

Secrets of The Shadow of Yesterday

Secret of Animal Speech

Your character can speak to an animal and understand its signals. In order to get the animal to cooperate or not try to eat you, you might need a successful Animal Ken ability check. Even if you fail this check, you'll understand that it wants to eat you loud and clear. *Cost:* 2 Instinct.

Secret of Blessing

With a successful Pray ability check, your character may bless the actions of a group. You must state a specific goal for them to accomplish. Your success level with this ability check is a pool of bonus dice any member of this group can use in accomplishing this task. *Cost:* 1 Vigor.

Secret of the Bodhisavatta

You must have at least one ability ranked at Grand Master to take this Secret. When you roll a Transcendent success level, you do not have to have your character transcend. Your character can deny herself of perfection and will stay chained to this life. Roll a penalty die immediately. You can keep rolling penalty dice until you are no longer Transcendent. *Cost:* Take a level one harm associated with the ability per penalty die.

Secret of Contacts

Your character knows all sorts of people in all sorts of places. You can use this Secret for your character to automatically have a past relationship with any Story Guide character in the adventure. You may describe the relationship in a short phrase, such as “old enemy,” “wartime buddy,” “ex-lover,” but the Story Guide gets to decide the history and current disposition of the relationship. *Cost:* 3 points from a pool determined by the Story Guide. Vigor would fit for a wartime buddy, Instinct for an ex-lover, and Reason for a former colleague in your character's field of study.

Secret of Disarm

Your character can disarm an opponent, without changing intentions, with a successful ability check using a weapon in Bringing Down the Pain. Because weapons can be all sorts of things in this game, “disarm” just means that the weapon's been rendered ineffective for the duration of Bringing Down the Pain. *Cost:* 1 Vigor.

Secret of Enhancement (Ability)

You must select an ability when you take this Secret. You may spend as many points out of the associated pool to give bonus dice to the ability as you like.

Secret of Evaluate

Your character's battle experience has given her the ability to read an opponent well. Evaluate your character's opponent not in descriptive terms, but in game mechanics, on a successful Battle ability check. You can ask for any of the following information, one bit per success level: Vigor score, Instinct score, best combat ability and score, specific ability score. *Cost:* 1 Reason.

Secret of Flying Leap

Your character can make amazing leaps. Using this Secret, she can jump much further or higher than normal. For each Vigor point you spend, up to three, you can jump another multiple of normal human ability for one leap.

Secret of Herbal Health

Your character can always find an herb that is an effective healing agent with a successful Woodcraft ability check in the outdoors. The herb lets you use your Woodcraft Ability to act like First Aid and heal others. *Cost: 1 Reason.*

Secret of the Hidden Pocket

Your character is adept at hiding objects on her person. No matter how carefully searched the character has been, she may pull an inexpensive, small (hand-sized) item off her person with a successful Stealth ability check. *Cost: 2 Instinct.*

Secret of Imbuement

Turn an item into a weapon or armor, using the rules found in the Resolution chapter. You can add one weapon or armor rating to the item each time you take this Secret. In addition, you can use this Secret to imbue the item with the power of another Secret. That Secret will have its costs lowered by one pool point. The item can be taken away from you, but you must be given a chance to get it back, or you can roll your advances spent on this Secret into a new item. You can take away someone else's Imbued item, but you'll have to pay the original cost to keep it.

Secret of Inner Meaning

Your character's art carries a meaning beyond the surface. Use any non-physical Instinct-based ability at a distance via a piece of your character's art. *Cost: 2 Reason.*

Secret of Knock-back

Your character's blows send people flying. Knock back a stricken character one yard per success level. This immediately ends Bringing Down the Pain if you're involved in that, with no resolution as to intentions. *Cost: 2 Vigor.*

Secret of Languages (Specific language)

Your character knows a language outside her homeland's.

Secret of Mighty Blow

Your character can strike with extreme might. Spend as many dice of Vigor as you like to increase the harm of a successful blow in combat.

Secret of Quality Construction (Craft Ability)

You must choose a specific Craft Ability when you take this Secret. Your character can craft items of excellent quality. Any item your character creates using this Secret gives one bonus die to a particular ability when using the item, permanently. *Cost: 5 Reason.*

Secret of Scribing

Your character can read and write any language she knows.

Secret of Shattering

The weight of your weapon can be used to destroy other weapons and armor in combat. With a successful attack, your success level (not including any damage bonuses) is removed from the damage bonuses of weapons or damage reductions of armor. If reduced to 0, the item is destroyed. *Cost:* 2 Vigor. (Note: if used against player characters' weapons or armor bought with the Secret of Imbuement, they may repair the item or have it become something new after the scene.)

Secret of the Signature Weapon

Your character has one weapon with which she is bonded. You gain a bonus die to any action taken with that weapon and any other character else attempting to use the weapon receives a penalty die. (Note: to change this weapon, this Secret must be taken again.)

Secret of Speciality (Skill)

You must select an ability when you take this Secret. Choose a speciality your character has within that ability - for example, cooking pastries for the Complex Crafts skill. You always have a bonus die when your character attempts an action that falls within that speciality.

Secret of Synergy

You can chain multiple abilities together in Bringing Down the Pain as you would in a normal ability check; that is, you can roll multiple ability checks in one action to add bonus dice to the final check. *Cost:* 1 associated pool point for each extra ability you roll.

Secret of the Sudden Knife

Your character is a master of the assassin's art. In a surprise attack, the victim automatically takes harm level 4 (bloodied) if your character successfully hits. She should make an Endure ability check resisting your roll. If she fails, she automatically takes harm level 6. This is irrespective of being in a Bringing Down the Pain situation. *Cost:* 3 points from whatever pool is associated with the ability you're using, plus 1 from each other the other pools.

Secret of Throwing

Anything is a dangerous missile in your character's hands. She can throw anything fist-sized to greatsword-sized as an attack, using the Aim ability, and the object counts as a +1 weapon. *Cost:* 1 Vigor.

Secret of the Unwalked Path

Your character's footfalls leave little trace for others to follow. You can use your character's Woodcraft ability in resistance to anyone trying to track her. *Cost:* 1 Instinct.

Elven Species Secrets

Secret of Immortality

When an elf character dies, it returns to Near within 28 days. The Story Guide and the character's player should decide together when the most appropriate and enjoyable time for the character to

come back would be. No one has actually ever seen an elf return: it happens out of the sight of other people. The character loses a point from each pool. Three abilities must be lowered by one rank as well; the process of reincarnation is not perfect and the elf's spirit must adjust to a new form. The player can choose to have her character not return from death. Whether this means the character has ascended to Heaven, or something else has happened, is completely up to that player and the Story Guide. **This secret is mandatory for elven characters.**

Secret of the Polymath

In an elf's life, many abilities have waxed and waned. Using this secret, the elf may use its Past Lives ability as any other ability for an entire scene. *Cost:* 2 Reason. In addition, the very next available advance the player spends must be used to improve this ability.

Secret of Fading the Illusion

An elf with this secret can, through force of will, make the illusion of the world temporarily grow dim and ghostly around him. To everyone else, it appears the elf has become translucent and incorporeal. This secret lasts for one scene. *Cost:* 2 Vigor. (To note, your character can slip through cracks and cannot be physically harmed. She just has an interesting way of looking at this.)

Secret of the Iron Mind

Your character can refresh Reason whenever she defeats someone else in a one-on-one personal contest of any type, as long as it has been established as a contest between the two.

Aura of Protection

Your character's aura is palpable, bringing a strange thickness to the air. When physically attacked, you can spend from your Reason pool to lower harm on a one-for-one basis.

Aura of the Imperator

Your character's aura waxes as she enforces her will, making her appear taller and more threatening. On any attempt to intimidate someone or convince them of your character's opinion, you may add a bonus die.

Aura of Sight

Your character's aura is brighter than normal when close up, but no brighter when far away. This allows you and your friends to see fine at night, and eliminates any sight-based difficulties.

Aura of the Tower

Your character's aura is polarized, giving it a weird light-and-dark flavor. Both Reason and Vigor are now associated with Resist, and you can spend from both of them for ability checks.

Goblin Species Secrets

Secret of the Addiction

Your character is addicted to a substance or behavior. You cannot refresh any pools if it has been longer than a day since your character took part in this addiction. In addition, your character can never refresh Vigor normally: instead, she only refreshes Vigor through taking part in this addiction.

This refreshment can only happen once per day, but there is a boon. Your character can take part in the addiction as often you like, and one point of Vigor is returned each time after the first refreshment each day. You can break this addiction if you have the Key of the Affliction. The character must abstain from the substance or behavior. At the end of each day doing so, make a Resist roll. If the roll is successful for five straight days, the addiction is broken and you can refresh Vigor normally. If any roll is failed, start over. The secret is kept and if the character ever takes part in the addiction again, it returns. **This secret is mandatory for goblin characters.**

Secret of Adaptability

Whenever Vigor is refreshed, instead of actually refreshing the pool, the player can switch her character's Adaptability score with the score for a different ability. This is a permanent switch.

Secret of Body Weaponry

Your goblin has innate weapons and armor. This Secret works like the Secret of Imbuement and may be taken multiple times in order to gain more potent or extra weapons and armor. If you have the Secret of Adaptability, these weapons and armor can be changed under the same circumstances: when Vigor is refreshed, but no pool refreshment is taken.

Secret of the Chameleon

Your character's skin can change color, and instinctively does. You always have a bonus die to hide against brown, black, grey, or dark green: basically, natural colors and rough stone.

Ratkin Species Secrets

Secret of Rat Familiarity

You gain a bonus die on all Animal Ken ability checks involving rodents. In addition, your character can speak to rodents in their own language. **This secret is mandatory for Ratkin characters.**

Secret of Rat Companions

Your character always has two to four rats around her, living in her pockets, scurrying on the floor, or the like. As a whole, they have the following abilities: Endure: Unskilled, React: Adept, Resist: Unskilled, Scrapping: Unskilled, Stealth: Competent. They scatter immediately if successfully hit, even in Bringing Down the Pain, and do not return until the next scene.

Secret of Rat Size

Being a Ratkin, your character is smaller than most people in the world, and can use that to her advantage in combat. Gain a bonus die any time your character is avoiding an attack from someone larger than her or any other situation in which her reduced size may help (i.e. an Athletics ability check to wriggle through a pipe.)

Secret of Rat Vision

Your character is gifted with excellent night vision. You can never receive any penalties for low-light conditions and can see under the moon as if it were daylight.

Secret of Sibling Rivalry

You can refresh your character's Instinct pool whenever she gets in a knock-down, drag-out fight with a member of her litter. In addition, you can immediately roll your Litter Bond ability after the fight to heal your litter-mate.

Zaru Cultural Secrets

Secret of Swamp Lore

Your character always has a bonus die on Woodcraft or other ability checks involving swamp flora and fauna, and can use her Woodcraft skill for navigation in the swamp. She also receives a bonus die to Farming checks in the swamp.

Secret of Kinetic Redirection

When your character is using Uptenbo to defend herself, you can take your success level from your defense (which still does harm) and add them as bonus dice to a followup Uptenbo attack, using the full motion of the attacker to power your move. *Cost:* 1 Instinct.

Secret of Constant Motion

Your character's body is so well-trained that she can use Uptenbo almost without thought. If attacked, your character can use Uptenbo in Bringing Down the Pain for any action without changing from her true intention.

Secret of Zu

This Secret allows your character to speak the words of *zu* in their full power, although the character does not actually know any words of power besides "zu," which simply means "yes" or agreement. Speaking "zu," and spending a point of Reason, allows you to add a bonus die to an action of anyone within sight. *Prerequisite:* The character cannot have taken a human life, ever. If the character takes human life, this Secret is immediately lost and the Secret of Uz is gained. In addition, the player can only take this Secret when the character is hearing someone use *zu* as words of power.

Secret of Uz

This Secret allows your character to speak the words of *zu* in their full power, although the character does not actually know any words of power besides "uz," which simply means "no" or disagreement. Speaking "uz," and spending a point of Instinct, allows you to add a penalty die to an action of anyone within sight. *Prerequisite:* The character must have taken a human life. In addition, the player can only take this Secret when the character is hearing someone use *zu* as words of power.

Ammenite Cultural Secrets

Secret of Healing Venom

Your character can distill infusions that have an unusual effect: they shock the body into healing. These infusions still harm the imbiber if her Endure check is unsuccessful. If successful, however, the character is healed of a harm equal to or less than the infusion's potency. *Cost:* 2 Reason.

Secret of Metastasis

Your character can increase and add to infusions' effects with great skill. As many effects as you like can be added to drugs and poisons that she distills. *Cost:* 2 Reason for each extra effect past the first.

Secret of the Serpent Blade

By boiling an infusion down to a sticky substance, it can be applied to any sharp surface, usable indefinitely, until the object actually pierces someone. *Cost:* 1 Vigor.

Secret of the Fire Fruit

Your character's skill with chiles and other fiery ingredients is so good that she can actually harm others with a successful attempt at cooking. The ability check is your cooking ability versus the eater's Endure ability.

Secret of the Iron Stomach

Your character has great ability to consume things that would otherwise harm her. Gain one bonus die to resist any poison or drug taken orally, or to resist the effects of spoiled, overly spiced, or otherwise harmful foods.

Khale Cultural Secrets

Secret of the Perfect Chord, Joy

With a successful Music ability check, which can be resisted with a Resist ability check, your character can evoke swellings of joy in all listeners, no matter their disposition. *Cost:* 1 Vigor.

Secret of the Perfect Chord, Sorrow

With a successful Music ability check, which can be resisted with a Resist ability check, your character can evoke tears of sorrow in all listeners. *Cost:* 1 Instinct.

Secret of the Perfect Chord, Sleep

With a successful Music ability check, which can be resisted with a Resist ability check, your character can put all listeners to sleep. *Cost:* 2 Reason.

Secret of the Forest's Embrace

Your character gains a bonus die to Stealth and Guerilla Warfare when in thick forest.

Secret of Forest Transport

Your character may bring others with her when she travels into the Green World, holding the portal open for them. The ancestors, should they live, will hold you responsible for your visitors' actions. *Cost:* 1 Vigor per person.

Secret of Bough's Bosom

While in the Green World, anyone attempting to heal your character automatically receives a bonus die.

Secret of the Moon Heart

Your character has absorbed a quantity of moon-metal, which has bonded with her flesh. You no longer need fire to mold the metal into new forms, and can spend Vigor on a one-for-one basis for bonus dice when forcing the metal to keep its form. You cannot ever enter the Green World, however, and all attacks against you with wooden weapons do +1 harm.

Qek Cultural Secrets

Secret of the Walozi

Either through an unusual birth or training, your character has the power of the walozi. She knows the rituals for contacting spirits, and can attempt this by spending one Vigor and using the Pray ability. This ritual takes about fifteen minutes to perform.

Ritual of Spectral Form

This ritual gives form to a sasha or zamani spirit upon a successful Create ability check. This ritual takes about half an hour to perform. *Cost:* 1 Vigor and 1 Instinct. *Prerequisite:* Secret of the Walozi.

Ritual of Binding

The walozi with this ritual can bind a spectral sasha or zamani spirit to a body. This requires no ability check, and costs one Vigor. However, an unwilling spirit can make a Resist ability check. If successful, the walozi must spend a number of Vigor points equal to the spirit's success level. This ritual takes at least an hour to perform. *Cost:* 1+ Vigor. *Prerequisite:* Secret of the Walozi.

Ritual of Severance

Using this ritual, a walozi can sever a spirit with a successful Dueling ability check. This has no cost, but the walozi has a penalty die unless her roho is separated from her body. Speaking of that, a walozi can use this ritual to separate her roho from her body, severing herself. She can rejoin with her body simply by having her roho touch it and willing it so, but rival walozi might take advantage of this situation. Note that sasha and zamani might well have this ritual and fight back if one is spectral. This ritual takes one minute to perform if bound to one's body; if spectral, it's instantaneous as the two spirits fight. *Prerequisite:* Secret of the Walozi, or be a sasha or zamani.

Ritual of Zamani Control

This ritual allows the walozi to convince a zamani given form to do something besides destroy blindly, given a successful Sway ability check. Their need for destruction is so great that normal social interaction will not work. This ritual requires nothing more than special intonation and a hand signal. *Prerequisite:* Secret of the Walozi.

Ritual of Vessel Preparation

By removing all organs and applying powders, stuffing, and wax, one can prepare a dead body to accept a spirit with a successful Fine Crafts ability check. This not only allows a long-dead sasha to inhabit their old body, but has the added advantage of making the body much less vulnerable to physical harm. The body cannot be bloodied - all bloodied harm counts as bruised. Instead, after being broken, the spirit is automatically severed. What can make a ritually prepared vessel even more powerful is combining this ritual with the Secret of Imbuement.

Three-Corner Magic Secrets

Secret of the Invisible Hand

Normally, your character must touch a target to affect it with magic. With this Secret, she can affect any target she can see or have the effects of her magic occur anywhere she can see. *Cost:* 1 point from the associated attribute.

Secret of the Invisible Arm

Your character can physically manipulate objects through telekinesis. This power is not as strong or coordinated as her normal body: all actions take a penalty die, although pools can be spent as normal to alleviate this. *Cost:* 1 Vigor. *Prerequisite:* Secret of the Invisible Hand.

Secret of Magical Contagion

Normally, your character's magic affects one target. You can spread her magic over a group of targets by spending points from the associated attribute.

Cost:

- A small group of targets (around 5) can be affected for 1 point.
- A large group of targets (25 or less) can be affected for 3 points.
- A crowd of targets (100 or less) can be affected for 6 points.
- A horde of targets (all that the caster can see) can be affected for 10 points.

Secret of Magical Persistence

Normally, your character's magic can last for a maximum of one hour. With this Secret, you can extend the duration by spending from the associated attribute.

Cost:

- For 1 point, you can extend until sundown (or sunrise if used at night.)
- For 3 points, you can extend until the end of one moon phase (end of the week).
- For 6 points, you can extend until the next eclipse (end of the month).
- For 10 points, you can extend until one complete sun cycle (either solstice).

Secret of Magical Effect

You can increase the success level of a successful Three-Corner Magic ability check by 1. *Cost:* 1 associated attribute point.

Secret of Sympathetic Magic

If your character has an item of the target she is attempting to affect with magic, you gain a bonus die on your ability check.

Transformation Secrets

Craft

Your character can use any of her Craft or Artistic skills magically, making their action instantaneous. The Craft or Artistic skill is rolled first, with success levels acting as bonus dice on the Transformation ability check. *Cost:* 1 Instinct.

Living Morph

You can change the target's form into that of another living creature, moving around their pool points as you want at the same time. This costs a minimum of one Instinct. You can spend extra Instinct points to:

- Double or half the target's size. If this is not done, the target becomes a creature of its same size.
- Flip two skill scores. One of the skills does not have to be stated, if you flip for the target's best skill.
- Add a +1 or +2 weapon or armor rating to the target. One Instinct must be spent per separate rating.
- Add a Secret to the target.

Cost: 1+ Instinct.

Creation Secrets

Create Anything

Your character can create any pure material that she wants. Pure material is not as simple as any one of the real-world elements: alloys and such count. What is prohibited is creating, for example, wood and metal at the same time. Steel, an alloy, is fine. *Cost:* 1 Vigor.

Create Volume

Your character can create a mass of material. This is roughly equal to 1 foot cubed per Vigor spent, and can be in any non-complex shape, such as a sphere, wall, or cube. *Cost:* 1+ Vigor. (Note: That's 1 cubic foot for 1 Vigor, 8 cubic feet for 2 Vigor, 27 cubic feet for 3 Vigor, and so on.)

Destruction Secrets

Inner Damage

Your character can damage targets' pools, removing points, instead of doing physical damage. *Cost:* 1 Vigor.

Massive Damage

The damage done with Destruction is equal to your success level multiplied by the amount of Vigor spent. *Cost:* 2+ Vigor.

Enthrallment Secrets

Gentle Touch

Your character can use Enthrallment without making her target aware that she is being manipulated.

Cost: 1 Reason.

Alter Senses

You can alter a target's senses. *Cost:* 1 Reason per sense.

Divination Secrets

Know Truth

Your character can know the answer to any question asked of her. The GM will determine the clarity of these answers by your success levels. *Cost:* 1 Reason.

Know Capabilities

You can learn game statistics about a target, such as a particular attribute score, best skill and score, or specific skill and score. You can learn a number of bits of information equal to the number of Reason spent. *Cost:* 1+ Reason.

Enhancement Secrets

Empower Others

Your character can spend her pools to give other characters bonus dice or power their Secrets. This follows all normal rules; for example, only one point can be spent for bonus dice per action unless the receiving character has a Secret that allows more.

Burst of Power

By focusing on another character's action, you cause all dice rolled in their ability check to have the potential for bonus dice. Every blank (o) result on a die results in a bonus die given; this continues with these bonus dice, as well. *Cost:* 1 Instinct and one point of the ability associated with the other character's action.

Keys of The Shadow of Yesterday

Key of Bloodlust

Your character enjoys overpowering others in combat. Gain 1 XP every time your character defeats someone in battle. Gain 3 XP for defeating someone equal to or more powerful than your character (equal or higher combat skill.) *Buyoff*: Be defeated in battle.

Key of Conscience

Your character has a soft spot for those weaker than their opponents. Gain 1 XP every time your character helps someone who cannot help themselves. Gain 2 XP every time your character defends someone with might who is in danger and cannot save themselves. Gain 5 XP every time your character takes someone in an unfortunate situation and changes their life to where they can help themselves. *Buyoff*: Ignore a request for help.

Key of the Coward

Your character avoids combat like the plague. Gain 1 XP every time your character avoids a potentially dangerous situation. Gain 3 XP every time your character stops a combat using other means besides violence. *Buyoff*: Leap into combat with no hesitation.

Key of Faith

Your character has a strong religious belief that guides her. Gain 1 XP every time she defends her faith to others. Gain 2 XP whenever this character converts someone to her faith. Gain 5 XP whenever this character defends her faith even though it brings her great harm. *Buyoff*: Your character renounces her beliefs.

Key of Fraternity

Your character has someone she is sworn to, a friend who is more important than anyone else. Gain 1 XP every time this character is present in a scene with your character (maximum 3 per adventure). Gain 2 XP whenever your character has to make a decision that is influenced by them. Gain 5 XP every time your character defends them by putting herself at risk. *Buyoff*: Sever the relationship with this person.

Key of Glittering Gold

Your character loves wealth. Gain 1 XP every time you make a deal that favors you in wealth. Gain 3 XP every time you double your wealth. *Buyoff*: Give away everything you own except what you can carry lightly.

Key of the Guardian

Your character has a ward, someone who depends on her for security and protection. Gain 1 XP every time this character is present in a scene with your character. Gain 2 XP whenever your character has to make a decision that is influenced by them. Gain 5 XP every time your character rescues them from harm. *Buyoff*: Sever the relationship with this person.

Key of the Impostor

Sometimes your entire life is a lie. You gain 1 XP whenever you pass yourself off as someone/something you're not. You gain 2 XP whenever you convince others in spite of serious skepticism. You gain 5 XP whenever your story survives a deliberate, focused, "Hey everybody, look!" attempt to reveal your identity. *Buyoff*: Confess your imposture to those duped.

Key of the Masochist

Your character thrives on personal pain and suffering. Gain 1 XP every time she is bloodied and 3 XP every time she is broken. *Buyoff*: Flee a source of physical or psychic damage.

Key of the Mission

Your character has a personal mission that she must complete. Gain 1 XP every time she takes action to complete this mission (2 XP if this action is successful.) Gain 5 XP every time she takes action that completes a major part of this mission. *Buyoff*: Abandon this mission.

Key of the Outcast

Your character has lost fellowship or membership in an organization - which could just be a culture, or a specific cross-cultural group. This separation defines your character as much as membership in the organization defines its members. Gain 1 XP every time her status with this organization comes up. Gain 2 XP every time her disassociation brings her harm. Gain 5 XP every time the separation brings your character great pain and suffering. *Buyoff*: Regain membership in the organization.

Key of Renown

"You must be the worst assassin I've ever heard of." "But you have heard of me." You gain 1 XP whenever you see to it that your name and deeds are known, by bragging about them or making sure there are witnesses. You gain 2 XP whenever you put yourself at risk to do something unnecessary or foolish that will add to your reputation. You gain 5 XP whenever you risk your life to take credit for your actions (bragging that you were the one who killed the Duke's son, for example.). *Buyoff*: Give someone else credit for an action that would increase your renown.

Key of Power

You don't even care what you do with it, you just want it. You gain 1 XP whenever you earn a boon from someone important, earn a slight gain in prestige, or make a rival look bad. You gain 3 XP whenever you ruin, kill, or otherwise eliminate a rival, and improve your own position because of it. *Buyoff*: Relinquish your power and position.

Key of Vengeance

Your character has a hatred for a particular organization, person, or even species or culture. Gain 1 XP every time your character hurts a member of that group or a lackey of that person. Gain 2 XP every time your character strikes a minor blow at that group or person (killing a member of the organization or one of the person's lackeys, disrupting their life, destroying their property). Gain 5 XP every time your character strikes a major blow at that group or person. *Buyoff*: Let your enemy go.

Key of the Vow

Your character has a vow of personal behavior that she has sworn not to break. This could be a dietary restriction, a requirement to pray at sunbreak every morning, or something else like that. Gain 1 XP for every adventure in which your character does not break this vow. Gain 2 XP every time your character does not break this vow even though it causes her minor harm or inconvenience. Gain 5 XP every time your character does not break this vow even though it causes her great harm. *Buyoff*: Break this vow.

Human Species Keys

Key of Love

Your character has a deep love, whether friendly, erotic, or familial, for someone else. Gain 1 XP every time this character is present in a scene with your character. Gain 2 XP whenever your character has to make a decision that is influenced by them. Gain 5 XP every time your character puts herself in harm's way or makes a sacrifice for them. *Buyoff*: Sever the relationship with this person.

Key of Unrequited Love

Your character has a love for someone who does not return this love. Gain 1 XP whenever your character has to make a decision that is influenced by them. Gain 2 XP every time your character attempts to win their affection. Gain 5 XP every time your character puts herself in harm's way or makes a sacrifice for them. *Buyoff*: Abandon your pursuit of this person or win their love.

Elven Species Keys

Key of the Self

Your character is an elf, immortal and dedicated to the self. Gain 1 XP every time she ignores the request of another in order to fulfill her own goals. Gain 3 XP every time she ignores someone in need for herself. *Buyoff*: Become human. By either dying to save the life of another, or creating life, your character enters the Grey Age. All Elven Species Secrets and Keys, except Secret of the Polymath, are unusable.

Key of the Eternal Question

There is a reason for the illusion of Near, a purpose behind its entrapment of your character. Only when she answers this question will she be ready to be the master of all she dreams. Pick a philosophical question for your character. "What is the measure of a hero?" or "Can one know herself better through fulfillment or denial?" are good examples. Gain 1 XP every time you can apply this question to the situation your character's in. Gain 3 XP every time your character risks harm in pursuit of the answer. *Buyoff*: Answer the question.

Key of the Bloodline

No elf existing in Near today has humans that still remember her humanity. Some elves remember where they came from, though, and show their weakness through secretly shepherding their bloodline. Gain 1 XP every time your character is in a scene with one of her bloodline. Gain 2 XP every time she secretly manipulates a situation in their favor. Gain 5 XP every time she puts herself at risk to do so. *Buyoff*: Reveal who you are to your family.

Goblin Species Keys

Key of the Affliction

Your goblin has succumbed to the Affliction - she has learned to love. This means she is becoming human. With this Key, a goblin character may also take the human Species Key, Key of Unrequited Love. Gain 1 XP every time your character is insulted or ostracized by other goblins for the Affliction. Gain 3 XP every time this reaction causes great difficulty for your character. *Buyoff*: Become fully human. To do this, the character must have the Key of Unrequited Love. If your character either breaks her addiction or wins the love of her target, she becomes human. All goblin Species Secrets except Secret of the Addiction are lost, as is the Adaptability ability.

Ratkin Species Keys

Key of the Litter

Your character has a litter she was either born into or adopted. Gain 1 XP every time she defends a litter-mate from harm. Gain 3 XP every time she defends a litter-mate at great danger to herself. *Buyoff*: Leave your litter to strike out on your own. (Note: You may choose to adopt a different litter at any time, but must buy off this key and buy it again for your character to bond with the new litter. Your character may not have more than one litter at a time.)

Key of the Precious

Your character jealously guards her possessions, afraid that someone will try to take them at first opportunity. Gain 1 XP every time your character gains a new possession by her skills - not when one is given to her or bought. Gain 2 XP every time your character gains a new possession by fighting for it. Gain 5 XP whenever your character successfully defends her possessions against theft. *Buyoff*: Give away your possessions permanently.

Maldorite Cultural Keys

Key of the Revolutionary

Your character is dedicated to overthrowing a ruling class, party, or government. Gain 1 XP every time she speaks out against the rulers, or breaks a minor law. Gain 2 XP every time she acts directly against the rulers. Gain 5 XP every time she puts herself in great danger in order to damage the status quo. *Buyoff*: Accept any favor from the rulers in order for your quietude or complicity.

Key of the Manipulator

Your character works behind the scenes, manipulating others in order to be a shadow ruler. Your character must work for or be an advisor of someone in a position of power. Gain 1 XP whenever your character exerts her will over her ruler, even over minor matters - especially over minor matters. Gain 2 XP whenever the ruler accepts your character's advice over others. Gain 5 XP whenever your character's influence makes the ruler make a policy change or establish a new policy that works in your character's favor. *Buyoff*: Accept the mantle of power for one's self.

Zaru Cultural Keys

Key of the Collector

Your character is dedicated to obtaining as many *zu* as possible. Gain 1 XP whenever she obtains information about the location of a *zu* word. Gain 3 XP whenever she puts herself at risk in order to obtain a *zu*. *Buyoff*: Willingly give away a *zu*.

Key of the Pacifist

Your character has a personal commitment to nonviolence. Gain 1 XP for every adventure in which your character does not commit any violence. Gain 2 XP every time your character does not commit violence even though it causes her minor harm or inconvenience. Gain 5 XP every time your character does not commit violence even though it causes her great harm. *Buyoff*: Purposefully harm another sentient creature.

Ammenite Cultural Keys

Key of the House

Your character is a member of and dedicated to a House, one of the mercantile entities of Ammeni. Being a member of a House has great economic advantages, but requires much of a person. Gain 1 XP every time your character does something to benefit her House. Gain 2 XP every time she does something to benefit her house that causes her discomfort or inconvenience. Gain 5 XP every time she acts to benefit her House at the great risk of her body, reputation, or wealth. *Buyoff*: Act against the interests of one's House.

Key of the Overlord

Your character owns other people or oversees the ownership of others. Gain 1 XP every time your character makes someone else do something against her will. Gain 3 XP every time your character makes someone else do something that causes harm, pain, or despair to that person. *Buyoff*: Free a person under your ownership or oversight.

Khale Cultural Keys

Key of the Tribe

Your character's tribe is a great part of her identity. Gain 1 XP whenever your character does something to help the tribe. Gain 2 XP whenever your character defends or helps the tribe even though it brings her ridicule or inconvenience. Gain 5 XP whenever your character defends the tribe in battle.

Buyoff: Leave the tribe.

Key of the Lost Child

Your character has no tribe. They are lost to the Green World, or perhaps decimated in battle. It is her duty to carry on the tribe's name. Gain 1 XP every time your character tells a story of her tribe.

Gain 2 XP whenever your character defends her tribe's name or lands in words or in battle. Gain 5 XP whenever your character finds a new legend of her tribe. *Buyoff:* Join another tribe.

Qek Cultural Keys

Key of the Astral Traveler

Your character is dedicated to a world outside her body, taking hallucingens in order to change her perception. Gain 1 XP every time your character takes a drug purported to change her reality. Gain 3 XP every time your character separates her spirit from her body. *Buyoff:* Shirk away from an opportunity to see a situation from an altered perspective.

Key of the Death-Hunter

Your character fulfills a strange role in Qek society: she consorts with the zamani in order to make sure they can find their final rest. She dabbles in forbidden knowledge solely to put that knowledge to sleep. Gain 1 XP whenever your character is in a scene with zamani. Gain 2 XP whenever she sends zamani off to the Final Death. Gain 5 XP whenever she defeats a walozi that summons up zamani.

Buyoff: Summon up a zamani.