook, and transfer as much as makes sense from this playbook to that one.



hepherd

Tierds of chubby bumblebees can be found across the hæth, and tending to those flocks is simple, honest work.

You are alive. Your care is measureless, watchful, and gentle.

Choose a name and some pronouns.

Choose an animal.

- Ram
- Hawk
- Turtle
- A Guiding Animal
- Sheepdog
- A Peaceful Animal

Choose 2 you still are these days and 2 you're just not anymore.

- Hurried
- Loud

- Brave
- Fatherly
- Tough

- Maternal
- jay really exhausted all possibilities for these dimorphic gender

Reliable

Young

Shepherds are an important part of nomadic life in European agrarian societies, and I've always loved the romanticized idea of the shepherd with the flock out in the grassland. I think the relationship between bugs and animal-folk in Wanderhome is important as a way to underscore the cycles of relation that are present in most societies that we become alienated from, that sheepherding is a practice that brings us closer

both to the "sheep" we take care of and

the land we navigate

across.

Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Plaid Button-Down
- Shepherd's Crook
- Bug-Calling Whistle
- Woolen Cloak
- Puffy Jacket
- Wheelchair

- Old-Fashioned Pipe
- Hiking Boots
- Smock Frock
- Patchwork Overalls
- Practical And Bunched-Up Dress
- A Superstitious Turn Of Phrase

You have a herd of bumbles. Choose up to 5 bugs you can always pick out from the crowd.

- The youngest bumble, who is constantly underfoot. They are *cheerful* and/or *raucous*.
- ∴ The oldest bumble, gray and slow. They are wise and/or \(\Psi\) venerable.
- The cutest bumble, who loves head-pats. They are friendly and/or cunning.
- The most beautiful bumble, who always wants attention. They are *dramatic* and/or *Pglamorous*.
- The luckiest bumble, who keeps bumbling out of trouble. They are *adventurous* and/or *miraculous*.
- The bumble born with two heads under the full moon. They are *imaginative* and/or *witchy*.
- The most anxious bumble, who always needs reassurance. They are ‡lost and/or ‡nervous.
- The biggest bumble, who you like to ride around on. They are *sturdy* and/or *mighty*.
- The runt, a bumble with a brutal injury. They are \neq cautious and/or \neq hurt.
- The mother, who will die for the newborn bumble. They are *resolute* and/or *caring*.
- The head of the herd, who always leads the charge. They are *ambitious* and/or *confident*.
- The bumble who is remarkable in no particular way, but they're still your favorite. They are *chill* and/or *quiet*.

The two-headed bumble is a reference to the poem Two-Headed Calf by Laura Gilpin.

Choose 1 that stays by your side and 1 that you need to let go of. Gell the table about them.

- An almanac given by your *cheerful* brother, which grows increasingly inaccurate.
- A tall crook that reminds you of your mother.
- The old horn that once called the bumbles, which now needs repairs.
- A bandana that displays your high rank within the Shepherd's Guild.
- A handkerchief given by your first kiss, when you were both children.
- A dried-out orchid pressed into your journal, your last memory of the rebellion.
- Your *adventurous* child, who isn't your wee bab any longer.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- What did you do that made me trust you with my herd?
- ∠ How did I help bring you back when you felt lost?
- ∠ Do you think of yourself as part of my family?
- ∠ Why should I trust you less than I do?

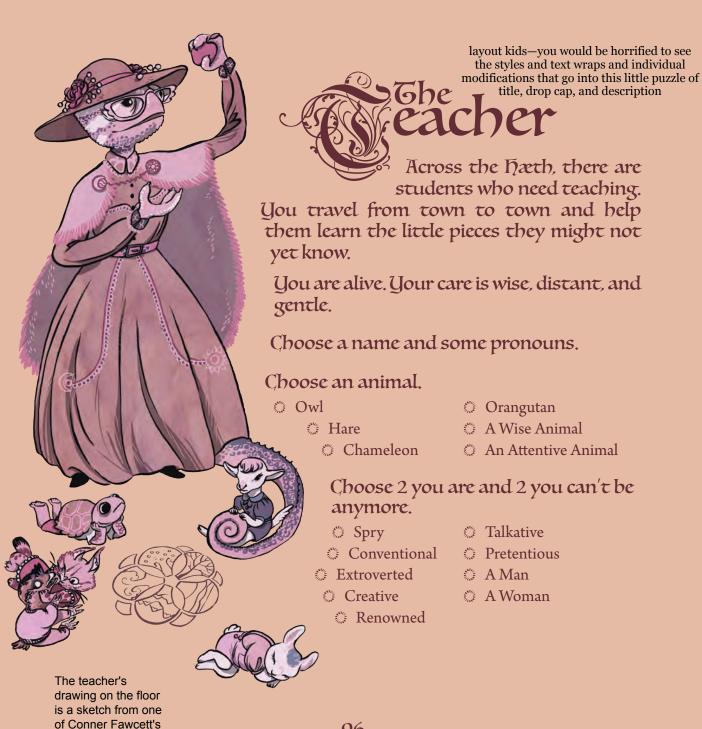
The Shepherd was not originally concieved of as a parental figure, but over time their relationship to their family and children became more important. I think that's in large part inspired by Terry Pratchett — the Chalk of Tiffany Atching and the world of the Witches feels very connected to this mythical shepherd that exists in my mind, and as they developed I got more and more interested in a character who carries age and history with them. The Shepherd's Guild is another one of those small moments, that introduces an odd new aspect of the world that's only barely examined later in Old Api's Fai, which was invented specifically because I love this old shepherd and wanted them to have a space to integrate into the world.

Some things you can always do:

- ∠ Pat a bumble on its head.
- Stare off into the distance.
- Make an offhand observation that turns out to be correct.
- Rest your back against something and take a moment to breathe.
- ∠ Say: "They're friendly, don't fret."
- ∠ Ask: "Can I teach you something someone once taught me?" They get a token if they say yes, and learn.

During each seasonal holiday, choose I you haven't chosen before:

- Find a bumble you thought you had lost.
- Grow attached to a new baby bumble, name it, and give it a personality.
- Grow attached to another new baby bumble, name it, and give it a personality.
- Recapture the spark of something you used to be.
- Get a token whenever you walk away from everyone else to spend some time alone with your herd.
- Spend a token to procure or provide honey, wool, pollen, or other gifts from your herd.
- You always know where every bumble in your herd is.
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- It's time for your herd to return to more familiar fields, and for you to head your separate way. Decide which bumble stays with the group, pick up a new playbook and make a new character.



early illustrations of the Arc of the Year!

Choose 3-4 to describe your look. Well-Kept Unobtrusive Cloak Satchel Of Books Dusty Blazer Journal Full Of Notes Oversized Glasses Comfortable Hat Conservative Dress Dangling Earrings Tie With A Splash Of Color Time-Worn Cane A Performatively Bright Smile Service Ant Wherever you go, there are children who need education. Choose 3 subjects you teach and I you wish you could teach. Realistic still-life paintings, taught through observation. Abstract impressionist paintings, taught through joy and expressiveness. Writing epic sagas, taught through studying the classic texts. Writing emotional lyrics, taught through poetic expression. The formal language of the noble courts, taught through memorization of tables. A traditional, endangered language, taught through conversation. Broader perspectives on history, taught from controversial books. Entomology, taught through listening to nature. Astrology, taught through late night wandering. Herbology, taught through attentive guidance. Songs and various instruments, taught through practice, practice! Philosophy, taught through Socratic seminars. Household magic, taught through fun and play.

Radical and rebellious politics, taught secretly.

Choose 1 you carry with you and 1 you're terrified of misplacing. Gell the table about them.

- A well-creased letter from your love back home.
- A bunch of drawings from the many students you've taught.
- An expensive pen, gifted by an *ambitious* former student, now an academic.
- A massive warm scarf, given by a wise colleague you miss terribly.
- A diploma from the *university* you left.
- Snacks for your small and *inquisitive* buggy friend, who helps out with lessons.
- A promise made to a daemon with a catfish head that you try to not think about.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- What did I teach you when you were younger?
- What have you shown me about the world?
- ∠ How do you reassure me when I'm at my wit's end?
- What do you know that I can't hope to understand?

The teacher is a slightly odd playbook, as Kazumi put it "the act of wandering makes being a teacher somewhat of an oxymoron" — after all, how can you teach students you don't exist in community with? The teacher is based, oddly enough, on the life of Ichabod Crane. Ichabod was a traveling teacher as well, and when he would arrive somewhere new he would teach students geometry in exchange for food and lodging from their parents. It feels very integrated into my imagination of how teachers can be, but I think teachers are another are a)like peddlers) where our imagination is limited by capitalism. It's hard to conceptualize what a teacher can be like outside the oppressive structure of the public school system in America. II don't think the teacher playbook gives that many tools for this understanding, but I think there's a lot of potential if they get the space to explore these themes of non-modern education styles.

Some things you can always do:

- Sit down, surrounded by others.
- Fumble for your supplies.
- Clear your throat and get everyone's attention.
- ∠ Tell the table about something related to a subject you teach.
- ∠ Ask: "Can you show me?"
- Ask: "What can we learn from this?" They get a token if they reflect on what's around them.

During each seasonal holiday, choose I you haven't chosen before:

- Learn a new teaching subject from your list.
- Learn another new teaching subject from your list.
- Invent a new teaching subject, learn it, and add it to your list.
- Become something you previously said you were not.
- Get a token whenever you listen when you want to talk.
- Spend a token to take a step back and have your students handle something.
- You can always remember someone's name.
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- A community has invited you to stay with them permanently, and you accept. Pick up a new playbook and make a new character.

The Vagabond is one of the heavier playbooks in the game, and more directly addresses how the harm the world is experiencing isn't over yet. If you're going to discuss stories about healing, it's in need of healing.

important to include characters who are

The Vagabond is a playbook that thematically deals with a lot of quilt and shame. The way they staunchly insist and proudly call themselves these somewhat insulting phrases (or at least, phrases with the potential to be insulting) help position the vagabond's guilt.

abond

The world's taken everything from you, beat down on your shoulders, and given you an aching heart. Some people think you're a criminal, or a monster. You know what you are.

You are alive. Your care is invisible, cautious, and unimaginably deep.

Choose a name and some pronouns.

Choose an animal.

Possum

A Misunderstood

Rat

Animal

Rattlesnake

A Sneaky Animal

Raven

Choose 2 you call yourself and 2 you staunchly insist you're not.

📜 Liar

* Traitor

Cheat

Hero

Thief

** Lady

Monster

Flirt

Gentleman



Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Black Cloak
- Terrifying Mask
- Gauze-Wrapped Splint
- Ostentatious Belt
- Scarf Big Enough To Hide In
- Deck Of Playing Cards

- Stylish And Wide-Brimmed Hat
- Fingerless Gloves
- Hood That Covers Your Eyes
- Pack Of Smokes
- Wanted Posters Of Your Own Face
- A Quick Word And A Sharp Jab

Choose 2 crimes you've been falsely accused of and 2 you're actually guilty of.

Coming up with this list of crimes was a lot of fun, and it gives the space for the Vagabond to be anytthing from a rebel deserter, to a dragonslaying rogue, to a homewrecking

gambler.

- Poaching
- Trespassing
- Carousing
- Grand Larceny
- Criminal Mischief
- Cheating At Cards
- Libel And Slander
- Lying Under Oath
- Wrecking Marriages
- Draft-Dodging
- Stealing Supplies
- Stealing Livestock
- Stealing Hearts

- Betraying Traditions
- Betraying Your Kingdom
- Betraying The Cause
- Betraying Your Family
- Betraying Your Partner In Crime
- High Treason
- Killing Your Commanding Officer
- Killing A Prison Warden
- Killing Your King
- Killing A God
- Slaying A Dragon
- Falling In Love With The Wrong Person At The Wrong Time

The framing of guilt, crime and prisons in this section is interesting considering Wanderhome's intentional absence of carceral structures otherwise, but it allows players to delve into discussions of transformative justice if they want to bring that to their table. If the vagabond is truly guilty of some of the more heinous crimes on this list, and yet we know they're fundamentally good, perhaps that throws our entire conception of guilt and carceral justice out the window.

Choose 1 you carry with you and 1 that's been stolen from you. Gell the table about them.

- A beautiful necklace you acquired from an *ambitious* noble.
- ⚠ A book of magic spells you picked up from a *\psi witchy* crone that you can't read.
- Your shadow, which moves of its own volition.
- A different name that your partner in crime gave you.
- A tattered blanket, the last thing you have as memory of your parents.
- A pink orchid, the symbol of your time with the rebellion.
- A secret you're not supposed to have about the King of the Floating Mountain.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- What do I still have to do to earn your trust?
- ∠ How did we get off on the wrong foot?
- ∠ Why do I call you my only friend?
- ∠ How have you helped me, when no one else would?

This was the origin of the pink orchid rebellion. The rebellion comes from my childhood love of the Italian partisans, and the motif of flowers as part of Bella Ciao! I even suggested an image of a Partisan for Letty to use as a reference for the Rebel stretch goal playbook.

These are some of my favorite and the best-designed game actions in Wanderhome. They create a really tidy mechanical loop (Lie -> Steal -> Ask For Trust), but they also allow the Vagabond to freely both introduce and resolve conflict in a session. The limitation allows the Vagabond to have a map to the lost island, but only if they're not supposed to have it - which gets them into more hot water than when they

started.

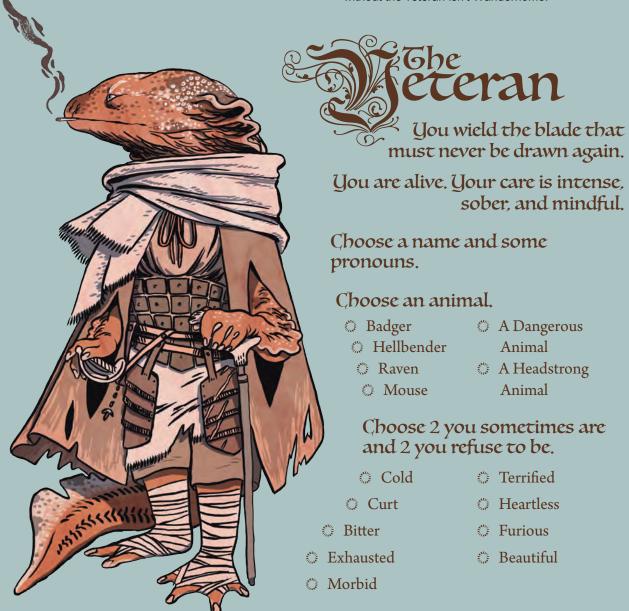
Some things you can always do:

- ∠ Be somewhere you're not supposed to be.
- ∠ Have something you're not supposed to have.
- Mutter something you're not supposed to say.
- Lie.
- ∠ Say: "I have a bad feeling about this."
- ∠ Ask: "Do you trust me?" They get a token if they say yes.

During each seasonal holiday, choose 1 you haven't chosen before:

- Become something everyone thought you weren't.
- Become something else everyone thought you weren't.
- Reject something everyone else called you.
- Reject something everyone else called you.
- Get a token whenever you contend with something or someone from your past.
- Spend a token to prove you're not lying about something.
- You can always tell the truth.
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- You find a place that doesn't care about your past, and you retire there to live a peaceful life. Pick up a new playbook and make a new character.

The veteran is probably the Wanderhome playbook that the most people have discussed, cumulatively. It's a dark omen at the back of a book about pastel animal people, and I think if you weren't noticing the thematic heaviness throughout the book, the Veteran can feel like a tonal shift. The truth is that the Veteran was the third playbook I wrote, and they are arguably one of the foundational pillars of Wanderhome. Wanderhome without the veteran isn't Wanderhome.



The Veteran is based on my experiences recovering from PTSD and C-PTSD, along with a number of conversation I've had with friends about transformative justice and addiction. The veteran's care is described as sober and mindful as intentional references to DBT advice and the AA concept of Emotional Sobriety.

I've gotten a bit of grief from former members of the armed serivce over my decision to make the Veteran be a playbook fundamentally about regret around violence. I think one should always be regretful for the violence they've committed or been complicit in, and that the Veteran is a reflection of a part of myself, just like every other playbook. If you want to play a former member of the armed forces who isn't a trauma metaphor, you can grab literally any playbook and give them the pink orchid.

Choose 3-4 to describe your look.

- Billowing Cloak
- Hidden Armor
- Many Scars
- Prosthetic Limb
- Lyre Missing A String
- Torn Standard

The purpose of this

relationship with the

articulate the desire

to unsheathe it. The

picklist is to help

understand the

sword, to help

("Starving") is a

personality trait,

dangerous and

destructive, but

sentient. It's a

which implies that

the Veteran's sword

whispering presence

on the back of their mind, always one step away from being reached for.

final option

is not only

constantly

Veteran's

- Pack Of Smokes
- Broken Tooth
- Wide-Brimmed Hat
- Blood Soaked Handkerchief
- Walking Stick
- A Nervous Tic

You have a sword, sheathed at your hip. You can unsheathe it whenever you want. You must never unsheathe it. Choose 2 to describe your sword.

- Sharper than anything else in the world.
- Engraved with a sacred name.
- Gifted by a proud parent.
- Looks unremarkable, unless you know what to look for.
- Blessed by a powerful god.
- Forged from the heart of the world.
- Passed down among generations of monarchs.
- Stolen from a massive hoard.
- Once proof of your undying love for another.
- #Starving.

The sword doesn't have a clear allegorical overlap to anything in the real world, but the idea of it is a tool of violence that you cannot let go of, which is forever on the back of your mind. Unsheathing your sword becomes tied to intrusive thoughts and emotional flashbacks.

The veteran doesn't start with any inventory choices (those are mainly covered in their Look) but they do have these lessons, which always end in the ritual phrase "and this is why you must never unsheathe your blade". This entire section is a lesson and reflection on willpower, and provide a sense of the veteran's previous rock bottom. The veteran has seen the worst they can possibly reach, and they've managed to pull their way out from there, with others help.

Choose 1 lesson you've learned and 2 you've since forgotten. Gell the table about them.

- An ‡*empty* soldier taught you that there's no better feeling than your sword cutting skin, and this is why you must never unsheathe your blade.
- A ‡ grieving mentor taught you that you will never choose where your sword lands, for from the moment you draw it it controls you, and this is why you must never unsheathe your blade.
- A ‡*royal* monarch taught you violence is just a way to maintain control, and this is why you must never unsheathe your blade.
- A sobbing and ‡*hurt* young child taught you that a single slice kills not only the enemy, but everyone who loved the enemy as well, and this is why you must never unsheathe your blade.
- A *friendly* old innkeep taught you that a well-made bed can save more lives than an army of warriors, and this is why you must never unsheathe your blade.
- Your once-lover recoiled from you when they saw the blood on your hands, and this is why you must never unsheathe your blade.
- You saw, in the eyes of someone you thought was $\pm heroic$, the fate that awaits everyone who only knows violence, and this is why you must never unsheathe your blade.

Ask 1 to the left and 1 to the right.

- ∠ How do you help me stay in control?
- When did you realize that I'm a good person?
- What do I still need to learn from you?
- What craft have you been teaching me?

The veteran has a small subtheme based around crafting that I really enjoy. I like to imagine the intense brooding salamander from the first image carving a little wood statue.

The veteran is an important thematic opportunity to explore Wanderhome's relationship with heroism. The role the Veteran played in the war before is never discussed — they might have been a hero or a monster, a dragonslayer or a liberator. All past morality is flattened out in the context of their own violence. It's possible the violence the veteran committed was a necessary evil to make the Haeth what it is today. the horror of that violence is completely independent from the emotional morality of that violence. Good people can still have blood on their hands, and you still have to recover from what that blood did to you.

I think the Veteran's other moves are really exciting, too. Drumming against the pommel of your blade serves as a constant reminder of your power, while leaping to your feet is most often used in the context of intense action. The veteran feels almost ill-suited for the world they're in, and they're trying to learn how to anchor themself.

"the veteran's seventh move" is a common moment of game design excitement among people who read Wanderhome. The mechanical idea is that in a game with so few rules and so few opportunities to access mechanics, the game gives you a huge flashing red button and tells you not to press it. Thematically, this game mechanic becomes reminiscent of the veteran's own intrusive thoughts, their understanding that it takes a lifetime of concentration not to relapse, and the way in which the veteran understands the true consequences of violence better than any other character. Even the vagabond, who often overlaps thematically with the veteran, is more focused on their own self-guilt, rather than a process of mindful restraint.

Some things you can always do:

- Repeat a calming phrase.
- Spend time practicing a craft you're not very good at.
- Drum against the pommel of your blade.
- Leap to your feet.
- ∠ Say: "I don't do that anymore."
- ∠ Ask: "What are you hiding?"

During each seasonal holiday, choose I you haven't chosen before:

- Remember a lesson you had forgotten, and reach out to the person who taught it.
- Remember another lesson you had forgotten, and reach out to the person who taught it.
- Realize you've stopped being something you used to sometimes be.
- Realize it's okay to sometimes be something you were scared of being.
- Get a token whenever you accept that you don't have power in this situation.
- Spend a token to teach someone a craft you've learned.
- You can always reflect on and reveal what you're feeling.
- Take an unused playbook and add as much as you want from that playbook to yours.
- Throw away your sword and settle down somewhere where you can live a peaceful life. Pick up a new playbook and make a new character.







above: truly the "bilbo's birthday" of the book (the most cozy fantasy thing i can imagine.) jo and lauren had wanted to collaborate forever and we'd loved their work for the book up to this point so basically just let them go nuts.



Traits are short descriptions of the various other characters we might encounter in the Hæth. Most of them describe personality traits, while some of them (marked with a "\perp") indicate magical or supernatural abilities. Others (marked with a "\perp") indicate the result of trauma and pain.

Traits are broken into 7 categories. You can use the first six as a table to roll randomly on, or you can pick whichever ones feel correct.

more on custom text colors: the decorative illustration on these pages is transparent, probably at a 60-80% multiply? and the text color (for the entire following section) is based on napkin math to match. they're not exact but it works.

1 Autistic Turits				
1. Artistic Traits	2 I	5 JAC 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1		
1. Crafty, p. 114	3. Imaginative, p. 114	5. \PGlamorous, p. 115		
2. Dramatic, p. 114	4. Poetic, p. 115	6. <i>₹Miraculous, p. 115</i>		
2. Grounded Traits				
1. Honest, p. 116	3. Watchful, p. 116	5. <i>∜Intertwined, p. 117</i>		
2. Quiet, p. 116	4. Wise, p. 117	6. <i>₹Invisible, p.</i> 117		
3. Intellectual Traits				
1. Ambitious, p. 118	3. Inquisitive, p. 118	5. <i>∜Oracular, p.</i> 119		
2. Cunning, p. 118	4. Learned, p. 119	6. <i>₹Witchy, p.</i> 119		
4. Personal Traits				
1. Cheerful, p. 120	3. Confident, p. 120	5. <i>\Pullet Luminescent</i> , p. 121		
2. Chill, p. 120	4. Pensive, p. 121	6. <i>₹Venerable, p. 121</i>		
5. Physical Traits				
1. Adventurous, p. 122	3. Resolute, p. 122	5. <i>₹Feral, p.</i> 123		
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6. Social Traits				
1. Caring, p. 124	3. Proper, p. 124	5. <i>₹Empathetic, p.</i> 125		
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7. Traumatized Traits				
1. <i>‡Cautious, p.128</i>	5. ‡Grieving, p.129	9. <i>\$Starving</i> , p.130		
2. <i>‡Empty, p.</i> 128	6. ‡Hurt, p.129	10. <i>‡Heroic, p.131</i>		
3. <i>‡Frantic</i> , p.128	7. ‡Lost, p.130	11. ‡Royal, p.131		
4. <i>‡Furious, p.129</i>	8. <i>‡Nervous, p.130</i>	12. <i>‡Dead, p.131</i>		

I accidentally double-named "Chill" the trait and "Chill" the season, so we last-minute changed it to Relaxed in the print version. The PDF version didn't get this fix. No one has ever seemed to notice this.



Crafty

A *crafty* kith is very skilled at putting all the pieces together in an unconventional way. They are often tinkers, mongers, and magicians, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Invent something totally new.
- Propose an alternate approach.
- Reveal that a plan they've had in motion has paid off.

Dramatic

A *dramatic* kith loves to show off to impress and please others. They are often singers, harkers, and socialites, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Put on a big show, with heightened emotions and histrionics.
- Distract someone with a talented display.
- Play up your emotions to absurd levels.

Imaginative

An *imaginative* kith's head is always up in the clouds. They are often artists, glaziers, and dreamers, among others.

- Explain a way things could be better.
- Forget about something really important.
- Describe an everyday object in a way no one's ever thought about it before.

Poetic

A *poetic* kith has a deep love for wordplay and lyricism. They are often authors, rimesters, and astrologers, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Wax metaphorical.
- Get caught up in the big picture.
- Give advice on what someone else should say.

4 Glamorous

A *glamorous* kith has a beguiling and enchanting appearance that is both beautiful and impossible. They are often kaleidoscopic insects, flirtatious daemons, and especially skilled makeup artists, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Dazzle and stun everyone who beholds you.
- Reveal the appearance you hide underneath.
- Tell someone to look at you. If they want to look away, they're going to need to spend a token.

Miraculous

A *miraculous* kith can do things no one else can do. They are often great and mighty gods, powerful wizards, and wish-granting fish, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Make possible the impossible.
- Take someone's hand and fly with them.
- Offer to grant someone's wish, in a way that won't work out how they want. If they want to reject your offer, they're going to need to spend a token.

The traits are illustrated with bugs doing regular bug tasks throughout the Haeth, both to help contextualize various species of bugs in Wanderhome that didn't necessarily get a shout out in a playbook, and also to remind players that traits go to non-animal kith as well.

I adore these "lure" actions at the end of each magical trait. I think it's a lot of fun to give characters these magical abilities that require a bit more work than normal to circumvent, it helps their magic feel more present. Tying it to consent while locking it behind an easy-to-acquire resource helps the magic feel arresting and powerful without violating agency.



Honest

An *honest* kith always says what's on their mind. They are often bayweavers, bookbinders, and clerks, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Lay out the facts, as you see it.
- Point out the truth everyone else has been ignoring.
- ** Ask: "Do you want my opinion?"

Quiet

A *quiet* kith doesn't have much to say. They are often colporteurs, glassblowers, and wall-flowers, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Tap on someone's shoulder.
- Stare at someone until they get the point.
- Non-verbally ask: "Are you okay?"

Watchful

A watchful kith keeps a close eye on the world around them. They are often guards, astronomers, and scribes, among others.

- Point out something people missed.
- Guard the exits.
- ** Ask: "What's that you're hiding?"

Wise

A *wise* kith has learned a lot from listening and moving through the world. They are often monks, herbalists, and janitors, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Reflect on what someone else has said.
- Propose a path quite unlike those that others have suggested.
- Ask: "What are your feelings on the matter?"

№ Intertwined

An *intertwined* kith is rooted in the world around them, and is just as much a part of the trees and the sky as they are themself. They are often contemplative shamans, gods of hidden places, and anyone who listens to the land, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- \$\iii \text{Show how two things are connected in an unexpected way.}
- Take your time and move very carefully.
- Help someone ask the world around them for guidance. If they want to know the answer, they're going to need to spend a token.

An *invisible* kith cannot be seen. They are often ghostly spirits, terrified gods, and tiny scuttling creatures, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Have been somewhere the whole time.
- Move right past people who should've spotted you.
- Vanish. If someone wants to find you again, they're going to need to spend a token.



This rider is a leftover concept for a playbook that I never ended up writing, but I've seen a few fan takes on it that I've really enjoyed.



Ambitious

An *ambitious* kith has goals and aspirations beyond where they are in life. They are often scribblers, scullions, and apprentices, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Take a calculated risk.
- Explain how you're the only person who can handle this.
- Ask: "How would you make things better?"

Cunning

A *cunning* kith is skilled at turning events and situations in their favor. They are often guttersnipes, wainwrights, and con artists, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Get somewhere you're not supposed to be.
- Tell a compelling lie.
- Ask: "What's your real goal here?"

Inquisitive

An *inquisitive* kith grabs hold of all the information that they can. They are often journalists, alchemists, and enumerators, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Focus on an irrelevant detail.
- Hold something up to the light.
- Ask: "What's this?"

I decided to include a list of jobs for each kith trait as a way to help inspire characters but without making essentialist statements about animals. Most of these jobs are sensible, but some of them I included just because I liked the word. I cannot explain why wainwrights are especially cunning.

modeled on cats in medieval monasteries, who would leave ink prints all over books while scribes were trying to work.

This book mantis is

Learned

A *learned* kith has spent plenty of time with texts and traditional learning. They are often professors, librarians, and apothecaries, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Reference a text no one else here has read.
- Know something useful that applies to the situation.
- ** Ask: "Do you want my advice?"

4 Oracular

An *oracular* kith can see the future, for better or for worse. They are often venerated sages, enigmatic gods, and star-gazers, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Make a vague and unclear reference to something that hasn't happened yet.
- Say: "I told you so."
- Tell someone the bad news about what their future holds. If they want to defy you, they'll need to spend a token.

A *witchy* kith is skilled at quiet and tricksy magics. They are often healers, court magicians, and kind old ladies that live in the swamp, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Cackle.
- Mix assorted components to create something new.
- Point out a personality flaw someone hasn't been dealing with. If you're right, put a curse on them. If they want to get rid of the curse, they're going to need to address their flaw.

Witchy is my favorite trait. Left to my own devices I will always give a character the Witchy trait.



Cheerful

A cheerful kith is happy and positive. They are often bakers, friars, and cooks, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do:

- Look on the bright side.
- Whistle a chipper tune.
- Gallivant into an awkward situation.

Chill

A *chill* kith is relaxed and perpetually calm. They are often fishers, brewsters, and dilly-dalliers, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Go with the flow.
- Remind everyone to take a step back.
- Ask: "Do you wanna talk about it?"

Confident

A *confident* kith knows exactly who they are and who they want to be. They are often blacksmiths, plumbers, and drovers, among others.

- Jump headfirst into action.
- Charge into a situation without understanding the risks.
- \$\text{\$\text{Say}: "I've got it covered."}\$

This is a service caterpillar helping a blind character navigate. I love this for many reasons, including that the caterpillar itself doesn't have any eyes, which is a fantastical example of how accessibility tools aren't actually about replicating abled tools.

Pensive

A *pensive* kith has a lot of heavy things on their mind. They are often printers, vintners, and bellringers, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Rain on someone's parade.
- Stare off into the distance mournfully.
- Ask: "What else can we do?"

4 Luminescent

A *luminescent* kith is full of light that casts a glow across the world. They are often motes of light, fallen stars, and fireflies, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Shed light on the shadows of the world.
- Lead the way.
- Non-verbally ask: "What is true about you that you keep from everyone?" If they want to withhold an answer from you, they're going to need to spend a token.

A *venerable* kith is as old as the hills and the earth. They are often mountain gods, isopods from an ancient time, and beings deep in the old dark, among others.

- Offer something that hasn't been seen in a very long time.
- Show what things were like in more grim times.
- Tell someone how they will repeat the mistakes of the past. If they want to prove you wrong, they're going to need to spend a token.



Adventurous

An *adventurous* kith always wants to be getting tangled up in something new. They are often aeronauts, sailors, and itinerants, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Declare where you're going next.
- Charge headfirst into trouble.
- Have circumstances improbably work out for you.

Passionate

A *passionate* kith is full of intense and explosive emotions. They are often mail-carriers, writers, and flâuners, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Explain why this matters to you.
- Say exactly what's on your mind right now.
- Lose your temper and damage something important.

Resolute

A *resolute* kith cannot be swayed from their current path, no matter what. They are often architects, caulkers, and arkwrights, among others.

- Keep at something that others would give up at.
- Reject what's right in front of your eyes.
- Refuse to yield under pressure.

Sturdy

A *sturdy* kith can be depended on when times are tough. They are often carpenters, spinsters, and dockhands, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Support something in danger of collapse.
- Push something concerning aside.
- Exert yourself to protect someone else.

A *feral* kith rejects traditional society and embraces monstrosity. They are often fearsome insects, hungry gods, and kids raised by the wilderness itself, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Call out to the wild, and hear it respond.
- Ask: "What's stopping you?"
- Show all your teeth and bite. If someone doesn't want to get bit, they're going to need to spend a token.

Mighty

A *mighty* kith has a strength that is beyond normal capacity. They are often great warriors, herculean gods, and beasts of forgotten legend, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Take on a heavy burden.
- Move the unmovable.
- Anchor something in the ground. If someone wants to move it even the slightest bit, they're going to need to spend a token.

I know a few people have felt puzzled by the inclusion of biting on the feral trait, since that seems to violate the no violence rule. My personal feeling is that clearly you did something that warranted a bitting, if you got bit. We can also imagine that there's a distinction between no-lethal or even non-hateful forms of violence, like sports, ritualized sword-fighting, or a 🐠 feral creature biting you, and the violence that Wanderhome is concerned with. None of that was

my intent, but it's a

valid read of the

text.





Caring

A *caring* kith is willing to die to keep someone else safe. They are often doctors, farmers, and coroners, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Protect someone else from the world.
- Inconvenience yourself to help someone else.
- Ask: "What do you need right now?"

Friendly

A *friendly* kith gets along well with folk from all over. They are often innkeeps, barbers, and bards, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Start up a conversation with someone else.
- Introduce someone to an old friend of yours.
- Get really attached to an inanimate object.

Proper

A *proper* kith sticks with formality and tradition. They are often butlers, grocers, and chamberlains, among others.

- Explain how things have been handled in the past.
- Judge something for its inappropriateness.
- Struggle to get something new.

Raucous

A *raucous* kith is always looking for a good time. They are often revelers, jesters, and roustabouts, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Find the fun in a dull task.
- Get lost in the excitement.
- Know exactly where a better party is.



Empathetic

An *empathetic* kith can connect with and understand things no one else can. They are often gentle teachers, affectionate spirits, and anyone who has a knack for getting it, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Communicate with something that can't normally talk.
- Express a concept in a way everyone understands.
- Non-verbally ask: "What are you feeling?" If they don't want to answer you truthfully, they're going to need to spend a token.

↑ Many-Faced

A *many-faced* kith is a shapeshifter, who can adopt other forms. They are often trickster gods, sneaky thieves with a little bit of magic, and skilled mimics, among others.

- Change dramatically, and become something new.
- Reveal another kith to have been them this whole time.
- Look exactly like another character. If someone wants to spot the difference, they're going to need to spend a token.





While theoretically the purpose of marking traumatized traits is to help people decide whether they want to include them in their game (another safety tool) it serves a secondary purpose, which as Emily Zhu Bo Ging put it in a zine, they become scars that criss-cross the entire text. Traumatized traits are a constant reminder that there is a pain in this world, and your decision to avoid it for your game is a choice — not a reflection of how the world is.

‡ Cautious

A *cautious* kith spent the last of their trust a long time ago. They are often exhausted widows, cold-hearted farmers, and those who have seen first-hand the harshness of the world, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Point out a danger, real or imagined.
- Refuse to open up to someone else.
- Step out of your comfort zone, even slightly.

The third action of any traumatized trait is always a rejection of the thesis of the trait, a reminder that traumatized characters exist in a state of change.

‡ Empty

An *empty* kith feels like there's just not much left to them anymore. They are often war-blast-ed survivors, haunted veterans, and those hollowed out by pain, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Sigh and gaze blankly.
- Ask: "Does it matter?"
- Display an emotion you thought you couldn't anymore.

‡ Frantic

A *frantic* kith is struggling to get everything done. They are often overburdened caretakers, manic intellectuals, and those desperate to please, among others.

- Agree to something dangerous or risky.
- Try to say too many things all at once.
- Push against your instincts and take a break.

‡ Furious

A *furious* kith cannot hold back their rage. They are often vengeful mothers, soldiers with fuming eyes, and those forged into a weapon by the pain in their heart, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Lash out without meaning to.
- Bottle everything up and seethe.
- Express your rage in a constructive manner.

‡ Grieving

A *grieving* kith freshly mourns the loss of their love. They are often heartbroken parents, terrified exiles, and those promised greatness, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Overflow with emotion.
- Hold tight to comfort and refuse to let go.
- Ask: "Are you in a place to listen right now?"

‡ ħurt

A *hurt* kith nurses wounds that will never fully heal. They are often old heroes, aching patients, and those marked by pain, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Flinch at someone else's actions.
- Re-open an old wound.
- Articulate a step on the path towards healing.

Trauma is a category that encompasses two broad groups of people — those who have suffered from violence, and those who have commited violence onto others. Often, due to the nature of trauma, these groups overlap. Vengeful rage, broken hearts, soldiers carrying old wounds, and workaholics become part of a coherent single category.



I think it's easy to misread Wanderhome's perspective on violence as being one that casts blame on everyone regardless of the righteousness of their cause. It would be easy to say" if you have hurt someone you're evil, it doesn't matter why you did it" But I think Wanderhome is trying to say something far less punitive, that if you've hurt someone, you are still worthy of love and forgiveness. Violence is a blade that cuts both those who wield it and those struck by it. and blades don't care about your moral justification.

‡ Lost

A *lost* kith has forgotten how to get back home. They are often lonely travelers, confused prophets, and those disassociated from this world, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Wander deep into the darkness.
- Express the disconnect between yourself and the world around you.
- Seek out the help of someone else to anchor you.

‡ Nervous

A *nervous* kith is very stressed out. They are often freaked-out kids, princes out of their depth, and those overwhelmed by the many dangers of the world, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Worry about something you don't have control over.
- Say: "I'm sorry."
- Ask: "Is everything okay?"

‡ Starving

A *starving* kith has been denied their hunger for too long, and it's burning them up inside. They are often hungry ghouls, spiteful wardens, and the shadows of monstrous gods, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Gnaw on what's left.
- Blame the wrong person for your hunger.
- Name a person, place, object, or secret. If someone wants to hide it from you, they're going to need to spend a token.



"Starving" is one of those traits that rarely gets used, but when it does, it always hit really hard. "Heroic" is the trait that tends to get the most buzz about it, as people try and figure out why it's on the traumatized list next to Royal and Dead. The reason for this is explained in the first few pages of Wanderhome, but I'll reiterate here. Basically, heroism comes from a place of moral confidence, that you have a secret and deep well of moral truth that overpowers others. It is a conviction in the sanctity of your morality that grants you a license to hurt other people. This is the emotional backbone of most Western storytelling traditions and an aspect of morality that Wanderhome abhors. That doesn't mean being heroic is evil, but rather that heroism is traumatizing. It puts you in a headspace that hurts you and will require healing from. It;s an unhealthy coping mechanism.

‡ Dead

A *dead* kith was once alive, but isn't anymore. They are often spectral lights, wandering souls, and the last remnants of a forgotten time, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Provide a bridge from one life to the other.
- Send a chill down someone's spine.
- Show someone something they truly don't want to grapple with. If they want to avoid thinking about it, they're going to need to spend a token.

‡ heroic

A *heroic* kith believes they are the savior of the world. What a cruel fate indeed. They are often dragon-slayers, leaders of the rebellion, and those arrogant enough to seek out power, among others.

Choose 1-2 they can always do.

- Know what's best for everyone else.
- Present a perfect persona to the world.
- Declare someone fundamentally good or irredeemably evil. If anyone wants to prove you wrong, they're going to need to spend a token.

‡ Royal

A *royal* kith rules over this land with authority and lonely gravitas. They are often arrogant kings, towering giants, or those destined to be undone by their own glory, among others.

- Engage in a petty and useless display of power.
- Inflict your will on the world around you.
- Make a sweeping proclamation. If someone wants to openly defy you, they're going to need to spend a token.







When I used to write larps, there was an approach to game design I jokingly called "the philosophy of Junk". This approach to game design is to create an environment filled with random objects, plot threads, puzzles, activities, and ventsd, that would generate a styory through emergence, as random objects would slam into each other. Wanderhome has a lot of that same energy, as it relies on flooding you with dozens of plot threads and idea-phrases that you can connect and combine together in a way that creates the sensation of an emergent world. When playing Wanderhome, there are always more ideas to explore than you have space to do, and so this soup of ideas gets to mingle together, and you can focus on the elements that excite you.

Natures serve that purpose to an extreme extent, where each place becomes the interlocking spiral of three different thematic patterns, and each draw in visual elements, characters, actions, and folklore. Sometimes these ideas won't come up, while other times they'll serve as the centerpiece for your experience.



Natures are the building blocks of places. They inform the aesthetic trappings and symbols of the place, the world surrounding it, and how it shapes the people who engage with it. Comfortable, verdant, and liminal natures are common throughout the Hæth, while sprawling, lonely, and desolate natures are more rare. You can use the following table to pick natures randomly, or choose them from the list.

relatedly i feel like i very rarely see people talk about wanderhome as a book past playbooks but this is where it starts for me, the entire magic of the game is in combining natures to build a little bit of a world

1. Comfortable Natures

- 1. Farm, p. 140
- 2. Garden, p. 141
- 3. Market, p. 142

2. Verdant Natures

- 1. Field, p. 148
- 2. Glen, p. 149
- 3. Hallow, p. 150

3. Liminal Natures

- 1. Bridge, p. 156
- 2. Island, p. 157
- 3. Lake, p. 158

4. Sprawling Natures

- 1. Carnival, p. 164
- 2. Castle, p. 165
- 3. Furnace, p. 166

5. Lonely Natures

- 1. Cave, p. 172
- 2. Graveyard, p. 173
- 3. Mirage, p. 174

6. Desolate Natures

- 1. Desert, p. 180
- 2. Labyrinth, p. 181
- 3. Maelstrom, p. 182

- 4. Monastery, p. 143
- 5. Tower, p. 144
- 6. Workshop, p. 145
- 4. Hillock, p. 151
- 5. Lagoon, p. 152
- 6. Swamp, p. 153
- 4. Port, p. 159
- 5. Road, p. 160
- 6. Tavern, p. 161
- 4. Metropolis, p. 167
- 5. Palace, p. 168
- 6. University, p. 169
- 4. Mirror, p. 175
- 5. Moor, p. 176
- 6. Wilderness, p. 177
- 4. Mountain, p. 183
- 5. Ruin, p. 184
- 6. Waste, p. 185

I have very few regrets about this d66 table of natures, besides that I should've included at least one explicitly forested nature, and that the "Lake" should've been named a "Sea".





Farm

A farm is a place where people live unremarkable lives, deeply rooted in the turning of the seasons and the work that must be done.

The three action a

place can always do follow a familiar rhythm — the first is about description and scene-setting, the second is to articulate hardship or problems within the place, and the third is a way to give players tokens in exchange for making their lives harder or inconveniencing them. Less hostile natures use this third slot as a

way to ask for help.

This place can always:

- Describe the calm mundanity of everyday life.
- Reveal the thin margins people live on.
- ∠ Ask: "Hey, wanna help out?" Give them a token if they pitch in, in whatever way they can.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Rapscallions And Merrymakers
- Crops As Far As The Eye Can See
- Peaceful Livestock
- Rusty Overgrown Weapons Of War
- A House You Once Called Home
- A Childhood Inspiration, Now Washed-Up And Pensive
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

we realized very late in the process that we wanted illustrations here so i did color them by hand (mouse) and they are all vectors..... nothing was efficient about the visual design at this point

- The Scarecrow That Walked Away
- The Rain Of A Hundred Days
- The Apple-Girl And Her Loving **Parents**
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



Garden

Some places prompt

additional choices that inform what the place is like. Not all

gardens are the same, after all.

you to make

A *garden* is a place where everyone has plenty and the world is overflowing with gifts.

When you arrive at this place, decide what it has in abundance.

This place can always:

- ✗ Describe the abundance all around us.
- Threaten the health and vitality of the abundance.
- Ask: "What do you need most right now?"

 Give them a token if they can't find it here.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Trees Overburdened With Fruit
- Outrageously Large Gourds
- Prismatic Butterflies
- Carefully-Trimmed Hedges
- **Irrigating Fountains**
- A Friendly Soul Unfamiliar With The Hardship Of The World
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Peach Tree's Prophetic Blossom
- The Old God In The Old Tree
- The Burning Of The Corn Woman
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Folklore always comes from this weird soup in my brain, where I slightly remix themes that I rememberer from childhood stories. The Burning of the Corn Woman is a Wicker Man reference.

Market

A *market* is a place where near-anything can be traded and bartered, and where people from across the Hæth gather with supplies to exchange.

This place can always:

- ∠ Describe what you can find here.
- Reveal the consequences of theft.
- ∠ Offer someone something they want, at an affordable price. Give them a token if they refuse the offer.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Show-Stopping Livestock
- Foreign Wares
- **Confusing Currencies**
- Antique Relics
- Distant Smells
- A Familiar Crafty Merchant
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Eel Daemon And The Lutist
- The Crow And The Thirty-Three Thieves
- The Golden King And How He Lost His Heart
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



Because the daemons don't ever get properly described, I try to always mention what kind of fish they are when I bring them up. I imagine them as having animal-folk bodies, fish heads, and some traits of insects like wings or chitin.

Monastery

A *monastery* is a place where a community gathers to learn from the past and cultivate answers to the complicated questions of the world.

This place can always:

- Describe the rhythm of daily life.
- Show tensions caused by generational divides.
- Ask: "Are you willing to wait to get the answer you seek?" Give them a token if they're here to wait. Do not tell them the answer either way.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- The Hermit's Cottage
- **Booming Bells**
- A Simple Herb Garden
- Scriptorium Filled With Knowledge
- Underground Catacombs

- A Wise Elder Who Remembers You From When You Were Very Young
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

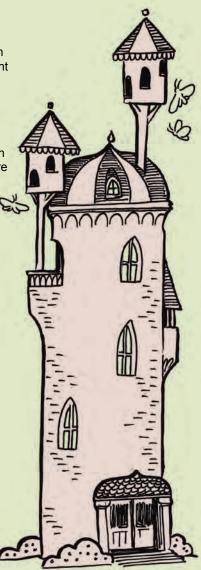
Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Generous Mentor And Her Betrayal
- The Janitor And The Secret Lessons He Taught
- The Alabaster Monk
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

The Alabaster Monk is a reference to a webcomic, the Secret Knots by Juan Santapau.



This illustration is a depiction of a moth tower, which I was very insistent about. Even if it wasn't explicit, I wanted to make sure there was some visual reference for moth towers somewhere in the book.



Gower

A *tower* is a place that reaches so high up to the sky that it feels like it scrapes against the clouds.

This place can always:

- ∠ Describe something very small and far away.
- ∠ Spread concern around structural stability.
- Make someone dizzy or disoriented, and give them a token.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Narrow Barely-Stable Entrance
- Winding Staircase All The Way To The Top
- Shining Light Warning Of Danger
- Roosting Moths In The Rafters
- Not Enough Space For All The Clutter
- A ‡ Grieving Soul Responsible For Keeping Everything In Working Order
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose I folklore about this place.

- The Observatory Of The Lightning Dancers
- The First Of The Moth-Towers
- The Ghost That Walks The Stairs
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

"Spread concern around structural stability" is just such a cute action to take, it always makes me giggle.

Workshop

A *workshop* is a place where fine crafts and wares are created and given life, and where people value their ability to breathe life into art.

This place can always:

Describe the process of creation.

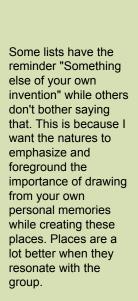
∠ Show conflict between expectations and demand.

Give someone a token if they work hard and sweat over their creation.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- A Whirring Loom
- A Chugging Factory
- A Work Song
- An Important Supply Line
- A Cunning Kid Too Young To Be Working
- An *Imaginative* Craftsperson Who Made One of Your Treasures
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Crafter Who Made Herself A Bride
- The Potter And The Goddess
- The Neverending Tapestry
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention









Field

A *field* is a place to lie back, feel the breeze in your fur, and look up at the sky.

This place can always:

Describe a gentle place to rest.

∠ Show someone looking for something lost.

∠ Ask: "Can we look at the clouds together?" Give them a token if they say yes.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Rustling Grass
- A Babbling Brook
- A Solitary Tree
- Wild Plants And Herbs
- Mossy Boulders
- A Friendly Shepherd And Their Flock
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Lucky Shepherd's Friend
- The Barrow-Ghosts
- The Dance Of The Flower Goddess
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

The Field is ur-Wanderhome. If you want to create a place that is the archetypical Wanderhome place, start with the field.



The Barrow-Ghosts are a slant-reference to Lord Of The Rings.

Glen

A *glen* is a place overflowing with creatures and bugs, alive with movement and presence.

This place can always:

- Describe a world teeming with life.
- Show a conflict between wild creatures.
- ✓ Introduce a new buggy creature.

 Give someone a token if they engage with it as an equal.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Chittering Mantises
- Cautious Pillbugs
- Massive Beetles
- Watchful Caterpillars
- Soaring Dragonflies
- A #Feral And Remarkable Creature That No One Has Seen For Hundreds Of Years
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Meadow Of The Lightning Dancers
- The Last Of The Monarch Butterflies
- The Day The Woods Walked
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

The Lightning Dancers are one of the least explained parts of Wanderhome. While there's some parts of Wanderhome's lore I plan to dig a little bit more into later, such as the North Wind God, the Lightning Dancers are great as this strange force on the outskirts.

they're also in uncanny! watch very closely for the jay dragon personal mythology. but they are also obviously those bright magic dancing figures in howl's moving castle



hallow

A hallow is a sacred place, where gods and mortals mingle.

When you arrive at this place, decide a rule that all must follow.

This place can always:

- Lescribe the gods that live here and their mystery.
- ∠ Offer someone the chance to break this place's rules to make their life easier.

Give someone a token when they bend over backwards to respect this place's rules.

I like places that have explicit rules around conduct. Even though Wanderhome has a broadly antiauthoritarian philosophy, I don't think rules and hierarchy are

necessarily coupled.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- A Well-Tended Shrine
- A Worn-Away Mask
- Watchful Eyes In The Shadows
- An Unexplainable Miracle
- Forgotten Offerings
- An Old Sturdy Caretaker-Priest
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- ☼ The ₱Miraculous Teachings Of The Old Priest
- The Fifteen Sleeping Gods
- The Maiden And Her Salmon-Headed Daemon Love
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



The Hillock feels like one of the weirder natures, since it's always the foothills to something. It was originally called "Foothills" but I didn't like how all the natures were singular except one.

Hillock

A *hillock* is a place in the foothills of a great and looming presence.

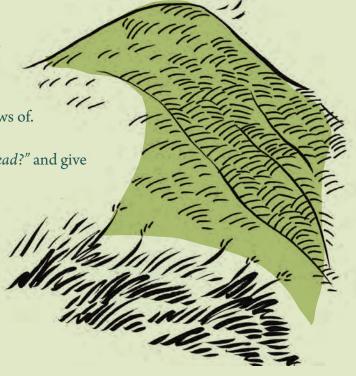
This place can always:

- Les Describe what we stand in the shadows of.
- ∠ Show a threat that's up ahead.
- ∠ Ask: "What are you worried lies up ahead?" and give them a token if they're right.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- A Sheltered Valley
- Strange Piles Of Stones
- A Deep Gorge
- Scattered Fragments Of Civilization
- Evidence Of Distant Strangeness
- A Quiet Foreigner From Higher-Up
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Goat Who Slept For A Hundred Years
- The Fallen Star And The Stories She Told
- The Hidden Treasure Of The Hyena-King
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



Lagoon

A *lagoon* is a place of contemplation, introspection, and self-reflection.

This place can always:

- Let Describe the water and all the tiny creatures that live in it.
- Make matters worse through people's inaction.
- Ask: "What have you been thinking about lately?" and give them a token for their thoughts.

So many natures are just "this is a place that makes me feel good to imagine" and there's something about lagoons, grottos, and anywhere with cool damp rocks that really scratches that part of my brain.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Mossy Stones
- A Hidden Grotto
- A Glorious Waterfall
- A Rare And Mysterious Flower
- A Well-Worn Path
- A Watchful Creature Who Hides From The Outside

Something Else Of Your Own Invention

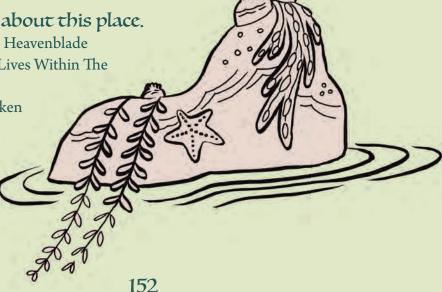
Choose 1 folklore about this place.

The Gifting Of The Heavenblade

The Teacher Who Lives Within The Rocks

The Waterfall's Broken Heart

Something Else
Of Your Own
Invention



i LOVE all the concrete bits of wanderhome lore (heavenblade, floating mountain, orchid, etc) and part of why i put together an index by hand was to make them opaque to readers

The first draft of this made the swamp a much more hostile force, and I tried my best to keep that energy out of it in subsequent drafts. I don't think swamps are hostile or bad places to be, and I sorta wish I had done a couple more drafts that focus on the swamp as a place of growth beneath the mud.

Swamp

A *swamp* is a place where the air is as thick as the mud.

This place can always:

- Describe the heaviness of the world.
- Show tension caused by stagnation.
- Bog someone down, and give them a token.



Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Muck And Mire
- A Pungent Stench
- A Heavy Fog
- Wriggling Worms
- A Sinking Feeling
- A Cunning And Tricksy Spirit Offering To Help
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Treacherous Lights Deep In The Dark
- The Traveling Bog
- The Shrewish Witch And Her Magic Cabin
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention





These days, the word liminal has a weird association with the Backrooms and creepy gas stations at night, but the intention when I wrote Wanderhome was to focus on the actual meaning of the word liminal — a place in-between, a connecting force between two other locations.

Bridge

A *bridge* is a passage from one place to the next.

This place can always:

- Describe the distance to the other side.
- ∠ Push something off the edge.
- ∠ Offer someone an easier way. Give someone a token if they don't take it.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Ancient Engineering
- Rickety Planks
- A Sudden Drop
- A Tollbooth
- Churning Waters Far Below
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Bargain Of The Flat-Faced Bass Daemon
- The Path Carved By The Giant-King
- The Fox And Toad Crossing
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



This is one of my favorite Letty nature pieces. It looks like a bridge up in the Swiss Alps.

The Island is a nature that leans more heavily on metaphor and theme. An island can be anything, but in this context it's specifically a place isolated from the rest of the world.

Island

An *island* is a place kept secret and separate from the rest of the Hæth.

When you arrive at this place, decide what makes it feel different than what you're used to.

This place can always:

- Describe the comfort of an isolated world.
- ∠ Show conflict caused by isolation.
- ∠ Give someone a token when they respect this place's difference.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- A Concealed Entrance
- A Forbidden Secret
- A Hidden Gem
- A Looming God
- An Inquisitive Kid Who Has Never Seen The Outside World

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Cave Where The Storms Stay At Night
- The First Survivor To Wash Ashore
- The Faith Of The White Dress
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- A Proper Leader Who Is Afraid Of The Outside World
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



to me this particular island is so clearly in the middle of the ashokan reservoir, near where jay and i met and much later made this book 157

For some reason I always imagine a mix of the island at the end of A Series Of Unfortunate Events and the island in that one episode of Mushishi when picturing the folklore of this place.

Lake

A *lake* is a vast body of water that spans an overwhelming distance.

This place can always:

- Describe the beauty of the water.
- Wash something strange up on shore.
- ∠ Bring someone somewhere completely unexpected, and give them a token.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Huge Churning Waves
- Sandy Coastline
- Flotsam And Jetsam
- Striders Darting Across The Surface
- Barnacle-Covered Rocks

A Nearby Vessel You Weren't Expecting To See

Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Kraken From The Deep
- The Salmon With Three Wishes
- The Hubris Of The Warthog
 Captain
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



Port

A *port* is the gateway through which the whole world opens up to you.

This place can always:

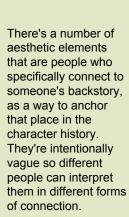
- Describe the ships and where they go.
- ∠ Show the dangers of a fragile lifestyle.
- Ask: "Can I take you somewhere you've never been before?" Give them a token if they accept.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Chunky Barges
- Hot Air Balloons
- Jetties And Docks
- Fidgeting Hoppers
- Smug Captains
- An Adventurous Buddy You Once Wandered The World With
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Headless Spirit Of The Dockyard
- The Boat That Would Not Sink
- The Eastern Mist And The Trouble It Brings
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention







Road

While "a lively

waterway" also encompasses a river,

and the purpose of the

road nature is to make room for both rivers

and roads. I should've

just written a river nature as well.

A *road* is a place that exists for traveling through.

This place can always:

- Les Describe something passing by.
- ★ Keep someone from getting where they're trying to go.
- ∠ Push someone forward, and give them a token.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Cairns Along The Path
- Litter In The Gutters
- A Lively Waterway
- Grooves In The Ground
- A Friendly Caravan
- An Old Chill Comrade Heading In A Different Direction
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Day The Hounddog Met His Double
- The Possum Made Of Mist
- The Pact Of The Crossroads Shrine
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



and this road is so clearly the one into hobbiton!

M.E. SOM

Gavern

A *tavern* is a place of simple comfort, often settled into while on the journey from one land to the next.

This place can always:

- Describe a small comfort.
- ∠ Sow confusion amongst the disoriented.
- Offer someone comfort and amenities, at a price. Give them a token if they refuse your offer.



The tavern mechanically rewards you if you DON'T accept its generosity. Weird! I like it!

"Bar rat" heehee get it

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Dry Places To Sleep
- Huge Fireplace With A Big Pot Of Stew
- Barrels And Barrels Of Mead
- Great Hall Jam-Packed With Layabouts
- Bar Rat With A Secret Identity
- A Cheerful Innkeep Who You Once Called Family
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Night The Old King Drank Here
- The Cat With The Magic Ale
- How The Old Wombat Outdrank The Slobbering God
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

I love "The Night The Old King Drank Here" becase I feel like that's one of those folklores that's really more of an excuse for the innkeep to brag.





Carnival

A *carnival* is a place full of celebration, decadence, and excitement.

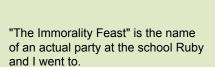
This place can always:

- ∠ Describe the lights and the crowds.
- Let Demand attention and adoration.
- Ask: "What will lure you deeper into the chaos?" Give them a token if they follow it.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Strange Actors
- Extravagant Displays Of Excess
- A Mysterious Performance
- A Hungry Crowd
- Masquerade Accoutrements
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Girl With A Thousand Masks
- The Neverending Wine Glass
- The Slobbering God And The Immorality Feast
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention





We've left behind the normal natures and we're now in the weird natures. I like the castle because it's both literally a castle and metaphorically a way to guard passage and access. It's got gatekeepers!

Castle

A *castle* is a place designed to keep everything else far outside its walls.

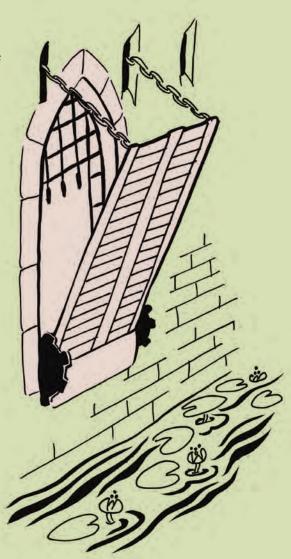
This place can always:

- ∠ Describe the walls that surround us.
- ∠ Spread worry about a distant threat.
- Keep someone from entering, and give them a token.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Long Shadows
- Trophies From Long-Forgotten Wars
- Watchtowers
- A Secret Heart
- The Crest Of A Distant Monarch
- A ‡Furious Administrator Who Oversees All
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Murdered Brother
- The Ghost On The Parapets
- The Lost Empire Of The Brick-Layers
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



Furnace

A *furnace* burns hot with the force of furious and creative fire.

This place can always:

- Describe the stifling heat.
- Raise tensions caused by intolerable conditions.
- Ask: "Will you forge what once was broken?" Give them a token if they try their best.



- A Seething, Flaming Forge
- Walls Of Iron Tools
- Ornate Glassworks
- A Legendary Blade, Left Unfinished
- An Imaginative Apprentice Still Learning The Craft
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Eternal Forge And Its Iron Servants
- The Heavenblade And Its Construction
- The Binding Of The Slobbering God
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Folklore, especially the folklore for these further-back natures, gives a lot of space to go into more detail about the big deep lore stuff, like the Heavenblade and the Slobbering God. Often this myth is contradictory from one nature to another.

Metropolis

A *metropolis* is a place where a lot of people live and where many communities sit side-by-side.

This place can always:

- Describe the diversity and variety of people.
- ∠ Show conflict between differing needs and worldviews.
- ✓ Tell someone they're lost, and give them a token.

I chose to focus on the aspect of a metropolis that is about intersecting communities coming together. There's a lot of other possible city natures, I just wanted this one to involve comingling specifically.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Tall Ramshackle Apartments
- Curving Arches
- **Cobblestone Streets**
- Laundry Hanging From Windows
- More People Than You've Ever Met Before
- The Enclave Of A Community You're Proud To Consider Yourself Part Of
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Truce Of The Three Gods
- The Night-Goat Of Vermilion Street
- The Giant Scorpions In The Sewer
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



The giant scorpions in the sewer are a joke about New York City crocodiles. The Night-Goat is a joke about Goatboy, a cryptid at our old college.

"Tell someone they're

asking questions of

other natures, and helps show how the

metropolis can be

very emotionally overpowering.

lost" is such a different vibe than the

Palace

A *palace* is a place ruled by power. It is beautiful, yet empty.

When you arrive at this place, decide who claims to rule it, and who really rules it.

This place can always:

- Describe the stunning splendor of the world.
- ∠ Show the aftermath of a conflict between its two rulers.
- ∠ Ask: "What here makes you feel small?" and give them a token.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Glorious Halls
- Many Colorful Flags
- Resounding Trumpets
- A Crystal Crown
- A Gleaming Throne
- The Young And ‡Royal Heir Dreaming Of Freedom
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Throne Of Crystal And Its Many Lies
- The King Who Killed A God
- The Crumbling Dynasty Of The Floating Mountain
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



These rarer natures let us go deeper into

mechanics that would

feel out of place in core Wanderhome, but I love the question

of "who rules here,

from Wickedness.

and who really rules here" — I think I got it

"The Crumbling Dynasty" makes me feel like the floating mountain dynasty are the Kardashians.

University

A *university* is a place where many gather to learn from ancient texts.

This place can always:

- Describe the vast amount of knowledge still left to learn.
- Show conflict between differing philosophies or viewpoints.
- ∠ Ask: "Do you want to learn a difficult or painful truth?" Give them a token if they listen.



Wanderhome are when people argue about ideology incharacter.

My favorite parts of

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Grassy Campus Quad
- Too-Small Dormitories
- Vast Banquet Hall With Many Long Tables
- Statues Of The Founders In All Their Glory
- An Inquisitive And Hopeful Kid Who Doesn't Want To Be Here
- A Witchy Professor Whom You Once Called A Mentor
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Founders And Their Petty Squabbles
- The Forbidden Society Of The Theatre Hall
- That One Prank That Got Far Too Out Of Hand
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

The Forbidden Society is another college joke, from the secret society at our college that used to meet in the catacombs.





The Cave is a really important part of Wanderhome to me, because I think it emphasizes certain chthonic qualities of Wanderhome that I adore. Caves are incredibly ancient and still, they breathe with history and carry this beautiful weight and depth to them.

Cave

A *cave* is a place fundamentally connected to the core of the earth, its wisdom, and its tenebrous secrets.

This place can always:

- Lescribe the beauty of the deepest shadows of the world.
- Swallow something into the dark.
- ∠ Ask: "Will you wander ever deeper?" Give them a token if they say yes.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Darkness Deeper Than You Expected
- A Bridge From This World To The Next
- Petroglyphs
- Countless Fungi
- The Voice Of Faraway Winds
- A ‡ Cautious Hermit
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Tapping On The Walls
- The First Art And The Stories It Tells
- The Sleeping God At The Bottom Of The World
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



"What the caves are trying to tell us" by Sam Kriss is the mood for all of this.

I think it's really important that the graveyard in Wanderhome is not a malicious place, but rather a place of memory and sorrow. That space for mourning is really important.

Graveyard

A *graveyard* is a place of death, where the lost are buried.

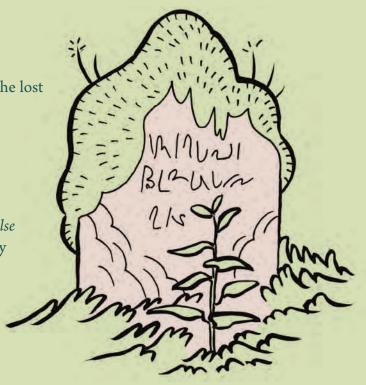
This place can always:

- Les Describe the weight of the past.
- Show someone disrespecting the history of this place.
- Ask: "Will you tell us a story no one else could tell?" Give them a token if they do.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Scattered Cairns
- Melted Candles
- Gravestones
- Mysterious Lights
- Deep And Profound Silence
- An Old Forgotten Friend, Now ‡Dead
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Candlelit Council And Their Warning
- The Day The Dead Danced With Us
- The Mist Rabbit And Her Rictus Grin
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



my favorite color treatment for these

Mirage

A mirage is a place that doesn't really exist.

This place can always:

- Describe something too good to be true.
- Show someone lost in their folly.
- Let Decide if something in front of someone is real, and then ask: "Do you believe what you see?" Give them a token if they're wrong.

Every aesthetic element of a mirage is too much, leaning into how it tricks you. It's the only list that doesn't have an actual person on it.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Too-Vivid Flowers
- Too-Shining Ramparts
- Too-Verdant Plantlife
- Too-Satisfying Food
- Too-Beautiful Music
- Too-Friendly Memory Of A Person
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Palace Of The Saccharine Dead
- The City Of Restless Dreams
- The Emperor's False Promise To His Adoring Lover
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



Wirror

A mirror is a place that reflects you back onto yourself.

This place can always:

- Describe what looks back.
- Reflect back something someone didn't want to see.
- ∠ Ask: "What is it about your reflection that unnerves you?" and give them a token.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Glassy Water
- Salt Flats
- Perfect Calmness
- Scratches In The Reflection
- The Sensation Of An Unfinished World
- Your Doppelganger
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

The March Of The Countless Footsteps

The Ghost Whose Name Cannot Be Spoken

- The Very Edge Of The World Itself
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



A lot of the inspiration for the Mirror comes from Neil Gaiman's movie Mirrormask, where there's a world at the edge of an impossible city that isn't finished being drawn yet, and all the lines are sketchy and impossible. There's a huge flat lake in that land, and the whole visual is both really beautiful but also really hard to explain without saving "go watch mirrormask"

Moor

A moor is a quiet place, where sharp winds whistle through a stretched-out landscape.

This place can always:

- Les Describe what makes someone feel lonely.
- Hint at something eerie.
- ∠ Ask: "What weighs on your mind?" Give them a token if they give a satisfying answer.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Distant Wasp-Caws
- Patches Of Wetland
- A Thin Mist
- Gnarled Trees
- A Shiver Down Your Back
- A ‡Nervous Teen Sneaking Away For Their Love
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

That's a Jane Eyre reference.

- The Devil-Dog And Its Prey
- The Heron And Her
 Murdered Lover
- The Lost Army Of
 The First Queen
- Something ElseOf Your OwnInvention



Wilderness

A *wilderness* is a place that holds nature close to its heart, closer than any mortal that dwells within.

This place can always:

- Describe something massive, sublime, and uncaring.
- Show the challenges caused by living with nature.
- ∠ Say: "Get out of the way!" and give everyone who does a token. Describe what enormous thundering force nearly strikes them down.

s heart,

"Get out of the way!"
makes me giggle. In a
place of such scale
both in space and time
that we're just ants, we
have to leap out of the
way of random giant
bugs or whatever.

It's all very Princess

Mononoke-core.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Tangled Undergrowth
- Trees Older Than Any Empire
- Something Bigger Than You've Ever Imagined
- Territorial Bugs
- A Pristine Waterfall
- A Creature Assumed To Be Extinct
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

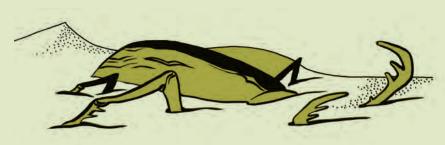
- The God Of All The Forests
- The Forest Spirits And Their Mockery
- The Song At The Heart Of All Things
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention





Desert

A *desert* is an empty place, without any of what you want or need.



This place can always:

- Describe the emptiness of the world.
- ∠ Show someone lost and wandering.
- ✓ Tell someone the path will be longer and more treacherous than they thought, and give them a token.

"The Horizon Line" is a very intense aesthetic element. Even though the desert feels very bleak, it often gets life added to it through the other two natures.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Sand That Goes On Forever
- Floating Pillars Of Stone
- A Bitter Chill
- The Harsh Sun
- The Horizon Line
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Ghost-Storm And The Lost Caravan
- The Opah Daemon's Whispers To The Wandering Prophet
- The Impossible Rain
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

This nature was originally a Prison, but I felt that was too out of theme, even for Desolate Natures. The Labyrinth satisfies all of my House Of Leaves / maze from the Cat Returns needs.

Labyrinth

A labyrinth is a tangled maze used to trick, imprison, and confuse.

This place can always:

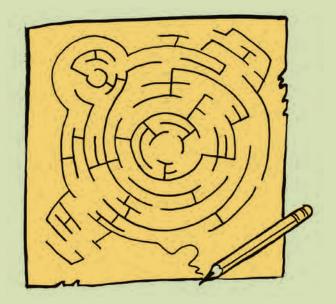
- Les Describe the vast sprawl of the maze.
- Disorient and confuse those attempting to travel.
- ∠ Give someone two options, neither of which is correct, and give them a token.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Stone Walls
- Tangled Paths
- Unexpected Hazards
- Chalk-Marked Directions
- A #Heroic Guide Who Might Not Be Helpful
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Crow Inventor And Her Wax Wings
- The Paths That Grow Of Their Own Accord
- The Ninety-Nine Wailing Minnow Daemons
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



Hey, it's the same wailing minnow daemons that are in the Ragamuffin's ring! What are they doing here?

Maelstrom

A *maelstrom* is a great and chaotic storm, full of winds and terrifying forces.

This place can always:

- Less Describe the storm that threatens us.
- ∠ Smash something against the rocks.
- Rip something away from someone, and give them a token.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Churning Skies
- Howling Winds
- Screeching Wasps
- Bolts Of Lightning
- Flying Debris
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

- The Fury Of The North Wind God
- The Lightning Dancers And Their Beautiful War
- The Queen Who Ripped A Hole In The World
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



Mountain

A mountain is a place where the earth meets the sky.

This place can always:

- Les Describe what can be seen from way up here.
- ∠ Show someone pushed to desperate extremes.
- ∠ Isolate someone from everyone else, and give them a token.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Sharp Cliffs
- A Treacherous Path
- A Lonely Flower
- A Sign Someone Was Here Once
- An Even Higher Summit
- A + Cautious Creature Hiding Just Out Of Sight
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

The Elk King Feasting Beneath The Hills

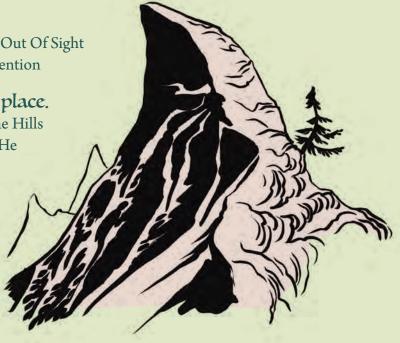
The North Wind God And What He Taught Us

- Where The Gentle Giants Fought
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

The Elk-King feasting beneath the hills is a subtle reference to Sleepaway, another one of my games that has a similar kind under the hills with antlers...

"seppellire lassu in montagna, sotto

'lombra di un bel fior"



Ruin

A *ruin* is a once-gleaming place that has fallen into disrepair and collapse.

This place can always:

- Describe what used to be here before.
- Show consequences for the actions of the past.
- ∠ Ask: "Do you know what once mattered here?" Give them a token if they don't.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Crumbling Pillars
- Fragments Of Pottery And Bone
- Abandoned Blades
- Monuments To Arrogance
- The Foundations Of Something Massive
- The Last # *Grieving* Survivor Of An Ancient Time
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Snowblanket Estate Of The Last Great Empress
- The Crypt Of The Dragons
- The Desecrated Temple Of The Slobbering God
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



I love this dragon statue — the death of the dragons is another one of those big Wanderhome mysteries I like to remix whenever it comes up.

This is the heaviest nature in Wanderhome, almost verging on tragedy porn. Thankfully in my experience the other two natures help places created with it feel worthwhile and 3-dimensional.

Waste

A waste is a place that life has abandoned.

This place can always:

- Describe the barren earth.
- Keep something from growing or changing.
- ∠ Ask: "What do you see here that breaks your heart?" and give them a token.

Choose 2 aesthetic elements.

- Dead Trees
- Tiny Struggling Saplings
- Dull Skies
- Craters Blasted In The Ground
- Wisps Of Smoke
- A Fragile People Wandering The Lonely World
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Choose 1 folklore about this place.

- The Curse Of The Lonely King
- The Corpse Of The Slobbering God Itself
- Where The Apocalypse Will Someday Ignite
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention



While the King of the Floating Mountain isn't explicitly the Lonely King mentioned here, it's worth noting how lonely and isolating it must be, to be stuck up on a mountain above the clouds.







The Hæth is shaped by the continuous passage of the year, with each season blending into the next. These seasons are composed of months and punctuated by holidays, and as we learn the rhythm of time we will feel how it changes with us. During longer journeys, we'll use this section to follow the great arc of the year.

The months and seasons of Wanderhome are designed to reflect the actional seasonal changes of the area I live in , modeled on a version of the seasons that's more rooted in how the seasons actually feel, instead of a structure imposed by society. The months of Wanderhome are of a variable length, with some months lasting for only a couple weeks while others spanning almost entire seasons.

Leap **%** The Sun Parade, p. 196-197 Tillsoil, p. 192 → Restlie, p. 198 → A Cold Leap, p. 193 → Ablution, p. 199 Monsoon, p. 194 → The Great Flood, p. 195 **Bright** M Blooommeadow, p. 202 **%** The Day of Song, p. 206-207 Blooommeadow:) → Callaleah, p. 208 → A Majestic Bloom, p. 203 at this point my → Old Api's Fair, p. 209 Devildays, p. 204 computer was suffering so greatly → A Meteor Shower, p. 205 from the weight of this books layout that i **Breathe** could barely type... reflections day & Swarming, p. 212 **%** The Moon Dance, p. 216-217 → Cicada Season, p. 213 → Refleections Day, p. 218 → Pyre, p. 219 **☆** Gateling, p. 214 → A Fleeting Gateling, p. 215 Silt **%** Firetop, p. 222 Candlefeast, p. 226-227 → A Dry Silt, p. 223 → Rime Gala, p. 228 → Nameless Day, p. 229 & Grasping, p. 224 → The Biggest Storm in a While, p. 225 Chill Snowblanket, p. 232 New Years, p. 236-237 → Bloody Night, p. 238 → A Deep Snow, p. 233 → Sunrise, p. 239 **%** Frostbite, p. 234 → The Eclipse, p. 235





Tillsoil is named after the farming practice of tilling soil, and in the Hudson Valley happens during March into early April.

Gillsoil

Tillsoil is the first month of the year in the season of Leap, after Chill has ended, when the ground is just warm enough for planting.

Choose 1 that this place lacks. The others are all present.

- Fertile Soil
- Constant And Challenging Work
- Gentle Rain
- The Occasional Chilly Day

bund

Every single month goes into pretty extensive detail on imagining how the people who live in this place navigate that month. I focus heavily on outfits, festivals, traditions, and experiences that anchor the place as lived in, where the inhabitants exist in relation to the land.

Choose 3-4 signs of the month found in this place.

- A Rhythmic Work Song
- Piles Of Quickly-Melting Snow
- Muddy Pant Legs
- Tattered Decorations Left Over From New Years
- Butterflies Up Above
- Fluffy Clouds
- Bugs Running Through The Fields

- Lovesick Teenagers
- Wide-Brimmed Hats
- A Sowing Festival Praising The Local Fertility God
- A Positive Outlook
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention.

One of the signs of the month always has something to do with how children or teenagers navigate the month.

Every time Tillsoil rolls around, ask the table: "Do you know anyone here?" Mark a sprout if anyone in the group says yes, and three sprouts if everyone in the group says yes. Once five sprouts are marked, that means there's a cold leap phenomenon this year.

This first question for Tillsoil's phenomenon is designed to be an on-ramp for nervous players to find easy plot hooks.











Each phenomenon has completely different mechanical effects. This one alters the rest of the calendar for the year.

A Cold Leap

When Frostbite lingers past its welcome and the muddy ground is too cold for plants, elders will sit on their back porches and mutter about how something like this hasn't happened in a very long time.

- ∠ Skip Firetop this year. The cold weather causes a pitiful harvest.
- ★ The cold lasts until the end of Monsoon, when the Sun Parade brings some muchneeded warmth. Until then, everyone can do all of the following:
 - → Spend a token to point out a crack in a frozen facade.
 - → Get a token whenever you say "We don't have enough to share."

Monsoon is named after the period of heavy rains in subtropical parts of the world, and in the Hudson Valley has an equivalent in April and early May.

Each month has these seasonal presences that help create a unified geographic sensation while also allowing for regional variation.

Monsoon

Monsoon is the second month of Leap, when great rains come and bring water to the Hæth.

Choose 1 that this place lacks. The others are all present.

- Torrential Rain
- Brief Moments Of Clear Skies
- Beautifully Green Plantlife
- Brooding Clouds

Choose 3-4 signs of the month found in this place.

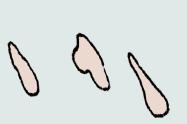
- Dancing In The Rain
- Heavy Quilt Blankets
- Lots Of Tea
- The Clean Smell Of Soil After The Rain
- Jumping In Giant Puddles
- Enveloping Mists
- Overflowing Rivers



- Distinctive Rain Jackets
- Bored Kids
- A Great Sacrifice For The North Wind God
- A Dreary State Of Mind
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Every time Monsoon rolls around, ask the table: "Do you seek shelter?" Mark a raindrop for each person who says yes. Once eight raindrops are marked, that means there's the great flood phenomenon this year.

0000



Each month question is designed to be interpreted in multiple different ways — perhaps its obviously true that you seek shelter from the rain, but it might also be true that you metaphorically seek shleter from some other force.

The Great Flood

The Monsoon rains, while torrential, rarely cause true catastrophe. But once in a while, the rain will fall from the sky with such ferocity that it forms into a massive flood, and in that moment it feels like the whole world is being carried away. The whole world can resemble an ocean when this happens, and when the rain stops, an overwhelming sense of peace can be found sitting atop the hills and trees that are now islands.

- Whatever place you are in or you arrive at is now a *lake*, in addition to whatever else it was.
- ✓ In order to travel from one location in this place to another during the Great Flood, you must spend a token.
- ✓ The Flood lasts until the end of Bloommeadow. Until then, everyone can do all of the following:
 - → Get a token whenever you spot something in the water no one's seen in a very long time.
 - → Ask: "How can we help you?" Get a token if you then do it.

This whole part is heavily inspired by Ponyo. I love it when it rains so hard that the whole world transforms — this shows up again in Yazeba's Bed & Breakfast.

The Sun Parade is strongly inspired by a local Beltane celebration that happens near where I live.

The Sun Parade

The Sun Parade celebrates the end of Leap and the start of Bright, with a holiday of cheer and merriment.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- A Huge Parade Through The Streets
- Streamers And Banners
- The Election Of The Bloom Queen
- Gifts Of Fake Golden Keys
- Ritual Face-Painting
- Wreaths Of Flowers
- Beautiful Dresses



The structure of "traditions you don't partake in" helps set each place as distinct by how they choose not to honor a history, which I think is neat. When we arrive somewhere new and there's a holiday going on, we often mainly notice how their celebrations are different than our own.

During the Sun Parade, everyone can always:

- ∠ Spend a token to find a pretty dress, trinket, or new friend.
- Cool off in the shade.

Holidays give special festive actions as a way to symbolically show that during a holiday period, you enter into a ritual space within a ritual space.

It was Riley Rethal's idea to add special holidays and traditions to encompass experiences outside a core set of traditions. It helps the Haeth feel less monolithic and helps recontextualize new places when you arrive at them. It also helps keep holidays fresh when you've celebrated them many times during a campaign, although I'm not sure how many people have had this issue...

If you've celebrated the Sun Parade before, choose how this place spends this time:

The ritual killing of the bloom/sun queen has big Midsommar energy.

- They celebrate the Sun Parade in a familiar way.
- They celebrate the Sun Parade, but their traditions are focused on a symbolic murder of the Sun Queen.
- They celebrate the Sun Parade, but their traditions are focused on gift-giving and good luck.
- They celebrate the Sun Parade, but their traditions are unfamiliar to you.
- Instead of the Sun Parade, they celebrate Restlie; a holiday dedicated to sleep and care.
- Instead of the Sun Parade, they celebrate Ablution; a holiday dedicated to freedom and tidying.
- Instead of the Sun Parade, they celebrate a holiday you've never heard of before. Ask the locals for its name, and discover its traditions together.
- Only a few households here celebrate the Sun Parade.
- They don't celebrate any holidays at this time, so we'll need to mark the passage of the seasons in our own way.

I wrote this holiday entirely because I like the idea of a holiday where you nap.

Restlie

***** Alternate Holiday

Restlie commemorates the end of Leap and the start of Bright, and is spent caring for your-self and others.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- Naps All Day
- Enormous Fans
- Feast Without Cooking
- Massages
- Fresh-Picked Fruit
- Lazily Created Artwork
- Long Meandering Tales

During Restlie, everyone can always:

- ∠ Get a token whenever you decide not to do something you could be doing.
- ∠ Spend a token to find joy in doing something you're not very good at.

Riley wrote Ablution based on Passover.

moment

Ablution

****** Alternate **holiday**

another dandelion glyph

Ablution generally falls at the end of Leap, before Bright begins, with a raucous delight in new beginnings.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- The Ritual Retelling Of An Old Story
- A Whole Day Of Cleaning And Reorganizing
- Songs Of Freedom And Hope
- Ceremonial Washing Of Hands
- Swimming And Bathing

I love the Afikomen -> Scavenger Hunt

- Special Roles For The Youngest Children
- A Scavenger Hunt

During Ablution, everyone can always:

- Get a token whenever you ask a question to learn more about the customs of this day.
- ∠ Spend a token to let go of something you've been carrying that you no longer need.
- Listen patiently.





Bloommeadow is named after what the meadows do during this month, and in the Hudson Valley happens during May through mid June.

Bloommeadow

Bloommeadow is the first month of Bright, when all the flowers bloom and pollen fills the air.

Choose 1 that this place lacks. The others are all present.

- Time To Relax
- Sunny Skies
- Good Cheer
- The Occasional Soggy Day

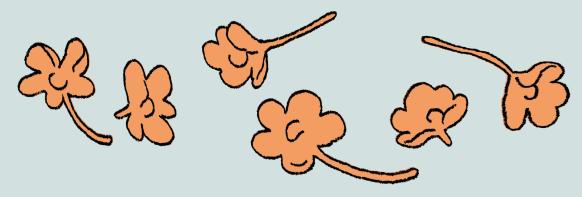
Choose 3-4 signs of the month found in this place.

- Bright Yellow And White Flowers
- Soft Pink And Turquoise Flowers
- Vivid Red And Orange Flowers
- Deep Purple And Blue Flowers
- Flower Crowns
- Everyone's Finest Outfits
- Baskets Of Ripe Fruit



- Waves Of Pollen
- Kids Making Daisy Chains
- A Festival Mourning A Mythical Creature Long Gone From This Place
- The Distant Sound Of Laughter
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Every time Bloommeadow rolls around, ask the table: "Do you have any grudges?" Mark a flower for each person who says anything other than yes. Once six flowers are marked, that means there's a majestic bloom phenomenon this year.



A Majestic Bloom

Sometimes, Bloommeadow blooms. The flowers are bigger than anything you've ever seen before, the forests turn a sea of pink and yellow, and there is so much pollen in the air that you need to wear a mask. A Majestic Bloom like this is considered a time to confess one's feelings and revel in the beauty of the world.

- Whatever place you are in or you arrive at is now a *garden*, in addition to whatever else it was.
- A Majestic Bloom lasts until the start of Devildays. At the start of this phenomenon, everyone starts with one flower. You may pick flowers whenever you'd care to. You may spend a Flower to compliment someone wholeheartedly. You may spend five Flowers in order to make an especially beautiful flower crown.

Spending flowers as game mechanical tokens is a small joke, but I enjoy it an awful lot. I also like that you can spend Flowers to make flower crowns.

Devildays is named after how it feels to be outside during this time, and in the Hudson Valley has an equivalent in late June and July.

Conner Fawcett called this month "The Devildays", which I find to be a really charming alternate way to refer to it. I imagine that this entire time used to just get lumped together as the devil days, and eventually it evolved into a month name properly.

Devildays

Devildays is the second month of Bright, when the sun's heat becomes near-unbearable.

Choose 1 that this place lacks. The others are all present.

- Parched Soil
- Dry Grass
- A Calming Breeze
- The Cruel Bright Sun

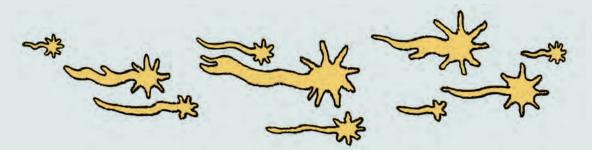
Choose 3-4 signs of the month found in this place.

- Hidden Swimming Holes
- Sweat-Soaked Clothes
- Tart Fruit Juice
- Paper Fans
- Creaky Porch Chairs
- A Lonely Lute-Player
- Fishing And Gossiping
- Long Thin Clouds



- Lazy Teens
- A Festival Remembering A Local Folk Hero And Their Adventures
- Plenty Of Naps
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Every time Devildays rolls around, ask the table: "Is there something hanging over your head?" Mark a meteor for each person who says yes. Once ten meteors are marked, that means there's a meteor shower phenomenon this year.



It took me a really long time to figure out what the Devildays phenomenon should be, and I went with this because it felt like a moment of joy in an otherwise-kinda harsh month.

sometimes we think about getting matching tattoos of these little guys:)

A Deteor Shower

It is a rare and lucky Devildays indeed, when the meteors travel through the night sky and fill the air with those many streaking sparks. It's impossible to resist the urge to climb up onto rooftops or lie in grassy fields and watch the lightshow. Some superstitious folks say that these meteors are the souls of the dead, finally happy and surrounded by friends, while others say it's the Lightning Dancers descending from above to grant wishes.

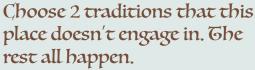
- ∠ Once during the meteor shower, each person can spend a token and make a wish. The wish cannot harm others or force them to do something they wouldn't do normally. Each wish comes true, even if the matter by which it comes true is metaphorical.
- ∠ Never forget to care for yourself and the world around you.

This is the only moment in Wanderhome where souls are mentioned. Wanderhome otherwise tries to avoid discussing matters of the soul, framing living as a very physical property. Live rests in the heart in the Haeth, and souls almost feel like a relic from another belief system.

When I was a kid, I'd end up going to a lot of concerts in late July / early August, hence the Day of Song is around this time.

The Day of Song

The Day of Song ushers away Bright and welcomes in Breathe, and is remembered by the endless music in the air.



- A Elaborate Orchestral Performance
- An Amateur Talent Show
- Historical Reenactments
- Dancing And Singing Long Into The Night
- A Few Songs Everyone Seems To Know
- A Special Drink Served Only During This Holiday
- Everyone Going Swimming

During the Day of Song, everyone can always:

- Get a token whenever you take some time to listen to the music and describe how it makes you feel.
- Spend a token to sing or make music, from the heart.
- Practice a song with someone.



If you've celebrated the Day of Song before, choose how this place spends this time:

- They celebrate the Day of Song in a familiar way.
- They celebrate the Day of Song, but their traditions are focused on a single, mournful melody.
- They celebrate the Day of Song, but the small and forgotten gods sing with them.
- They celebrate the Day of Song, but their traditions are unfamiliar to you.
- Instead of the Day of Song, they celebrate Callaleah; an enormous carnival holiday.
- Instead of the Day of Song, they celebrate Old Api's Fair; a holiday devoted to shepherds and their bumbles.
- Instead of the Day of Song, they celebrate a holiday you've never heard of before. Ask the locals for its name, and discover its traditions together.
- Only a few households here celebrate the Day of Song.
- They don't celebrate any holidays at this time, so we'll need to mark the passage of the seasons in our own way.

Riley wrote Callaleah and based it on Purim. She couldn't come up with a name, and so I went with something that sounds vaguely historical but without an easy-to-place origin.

Callaleah

₩ Alternate Ŋoliday

historical but without an easy-to-place origin. Callaleah is held in the last week of Devildays before the start of Breathe, and is an enormous carnival spectacle.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- Carnival Games
- A Costume Contest
- A Farcical Play With A Raucous Audience
- Sending Gifts To Friends
- Drinks For Everyone
- Children With Noisemakers
- Lots Of Pranks

During Callaleah, everyone can always:

- ∠ Get a token whenever you try something new and describe how it feels.
- ∠ Spend a token to give someone the perfect gift, compliment, or reassurance.
- Make a lot of noise.

Old Api's Fair is based on all the regional town festivals that happen in late July in Italy and in America, like the Onion Festival where I live, or the sheep festivals of the Italian mountain villages. It's also a great chance to focus more on Shepherd lore in Wanderhome.

Old Api's Fair

***** Alternate Holiday

Old Api's Fair is held on the first day of Swarming as Bright fades away, and is focused on the bumblebees and all the gifts they have to give.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- Bumble Beauty Contest (With Prizes!)
- Honey Cakes And Drinks
- Kebabs And Roasts
- Smooth Stones Offered To A Shepherd's Shrine
- Songs Sung Across Vast Distances
- Bumble-Herding Instruments
- Hand-Carved Pipes

During Old Api's Fair, everyone can always:

- ∠ Get a token whenever you pay respect to the herds or their shepherds.
- ∠ Spend a token to procure some one-of-a-kind honey.
- Make a new bumbly friend.





Swarming is named after what the bugs get up o,y and would happen in the Hudson Valley in late July and early August.

Swarming

The first month of Breathe, Swarming is when the air is filled with the buzzing of countless bugs.

Choose 1 that this place lacks. The others are all present.

- Dewdrops On Leaf Tips
- Constant Distant Buzzing
- Ornate And Elaborate Displays
- Poachers And Hunters Afoot

Choose 3-4 signs of the month found in this place.

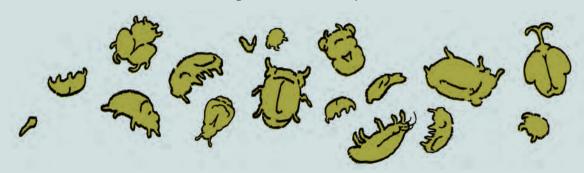
- A Whistled Tune
- Fireflies At Twilight
- Moths Everywhere
- Shepherds And Their Flocks
- The Building Of Cairns
- Mossy Fields
- Teens Cuddling And Watching The Sunset



- Merchants From Distant Lands
- Construction And Repairs
- A Festival Honoring The Local Herds And The Sustenance They Provide
- Long Walks In The Evening
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

This time period is also when the Hudson Valley gets overwhelmed by construction equipment and machines fixing the road, so this bullet point is a joke about that.

Every time Swarming rolls around, ask the table: "Have you made a new friend recently?" Mark two bug shells for each person who says yes. Once seventeen bug shells are marked, that means there's the *cicada season* phenomenon this year.



I was 16 the summer cicadas awoke in the Hudson Valley for the first time in my life, and it was a huge cicada summer. If you don't know, cicadas are a symbol of lesbians, and it was a really pivotal summer for me for other reasons, so that bug got bundled up with all those emotional memories, and so cicada season has a certain sweetness to it that other people might not experience.

Cicada Season

Every few years, the cicadas burrow up from the dirt and take to the sky, each one the size of a person and very loud. They are harmless, of course—cicadas don't eat, and all they do is create children to bury beneath the ground again. But the slow-moving creatures are everywhere, and to many communities they are revered as good omens. Swarmings during Cicada Season are considered the most profound and meaningful you can have.

- Whatever place you are in or you arrive at is now a *glen*, in addition to whatever else it was.
- Let The cicadas stick around until the month of Grasping. Until it ends, everyone can do any of the following:
 - → Get a token whenever you set aside time to hang out with a cicada.
 - → Get a token whenever you go for a walk with a friend.
 - → Spend a token to ask the cicadas any question you want. The cicadas will answer, in their own mysterious way.
 - → Spend a token for a miraculous stroke of good luck.

Gateling is named after its position in the middle of the warm months and the cold months, and how it serves as a get between the two halves of the year. In the Hudson Valley it's the last few weeks of August and early september before the leaves turn.

This is the month our

happens in, so there's a lot of references to

that's like in this month.

our camp and what

summer camp

Gateling

Gateling is the shortest month, and brings Breathe to a close with hot days and cool evenings.

Choose 1 that this place lacks. The others are all present.

- Clear Starry Skies
- A Constant Breeze
- Cold Cold Nights
- The Smell You Imagine Home Would Smell Like



Choose 3-4 signs of the month found in this place.

- Bonfires
- Rugged And Practical Clothes
- A Beautiful Golden Moon
- Buildings Swallowed In Vines
- The First Few Orange Leaves
- Sweet Treats
- Strange Subtle Magics
- A Thin Ambling Fog

- **Kids Camping Out In Tents**
- A Festival For A Secret And Mysterious God
- Not Enough Time For Everything You Want
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

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Every time Gateling rolls around, ask the table: "Are you rooted?" Mark a moon for each person who says no. Once five moons are marked, that means there's a fleeting Gateling phenomenon this year.



A Fleeting Gateling

The month of Gateling is short—sometimes, so short you feel like you miss it entirely. When this phenomenon occurs, Gateling came and went when you weren't looking, and the Moon Dance is starting.

I know this is the least mechanically involved of all the phenomena, but it's also by far my favorite. I feel like the knowledge that Gateling cvan be so easily missed gives it a bittersweet quality that enhances its presence.

The Moon Dance is inspired by big end-of-summer bonfires and celebrations, and how that entire period has a mystical air to it.

The Moon Dance

The last night of Breathe is the Moon Dance, when communities gather to dance beneath the light of the moon and welcome Silt.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. Ghe rest all happen.

- Everyone Staying Up Until The Sun Rises
- A Bonfire Burning Blue
- **Ethereal White Robes**
- The Ceremonial Marriage Of The Moon
- Thin Metal Crowns
- A Somber And Esoteric Waltz
- A Quiet And Caring Ballet

During the (Doon Dance, everyone can always:

- Get a token whenever you spot a constellation in the sky, describe its shape, and tell everyone what you call it.
- ∠ Spend a token to make a promise you never want to break.
- ⊭ Feel the dance's rhythm in your bones.



If you've celebrated the (Doon Dance before, choose how this place spends this time:

- They celebrate the Moon Dance in a familiar way.
- They celebrate the Moon Dance, but when they dance, their ancestors join them.
- They celebrate the Moon Dance, but it is full of cheerful and merry jigs.
- They celebrate the Moon Dance, but their traditions are unfamiliar to you.
- Instead of the Moon Dance, they celebrate Reflections Day; a day for making amends and forgiveness.
- Instead of the Moon Dance, they celebrate Pyre; a holiday of burning branches and dressing up as monsters.
- Instead of the Moon Dance, they celebrate a holiday you've never heard of before. Ask the locals for its name, and discover its traditions together.
- Only a few households here celebrate the Moon Dance.
- They don't celebrate any holidays at this time, so we'll need to mark the passage of the seasons in our own way.

Riley wrote Reflections Day based on Yom Kippur.

Reflections Day

***** Alternate Holiday

The last day of Breathe here is Reflections Day, a day for considering the past year, making amends, and forgiving others and yourself.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- Moments Of Silence
- Fasting
- A Huge Feast For Everyone
- Journaling
- A Special Greeting
- Throwing Our Worries Into The River
- Conversations With People You Haven't Seen In A While

During Reflections Day, everyone can always:

- ∠ Get a token whenever you apologize without expecting anything in return.
- Wish someone the best for the coming harvest, and give them one of your tokens.
- ∠ Take a moment of quiet to yourself.

I wrote Pyre when I realized Wanderhome was missing a halloween equivalent, which felt so bizarre to me I had to find its presence somewhere. I love the idea of running from one campfire to another asking for candy, and the way fire is a recuring spiritually important practice in Wanderhome.

Pyre

***** Alternate Holiday

Pyre concludes Gateling and welcomes Firetop with a week of countless bonfires, treats, and tricks.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- Tossing Worries Into The Fire
- Roasted Sweets On Sticks
- Spooky Masks And Costumes
- Ghost Stories
- Learning How To Light Fires
- Buckets Of Candy
- Commemorative Carved Figures

During Pyre, everyone can always:

- ∠ Take a token from someone else and give them a delightful treat in exchange.
- ∠ Play a cunning trick on someone, and give them one of your tokens.
- Sit by the fire and stay warm.



The illustration on the previous page is heavily based on the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, a Northern Renaisseance painter who created paintings that focused on democracy of vision. In Bruegel's work, there is no central character, only the interplay of characters within their landscape. This is also a core philosophical tenant of Wanderhome itself, and so this watercolor by L Henderson (@truffke) captures a lot of the philosophy of Wanderhome.



Firetop is named after what the trees look like, and in the Hudson Valley happens during September through mid-October.

Firetop

Firetop is the center of Silt, when the trees are so bright and red that you'd be forgiven for assuming the forest itself was on fire.

Choose 1 that this place lacks. The others are all present.

- Brilliantly Colorful Leaves
- Crisp Evening Air
- Hearty Food
- Long Dark Shadows

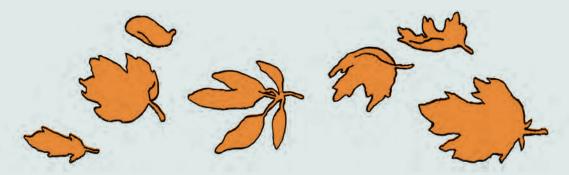
Choose 3-4 signs of the month found in this place.

- Gourds Of Various Sizes
- Spooky Masks
- Mulled Cider
- Lonesome Winds
- Comfortable Clothes
- Musicians Practicing
- Plumes Of Smoke



- Larders Stocked Full Of Crops
- Teens Engaged In Secret Mischief
- A Festival Celebrating The Harvest
- A Jolly Good Time
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Every time Firetop rolls around, ask the table: "Do you have plans for the future?" Mark a leaf for each person who says anything other than no. Once seven leaves are marked, that means there's a dry Silt phenomenon this year.



A Dry Silt

Silt is a dangerous season. Sometimes the "fire" in Firetop is literal. Dry Silts are considered an important part of a community's relationship with the land—sometimes it's important for things to burn away and reveal what's underneath. Sometimes we all need a fresh start.

- ∠ Skip Snowblanket this year. It's too dry for any decent snow.
- ∠ A Dry Silt lasts until Candlefeast. During that time, everyone can do any of the following:
 - → Ask: "Would you start over, if you could?"
 - → Ask: "Do you feel stifled?"
 - → Ask: "What are you scared you'll do?"
 - → Ask: "What do you need to let out?"

Although fire season isn't an experience I have in the Hudson Valley, it's still an aspect of Autumn that I wanted to capture, and create space to understand fire as both incredibly destructive but also important for the health for the environment.

Grasping is named after the shape of the trees as they grasp for the sky, and in the Hudson Valley happens from mid-October through November.

Grasping

Grasping is a cold and difficult month, when the leaves have fallen from the trees and the Silt air becomes uncomfortably cold.

Choose 1 that this place lacks. The others are all present.

- Leafless Trees
- Cold And Rocky Soil
- Fogbanks Rolling In
- An Alien And Unfamiliar Sky

Choose 3-4 signs of the month found in this place.

- Sweaters And Scarves
- Strange Yellow Sunsets
- Sharing Smokes
- Bowls Of Soup
- Half-Frozen Lakes
- Faraway Screech Of Distant Scorpion Packs
- Muddy Leaves Across The Ground

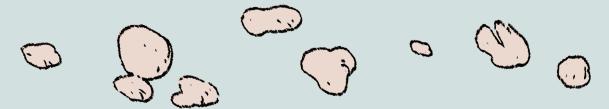


Originally, the illustrations for Grasping and Frostblanket were swapped, but I felt this illustration more effectively captured the feeling of grasping trees and almost-winter.

- Gifts Of Food For The Hungry
- Kids Anxiously Watching The Shadows
- A Somber Festival Paying Respects To The Dead
- A Creeping Sense Of Unease
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

I find Grasping in real life to ber a deeply strange and alien time, when the sky looks weird. It is often present in my memories of college, watching a weird yellow sky while I pass a cigarette between me and my friends. I wanted to capture that sensation of a month that feels outside time and space, not quite winter but still somehow cold and dead.

Every time Grasping rolls around, ask the table: "Is there something you're hiding from everyone else?" Mark a stone for each person who says anything other than no. Once nine stones
are marked, that means there's the biggest storm in a while phenomenon this year.



The Biggest Storm in a While

A Grasping Storm, or Northgale (as they're so often called), is a mercifully rare and oft-miserable experience. The frightfully cold wind roars down from the north, bringing lightning, thunder, black skies, and gales so strong that trees fall and buildings break. The most unusual aspect of a Grasping Storm is the lack of rain. Even if sometimes there will be sleet or hail that shatters windows and dents rooftops, you'll never see a drop of rain during a Northgale.

- When this phenomenon occurs, you are stuck in whatever place you were in most recently. It's not safe to travel. Everyone says who they're taking shelter with, or where they're hiding out.
- Whatever place you are in or you arrive at is now a *maelstrom*, in addition to whatever else it was.
- ✓ The Biggest Storm in a While lasts for the duration of Grasping, and quiets down by Candlefeast. You must do one of the following whenever you go outside:
 - → Ask: "What that I care about will be taken away by these winds?"
 - → Ask: "Where are these winds going to pull me to?"
 - → Mutter a curse, and tell the table what damage the storm has caused.

Candlefeast is based on all the winter feast holidays I've had in my life, including Christmas, Solstice, Thanksgiving, and Rosh Hashanah.

Candlefeast

As everyone says goodbye to Silt and welcomes in the icy Chill, Candlefeast is a time when people can honor their families (both blood and found) and give each other hope in a dark time.



Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- Candles In Every Window
- All The Locals At One Long Table
- Massive Plates Overflowing With Food
- Ceremonies Associated With Each Course
- Long Stories About The Ancient Times
- An Offering Of Food For The House God
- Copious Amounts Of Wine

During the Candlefeast, everyone can always:

- ∠ Get a token whenever you invite someone to sit with you.
- ∠ Spend a token to ask: "Is there anything else you need?"
- ∠ Help out in the kitchen.

If you've celebrated Candlefeast before, choose how this place spends this time:

- They celebrate Candlefeast in a familiar way.
- They celebrate Candlefeast, but a plate is always set aside for any daemons passing by.
- They celebrate Candlefeast, but it is the same candles every year, passed down through generations.
- They celebrate Candlefeast, but their traditions are unfamiliar to you.
- Instead of Candlefeast, they celebrate the Rime Gala; a time for your finest outfits and more beautiful fashions.
- Instead of Candlefeast, they celebrate the Nameless Day; a cruel holiday of ceremonially hiding from the Slobbering God.
- Instead of Candlefeast, they celebrate a holiday you've never heard of before. Ask the locals for its name, and discover its traditions together.
- Only a few households here celebrate Candlefeast.
- They don't celebrate any holidays at this time, so we'll need to mark the passage of the seasons in our own way.

The idea of a midwinter gala shows up a lot in my imagination (see Yazeba's Bed & Breakfast for more of that) but I like finally getting to explore what the fancy royal holiday is in the Haeth.

Rime Gala

***** Alternate Holiday

The Rime Gala is an enormous spectacle of a holiday, when the first snow of Chill gives all the chance to show off their finest outfits.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- Ice Skating
- Frozen Sculptures
- Shimmering Gowns
- Fancy Cocktails
- Masquerades
- Colorful Suits
- Merriment And Laughter

we now annually celebrate the rime gala in early december as a possum creek holiday party! the invitation always suggests some of the traditions from this list.

During the Rime Gala, everyone can always:

- ∠ Get a token whenever you compliment someone on their outfit.
- Ask: "May I have this dance?" and give them one of your tokens, regardless of their answer.
- Appreciate how you look in a mirror.

Nameless Day isn't directly based on any one particular holiday, but rather it's a chance to integrate the Slobbering God further into the setting.

Nameless Day

***** Alternate Holiday

In rare and cursed places, no one speaks of the last day of Silt. The Slobbering God might be long dead, but she is not yet forgotten.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- Locked Doors
- Symbols Painted On Walls
- Straw Scapegoats
- Raw Bug Meat Left On Windowsills
- Ringing Bells
- Knives Under Pillows
- Whispered Prayers

During the Nameless Day, everyone can always:

- ☐ Get a token whenever you describe the length of the shadows, a distant howling, or
 the feeling of something watching you.
- Spend a token to remind everyone that the Slobbering God is dead, and that she cannot harm you.
- ∠ Hide.

Having to remind everyone that the Slobbering God is dead and cannot harm you is one of the creepiest parts of this extremely weird and intense holiday.





Snowblanket is named after what the snow does, and in the Hudson Valley runs from December through early/mid-January.

Snowblanket

Snowblanket is the calmer of the months of Chill, when the snows are heavy and the air becomes so quiet at night that you feel like you can hear the whispers of the world.

Choose 1 that this place lacks. The others are all present.

- Snow Up To Your Waist
- Light Of A White Sun
- Unbearably Bitter Cold
- The Silence Of A Sleeping World



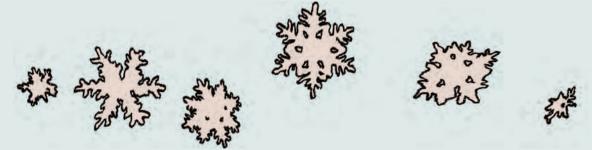
Choose 3-4 signs of the month found in this place.

- Many Layers Of Clothing
- Frozen-Over Creeks
- Red Flowers Peeking Through Snow
- Smoke Rising From Chimneys
- Mugs Of Steaming Drink
- Countless Stars In The Crisp Sky
- Numb Fingers Hidden In Pockets

I imagine Snowblanket and Frostbite as "Good Winter" and "Bad Winter", and I feel like in many places the two months bleed together.

- Warm And Comfortable Hearths
- Kids Building Snow-Folk
- A Festival Where You Build A Big Bonfire
- A Sense Of Family
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

Every time Snowblanket rolls around, ask the table: "Do you dream of a home?" Mark three snowflakes if someone says yes, and six snowflakes if everyone says yes. Once six snowflakes are marked, that means there's a deep snow phenomenon this year.



A Deep Snow

When the snow falls, it can truly fall. There have been records of past snows swallowing up entire houses under the white blanket, and no one in their right mind would ever travel. If it wasn't for the culture of hospitality in the Hæth, this might be a nightmare for you wanderers. Thankfully, a Deep Snow is a lovely time to hunker down with some friends and stay warm during a heavy Chill.

- When this phenomenon occurs, you are stuck in whatever place you were in most recently. You won't be able to travel until the Deep Snow is gone. Decide as a group where you're staying for the season.
- ∠ In order to travel from one location in this place to another during a Deep Snow, you must spend a token.
- ∠ A Deep Snow lasts until New Years. Skip Frostbite entirely, as that month is going to just be even more snow. During that time, everyone can do any of the following:
 - → Get a token whenever you help out the people, spirits, or bugs hosting you.
 - → Spend a token in order to ask: "How should we pass the time?" They get a token if they give a good answer.
- I love any phenomenon that requires you to spend a token in order to travel from one building to another. It's not a substantial cost, but it makes it feel like there is a cost an another-wise unremarkable event.

Frostbite is named after what the cold does to you, and runs from early January until the snow finally melts in early March.

Frostbite

Frostbite is a miserable month, when the beauty of snow has given way to the uncomfortable presence of ice and frost.

Choose 1 that this place lacks. The others are all present.

- Your Breath Clinging In The Air
- Light Diffusing Across A Leaden Sky
- An Inescapable Chill
- A Barren And Inhospitable World

Choose 3-4 signs of the month found in this place.

- Icicles On Every Surface
- Huge Mounds Of Muddy Snow
- Strangers At The Door
- A Howling Gale
- Perpetually-Bubbling Stew
- Barns Full Of Sleeping Bugs
- Chattering Teeth

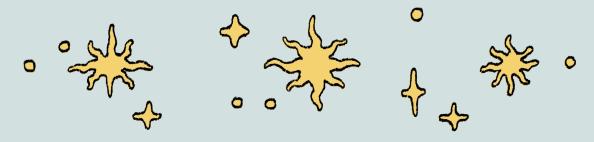


- Chapped And Cracked Lips
- Teens Huddled Together For Comfort
- A Festival Warding Off An Evil God
- A Profound Melancholy
- Something Else Of Your Own Invention

The eclipse is the most important phenomenon in Wanderhome. While there's no real point where the game reaches an end, the idea of the eclipse is that you've finally gotten to the point where the game is entirely yours — the book has no secrets left to teach you. If we imagine that Wanderhome is a ship of Theseus, then this is the point when you have replaced every plank of wood in the ship with something of your own creation. You're still playing Wanderhome, but its your game now.

Originally this section was at the end of the book, before we added alternate holidays. It no longer has the same emotional impact that it did when it was the last piece of text in the game, but it sill matters a lot as the symbolic end point of the text's influence.

Every time Frostbite rolls around, ask the table: "Are you content?" Mark a star for each person who says anything other than yes. Once thirteen stars are marked, that means there's the eclipse phenomenon this year.



The Eclipse

News from the astronomers of the Floating Mountain has arrived even here, to the furthest reaches of the Hæth. As the frigid sun rises high into the Chill sky, the moon will dance in front of it and cast the world in darkness. While it lasts for only a moment, a solar eclipse can capture everyone's imagination for years to come. Everyone emerges from their bundled-up chilly blankets to see something unlike anything they could imagine.

- Whatever place you are in or you arrive at is a *mirror* for the duration of the eclipse, in addition to whatever else it was.
- When the Eclipse begins, cross off two of the seasonal advancements you haven't yet chosen from your list, then invent a new seasonal advancement and add it to your list. I cannot tell you what to write—this journey is now your own.

New Years is inspired by a loose combination of the Lunar New Year and my own experiences with the Solar New Year as a time for celebration and hanging out with friends.

> Each of the "New Year" holidays encourage you to rework your social connections through the ask prompts.

New Years

New Years is the end of the year, a solid week of celebration that is a time for radical

change and transformation.

At the end of New Years, go around and ask 1 question to your left and 1 question to your right, using those questions in your playbook from the start of your journey. It's okay and expected for the answers to have changed.



Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- A Week Of Hopeful Revelry
- Raucous Fireworks
- Festival Stalls With Lots Of Snacks
- Gift-Giving
- **Elaborate And Ornate Costumes**
- Special Performances
- Letters Written For All Your Friends

During New Years, everyone can always:

- ∠ Get a token whenever you give someone something they really wanted.
- ∠ Spend a token to make a promise to yourself that you're determined to keep.
- ∠ Try out a new name, look, or gender.

While you could try out a new name or gender whenever you want, having a special day for it makes it feel more present in the culture.

If you've celebrated New Years before, choose how this place spends this time:

- They celebrate New Years in a familiar way.
- They celebrate New Years, but it is a decadent and sensuous holiday here.
- They celebrate New Years, but it is a private and personal holiday here.
- They celebrate New Years, but their traditions are unfamiliar to you.
- Instead of New Years, they celebrate the Bloody Night; the honoring of the tragedy of war and times otherwise forgotten.
- Instead of New Years, they celebrate the Sunrise; when the last beams of light from the old year brush against the skin of the new.
- Instead of New Years, they celebrate a holiday you've never heard of before. Ask the locals for its name, and discover its traditions together.
- Only a few households here celebrate New Years.
- They don't celebrate any holidays at this time, so we'll need to mark the passage of the seasons in our own way.

There should be more decadence and sensuousness in Wanderhome games lol

Bloody Night is a tool to give social context for the Rebellion, and also imitate a lot of anti-fascist war holidays celebrated in various parts of the world. It helps anchor the war as something that occurred in recent memory, and creates a really mournful shape to the hints of rebellion throughout the book.

Bloody Night

※ Alternate ∏oliday

The Bloody Night is not a celebration, but instead a time of mourning. You cannot lionize those who died for a useless cause—all you can do is thank all the gods that things are better now.

Let At the end of the Bloody Night, go around and ask 1 question to your left and 1 question to your right, using those questions in your playbook from the start of your journey. It's okay and expected for the answers to have changed.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- Destroying Statues
- Symbolic War Paint
- Leaving Orchids On Graves
- Recounting The Dead
- Lonely Walks At Night
- Old Rebel War Songs
- Sobbing

During the Bloody Night, everyone can always:

- ∠ Spend a token to speak directly the name of someone you lost to violence.
- Curse the King of the Floating Mountain's name.

Another patented Jay Dragon writing motif is the sunrise as a time when emotions are laid bare and people can be together in a rolling wave of intimacy and care. Sunrise is especially based on sleepovers and hangouts with my friends.

Sunrise

***** Alternate Holiday

The last flickering stars of the old year brush against the hopeful youth of the new. Most people are asleep as the morning dawn welcomes something new to us, but for the lucky few that stay up...it can mean everything.

When the sun rises, go around and ask 1 question to your left and 1 question to your right, using those questions in your playbook from the start of your journey. It's okay and expected for the answers to have changed.

Choose 2 traditions that this place doesn't engage in. The rest all happen.

- Blankets On The Ground
- Rambling Jokes
- Makeup Parties
- Mock Fights
- Whispered Confessions
- Lying In Piles
- Sneaking Away

As the sun rises, everyone can always:

- Get a token whenever you have fun with the people you care about, even if you only just met them.
- Spend a token to spot something fantastical and impossible, that no one should ever get to see.

I put a lot of work into this section of the book, and this page in particular, into making sure it holds up as an end to Wanderhome. Even though the average Wanderhome player won't ever read this page, it's an important part of the experience for someone who reads through Wanderhome in order.

You can spend a token to be Ash having his Ho-oh moment

The next page is the mirrored version of the opening paragraphs of Wanderhome, that serve as the closing incantation for the book, as a way to symbolically contain the entire game between two mirrored stanzas. And with that, we come to the end of our journey through the book! I hope you enjoyed this Director's commentary from myself and Grub as we went through Wanderhome and talked about the process of its creation.

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The road is a river that carries me home. I hold tight to it as it sings within me, louder than any storm yet calmer than any lullaby. Press your hands against mine, and you can feel this. My home, heavy in my heart and soft against my lips. Sometimes, when I feel the harsh gales pushing against me, I can stare out at the thin and tangled road ahead and forget what waits beyond.

But I trust the road. I trust the song. I trust that someday, I'll cuddle up in my bedding beneath a canopy of trees, deep in the forest where the small and forgotten gods dance, and know that above all else: we are alive. Our care has a warmth all of its own.





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Wanderhome was written on the ancestral land of the Esopus Munsee people, which has been illegally and forcibly occupied by white settlers, and as of this publication has not been returned.

Wanderhome is inspired by the **No Dice, No Masters** engine (sometimes called **Belonging Outside Belonging**) designed by Avery Alder and Benjamin Rosenbaum. It also draws inspiration from *Under Hollow Hills* by Meguey & Vincent Baker, *Balikbayan* by Jamila Nedjadi, *Venture* by Riley Rethal, and *The Grand Guignol* by Luke Jordan. *Wanderhome's* Journeying Tools were inspired by the Script Change safety mechanic. Finally, *Wanderhome* is also rooted by the author's appreciation for the works of Tove Jansson, Brian Jacques, and Hayao Miyazaki.

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A Note on Type

This book is set in Arno Pro, with headers in Luminari and initials in Ruritania.

Arno (*Robert Slimbach*, 2007, *Adobe*) is an old-style serif based on 15th and 16th century Humanist calligraphy, named for the Arno river that runs through Florence, and designed to have a "tangible style" while maintaining legibility. A combination of the Aldine and Venetian styles, it includes a multitude of fleurons, glyphs, and alternates as a nod to early printing, used heavily throughout this text. Italics are based on the print work of Ludovico degli Arrighi.

Luminari (*Philip Bouwsma*, 2010, Canada Type) also references the calligraphy of the Italian Renaissance, with lowercase letters specifically based on the work of fifteenth century Humanist Poggio Bracciolini. Capitals take influence from varied Medieval sources including the Momouth psalters and twelfth century work from Ramsey Abbey.

Ruritania (*Paul Lloyd*, 1997, *Greater Albion Typefounders*), used here for decorative initials, is a Medieval-inspired typeface named for Anthony Hope's novels and the following Ruritanian tradition of quaint and nonspecific fantasy kingdoms. It was designed, like much of Lloyd's work, to be beautiful, impractical, and free to use.

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About the Author

Jay Dragon is a queer disabled game designer born and raised in the Hudson Valley, who grew up digging for newts in the riverbed, attempting (and mostly failing) to summon ghosts with friends, and taking long rooftop naps. Jay has been designing for more than a decade, writing games about the liminality of queerness, the power of community, and the magic hidden in the world around us. These days, when not writing games or managing Possum Creek, Jay can often be found sitting on a dock by the creek, listening to music and watching the sun set.

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