



The Wheel of Years: Time & Aging in Dammerung

Dammerung is a “Saga-style” Emergent LARP. What Saga means in this case is that in each Dammerung Season, roughly a year of play (or 3-4 events) is separated by 25 narrative in-game years. During this time, Characters can make up their own stories as to what occurred- within limits. Here is a rough guideline to planning your Wheel of Years!

The effects of the Dammerung

During the period known as the Dammerung, the century or so before the fabled Age of Winters, the passage of the seasons is disrupted by the climate shift that occurs on the planet its inhabitants call Midgar. The planetary shifts that occur are not understood by the Dark Ages people populating the world, so superstitious and mythical reasons are given by Tahlers and Ostahlers to explain why these changes are happening. Heck, the inhabitants of Midgar do not even think of their world as spherical. These effects started in Season 1 and will become overwhelmingly obvious by Season 4- roughly a century for our characters.

- **Star Migration:** The stars overhead slip southwards, year after year revealing new constellations. This confuses traditional, primitive calendar keeping and leads people to reckon years and seasons differently in different parts of the world.
- **The Moon:** Lunar phases shift gradually to no longer line up with expectations. Tides become strange which leads to misfortune in coastal settlements and for sailing vessels.
- **The Sun:** shifts southwards like the stars. The Age of Winters will descend on the northern latitudes first, seeming to creep from the polar north. Likewise, the southlands grow ever hotter and wildfires and drought scour the southern hemisphere and equatorial regions until very few living organisms remain.
- **The Dead Walk:** This one has no explanation to our modern, physics-based thinking but it’s happening. The deeper into the Dammerung the world passes, the more restless the dead become. The so called Aftergangr, Wights, and Alikir are all related, but explaining the reasons for such violent, mindless resurrection is beyond the purpose of this guide. It happens and will continue to happen more and more until the Dead consume the living at the end of the Saga. Players should consider when their dead characters will come back to attack and slay the living, especially if funeral rites are not observed!

Dammerung Season Themes

Season 1: **The Axe Age:** human kingdoms squabble and fight as their world is upturned. The End is far off, rivalries overrule a distant threat of apocalypse. The first prophecies of the End come true.

Season 2: **The Wolf Age:** human civilization begins to break down and men turn upon each other, fighting over resources. New kingdoms rise and fall, but there is still hope. Humans begin to realize the doom that awaits them.

Season 3: **The Wind Age:** humans struggle to survive against a world that is turning against them. New gods arise, old human hatreds flair up, and the Jotunar begin their final war; the End is nigh.

Season 4: **The Age of Winters:** The Jotunar make their bid to reclaim the world and fail. The Dead come and wipe out all but a final fading stronghold of the living. The Last Fire goes out and a fragment of what was lost survives; the End has come.



Character Aging

Twenty five years (or so) passes between Seasons of play. Completely accurate record keeping is nearly impossible given the celestial shifts and the largely uneducated cultures of Midgar. Humans live slightly longer on Midgar for whatever reason their mythology justifies when compared to our own Dark Ages. It has never been any different so they wouldn't know any better; lucky them. Players should consider how their characters will age. Here is a handy, rough guide:

1. **Birth/Infant** (0-1 year) This is for babies born during or between the Seasons.
2. **Young Adult** (approx. 18-30ish years old) always Inexperienced characters.
3. **Mature Adult** (approx. 28 - 55 years old) often Experienced or Grizzled
4. **Old** (approx. 56 - 70 years old) often Grizzled or World-Worn
5. **Ancient** (70+) always World-Worn.

When advancing in Age, a character should generally increase in their level of experience. This has an effect on Trainings and Talents as well as how many Stories they have including flaws and injuries from a lifetime of adventure. (See Character Creation in Rulebook v. 2.0 for details)

Magic, Near-Immortality, and Longevity

These things grant you Longevity:

Alfwater: A character that drinks the very rare Alfwater will age half as much between Seasons.

Skafraega: These people can steal one year of life from a victim. The victim ages one year while the Skafraegr gets one year younger!

Setja Stones: A character can use a Setja Stone ritual in conjunction with a Master Herbalist or powerful magician to not age between seasons or to get one Age Bracket younger!

Jotunar & the Waer-Oath: Most Jotunar clades have longevity, with some living hundreds of years. As long as they hold to the Waer-Oath, the passage of years will barely touch them. Break this Oath and the Jotunar will quickly wither and shrivel as the years catch up to them rapidly.

Character Culture

Pick ONE Culture. Dammerung is a game about different Dark Age themed cultures handling the reality of their world ending in unique ways. **PICK ONE CULTURE.** Your parents may have come from two different cultures, but you were raised in ONE. In the Dark Ages, let alone the Apocalyptic Dark Ages, travel is exceedingly dangerous. No one is raised half here, half there. Even in instances of becoming a squire, ward, or captive, some element of your early childhood culture would remain or be overwritten. Pick ONE Culture that your character grew up in and/or was shaped by, and have them identify strongly with that ONE CULTURE.

Lineage

Preparing an Alt or Heir: Playing your own relative or heir is entirely reasonable and allows you to recycle the use of costumes and gear (it was your father or mothers before you!). Another way to recycle a character's belongings or costuming is to swap some items with a friend and to create interesting roleplay and story. Heirs can also inherit a Parental Figures home, title, and/or social rank and will often be associated with their Parent's reputation.

Playing Seasonal Bad Guys (NPCs)

As Dammerung continues through the seasons there will be calls to play the various Bad Guys that threaten the world- starting with mortal threats and escalating to the unstoppable undead army of Hell. We will all have to work together to help make this apocalyptic vision come true. This gives our characters a chance to triumph (and then die!) against the worst forces of the world. Please volunteer to be the Bad Guys if you can when the call is sounded!

In Between Season Actions

Between seasons you should think of what your characters life would be like as the world slowly dies and civilization shifts around them. Even in the face of the Dammerung, maintaining a normal, traditional existence will still be important to most people. Pick one or a few of the following themes. Keep it reasonable; often times the pursuit of Fame is inimical to living and growing in peace.

Make a Home - Your character spends years finding a safe and workable place to build a home. This may include their tradeskill workshop, a farm, a home in a hold, fortifying a hilltop, or finding a secret cave- whatever. The goal is to have a relatively safe place to dwell and to store your belongings. Once a character has a home, they stand a better chance of finding a partner and raising children while winning local reputation and being considered a valuable part of society. Having a home also often makes a character very worried about losing it.

Raise Children - Your character devotes a large portion of their coming years raising a child or children into adulthood. This does not have to be their own child, but could also be a foundling or ward. The end result is creating an Inexperienced Young Adult character that could enter play. Often a child is the heir of certain

heirlooms as well as lessons and learning that their Parental Figure has imparted to them to see them safe and independent in the world.

Take a Journey - Your character travels to near or distant lands to see the wider world. In the Dark Ages few ever traveled more than a few miles from home, but information on travels as fast as feet, a horse, or a ship can carry a person. Journeying to far off lands like the Vaestelans, Sudelans, Tyrol, Salzpyre, and Jotunheim are incredibly perilous journeys that will take many years to accomplish and survival to return home is unlikely as some of these places are nearly impossible to get to. Characters journeying to far off lands should always gain an additional Story (injury, flaw, etc.) to represent the rigors of such an undertaking and will have most likely had to turn back well before their destination.

Local journeys- Within the Nordelans, Cernlans, Crownlands, and Stahlford are much easier and take a year or two to complete before returning home. Characters that leave for a journey that takes more than a year or two will often return having been presumed dead, their kin having already dispersed their holdings, and their partners remarried. Such is the dangerous reality of going to far from home!

Hone Your Skill & Knowledge- Your character spends years training and practicing their calling or art. This can represent joining special secret societies, learning new mysteries, or mastering your trade. Only those who devote themselves to Honing their Skill will ever be deserving of the titles of Master or Grandmaster (or whatever is appropriate of their craft). As with all things in Dammerung, show what you can show- aka: a master smith should have an excellent fake forge set up!

Change Lifepath - Your character, in reaction to world events or personal life events, drastically changes the course of their life, career, and often, philosophy. This can include taking holy vows, becoming a sworn troll slayer, converting religion, or even giving up soldiering for a life as a farmer to raise a family. This is best done when a character wants to change Archetype, Trainings, and Talents.

WIN REPUTATION - Your character changes or increases their reputation with notable deeds. These can be good or ill, and often what is good for one Culture may be at the expense of, or looked down upon, by another. Reputations are highly prized but also restrict how a character can act if they are to maintain the renown. Below are some examples:

Terrible (expected to be merciless), **Brave** (expected to show no fear), **Honorable** (expected to keep oaths), **Wise** (expected to never make mistakes), **Powerful** (expected to never show weakness), **Just** (expected to be fair in all things), **Mighty** (expected to win every challenge), **Skilled** (expected to work tirelessly), etc.

The Rule of Misfortune

For every triumph, a loss.

Every harvest, a snow.

Every birth, a death.

For every blessing, a blow.