

INTRODUCTION – USING RUNE LORE



une Lore is the end product of a long line of thought here at Troll Lord Games. Originally conceived in the halcyon days of d20, it was part of a series of books, the first of which we titled *Winter Runes*. Eight follow up books were planned, each highlighting a type of runic magic.

The second one we worked on was *Blood Runes*. We developed the runes to our mode of play, with a focus on the storytelling aspect of any adventure and heavy emphasis on player interaction and interpretation. All spell use and magic had long enjoyed a broad interpretation with the Trolls. This, coupled with the “rules-light” philosophy, led directly to the creation of rune magic. Here we envisioned a type of magic that broke the normal rules of cat and roll, allowing the character to use singular spells (or in this case, runes), to have a wide range of effects. Controlling fire means you can ignite it as easily as you can extinguish it.

The rune magic we designed for the d20 system, and the rune mark itself, we presented as a prestige class. As good a system as d20 is and was, it was an imperfect fit for our concept of the rune magic, for the mechanics of the game severely limited the broader interpretation of the rune’s magic. After *Winter Runes* was released, work on *Blood Runes* was halted as the d20 market shifted and *Castles & Crusades* became our main focus.

The move to *Castles & Crusades* opened up a whole new vista for the rune mark and his magic. The rules-light approach, the simplicity of game play, and the heavy reliance on the adjudicating powers of the Castle Keeper all play perfectly into the concept. Development problems arose early on as it took some time to break free of the d20 mechanics built into the class

in almost all legibly written forms. But once the breakthrough came, the class opened up, and has become, we hope, the perfect addition to the C&C game.

A cautionary note for all those CKs and players embarking upon the rune mark class play. The runes themselves are not given levels. Any rune mark can possess any rune, and, once translated and mastered, use that rune. Some of the runes are very powerful and CKs should limit their distribution until higher levels. This is, however, left entirely up to the CK. *Castles & Crusades* is your game, to tailor as you see fit. The runes themselves may require some adjudication as players attempt to do things with the runes, or to weave the runes together, in such a way that doesn’t work for the campaign or the world. As always, the CK stands in command of the Challenge Level of any action the players attempt. Raising it puts an end to the rune’s effectiveness.

The book is presented in three parts. The rune mark is first, complete with rune magic and how it works, the class itself and 45 runes. A huge swath of the Aihrde setting is next, the region of the Gottland-Ne, with town and area descriptions and an encounter chart. The third part of the book contains about a dozen short adventures. These are only loosely tied to the acquisition of rune magic, allowing for a broader use of the adventures in a variety of settings and times.

Rune Lore captures the essence of the C&C game, requiring imaginative play from both the CK and Players.

2 CASTLES & CRUSADES