

THE DARK CRYSTAL

The Role Playing Game
Character Sheet

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Character Name:

Character Type

Player:

Appearance:

Character Points

Personality:

VITALITY

- ✧ *Healthy*
- ✧ *Bruised*
- ✧ *Wounded*
- ✧ *Injured*
- ✧ *Seriously Injured*
- ✧ *Unconscious/Dead*

ABILITIES

MENTAL

Perception:

Politics:

Science:

MYSTICAL

Nature:

Rituals:

Spirit:

PHYSICAL

Athletics:

Fight:

Pilot:

SPECIAL ABILITY

Equipment

Other:

I. Introduction

In order to create a character for "*The Dark Crystal: The Role Playing Game*," begin by examining the character sheet. It is divided into four parts.

Part 1: Basics contains general information about the character.

- **Player:** This is the name of the person who created and is playing the character.
- **Name:** This is the name of the character; it can be anything appropriate to the world of *The Dark Crystal* (see section VII for example names).
- **Character Type:** This is the species of the character: who he or she is and what he or she does. Select one from section VII. For ease of discussion, all references will use the word "he" for the rest of the manual.
- **Appearance:** This is a space to describe the physical look of the character: his hair color, clothing, etc.
- **Personality:** This describes the character's general attitude toward the outside world. Examples include "self-serving, only exists to gain power," "always willing to sacrifice his life for others," "constantly making jokes in order to disguise his fear," etc.

Part 2: Status shows the health and experience of the character. See section III for more information on both of these listings.

- **Vitality:** The physical and mental well-being of a character is measured in six levels, from Healthy to Unconscious/Dead. Each character begins by marking the Healthy box.
- **Character Points:** This is a space to show the growth and learning of a character. Begin with 0 (zero).

Part 3: Characteristics describes the skills and powers a character has. See section II for information on these listings.

- **Abilities:** These are the different types of talents a character has developed during his lifetime. They are measured in levels from 0 (zero) to 5.
- **Equipment:** This is a space to record a character's weapons, armor and items.

Part 4: Other is a space to add more information about a character, such as a background, a list of personality traits, adventuring notes, etc.

I am going to create a character for "The Dark Crystal: The Role Playing Game". I think my character will be a Gelfling who grew up in a Podling village, like Kira, but he will be an athlete who organized sports competitions among the villagers. I take a copy of the character sheet and begin filling it out. I write my name in the space for Player, and choose the name "Arra-Of-The-Swamp" for my character. He is a Gelfling, as I have already decided, which I record as his Character Type. I also write down his appearance and personality based on the ideas I have for Arra.

II. Abilities

ABILITIES — Every character in "*The Dark Crystal: The Role Playing Game*" has 10 abilities, the different skills and aptitudes the character possesses because of his species and training. The world of *The Dark Crystal* is built around sets of three, and as such the abilities are arranged into three groups, called "triads".

Mental: These abilities relate to a character's intelligence and alertness.

Perception: The character's observational skill.

Politics: The character's skill at manipulating and outwitting others.

Science: The character's knowledge of the way things work.

Mystical: These abilities relate to a character's inner-strength and his interconnectedness with all things.

Nature: The character's understanding of the deeper mysteries of the wilderness.

Rituals: The character's skill at participating in rites and performing for others.

Spirit: The character's ability to harness the magical harmonies of the world.

Physical: These abilities relate to a character's strength and endurance.

Athletics: The character's skill at running, jumping, climbing, etc.

Fight: The character's skill in combat with weapons.

Pilot: The character's skill at controlling and caring for vehicles and riding animals.

There is also space on the character sheet for a Special Ability (see below).

When creating a character, a player must first choose a Character Type from one of the following chapters. Each of the three triads will have a label next to it, describing the number of points which are to be divided by the abilities in that triad.

Primary Triad: 9 points
Secondary Triad: 7 points
Tertiary Triad: 5 points

You can split the points up among the abilities in the triad any way you wish. All of the points must be spent in the triads they are assigned to. No ability can have more than 5 points or less than 0 (zero) points. When all points have been divided and assigned, each ability will have a level between 0 (zero) and 5.

<u>Ability Level</u>	<u>Description</u>
0 (zero)	Terrible
1	Poor
2	Average
3	Good
4	Excellent
5	Outstanding

Your character also begins with a Special Ability of your choice. It is an ability you have become especially good at because of your personal talents. Some examples appropriate for each Character Type are listed in section VII. Your Special Ability automatically begins at level 5.

Athletics: This Ability measures a character's skill at physical actions such as running, climbing and swimming, among others. It represents his speed, sleight-of-hand, and endurance. This ability is the "default" Physical ability (see section IV).

Fight: This Ability measures a character's skill at using weapons, from slings to swords. A character with a high Fight level is quick and able to out-manuever and hit enemies more accurately.

Nature: This Ability measures a character's skill at making use of the plants and animals of Thra. He can find food among the trees, survive for long periods of time with nothing but the clothes on his back and use moss and bark to help heal wounds (as Kira did).

Perception: This ability measure's a character's skill at noticing out-of-place things. He can spot animal tracks in the deep forest, catch an enemy sneaking up behind him and detect hidden traps.

Pilot: This Ability measures a character's skill at riding creatures such as Landstriders and driving vehicles like rafts and carts. The character also knows how to care for the creature and repair the vehicle, and also has a good sense of direction.

Politics: This Ability measures a character's skill at running the business of a group, from the Royal Court of Skeksis to a Village Council of Pod People, and making friends. It involves administrative talent as well as charisma. A character with a high Politics level can make friends and bargains easily and can also take charge of a group.

Rituals: This Ability measures a character's skill at knowing and performing the various rituals in use among the peoples of Thra. He can look at a sand painting and tell what the urRu were intending, can (like Jen) read the runic carvings in a Gelfling stronghold or participate in a Haakskeekah sword duel.

Science: This Ability measures a character's skill in all areas of scientific knowledge, from the graceful movements of the planets and moons to the distilling of vliya to the creating of new medicines and tools to speaking numerous ancient languages. This ability is the "default" Mental ability (see section IV).

Spirit: This Ability measures a character's skill at summoning his inner-strength, as well as his willpower and resistance to fear and other supernatural powers (like those coming from the Crystal). It also measures his skill at playing a musical instrument and singing, because music is so important to the natural balance of Thra itself. This ability is the "default" Mystical ability (see section IV).

EQUIPMENT — The peoples of Thra live comfortably with very few material goods. You begin with the weapon and armor listed for your Character Type (see section VII) and may select other items. This list may change as the character gains and loses possessions. See section VI.

As a Gelfling, Arra's Ability triads are in the following order: Physical Primary, Mental Secondary and Mystical Tertiary. I get 9 points to divide between his three Physical Abilities, but none of the Abilities can have more than 5 points. Since he is a talented runner and thrower, I give Arra a 4 for his Athletics Ability. He has also led a few Podling hunts, so he has a Fight of 2, and the remaining 3 points go to his Pilot Ability. He has 7 points to spend on his Secondary triad, and I decide that he is very observant, so 4 points go to his Perception Ability. Arra has also dealt with the leaders of the Podling community, so he is somewhat familiar with leadership. I spend 2 points on his Politics Ability. The remaining 1 point goes to his Science Ability. Finally, Gelflings only have 5 points to spend on the Mystical triad, so I assign 3 to Arra's Nature Ability and 2 to his Spirit Ability. The Pod people have never had very many complex, intricate ceremonies, and Arra has never been interested in learning history, so he has 0 (zero) points in his Rituals Ability. After dividing all the points, Arra-Of-The-Swamp has the following Ability levels: Perception 4, Politics 2, Science 1, Nature 3, Rituals 0, Spirit 2, Athletics 4, Fight 2 and Pilot 3. I also choose a Special Ability for Arra, which begins at level 5. I decide it will be Running, since he has always been very fast. Arra also begins with Leather Hide armor and a Knife.

III. Status

A character has two different measures of status: Vitality (health) and Character Points (experience).

VITALITY — The Skeksis are only one of the many dangers found on the world of *The Dark Crystal*. Characters can suffer damage from many different sources, from monsters to falling off cliffs to drowning in a river. A character's health is measured in six levels. Whenever a character suffers damage (see section V), subtract the appropriate number of levels of Vitality. If the character reaches the Unconscious/Dead level, he has fallen unconscious and cannot make any actions. If he takes any further damage or is not healed in 3 turns (possibly more if Character Points are spent — see below), he has died and the player must create a new character. All characters begin at the Healthy level and cannot restore Vitality levels above Healthy.

There are a number of ways to restore Vitality. The most common is rest, which requires a few hours of sleep and at least a little bit of food to eat. This will restore 1 level per resting period (exact duration is up to the Keeper of Secrets, depending on what the character has been doing recently and what is available).

Another is through the use of medicines, whether it be with advanced medicines (use of the Science Ability) or plant life (use of the Nature Ability). On a successful Ability Check (see section IV), the character will regain 1 Vitality level.

The third is through mystical powers, which are known only to the most skilled healers.

The final way to regain Vitality is by consuming vliya, the life essence of all creatures on Thra. This is an utterly evil act — if enough vliya is drawn from a being, he is killed, but even the loss of one Vitality level makes the being into a slave. Only the Skeksis are cruel enough to distill vliya, and skekTik the Scientist's machine is only large enough to fit Gelfling and Podlings. If a character is drained in this way, he will lose 1 Vitality level per turn. After the loss of the first one, he will lose spirit and be reduced to a Skeksis slave. If the character is able to escape, he can drink his own vliya and will instantly regain the lost Vitality levels (although other damage is not healed). Any character can drink another creature's vliya, but only the Skeksis would be so evil as to actually do so.

I mark the "Healthy" box on Arra's character sheet. He begins the game without any injury.

CHARACTER POINTS — The Keeper Of Secrets will give Character Points (CP) based on how well the player did during the game session or adventure. This usually ranges from 1 to 3 points. These can be spent right away, before, during, or after the player's turn, or can be saved for later spending. There is no limit to the number of CP a player can spend in a turn, as long as he can pay for any he used. A character's total CP, including those already spent, is a general description of the character's fame. A character with many CP is well-known to the peoples of Thra, although he may be considered evil.

It costs 20 CP to give the character another Special Ability of the player's choosing. This Ability begins at level 5.

It costs 10 CP for 1 additional Ability level. No Ability can be raised above level 5.

It costs 4 CP to keep a character from dying. If a character is at the Unconscious/Dead Vitality level, these CP are spent to keep the character Unconscious for another single turn.

1 CP to add +2 to a single die roll (see section IV).

Arra begins with 0 (zero) Character Points, since he has not gone adventuring outside the Podling villages.

IV. Playing The Game

In order to play a game of "*The Dark Crystal: The Role Playing Game*," the players need to set up the adventure. Role playing games usually take place around a table, with refreshments and plenty of pencils and paper. Each player needs one six-sided die and a character sheet. One player is designated the Keeper Of Secrets and is responsible for directing the adventure, playing the enemies and friends the characters meet, and awarding CP. He begins the game session by describing the situation, and each player takes his turn by describing what his character will be doing.

In order to test the action the character will be making, the Keeper Of Secrets decides which Ability it falls under and decides on a Difficulty Number (DN) based on the complexity of the action. Use the "default" ability for the triad most appropriate to the action if no other ability seems to fit.

Easy — DN of 3
Average — DN of 6
Challenging — DN of 9

The player then rolls a die and adds the appropriate Ability level. If the total is **Greater Than Or Equal To** the DN, the character has succeeded at the action, and if it is **Less Than** the DN, the character has failed. Penalties or bonuses to the roll may be applied depending on the situation, equipment, the whim of the Keeper Of Secrets, etc. The Difficulty Number may also be adjusted by the Keeper Of Secrets.

After a character attempts an action, the Keeper Of Secrets describes what has happened in the story as a result. The player's turn then ends and the next player takes a turn.

During a game, the Keeper Of Secrets tells me that Arra and his friends are looking for secret entrances to a Skeksis guard post. It is my turn, and I say that my character is going to search the stone walls of the guard post. The Keeper Of Secrets tells me it is an Average (6) task using my Perception Ability. I roll one die and

add my Perception Ability level of 4 for a total of 9. This is greater than the Difficulty Number, so I have succeeded. The Keeper Of Secrets says I have found what seems to be a way inside the guard post.

V. Action Systems

There are many different actions a character can take. The following provides examples of many common actions and the role playing systems used to find a result for the action.

CLIMBING: This is a test of the Athletics Ability. A character can climb 10 feet per successful roll. If the character needs to move quickly, the DN of the roll may be increased by 1 or 2.

Easy - A tree with many thick branches.

Average - A short cliff with handholds and few loose rocks.

Challenging - A slick surface, such as ice or mud.

COMBAT: Even the urRu understand that sometimes the only way a conflict can be resolved is to physically confront a foe. But it must be done with great caution; fighting is dangerous and can be very fatal in *"The Dark Crystal: The Role Playing Game"*. Combat is broken down into a series of Fight Ability rolls. The character who rolls the highest on a regular die roll can attack first by naming an opponent to attack. He then makes a Fight Ability roll against a DN of the enemy's armor (see section VI. If a character does not wear armor, the DN for this roll is 4).

If this roll is successful, he has hit the foe and caused damage. Each weapon does a set number of Damage Levels. Subtract this number of Damage Levels from the Vitality level of the opponent character.

If the enemy is still able and willing to fight, he can attack when it is his turn. Combat ends when one fighter retreats, surrenders, or falls to the Unconscious/Dead Vitality level.

Much to Arra and his friends' surprise, a band of Skeksis were waiting in ambush inside the guard post! The Keeper Of Secrets says the evil beasts attack before anyone can try to escape or communicate. To make it easier to play, the Keeper Of Secrets decides that each Skeksis will fight a single adventurer. When it is my turn, I roll a die and so does the Keeper Of Secrets (since he is playing the Skeksis). I have a higher result, so I can attack first. I make a Fight Ability roll with a DN of 8 because of the Skeksis' Metal Plate armor. I roll a 6 and add that to my Fight Ability level of 2 for a total of 8. My total is equal to the DN, so I have hit the Skeksis. A Knife does 2 Damage Levels, so the Keeper Of Secrets marks two boxes on the Skeksis' character sheet, and he (or it) is at the Wounded Vitality level.

DRIVING / RIDING: This system uses the Pilot Ability. Pilot rolls are made in a variety of situations, such as chases, during bad weather, on poor terrain (like a muddy swamp or rocky plain), or when the vehicle or creature is damaged and out of control. The DN depends on how challenging the situation is as well as how sturdy and capable the creature or vehicle is at maneuvering. A Pilot test is not required to simply board a vehicle or get on a creature and ride it, since the people of Thra do that every day.

FAST-TALK: The Skeksis are masters of this system, as they all are constantly swindling and lying to one another in order to become the next Emperor. The Chamberlain almost had Jen convinced at the Gelfling Ruins, but Kira did some fast-talking on her own and kept the shard. The fast-talker should tell the Keeper Of Secrets what he is trying to talk the other person into doing and then roll a Politics action. The character being fast-talked should make a Perception roll to resist the con. If the roll is successful (the Politics roll is greater than or equal to the Perception roll), the subject will believe what has been said and will attempt to follow through on that action. If the roll is very successful, the subject may even do something as major as attacking a friend or giving away a secret.

HEALING: See "Vitality" in section III.

REPAIR / INVENTION: To fix or create an object, roll a test of the Science Ability. The amount of time and work that must be put into repairing or inventing determines the number of successful rolls needed. Very

simple objects (toys, hand tools and so on) may only need 1 or 2 rolls, while a more complex item like a new house may require 10 or more rolls.

Easy - Fixing a broken wheel on a cart.

Average - Rebuilding a Garthim-destroyed house.

Challenging - Creating a new mathematical formula used to measure the power of the suns.

STEALTH: The Chamberlain used this system when following Jen and Kira in the Gelfling ruins. In order to follow another person without being seen or to creep past a guard, the character must make an Athletics roll. His opponent should make a Perception roll to see if he spots the sneak. If the Athletics roll is equal to or greater than the Perception roll, the character has successfully hidden himself or surprised his enemy.

VI. Equipment

There are many different items a character can create and use in the world of *The Dark Crystal*. Some of the most common are listed below.

Weapons —

A **Punch** is any sort of attack using the character's strength. It may also be a kick, bite, claw slash, or tail swing. The Punch does 1 Damage Level. All characters can Punch in addition to any other attack they might be able to make.

Kira used a **Sling** to hurl small stones at a Crystal Bat that was following her. Podling children are taught to use this weapon when hunting and to defend themselves from the minions of the Skeksis. The Sling can be used to fire a stone a maximum distance of 20 feet. The Sling does 2 Damage Levels.

A **Knife** can be made of stone or metal. Jen used the shard as a Knife when he was attacked by the Garthim in the Podling Village. The Knife does 2 Damage Levels.

The urRu each carried a **Staff** as a walking stick, but some of the other peoples of Thra use these solid wooden poles in battle. The Staff does 3 Damage Levels.

The Skeksis used heavy blades when in the Haakskeekah **Sword** duel, but more maneuverable weapons can cause serious injury to a foe. The Sword does 4 Damage Levels.

Armor —

Most of the peoples of the world of *The Dark Crystal* do not need to defend themselves from attack. They wear a **Tunic**, layers of draping robes and soft boots or bare feet. A character in a Tunic has a DN of 4 when attacked.

Some of the more adventurous Gelfling and Podlings wear the **Leather Hide** skins of animals they have defeated in battle. A character in Leather Hide has a DN of 6 when attacked.

In keeping with the traditions of their decadent royal court, the Skeksis wear old, corroded **Metal Plate** armor. Despite its poor appearance, this type of armor is still sturdy and will protect against many blows. A character in Metal Plate has a DN of 8 when attacked.

Only the greatest heroes have been talented and lucky enough to destroy a Garthim beast. After its energy vanishes, the creature's husk remains. Skilled artificers can convert a **Garthim Shell** into a mighty suit of almost impenetrable armor. A character in Garthim Shell has a DN of 10 when attacked.

Items —

Many other small pieces of gear can be used by characters when exploring Thra. Typical items include a **Torch**, a small leather **Sack** to carry food or equipment, **Tools** for repairing things around the home, etc.

VII. Character Types

Each of the five intelligent species on Thra is described below. Each has an order for the ability triads as well as suggested Special Abilities (see section II). The character also begins with the equipment listed for his Character Type.

GELFLING

Appearance: The Gelfling are a species of small, elfin creatures with long hair and pointed ears. They are forever exploring, looking for something more in life. Gelfling are not evil nor good; they act as they feel, doing whatever seems right at the time. Gelfling are talented musicians; all have an "ear for music" and many can sing or play instruments. At one time, all Gelfling could fly via gossamer butterfly wings that spread from between their shoulders, but that ability was lost to male Gelfling long ago. Now only female Gelfling possess wings, and they can only really use them to glide through the air. Gelfling can communicate silently with one another via "dreamfasting", and many can also speak to the animals or even the plant life of Thra. If they make physical contact, they can share images from their memories with one another. Gelfling speak Gelfling, the common language on Thra used by all races to interact with one another. Gelfling have a short, soft-sounding first name used when addressing one another, but all have a descriptive element attached to that name used to describe their home, interests, abilities or lineage. Examples include Kira-Friend-To-Podlings and Arra-Of-The-Swamp.

History: For much of the world's history, Gelfling were the major race on Thra. They lived in small villages across the planet, led by the noble court of the Gelfling, called the Old Ones. They spent their time caring for the wild creatures and maintaining order and harmony. After the Great Conjunction that divided the urSkeks, however, their kind was wiped out. A prophecy decreed that one of their kind would heal the Crystal and destroy the reign of the Skeksis, and so they were slaughtered planetwide. A few managed to slip through the talons of the Skeksis, however, and survived to repopulate the world after the restoration of the Crystal.

Playing a Gelfling: Most characters will probably be Gelflings. They are the most common adventurers and the easiest to play. Gelfling attitudes and abilities stretch in every direction. Many Gelfling are royal courtiers or knights, driven by their leaders to explore new lands or confront enemies. The Gelfling fought valiantly against the Skeksis, and many are skilled warriors. Gelfling respect the wisdom and knowledge of the urSkeks but few are able to maintain their level of meditation and reflection, preferring instead to search the wide world for whatever adventures it may hold.

Primary Triad: Physical
Secondary Triad: Mental
Tertiary Triad: Mystical

Suggested Special Abilities: The skills of a Gelfling are as varied as they are. A Gelfling character could have advanced training with one specific weapon. A Gelfling may also be an Acrobat, Landstrider Rider or Pickpocket.

Equipment: A Gelfling adventurer usually goes exploring wearing Leather Hide armor taken from some defeated enemy and carrying a Knife.

PODLING

Appearance: The Pod People are the second most common race on Thra. They are tiny, round creatures with brown skin. Podlings enjoy the domestic arts of singing, dancing, cooking and gardening. They make their homes out of giant gourds which they grow deep in the forests of Thra. They are content to leave the outside world to the Gelfling. Some work as explorers or hunters, but most Podlings that leave the Pod Villages do so because they have befriended a Gelfling and share his spirit of adventure. Pod People speak Podling at home in their communities, but when speaking with peoples of other species they prefer Gelfling. Pod People have short names like Ydra or Mali.

History: The Podlings have been the real force behind the survival of the world of *The Dark Crystal*, still thriving no matter what the larger races of Thra do. They have been ignored by the Skeksis until recently, as they were not named in the prophecy. On occasion, Garthim have raided Pod villages to take Pod slaves, but aside from this occasional threat little has changed in the Pod People way of life over the hundreds of trine.

Playing A Podling: Pod People characters will probably be the second most common type of adventurer in a group. They are happier with simpler things and will probably more hesitant about jumping into danger than a Gelfling will, but once they are involved in something, the Podlings will dedicate themselves to the task until it is finished.

Primary Triad: Physical
Secondary Triad: Mystical
Tertiary Triad: Mental

Suggested Special Abilities: Podlings are not as adventurous as Gelfling. Their Special Abilities are most often domestic, like Cooking, Sculpture or Swimming.

Equipment: Pod People carry a Sling to protect against the occasional terror hidden in the deep forests of Thra but only wear Tunics. They enjoy a good meal and make sure to carry food and cooking utensils when exploring. They try to hold off the darkness by using lanterns made of hollowed-out plant buds.

SKEKSIS

Appearance: The Skeksis are ugly, raptor-like creatures. They have scrawny grey bodies and tooth-filled beaks. They screech at each other in guttural voices, and hate everything on Thra. When a Skeksis dies, its body crumbles into a fine ash. At the time of the Great Conjunction when Jen healed the Crystal, only nine were left (see urRu below). The Skeksis arranged themselves into a Royal Court in the corrupt castle of the Crystal, sending emissaries out across the planet to do their work for them. They speak a corrupt, vulgar form of urSkek, although the Skeksis who worked most closely with the Gelfling learned that language as well. They did not consider Podling worth learning, and those that had quickly forgot the language. Each Skeksis has a name beginning with "skek" and then a short, sharp syllable. Following that is a description of their specific purpose in the Royal Court. Examples include skekSil the Chamberlain and skekBik the Assassin. Each Skeksis is bonded to an urRu with a similar personality and purpose.

History: The Skeksis were formed after the failure of the urSkeks. They retained the brilliant intelligence and desire to act of these almost-perfect beings, but lost the friendly, helping nature. They immediately seized the mountain of the Crystal and built the stone framework of an evil castle around it that more suited their evil natures. The Skeksis were content to rule the peaceful world of Thra, occasionally taking slaves or destroying forests if it suited their purposes, until Aughra told them of the prophecy. The Skeksis realized the danger and began the Gelfling pogrom, the genocide of the entire Gelfling race. After that time, the Skeksis concentrated more on watching and manipulating one another, as they no longer had to deal with the the Gelfling. Their evil disappeared along with the good of the urRu after Jen healed the Crystal.

Playing A Skeksis: The Skeksis are the symbols of all that is evil. A Skeksis character may join a group of characters, but he will have some reason for doing so. Most likely it will involve a desire to learn the ways of the characters so he can betray and destroy them at a future time. A Skeksis character will help the group, but only as it furthers his own ends. A Skeksis by its very nature can do no more "good" than to help an ally in battle – while the ally does get the aid of the Skeksis, the foe is done much harm. The biggest drawback to playing a Skeksis is their lack of trust. No other individual (except the others in the character group) will be willing to deal with a Skeksis character, because of his reputation for cruelty and deceit. A group of Skeksis characters adventuring together will often have a more difficult time cooperating long

enough to achieve the mission than actually attempting the mission. A Skeksis will not attack an urRu because they are part of each other and cannot hurt one another.

Primary Triad: Mental
Secondary Triad: Physical
Tertiary Triad: Mystical

Suggested Special Abilities: Each Skeksis has a Special Ability which emphasizes his cruel nature. It is used by the Skeksis in some way to harm or manipulate another. Examples include Set Traps, Sneak, various weapon skills (Knife, Sword, etc.), etc.

Equipment: Skeksis wear Metal Plate armor, insisting it still holds some important ceremonial value, and carry Swords when adventuring across Thra.

URRU

Appearance: The Mystics are a slow, ponderous people. Their heavy heads rest at the end of long necks over a low, squat body. They walk on short legs with the aid of a finely-gnarled walking stick in one of their four hands. Each has a long, scaly tail. An urRu's thoughts and feelings are captured in the whorls that run across their long snouts faces and in the massive piles of cloth they wear. The urRu speak in loud, low voices, with a harmony that can shake the rocks. They are living symbols of all that is good, and nothing can oppose them that they do not wish to confront. The urRu protect and care for all things, but spend much of their time in deep thought, trying to discern the unseen workings of the universe. Because of this, they are slow and must consider every course of action before trying something. When an urRu dies, its body vanishes into the pure air. urRu speak urSkek and Gelfling. Like the Skeksis, urRu have a name preceded by "ur" and followed by a description of their title. Examples include urAc the Scribe and urEs the Watcher. Each urRu is bonded to a Skeksis with a similar personality and purpose.

History: The urRu took the goodness and wisdom of the urSkeks, but brought the slowness great wisdom requires along with it. They were pushed out of the castle of the Crystal and settled in the Valley of the urRu, where they continued their meditation on the ways of all things.

Playing An urRu: An urRu character is slow and ponderous. They have no objection to exploring the outside world, but are much less impulsive than any of the other races of Thra. An urRu will not attack a Skeksis, knowing it will do no good, as the two are opposing forces, each needing the other to survive.

Primary Triad: Mystical
Secondary Triad: Mental
Tertiary Triad: Physical

Suggested Special Abilities: An urRu character has a Special Ability which helps himself and/or others. Examples might be Climbing, Prophecy (fortelling the future), Tracking, etc.

Equipment: urRu wear layers of heavy cloth, but these layers are individually only as light as the thoughts and ideas put into them. The urRu has the equivalent of a Tunic for armor. urRu wish to do no harm to any other creatures on Thra and carry staves (Staff weapon) which they only use in the most dire of emergencies.

URSKEK

Appearance: urSkeks are tall, slim creatures dressed in long robes. They are ivory-colored, and glow when bathed in the light of the Crystal. They are highly intelligent and kind to all creatures. In addition to their great wisdom and intelligence, each urSkek can perform a magical feat related to his specific profession.

They speak in firm, modulated tones and know all the languages of Thra (Gelfling, Podling and the languages of the animals). In addition, they can speak the native language of their home dimension, urSkek. Each urSkek has a four to eight letter name, combining the names of their Skeksis and urRu halves (Skeksis is listed first) such as "SilSol" or "BikBar".

History: The urSkeks come from another dimension, inhabited by creatures of their unparalleled grace and magnificence. Eighteen urSkeks refused to accept the basic fact of existence – that all things have both good and evil in them – and were ostracized from their home for their disagreement. They were drawn to a place of power, Thra in the midst of a Great Conjunction, and settled there. They lived in the mountain of the great Crystal and spread out across the planet, instructing and helping the people of that world. Giant thunderstorms raged when they were angered, and plants grew where they passed. The original eighteen urSkeks were followed by others who wanted to understand what the urSkeks had done and those who wanted to follow in their footsteps, but these followers had very little impact in the end. Still the original eighteen urSkeks' quest for perfection in themselves continued, and they eventually decided to try purifying themselves by placing their very essence into the Crystal which had brought them. It divided them into two halves, the urRu of good and the Skeksis of twisted evil. These two separate races continued for a thousand trine until a Gelfling restored the light of the Crystal. The urSkeks reformed, and having learned the error of trying to become good without the balance of evil, they returned to their home dimension, leaving a changed world behind.

Playing An urSkek: Try as you might, your evil half still has a hold in you. An urSkek is in some ways as adventurous as a Gelfling, although they are more interested in studying a thing than confronting it and moving on. urSkeks are intelligent and clever but prone to dark, violent rages if conditions are right. Very few urSkeks did not split into their urRu and Skeksis halves after the original eighteen did so.

Primary Triad: Mental
Secondary Triad: Mystical
Tertiary Triad: Physical

Suggested Special Abilities: An urSkek character can select two Special Abilities, one similar to an urRu Special Ability and one similar to a Skeksis Special Ability. His Special Abilities also extend into the realm of the supernatural. The character can attempt nearly any type of action using his two Special Abilities by making a successful Spirit Ability roll with a DN of 6. In the movie, the urSkek Unglm (who was both the Garthim-Master and the Healer) used his special ability of Healing to bring Kira back to life.

Equipment: The urSkeks only wear a simple robe, but its supernatural origin gives it a DN of 7. They do not carry weapons; beings of goodness, such as those they strive to be, do not attempt to harm others or invite harm upon themselves.

VIII. Creatures

There are hundreds of different types of animals roaming the great forests, swamps, rivers and hills of Thra. Some of the most common are described below. Each has the following statistics:

Beginning Vitality: The number of Vitality levels the creature has. Some are weaker than characters and so they begin with a smaller number.

Ability Levels: Creatures only have the Athletics, Fight and Perception Abilities. The weapons and armor DN of each creature is listed in its description.

Bio-Engineered Beasts — Beginning Vitality 3, Athletics 3, Fight 2, Perception 2.

These are the creatures skekTik the Scientist tore apart during his cruel research. They were pulled into his Chamber of Life and were discarded, still living, when he no longer needed them. Jen's cry gave them the energy to fight back against skekTik and knock him down the shaft of fire. They hate all Skeksis simply because of what they are, and some may have been altered by the Scientist to act as guards or

soldiers for the Skeksis. Other creatures which live on Thra have similar statistics, such as the myrrhie and krikids of the waters and the katyaken birds. They have an armor DN of 4 and attack by clawing, kicking and biting for 2 Damage Levels.

Crystal Bat — Beginning Vitality 2, Athletics 5, Fight 1, Perception 5.

The eerie crystal bats, also called 'spy crystals', were created using the power of the Dark Crystal. Each carries a small sliver of crystal between its taloned feet, torn from the great Crystal. The pieces of crystal reflect an image back to the great Crystal. The Skeksis use this to monitor the entire world from their castle stronghold. Crystal bats are excellent spies, as they are almost silent and are difficult to spot, but they are poor in combat. They have an armor DN of 4 and do 1 Damage Level with their talons if they drop their crystal sliver.

Fizzgig — Beginning Vitality 4, Athletics 3, Fight 1, Perception 2.

Fizzgigs are small, round creatures covered in white fur. They have large mouths and small sharp teeth, which do 1 Damage Level. Wild fizzgigs travel in packs of about ten, hunting for food through the forests of Thra. They often have a darker fur color, almost a grey. Fizzgigs have been domesticated as pets and guards by Podlings for many trine. They are loyal companions and will fight to the death to defend their owners. Fizzgigs have an armor DN of 6.

Garthim — Beginning Vitality 6, Athletics 2, Fight 5, Perception 1.

The Skeksis made the Garthim from the deepest black light of the Crystal. They are purple-black monstrosities, giant beasts with a shell curling over their tiny legs and feelers and ending at their face. This shell provides them with an armor DN of 10. They have a single scaled arm used to pick up enemies, and their other hand is a massive claw which does 3 Damage Levels and can tear through buildings. They are sensitive to sound and smells, but cannot see very well. The Garthim are completely under the control of the Skeksis and will only act if ordered to by a Skeksis. skekUng the General is the true Garthim-Master, and it is he who conceived of and cares for them, but any of the Skeksis can give the Garthim orders. When a Garthim is destroyed, the faint glow fades from its eyes, and its shell collapses on the grounds as its mystic energy flows back into the great Crystal. All Garthim are silent and deadly, and they make a very quiet ticking sound just before they are about to attack.

Gelfling — Beginning Vitality 6, Athletics 4, Fight 2, Perception 3.

See section VII.

Landstrider — Beginning Vitality 6, Athletics 5, Fight 3, Perception 2.

The tall, slim, light-skinned landstriders are used as riding mounts by many of the peoples of Thra, except the urRu and Skeksis, who are not built to ride other creatures. They are fast and friendly, and enjoy racing through the forests. They kick with their powerful hooves in battle, doing 2 Damage Levels, although their armor DN is only 4. Landstriders hate the Garthim and will engage them in combat at every opportunity, which sometimes makes them hard to control.

Nebrie — Beginning Vitality 5, Athletics 2, Fight 0 (zero), Perception 2.

A nebrie is a squat, four-legged amphibious animal. It has a thin leather skin (armor DN of 4) and patches of fur around its face. The nebrie graze on the leaves of the plants of Thra, and herds are regularly caught by the Gelfling and Podlings temporarily in order to milk them. Nebrie milk is converted into cheese, one of the most common foods on Thra along with kainz berry juice. The Skeksis and other predators slaughter nebrie, as they provide tender meat. Nebrie can only kick for 1 Damage Level, but the sight of an angry nebrie herd is not something anyone on Thra enjoys seeing.

Podling — Beginning Vitality 6, Athletics 3, Fight 1, Perception 4.

See section VII.

Pod Slave — Beginning Vitality 3, Athletics 1, Fight 1, Perception 2.

A Podling drained of all its vliya is turned into a grey, milky-eyed version of its former warm, pleasant self. They are used to do the menial jobs around the castle of the Skeksis and are considered expendable. A Pod slave will regain a tiny bit of his former life energy if he is reminded of his true identity, such as having someone call his name or if given his vliya to drink. They have an armor DN of 4 and can punch for 1 Damage Level, but must be commanded to fight by the Skeksis, who would never do such a thing unless their situation was out of control.

Skeksis — Beginning Vitality 6, Athletics 3, Fight 3, Perception 2.

See section VII.

urRu — Beginning Vitality 6, Athletics 1, Fight 0 (zero), Perception 5.

See section VII.

urSkek — Beginning Vitality 6, Athletics 3, Fight 2, Perception 4.

See section VII.

IX. The World Of The Dark Crystal

The story of *The Dark Crystal* takes place in the age of wonder, a time and place far different than that of Earth. It is set on the planet Thra, a cool, quiet planet in the midst of a distant galaxy. A small moon hides in the shadow of Thra away from the light. Thra is mostly a forest ecology, with free-running springs, murky swamps and lush undergrowth throughout. Three suns provide a constant warmth to the planet; they are named the Dying Sun, the Rose Sun and the Great Sun. Thra is full of hills and small mountains, and a single rocky plain exists, surrounding the castle of the Crystal, which holds the most important element on the planet Thra.

The Crystal is a five foot tall, teardrop-shaped purple gem, cut at many different angles. It floats freely in the center of the castle built for it, which was once one of the mightiest mountains on Thra. The three suns pass over the open central shaft of the castle of the Crystal at different times during the day, and their light shines down into the Crystal. All of the peoples of the planet can feel themselves infused with a lightness and power for a moment, as the Crystal has the same elemental power as the very soil, water and air of Thra. The Crystal also responds to music, answering harmonies sung to it with a voice of its own. Once every thousand trine (Gelfling for "years"), the three suns come together at a zenith, and their combined light causes the Crystal to shine with a blinding white light. These Great Conjunctions are full of such power that great magical events can occur. Small crystals grow in bunches amongst the grasses and flowers of Thra, and they echo the light and sound reactions of the great Crystal. One theory holds that Thra's Crystal is one of the most powerful of a series of crystals linking many universes together.

This is the nature of the world of *The Dark Crystal*. Its history has been divided by Aughra, the Keeper Of Secrets, into three separate Ages.

THE FIRST AGE: The Age of Harmony

How long the Crystal, the planet Thra, the galaxy it spins through or even the very universe have been around is a mystery which can never be solved. The great wisdom of the urRu could not help with this question, as it is one of the High Mysteries beyond any comprehension. Podling myth holds that the three suns are brothers who divided in an argument about the lovely, dark daughter of the moon. They circle each other day after day, only coming together once every thousand trine. What happens at that point is reflected on the planet itself; they either battle, and great harm comes to the land, or they make a truce, and peace and harmony is restored for a time.

Aughra is the only (or last – she is no longer sure) member of an ancient species on Thra, having lived for 300 or more trine. She has memory of the thousands of things that happened before any of the other races

appeared, and she is constantly seeking to learn more. At some point during her youth, the first members of the Gelfling and Podling species appeared, and she helped them grow and develop. Great Conjunctions passed into memory during this time, as well as Lesser Conjunctions of only two of the suns, and as she grew older Aughra devoted herself to studying them. Her ultimate experiment resulted in her staring directly into the light of a Great Conjunction. It would be a vision so beautiful she could never forget it, although it destroyed her right eye.

The world changed soon after that. A race of powerful beings arrived, drawn by the power of the Crystal. They were the urSkeks, who had been cast out of their own world for their curiosity. They wished to seek absolute perfection, refusing to accept their mortal selves, and they were forced to leave their dimension until they could learn to be satisfied with what they were – beings of both good and evil in balance. They found themselves on Thra, and took up residence in the mountain of the Crystal to protect and honor its glory. The urSkeks spread out across the planet, sharing their great knowledge with the Gelfling, Podlings and Aughra herself. The Crystal had nine faces, and the urSkeks came in two waves of nine to Thra. They were the original eighteen urSkeks, but followers of their beliefs and fellow outcasts also came to Thra, following in the footsteps of the originals.

THE SECOND AGE: The Age of the Dark Crystal

The peoples of Thra only saw the end of the first age long after it had happened. The urSkeks, in their constant search for perfection, tore themselves in two using the Crystal. They became both the urRu and the Skeksis. For a time, little seemed to change, except to the Crystal itself, which grew a shade darker with each corrupt act of the Skeksis. The urRu left the castle of the Crystal, seeking a more intimate connection to the natural world. They found it in a deep valley, and they built themselves a simple home, centered on the mystic standing stones they placed there. The Skeksis remained in the castle, reveling in its organization and hierarchy. Gelfling and Podlings came to settle there as servants and students of the intelligent creatures. Nearly all of the urSkeks who had followed the original eighteen to Thra used the same procedure to divide themselves in two as well.

As trine passed, the division of each urSkek into two different beings became more and more an evil thing. The Skeksis, brilliant but without thought to how their actions might affect others, grew suspicious and hateful of one another. Their research grew more cruel, and they used their outwardly friendly ways and reputation as great masters to build a petty, violent empire ruling over Thra. They built a grotesque façade over the castle of the Crystal to keep its power to themselves and hacked shards off the Crystal itself in pointless contests of might. They dumped their waste outside the castle, despoiling the land around it, and savaged the wild creatures who had formerly been part of their world. The urRu, wise but incapable of action, only stepped further away from the real world as their thoughts covered the many realms of the universe. Being part of a whole, the urRu and Skeksis had no quarrel with one another. But the Gelfling and Podlings were torn in the middle.

It was Aughra, whom everyone left alone out of respect for her age and intellect, that came to the Skeksis. The seer had foretold a great prophecy:

*When single shines the triple sun,
What was sundered and undone
Shall be whole, the two made one
By Gelfling hand, or else by none.*

Word of it spread among the Gelfling and Podlings as well as the eighteen original Skeksis and their many followers. Its message was clear, and never had Aughra's prophecies been clouded by error. Only a few days afterward the Skeksis began their Gelfling pogrom.

They did not want to go back to being the urSkeks, as they enjoyed their power and saw their urRu halves as worthless, rambling mystics. The Skeksis slaughtered the innocent Gelfling living in the castle of the Crystal,

and began the destruction of the Gelfling villages throughout Thra. The Gelfling fought back valiantly, but were powerless against the much greater Skeksis, especially after those beings used the powers of the now darkened Crystal to create the fearsome Garthim. After an all-too brief time, the Gelfling were seemingly obliterated, and the Skeksis returned to their squabbling in the black confines of the castle of the Crystal.

A Great Conjunction was drawing near when the Skeksis discovered their pogrom was not as absolute as they had first thought. A single Gelfling had somehow escaped to grow up and was now on his way to fulfill the prophecy. They exhausted their resources hunting him down, destroying Aughra's great orrey and many Pod villages in the process, but it did no good. In only a few moments, the hundreds of trine the Skeksis had spent plotting were dispelled. The Gelfling made his way to the Crystal, despite the death of another Gelfling they had also somehow overlooked, and the urRu returned to their former home and took their places around the Crystal. Jen the Gelfling drove a shard of the Crystal deep into its heart at the exact moment of the Great Conjunction, and the urRu and Skeksis magically reformed into their urSkek selves. By this time, only eight of the original eighteen remained, and they were the ones who left Thra, having learned the folly of their ways. Jen's Gelfling friend Kira was restored to life, and the two along with Aughra witnessed the healing of the Crystal and of the planet. The evil of the Skeksis was unmade.

THE THIRD AGE: The New Age

The peoples of Thra went into a new future with all they had learned from the greatness of the urSkeks and the actions of the urRu and Skeksis. Jen and Kira discovered other Gelfling that had escaped the pogrom, and they brought their species back from the edge of extinction. The Pod People continued to survive as they always had. And Aughra settled into a life of instructing and aiding the young ones as she had done in her earliest days. The grand cycle of all things on Thra began again.

The original eighteen urSkeks divided into the following pairs. An asterisk (*) is listed by the urSkeks who returned to their dimension after the Crystal was healed. The names of only ten urSkeks have been remembered, although the names urArhd, skekScred, and skekShkreesh may have some significance. However, the identities of the other urSkeks are lost to history.

urSkek

* AyukAmaj
* EktYod
* NaNol
* OkAc

* ShodUtt

* SilSol

SoSu

TekTih

* Unglm

* ZokZah

urRu

urAmaj the Cook
urYod the Numerologist
urNol the Herbalist
urAc the Scribe

urUtt the Weaver

urSol the Chanter

urSu the Master

urTih the Alchemist

urIm the Healer

urZah the Ritual-Guardian

Skeksis

skekAyuk the Gourmand
skekEkt the Ornamentalist
skekNa the Slave-Master
skekOk the Scroll-Keeper
(Historian)
skekShod the Treasurer
skekSil the Chamberlain
skekSo the Emperor
skekTek the Scientist
skekUng the General (Garthim-
Master)
skekZok the Ritual-Master
(High Priest)

X. Characters

Jen-Crystal-Healer (9 Character Points)

Perception 4, Politics 0, Science 3, Nature 1, Rituals 2, Spirit 2, Athletics 5, Fight 3, Pilot 1, Make new friends 5.

Jen is the great hero of the Second Age, the Gelfling who made the dangerous trek across Thra with the shard to heal the great Crystal. He was hidden from the claws of the Garthim by his mother during the

Gelfling pogrom and was later rescued by the urRu, who took him to their valley and raised him the best they could. He was an intelligent child, made only brighter by the great knowledge of the Mystics, but knew very little of the world outside the valley. Despite this, he rescued his world from the threat of the Skeksis at the time of the last Great Conjunction. Jen, given the title "Crystal-Healer" by the Podlings, has become the mate of his friend Kira, and they have spent the time since then searching for more Gelfling who escaped the slaughter. Jen is aware that he may have to become the leader of his people, and he is not sure if he can handle the responsibility.

Kira-Friend-To-Podlings (7 Character Points)

Perception 5, Politics 1, Science 1, Nature 4, Rituals 0, Spirit 1, Athletics 4, Fight 2, Pilot 3, Speak with animals 5.

Kira-Friend-To-Podlings was in every way as important to the healing of the Crystal as Jen. The young Gelfling was rescued by Pod People when she was young and raised in their world. Kira kept Jen focused on his quest to heal the great Crystal, even retrieving the shard when he threw it away. She gave her life to buy time for Jen, but was returned to life soon afterward. Since the time of the Crystal's healing, Kira and Jen have become life-mates and are helping the peoples of Thra recover from the nightmare of the Skeksis.

urZah the Ritual-Guardian (6 Character Points)

Perception 1, Politics 4, Science 2, Nature 3, Rituals 5, Spirit 1, Athletics 4, Fight 1, Pilot 0, Leadership 5.

After Jen's master urSol died, urZah became the leader of the urRu. He helped the Gelfling through his period of mourning and gave instructions to the youth as Jen began the quest to heal the Crystal. urZah is somewhat more talkative than the other urRu and definitely more direct; he prefers to tell others exactly what to do – at least as far as urRu speak directly. He joined with skekZok the Ritual-Master when the urSkeks returned to their home dimension.

skekZok the Ritual-Master (6 Character Points)

Perception 4, Politics 3, Science 2, Nature 0, Rituals 5, Spirit 0, Athletics 3, Fight 3, Pilot 1, Sacrificial methods 5.

skekZok is a cruel, calculating Skeksis. He was one of the three competing to become the new Emperor, but elected to withdraw after the Garthim-Master gave the challenge of Haakskeekah, seeing that he would become second-in-command no matter who won the duel. He dresses in gold and silks, as his office demands, and carries a jewelled sacrificial knife. He is responsible for the rituals and traditions of the Skeksis; he requires the others to follow the letter of the laws recorded by skekOk the Scroll-Keeper and only complains when those rules are not obeyed. At most other times, skekZok is silent and menacing, feeling he is more dignified than his violent, argumentative brethren. skekZok joined with urZah the Ritual-Guardian when the urSkeks returned to their home dimension.

skekUng the General (8 Character Points)

Perception 3, Politics 3, Science 3, Nature 2, Rituals 2, Spirit 1, Athletics 1, Fight 4, Pilot 2, Command Garthim 5.

The Garthim-Master is physically the most powerful of the Skeksis. He organized the Gelfling pogrom and conceived the Garthim. They are his pets and his slaves, and any failure on their part (there was only one:

the capture of Aughra instead of Jen at the seer's orrey) reflects on him. He became Emperor after skekSo died, but even his violent maneuvering could not stop the healing of the Crystal. skekUng joined with urlm the Healer when the urSkeks returned to their home dimension.

skekSil the Chamberlain (8 Character Points)

Perception 4, Politics 5, Science 0, Nature 0, Rituals 2, Spirit 3, Athletics 4, Fight 3, Pilot 0, Flattery 5.

Next to the Gelfling, the Skeksis hated skekSil the Chamberlain the most. He was a whining, complaining glory-hound, always scheming to earn the favor of those in power. Although his status dropped considerably after his loss to the Garthim-Master in the Haakskeekah duel, he was more embarrassed when his robes and signs of office were stripped away to reveal his scrawny hide. skekSil escaped the castle of the Crystal with his life intact, however, and spent the remainder of it trying to regain his former glory. He was not stupid, and returned to his once-sharp survival skills, following the Gelflings and even rescuing them from the Garthim at one point. He pretended to be their friend and almost convinced one to side with him, but when that plot failed he simply devised another one. To his surprise, the Gelflings actually did make it all the way inside the castle, and skekSil capitalized on that by returning to his fellow Skeksis and demanding the return of his former power. They restored his office, but very soon afterward the reign of the Skeksis came to an end. He joined with urSol the Chanter when the urSkeks returned to their home dimension.

Aughra (30 Character Points)

Perception 4, Politics 1, Science 5, Nature 3, Rituals 1, Spirit 3, Athletics 1, Fight 1, Pilot 1, Prophesize 5.

Aughra is the only one of her kind on Thra. She experienced a number of Great Conjunctions, and no one really knows the extent of her powers. She is interested in many different avenues of science, and before the urSkeks divided themselves in two she would spend many days with TekTih discussing the far reaches of space and the nature of the great Crystal. Aughra made the prophecy that brought about the Gelfling pogrom, but she made no protests against the devastation, as long as it did not interfere with her studies. She does not take sides and views all the races of Thra equally. To her, no creature is 'good' or 'bad'. One of Aughra's eyes was burned out when she looked directly into the three suns during a Great Conjunction, and she is completely willing to give up the other if she could see such beauty again.

XI. References

A number of texts were instrumental in the writing of this game. First and foremost, of course, is the film itself: "The Dark Crystal", Jim Henson Productions, 1982.

There are also three books with more background information on the world of The Dark Crystal:

Finch, C. The Making Of The Dark Crystal. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York. 1982.

Froud, B. The World Of The Dark Crystal. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 1982.

Smith, A. The Dark Crystal (novelization of the movie). Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York. 1982.

Finally, the best Internet Website with Dark Crystal information is at:

www.public.asu.edu/~galenelf/wyvern/darkcrys