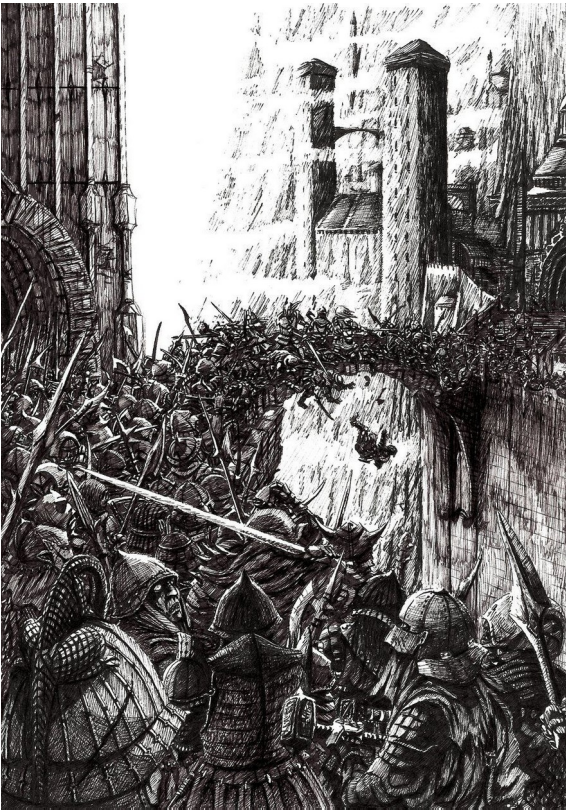


# The Pool - The Siege



*Valais was once the greatest of all the kingdoms: the Valaisian armies conquered each neighbour nation; and the yellow and light-blue banners with the hazelnut tree of the royal family used to wave across the known lands. But those times are long gone... The Empire of Drägerland is rising and has begun a campaign to subdue Valais; they are winning: the Drägerlanders have subjugated most of the country and routed the Valaisian army. The King has run away after losing his only heir Nithard the Golden Blade in the decisive battle to defend the capital from the invasion. And so, King Berthaire and the court have found shelter in the far Enrilith Fortress among the mountains.*

*In the last few days, the refugees are flooding towards Enrilith while the fortress is preparing for the last stand against the Drägerlandic army that will arrive soon.*

## King Berthaire of Valais



King Berthaire of Valais has lost any hope and has no will to live after the death of Nithard. He spends his days before the siege drinking wine and philosophising about the nature of fate. He listens to his counsellors and commanders passively, nodding at their plans for the siege without caring too much.

## Lady Lafrenia of Algisel, Commander of the Royal Guard

Lady Lafrenia is the commander of the royal guard of Valais. She was the lover of Nithard. Although suffering for the loss of his beloved one, she has reacted with strength to

Nithard's death and tries to shake Berthaire from his despair. Her plan is releasing the relic of the gods sealed in the depths of the Elrith fortress to save Valais – an act that the Arborial Church forbids and considers heretical.



## Lord Wandregisel, Keeper of Enrilith Fortress

Lord Wandregisel is the lord keeper of the Enrilith Fortress. In ancient times, his noble house betrayed Drägerland and swore loyalty to the royal family of Valais. As a sign of appreciation, the King's ancestor granted the title of keepers to his family which has been protecting the Enrilith fortress for generations ever since. Against the odds, he is ready to fight to the death to defend the gates with any men able to fight. He will never surrender, and he would prefer to destroy the fortress rather than let the enemy take it.



## Hilcardis, Hallow Maiden of the Arborial Church

The sisterhood has elected Hilcardis as the new hallow maiden of the Arborial Church. She has been proposing to surrender to the enemy, letting the first son of the emperor of *Drägerlandic* to marry Berthaire's niece. Her only concern regards the safety of the refugees, and she wants to avoid any useless slaughter.





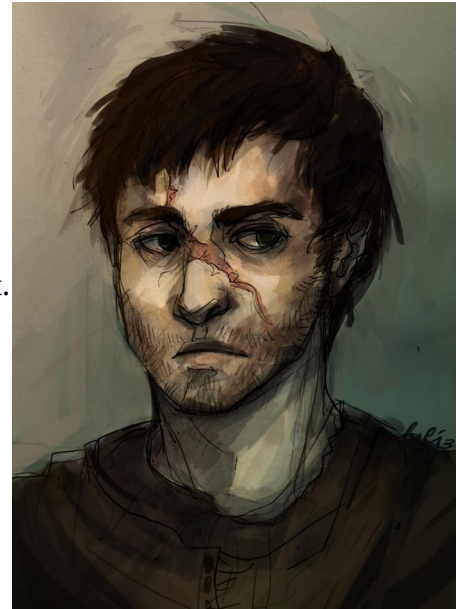
## Master Toxilus, the Last Elder Sorcerer-Monk



Master Toxilus is the last member of the Order of Sorcerer-Monks of Enrilith. He is convinced that the battle cannot be won, although he is not acknowledging it to the King. He is devoting his efforts towards evacuating the most precious tomes from the library and preventing the godly relic from falling into enemy hands.

## Sphaerius, the Quartermaster

Sphaerius is the bastard son of Wandregisel and he has become quartermaster of Enrilith on his appointment. As a child, he was disfigured by a drunken Wandregisel, who had lost his temper during a feast. He resents his father and plans to betray his kin by opening the main gate for the Drägerlandic forces at



their signal.

## Creating a Character

**Character Story:** Write 50 words or less to describe anything about their appearance, their status, their origin or background, what they can do, their gear or resources, their relations or companions, or what they want.

- Do not use superlatives or generalized terms.
- Make up and include other characters or past events if you want.
- Underline words or short phrases to define Traits, as many as you can or want.
- Give the character a name. They do not count toward the 50 words.
- Assign bonuses to one or more Traits. It is OK for Traits not to have bonuses.

You have 15 dice. You may spend up to 14 of them for Trait bonuses.

+1 Bonus costs 1 die; +2 Bonus costs 4 dice, +3 Bonus costs 9 dice, et cetera.

The remaining dice become your starting Pool.

## Rules of Play

The GM plays the backstory and the physical qualities of situations in play. Players' knowledge and backstory input is restricted to content in their characters' stories. Unless stated actions by players

intercede, the GM begins new situations including cuts in location and time. The GM plays all non-player characters including those listed in characters' stories.

Conflicts (dice rolls) are identified by anyone in play based on what's happening or on what they're about to do. The scope of a given roll and potentially damaging or lethal effects are identified by the GM.

Everyone involved picks one (just one) of their applicable Traits to use, receives 1-3 Gift dice from the GM, and decides how many of their remaining pool dice they want to gamble.

Roll a number of dice (d6s) equal to: [1-3 Gift dice] + [dice equal to the bonus for one Trait] + [Pool dice they choose to gamble]. If at least one die shows a "1", the roll is a success.

- If the conflict is failed, the GM narrates, and all gambled Pool dice are lost.
- If the conflict succeeds, the player chooses whether:
  - the GM narrates minimally and the player **adds one die** to their Pool, or
  - the player narrates (take a **monologue of victory**) with greater latitude for effects and consequences.

Describe the success or failure, including ordering, causal events, actions, effects, and characterizations.

Whether the GM or player narrates, they should keep in mind that the effects of the roll should be as decisive as possible within the scope, in the sense that a clear change in the situation happens. Players should keep in mind they can't add new information to the backstory; they can only use elements that have already been established. The GM should keep their narration as basic and minimal as they can, while the player can be more extravagant.

## Later Development

During play or between sessions, assign or increase bonuses to Traits as you desire using the same method as above. Bonuses may not be traded back into Pool dice.

To increase a Trait bonus, pay the difference between the new bonus's and the old bonus's cost. For example: increasing from 2 (cost 4) to 3 (cost 9) will cost  $9-4 = 5$  dice.

After each session, add, remove, or modify 15 words from your Character Story.