

THE WEAVERS' DAUGHTERS

Jessica Hammer
Group Omega
Sacred, Thread, Inconsistency

The year is 1792, a thousand years after the gods died – but their daughters still walk the halls of Versailles, the battlefields of Turkey, the forests of the American frontier and the slums of London. As Vorvia, daughters of the Norns, you are cursed and blessed with visions of the future. In exile from your homeland, can you find a way to reconcile your ancient powers and sacred duties with the demands of a complex, chaotic, contemporary world?

This game could not have been made without a little help from my friends.

Thanks to Amy Fagundes for crucial brainstorming help; to Robert Scott for late-night discussion sessions; to Echo, Rossum, Talysman, Tadh, Mike Sands, Daniel Wood and Gorsh from Group Omega for great feedback and for keeping me motivated; to iago, for a fantastic character sheet; to Emily, Graham, and all the other Game Chef participants who helped me focus; and to all my other friends who forgave me for disappearing off the face of the earth to write this game.

Most of all, though, this game could not have been written without the help of my muse, my comforter, my inspiration and my partner:
Chris Hall.

This one's for you, sweetheart.

Then again, they're all for you, one way or another.



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Introduction

The Weavers' Daughters

In Ragnarok, the gods died - brave men rushing to their deaths, as usual. But your great-great-a-hundred-times-great grandmothers had the gift of sight, and knew when to flee. The Norns survived the war at the end of the world, at least for a time. The gods had died and magic was gone from the land, but these women bore children to brave mortal men: warrior sons and witch daughters, daughters with the gifts of foresight and fate.

Those daughters are you.

Hundreds of years have passed, and your mothers and grandmothers have always fulfilled their sacred duties, tending the small farming communities of northern Iceland and quietly performing the ancient rites. But in 1783, nine years ago, terrible trouble came to your home. The great volcano, Laki, exploded in smoke and fire. Tens of thousands starved, and tens of thousands more fled to try to make a life elsewhere. The Vorvia did their duty and stayed with their people, even if it meant starving by their side – but not all of them made this choice. A few of your people took another path.

The year is 1792, and you, the player characters, are the daughters of women who chose to throw aside their sacred duties and flee their homeland. Gifted with foresight and control over the strands of fate, but cut off from your community and your home, you must find your way in a hostile world that has more use for merchants than magic. Most people have no idea who you are and what you can do - even though you can see death and war and fear approaching them.

Worse, though, is the people who do know about you. The Norns weren't the only ones who survived Ragnarok. The daughters of the Valkyries live, too, urging nations toward chaos and war from their places at the sides of powerful men. The daughters of the Oskmey, the swan-maidens, walk the courts of kings and the back alleys of slums, their songs propelling their listeners toward beauty, decadence and madness. A swan-daughter sings in Marie Antoinette's ear, propelling her into greater and greater excess. A sword-maiden whispers to William Pitt of the need to restore England's power and might. And both groups know that you can see them, and track them, and find them - and that you may not approve of what they are doing to the world. If that weren't enough, the members of your own family who stayed behind have sent out emissaries to find you and return you, possibly forcibly, to face up to your ancestral responsibilities, whether you like it or not.

And then there are the visions of the future that just won't leave you alone

What's the right thing to do? Who is your real family? Where does duty stop and self begin? How do you respond to tragedies that only you can foresee, and what do you give up to stop them? Who can you save? How can you pit yourself against the complex,

connected forces that pull lives and nations toward chaos and destruction? What is the place of magic in the modern world? And just how much power does this magic give you, anyhow?

This game explores these questions and more, through the medium of possible futures that the players shape and change.

Use of Ingredients

As a Game Chef game, this game was designed to explore three ingredients. For purposes of judging, the ingredients and my interpretations are listed here.

This game explores:

- The **sacred** duties of the Vorvia. Because your mothers fled their sacred duties, you are considered dangerous, despicable exiles. But the sacred bonds of Seidhr still unite you with your people
- The **threads** of Fate as it is woven on the great Loom of the world. As daughters of the Norns, fabled fate-weavers, the PCs can see and even change these threads.
- The **inconsistencies** the PCs strive to create between the futures they see, and the ones they bring to pass. To accept the future that Fate provides is a dangerous thing.

Materials and Preparation

In order to play *The Weavers' Daughters*, you will need a few simple materials, as follows:

- Four players
- A pencil for each player
- Three character sheets
- Two sets of *The Weavers' Daughters* fate tiles (48 tiles total)
- At least twenty black pebbles or other tokens

The character sheets and fate tiles are printable from this package. For players, pencils and black pebbles, you will have to look elsewhere.

You will need to write the word FATE in capital letters on the back of each fate tile. Be sure the word is oriented the same way as the rune on the front of the tile!

If you cannot acquire black pebbles, any small, identical objects will do, such as pennies.

The Weavers' Daughters can be played for a single session or as part of an ongoing campaign. For a single session, expect to set aside 2-4 hours for play. For a campaign, consult your friendly local gamemaster.

Setting and Situation

Norns in Exile

Long ago, your grandmother's grandmother's grandmother spent the eternal years of her life sitting by the foot of Yggdrasil, the World Ash. Uld, the Crone, mistress of What Was, spun out the threads of fate. Verdandi, the Mother, mistress of All That Is, wove them into a tapestry that pictured the lives of men, gods, and beasts alike. And laughing, lovely Skuld, the Maiden, clipped the threads with her quick shears, bringing all things to an end.

Then came Ragnarok, the day of fire and blood. The gods struggled with one another, shattering the earth and tearing the sky with their wars. Uld, Verdandi and Skuld had long foreseen this day, and while the others fought, they hid among the roots of the World Ash. When they emerged, all was silent. The gods were dead, and a new age had begun – the age of Men.

The Norns felt the strength leaving them, though they were still to live a dozen years and more. (Not an easy thing, for time and age to slay fate!) So that their knowledge would not depart the world, they each sought out a hero among mortal men. Wise Uld chose a singer of great tales, halt in body but sound of mind and valorous of heart, to father her children. Compassionate Verdandi chose a great king among men, a leader and wily politician, who protected all his people as if they were his own children. And laughing Skuld chose a warrior for herself, a mighty man who leaped laughing into battle, shattering the swords of his enemies upon his skin.

The three Norns each bore a daughter, the progenitor of her line – and on the day her daughter's blood began to flow, each Norn called her daughter to her side and taught her the secret of the Loom. Then each of the Norns left her home, her husband and her child. It is said that the three of them found one another on the night of a full moon, by the shores of the sea, but outside of stories they were never seen again.

The daughters of the Norns had daughters, and they daughters in their turn, all gifted with foresight and wisdom and the magics of their foremothers. The daughters of the Norns came to be called Vorvia, for they served as protectors and guides to the small Icelandic communities in which they lived. They healed the sick, fed the hungry, and tended the shrines and sacred trees in homage to the gods who once lived and who, like the White Christ, were sure to rise again.

But while the lives of the Vorvia have changed very little in a thousand years, the world around them has changed a great deal. Empires have risen and fallen. Wars have been fought, songs written that will live a thousand years more. Surely any woman could be tempted to forsake her sacred duties in the face of such temptation.

Perhaps it was temptation that drew your mother from her home, or perhaps it was the great Laki eruption of 1783, which destroyed many villages utterly and left others to

starve. But either way, your mother left Iceland many years ago – and now you have grown up in exile.

By leaving, your mother thought she could be through with Fate.

The difficulty is, of course, that Fate is hardly through with you.

The World of 1792

The world of 1792 is one of uncertainty and revolution. The French Revolution is proceeding apace; the American one is just getting its feet, with the election of its first President. In Sweden, a king is murdered; in France, one stands trial for his life. Imperialistic Russia invades Poland, while France declares war on her neighbors. The last of the Holy Roman Emperors takes his throne, while the first Europeans explore the Pacific Northwest.

And through all of this, the daughters of the Norns, the Valkyries, and the Oskmey make their way, shaping the nature of the world that is to come.

The Weave and the Nature of Fate

To understand the relationship of the Vorvia to fate and the future, it is important to understand the nature of fate itself.

All creation is tied together. This is easy to observe: throw a rock into someone's window and watch them react with anger! Any action pulls on all the lives surrounding it. This is known, to the Vorvia, as the Weave of Fate. The Weave contains all human lives. Animals, places or things which are significant to any human also fall into the web. The world as a whole, the canvas upon which the Weave is made, is referred to as the Loom.

Fate and the Physical World

If a tree falls in the forest, does anyone hear it? In the world of *The Weavers' Daughters*, the answer is no. The tree may fall, but its fate is irrelevant to the course of time. Until it becomes significant to a woodcutter, a hunter, or a pair of lovers who use it as a seat, the tree stands outside the Weave. Anything that happens to it has no effect on the rest of the world.

The Weave of Fate has two parts: the Warp and the Weft.

The Warp

The Warp is how the Vorvia refer to the thread of a single person, place, or thing, forward and backward through time. These threads are stretched on the Loom of the world, anchored in the past and the future.

Looking backward and forward along the threads of the Warp allows a Vorvora to see through time. A person's future is written in the web of the Warp, just as their past is woven into the fabric of history. Looking ahead in the Warp, a Vorvora might see that a child will die young, or that a man's hands will drip blood through a long day and longer night, or that a woman will be barren. Looking behind, a Vorvora might see the person being born, or the day they left home, or the murder they committed to win their fortune.

When looking back or forward, the Vorvia tend to see moments that created the person's fate. They are likely to see moments that involve that person's relationships with other human beings rather than with physical objects, unless those moments are of immense personal or fate-linked significance. After all, each human life is a thread, and the eye is drawn to places where those threads link and tangle.

Fate and Free Will

If the Weave predicts the future, what of free will?

Free will is not an impossibility in the world of *The Weavers' Daughters*. It is simply that the Weave predicts with unerring accuracy the decisions that an individual will freely make. The Warp represents both a person's inner nature (the thread itself) and the meaningful events that happen to them (the tangles and knots in it). With perfect knowledge of these two things, it is possible to completely predict a person's actions. Ordinary folk simply cannot change who they are enough to escape themselves.

The Vorvia and their supernatural sisters – as well as a few rare mortals – can change the course of their own fate. This means pulling one's thread free of the Weave for a brief period, stepping outside one's own life and capacities. In a very real way, escaping Fate, even briefly, means fundamentally changing who you are.

For more on supernatural beings, see p. 12.

For more on the powers of the Vorvia to change fate, see p. 8 and p. 32.

The ability to change the Warp means reaching into the past or the future. It is a source of immense power. By changing the Warp, one could cause someone to die young – or, even more disturbingly, to have died young a dozen years ago. One could tempt a good man into evil, or give an evil man a change of heart. However, changing the Warp means not knowing the full consequences of what you do. Every individual's fate affects every other's. It takes, quite literally, a village of Vorvia to change the Warp safely – one to control and shape each thread the proposed change affects.

Of course, difficulty and danger doesn't always stop people from trying to play with fire
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The Weft

The Weft is how the Vorvia refer to the threads that weave between people, places and things in the present moment. These threads of connection and community – of meaning, if you will – hold together the different threads of the Warp. Without the Weft, individuals would move forward through time without any impact on the lives of those around them. The Weft represents the ways in which people's lives change one another.

Looking at the Weft means seeing connections in the present or the near future. A connection between two elements of the Web means that they are, or perhaps soon will be, interacting in a way that will change the fate of both. For example, a man hoping for his ship to come in would have a thread tying him to the ship. A woman waiting for her lover would have a thread tying them together. A child afraid of being bullied would have a thread tying her to the bully, and perhaps also to her mother who she hopes will protect her. The Weft creates the actions of today that shape the Warp's fates of tomorrow.

Changing the Weft means changing the relationships between people, places and things. The man's ship sinks. The woman sends her lover away. The child stands up to the bully. While changing the Weft is less powerful than changing the Warp, it is also far less dangerous. People remain themselves; only their circumstances and relationships change.

Visions and Seidhr

The Vorvia are both blessed and cursed to be able to see the Weave. Blessed, because they can use their knowledge of Fate to step outside what is preordained for them and to commit acts which change the future. Cursed, for though they have a choice of how to respond to Fate, they are nonetheless bound to her by deep ties.

The code of the Vorvia is known as Seidhr, a word which refers both to the relationship between a Vorvora and the Weave, and to the obligations the Weave places upon her. A Vorvora may seek out a vision by enlisting the aid of two of her sisters, but often visions will come to Vorvia unbidden. These visions are a call from Fate, and they are dangerous to ignore.

Bidden and Unbidden Visions

Visions are born from tangles in the Weave, nexuses of Fate that call to Vorvia nearby. The choice of many Vorvia to remain in their isolated Icelandic communities is not entirely about tradition. To live far from people is to avoid the obligations of Seidhr toward them.

By choosing to live among so many strangers and give up control of their immediate environments, PC Vorvia place themselves in the hands of Fate. With so many people about, they are often caught up in futures that might be, could be, or should be – even if they would prefer not to be involved at all.

The precepts of Seidhr are as follows:

1. Do not ignore a vision that is sent to you.
2. Do not allow your community to be harmed.
3. Do not betray those to whom you have given your word.
4. Do not give aid to the unworthy.
5. Do not let profit or harm to yourself cloud your judgment.

These five precepts are, naturally, open to interpretation. Who is in one's community? What makes someone unworthy? When exactly does one's judgment become clouded? In Iceland, the Vorvia communities have long-standing traditions of interpretation and centuries of experience determining how Seidhr applies to specific cases. For you, exiles in a foreign land, interpreting Seidhr is much more difficult.

Getting Seidhr right is crucial, however – because there are forces which enforce it. Violating Seidhr weakens your ties to Fate. Violate it too often, and the Weave itself will revolt against your attempts to manipulate it! Worse, many Vorvia consider themselves agents of the Weave whose responsibility it is to hunt down violators of Seidhr. After all, a single Vorvora gone wrong can change the Weave for the worse in terrible ways.

The problem? Just living in the outside world, to some Vorvia, means you're already in violation of Seidhr, and they consider it their sacred duty to hunt you down and destroy you. These Vorvia call themselves the Skadaji, after the giantess Skadi who made the gods themselves tremble when she came to them seeking revenge. Some of them even believe that they ought to take revenge upon you, blaming your modern ways for the Laki eruption and the following tragedy for their people.

The traditional Vorvia of Iceland are hardly any help. If anything, they support the Skadaji. After all, they suffered through the aftermath of Laki, stayed with their communities, did their duty, and often starved to death alongside their friends and family. You and your people are traitors and exiles, or at best a bunch of irresponsible mavericks who can't be trusted to do your duty. There's little help for you there.

Heroic and Villainous Vorvia

NPC Vorvia are just as capable of heroism and villainy as any other people. However, the ancient culture of the Vorvia tends to shape the ways in which their heroism and villainy expresses itself.

When a Vorvora is heroic, her heroism comes from wisdom, cleverness, foresight, patience, loyalty, and discernment.

When a Vorvora is villainous, her villainy comes from being controlling, passing judgment, fear, narrow-mindedness, mindless adherence to tradition, and fascism.

Whether one considers a particular Vorvora's actions to represent the first group or the second, of course, will be strongly influenced by whether one is a traditional Vorvora or an exile. What Icelandic Vorvia consider perfectly normal, such as dictating marriages based on what they foresee in the children's lives, the exiles likely consider offensive and oppressive. Conversely, the exiles' freedom horrifies the traditional Vorvia, who see them as tossing away a thousand years of tradition for no good reason.

Like beauty, heroism and villainy are often in the eye of the beholder!

It's hardly all bad, of course: there are enough families who fled Laki to make communities of your own. But violate Seidhr too badly and you might have Fate, the Skadaji and even your own extended family on your tail!

Other Supernaturals

The Vorvia are not the only individuals who have control of Fate. There are also other types of supernatural beings in the world, and a few rare mortals who also hold the strings of Fate in their hands. Like the Vorvia, these individuals can perform actions which cannot be predicted by Fate. They can go above and beyond their place in the Weave, for better or for worse.

Of course, these individuals do not have the ability to perceive the Weave as the Vorvia do. However, they do have other powers which may compensate to some extent. These individuals are briefly outlined here.

Disir

The Valkyries of legend accompanied heroes into battle, protecting the greatest of them and reaping the souls of those who died heroic deaths. Riding on great wolves, they gloried in blood and valor and stories of great deeds. In Ragnarok, the Valkyries died shrieking upon the battlefield, but left their daughters, the Disir, among mortal men.

The Disir are the ultimate Darwinists, believing that greatness comes from conflict and pain. The more brutal and savage the conflict, the greater the men and women who survive. They are profoundly engaged in the mortal world, urging nations toward chaos and war from their places at the sides of powerful men.

When a Disya is heroic, her heroism comes from courage, independence, strength, honesty, and ambition.

When a Disya is villainous, her villainy comes from callousness, chaos, death, and destruction.

The Disir have powers of protection and war.

Oskmey

The Swan-Maidens of old were beautiful women who took the form of swans, or perhaps swans who took the form of beautiful women. It was said that men would go mad to see the beauty of a Swan-Maiden's face – mad with desire to possess her and to father a child upon her. Perhaps it is no surprise that although the Swan-Maidens died in Ragnarok, many of their descendants survive in all walks of mortal life.

The Oskmey are sensualists, enjoying the pleasures of this world for all they're worth. These pleasures aren't just those of the body; Oskmey have just as keen an appreciation for scholarship and art as they do for sex, food and drugs. The Oskmey walk the courts of kings and the back alleys of slums, their songs propelling their listeners toward beauty, decadence and madness.

When an Oskmaiden is heroic, her heroism comes from passion, imagination, creativity, generosity, and love.

When an Oskmaiden is villainous, her villainy comes from decadence, irresponsibility, hedonism, and selfishness.

The Oskmey have powers of enchantment and shape-shifting.

Mortals

The vast majority of mortals cannot go beyond their place in the Weave. However, the occasional exceptional mortal may have the power to change Fate with their actions.

This power does not have to do with the mortal's level of mundane power or the strength of his will. The mortal in question may be a ruler or a beggar, with a will like iron or like butter. However, these mortals have, without exception, escaped an apparently inevitable death through the actions of a Vorvora, a Disya or an Oskmaiden – actions which take place outside the Weave.

According to the Weave, these individuals do not exist – and so nearly everything that they do caroms and cannons off other threads of the Weave, interfering with the orderly march of Fate toward the future. Many tangles in the Weave come about because of the actions of such mortals, tangles which appear in the visions of the Vorvia whether they like it or not.

Other Beings

There are no male Vorvia, Disir or Oskmey. Males of these bloodlines are simply ordinary men. Male relatives of the Vorvia do tend to be wise and patient, relatives of the Disir brave and strong, and relatives of the Oskmey handsome and talented, but that has more to do with selective breeding than magic powers!

The blood does not always run true on the distaff side, either. Female relatives of a Vorvora, a Disya or an Oskmaiden may be gifted or ungifted on a case-by-case basis.

There may be other supernatural beings in the world, at the group's discretion. Descendants of giants, dwarves, elves and other creatures of Norse mythology may certainly have survived Ragnarok. However, these individuals are not outside of Fate as the Vorvia, Disir, and Oskmey are. They may be used in stories, but have no power to change the story's ending.

Character Creation

Who Am I?

In *The Weavers' Daughters*, players take on the role of Vorvia – daughters, many times removed, of the three Norns who sat at the base of Yggdrasil and wove the future by the well of Ymir. Your far-sighted mothers fled their small Icelandic communities at some point before the devastating Laki eruption of 1783.

Since then, you have been raised in exile, estranged from your land, your people and your community. Though you have left your home, your powers of foresight and fate have not left you. You must find a way to reconcile your life as a Vorvia to your life in the thoroughly modern world of 1792.

For more details of setting, see p. 4 and p. 8.

What Can I Do?

Vorvia are, in essence, ordinary women. Much as they might like supernatural speed, or the ability to throw a fireball or two, or some really big guns, they must face the problems of the world more or less unarmed.

Think about the women in your life when considering what the average Vorvora is capable of. A typical Vorvora in 1792 might be able to pick a lock, persuade a guard to let her into the palace, or earn a living from a small business. On the other hand, she can't invent the sub-machine gun, sweet-talk the crown jewels out of a prince, or defeat a squad of guards single-handedly. Vorvia in other times and cultures should follow similar laws of plausibility.

Of course, that's before fate comes into the picture.

You see, most people are limited in what they are capable of by their nature and their upbringing. They cannot go beyond their innate capabilities. Their thread is woven into the great Loom of Fate. Their hopes and dreams, successes and failures, heroisms and betrayals are all already a part of the story. Nothing they can do can affect the way that the future turns out, for them or for anyone else.

The Vorvia – and a few others, as described on p. 12– have the rare ability to go beyond what is fated for them. A Vorvora can draw on her connection to Fate to change the Weave. For example, a Vorvora calling on Fate just might be able to get those guards run over by a conveniently out-of-control carriage. Of course, that act will then be woven back into the Loom, and the Vorvora in question may not like the consequences it has later on.

It is this ability to draw on the Weave which allows the Vorvia to truly change the future, not just live within the boundaries of the immediately possible.

See p. 32 for more details of what magics your character might have.

To create a Vorvora, read on!

The Character Sheet

The *The Weavers' Daughters* character sheet is built around the Elder Futhark, a set of ancient runes used for divination and other sorts of magic. The twenty-four runes are laid out in three groups or Aetts.

Each rune has a name and a meaning; the name appears on your character sheet, and you can look up the meaning in the Rune List on p. 39. Runes represent your character's ability to go above and beyond what is fated for her – the degree to which she can manipulate, rather than be controlled by, that thread of the Loom. Your character's relationship with a particular rune represents her relationship with that particular aspect of Fate.

Example

The rune Fehu literally means cattle, but it also symbolizes wealth, abundance, reward, generosity, ownership, money and ambition. One's relationship with Fehu would represent one's past and future relationship with those concepts.

A character with a strong affinity for Fehu might simply be wealthy. Alternately, she could have a keen business mind, succeed at finding powerful patrons, or always win at cards. A more literal interpretation might be that she grew up on a farm!

A character who has a poor relationship with Fehu might be financially irresponsible, avaricious, or simply unlucky with money.

To a large extent, the nature of your character's relationship with a rune is what you define it to be. These relationships are the bulk of where you define your character's history and personality, so feel free to use whichever meanings of the rune particularly call to you. The group's consensus should define what's plausible here.

Each Aett also has a meaning.

The first Aett is Freya's Aett. Freya is the goddess of love and war, and so her Aett deals with the character's skill in direct social or physical conflict of any kind.

The second Aett is Heimdall's Aett. Heimdall is the guardian of the Bifrost Bridge, whose senses are keenest and insight deepest of all the gods. Heimdall's Aett represents the character's perception, intelligence and knowledge.

The third Aett is Tyr's Aett. Tyr's name is sung throughout the ages for his courage in putting his hand in the mouth of Fenris wolf. His Aett stands for the character's courage, fortitude, and valor.

Aetts and Conflicts

A particular conflict can often be solved by different methods which fall under different Aetts. For example, consider a character trying to bypass a locked door.

If she attempts to bash the door down, it is a direct physical conflict and falls into Freya's Aett. (Though whether she hurts herself doing it might be a question for Tyr's Aett to answer!)

If she attempts to persuade a guard to open it for her, it is a direct social conflict and falls into Freya's Aett as well.

If she looks for where the key might be hidden, her perception comes into play, and she uses Heimdall's Aett.

If she tries to pick the lock, it is a test of knowledge and skill, which is Heimdall's Aett as well.

If she wants to hide and wait until someone opens the door, her patience and endurance are tested through Tyr's Aett.

Finally, if she burns the door and wishes to step through the flaming ashes, the test of her courage falls under Tyr's Aett as well.

The runes in a particular Aett do not necessarily directly relate to the Aett's meaning. For example, the rune Hagalaz, in Heimdall's Aett, refers to uncontrollable natural forces. This has little to do with Heimdall's realm of perception and knowledge.

However, if a character has positive relationships with the runes in a particular Aett, she will generally be good at doing things covered by that Aett. Any positive relationship the character has with Hagalaz helps her with all activities in Heimdall's Aett, as well as defining something about who she is and how Hagalaz has helped her in the past. A negative relationship with Hagalaz would indicate that the character has less power when it comes to matters of Heimdall's Aett, even when those matters have nothing to do with natural forces or destructive power.

Choosing Runes

The core of creating a character, in *The Weavers' Daughters*, is choosing the runes with which your character has a positive or negative affinity. These runes represent the ways

in which your character is most effective at changing the Weave – either for better or for worse.

Begin by choosing three runes with which your character has a close positive relationship. You may choose these runes based on what you want your character to be like, or you may draw three runes at random from the rune pool to determine your character's starting strengths. These are Affinity runes and should be marked as such on your character sheet. Use the upper of the two empty spaces next to the rune in question.

By marking a rune as an Affinity rune, you declare that your character has an affinity with the Fate represented by that rune. For example, an affinity with the rune Fehu, wealth, means that the character will be best at changing fate through the medium of wealth.

Next, choose at least two, and no more than five, additional runes with which your character has a close positive relationship. These, too, are Affinity runes and should be marked as such on the character sheet.

Collaborative Character Creation

Since there are only two copies of each rune in the rune pool, but three players, it is strongly suggested that players collaborate during character creation to make sure that the characters have a variety of Affinity and Merkstave runes among them.

A variety of Affinity runes gives the players the most control over the story, as drawing to one's Affinity rune is the most effective way to change the Weave.

A variety of Merkstave runes means that there will be at least one player who can take any given rune without invoking her character's weaknesses.

Now, for each additional Affinity rune you chose, you must choose one rune with which your character has a weak or negative relationship. These runes are referred to as Merkstave runes. Mark these runes, too, on your character sheet. Use the lower of the two empty spaces next to the rune in question to indicate that a rune is Merkstave.

By marking a rune as a Merkstave rune, you set your character up as a victim of the Fate represented by that rune. For example, taking the rune Fehu as Merkstave means the character's relationship to wealth will cause trouble when changing her fate or the fate of others.

Once all runes have been chosen, you should calculate how strong your character is in each Aett. Add up the number of Affinity runes your character has in each Aett. Put this number in the blank space to the right of that Aett on your character sheet. This number represents your character's basic competence in conflicts relating to that Aett, as we'll see on p. 30.

Finally, establish the relationship your character has with each rune. Invent a piece of your character's backstory around each Affinity and Merkstave rune. Suggested questions to answer are available in the Rune Question table, p. 23. This part of the character creation process is extremely important, because the history of your character will determine what conflicts she is capable of overcoming in the course of her ordinary life. See p. 30 for more details.

Example

Joanne wants to create a character for a game of *The Weavers' Daughters*. She has never played before, so she opts to draw three random tiles from the rune pool. She draws Raidho (Wagon), Jera (Harvest) and Eihwaz (Yew) as her three Affinity runes.

After briefly checking the rune book for the interpretation of these runes, she realizes that her character is going to be about journeys, well-earned success, and trustworthiness. This suggests a successful trader, to her, so she chooses Fehu (Wealth) as an additional Affinity rune.

Looking over her sheet, she realizes that she has two Affinity runes in Freya's Aett and two in Heimdall's Aett, making her character smart and good at conflict – but she's got nothing in Tyr's Aett, which means her character will be weak in tests of will, courage or endurance. To compensate, she chooses Ehwaz (Horse) as the final rune. Its meanings of movement and positive change reflect her concept of the character, and it means she'll have some competence with conflicts of Tyr.

Finally, she has to choose two Merkstave runes, since she chose two additional Affinity runes.

Joanne decides that her character pursues this life because she is greedy, so she chooses Gebo (Gift) as one of her Merkstave runes. While looking through the rune book, she also notices the rune Ansuz (Odin), which has vanity as one of its negative meanings. These two runes, particularly in the form of vanity and greed, will come back to haunt the character again and again.

Next, Joanne consults the Rune Question table. She finds the Affinity questions for Raidho, Fehu, and Eihwaz inspiring, as well as the Merkstave question for Gebo. For the other runes, she chooses to make up stories of her own.

She jots some notes on the back of her character sheet about how her character travels the provinces of France, selling Parisian fashions to the wives of local officials and tradesmen. She adds a story about how she agreed to smuggle an aristocratic family out of Paris last year, but broke her word and turned them over to the tribunals. After all, during the Revolution, people seem more interested in buying swords than clothes, and a girl's got to make her living somehow.

By the end of this process, her character has a clear past relationship, positive or negative, with each of the seven runes that Joanne marked on her sheet.

Families

While some of the character's family relationships may have come up during the rune relationship process, this section of character creation involves defining the character's lineage and family relationships.

First, the player should decide which lineage of the Vorvia she is from. She may play a daughter of Uld, who possess the power to create the threads of fate; a daughter of Verdandi, who possess the power to change and weave the threads; or a daughter of Skuld, who alone possess the power to snip threads, ending them before their time.

The character's lineage determines which magical powers she has access to, so don't forget to check p. 32 for details of what creating, changing and ending the lines of fate might mean!

Collaborative Lineage Choice

It is highly recommended that each group have one character from each lineage, as otherwise players will not have access to some of their powers. Caveat ludor!

Next, each player should decide who is her mother, her sister and her daughter. These do not have to be blood relations, but represent close relationships that are important to the character.

The character's "mother" should be her mother or other elder female relative, or else an older mentor who has helped her through life. The character's "sister" may be her sister or another blood relative of her own generation, or else a close personal friend who she has had a lifelong friendship with. Finally, the character's "daughter" may be her daughter, niece or another younger relative, or else a younger woman whom she mentors and protects.

These characters must participate in the character's day-to-day life. No fair creating a mother in Australia or a sister in Zimbabwe, unless the story often takes you there!

Next, choose a name for your character. This is not a casual decision, because your name reflects a great deal about your social standing and your place in the world.

Giving your character a traditional Icelandic name indicates a strong connection to the past and to her traditions. Add another character to the row of your choice ("Mother of," "Sister of," or "Daughter of"). This person is one of the traditional Vorvia from Iceland

who nonetheless has a positive relationship with your character. For information on Icelandic naming practices, see p. 41.

Choosing a name from another country, whether it's the one where the game is set or any modern nation of 1792, indicates a strong connection to the modern world. Add another character to the row of your choice as above. This person is strongly connected to the modern world and can help your character with many practical things.

Finally, choose your personal rune. This rune must be one of your Affinity runes, and should reflect the core of what interests you about your character. You will be able to call on this rune during play to get you out of trouble in certain situations. Draw the rune in the "Personal Rune" box to the left of your character's name.

Example

Joanne decides to make her character a Daughter of Verdandi. Her friend Amy really wants to play a Daughter of Urd, and Joanne isn't terribly interested in snipping the threads of fate. Besides, being able to change people's attitudes and relationships sounds interesting to her!

She chooses to be the "daughter of" her grandmother, who raised her from a child; the "sister of" her best friend, who will be played by Amy; and the "mother of" Amy's character's infant daughter, who she has vowed to help raise.

Before naming these characters, she decides to choose her own name. This character feels like a pretty modern woman to her, so she chooses Francine Leduc as her character's name. This gives her an extra connection to the modern world, and after some thought, she chooses a mentor for herself, an old seamstress who used to make dresses for the aristocracy and still has some connections with the old guard.

Finally, she chooses her character's personal rune. She thinks about choosing Fehu, but decides that her character's wanderlust is more interesting for her to explore than her wealth. She draws the rune Raidho in the appropriate space, and then goes back to start filling in character names.

Visions

The last step in creating your character is to give her a personal vision. This vision should be something that your character cannot achieve in her current life, but that you as a player would like to explore. It may be something the character would want for herself, or something she would be very unhappy with. However, you as a player should be pushing for the character's life to change in a way that would make this vision come true.

A good vision is highly symbolic, but with clear emotional or narrative content. Feel free to draw up to three runes from the rune pool to help you shape your character's personal vision.

Now share your character with your fellow players and your GM. Congratulations!
Your Vorvora is complete!

Example

Joanne decides that she wants to explore her character's reaction to losing her money and having to fall back on her own resources. With the help of the other players at the table, she invents a vision of her character sitting, in rags, at the foot of a broken statue, begging for bread to fill her stomach. She notes the vision, in pencil, on her sheet. The group will work to make this vision come true.

RUNE QUESTION TABLE

RUNE	AFFINITY	MERKSTAVE
Fehu	What is your most precious possession?	Describe a time when poverty caused you to hurt someone you love.
Uruz	What do you like best about your body?	What chronic illness do you suffer from?
Thurisaz	Describe something that you have lost that has made you stronger.	When in your life did you feel the most helpless?
Ansuz	What do you like best about seeing and weaving the Loom?	Who has betrayed you and how?
Raidho	What unusual place have you visited and why did you go there?	What bad habit do you cling to, despite its negative effects on your life?
Kenaz	You have a skill that is unusual for a woman to possess. What is it and how did you learn it?	Why are you so cynical?
Gebo	What's the best gift you ever gave, and who did you give it to?	Describe a time when you broke your word and what happened because of it.
Wunjo	Describe a time when you were publicly recognized for an extraordinary achievement.	What's the worst thing you've ever done when you've lost your temper?
Hagalaz	Your passion for something awes and frightens those who see it. What is it, and why?	When did you think you were going to die, and why?
Nauthiz	When has stubbornness or patience helped you overcome a challenge?	Describe the thing you wanted most as a child, and why you could not have it.
Isa	What makes you frustrated?	Who have you betrayed, and why?
Jera	When you imagine your ideal future, what do you imagine?	What apparent success turned out to be a humiliating or dangerous failure?
Eihwaz	Someone close to you has trusted you with a very personal secret. Who is it, and what is the secret?	Describe a time when you were careless or irresponsible and what happened because of it.
Perthro	What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?	What are you addicted to, and how did your addiction begin?
Algiz	Who would lay down her life for you, and why?	You have violated a serious social restriction or taboo. What is it, and what happened?
Sowilo	What self-destructive habit, behavior or addiction have you overcome?	Who did you take revenge on and why?
Tiwaz	Why do people look to you as a leader?	You are always second best. Who is your rival, and in what areas are they always ahead of you?
Berkano	Describe your most passionate love affair.	Who in your family hates you to the point of violence?
Ehwaz	Over the course of many years, your	There is something your character has

	steady commitment to some activity has given you great skill in it. What is it, and how do you participate in it every day?	always dreamed about, but has never made a reality. What is it, and why?
Mannaz	What do your friends consider your best quality?	Describe a time when you needed help, and someone you cared about did not give it to you.
Laguz	Someone once did something terrible to you. What was it, and how did you forgive them?	What psychological or mental disorder do you suffer from?
Ingwaz	Describe the place you go to rest and renew yourself.	Describe a time when you worked yourself to the bone without being recognized for it.
Dagaz	You have a hard-won sense of your strengths and weaknesses. How did you learn something uncomfortable about yourself, and how has that knowledge helped you?	What piece of your past can you not let go of, even though it's clearly over?
Othala	What precious heirloom is passed down in your family, and who has it now?	Why can you never go home again?

Starting the Game

Key Decisions

Before you start a game of *The Weavers' Daughters*, there are a few decisions your group will have to make.

First, your group should choose a setting for the game. This means agreeing on time, place, and the “ooky” factor.

The first setting released for the game is 1792, a year of upheaval and chaos across the globe. If you are playing in 1792, choose where the characters will begin the game. The players should create characters who are rooted in the community and history of that place and time.

If you are playing in another setting, agree among the group where and when you will play the game. Alternate setting suggestions are on p. 42.

Finally, decide how much ambient magic exists in the setting. Does an affinity with animals mean the characters can speak to animals, or just that they tend to like her? This is extremely important in determining the sorts of actions that fall into ‘everyday activities’ for the characters at hand, and the group should discuss it until they arrive at a clear consensus.

Second, you should decide if your game is a one-shot or an ongoing campaign. If your game is part of an ongoing campaign, your GM should use the framing vision of each session to involve NPCs and themes from other sessions. However, *The Weavers' Daughters* can just as easily be played as a one-shot.

Once you've done these things, you're ready to play!

Example

Joanne's group decides to play in the default setting of 1792, and uses revolutionary France as the setting. Joanne has clearly already taken this into account in creating her character!

The group discusses the magic level of the world, and agrees that since this is their first time playing, they won't involve any magic other than the Vorvia's powers to affect the Weave.

Finally, the group decides that this will be a one-shot, though if they like it they may use it as the first session of an ongoing campaign. With that in mind, Joanne decides to jot down the names of important NPCs on the back of her character sheet, just in case!

Starting a Session

To begin a session of *The Weavers' Daughters*, the players and GM should sit in a circle so that they can all see each other. Each player should have her character sheet in front of her and a pencil close to hand.

The GM begins the session by welcoming each player by name to the game and asking if she is ready to play. Once all players have responded in the affirmative, the GM spreads the rune tiles in the center of the circle. All players should be easily able to reach the runes.

Next, the group creates the framing vision for the session. This vision dictates the future which will come to pass if the players do not avert it. To create the vision, each player draws one rune from the pool and narrates how it is involved. For more details of how this happens, see below.

At the end of the vision, each of the three players should have chosen one rune from the rune pool. The GM claims the three runes and sets them out in front of her, where all players can see them. These three runes are now temporarily Black for the session. For more on Black Runes, see p. 32 and p. 37.

The Framing Vision

The players and the GM collaboratively create the framing vision for a session. This vision encompasses the future as it currently stands, before the PCs intervene.

Each player will draw a rune from the pool to represent an element of the vision. The player decides what in-game element that rune will represent. For example, a player might say that Laguz represents a mesmerist, or that Eihwaz stands for someone being rescued from danger, or that Kenaz represents a scientist's laboratory.

The player may choose a person, place, thing, animal, or concept as the element they wish to integrate into the vision. However, they may only choose one distinct game element. Additionally, that element must be thematically linked to the rune the player drew. (If a majority of the players disagree on the thematic linkage, the player must choose a new game element.) Finally, the element may be literal or metaphorical, as the samples below indicate.

Sample Elements of a Vision

Justice
A bloody petticoat
A man in a top hat
Diamonds hidden in a midden

Three loaves of bread
A speaking lion
An English spy
Francine's aunt
A child with glass eyes
Venomous snakes

Additionally, each player has specific roles and responsibilities in creating the framing vision.

First, the player whose character is a Daughter of Urd chooses a rune. Her rune represents "That Which Was." In an ongoing campaign of *The Weavers' Daughters*, she must choose one element or character that appeared in any previous session to reincorporate into the game. In a one-shot, the player may invent any game element she likes.

Second, the player whose character is a Daughter of Verdandi chooses a rune. Her rune represents "That Which Is." The game element she chooses must appear in the first scene of the game. (Excepting, of course, the inevitable in-character discussion and interpretation that will follow the vision!)

Next, the player whose character is a Daughter of Skuld chooses a rune. Her rune represents "That Which Shall Be." The game element she chooses will be irrevocably altered, for better or worse, during the course of the session.

Finally, the GM weaves together the three game elements into a vision, narrating it to the players. The vision should begin in the past, touch upon the present, and then move into a vision of a future which will come to pass if the players do not intervene. This future is what the PCs must change if they are to keep their powers.

Example

Joanne's group decides to create a vision for their first session.

Amy, as the Daughter of Urd, draws the first rune. She draws Hagalaz (Hail), and decides to interpret it as the wrath of nature. She chooses a terrible storm as her vision element, since this is the first session of the game and she is not required to incorporate a past narrative element.

Joanne, as the Daughter of Verdandi, draws the second rune. She draws Perthro (Vagina). Consulting the rune book, she finds that Perthro can mean mystery and the occult, so she chooses an ancient fortune-teller as her element. This character will now appear in the first scene of the game.

Finally, Mike, playing the Daughter of Skuld, draws the last rune. He draws Berkano (Birch), which represents fertility and liberation. He decides that he wants the concept of freedom to be at risk in the session.

The GM takes a moment to weave these elements together into a vision. She begins with the past, describing two figures struggling together in the mud and rain of a terrible storm, until one struck the other down with a mighty blow. Next she describes a handsome young man turning over a bag, heavy with coin, to an old woman wearing a robe embroidered with mystic symbols. Finally, the same young man is buried alive, screaming and begging for mercy, while the old woman prods him with the butt of a spear.

If any of the three lineages are not represented among the players, the GM draws the rune and decides on an appropriate element instead.

Gamemastering and Vision Design

A good vision is symbolic and somewhat open-ended. For help with a good vision, see the rune book for people, places and things associated with each rune. Also, don't be afraid to take a few minutes to think of a good vision.

Usually, the vision should represent a fate that is worse than the ones the characters hope for. The vision should not only evoke the first rule of Seidhr, but also threaten something the characters care about in the narrative itself. A good vision has direct consequences for the characters' lives or the lives of people they care about.

A vision might involve things going on in history at the time. For example, a vision during the time of the French Revolution might show them someone they care for falling victim to Madame Guillotine. A vision could involve the machinations of the Disir, who push the world toward blood and destruction, or the workings of the Oskmey, who send it careening toward hedonism and madness. A vision might even show them the Vorvia from Iceland coming after them to return them to their 'place' by hook or by crook!

However, visions that do not place the characters under direct threat can also be very effective. For example, a vision of someone or something the characters know nothing about can send the players scrambling to find the source of their visions so that they do not have to violate Seidhr. A truly inventive GM might even use the vision to force the PCs to choose between violating different tenets of Seidhr!

The players will tell you a lot about what they want to see in the session by the elements that they choose for the vision, but you must be the one to integrate the visions into a compelling story that you can sustain for the session. After all, if the players fail, you've just determined the future, so it should be one you can live with!

Of course, the players often will succeed in averting the vision – so make sure you define your vision in a way that is open-ended enough that the players can describe the new future that their actions have created.

Seidhr: A Review

Seidhr is the social and magical code which dictates how Vorvia must respond to their visions. The precepts of Seidhr are as follows:

1. Do not ignore a vision that is sent to you.
2. Do not allow your community to be harmed.
3. Do not betray those to whom you have given your word.
4. Do not give aid to the unworthy.
5. Do not let profit or harm to yourself cloud your judgment.

Of course, the precepts of Seidhr can easily be placed into opposition with one another! Additionally, each precept is widely open to interpretation. The PCs should be involved with the demands of Seidhr and how they may conflict with the PCs' personal desires, their lives in the modern world, and their own moral beliefs which may be rather different.

Playing the Game

Ordinary Actions

Much of the time, the things the characters do will not require the intervention of Fate. They simply can build on their ordinary existence, doing nothing that is radically out of character or highly fortuitous. As long as characters are performing within their abilities, as measured by the Weave, they do not need to draw Fate tiles for any action they take.

If the players and the GM agree that any action is plausible within the story, it may simply take place. However, if even one person disagrees, the group should decide whether the action is plausible or not. Ask the following three questions.

Is the action justified by the character's backstory or their narration?

If something specific in the character's backstory suggests the character should be able to complete the task, the player should explain the story element in question. For example, a character with many years' experience in boat handling should be able to rig a sailboat, even if that isn't common knowledge. Alternately, the player may simply have come up with a very clever plan that should allow her to do something unusual.

If the group cannot agree that the backstory or the way that the action is narrated justifies the action, continue to the second question.

What Aett does the conflict fall into?

As explained on p. 17, direct social or physical conflicts fall under Freya's Aett; conflicts regarding knowledge, perception or skill fall under Heimdall's Aett; and conflicts of courage, endurance, fortitude, physical resistance to damage or moral resistance to temptation fall under Tyr's Aett.

If the conflict is between multiple players, different players may use the same or different Aetts to respond to the challenge. For example, a character punching her friend would use Freya's Aett to hit her, while the friend would use Tyr's Aett to resist being hurt.

At this point, the group should continue to the third question.

Whose skill is the highest?

If the conflict is between one or more players and the GM, the GM must set a difficulty for the task at hand. This difficulty should range from 0 to 8, with 0 representing a trivial task and 8 representing a task requiring maximum human potential to overcome. (If the PCs attempt an impossible task, the GM should ask how they intend to accomplish the task and make them justify each step as to why it ought to be within human limits.)

Next, all players involved in the conflict should find their character's skill in the relevant Aett.

The individual (player or GM) with the highest score may narrate the result of the conflict. Each point of difference between the highest and second-highest score allows the character to establish one thing about their opponents in the conflict.

Ties are resolved in favor of the status quo, as neither side can narrate change about the other.

Finally, players may combine their Aett scores to overcome a challenge. Every additional player adds one-third her Aett score, rounded up, to overcoming the challenge. In order to do this, she must explain how her aid helps surmount the challenge.

Example

Joanne wants Francine to look through the fortune-teller's account books for information while the old woman is out of the room. She argues that her character, as a trader, would be able to gain a lot of information from a quick scan. The GM doesn't agree that this is justified by Francine's backstory – after all, she's hardly a speed reader! – so they begin a conflict.

Joanne decides she is using her intelligence and perceptive skill to find out what's in the books, so she checks her score for Heimdall's Aett, which is a two. The GM decides that the books aren't terribly extensive, so the difficulty of finding something useful in time is a two. Unfortunately, the two are tied, which means the situation is resolved in favor of the status quo: Francine learns nothing, but doesn't get caught peeking at the books.

Amy sees what's happening and volunteers for her character, Asta, to help out. Amy declares that Asta will intercept the old woman outside and start an argument with her to delay her. This falls under Freya's Aett, so Asta adds 1/3 her score in Freya's Aett to the conflict. She only has a two, but since she rounds up, this adds a point to Joanne's score. Francine can now find something out before the old woman returns!

Since the difference in the two scores was just one point, Joanne gets to establish one thing about the result of the conflict. She decides that she found the name of someone that the old woman was blackmailing – and it's Joanne's beloved grandmother!

However, these successes and failures are ultimately unimportant.

Actions such as these cannot affect the Weave – so they do not change the course of the story. Even if the players rescue a prisoner from prison and whisk him to apparent safety,

he is still fated to die at the executioner's hand – and the GM may engage in any sort of plot juggling necessary to make that happen.

In other words, any consequences of ordinary actions may be cancelled out by other actions the GM may take to restore Fate to its course. Their only importance is narrative.

Zero Scores

If a character has an Aett score of zero, it does not mean that this character is incapable of acting in the relevant area. It simply means that they cannot insist that their character perform an action in that area if even one member of the group disagrees. They are entirely at the mercy of their fate, as represented by group consensus about what the outcome should be.

For example, a character with a score of zero in Freya's Aett can still engage in direct social or physical conflict, such as trying to convince a jumper to come in off a ledge. However, if any other player or the GM thinks she should not succeed, she automatically fails, and her opponent narrates the outcome of the conflict.

Fate Magic

If characters truly wish to change the outcome of the story, they must do so with magic. To change the Weave itself is only possible for those who can, with their actions, step outside the Weave.

The Vorvia can perform two sorts of magic: perceptive and active. Each type of magic can be performed on the Weft, the connections between people, places and things in the here-and-now, or on the Warp, a single thread that ties the past to the future.

Knowing Fate

All Vorvia possess the fundamental ability to see the fabric of the Loom.

Seeing the Weft

Any individual Vorvora can see the Weft. By looking with the eyes of Fate, the Vorvora can see the connections between local individuals that relate to some aspect of Fate.

You can only see the connections of one of the twenty-four runes at a time. This rune must be one that you have already established a connection with during the session, by drawing it and placing it on your sheet.

To see the Weft, choose any non-Black rune on your sheet and briefly state the interpretation of it that you are most interested in. Agree with the GM about any connections nearby (within your line of sight) which are related to that rune. These

connections appear in the form of threads connecting people to each other, or to significant places, animals or objects.

If the rune is an Affinity rune, you have the final say over whether a particular connection exists. Otherwise, the GM does. You cannot see the connections of a Black rune under any circumstances.

Seeing the Warp

If three Vorvia of different lineages gather, they can together have a vision of the Warp. By opening themselves to the Loom, they can look forward and backward along a chosen thread. They need only name the subject of their vision, who must be within their sight at the time. This will show them elements of the subject's past, present and future.

To see the Warp, each lineage draws one rune and chooses a related game element, as per the Framing Vision, p. 26. The Daughter of Urd draws an element from the subject's past, the Daughter of Verdandi the present, and the Daughter of Skuld the future. If any lineage is not represented among the players, that element of the vision is simply lost.

Changing Fate

Vorvia have the power to change Fate as well as simply observe it. To change the Weft is to change relationships in the here and now; to change the Warp is to interfere with the past and the future, an exceedingly dangerous enterprise for any Vorvia to undertake.

Changing the Weft

When it comes to shaping Fate, the three lineages of Vorvia have different powers. The Daughters of Urd create threads in the Weave, the Daughters of Verdandi manipulate them, and the Daughters of Skuld snip them off when their time has come.

Daughters of Urd can create threads in the tapestry. By naming any two things within eyesight, the Daughter can create some kind of connection between them. However, she can only determine that these things will be connected by fate – not necessarily how. The rune you choose will represent the nature of the connection.

Daughters of Verdandi can change threads in the tapestry. First the Daughter must see the thread she wishes to change, by naming the rune she seeks. Then she may change that Fate to another. The rune you choose will represent the new nature of the connection.

Daughters of Skuld can remove threads from the tapestry. First the Daughter must find the thread she wishes to change. Then she simply declares it cut. The rune you draw represents the connection you have broken.

All three forms of magic follow the same basic mechanics, as follows.

- **Draw** a number of runes equal to the number of Merkstave runes on your character sheet.
- **Choose** one rune from among these to add to your character sheet. You may not choose any rune which you have previously chosen this session, unless it is your personal rune.
- **Place** the rune on top of the appropriate space on your character sheet.
- **Reincorporate** the rune later on to gain control of the narrative.
- **Step** the rune downward in power.

A few of these steps require discussion in more detail.

Placing the rune is your way of recording how much control this rune gives you over Fate in the future. When you put it on your character sheet, you put it down face-down, so that the word FATE faces upwards. This is how you record that the rune is open to you for manipulating the Weave.

If the rune is an Affinity rune, put it down so that the word FATE is upside-down to you.

If the rune is an ordinary rune, put it down so that you can read the word FATE on the back of the rune.

If the rune is a Merkstave rune, put it down so that you can read the word FATE, and then add a token to it.

If the rune is a Black rune, put it down so that the word FATE is upside-down to you, and then add a token to it.

Reincorporating the result can be done at any time after the magic has been performed. If a rune has no token on it, you are the only one who may reincorporate using that rune. However, you and the GM may both use any rune with a token on it for reincorporation.

Reincorporation allows you to:

- Frame a scene
- Introduce a complication
- Introduce an NPC or other game element
- Take over the narration
- Win a conflict

When you narrate using a rune, the narration must:

- Reflect the nature of the rune used
- Reflect the action which you took to draw that rune
- Reflect your weaknesses or failures, if the rune has a token

Stepping a rune means counting how many times you've used it. Every time a rune is used for reincorporation, you need to record that you've used it. However, this is very simply recorded in the rune's position!

After you use a rune, if the word FATE is not face-up to you, turn the rune a quarter-turn clockwise. If the word FATE is face-up to you, turn the rune over. Now that the rune is rune-side-up, you can no longer use it for reincorporation.

Changing the Warp

Changing the Warp is rare and extremely dangerous. It allows direct manipulations of the past and the future – but if too few Vorvia are present to help with the ritual, the threads of Fate snap and flail at the sudden violation of the integrity of its fabric.

Changing the Warp allows the players to do anything they like in the game's past or future, as long as it falls within human bounds. For example, an old friend who died can have avoided death. A king could have been murdered in his bed. A woman can be marked for terrible sin and even more terrible redemption.

To change the Warp, each participating Vorvora draws a single rune. These runes represent the threads of Fate which the participants manage to control. All other runes on **all** characters' sheets step down one level in quality. Affinity runes become ordinary; ordinary runes become Merkstave; Merkstave runes become Black; and Black runes remain so.

Each player may dictate a single change they wish to make in the past, or a single event they insist must come to pass in the future. Each player may also indicate how the change they chose influences the present, or how they expect the present situation to lead to the future they predict.

Ending a Session

The session may end at any time that all players agree it ends. If any runes remain FATE-side-up on characters' sheets, mark the number of reincorporations left, and whether or not the GM has access to those reincorporations. The next session will begin mid-story, with open reincorporations left and the same framing vision.

Otherwise, the players may clear their sheets for the next session. Players should remove the rune tiles from their sheets one by one, placing them gently back into the rune pool. They should thank their Affinity runes by name for the aid rendered this session. Last of all, the GM returns the three runes of the Framing Vision to the rune pool. Finally, the GM returns the rune tiles to the bag or box in which they are kept. The session is over.

Character Change

Blackening Runes

If at any point during play, a PC violates Seidhr, one of their runes may become Black.

The precepts of Seidhr are as follows. When using Fate

1. Do not ignore a vision that is sent to you.
2. Do not allow your community to be harmed.
3. Do not betray those to whom you have given your word.
4. Do not give aid to the unworthy.
5. Do not let profit or harm to yourself cloud your judgment.

If both other players agree that one PC's action or inaction has violated Seidhr, the rune the PC used to perform the action (or the rune symbolizing the portion of the vision that was ignored) becomes permanently Black.

If only the GM believes the player has violated Seidhr, she may introduce one of the Skadaji or another tradition-linked complication, but she may not command the player to Blacken a rune. However, the player may choose to make a rune Black in order to avoid the introduction of this narrative element.

A rune that is permanently blackened is Black for purposes of conflicts. Additionally, it no longer contributes to your score in an Aett if it is an affinity rune. Reduce your Aett scores accordingly. If this reduces your score in any Aett to zero, see the section on Incapacity, below.

Incapacity and Leaving the Game

If your score in a particular Aett becomes zero, you are incapacitated in that arena. It does not mean that you cannot engage in conflicts or perform tasks in that Aett's sphere of influence! It does, however, mean that you cannot go beyond your fate. If you come into conflict with the GM or another player in an area around this Aett, you must yield.

For example, if you are incapacitated in Heimdall's Aett, it means the GM is the final arbiter of whether you know, understand, or can notice something. You have no way of contesting the power of Fate over you.

If your character's scores are reduced to zero in all three Aetts, she no longer can contest against Fate. She immediately becomes an NPC. There are four main ways this can happen.

1. The character dies or is otherwise incapacitated.
2. The character's biological daughter reaches puberty and inherits her mother's power.

3. The character loses her connection to Fate and becomes an entirely modern woman.
4. The character returns to Iceland and the control of the elder Vorvia, losing her free will to their superior power.

However, the players and the GM may agree on any other ending to the character's story that they wish, so long as it makes clear that the character has lost her powers and can no longer change this fate in any way.

A character can be reintroduced to the game (assuming they chose to survive their retirement) by having them join the group, then restoring runes during the session as explained below.

Restoring and Advancing Runes

Remember the personal visions you created during character creation? If any player's vision comes true, each player may advance one rune of her choice. A Black rune becomes Merkstave; a Merkstave rune becomes ordinary; an ordinary rune becomes an Affinity rune.

Other Strengths

You should note things that happen to you and characters or places who matter. Remember that if you can explain why something is plausible, then you can always succeed at ordinary conflicts that involve it. Building a strong community or skill set for yourself will help you maneuver in the world of *The Weavers' Daughters* – it just won't necessarily help you get better at managing the course of Fate.

Rune List

Rune Name	Meaning	Merkstave
<i>Fehu (Wealth)</i>	Wealth. Reward. Nourishment. Ambition. Cattle. Abundance. Possessions.	Poverty. Bad luck. Failed ambition. Loss of something you value. Greed.
<i>Uruz (Wild Ox)</i>	Physical strength. Health. Male virility. Courage. Power. Freedom. Potency.	Lust. Brutality. Rashness. Callousness. Violence.
<i>Thurisaz (Thorn)</i>	Defense. Regeneration. Cleansing fire. Catharsis.	Evil. Malice. Spite. Lies. Betrayal. Temptation.
<i>Ansuz (Odin)</i>	Messages. Insight. Inspiration. True vision. Wisdom.	Delusion. Being manipulated. Vanity. Megalomania.
<i>Raidho (Wagon)</i>	Travel. Union or reunion. Spiritual quests.	Stasis. Rigidity. Injustice. Stagnation. Isolation.
<i>Kenaz (Beacon)</i>	Heat. Flame. Enlightenment. Knowledge. Creativity. Inspiration. Skill.	Stagnation. Lack of creativity. Loss of illusions. False hope. Cynicism.
<i>Gebo (Gift)</i>	Generosity. Gifts. Sacrifice. Contracts. Personal relationships.	Loneliness. Dependence. Obligation. Bribery.
<i>Wunjo (Joy)</i>	Joy. Enthusiasm. Ecstasy. Glory.	Raging frenzy. Berserker. Delirium. Intoxication.
<i>Hagalaz (Hail)</i>	Storms. Uncontrollable force. Weather. The unconscious.	Natural disaster. Catastrophe. Hardship. Crisis.
<i>Nauthiz (Need)</i>	Self-reliance. Endurance. Determination. Patience.	Drudgery. Poverty. Starvation. Deprivation.
<i>Isa (Ice)</i>	Ice. Delay. Turning inward. Meditation. Thoughtfulness.	Treachery. Illusion. Deceit. Stealth. Ambush. Plots.
<i>Jera (Harvest)</i>	Peace. Happiness. Well- earned success. Prosperity.	Reversals. Poverty. Conflict. Work without reward.
<i>Eihwaz (Yew)</i>	Reliability. Dependability. Trust. Protection. Supporting a family.	Confusion. Betrayal. Dissatisfaction.
<i>Perthro (Vagina)</i>	Mystery. The occult. Initiations. Destiny. Knowledge of the future.	Addiction. Stagnation. Hidden ills.
<i>Algiz (Elk)</i>	A shield. Protection. Shelter. Defense.	Hidden danger. Taboo. Warning.
<i>Sowilo (Sun)</i>	Success. Achievement of goals. Health. Cleansing fire.	Retribution. Justice. Casting down of vanity. Wrath of god.
<i>Tiwaz (Tyr)</i>	Honor. Justice. Leadership.	Strife. War. Failure. Injustice.

	Victory in competition.	Unnecessary sacrifice.
<i>Berkano (Birch)</i>	Birth. Fertility. Trees. Spring. Renewal. Desire. Love.	Family trouble. Carelessness. Deceit. Sterility.
<i>Ehwaz (Horse)</i>	Change for the better. Transportation of all types. Teamwork. Marriage.	Restlessness. Need for change. Reckless haste. Betrayal.
<i>Mannaz (Mankind)</i>	Friendships and relationships. Social order. Social skills. Intelligence. Awareness.	Cunning. Manipulation. Slyness. Craftiness. Betrayal.
<i>Laguz (Water)</i>	Water. The sea. Imagination. Dreams. Renewal. The underworld.	Fear. Avoidance. Madness. Despair. Suicide.
<i>Ingwaz (Earth)</i>	Common sense. Common virtue. Family love. Caring. The home. Rest.	Impotence. Toil. Fruitless labor. A broken home.
<i>Dagaz (Dawn)</i>	Awareness. Clarity. Morning. Hope. Happiness.	Hopelessness. Endings without hope of renewal.
<i>Othala (Heritage)</i>	Inherited property. A house or land. Land of birth. Spiritual heritage. Values. Safety.	Totalitarianism. Slavery. Prejudice. Provincialism. Oppressive duty.

Icelandic Names

Icelandic characters take any first name from the list below (or others that you may find online). Their last names are constructed as “_____sson” or “_____dottir.” These names mean “Son of” and “Daughter of,” respectively. All Vorvia use the latter construction.

For example, Gudrun Mjollsdottir means Gudrun, daughter of Mjoll. Gudrun’s own child might be named Dylla Gudrunsdottir.

Women’s Names

Bergljot	Ingibjorg	Sigrun
Fenja	Lilja	Tinna
Jodis	Kristjana	Astrid
Asa	Helga	Bryndis
Eir	Dylla	Karen
Katrin	Ros	Dagny
Hilduar	Helga	Rannveig
Gudny	Margret	Ingun
Menja	Asta	Herdis
Erla	Lara	Groa
Kristin	Nanna	Thora
Berglind	Dagrun	Johanna
Gudrun	Barbara	Halldora

Men’s Names

Bjarni	Halfdan	Adam
Dagur	Galdur	Simon
Brynjar	Fridmar	Hallur
Grimur	Ragnar	Teitur
Eysteinn	Audun	Njall
Valdi	Olafur	Larus
Asbjorn	Ingimar	Jens
Gunnar	Magnus	Karl
Oskar	Kristjan	Johann
Eyjolfur	Hallmar	Tomas
Sveinn	Jakob	Steinn

Alternate Settings

The Weavers' Daughters works well in almost any setting, though it is recommended to set the game after the Laki eruption of 1783.

Suggested settings include:

- Vorvia in World War II!
- Vorvia in the Boxer Rebellion!
- Vorvia at the Turn of the Millenium!
- Vorvia in the Cultural Revolution!
- Vorvia in the American Civil War!
- Vorvia in the California Gold Rush!
- Vorvia under Stalin!
- Vorvia and the India/Pakistan Partition!
- Vorvia and Simon Bolivar!
- Vorvia in the Great Depression!
- Vorvia and the fall of Communism!
- Vorvia in Japanese-occupied Manchuria!

Design Notes

What grabbed me about this game was the notion of a supernatural secret-societies game in a genre that was neither heavily staked-out by White Wolf nor a “Make up your own conspiracy, then play it!” storytelling kit. The line about Oskmey and Marie Antoinette seems to have sold not just me, but a whole lot of other people, on this game.

During design, I had two main goals. First, I wanted to explore the notion of fate and seeing the future pretty heavily. I was interested in using issues of GM railroading and player narration to represent the fixed-versus-fluid nature of the Weave. This was partly a theoretical/philosophical issue, but also because I wanted to represent some of the best things about the way my group plays. We tend to reward reincorporation very highly and to voluntarily give the GM a fair amount of narrative authority, as opposed to playing in the highly adversarial, rules-bound way that a lot of Game Chef games seem to posit. This takes a fair amount of expertise and skill on our part (not just the GM, but the whole group), and I want to write games that support people in developing those skills, ‘cause it’s a fun way to play!

Second, I wanted to make a game that was quietly but thoroughly feminist. It’s not just a question of only playing female characters; it’s that the female characters don’t have to become man-like to succeed. In fact, the three supernatural archetypes represent three different models of what it means to be a woman – three stereotypes, if you will. But there were a lot of smaller decisions that went into the game, too, such as having you define your relationships to other characters by blood or by meaning, that I consider to be feminist as well.

If I had more time before submission, I’d write up further notes, but I hope these brief thoughts give you some idea of what I was trying to do with this game. I know there’s a lot of work still to be done, but I hope it’s fun to play with already!