

CHARACTER



CREATING A CHARACTER IS A SOCIAL EXERCISE. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU SHOULD NOT DO IT ALONE. IN FACT, YOU CANNOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CERTAIN BENEFITS AND BONUSES IF YOU CREATE YOUR CHARACTER IN A VACUUM. SO, BE SURE TO GET TOGETHER ALL YOUR FELLOW PLAYERS, GET CHARACTER SHEETS, PENCILS, SNACKS AND DRINKS, AND GET READY TO MAKE CHARACTERS.

Judge a man by the quality of the company he keeps.

— HUMAN PROVERB

Judge a man by the enemies he makes.

— VEN PROVERB

STEP-BY-STEP

Making a character in *Houses of the Blooded* may seem like a huge undertaking, but like most journeys, if you concentrate on the steps, you'll get to the end faster than you think. And you won't be alone. I'll be going through the chapter as you do, making my own character. I decided to make Shara Yvarai—one of the most popular pillow book characters—using the same system. We'll see how true to form she comes out.

STEP 1: BACKGROUND

Your character's younger years are important: building the foundation for the rest of his life, helping him into adulthood. This step determines his Family (not something you have a lot of choice in, I'm afraid), his Name (a powerful influence on his life path), and which House he belongs to.

STEP 2: VIRTUES

This step determines your character's Virtues and his weakness. All ven have a weakness and your character is no exception.

STEP 3: PHASES

The ven measure their lives in Phases, based on the four Seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Solace (Winter). Phases determine the number of Aspects your character has and how many Contacts he's gained.

STEP 4: DEVOTIONS

The sleeping ven, the Suaven, wait for your reverence. They have blessings to give you. All you must give in return is your Devotion.

STEP 5: DOMAIN

This step outlines your character's lands and vassals. What he owns. Rolling plains, majestic mountains, cunning spy masters and faithful swordsmen. All at your command.

STEP 6: BONUS

Your character also gains a number of bonus points to spend.

DONE AND DONE!

Once you've done all five steps, you're ready to play. So, let's start at the beginning. Let's talk about your character's past...

STEP 1: BACKGROUND

Here's where we begin, with who your character was before the very first game. Her mother and father, siblings (if any), the House she was born under... all of these are elements of your character's past.

Now, I have to warn you: this is also the only part of character generation that is completely random. You may know the saying, "You can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family." Well, I've made that phrase a part of the game. A mechanic. The only element of chance in character creation rests here. Your family.

Roll on each of the following tables to determine the specifics of your family. Now, because I believe folks should have *some* degree of say in who their character is, I've given you three points to modify the results of your rolls. Each point moves your roll up or down one point. You can spend all three on one result, one point on three results or decide you don't want to spend any points at all. But remember. This is your family. You may not have chosen them, but they belong to you. And you belong to them.

If it's okay with your Narrator, you can *choose* from these charts without rolling. I like the random factor, but at the same time, I'm a control addict who wants to be free to make choices when I make my character. I sympathize with both sides, so I leave the choice up to you.

PARENTS

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1 Bear | 4 Fox |
| 2 Elk | 5 Serpent |
| 3 Falcon | 6 Wolf |

First, find which House's shadow your parents were born under. Again, you have a total of three points to modify your die rolls. Each point modifies your roll one pip, either up or down. If you spend a point here, you have only two points to spend on your other rolls.

Once you've got your parents' Houses, choose which parent was dominant and which parent was submissive. Roll a die for each one. Whoever gets the higher roll is the dominant.

Finally, choose which House you adopt as your own: your mother's or your father's.

SIBLINGS

Time to determine your siblings. Roll one die. This is your rank in the birth order. In other words, if you roll a 3, you were third born.

Next, roll one more die and subtract one from the total. This is the total number of surviving children in your family. Because of the possibility of rolling zero and one (rolling one and subtracting one or rolling two and subtracting one), you may be the only child remaining.



Finally, roll one die for each sibling. An even result indicates a brother, an odd result indicates a sister.

Again, you can use your three points to modify these rolls in any way you like.

FAMILY STANDING

All starting characters begin as Barons, but your parents' titles are still important to know. Roll for your parents' social standing. Again, roll one die and check the table to the right.

1 Baron	4 Count
2 Baron	5 Count
3 Baron	6 Marquis



PICK A HOUSE (UNDER THE SHADOW)

Your parents could be from the same House or be from two different Houses, but you've chosen to align yourself under the shadow of one House: your mother's or your father's. Thus, when you introduce yourself, you will do so as "(your name), House X."

In other words, if my chosen House was the Serpent, I would introduce myself as "John Wick, House of the Serpent." You can choose either your mother or father's House, but you have to choose one.

Your choice of Houses influences every other step of character creation, so choose wisely. There are currently six unveiled Houses in the Senate. What follows are simple illustrations of the six unveiled Houses.

House of the Bear

The embodiment of self-determination, the Blooded of the Bear live alone in the mountains. They are not isolationists, nor do they shun the company of their cousins, but prefer to remain above such petty matters as politics. Pillowbooks paint caricatures of Bears as boorish and loud, disregarding tradition and fashion, but they can also be duplicitous as the most crafty Elk or Serpent. The Blooded of the Bear can use intrigue to solve matters, but prefer to deal with such issues up front, in the open, and with brutal honesty. The virtue the Bear value above all others is *strunaga*: "Strength." The ability to stand alone.

House of the Elk

The Elk are a shunned House, but their banner has not yet been veiled. Once the most powerful House, the Blooded of the Elk were nearly stripped of their lands and titles. If not for the precious favors they traded to keep their status, the Elk would be no more. Now, their banner sits half-veiled in the Senate, a symbol of their shame. But they are still one of the most powerful Houses, masters of politics and intrigue. Moving their influences from sight, they are the most subtle manipulators, regaining their Strength and glory one maneuver at a time. The virtue of the Elk is *inquena*: "cunning." To plot, to plan, and to execute.