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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Onen tsi ne'i nakkara. This is my tale.
Call me Okwabo — that is "Wolf" in the language of my people, the Keepers of the Eastern Door. I am a rakarota, a master storyteller. Give me a seat by the hearth, and fill my cup with pine needle tea, and I will tell you a tale of heroes.

We have been here since the Uncounted Time. We are the People of the Place of Flint. We live by the grace of the earth, of our sacred crops, of the thunder that brings the rain. We take what we need and no more, and we are grateful for the gifts of wood, bone, hide, food, and water. Preserving the balance of all things and returning thanks to that which sustains us are the two hallmarks of a good life.

When the balance fails, heroes must rise to restore it. A hero defeated the stone giants and monsters of old. By the grace of Sky Woman, a hero saved the world from the great flood. Heroes composed the hymn of peace and combed the snakes from the hair of the enemy of peace and straightened his crooked form. A hero buried our weapons of war beneath the peace tree, and so ended the conflicts that threatened to tear us apart.

Now the balance is again threatened. Newcomers have arrived from the sea. Forests fall. Villages burn. Evil beings stalk the land, bringing strife and sickness. The weapons of war are wielded against our kin. It is a time for heroes.

This is their tale.



OVERVIEW

Imagine a world where the legends of North America come alive — a place of high adventure, magic, and monsters, where history and myth intertwine.

Brawl with Mike Fink or swing an axe with Paul Bunyan. Brave the dangers of the polar sea in search of the legendary northwest passage. Trudge through steaming swamps in pursuit of the fountain of youth. Prowl the misty streets of Boston on the trail of hell-spawned fiends. Take flight with a coven of witches upon a midnight ride. Shiver at the call of the wendigo as you traverse a frozen wasteland. Carry the banner of liberty into battle against the forces of tyranny ...

Northern Crown: New World Adventures is a campaign world set in North America's legendary past, in an age of frontier adventure, political intrigue, and supernatural horror. Inspired by history and infused with myth, it is a place where heroes fight for freedom, chart a vast wilderness, and battle unknown evils.

The possibilities for adventure in the *New World Adventures* setting are many. You might find yourself searching the wilderness for a lost Moundraiser city, or aiming a silver bullet at the heart of an elegant vampire beneath the Dueling Oak at Nouvelle Orleans. At risk could be something as personal as your own honor, or as epic as the birth of a new nation.

Your character might be a hardy Coureur scout from the northern woods, a stylish rake from the court of Carolingia, a Witchling agent, or a Mohawk bard like Okwabo, whose words you just read. Your foes could be axe-wielding Vinlander raiders, the automaton soldiers of a deranged evil genius, or a lich who once ruled as sorcerer-king of a now-vanished native civilization. Along the way, you might find an ally in Jonny Appleseed or the prophet Tenskatawa. And you may just join them as a legend in your own right!

To help in your quest, you may possess a psionic knack that lets you work wonders as a hex or a firebug, or even wield the dreaded evil eye. Perhaps you practice sorcery, daring to defy the edicts of church and state. Or you could be a witch, wresting your arcane powers from a fiendish imp at the risk of losing your soul. A degree in natural philosophy can imbue you with the knowledge to construct anything from a flying machine to an earthquake generator, and let you use the power of science to produce impressive effects rivaling the spells of magicians. But if all else fails, then you'd better also know how to fire a matchlock musket or hurl a tomahawk.

It's a dangerous world, after all. The New World seethes with conflict, as the strifes and plagues of vying Uropan (yoo-ROPE-ahn) nations take root in fertile ground. Witches struggle against Puritan firebrands; royal agents play games of murder and deception for the glory of their monarch; and soldiers take to the field of battle where dragoons and musketeers clash amid the roar of cannon

and shot. Patriots stake their lives to overthrow the old order and establish a new freedom, unfettered by the evils of slavery and persecution. Natural philosophers compete to create clever inventions that could shape the course of the future, while wizards and sorcerers seek to preserve the arcane arts of the past. And in the deep forests, druids create standing stones and earthen mounds to focus the healing power of the land, and gather animal allies to defy the encroachment of civilization.

GETTING STARTED

If you're a player, you'll want to read Chiron Franklyn's overview of the continent that appears later in this chapter, to get a feel for Northern Crown's history, cultures, and conflicts before you make your character. You'll then follow the adventures of Franklyn and Okwabo as you read this book — their narratives provide vivid first-person accounts of the campaign world, and suggest possibilities for your own adventures.

If you're the Game Moderator (GM), first read the Cultures chapter and pick three or four cultures to offer as possible backgrounds for your players' first characters; opening their choices up to every culture at once would be a little overwhelming, after all. The mechanics of character creation will feel very familiar to anyone who has played an Open

THE PRESENT

There are some who say the Dark Years have yet to end, but even if that is so, clearly the advance of the Uropan has been greatly slowed of late, for reasons of geography, politics, and perhaps, some forces less tangible. First, the great barrier of the Appalachians has slowed attempts to occupy the interior. Second, much of the Uropan's resources are now spent fighting one another, and defending the colonies they already hold, leaving fewer forces to win new lands. Third, the native nations of the interior are organized into several confederacies, and cannot be destroyed piecemeal as were many of the states of the coast. And last, there are some who say the land itself has organized a resistance to the Uropan advance. Terrible storms beset settlements along the frontier; animals larger and fiercer than normal waylay travelers, and have even been seen fighting alongside native forces; and the power of native magic seems to grow ever mightier the further one pushes westward.

Because of these factors, the eastern shores are occupied by small but prosperous Uropan states and colonies, separated from the native lands by a long, dangerous frontier, behind which brood forces both political and natural that may yet drive the newcomers back into the sea. In the meantime, the unsettling menaces of undead creatures, evil outsiders, and sinister secret societies and cults have begun to stir once more, casting a lengthening shadow over their conquest. A time of great conflict and peril is at hand in Northern Crown, the outcome of which may depend on the actions of a handful of young heroes just now taking their place upon the world's stage.

USURPERS OF THE NORTHERN CROWN

Who among the many Uropan powers now sharing the eastern shores of Northern Crown does not seek mastery over all? *Nederlanders* clash with New Sweden in the Delaware Vale and with Nouvelle France in the north; *Espaniards* and *Carolingians* compete for the favor of the Creek and Cherokee nations to gain an edge in their struggle for control of the south. *Cimarrons* pursue the cause of liberty for all *Nyambans* and other captive peoples. *Commonwealthers* seek mastery of their neighbors' souls,

while my own Republic of Sophia struggles to free their hearts and minds from superstition and tyranny. And the First Ones of the interior are banding together to rebuff these invaders, consolidating their own holdings. Only one head at a time may wear a crown, Your Majesty. Will one of the young captains now fighting upon the battlefields of Northern Crown seize it by force of arms, becoming master over all — an Alexander of the new era?

ARMIES OF DISCOVERY

As you are no doubt aware, Uropan knowledge of Northern Crown ends at the western banks of the great river *Espirtu Santo*, which divides the continent in two from north to south. Beyond, our maps show only *terra incognita* and cartographic conceits: golden cities, burning deserts, and rivers running conveniently to the Pacific Sea. The same lure of the unknown that brought *Corte-Real* and *Cabot* across the Atlantic Sea is now driving my countryfolk into the unknown west. You may have heard that the First Lord of Sophia has organized an Army of Discovery to penetrate the continent's interior. It includes scouts, soldiers, diplomats, and natural philosophers, well trained and well supplied. I understand that Your Majesty has employed priests of the *Ignatian Order* and *Coureur* scouts for the same purpose, and that the emperor *Felipé of España* has sent his armored captains into the deserts of *Quivera* and the high, bare lands of *Kansa*. The true objective of these missions — whether knowledge, trade, gold, or empire — can be debated among royal ambassadors from here to *Havana*, but one thing is certain: success or failure will depend upon who among these small companies has the will, the strength, and the favor of *Fortuna* to unlock the key to the western lands.

REASON'S CHILDREN

As we sit beneath the glow of the galvanic lamps that illuminate this chamber — gifts to your majesty from my own laboratory in Sophia — we are keenly aware of the innovations that the divine gift of Reason and the science of natural philosophy have granted us through the unlocking of the secrets of *aeliopilic* power, galvanism, mesmerism, and more. Surely these inventions hold great potential to free humankind from toil and discomfort, but there is a growing aware-

ness among us that they also may sow the seeds of destruction, in the form of ever-deadlier weapons of war, plagues, and lethal engines. The next generation of natural philosophers, our intellectual children, will decide how this Promethean drama will play out: either bringing the light of Reason to the world at large, or beginning a holocaust that will engulf us in miseries undreamed of in earlier eras. Northern Crown — a place of relative freedom, far from the courts of Uropa — could be the place where this question is decided for us all.

WIELDERS OF WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY

But if you think that the old order will go quietly into the night as the age of reason dawns, I am sorry to say that the practices of sorcery and witchcraft are alive and well in Northern Crown. The *Witchling* enclave of *Naumkeag* sits but a day's ride from the Puritan capital of Boston, ready to unleash the very forces of the infernal realm upon its neighbors. The secret order of sorcerers known as *Le Dragon Rouge* is active in Sophia, and rumors of *L'Ordre du Sang*, that cabal of ancient vampires, have arisen in the foggy streets of *Nouvelle Orleans*. Only a few intrepid clerics and paladins have dared to combat these occult menaces; the actions of these young heroes could determine whether Northern Crown will be spared the evil influence of sorcerers and vampires, or forever fall under their yoke.

The First Ones' sorcerers can cast spells for which we have no name, and produce magical items of great power. Within their lands are ancient ruins that are said to contain lost arcane spells, mighty artifacts, and evil outsiders summoned by long-dead mages. If these things are brought into the light of day by a few bold plunderers, the balance of power over the entire continent could shift overnight.

CONCLUSION

And so, I present to Your Majesty this tome, encompassing our present knowledge concerning Northern Crown — its peoples, creatures, lands, legends, and magic. May it guide Your Majesty's hand in choosing a wise path in your conduct with my countryfolk. As a wise man once said, "The noblest question in the world is, 'What good can I do in it?'"

NEW CLASS: NATURAL PHILOSOPHER

The natural philosopher character class represents the inquiring, scientifically-minded thinker who has come to challenge the wizard as the archetype of the learned person as the ancient world fades and age of reason begins. Natural philosophers use their understanding of the laws of nature to create extraordinary phenomena that duplicate or surpass the arcane and divine spells of the spellcasters of earlier eras.

Natural philosophers may pursue the mysteries of the life force and the body, the secrets of matter, or the challenges of engineering and invention. As their understanding of the secrets of the natural world becomes more complete, natural philosophers may discover scientific means to travel to other planes, control the powers of the mind, predict the future, or confound the spells of divine and arcane magic.

Adventures: A natural philosopher adventures in the interests of knowledge and discovery, seldom solely for material gain or for fame, except for those who turn their genius to evil purposes. The promise of new lands, with unknown flora, fauna, people, and things, often calls young natural philosophers to the adventuring life. Or, the political arena may beckon, tempting them to put their scientific knowledge into action to improve the lives of common folk, in defiance of the interests of long-established power structures that equate any attempt to change the status quo with treason.

Characteristics: To the untrained eye, natural philosophers seem capable of duplicating some of the divine spells of clerics and the arcane spells of wizards and sorcerers, with miraculous feats of healing and divination, and control of the elements. But these phenomena are the product of their well-honed minds and scientific apparatus, rather than magical power. Natural philosophers also have the ability to turn undead creatures and resist magical spells, simply by the power of reason, which in *New World Adventures* can suppress magical forces.

Alignment: Natural philosophers may be of any alignment, but their rational minds tend to draw them strongly towards law and away from chaos.

Background: All natural philosophers have a background of extensive study, whether at a university, with the help of a mentor, or simply self-taught from texts. Those with a social class of burghers or higher will have been to university, while characters of a lower social class will have learned what they know as an apprentice to a master of higher social class, or else learned on



their own from books or from trial and error.

As a group, natural philosophers share intense rivalries over academic prowess, but are quite willing to share their published results in the interests of peer review and the advancement of their art. A natural philosopher PC will likely be a junior member of at least one academy or philosophical society that may meet regularly to discuss new discoveries or argue theories, and publish yearly journals summarizing their findings. Among these organizations are the Virtuosi, based in Sophia; the Royal Society, based in Carolingia; and the Uropan Society of Natural Philosophy, with its headquarters in Paris. (See the Philosophical Society Member feat.)

Other Classes: Natural philosophers enjoy the company of their own kind, with whom they share a common mindset and language. They also respect wizards' dedication to study, although they may disdain them for trying to keep alive the traditions of the medieval past. They often enjoy debating clerics over philosophical matters. As for other classes, raiders, druids, and scouts may be admired for their understanding of the natural world, but other classes are met with indifference. Clerics, druids, paladins, witches, and sorcerers often find it hard to get along with natural philosophers, who consider their powers an affront to their own science-based abilities.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Natural philosophers have the following game statistics:

Abilities: Intelligence is by far the most significant ability for natural philosophers. It determines the maximum level of the phenomena they can create, how many they can create per day, and the DC to resist them. Many of their class skills have Intelligence as their key ability.

Alignment: Any.
Hit Die: d4.

CLASS SKILLS

The natural philosopher's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (any) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at 1st Level:
(4 + Int Modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level:
4 + Int Modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the natural philosopher.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Natural philosophers are proficient only with simple weapons. They have no armor or shield proficiency. They are not prohibited from learning any

CHAPTER TEN

PSIONIC KNACKS

"Miss Emmaline, are you there?" I call, in a whisper. But the witch is either too scared to answer, or has become separated from me. My wolf sniffs at the air, but cannot catch her scent. His paws tremble at the touch of this place, whose natural power has become corrupted to the point that it has begun to extend tendrils of unlife into the surrounding lands. This is what we have felt all along. We have arrived at the source of the interruption of the beat of the living earth — a rent in the web of life. The people here — the rafters and the soldiers alike — are without independent thought, mere playthings of a single mind, a powerful presence that draws me onward toward the rising pyramid by the riverside. I pass a smoldering pyre, the smoking wreckage of a flying ship, fed by papers, books, and maps, all crumbling away to ashes. What madness is this?

Then I see her, the one Franklyn has warned me about. Gold and silver bracelets adorn her arms, a glittering mica gorget hangs at her throat. And upon her face, a mask like a crystal skull, the funeral garb of some long-dead sorcerer-king. My wolf growls, and I see that the woman stands at the center of this evil place — she is its source and its master. The mask — those hollow eye sockets — there is an inhuman malice behind them. She is no less a puppet than they are. I am facing a greater and older enemy than I have ever encountered, intent on reclaiming its ancient realm, and capable of controlling the minds and bodies of others.

Another woman has appeared at her side, with the same awkward gait as the others. It is Emmaline, but her face is like a mask, showing no emotions, no spark of life. A feeling of sickness spreads over me, and then the mind of that evil thing inside the mask makes contact with my own ...

POWERS OF THE MIND

In addition to the arcane and divine spellcasting abilities possessed by some Uropans and First Ones, others are gifted with powers of the mind that manifest in startling, sometimes powerful effects. Although these powers use the standard SRD rules for psionics, the term "psionics" is unknown to denizens of Northern Crown, except perhaps for a few natural philosophers who have just begun to study the phenomenon. Instead, psionic abilities are simply called "knacks." Those who manifest them or witness them may believe that they are divinely inspired gifts, merely another form of magic, or the work of evil spirits.

This chapter describes the various types of psionic knacks found in *New World Adventures* characters and includes a list of psionic powers suitable to the campaign, as taken from the SRD rules.

AVAILABLE KNACKS

Three psionic knacks are available to *New World Adventures* characters: evil eye, firebug, and second sight. A character gains a psionic knack by taking the feat of the same name as the knack desired. It provides the character with access to a limited number of psionic powers, depending on the character's level.

A psionic knack is not a character class. Unlike a psionic class, it does not

have a key ability or primary discipline. It simply allows a character to manifest a small number of psionic powers, with a fixed number of power points per day based on the character's level.

Knacks first manifest themselves when the character is still a toddler. Young folk with the evil eye may startle their parents with their ability to see in the dark; children destined to become firebugs may have eyes that glow like fireflies in the dark; and those with the knack of second sight may casually reveal the thoughts of neighbors or strangers. In rural areas of Northern Crown, a knack can be considered a blessing — a valuable addition to the family's limited resources. But such a gift carries the danger that the child will use its talents for mischief or harm, which would bring disapproval or even retribution from the community.

Natural philosophers have found evidence that knacks seem to be rare among urban populations, but that may

PSIONIC KNACKS

CHARACTER LEVEL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+
POWER PTS./DAY	2	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15
POWER LEVEL	0	1 st	1 st	2 nd	2 nd	2 nd	3 rd	3 rd	3 rd

Character Level: The character's total character level.

Power Pts./Day: How many psionic power points the character has access to each day.

Power Level: The maximum level of psionic power to which the character has access. Characters with a psionic knack do not need to discover their powers; once they can manifest powers of a certain level, they have access to all the powers of that level associated with their particular knack.