Gargoyles: Dark Ages

One thousand years ago, superstition and the sword ruled. It was a time of darkness, it was a world of fear.

It was the Age of *Gargoyles*.

Stone by day, warriors by night, they were betrayed by the humans they had sworn to protect, and frozen in stone by a magic spell for a thousand years... but that is a tale for another night.

The year is 971, and two men grapple for the throne of Scotland.

One is the noble Kenneth II, brother to the murdered King Duff. The other is Culen, the usurper. This is a human problem, but human problems have a habit of becoming gargoyle problems, and young Prince Malcolm is intent on recruiting the stone-fleshed warriors who dwell in Wyvern to his royal brother's cause, win back the throne, and revenge King Duff's death...

+1000 Gargoyle Points (GP)

Location

You may choose between four locations; 1) Wyvern Hill, where the gargoyle clans yet reign, 2) Kenneth's war camp, where the rightful king prepares himself, 3) Culen's fortress, where there will be flames, or 4) Scone, where oaths are made and kings are crowned.

Origin

Any of these may be taken as a drop in. You may freely choose your age and sex.

Warrior: Your duty is to fight and kill and die for your liege lord, for your people, and perhaps for your honor, but you're no fool or thug; a stupid fighter is a dead fighter.

Thane: You are part of Scotland's upper class, as these things go. Human kings and lords of Avalon are self-explanatory, but gargoyles are more elective- and who rules amongst the dragons?

Scholar: You are a man of letters or the cloth, concerned with the pursuit and usage of knowledge, not the swinging of swords or the power of the crown.

Race

Humans (100) A species of hairless primates sometimes called the Second Race. They are fickle, but often fierce, and sometimes courageous or kind or clever.

Gargoyles (000) The First Race, a species of humanoids with leathery wings and tough skin who predate mankind, whom they learned language from. While powerful in the night, gargoyles turn to stone during the day. They are a highly protective people, but few take personal names in this era.

Halfling (300) You are a hybrid between the Third Race and another species. You've inherited a mortal tolerance for iron and an immortal's connection to magic. While your talents don't get as specific or as potent, you can learn to use both forms of magic sequentially. You may take this with another race (even Oberon's Child) or take it on its own and be a New Olympian; the crossbred of gods and beasts.

Dragon (800) Also called the Lost Race, you are a distant relative of the gargoyles, famed for your fiery breath, colossal size, and hoards of gold. Unlike gargoyles, you don't turn to stone during the day; you turn to stone when you sleep, but remain rousable.

Oberon's Child (800) You are a member of the Third Race, the Fair Folk, the iron-adverse manifestations of the magic generated by planet Earth. You are all but immortal, a natural shapeshifter, and a powerful magician, though amongst the Third Race, some are tricksters while others are death-gods. Don't let the name fool you; Oberon is *pater familias*, not father of all. You may begin on the Isle of Avalon instead of the existing options, if you so choose.

Perks

Clean (50, Free for this jump) The world is not nearly as sanitary or as healthy as it will be, but you, your apparel, and any objects you're holding magically maintain a late 20th century hygiene standard, even when you encounter filth, unless you want to or it's more beneficial to be dirty. You also benefit from a minor perception filter to prevent people from noticing this, and lack unusually strong feelings of revulsion or germaphobia and so forth.

A Close Relative (50) In this and every future jump, you may choose to be closely related to an existing character of your choice, even if it doesn't make sense, but this doesn't give you any wealth, powers, or standing you didn't buy.

Ad Orae Avalonis (50) You know a spell to travel to Oberon's mystic isle of Avalon, which is rich in sweet and wondrous magic, and has a peculiar relationship with time. Unlike most mortal spells, it requires no conduit but the incantation and a body of water. Be warned; while the unbreakable law can surely be bent, no magic may enter Avalon, save Avalon's own. In other worlds, this will take you to the closest known equivalent- or an empty isle of magic.

Tracking Skills (100) You are proficient at hunting, with skills in trailing and following groups of people or soldiers as well.

Avatar (100) Mortals sometimes become the vessels of magical beings, such as Oberon's Children, allowing them to use that being's power for their own. You are particularly well suited to such acts, enhancing the powers of each component when you work in concert, and optionally becoming a blend of both identities. If you are a sorcerer, you can easily design the spells necessary to do so with even otherworldly beings, and if you are a magical being, you find yourself receptive to the same, except when you don't wish to.

Player (100) The Bard of Avon and his plays are centuries unborn, but you are a *very* skilled theatre actor.

How Novel (100) You are not subject to prejudice based on sex, sexuality, species, race, religion, or national origin, though you exist as a singular exception rather than somehow removing those bigotries.

True to Life (100) You have no subconscious prejudices or in-group bias and never feel any you do not deliberately buy into.

The Story is Told (100) But who can say if it be true, though all things are in their way, that the jumper was a storyteller skilled enough to enthrall an angry dragon, with uncanny insight and a vast well of knowledge.

Properly Conducted (100) Doing mortal magic without a conduit makes one too inflexible for other spells, but rigidity isn't a problem for you, in any magic system. You'll never find yourself too magically or mentally calcified or so forth for new or additional spells, though you still have to actually master them, and conduits still make things easier.

Limited Magic (200) You have a particular talent for making your magic simpler and more efficient through specialization, as a specific spell is stronger and easier than a general one. You're also good at implementing and negotiating the escape clauses curses require, and may apply both principles to other magic systems as well as benevolent enchantments.

Gag Reflex (200) More than one wizard has died absorbing more power than they can hold, or losing control of power they'd already absorbed. One even ate a book and *exploded*. Fortunately, you always have the option to harmlessly regurgitate any sort of energy, artifact, or essence you absorb, leaving yourself and it intact.

Graced by the Graces (200) You are beloved by the Weird Sisters of Shakespearean fame, in their guise as the Three Graces, which is their friendliest and most helpful mode. They will periodically appear to give you advice and information, though actual magic generally comes at a price. In each later jump, your choice between a similar group, some generic good fairies, or a version of the Sisters *as presented in City of Stone* will both exist and favor you.

One Against Many (200) You have a natural talent for fighting multiple opponents. Not only can you bob and weave between them, you'll never let one distract you from the others, and can often maneuver to keep them in each other's way.

Guardian (300) Once per jump, you may name one willing individual the protector or adversary of a specific group, concept, area, or so forth; the narrower the better. When this individual - which may be yourself - acts in accordance with their new role, they will prove far more effective, and more likely to have a long term effect, even if they aren't strictly more powerful. Additionally, they gain almost supernatural instincts towards their work, and fate will twist in certain ways to help them get to the right place at the right time to do their job - or gain what they need to do so.

Do the Soldier's Work (100, Free Warrior) You are a skilled fighter, even amongst those trained from birth in medieval Scotland. You are at home on a battlefield, and will surely carve a bloody swath through enemy soldiers.

We are So Much More (200, Discount Warrior) While it's not so helpful on the battlefield itself, you are very good at adapting your tactics and strategies to new developments, like winged allies, enemy sorcerers, or novel technologies.

Captain (400 Discount Warrior) You are a masterful combatant and battlefield leader, perhaps one of the greatest in Scottish history, to be spoken on the same breath as Macbeth and Golisth will be. A swordarm like yours could change the course of battles, and a mind like yours could change the course of history. You're pretty good at management and strategy too.

Men Against Monsters (600, Discount Warrior) You and those under your command find mundane, medieval methods of fighting paranormally effective against supernatural horrors and advanced technology. Some of that is just genre convention, but you take it even further. Your shield could stop a bullet or a laser rifle, and your sword could cleave a living armor in twain. This also extends to using more standard or old school magic against sci fi tech and weirder sorceries. Of course, it only goes so far, so you still need to fight smart to actually win.

Raised to be a Good Thane (100, Free Thane) You grew up with a noble's education, including such matters as geography, history, governance, and warfare. Try not to overestimate yourself on the battlefield, and get someone trustworthy to watch your back.

Clever Plans (200, Discount Thane) You are remarkably cunning, able to come up with daring schemes and amusing pranks in equal and extreme measure, given only a little time to think.

Living in Harmony (400, Discount Thane) You are an exceptional diplomat and negotiator. Additionally, something about your presence or rule serves to blunt culture clashes and soothe grudges or prejudice, save against specific individuals or families. This is still Scotland, after all.

Fourth Brother (600, Discount Thane) There were once three brothers, destined to save Scotland, lose it, and save it again. Kenneth, Duff, and Malcolm are still working on the last one, but you are of their royal blood. They are a loyal and affectionate family, without the dysfunction or backstabbing other courts are known for, which is extended to and by you. You may also choose the other side of the conflict. In future jumps, you may decide to be a member of another powerful family, which is guaranteed not to be toxic or treacherous, even if it was meant to be.

Scribe (100, Free Scholar) All literacy is the exception in this era, but you can read several languages, including Latin, classical Greek, Hebrew, Spanish, English, and Scottish Gaelic. You also have all the skills of a clerk or archivist.

Architect (200, Discount Scholar) You are a master draftsman, and have all the skills necessary to plan and oversee the construction of a castle, or other medieval monuments, such as roads and dams.

Advisor (400, Discount Scholar) You are a skilled teacher, with a certain amount of practical wisdom, and knowledge in a wide variety of scholastic subjects, such as history, economics, natural philosophy, mathematics, rhetoric, and metaphysics.

Sorcerer (600, Discount Scholar) You are as skilled in mortal magic as Valios or Wyvern's nameless Archmage, who could summon lighting, track people, and stun enemies. In theory, you *can* improvise and adapt spells, but in practice, you should keep a hand on your spellbook. You're no Child of Oberon, but wizards play a different, more complicated game on the same board - and iron is no impediment to *your* magic. You may also train other mortals to do the same.

Items

Horse (50) A quadrupedal animal used for farm work and transport in this era. This may be taken multiple times.

Farm in the Countryside (50) A small plot of land with crops and livestock, though the animals seem to take care of themselves when you're away.

Conduit (100, Free with Sorcerer) A ring, staff, or other item which allows a mortal to wield magic effectively, plus a book of basic spells, suited for stunning and tracking others, but they're nothing compared to the Grimorum's contents.

Sturdy Sword (100, Free Warrior) You have a well-made blade and a shield, though nothing too special.

Ghost Cage (200, Discount Warrior) An ancient, eerie cavern containing strange runes and an occult temple, whose mysterious secrets and eldritch builders have been lost to time. Unquiet souls who enter cannot leave, and those who die unsatisfied may be drawn within, if they perished nearby. This underground cave complex follows you into later worlds, and once per jump or decade you may fill it with two souls of choice by fiat, so long as they've died in that world. They may be chosen simultaneously or at different times, but you cannot use this to bring spirits between jumps.

Gargoyle Allies (400, Discount Warrior) A clan of follower gargoyles bound to you and yours by mutual respect if not servitude, which inhabits your hometown or so forth alongside you. You will have similar friends in every later jump, though they may be something stranger and more generic than gargoyles.

The Finest of Arms and Armor (100, Free Thane) The wealthy aren't always the best trained or most experienced, but they tend to be the best equipped, and you are no exception, being provided with the best weapons and covering money can currently buy.

Castle Wyvern (200, Discount Thane) A cliffside fortress and trade hub of your very own, complete with a castle town, of which you are rightful owner. It is well made, and as a bonus, ambiently magical.

Noble Holdings (400, Discount Thane) You own enough land in Scotland to potentially challenge the king for his throne. Most of that land is bound up in a complicated system of feudal vassalage, but it is yours, pays taxes, and serves as a recruiting pool for levies. You will own a similar fiefdom in each later jump, adjusted for population numbers and technology.

Library (100, Free Scholar) Paper is more precious than blood, but books are all that stand between memory and oblivion, so you have compiled what is, to modern minds, a very impressive library of some two hundred different tomes on a variety of subjects, though it'd be rather modest in the 20th or 21st century.

Court Position (200, Discount Scholar) In every jump, including this one, you may insert yourself into one organization as a consultant, royal advisor, or similar. Even if you decide to abstain, you will enjoy a reputation as a trustworthy source of information and advice.

Grimorum Arcanorum (400, Discount Scholar) The greatest book of human magic ever compiled in this world. Users have enslaved minds, defeated demigods, created illusions, conjured the dead, and cursed whole cities, though most were sorcerers and witches in their own right. It also serves as a conduit. The book is not easily destroyed, but it's simple to add or remove individual pages. I hope you can read Latin.

Companions

Import (50) One of your companions from a previous jump may be imported into this one. They gain 600 Gargoyle Points to build themselves, and may take non-global drawbacks for more. This may be taken as many times as you like.

A Friend Who is Never Far (100/200/300) Someone from this world, your greatest friend, a friend who would lay down his life for you. For 100, they are merely a skilled and clever Warrior. For 200, they are a Thane instead. For 300, a Thane with Fourth brother.

Canon Character (100) You have the right to take any one person you can genuinely convince to become your companion from this world. This may be taken multiple times, and they do not need to be selected in advance.

Drawbacks

Crossover (+000) This jump is meant to be for the canon Gargoyles world, but you'd prefer to use it as a supplement for some other story based on Earth, then you may, even if there isn't a jump for that story. No matter what you choose, it won't cause an apocalypse during your ten years here.

I Despair of Learning All These Blasted Names (+100) You are remarkably bad at remembering names, particularly if you haven't met the person who bears them.

Chicken Scratch (+100) You cannot read Scottish Gaelic or Latin, which are the languages you'd most want to read in these parts.

A Face Like a Gargoyle (+100) Normally this would mean you were ruggedly handsome, but in this case it just means you're noticeably ugly. Sorry.

One Thousand Years Ago (+100) You have forgotten all future history, including the plot of Gargoyles: Dark Ages. For double, you don't even remember being a jumper.

Outsider (+100) You or one of your parents is from outside Scotland, and you sometimes have difficulty fitting or being accepted because of it. You may determine where they / you are from. This cannot be taken as a drop in.

Not a Native Speaker (+100) You can speak Scottish Gaelic pretty fluently, but it isn't your mother tongue, and you haven't quite mastered it yet, so you sometimes stumble or slip into your first language.

Permanent Change (+100) Normally, fiat-backed items respawn after 24 hours when destroyed, sometimes with exceptions for deliberate sacrifice or so forth. During this jump, none of yours will until the end of the jump. You must have purchased at least one item here to take this with No Magics May Enter Avalon, Save Avalon's Own.

Unclean (+100) You do not receive Clean during this jump, even if you bought it.

Unconvincing (+100 You are unpracticed with rhetoric, public speaking, deception, and other modes of persuasion, making every argument an uphill battle. Worth double for Thanes.

Lost Control (+100) You spent time as hostage to an enemy of your family, and bear emotional scars from it, though how you bear them depends on you.

Lost (+100) Instead of choosing your location, roll a d4, and start at the location corresponding to that number.

Flightless (+100/200) You are incapable of flying under your own power, the power of machines, or the power of nonsapient beings, which is a pity, because you dream of flight, and would surely love it given the chance. If you do take this drawback, you may optionally gain an undying love of and wonder at flying, which will never become mundane. Worth 200 for Oberon's Children and Gargoyles.

The What Race? (+100) You have forgotten this world's strange and supernatural aspects, beyond yourself and, if nonhuman, your own kind. Oh, you know the stories, but you think that's all they are, so your first dragon or gargoyle will come at a complete surprise unless you are one.

Child (+200) You're young and immature by the standards of your species, a peer to Alesand and Antiope, or perhaps the troublemakers Caesar, Charlemagne, and Alexander, who are about 7 in human terms. Emotional volatility and physical weakness are the order of the day.

In Dies Usque ad Saxum Commutate (+200) Genetics or a powerful curse has given you whatever biological quirk turns gargoyles to stone during the day. If you can't find a solution, it will leave you vulnerable during the day. Gargoyles must take this for zero points, or they can spend 300 GP and buy their way out of it.

Sightless (+200) You are completely on blind, but on the upside, many spells do not affect those who cannot both see *and* hear them, though this *might* be a mortal limitation.

The Thanes are Fickle (+200) You have a great deal of difficulty maintaining alliances with humans, as they almost always turn treacherous or disloyal in some way. Leal friends may "merely" betray your other allies on your behalf, but I assure you that's no better.

It Was a Time of Darkness, It Was a World of Fear (+200) Wherever you go, you can't seem to go a month without tripping over some perilous supernatural happening, whether it be a wicked curse, a malevolent ghost, or an angry fairy. They just seem to be far more common than they should be. Worse, certain superstitions and beliefs you may have dismissed now seem perilously true, from bad luck to random monsters and literal demons.

Superstition and the Sword Ruled (+200) You have forgotten all anachronistic science, and the emphatic rationalism of the enlightenment, never mind the 20th or 21st century. Any such information or technology in your warehouse is also removed.

It Was the Age of Gargoyles (+200) You are fully immersed in 10th century culture and social mores. This is a lighter version of the reality (though the truth wasn't nearly as dark as some people think) but modern society has fallen away from your mind, even if you still technically remember it.

Impulsive (+200) You chafe at taking orders, and often run headlong into danger when patience may prove more prudent.

The Jumper's Tale (+200) Shahrizad, whom you may know from her thousand and one nights, is familiar with your story outside this world, and has likely shared it with the Illuminati- and perhaps the White Council. It might even be public knowledge, depending on its contents. Of course, they don't know you're the jumper, necessarily, but Shahrizad might.

Remarkably Trustworthy (+200) You are truly a man or woman of honor, dedicated to keeping every oath, respecting each custom, and being honestly forthright with others. Unfortunately, while this doesn't make you stupid, you also attract people who are seeking to abuse your good nature, and may sometimes find yourself in trouble. Of course, even the most forthright may engage in certain deceptions, when necessary, against declared enemies, and if the situation is dire enough, you may be able to force yourself to break an oath, though you'll live in shame afterwards.

No Magics May Enter Avalon, Save Avalon's Own (+200) You cannot access your warehouse during this jump.

Oberon's Law (+400) Your perks and powers from previous jumps are removed for the duration of this one. Of course, no one takes drawbacks like this, so as a bonus, you may add one perk from this jump and one from a prior jump to your bodymod, and therefore not to be sealed or affected by drawbacks or gauntlets that don't specifically mention it. Unfortunately, neither perk can give you clear and dramatic superpowers per se, though some kinds of more subtle and classical magic may pass, and you may hold off on selecting them. If taken with Teg Ydaer, you may add two of each instead.

Teg Ydaer (+600) The Three Keys to Power have a cameo in Young Justice, and the magic systems are remarkably similar, as long as you remember that Arion's descendents are magically augmented, while this world's wizards are standard mortals. In keeping with that, you are now officially on Earth-16, albeit a version with gargoyles. Aliens, metahumans, and Vandal Savage will dramatically change the setting's dynamics - and if the Holy Balance between Order and Chaos is broken, the universe shall crumple once more.

Ending

After a decade here, all drawbacks are removed, and you may choose to Stay Here, Go Home, or Move On.

Notes

Post-jump, non-human forms become altforms, and gargoyles don't need sunlight to be healthy.

Oberon's Children may accept what comes naturally or import as an existing fairy, god, or singular phantom which has not appeared in Gargoyles, and base their individual powers off that figure. Doing so would be enough to get a free The Name of God in my Iron Druid 2.0 jump.

A Close Relative can be biological or adopted; your choice each time. Even a drop in will be recognized as family though. Just blame magic if you're a different species or something.

Properly Conducted ensures that your prior magical skills, specialties, affinities, actions, and achievements don't interfere with learning or doing other spells. See various cases in Mage the Ascension, Anima: Beyond Fantasy, Pathfinder, Unknown Armies, Raildex, and Naomi Novik's Scholomance. You still need to have been able to learn the spells in the first place; having naturally narrow powers is quite another thing, as is outright incompatibility, various patron-related issues, only being able to learn one discipline, and your spell list having an upper limit. It's not going to be very helpful in Warhammer Fantasy, the Paper Magician, or Avatar: The Last Airbender. Of course, all this assumes the spellcaster model rather than the superpower model.

Jumpchain by Ze Bri-On