

INTRODUCTION

Do you dream of spending your life in the magnificent forests of the North, attending the gathering of the great Illusionians, or simply enjoy the market of the city of Teromberg? Perhaps you are from Sol Thu'ma and want to cross the galaxy in a spaceship, or spend your twilight years on a pleasure planet?

In that case, I have bad news for you - this will not happen. Because you are chosen to be the defender of your home sphere. That is your destiny.

That probably sounds better than it is. Very few inhabitants of your sphere know what you really do. You won't be celebrated as a hero, you won't get a medal, but you do have a good chance to die an early death.

This is not a job you can quit. Your mission is immensely important. If you fail, not only you and your friends, but the entire sphere will die. On Valcreon, that may be one planet, but on Sol Thu'ma, your failure could result in the extinction of an entire galaxy. Thousands of planets, billions of lives.

No one said it was going to be easy. So, stop complaining and get ready. The adventure has already begun...

The cosmos

"I thought my world was rich in adventure, magic and wonder, full of strange species, mysterious animals and exotic plants, until the first time I was allowed to see through the eyes of my sphere brother. I had no idea."

Spherechild is home to a variety of worlds: the spheres, which differ in way of life, level of development, and size. They include worlds full of magical wonders, vast galaxies traversed by starships, and planets with creatures that have left their materiality behind. In this book we focus our attention on two of them, Valcreon and Sol Thu'ma.

Valcreon is characterized by the elements of fantasy without machines and gunpowder, but its spellcasters have created a fantastic world of their own. Magic is integrated into everyday life, from healing illnesses to the great teleportation circles that transport a person hundreds of kilometers in the blink of an eye.

Sol Thu'ma is pure science fiction, a galaxy with many solar systems at the centre of one of the largest and oldest spheres. Faster-than-light spaceships travel between the planets and trade between different species booms. Supercomputers are leading science and medicine into a brighter future. Most parts of Sol Thu'ma are mapped except for the great anomaly and a few unexplored remote areas. All secrets seem to have been uncovered - but this could not be further from the truth.

Even though both spheres are very different, they share a special background - the myths.

The return of the myths

"As children we listened to the stories about black men, scary beasts and haunted cities. But in recent years, we found everything was true, worse even than depicted in the most gruesome tales. I can't tell when it began. All I know is that life was never the same after that."

A few years ago, the spheres experienced a phenomenon known as the return of the myths. Horrible creatures from legends roamed remote villages, mystic islands rose from the seas, and lost planets appeared on starship sensors. At the beginning a rarity, these oddities soon got out of hand and became a real threat.

On Valcreon, after centuries, the Boak returned, a cruel species, as powerful as they were ruthless, willing to rise again as masters of the world. The other species barely had time to face this threat. But this return is not the only danger. Many regions were haunted by creatures known only from ancient tales. Child-stealing ghosts, flying lizards which ruled the skies, or creatures that were immune to any kind of magic. The knowledge from the libraries was useless and even the brightest minds gave up hope facing this new threat. Solely the ancient knowledge of the ancestors promised salvation. But their records are rare. Many of it has been lost.

The history of Sol Thu'ma dates back more than ten thousand years. The oldest records tell of a species of conquerors who ravaged the galaxy. The fearsome Usuur required new slaves for their war god. The species of today were barely developed, savage Barbarians, without a common language, millennia away from spaceships, computers, or modern science. Only the Raan were able to oppose the Usuur at that time. But the Raan have long since disappeared, while there are increasing signs of a return of the Usuur.

This metaplot runs through all the worlds. At some points there are overlaps that go beyond the boundaries of one sphere. The questions are the same everywhere: Why did the myths disappear back then, and why are they returning now?

THE RULES

Create characters with your own ideas

The Spherechild rulebook provides a framework that allows freedom in the creation of characters. These characters are the defenders of their spheres, equipped with special powers that set them apart from the normal inhabitants.

Through the free choice of skills, the development of an individual background and the creation of unique powers, the players can create any character they like. They can choose between two methods of creation, one based on dice or the other based on points.

Fast rules with optional features

The rule system is intuitive, clear and fast. This idea applies to all aspects of the game, from combat to character progression, to magic and supports the typical Spherechild style of play.

Some sections contain additional, optional rules with more details (e.g., called shots) or provide an alternative to existing rules (e.g., initiative).

Create an infinite cosmos

Spherechild allows the creation of spheres of any kind, according to the ideas and preferences of the players. Due to their universal framework, the rules remain the same across all the spheres and do not need to be adapted.

Adventures across the spheres

The spheres are not independent from one another, they are connected. Unusual events on one sphere can have an effect on others. This idea allows adventures that confront the characters with completely new challenges.

THE CHARACTER CREATION

Before describing the rules of the game and the two spheres, we start with character creation. How are characters created? What can they learn? What makes them special? This chapter is an introduction, so we deliberately renounce from explaining the rules. Nothing of this introduction needs to be memorized. Everything necessary will be explained in the rule section following afterwards.

The first idea

The first idea for a character is detached from scores and rules. It is the basic enthusiasm for a species (the proud warriors, the mysterious mountain people ...), for a profession (gladiator, wizard, thief, doctor ...) or a mixture of both. Spherechild infuses this idea with more life and facilitates the creation of a playable character for countless adventures.

Species and profession

The groundwork of each character is laid out by choosing a species and a profession. This provides the character with a framework which becomes unique by the players' individual choices. Experienced players have the option of building a character according to their ideas, without any restrictions by a profession or dice.

The character in game terms

A player character consists of four elements. These are:

- the physical and mental attributes.
- the acquired skills with their subskills.
- the unique powers of a Spherechild.
- the "soft" factors, such as background, appearance and features of the character's personality.

To illustrate the creation of a character, we accompany the thief Yarena on the fantasy sphere Valcreon in her creation. She originates from the species of Sinites. She will start off colorless and hard to imagine, but by the end of the chapter, Yarena will be a remarkable player character.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF A CHARACTER

The six physical and mental attributes form the basis of a character.

Strength stands for physical power, while **Constitution** describes a character's robustness. **Dexterity** includes their sense of balance, speed, and agility. **Charisma** includes a character's appearance, appeal, and their effect on others. **Intelligence** represents knowledge and the ability to learn. And finally, **Willpower** describes a character's strength of will, mental responsiveness, and their affinity with magic.

Attribute scores

In order to "measure" the ability of a character, all attributes are expressed in numbers. The minimum score of an attribute is 4. The species intended for character creation may not exceed the score of 18.

For example, an intelligence score of 4 indicates an uneducated, stupid person. While a character with the score of 10 is averagely smart, at 18 they possess extraordinary intelligence. The following example illustrates this:

Intelligence	
2	„Ugh!“
6	“Reading? It’s too hard for me.”
10	“The final exams were pretty tough.”
14	“Sure I have a degree.”
18	„Cogito ergo sum!“

Yarena's attributes

From a physical point of view, Yarena is a slender, but muscular woman, nimble with her fingers and quick on her feet. As a child she entertained her family with her sleight of hand. Her home were the desolate slums of Teromberg. She had to work for a living early in life, so she used her dexterity to relieve unwary merchants of their valuables. This is reflected in her very high **Dexterity** (17 - almost the maximum). Yarena is not weak, but she cannot compete with a well-trained warrior. She has a **Strength** of 10 and a **Constitution** of 9.

Life on the street taught her how to deal with other people. She has an eloquent manner, which is reflected in a **Charisma** score of 9. She is not unattractive, but she is not a beauty either. Her neglected education is reflected in her **Intelligence** of 7. Finally, she seems to have no affinity for magic (**Willpower**: 6). On the character sheet, this is denoted as follows:

Attributes		+/-
Strength	10	0
Constitution	9	0
Dexterity	17	+4
Charisma	9	0
Intelligence	7	-1
Willpower	6	-2

The positive or negative numbers behind the attribute scores (+/-) are modifiers for the associated skills. We will go into this in the next chapter.



THE SKILLS OF A CHARACTER

During their life, a character acquires physical and mental talents, in Spherechild this is divided into general skills, weapon skills and magic skills.

The general skills

The general skills include languages or the knowledge of history, as well as acrobatic talents or driving a car. These skills are also expressed in scores. For many applications of a skill, an initial score of 4 is sufficient. Characters with a score of 10 are considered experienced, and with a score of 18 they are true masters.

Yarenas general skills

Yarena's skills revolve around anything that requires Dexterity. Not surprisingly, this attribute is her highest in score. Thanks to her life on the streets, she has little education. Despite this, she is able to make a good living with her talents. On the character sheet, this attribute (abbreviated) is noted under the "Dep." column. This is followed by the learned score ("Score") and the modifier (" +/-") depending on the attribute score. The addition of both gives the final skill score ("Total").

General skills	Dep.	Score	+/-	Total
Perception	-	7	-	7
Speak Sinite	IN	8	-1	7
Acrobatics	DX	8	+4	12
* Impassable terrain +4	DX			16
Athletics	ST	5	0	5
Burglary	DX	12	+4	16
* Pick locks +4	DX			20
* Pickpocket +4	DX			20
Secret skills	CH	7	0	7
Stealth	DX	9	+4	13
* Hide +4	DX			17
Arts	CH	4	0	4

Yarena has a **Perception** score of 7, which is an important skill for thieves and includes the senses of hearing, smelling, tasting, seeing, and touching. Furthermore, because she belongs to the Sinite species, she speaks her native language **Sinite** at the level of her Intelligence lowered the intelligence score (7).

As a thief, she is an excellent acrobat (**Acrobatics**: 12). Anything that requires Dexterity, agility, or speed is covered by this. She can juggle, take risky jumps or keep her balance on a rope. Over the years Yarena has learned to weave her way light-footedly past obstacles and to take advantage of any gap on the run. This is where Yarena's subskill (marked with an *) called **Impassable terrain** comes from. The strength dependent skill **Athletics** involves physical activities such as climbing, jumping, or swimming. She is not as good at this as she is at Acrobatics, but a score of 5 is enough for climbing walls. Yarena excels at **Burglary**. She can use it to detect weak points and security measures in buildings or pick locks. This includes stealing valuables from persons or luggage.

Not only does Yarena's total score of 16 show this ability, but so do her two subskills, **Pick locks** and **Pickpocket**, which give her a +4 modifier each on top of the main skill.

With a score of 7, Yarena has mastered the basics of **Secret skills**. This includes encrypting messages, spying, lip reading and imitating voices. With this skill the character can make contact with secret guilds and read secret signs.

Her talents as a thief are completed by **Stealth**, which includes both sneaking and hiding. The subskill **Hide** indicates another talent of hers, walking in the Shadows. Finally, she can do some acting ("**Arts**").

Weapon skills

On all spheres, a character can learn how to use weapons. Each is treated as a skill with three scores: Attack strength is expressed by the A-score (A = attack), defense ability is shown by the P-score (P = parry), and damage is reflected by the DP-score (DP = damage points).

The scores under „+/-“ corresponds to a bonus pool that may be distributed to the weapon's A or P-scores at will during combat, reflecting a more aggressive style (when set to A) or a more passive tactic (when set to P). This modifier depends on the associated attribute of the weapon.

Yarenas weapon skills

Weapon skills	Dep.	A	P	DP	+/-
Martial arts	ST	2	2	1D6-4	0
Dagger	DX	6	5	1D6+2	4

Like any character, Yarena has mastered the basics of **Martial arts**. Being more agile than strong, the thief has learned **Dagger**. Her acceptable stats of 6 (attack) and 5 (parry) show that Yarena doesn't like fighting. She is proficient with the weapon for emergencies. Nevertheless, she does much more damage (DP) with the dagger than with her fists.

Magic skills

Regardless of their profession, every character is able to learn the art of magic, as long as it is common in their world. Magic is the manipulation of mind and matter. A wizard uses it to control the elements, the mind of a person, or to summon creatures from other dimensions.

The art of spellcasting comes from the spellcasters themselves. It is not bestowed by gods or tied to materials. Some mages learn magic from books, while others are taught the art by instructors. The wild magic of Spherechild is divided into magic skills with a specific area. It allows the creation of a spell according to the player's wishes and ideas.

Yarenas magic skills

Yarena has never had much use for magic. On the one hand, she lacks the mental foundation (Willpower: 6), on the other hand mages are hated by thieves. Magical security measures have often prevented profitable robberies.

The interaction of skills and attributes

The ability of a character also depends on the attributes. Firstly, the associated attribute score determines the maximum learning level for each skill. Secondly, a higher attribute also provides a higher modifier to add to the characters skill score.

This modifier ranges from -4 to +4. All the math on the character sheets has already been done for this introduction.

Yarena has a Dexterity of 17, so her Dexterity-dependent acrobatics skill cannot be higher than 17. The excellent Dexterity gives her a +4 modifier, so Yarenas Acrobatics skill score is 12, even though she learned it only at 8 (8+4).

Subskills characteristics

Subskills highlight the areas of expertise of a character. They give them depth, individuality and at the same time help to develop their preferences.

Yarena earns her living as a burglar. To do this, she spies on houses, opens poorly secured windows and sneaks through rooms in search of valuables. Therefore, subskills of use to her are Pick locks and Hide.

Subskills affect stats and give a +4 modifier to the corresponding skill.

Pick lock is part of the normal Burglary skill. Every time Yarena picks a lock, she gets a +4 modifier.

THE POWERS OF A CHARACTER

A Spherechild distinguishes from the other inhabitants of their world by their powers. These are special talents or traits that go beyond the ordinary. All player characters have a general power, an individual power and a group power from the start.

General powers

The general power is the same for all characters. Using **Attribute and skill transfer**, the Spherechild can borrow the attribute or skill (or its score) from a sibling for five minutes. The borrowing sibling on the other sphere endures no penalty.

Individual powers

The individual powers can be chosen freely.

Yarenas individual powers

Yarena has three individual powers that make her special, beyond her skills.

- **Always a rope in hand** - She can produce a 10m rope out of thin air for the duration of an hour.
- **Wall Climber** - When climbing a wall, Yarena gains a +6 modifier to Athletics for 5 minutes.
- **Perfect orientation** - The character can find their way everywhere. Yarena does not get lost, and she can determine the direction like a compass inside a building or underground. The power works for 24 hours.

Group power

As a team, characters have group powers. These can be used individually or together, depending on their type.

Yarenas group power

Yarenas group has chosen **Group telepathy**. This power allows Yarena to talk telepathically to the other members of the group. The maximum distance of the conversation, as seen from the activating character, is 500 meters and extends through matter. The power has a duration of five minutes.

Powers

Attribute and skill transfer
Always a rope in hand
Wall climber
Perfect orientation
Group telepathy

THE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

The attributes, skills and powers are the framework of a character. The essence of the character is generated through a deeper description. What drives the character? What are his desires for the future? What is he afraid of? What are his weaknesses? These are only four possible questions. Part of the description are the characters external characteristics and origin. All this is not rolled up, but can be freely determined by the player.

The chapter of character creation (p. 288) contains a lot of help for creating a character with depth.

Yarenas character description

So far, Yarena is a skilled thief from Teromberg's slums, a talented burglar with special powers. The stats tell us nothing about her character or appearance. Is she tall or short, blonde or black-haired? Is she a thief who steals only for greed, or does she have a good heart and shares her loot with the poor? Does she want to rise to the top of the thieves' guild or does she want to steal enough money to live a comfortable life? Here is a suggestion:

Twenty-one-year-old Yarena is from the hovel district of Teromberg. She is a slender, visibly well-trained woman with long black hair that falls over her shoulders in curls, but is usually tied into a braid. She wears light, soft clothing that gives her plenty of freedom of movement.

Yarena has a good heart and gives away money to friends from her neighborhood. She tends to be reckless as she seeks admiration from her fellow thieves. This almost cost Yarena's life, as she tried to rob a wealthy merchant, whose magical security is feared in the guild. Only a lucky coincidence saved her from the city guard. It is this unpredictable, intangible magic that frightens her. She cannot grasp or understand it. Nevertheless, she is brave and loyal. Her maxim would be: "Adventure is waiting behind the next closed door."