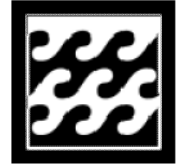




## CHAPTER TWO BACKGROUND



At the time of the novels, there are several kingdoms and nations throughout what is known as the Westlands, as well as people coming from other places as well, such as the Aiel Waste, a far away continent called Seandar, and even the islands of the sea itself. There is also a giant race of people called the Ogier, who are not humans, though they have many similar traits to humans. Though life is mostly similar in the Westlands, cultures and backgrounds are different enough that for the purposes of character creation, the cultures have been split into groups, and these groups have been split into individual nations.

You may choose to be from any background, though there are certain limitations for some backgrounds. While many backgrounds tend to favor certain roles, others may rarely have certain types of heroes. For example, Borderlanders produce many armsman heroes, yet among the Tuatha'an, armsmen are almost unheard of, and armsmen from the Aiel Waste are very different from armsmen in Amadicia. Ogier characters cannot be initiates, because Ogier cannot channel the One Power.

Because the possibilities are vast in the Wheel of Time, you are encouraged to use your creativity, whether it is to play a more common type of hero or a rare find in the Great Tapestry. No matter what you are, you can make your character unique in many ways.

### HUMANS

Humans are the main race in the Wheel of Time, and nearly all heroes from any Age will be human. Following are the different backgrounds for human characters.

#### Human Traits

All Humans have the following traits:

**Ability Scores:** A human character does not gain any bonuses or take any penalties to ability scores at character creation.

**Bonus Feat:** At first level, a human character gains a bonus feat.

### AIEL

The Aiel are a clan-based society in the vast desert to the east of the mountain range known as the Spine of the World. This land is called the Aiel Waste by those in the Westlands, but the Aiel call it the Threefold Land, because to them it is a shaping stone to

make them, a testing ground to prove their worth, and a punishment for their sin. While most members live in communities and in relative peace, trying to survive in such a harsh place, there are also warrior societies that exist as well, often uniting members of different clans.

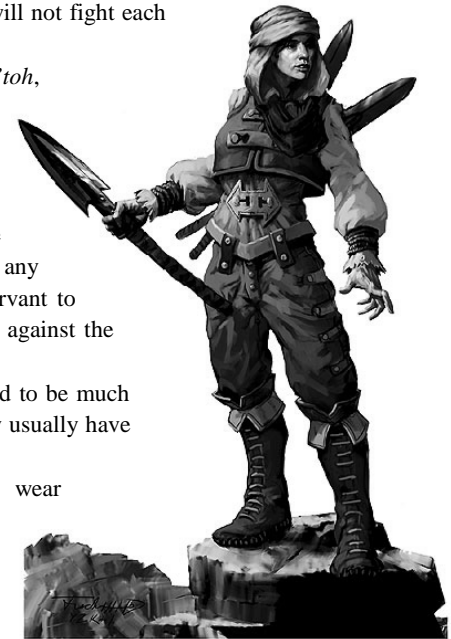
**Culture:** There are twelve clans (excluding the thirteenth "Jenn" clan), and each clan is divided into communities, called septs. A character will introduce herself as being a member of a clan as well as a sept. Each clan has its own Clan Chief, always a male, as well as several Wise Ones, who are female.

There are also twelve warrior societies, each with its own unique role in battle and general security of the Aiel, which exist simultaneously together and separately from the clans and septs. Members from any clan can be in any society, and indeed each society is represented by each clan. Even when clans are enemies, members within the same warrior society will not fight each other.

Aiel follow a code of ethics called *ji'e'toh*, which means honor and obligation. This code governs most aspects of life for an Aiel, and all follow it except most of the members of the Shaido Aiel. Among the many tenets of this code is the rule of *gai'shain*, which causes that any individual captured in battle becomes a servant to the captor for a year and a day. It is also against the code to kill a *gai'shain*.

**Appearance:** Aiel have tan skin and tend to be much taller than humans from other places. They usually have light hair and pale eyes.

Aiel among warrior societies often wear clothing they call a *cadin'sor*, which helps them blend into their surroundings in the Threefold Land. Whenever an Aiel fights, he covers his face due to ancient traditions that state this must be done.



**Psychology:** Aiel are vigilant and can be aggressive, and tend to be much more fearless than those on the other side of the Spine of the World. Honor is essential to them as well, and few Aiel will do anything to stain their honor, even if doing so would greatly benefit them.

**Example Aiel:** Aviendha, Rhuarc, Couladin, Amys, Sevanna, Bain, Chiad.

### Aiel Traits

All Aiel characters have the following traits:

**Desert Survivor:** When in a desert environment, Aiel may reroll any Survival check, though they must keep the second result, even if it is worse.

**Durable:** Aiel may spend a Hero Point as a free action to reroll any Endurance check, though they must keep the second result, even if it is worse.

## ATHA'AN MIERE

The Atha'an Miere, or Sea Folk as they are commonly called by people in the Westlands, are the exotic, hardy people who inhabit the sea and the distant islands they fiercely guard. Legends of the sea, the Atha'an Miere have ship designs and sailing expertise unmatched by any other culture, and while they trade and interact with Westlanders, they are strongly tight-lipped about their own lands and culture.

**Culture:** Atha'an Miere life is spent mostly at sea, where they are born, grow, and eventually die.

The leader of the Sea Folk carries the title of Mistress of Ships, whose counterpart is the Master of the Blades. Atha'an Miere culture is divided into clans, with the head of a clan having the title of Wavemistress, with her counterpart being the Swordsmaster. On each ship, the captain is the Sailmistress, whose counterpart is the Cargomaster. Another important role on each ship is the Windfinder, a channeler who is in charge of gathering winds and moving waves with the One Power, and who is outranked on her own ship only by the ship's Sailmistress and Cargomaster.

**Appearance:** Sea Folk have dark brown skin



and are taller than most Westlanders (though shorter than Aiel). They have black hair and dark eyes.

Atha'an Miere tend to wear lightweight clothes, and when they are out at sea and out of view of Westlander ports, they wear no shirts, including the females, and they don't often wear shoes on their ships. Atha'an Miere like to wear jewelry, and often have many jeweled and precious facial piercings, which are often connected by chains.

**Psychology:** Atha'an Miere are shrewd negotiators and traders, and are very proud of their culture. Indeed, the idea of bargaining itself is so important to the Sea Folk that it is incorporated into nearly every facet of life. In return for anything given by the Atha'an Miere, they will always seek to be given something in return as a fair trade, even when it comes to the Caramoor.

**Example Atha'an Miere:** Zaida din Parede Blackwing, Harine din Togara Two Winds, Talaan din Gelyn, Moad.

### Atha'an Miere Traits

All Atha'an Miere characters have the following traits:

**Expert Sailor:** Sail is always a class skill for Atha'an Miere. Furthermore, once per encounter, an Atha'an Miere may spend a Hero Point as a free action to take 20 on a Sail check, even when taking 20 would not normally be allowed.

## TUATHA'AN

The Tuatha'an, often called the Traveling Folk or simply the Tinkers, are an unusual people loved by some, and despised by others. They travel the Westlands and Aiel Waste (though more frequently the former), searching for "the Song." They have yet to find it, yet this does not stop their search. They travel on, never settling anywhere long, and passively bringing their customs and ways to anyone who will befriend them.

**Culture:** Tuatha'an follow the Way of the Leaf. They believe that there is never a reason to do violence, not even to defend their own family or fight off evil beings. A Tuatha'an who turns his back on this way of life is called a Lost One, and is considered no longer to be a part of the Tuatha'an.

The Traveling Folk are renowned for their ability to fix things (which is indeed where they gained their nickname "tinkers"). In their travels, they frequently stop by villages and cities, offering to fix things for local residents, and also proselytizing their beliefs to anyone who will listen. For their attempts to convert others to their ways, they have gained a reputation as baby thieves (as well as ordinary thieves).

Tuatha'an also love music, and spend much of their time in the late afternoons and evenings dancing and playing various instruments.



**Appearance:** Tinkers come from a variety of backgrounds, especially considering that a percentage of their population is converts to their ways. Most tend to have light or dark brown hair and dark eyes.

Tuatha'an paint their traveling home-wagons in the same way they dress: in bright, vibrant colors that stands out and even agitates the eyes of some. Their demeanors are typically cheery and bright, and they walk with a rhythm to their step, as though they are listening to music nobody else can hear.

**Psychology:** To a Tinker, violence damages a person's soul every bit as much as the damage they cause by their violence, even if the violence is for what others might consider a

noble reason. They abhor violence, but will seek to help in other ways as they can, though they will never ask others to fight for them.

They are welcoming, helpful, and joyful, though they can seem intrusive and false-handed to some.

**Example Tuatha'an:** Raen, Aram, Ila.

### Tuatha'an Traits

All Tuatha'an characters have the following traits:

**Persuasive:** Tuatha'an may spend a Hero Point as a free action to reroll any Persuasion check and keep the better result.

**Gatherer:** Tinkers may always take 10 on Survival checks made to do anything except hunt wild animals or track.

## WESTLANDERS

The Westlands have diverse geography, including plains, forests, hills, mountains, and several cities and communities throughout. The Aiel call it the Wetlands due to the fact that there is much more rain than in their "Threefold Land." Numerous kingdoms and independent city-states can be found from the coasts to the south and west to the mountain ranges to the east and the Blight to the north.

Below are the three major divisions of the Westlands: the Borderlands, which include the northernmost kingdoms nearest the Blight, the Coastlands, which include the nations

to the south and west along the coastline, and the Midlands, which include the countries throughout the fertile plains and woodlands between the ocean and the Blight.

## BORDERLANDERS

As the years go by the deadly Blight gains ground, ever moving southward. In the Westlands, the kingdoms of Saldaea, Kandor, Arafel, and Shienar stand to stave the Blight and its dangerous minions off. Until recently, these nations included Malkier, but Malkier finally became overwhelmed and swallowed by the Blight. These resilient people have their own kingdoms, their own cultures and societies, but the thing they are easily most renowned for is their stalwart stance against the forces of the Blight.

**Example Borderlanders:** al'Lan Mandragoran (Malkieri), Zarine ti Bashere t'Aybara (Saldaean), Mazrim Taim, (Saldaean), Agelmar Jagad (Shienaran), Alanna Mosvanni (Arafellin), Masema Dogar (Shienaran), Jahar Narishma (Arafellin), Davram Bashere (Saldaean), Ingtar Shinowa (Shienaran), Hurin (Shienaran), Uno Nomesta (Shienaran), Nesune Bihara (Kandori).

### Borderlander Traits

All Borderlanders have the following traits.

**Vigilant:** Borderlanders are always ready for combat. They may reroll their Initiative checks if they choose, but must keep the second result, even if it is worse.

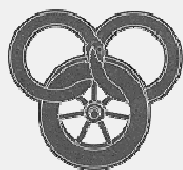
## ARAFELLIN

Arafellins are a staunch, proud people, and protect the Westlands from the Blight just as much as their neighbors. Though their pride is abundant, Arafellins are a humble nation, willing to do whatever it takes to do their duty, even if it means expending their lives for the cause.

**Culture:** Arafellins, perhaps more than any of the Borderlanders, love artistic endeavors as well as ones of battle. Though seen as rough and unsophisticated by some other cultures in the Westlands, Arafellin art is an expression of the souls of battle-hardened warriors and gritty survivors.

As Borderlanders, certainly their culture is in a state of constant readiness against raids from the Blight, and Arafellins are not outdone by their neighbors along the Blight's borders. Their warriors prefer to wield two swords, both sheathed on their backs, and they fight with a mixture of grace, fortitude, and soulful passion as though each battle is a blessing, whether they die or not.

**Appearance:** Arafellins are fair-skinned and light-haired, and tall, typically with broad shoulders and large muscles. They dress conservatively and practically, and both men



## BIRTHPLACE VERSUS RESIDENCE

It often happens that characters are born in one land and are raised in another. It also occurs sometimes where a character is born and raised one place and has only been living in a place for a short time.

Your background reflects your general upbringing. When determining your background traits, if you were born and raised through most of your childhood and adolescence in a certain place, that place should be chosen as your background. Even if your character currently lives, and has lived for some time, in a different place, the place she was born and raised is her background.

If the character was born somewhere but raised in a different land, the land he was raised in is his background when determining traits. For example, Rand al'Thor could be considered an Aiel, but the fact that he was raised in the Two Rivers gives him the traits from the Two Rivers background.

Alternately, for characters whose backgrounds are still vague, a generic human background can be used. A generic human gains the human traits, plus one extra trained skill. Such characters do not gain benefits from having any background.

and women wear their hair long. Men will often braid their hair into two thick braids and wear silver bells or other trinkets on the ends.

**Psychology:** Arafellins love art and dutifully fight the Blight, but their vigilance and alertness is also legendary. Part of their success is their ability to see danger coming before it arrives at their walls.

### Arafellin Traits

All Arafellin characters have the following traits:

**Alert:** Once per encounter, Arafellins may spend a Hero Point as a free action to take 20 on any Perception check, even when taking 20 would not normally be allowed.

## KANDORI

The Kandori are tough, strong, and earnest, and the minions of the Blight have extraordinary difficulty getting past their stalwart and often brutal guardians. Above the other Borderlander nations, Kandori love combat and beating up on Shadowspawn creatures the most, though rarely to the point of doing it just for savagery sake.

**Culture:** The merchants of Kandor are among the best in the Westlands, especially considering their limitations in their tradable goods. With few marketable items, Kandori still manage to have a hefty presence in marketplaces all the way south even to the coastal towns, where they trade with merchants and even Sea Folk.

Kandors seem to live in the moment, and can be raucous and loud when the time

doesn't warrant better behavior. Though their vigilance is high, they know how to rest when the time comes for resting, and be frivolous when times aren't as gray as they sometimes are along the Blight.

**Appearance:** Kandori are light-skinned and of average height. Both men and women wear jewelry, especially earrings, and embroidered clothes that seem elegant for Borderland cultures. The men usually wear long, forked beard, though they are neat and well-groomed.

**Psychology:** Natives of Kandor know they will likely die in battle, so they try to live life to the fullest every day. They are also cunning, able to see strengths and, perhaps more importantly, weaknesses. Kandori don't appreciate unearned frivolity, and can seem quite gruff in most scenarios, despite their sociability.

### Kandori Traits

All Kandori characters have the following traits:

**Savvy:** Kandori may spend a Hero Point as a free action to reroll any Persuasion check, though they must keep the second result, even if it is worse.

## SALDAEAN

Saldaeans are swift riders and swift killers of Blight creatures. Their range of the Blight is vast, so their coverage must equal the challenge. Among the Saldaeans, women fight alongside their men, and are equally capable in combat. Though they generally prefer light weapons such as short swords and daggers, they manage to inflict damage swiftly and beat the threats that come into their lands back.

**Culture:** The people of Saldaea enjoy feats of physical dexterity and balance. Men and women train themselves to be master horse riders and acrobats, not only for the benefits on the battlefield, but also to display and put on a show for those around them. Horsemanship is an important part of Saldaean culture.

Above all else, however, Saldaeans take very seriously their responsibility to protect their portion of the border from the constant raids of the Shadowspawn abominations. Their duty is to keep the Blight back along mostly flat lands, except the lands to the far west along the coast, where they become treacherously rocky and mountainous. Still, the Saldaeans rise to the challenge with their ingenuity and bold fearlessness.

**Appearance:** Saldaeans have light to tan skin and dark hair is generally worn at medium length. Their almond-shaped eyes are generally found to be exotic and even alluring, and Saldaean women particularly are found to be extremely attractive not only for their toughness, but also their ironic wiles.

Saldaean clothing tends to be cut and crafted for riding, with few extra niceties except for colors and patterns designed to show the wearer's family.

**Psychology:** Saldaeans are bold, willing to do daring things most wouldn't even imagine to attempt. To them, risks are worth taking if the reward is great, and bravery is its own reward.

### **Saldaean Traits**

All Saldaean characters have the following traits:

**Master Rider:** Saldaeans can spend a Hero Point as a free action to reroll any failed Ride check. They must keep the second result, even if it is worse.

## **SHIENARAN**

The Shienarans are an extraordinarily proud warrior culture in the far eastern reach of the Borderlands. Every bit as vigilant and sturdy as the other Borderland kingdoms, these warriors do not fear the Shadowspawn they must fight so often along the Blight's borders. Shienarans yearn for peace, though they know it won't likely happen for a very long time.

**Culture:** Shienarans revere life and honor death. They admire peace, but master combat. A great deal of their cultural and general outlooks seem like an oxymoron to most other cultures, but Shienarans recognize the virtues of these things, and it causes their admiration of them to increase.

Nobody, not visitors or natives, is allowed to wear a mask or hood within the walls of a city. Baths are taken publicly, which can be something of a shock to conservative and modest visitors. Above all else, Shienaran culture is a warrior one, and nobody is more important than the brave individuals that fight and die to protect all decent life from the ravaging forces of the Blight.

**Appearance:** Shienarans are tall, slightly shorter than Atha'an Miere, but taller than other Westlanders. They have light tan skin and dark eyes. Their dark hair is worn long, though the men often shave all parts of their head except the topmost part, which is tied into a topknot.

Shienaran warriors wear breastplates and often wear two swords in battle. When not in battle, the men wear robelike garb and boots, while the women wear elaborate dresses tied at the waist.

**Psychology:** Shienarans are generally fearless,



though they are considerably more careful and calculating in their ventures. They have a sense of duty that prevails most other things, and Shienarans who give their word will do everything in their power to fulfill it.

### **Shienaran Traits**

All Shienaran characters have the following traits:

**Heroic Stealth:** Any time a Shienaran spends a Hero Point to gain a bonus die to a Stealth check, she can roll one additional die, keeping the highest die.

## **COASTLANDERS**

All along the southern and western coasts of the Westlands, from Tear to Bandar Eban, merchants and sailors trade their goods in the diverse coastal kingdoms. In the major port cities, trade happens at the docks, but most of the similarities end there. While these are among the wealthiest nations in the entire Westlands, they are also diverse and vibrant.

**Example Coastlanders:** Suan Sanche (Tairen), Juilin Sandar (Tairen), Leane Sharif (Domani), Berelain sur Paendrag Paeron (Mayener), Bayle Domon (Illianer), Nalesean Aldiaya (Tairen), Alise Tenjile (Taraboner), Liandrin (Taraboner), Tylin Quintara Mitsobar (Altaran), Teslyn Baradon (Illianer).

### **Coastlander Traits**

All Borderlanders have the following traits.

**Sociable:** Coastlanders are naturally sociable. They may always reroll Persuasion checks, but they must keep the second result, even if it is worse.

## **ALTARAN**

Much of Altaran culture and fame lies in its main city, the large port of Ebou Dar. While many call the residents of this city the Ebou Dari, the rest of Altara also has a vibrant and colorful presence in the Westlands. Renowned for their festivals as much for their dagger-dueling, Altarans tend to think of themselves as belonging to their region or city, not generally their kingdom.

**Culture:** Altarans are justly famous for the significance of daggers in their culture. Duels are commonplace, even to the death. A woman will even wear a marriage knife as a necklace around her neck, with stones on the hilt to represent her children. Different colors tell of the state of the child, whether they are alive or not, if they died in a duel, and other things. She is to stab the husband with it if he ever displeases her.

Altarans have many festivals, including the Festival of the Birds, during which Ebou Dari natives will dress in feathered costumes and masks, and the Festival of Lanterns, which is not unique to them, and during which fancy, colorful paper lanterns are hung



from windows, tree branches, and anything else that can hold lanterns. Indeed, Altarans know how to celebrate their holidays.

**Appearance:** Altarans have olive skin and dark hair and eyes. They are shorter in general than other Westlanders. Scars are considered beauty marks.

To complement their olive skin, Altarans tend to favor light shades of clothes. The men often wear vests, and frequently without shirts, while the women wear snug dresses that show a lot of cleavage (and their marriage knives). Both men and women like jewelry, including rings and earrings.

**Psychology:** Though many consider them violent in their customs, Altarans, and specifically Ebou Dari people, are generally easy-going and friendly. They settle insults with duels, but are generally respectful to each other and those from beyond their borders.

#### **Altaran Traits**

All Altaran characters have the following traits:

**Always Ready:** An Altaran may spend a Hero Point as a free action to reroll any Initiative check, though the reroll must be accepted, even if it is worse.

## **DOMANI**

Arad Doman is a nation full of political and social strength. The Domani are outdone by no one when it comes to getting what they want or need, especially when they are trying to get what they want from a member of the opposite sex. Domani men and women—especially the women—are famous throughout the Westlands for their ability to seduce. Despite being an isolated nation, Arad Doman is a powerful land, with a strong military and a rich culture.

**Culture:** Domani women are raised to be seductive and attractive. They are taught from childhood by their mothers everything from attire to kissing techniques, all to attract men. Indeed, no women are considered more alluring than Domani women. Men are good at attraction as well, but they don't have the same amount of fame that the women have.

Luxuries and hedonistic endeavors are enjoyed to the fullest, perhaps more by Domani than by anyone else. Falconry, fine food and drink, gambling, plays and live music, sports, and many other things are enjoyed to the fullest by the Domani. They are good at

what they do, and have a progressive, industrious culture, but they also know how to have fun.

**Appearance:** Domani skin tones range from pale to coppery. They usually have dark hair and eyes, and are of average height. Most Domani are thin, but their lifestyles can bring some to portliness.

Male Domani dress in shirts and trousers, made from fine material whenever possible. They often grow mustaches that are trimmed thin. Females wear body-covering dresses that cling to every curve and are often made from sheer material. This gives the impression of nudity while actually exposing very little.

**Psychology:** Domani live frivolous lives, and they are natural pleasure-seekers. While they are generally easy-going, enraged frenzies can happen at the slightest provocation, especially among the men. Domani are unpredictable.

#### **Domani Traits**

All Domani characters have the following traits:

**Fiercely:** Domani characters may spend a Hero Point as a free action to reroll Persuasion checks made to intimidate. They must keep the second result, even if it is worse.

**Seductive:** When dealing with members of the opposite sex, Domani characters may reroll Persuasion checks made to change the person's attitude as a free action and keep the better result.

## **ILLIANER**

Illian is a nation of freedom-loving people with a certain sense of adventure that permeates from them. There are perhaps no better seamen in the Westlands than the men from Illian. Meanwhile, on the land they will stand up to any threat, and with their balanced governance, they have very few enemies.

**Culture:** Illianers abhor tyranny, despite the fact that they are ruled by a king (though they do have other ruling bodies as well). To them, tyranny represents, among other things, an opposition of freedom, and few things are more important to Illianers than their freedoms.

Illian is also the traditional starting place of the Great Hunt, which sees thousands of people from across the Westlands gather at the Square of Tammaz to begin their search for the Horn of Valere. It is a major port, and Illianers frequently see people from many different lands and nations in their communities.

**Appearance:** Illianers are slightly above typical average height and build, and they tend to be light-skinned and have dark hair and eyes. Both men and women are sturdily built, with a tendency for stockiness.

Among both nobility and the common folk, men favor beards that leave their upper lip bare. Clothing for men is typically simply shirt and trousers, whereas for women it is dresses with low-cut necklines.

**Psychology:** From the founder of their kingdom, Illianers revere adventure and freedom to be among the loftiest of virtues and ideals. Their sense of adventure is unrivaled, while their love of freedom drives them. Illianers are a versatile people, and can be found in virtually any role.

### Illianer Traits

All Illianer characters have the following traits:

**In the Know:** An Illianer may spend a Hero Point as a free action to reroll any Gather Information check. The second result must be kept, even if it is worse than the original.

## TAIREN

Other than the White Tower, perhaps no other place is more well-known and magnificent than the Stone of Tear. From nobles to commoners, Tairens strive for greatness in any endeavor that they do, and their beliefs are that there is nobody out there who has more potential than they do. Though many see them as arrogant, often it is simply confidence in themselves.

**Culture:** Tairens do not like channelers, yet ironically they have a constant reminder of the power of the One Power in the form of the Stone of Tear, which itself was created using the One Power, and the Prophecies of the Dragon include the Stone. Even though they do not like channelers, many Aes Sedai come from Tear.

All throughout the Westlands, there is a notable difference between commoner and noble. Yet, in Tear this is particularly noticeable. Nobles elevate themselves to extraordinary heights while the commoners toil in astounding poverty in some parts of the kingdom. The nobles consider it their responsibility to use whatever means necessary to fulfill their demands, which, to many, includes protecting their people and even the entire world, starting at the Stone of Tear.



**Appearance:** Tairens are generally of average height and weight, and they have light skin. They have dark hair and eyes.

Tairen noblemen wear elaborate clothes, including colorful coats with puffy, padded sleeves and embroidered sashes. The noblewomen wear long silk gowns that leave the shoulders and a fair amount of the chest bare. Commoners wear much more drab attire, with the men wearing snug-fitting coats, and the women often wearing aprons over plain-colored dresses. Commoners also often wear wide-brimmed, conical straw hats.

**Psychology:** With very rare exceptions, Tairens are, as a whole, very confident, sometimes even to the point of arrogance. Yet, Tairens see themselves as vessels of greatness, and they do what they can to fulfill what they believe their potential is.

### Tairen Traits

All Tairens gain the following traits:

**Bluff:** Any time a Tairen spends a Hero Point to add a bonus die to a Deception check, the number of dice rolled increases by one, and the best result is kept.

## TARABONER

In the southwestern corner of the Westlands lies the cultural and artistic kingdom of Tarabon, as well as its major port city Tanchico. Tarabon is a progressive kingdom with a great respect for historical artifacts and art in its many forms. Even though their location makes them the first nation to be conquered by the Seanchan invaders, their sense of culture helps them keep many of their traditions alive. Tanchico is one of the most important port cities in the Westlands, as it joins the west with the south in both culture and trade.

**Culture:** Taraboners have a very old culture, with a great deal of history. It is a society that spawns a high percentage of unique thinkers and great artists, from sculptors and painters to minstrels and actors. Many gleemen come from Tarabon, and the Illuminator's Guild was started there.

Taraboners seem to have an optimistic outlook on the world more frequently than other nations. These Taraboners see life as an opportunity to explore possibilities and pursue dreams, and their society certainly doesn't discourage them.

**Appearance:** Taraboners have light to tan skin, and are of average height and build. They have a have dark hair, which the women wear in small braids worn long, and dark eyes.

Male Taraboners often wear bushy mustaches and cylindrical hats, and prefer baggy shirts and pants. The women wear dresses similar in style to Domani dresses, which cling to every curve and leave little to the imagination, though they are certainly less transparent than the ones worn by their Domani counterparts. Men and women alike

wear semi-transparent veils that partially conceal their faces, leaving only their eyes in view.

**Psychology:** Taraboners are generally optimistic and hopeful in their endeavors. They tend to aim high in their goals and don't quit on their dreams easily.

#### **Taraboner Traits**

All Taraboners gain the following traits:

**Conceal Intent:** A Taraboner may spend a Hero Point as a free action to take 20 on a Deception check, even when taking 20 would not normally be allowed.

## **MIDLANDERS**

In the heart of the Westlands lies the Midlands, the nations that neither border the Blight nor the sea. These nations are in the center of everything, from trade and culture to wars that may occur. Still, these hardy people are in the center of everything not only geographically, but socially, politically, and economically as well.

## **AMADICIAN**

Wedge between Altara and Tanchico, Amadicia is a kingdom with a relatively weak government that rules beside the influential Fortress of the Light, the headquarters of the Children of the Light. Despite their neighbors, they are a conservative people, with a love of simplicity and tradition. Amadicians do not trust channelers, and no channelers are allowed within their borders. This is most likely due to the influence of the Children of the Light.

**Culture:** Life is peaceful in Amadicia, despite the unmistakable presence of one of the most powerful independent military organizations in the Westlands. Their orderly lifestyle and strict laws make life safe for the common man, perhaps safer than anywhere else in the known world.

Amadicians are proud of their traditions, and do everything they can to cling to them and keep them unchanged except when they are obviously beneficial. They have a tendency to distrust change done in the name of progress unless they can see plainly how it will improve their way of life. This is not to say that things never change, but rather that changes are done conservatively.

**Appearance:** Amadicians are of the typical Midlander build, which is what is considered average for the rest of the Westlands. Amadicians, however, have a tendency for stockiness among both men and women. They have light skin with dark, curly hair and eyes.

Women and men both dress modestly. The women wear body-covering, long-sleeved dresses that extend to the ankles at the bottom and the neck at the top, and bonnets. The

dresses and bonnets are decorated with velvet bows. The men wear knee-length coats and otherwise plain shirts and trousers. Colors are generally earth-tones, except in the case of the coats, which have a tendency to be somewhat more colorful.

**Psychology:** Amadicians strive to be in control of every aspect of their lives. They seek order and justice in all things, and can be content with simplicity and mediocrity as long as they can live comfortably and contribute to their community.

#### **Amadician Traits**

All Amadicians gain the following traits:

**Informed:** Any time an Amadician spends a Hero Point to gain a bonus to a Gather Information check, they roll one additional die and keep the highest result.

## **ANDORAN**

The largest kingdom in the midlands is among the most powerful in all the Westlands in virtually every way. Andor has a strong military, nobles who rule well, commoners who are proud of their nation, economic stability, and a culture rich with tradition and vibrancy. Generally considered the "average" that many others are compared to, Andorans are very versatile and reliable.

**Culture:** Andor is a secure nation, and this security grants Andorans the ability to pursue the trades and skills they want. The Queen's Guard is among the best national militaries south of the Borderlands, and the people are generally happy and friendly. With its diverse land and people, individuals of nearly any specialty can be found somewhere within the borders of Andor.

Andoran life is relatively simple and peaceful. Though there are many who may consider Andor less than friendly allies, their strong military presence and economic and cultural importance keeps would-be enemies at home. Andor is often considered to be the nation that is good at everything, best at nothing. While this is debatable in a general sense, individuals from Andor are just as likely to be significant people, or even heroes.

**Appearance:** Andorans are light-skinned, with dark hair and dark eyes, though since they are in the midst of so many crossing routes and cultures, traits from many other lands can be found frequently. Most Andorans are of average height and weight. General appearances can vary from region to region, though in general, Andorans look similar to each other wherever in the country they are.

Andorans dress moderately. While the nobles prefer silken clothes, commoners wear hardy, practical clothes made from wool, cotton, or other durable, reliable fabrics. Simply put, nobles and commoners alike dress for their lifestyles.

**Psychology:** Perhaps no single other kingdom in the Westlands has a more diverse people than Andor. Their unifying traits are their general patriotism, their sense of

security, and their sense of significance, almost as though they are a part of something greater than themselves.

### Andoran Traits

All Andorans gain the following traits:

**Significance:** Any time an Andoran spends a Hero Point to add a bonus die to any Wisdom-related or Charisma-related skill check, she adds an additional +1 bonus to the check.

## CAIRHIENIN

A vast kingdom that shares its name with its capital city, Cairhien is a kingdom rich with political maneuvering and national pride. Cairhienins from the nobility to the lowest commoners are masters of the Great Game, a system in which even the slightest gaffe can earn you a lifelong enemy. Though seen as unnecessarily frivolous by many, Cairhienins stand their own in military and intellectual endeavors as well. While Cairhien enjoys a very good relationship with the Aiel before King Laman's disastrous mistake of cutting their gift of an *avendoraldera* tree. Before that error, they were among the only people allowed to travel through the Aiel Waste. Since then, they are the most reviled people by the Aiel.

**Culture:** Daes Dae'mar is at the heart of everything Cairhienins do. Even among the commoners, the Great Game is essential to a person's social, and sometimes their physical, standing. A person can rise and fall in their social ranking with the slightest maneuvers or mistakes.

Despite their love of pomp, Cairhienins are typically very reserved and orderly. They will do virtually nothing without careful planning, partially as a result of their adherence to the Great Game. This makes Cairhienins very good at battle strategy, governance, city planning, and creative learning, among many other things.

**Appearance:** Cairhienins are, on average, the shortest people in the Westlands. They have dark hair and eyes, and light, even pale skin. Among the nobility, features are graceful and soft, and are even so among the commoners when compared with commoners from other nations.

Cairhienin attire among nobles includes dark clothes and lace with narrow, brightly colored horizontal sashes or bars of gold, silver, and scarlet, the number of which



announces their rank in society. Their hair is dressed as elaborately as their lifestyles. Men and women wear it long, and the women curl it into a tower of beautiful locks.

**Psychology:** Cairhienins are master planners, and they demand to be in control of their own lives, which they desire to be orderly and full of comforts.

### Cairhienin Traits

All Cairhienins gain the following traits:

**Elegance:** A Cairhienin spend a Hero Point as a free action to take 20 on a Persuasion check, even when taking 20 would not normally be allowed.

## GHEALDANI

The hilly, forested kingdom of Ghealdan lies between the easternmost parts of Andor and the kingdom of Amadicia. To the east are the Mountains of Mist. The Forest of Shadows can be found along the northern border, where nobody travels, and the Rivers Eldar, Boern, and Manatherendrelle run through it as well. Ghealdan is a land of mysteries and intrigue, and its people are diverse and hardy.

**Culture:** Ghealdan has a history of trouble with neighboring countries, and while they are not completely xenophobic, they do take steps to ensure they are well-defended if anyone does try to attack them. Their cities are walled, and they have a stout military renowned for its toughness and keen knowledge of the land.

Communities in Ghealdan are centered around individual families, with men and women generally responsible as parents and raising their children well. Marriages are very happy occasions, as are other events throughout a child's life, such as their completion of apprenticeship. The birth of a child is also an occasion celebrated throughout the community.

**Appearance:** Ghealdani men and women have a tendency for stockiness. They are generally of average height, though above-average weight. Skin tones range from slightly tanned to light, and hair and eyes are usually dark tones, typically brown. Hairstyles among men are diverse, but among women the popular style is pigtailed held by curled ribbons.

Ghealdani males favor dark coats with double rows of wooden buttons, and short, baggy trousers that extend to the knee-high, thick boots they wear. The women prefer practical dresses that are modest, with a lot of knit clothing and thick aprons.

**Psychology:** There is very little fear among the Ghealdani, though they do love their lifestyle and take many steps to protect themselves. They are passionate about their families and communities. A Ghealdani militia is a force to be reckoned with simply because they are tough and passionate, a difficult combination to overcome.

## Ghealdani Traits

All Ghealdani characters gain the following traits:

**Sturdy:** A Ghealdani may spend a Hero Point as a free action to take 20 on any Endurance check, even when taking 20 would not normally be allowed.

## MURANDIAN

With a history of weak nobles and near-total xenophobia, Murandy is a kingdom renowned for its instability. The governing nobles are ever-changing, trade is nearly non-existent, and people live in a state of virtually no confidence in those above them. Still, their self-reliance makes them stronger in many ways.

**Culture:** Murandians have more admiration for their local rulers than their national ones, and as such, local laws are generally enforced over those set forth by the national rulers. This makes it much more possible for the commoners to have a more say in what happens in their local area, but it creates a dangerously fragmented kingdom and makes it vulnerable to outside threats. It also creates very little national pride and the large cities, such as the capital city of Lugard, are run-down and dilapidated from lack of attention.

Murandians are very aware of their political situation, and it can make many of them quite self-minded. To them, it is a matter of survival, and if survival means taking more than is owed to you, or disregarding rules entirely, then that is what they will do. With the country itself in constant jeopardy, stability must begin with oneself, according to many Murandians.

**Appearance:** Murandians are of average height and weight. They have light-colored skin and dark hair and eyes, like nearly all Westlanders.

Male Murandians often grow mustaches and goatees, which they painstakingly curl and fashion. Men wear knee-length coats and high-crowned hats, and typical trousers and shirts that are common in the Midlands. Women wear modest dresses that are also typical, though they tend to be slightly higher up on the ankle. They wear colorful and often striped aprons. Bright scarves often adorn their heads.

**Psychology:** Murandians are not fatalist, but they have next to no confidence in the future of their nation. Most of them yearn for a strong government, but at the same time they do not respect it and admire the strong local governments that oversee them. Murandians have a tendency to be stubborn and licentious.

## Murandian Traits

All Murandians gain the following traits.

**Suspiciousness:** Any time a Murandian spends a Hero Point to add a bonus die to a Perception check, the number of dice rolled is increased by one, and the best roll is accepted.

## TAR VALONER

Throughout the Westlands, there are a few independent city-states. Easily the most influential of these is the city of Tar Valon, the location of the White Tower, center of the Aes Sedai. Merchants and diplomats from all over the Westlands come to Tar Valon. It is a center of politics, commerce, and trade, and with the help of the powerful Aes Sedai, it has enough might that it rarely has to be concerned with being conquered, and indeed it hasn't been in a very long time.

**Culture:** Tar Valon culture is unique in that it has elements of the multitudes of cultures within it. It resembles a coastal port city in many ways, but the people behave much like Midlanders as well, and their firm military tradition reminds one of the Borderlands. Nearly the entire city was built by ogier stonemasons, and it is widely regarded as perhaps the most beautiful city in the Westlands.

The White Tower stands tall in the center of the island-city, and Dragonmount can be seen from anywhere in the city. The magnitude for the good and bad that can come from the One Power is constantly being pressed into the minds of citizens and visitors alike as a constant reminder. One cannot come within several leagues of the city without receiving these reminders, and the locals generally admire the Aes Sedai and the wondrous things that can be done with the One Power.

**Appearance:** Tar Valoners are similar in build to other Midlanders, except many of them have traits and appearances from other lands. It is common for a person claiming to be a Tar Valoner to have parentage from other lands, such as the Borderlands or Coastlands.

Attire also varies by land. An Amadician Tar Valoner is likely to dress much like an Amadician in Amador would, while a Domani would dress like she would in Bandar Eban. However, a common Tar Valoner style of dress is simple, Midlander-style attire, with trousers and shirts, dresses, and coats in the winter.

**Psychology:** Tar Valoners are secure with themselves, and many are fascinated by the different cultures that pass through their city. Many love the independence they enjoy, and the freedoms that come with that independence.

## Tar Valoner Traits

All Tar Valoners characters gain the following traits:

**Multicultural:** Any time a Tar Valoner spends a Hero Point to add a bonus die to a Persuasion check, the number of dice rolled is increased by one, and the highest result is kept.

## TWO RIVERS FOLK

Though it is considered to be a part of Andor, the Two Rivers region is quite different from the rest of Andor, especially western Andor. Lying between the Manetherendrelle and While the Two Rivers is lightly populated, their wool and tabac are sold throughout the Westlands and even beyond by merchants. Two Rivers folk are hardy and bullheaded, though few ever leave their remote region of the Westlands.

**Culture:** Two Rivers folk are generally welcoming and pleasant people. They tend to become fascinated with visitors who do things other than farm, and it can be years between sightings of such a person as a gleeman or noble. Still, the simple life is best for them, and they wouldn't want it any other way.

It is said that the people of the Two Rivers never give up, no matter what occurs. Through the harshest winters and the worst disasters, Two Rivers natives band together to get through everything that comes their way.

**Appearance:** Two Rivers folk are mostly built like other Andorans, though their lifestyle makes them somewhat more hardy and stout than most other Midlanders. They have dark hair and eyes, and light skin.

Natives of the Two Rivers wear hardy clothes, typically made from wool and furs. They dress modestly, with men wearing trousers or breeches and thick shirts, while the women wear ankle-length dresses and aprons. Grown women of marrying age wear their hair long, in a single, thick braid.

**Psychology:** While most inhabitants of the Two Rivers are largely ignorant of the world beyond their small region, they have their own wisdom, and are fast learners. They do not allow themselves to be defeated, stubbornly clinging to hope even when others would call the situation hopeless.

### Two Rivers Folk Traits

All Two Rivers characters gain the following traits:

**Survivor:** A native of the Two Rivers may spend a Hero Point as a free action to reroll Survival checks. The second roll must be kept, even if it is worse.

## OGIER

Not all of the residents of the Westlands are humans. Living in mysterious places called *steddings* are a giant race called Ogier. Ogier are found in other lands as well, though they do not live in *steddings* in these other lands.

Ogier stand about eight to ten feet tall and weigh twice to three times as much as humans. They normally have brown hair and eye colors within the same color range as humans. Even for their size, they have thick fingers and wide noses, and their ears are long and pointed, ending in small tufts of hair. They have light skin.

Ogier lifespans are much longer than humans. An Ogier can expect to live over six hundred years, and reaches full maturity at around eighty to a hundred years of age.

### Ogier Traits

All Ogier have the following traits:

**Ability Modifiers:** +4 Strength, -4 Dexterity. Ogier are very powerfully built, but not very agile.

**Large Size:** As Large creatures, Ogier take a -1 size penalty to Reflex Defense, a -5 size penalty on Stealth checks, and gain a +5 size bonus to their damage threshold. Their lifting and carrying limits are double those of Medium characters.

**Speed:** Ogier base speed is 8 squares.

**Great Fortitude:** Ogier gain a +2 racial bonus to Fortitude Defense.

**Keen Senses:** Ogier may reroll any Perception check, but must keep the second result, even if it is worse.

Ogier in the Westlands are Ogier from *steddings*, called “*Stedding Ogier*” in this book for differentiation and specification. In the Westlands, they would simply be called Ogier, or other honorifics.

### STEDDING OGIER

Found in *steddings* throughout the Westlands, *stedding* Ogier are the master stoneworkers and builders whose works can be seen in many of the major cities throughout the Westlands, including Cairhien, Caemlyn, and others. Most of their original work done in Tar Valon can still be seen. They are renowned for their wisdom, pacifism, and longevity, among many other things.

**Culture:** Hierarchy in the *stedding* consists of a council of Elders, called the Stump, who make important decisions for the whole of the community and meet with any visitors. Community, specifically family, is very important to these Ogier.

*Stedding* Ogier spend much of their lives in study, and their longevity enables them to become extraordinarily wise by their



adult years. This longevity also gives them great patience. While they have been involved in wars in the past, they have been choosing neutrality for the past few centuries because they generally do not like violence. While they are now very rarely seen outside the *stedding*, their stoneworking techniques have been passed down through the generations, and they are still very capable builders. Trees are held in such high esteem that harming one even for practical or even necessary use causes the Ogier grief, even if they are not a Treesinger.

**Appearance:** *Stedding* Ogier look just like ordinary Ogier in general appearance. Male Ogier often grow bushy sideburns and eyebrows.

Dress styles among *stedding* Ogier is generally fancy, though not frivolous. Males wear fine coats with embroidery, while females often wear flowers in their hair. The number of embroideries on an ogier's clothes displays rank in society.

**Psychology:** *Stedding* Ogier value wisdom, and are indeed very well-educated. They are certainly more patient than humans are typically capable of being, and when diplomacy can work, it is always preferable to resorting to violence, though violence is a reasonable alternative in some cases.

### ***Stedding* Ogier Traits**

All *stedding* Ogier characters gain the following traits:

**Longing:** *Stedding* Ogier who spend too much time outside *steddings* risk their well-being. After a number of consecutive months equal to their Constitution modifier, the Gamemaster makes a secret attack against the Ogier's Will Defense (1d20 + 10). This attack gains a +5 modifier for each week after the first roll the Ogier spends out of *steddings*. Success causes the Ogier to move one persistent step down the condition track. This condition track damage persists until the Ogier spends at least one day in a *stedding*.

## **RACIAL TALENT TREES**

Heroic ogier characters have access to the following talent trees.

### **STEDDING OGIER TALENT TREE**

You are an Ogier from the Westlands, and have spent nearly your entire life in a *stedding*.

**Great Patience:** You are extraordinarily patient. Once per encounter you may extend the time it takes to make an Intelligence-based or Wisdom-based ability or skill check that normally takes a swift, move, or standard action to a full-round action, or a full-round action to one full minute. Doing so allows you to take 20 on the skill or ability check.

**Great Wisdom:** Any time you spend a Hero Point to increase an Intelligence-based or Charisma-based ability check or skill check, you increase the number of dice rolled by one.

**Reduced Longing:** You make Longing checks once a month, rather than once a week. The difficulty similarly only increases once a month.

**Stonework Mastery:** You are trained in the Craft skill.

Any time you are working on a project that includes masonry or stonework, you may reroll any failed checks, but you must keep the second result, even if it is worse.

**Woodland Resolve:** Any time you damage an opponent who has caused harm to any plant or animal in a woodland environment, you gain a +1 morale bonus to all Defenses for the remainder of the encounter. This bonus can only be increased once per encounter.

### **OGIER RAGE TALENT TREE**

There is a saying that goes "to anger the Ogier and pull the mountains down on your head." You are the embodiment of such rage.

**Brutal Rage:** Any time you use the Ogier rage ability, your bonus to attack rolls and damage increases by an additional +6.

*Prerequisite:* Ogier Rage.

**Intimidating Rage:** While raging, you may reroll any Persuasion checks made to intimidate and keep the better result. Furthermore, you can make Persuasion checks to intimidate as a swift action rather than a full-round action.

*Prerequisite:* Ogier Rage.

**Ogier Rage:** Once per encounter, you can fly into an Ogier rage. While raging, you gain a +2 rage bonus on melee attack rolls and damage rolls, and Damage Threshold. You also gain one additional hit point per character level.

The rage lasts a number of rounds equal to 5 + your Constitution modifier. At the end of this rage, you move -1 persistent step along the condition track. This penalty is imposed until you spend at least 10 minutes recuperating, during which time you cannot engage in any strenuous activity.

You may take this ability multiple times. Each time, it increases the number of times you may use this ability per day by one.

**Undying Rage:** You take no penalties from Condition Track damage during your Ogier Rage. Furthermore, your rage continues to the end of its duration, no matter how much damage you take. If you take damage that results in you being reduced to 0 hit points, you may continue on until the end of the Ogier rage. At the end of this rage, if you were reduced to 0 hit points, you fall unconscious, or, if you took damage that exceeded your damage threshold and reduced you to 0 hit points, you die. Regardless, at the end of the Ogier rage, you take one additional step down the condition track normally.

*Prerequisite:* Ogier Rage.