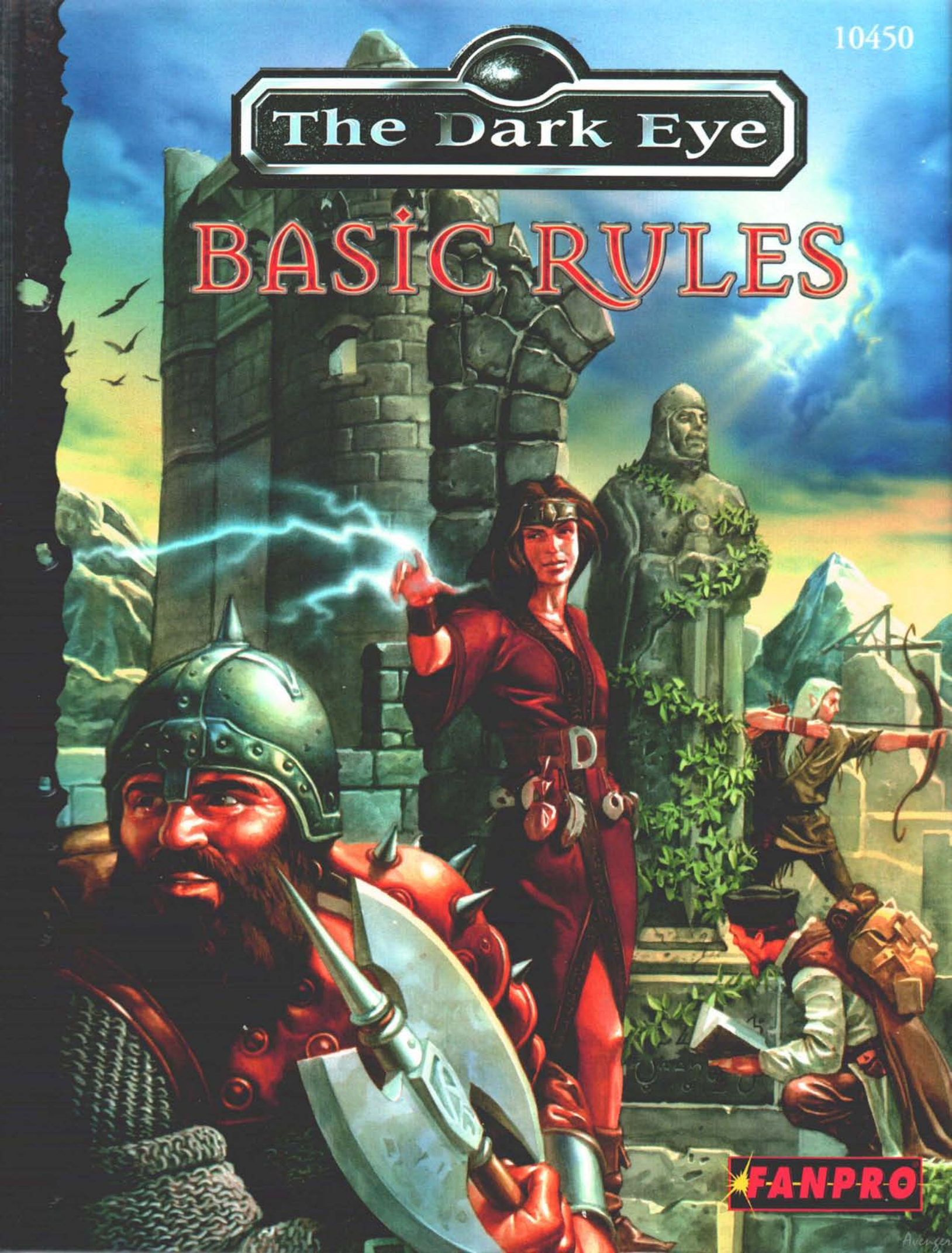
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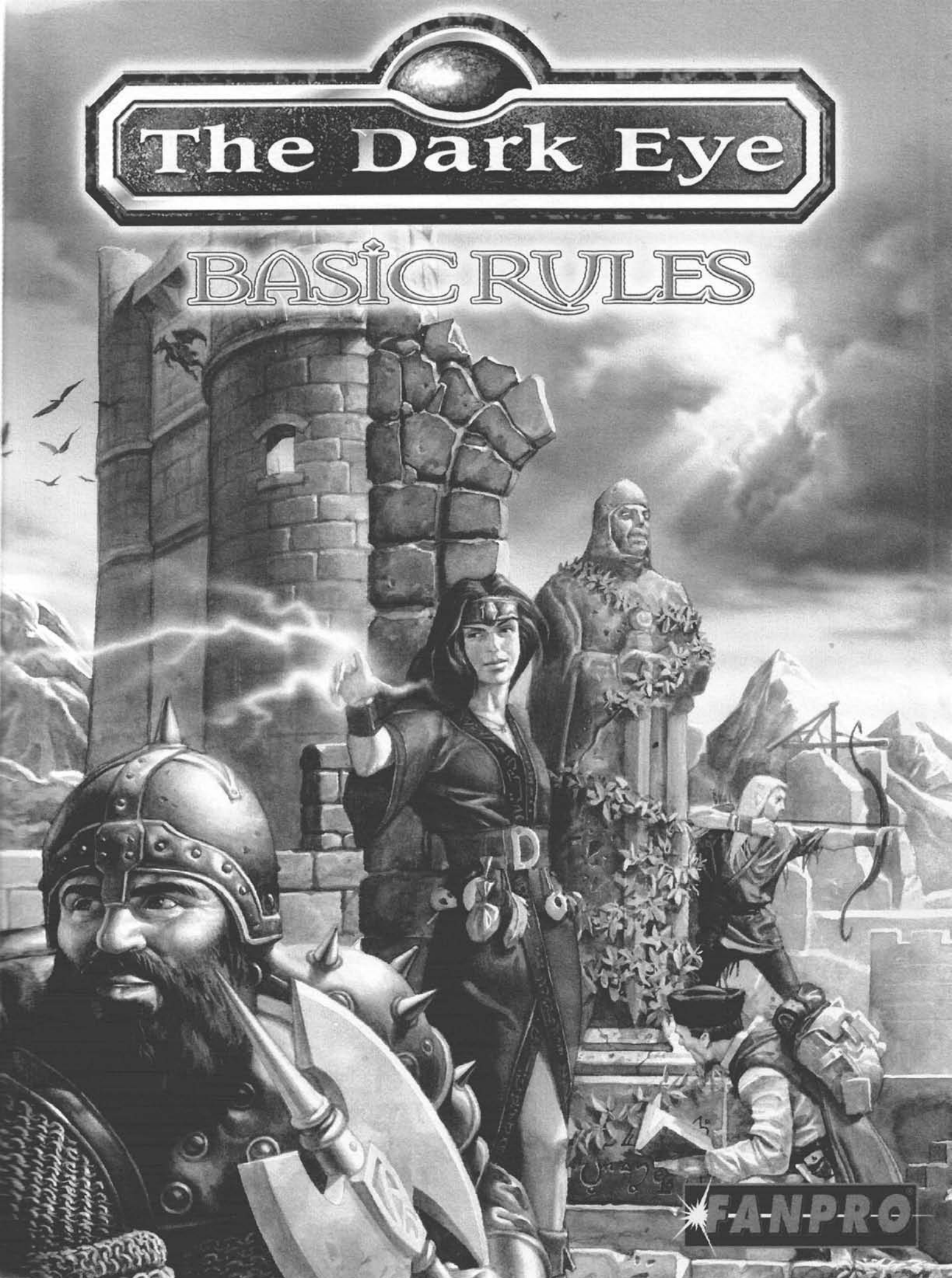
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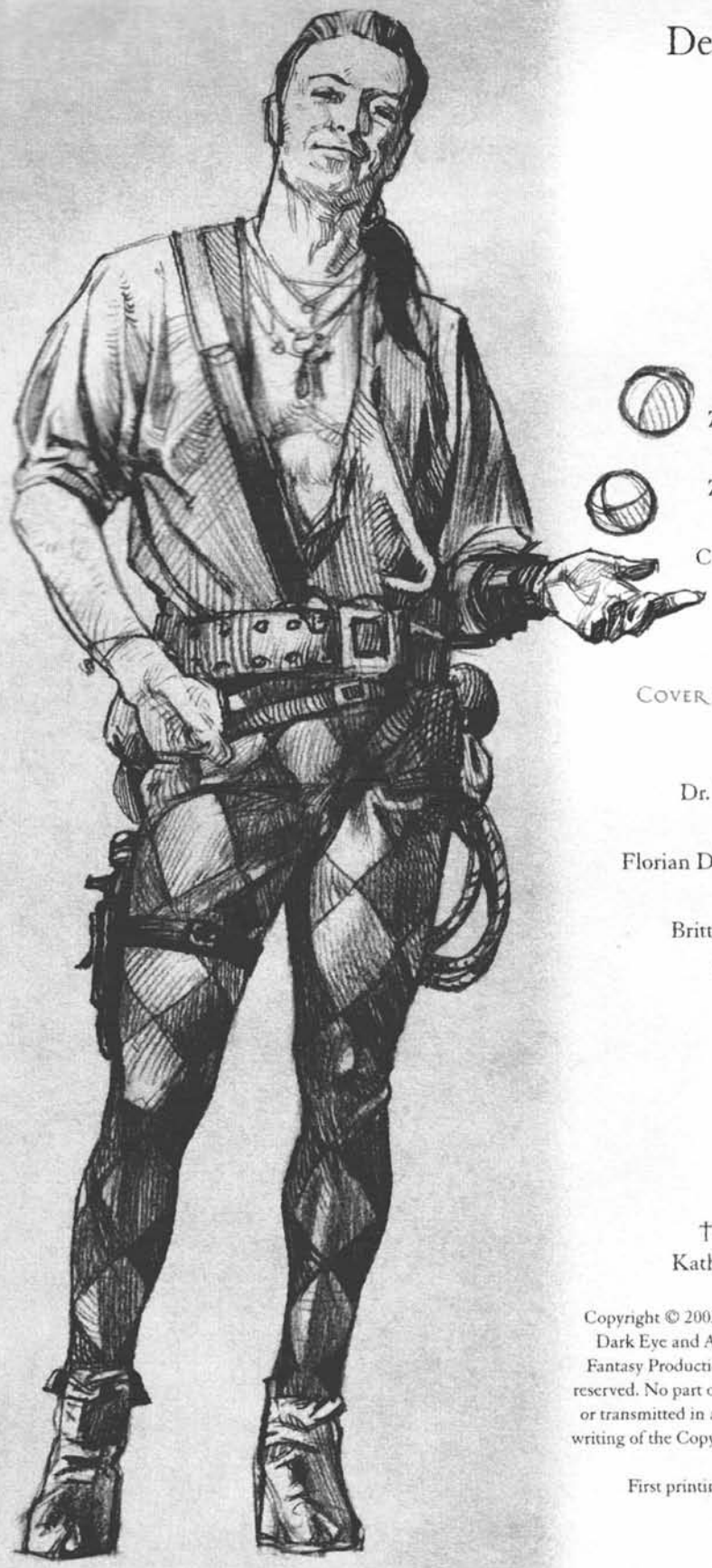
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The Dark Eye

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First printing, 2003. Published by FanPro LLC, Chicago, USA.
www.thedarkeyerpg.com
ISBN: 1-932564-02-0



Basic Rules

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The authors wish to thank the following people for proofreading, critique, and many worthwhile suggestions:

Kai Burmeister, Andreas Dopfer, Andreas "Ago" Ensch, Benjamin Ernst, Chris Grosse, Bernd Iacobitz, Stefan Königs, Michaela Kroupa, Stefan Mann, Frank Müller, Torsten Nelhübel, Benjamin Scala, Philipp Seeger, Peter Sulc, Marc Szodruch, Michael Wuttke

as well as other participants of the "Combat Rules Project" and, of course, the whole TDE-Team.

FanPro would also like to thank the following people for proofreading and last-minute checking: Kristian Kerber, Bruno Lalonde, Stephanie von Ribbeck, Gudrun Wagner, Andreas Wielenberg, and Philipp Wittmann



Fantasy Productions

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Introduction to Role-Playing

In a typical Aventurian tavern on the fringes of the Imperial Forest ….

The air is thick with the smells of dwarfen ale, hearty stew, fresh herbs, and warm, fresh-baked bread. The low-ceilinged taproom is full of customers crowding the plain wooden benches and tables. Traders and peasants mingle with travelers on brief stops from their journeys. Even a Beilunk Rider, a member of Aventuria's fastest courier service, has chosen this inn for a brief rest. Two women in colorful, loose-fitting garments sit in front of a crackling hearth fire. They beat drums in a steady rhythm; coupled with the jangling of the bells tied to their tapping feet, the music they make rattles the glass panes of the building, adding to the noise and merriment.

A young waiter, his curly red hair bobbing like a buoy on the sea, pushes his way through the crowd, trying to deliver his tray of wooden mugs and bowls to the waiting customers.

"Ho there, young fellow!" a ringing voice calls from one of the tables. "You think I'll be having my ale any time soon? Or do you want me to die of thirst in here? In Swafnir's name, can't you all just let this laddie pass, for Frenja Ragnarsdottir wants to pay her gambling debts!"

The boy finally reaches her table and Frenja relieves him of his entire tray, quickly placing a mug in front of each of her companions and spilling some beer across the table.

"Here's to you, my new-found drinking mates! Let's see whose face will hit the table first!" she cries. "And here's to the gods, who have brought us here together tonight! Let us pray that they won't send us back out again into the cold any time soon, as is the fate of the poor Beilunk Rider yonder."

Sporting a big grin, Frenja points at the messenger clad entirely in black, who at this very moment is fastening the belt holding his message bag around his waist. As he dons his traveling cloak, he is obviously dreading the long ride that lies ahead of him through the cold night.

Chance has brought together a strange lot of characters tonight in a game of Boltan. First is hot-blooded Frenja Ragnarsdottir, a pirate of Thorwal, the land to the far north famous for the seafaring skills of its people. Frenja is never without her bottle of brandy and her skraja, a double-bladed hand ax. Dozens of amulets dangle from her neck. Her thick, sandy braids and her muscular, sun-tanned arms are adorned with colorful, woven bands. She wears linen trousers striped in red and white, high boots crusted in layers of salt, and a rather revealing bodice.

Next to her, Trewman Trueleaf, an explorer from Gareth, shifts nervously in his seat and glances around the room. His traveling robe is of green and gold, the colors of Hesinde, goddess of the sciences. The colors complement his long, flaxen hair. His eyes turn shyly to the beautiful woman at his side: Mirhiban saba Said, a magicienne who finished her academic training only a few months ago. Her bronze skin and glittering dark eyes reveal her as a Tulamide, hailing from Aventuria's southeast. The richly carved wand at her side, topped with a sparkling crystal sphere, proclaims her profession for all to see. Unfortunately for Trewman, she seems far more interested in arcane musings than in her companions.

Rondrian Stormrock rounds out the table, a recent graduate from the warriors' academy at Gareth. He proudly wears the blazoned tunic identifying him as an officer in the Garethian Militia. His broadsword and chainmail shirt have obviously been well cared for, their shine nearly matching the glitter of his bright blue eyes. His blond hair is damp with sweat and cut short in compliance with Garethian knightly fashion.

The last person at the table uses his large leather rucksack as his seat, a choice that raises him high enough to see across the table. His thick gray beard is plaited artistically into small braids, while his scalp is clean shaven. Eyes of icy gray, up to now glaring with ill humor from beneath bushy eyebrows, light up with joy as his small but knobby hands firmly clasp his mug. Angrax, son of Angarosh, is a dwarf from the Anvil Mountains, a mercenary offering his fighting prowess to anyone able to pay for his services in shining ducats.

"Very well then," his low voice rumbles from behind his beard, "you will be sorry for challenging an Anvil dwarf to a drinking contest, woman!"

"…you will be sorry for challenging an Anvil dwarf to a drinking contest!"

What Is A Role-Playing Game?

Answering this question in one sentence is difficult. Imagine trying to explain the concept of motion pictures or television to someone who has never heard of these things. Surely you'd be tempted to say, "Why don't you just try it?"

Of course, a dictionary would define television as "a box-like device with a screen that receives electrical signals and changes them into moving images and sound, or the method of sending images and sound by electrical signals," but this doesn't really describe TV's appeal, does it? This definition, while technically correct, says nothing about the suspense of a police TV show or the amusement of a comedy program. It's the same with role-playing. The appeal and excitement of the game will make far more sense if you just start playing and see what happens.

Still, we'll do our best to give you a brief introduction to role-playing so that you'll understand the general idea.

The Basic Idea

You become the **hero** of a story and can **decide for yourself** exactly what you want to do.

You've experienced it time and again: You are reading a book or watching a movie, and suddenly the story's hero does something completely stupid. Of course, *you* would have done something different and much better. Have you ever wished that you could enter the story and lend a hand yourself? Unfortunately, you cannot. Regardless of your brilliant ideas, the story follows the path written by its author.

All these stories take place in your imagination.

But imagine that you're watching a movie with friends and you don't like the way the story is going. You turn off the movie and each of you takes on the role of a character you were just watching, speaking in their style of voice and continuing the story to an exciting conclusion. You've just begun role-playing! You become the hero of a story and can decide for yourself exactly what to do. By role-playing, you can have all the adventures that you observe passively as a viewer or reader. You can explore ancient ruins, fight terrible monsters, solve intricate mysteries, or experience new places of which you've always dreamed. You don't even need a costume or a weapon; all these stories take place in your imagination.

All players need to work together for the adventure to reach a successful conclusion.

How do you play a game with only your imagination? If you want to role-play, you first gather some friends, just as you would to play a board game.

At first glance, role-playing looks similar to a board game, with a group of friends sitting around the table. The visible difference is that no game board is used, just an assortment of rulebooks, papers, pencils, and dice. Additionally, you won't be playing *against* each other, but *with* each other—role-playing is cooperative gaming. Each player takes a certain role, and each role has unique strengths and abilities. All players need to work together for the adventure to reach a successful conclusion.

The Roles

The **players** choose roles as **heroes** of the story. Each hero's capabilities are listed on a **character sheet.**

Each player chooses a part to play, just like in a movie; the players choose roles as heroes of the story. Thus, a player could portray a mighty warrior (even if he's never touched a sword in his entire life), a crafty rogue (even an honest person can play someone devious), or a wise magician (even though magic doesn't exist in our world). Each hero's capabilities are listed on a sheet of paper known as the **character sheet**. This page tells you everything about your hero: how tall she is, the color of her hair and eyes, whether she is strong, clever, or agile and how good she is at riding, swimming, climbing, and fighting.

The Highlord

The **Highlord** is the game master. She is **director, cameraman, referee, and actor of all minor parts in the story.**

One player takes the job of **Highlord**, a special task. She is the only player without a specific single role. Instead, she is the director, cameraman, referee, and actor of all minor parts in the story. She alone knows all the details of the entire adventure on which the players are about to embark. For instance, if the adventure is a whodunit, the Highlord already knows who the criminal is and which clues will enable the heroes to find the culprit. She also knows where danger lurks. If the players decide to enter a room, the Highlord tells them what the room looks like. If a hero wants to listen at the door before entering the room, the Highlord knows what the hero will hear. Should a guardsman drop by and catch the heroes in the act of listening in, the Highlord will assume the role of the guard, possibly wishing to interrogate the intruders or capture them.

Of course, this does not mean that the Highlord is out to get the players. While she might be playing the role of the sinister wizard hermit at one point, she might soon play the helpful bystander, providing the heroes with important hints and clues. This makes a Highlord's task demanding as well as versatile—and so much fun.

Rules

Any adventure, movie, or book would be boring if the heroes were all-powerful and succeeded in everything they attempted. Climbing a slippery castle wall is difficult, for example, regardless of the number of princesses waiting to be rescued (or the number of poor dragons held captive by cruel princesses ...).

Rules serve the function of better representing the game world.

Some heroes are better at climbing than others; some are more competent fighters or more skilled riders. To better represent these differences in ability, the game uses certain rules involving dice. Thus, a hero who wants to climb a wall needs to roll dice to determine whether he succeeds; a higher degree of skill at climbing will improve his chances for success. The players are unlikely to get bored since success is never guaranteed. They cannot rely on being able to climb any wall, vanquish any enemy, decipher any old inscription, and so on.

When in doubt about a hero succeeding at a difficult action, the Highlord can ask for a **test.**

Even when a roll of the dice results in failure, life still goes on. The heroes just need to find another solution. In this manner, they will be able to face any task that comes their way and conclude any adventure on which they embark. You will soon see how individual adventures turn into prolonged stories in which you, in the guise of your hero, have the most interesting of adventures. Anything is possible—the only limit is your imagination!

And this leads us to ask: "Why don't you just try it?"



An Example of Play

So far, we have told you about the basic concepts of role-playing. You now know that you will take on the role of a hero to go on an adventurous quest with some of your friends, being in the care of the Highlord. Yeah, right. But what does it all mean? How does this really work? What exactly does the Highlord tell you? How do you get your hero to do things? What happens if everyone wants to take action at the same time?

To answer all these questions (and more), we present the following sample scenario as it might occur during a role-playing session. The scene has been written from the point of view of the players at the beginning of an adventure.

Anne, Lisa, Tom, and Frank have met one Saturday afternoon to play an adventure together. Anne is the game master, has read the adventure thoroughly, and knows it more or less by heart. The others have prepared their character sheets, detailing their heroic personas. Thus, Lisa becomes Fenia, a cat-burglar of no small skill, while Tom plays the learned magician Bosper of Greeningdale and Frank assumes the role of the not-too-bright mercenary, Ugo.

Anne acts as *Highlord*, while Lisa, Tom, and Frank are the *players*. Fenia, Bosper, and Ugo are the *heroes*.

First, Anne sets up the characters at the beginning of the adventure and describes their situation. She tells the players, "After a long day's journey, you have finally reached the end of today's leg: the city of Honeyton. The guards at the gate have allowed you to enter the city with no more than a disinterested glance, and you have discovered the Red Unicorn Inn. A stable boy has taken charge of your horses, promising to groom them most diligently (for a small fee, that is).

"Thus at ease, you have entered the tavern and are now sitting at a rough wooden table in the common room, partaking of hot stew. The taproom is bustling. Many visitors have arrived tonight and the room is loud with many conversations. At the table next to yours, you see a few blond giants sporting wild tattoos and speaking in a foreign dialect. Close by at the next table, some drovers are engaged in a game of dice. A pale-looking bard is hard-pressed to make himself heard above the din, strolling aound the taproom as he plays his lute. You are unable to make out a single word of his song."

Since Fenia might or might not notice the impending danger, Anne decides to call for a test.

Anne then turns to Lisa and quizzes her. "Fenia has been gifted with Danger Sense, right? Roll a test to see if you notice something!"

Lisa takes a brief look at her character sheet with all the pertinent information about Fenia. She then grabs three dice and rolls. "That was close, but I made it!" she says.

"Good for you," Anne says, "because suddenly you feel a strange tingling sensation crawling down your neck. Automatically, you grab for the purse that hangs from your belt—and you feel a hand hovering next to your purse strings! What do you do?"

"A thief, and an inept one, too! I try to grab the hand."

"Roll a Strength test!" Anne tells her.

Again, Lisa rolls the dice. "Nope, Strength is not one of my strong suits. It didn't work," she says, disappointed.

Anne now turns to Tom. "You notice that Fenia has dropped her spoon and is turning around to face a young girl standing directly behind her."

Tom knows that this must be the person who just tried to rob Fenia, but his magician Bospan does not share this information, so Tom must role-play Bospan's part as if he doesn't know. "I frown and take a closer look. What do I see?"

"Well, Fenia is sitting directly across from you, making it hard for you to see the girl. You still might see something, though. Why don't you roll a Perception test?"

Tom nods and rolls. "Made it!"

"Looking past Fenia's arm, you see that the girl is holding something in her hand; it's Fenia's purse."

"Huh. I'm sitting across from her, you say. This means I won't be able to get to the girl in time to grab her. I could cast …."

> Anne's task as Highlord is that of referee: She must decide whether the heroes' actions have any chance of success.

"You are aware that casting a spell would be highly conspicuous right now, aren't you? While you don't know about the burghers of Honeyton, you do know that in many cities, the rulers dislike spell use in public. By the way, Frank, what is Ugo doing?"

"Eating," Frank grins. Of course, he would like to get involved, too, but since Ugo isn't too bright, Frank believes that the mercenary won't pay too much attention to his surroundings—not as long as he has food in front of him.

"Where is Ugo sitting?" Tom asks. Apparently, he has an idea.

"Right between you and Fenia, on the end of the long table," Anne explains.

"Excellent!" Tom exclaims. "I say, 'Ugo, grab the girl over there!'"

"Ugo doesn't fully understand, but he reaches out and grabs the girl by the collar. He doesn't even miss a single spoonful of stew," Frank explains.

Anne cannot be entirely certain, however, whether Ugo is quick enough to capture the thief: "Are you sure that works? Let's see … Ugo *is* big, and has long arms. Kindly roll a Wrestling attack."

"That's all?" Frank grins, for Ugo's fighting abilities are excellent all across the board. It comes as no surprise that his roll succeeds.

"While Ugo is still spooning up his stew with his right hand, he reaches out with his left and easily grabs the girl. She is trying to break free, but isn't strong enough. She resorts to biting and scratching, but you've seen much worse than this and can continue eating."

"What does this girl look like, anyway?" Lisa chimes in.

"Looks like she's about ten years old, with long, dirty hair and an unwashed face, wearing a dress she might grow into in a year or two. Her eyes are wild with panic."

"Okay. What about my purse?"

"She's already dropped it. It's lying on the floor."

"First, I pick it up again. Next, I smile reassuringly at the girl and shake my finger at her playfully." To demonstrate, she smiles at Anne and waves her index finger in her direction. "Hi there, darling. Nice try, but maybe you should take greater care in picking your victims."

"Fenia, you are talking to a *thief*!" Tom exclaims, trying to put on a most indignant air. "Surely you don't …."

"Calm down. After all, I try to leave you alone when you're talking to your ilk, right?" Lisa says to Tom with a sly smile, since the burglar Fenia might very well be some kind of colleague to the small girl.



"I throw you a displeased look, but fall silent," Tom says.

"And I continue eating, still holding onto the girl," Frank interjects.

"Er … Ugo, everything's fine. You may let her go now." Lisa says.

Frank instantly nods. "I let her go."

"And you, dear, you look like you're hungry. Come on over here. How about some stew?" Lisa continues in stride.

"Fenia!" Tom admonishes, but Lisa once again only gives him a sly smile.

"The girl looks at you, quite shaken," Anne states. "Once her gaze falls on your plate of stew, however, you can hear her stomach rumble despite the noise of the crowd."

"I draw her closer to me and push the plate in her direction," Lisa says.

"Well, it looks like the girl doesn't know what to do now. She looks shyly from one of you to the other, then back again at the steaming plate."

Frank raises his voice again. "You just eat, little one! Putting on a bit of weight sure can't hurt you, skinny as you are. But if you don't want it, I'll have it."

"Obviously, she doesn't like the thought of you eating that stew instead of her," Anne says. "She sits down and begins to spoon the stew with a speed that even Ugo would be hard-pressed to match."

"Okay," Lisa says. "I let her finish the stew and order another one for me."

"And for me!" Frank adds.

"Before you even get your next helping, the girl has finished hers. She starts licking the plate clean until she has eaten every last trace of the stew."

"I just sit there and watch events with a stony face," Tom declares.

"And I just look at her and continue smiling. I only address her again after she has finished eating. 'So now, I hope you liked the meal. My name's Fenia. What's yours?'"

"She looks at you, still somewhat afraid. Finally, she says in a small voice, 'Yanis.'"

"Very well, Yanis. The guy next to you is Ugo, the famous warrior, and over there is Master Bosper of Greeningdale, a real mage."

"Yanis looks at both of them in awe," Anne states.

"You've been really lucky, Yanis," Lisa continues. "Had you been caught by anyone else, they would have given you a solid beating at least. At worst, you might have been taken by the city guard. Try to learn from that!"

"Yanis nods eagerly," Anne says.

"Say, little one, don't you have any parents to buy you something to eat?" Frank chimes in.

"Suddenly, the girl's eyes are filled with tears. 'They went missing two days ago,' she says. 'Just like that ….'"

"Missing, you say?" Tom cuts in. "As in vanished? Have you told the city guard?"

"Of course!" Anne replies in a whining voice, sniffing heavily, playing the part of Yanis. "But they don't believe me!"

"Ah, well, calm yourself," Lisa says in a soothing voice. "Tell us the story from beginning to end. You know, you might call us specialists in finding and returning missing parents!"

"We're what?" Ugo exclaims, looking at Fenia and quite perplexed.



"Specialists in finding and returning missing parents," Tom repeats, having finally realized that this must be the beginning of a thrilling adventure. "Just tell us, Yanis!" And thus, Anne begins to explain. A short while later, the three heroes are well on their way to another exciting adventure.

As you can see, Tom, Lisa, and Frank portray their heroes by acting and speaking their parts. Highlord Anne describes the scenery and situation they are in, while also playing the role of Yanis. She will play many more roles in the course of this adventure: the barmaid, a member of the city guard, the eyewitness who was the last to see Yanis's parents, and so on. Of course, Anne knows what happened to the girl's parents, and how the heroes will find the clues they need to make their way through the adventure.

Whenever Tom, Lisa, or Frank want their heroes to do something and the outcome of the act is in doubt, Anne will call for a test. Depending on how well (or poorly) her players roll, they may succeed or fail in their actions. In that manner, the game unfolds. Let us hope that our three heroes will manage to find the right clues to solve the mystery of the disappearance of Yanis's parents.

If you now wish to play through such a scene yourself (or wish to run others through it, acting as Highlord), you've made the right choice, for this is the essence of role-playing!

Have fun!

What Is Aventuria?

Every role-playing game needs a world in which it can be set—a world with which the heroes can interact in a multitude of ways. They can talk to the world's inhabitants (to flatter or to curse them, to talk about philosophy or to engage in more physical aspects of life), experience a diversity of landscapes (in all their beauty or danger), study the history of the world (by exploring old ruins or reading dusty tomes), hear news from far-away countries (to which they might travel afterwards, just to find out that things there really are different from things at home), or even become famous themselves, shaping the fate of entire nations by their actions. Without such a world, a role-playing game is little more than a loose collection of unrelated scenes. When worse comes to worse, it might be no more than a never-ending sequence of battles and looting.

The world of this game is called **Aventuria**, a game world that serves as the **backdrop for fantastic adventures.**

The world of *The Dark Eye* role-playing game is called Aventuria. Aventuria is one of four continents on the world of Ethra, but it is also a fully developed gaming environment on its own, and thus qualifies as a complete game world.

This continent has an atmosphere all its own, one so different from that found on the other continents that they might as well be located on entirely different planets. The other continents are known as Vaestenland, Uthuria, and Myranor. The last is especially fascinating—an ancient dark continent to the west of Aventuria (known to Aventurians as Gyldenland and presented as a separate gaming environment, to be translated from its original German into English at a later time).

We will examine the continent of Aventuria in more detail on page 140; in this section, however, we will take a quick glimpse behind the scenes of our game world.

Fantastic Realism

Highlords and players should get a sense that Aventuria functions even when they aren't looking. Even when the gods do not directly intervene in the affairs of the continent, humans, elves, and dwarfs are born and die; they till their fields and ply their trades,wage wars and negotiate trade agreements. The seasons change and the tides ebb and flow. Near the ends of the winters, wild animals are hungry and more eager to attack humans; the children of coastal fishermen seek the shallows at low tide to catch crabs from isolated puddles.

Granted, there are differences between Aventuria and our world. The change from one season to the next is more pronounced, the tides less severe; wild animals are significantly wilder (and often better organized). A maimer (a vicious type of giant crab) may be lurking in the shallows near the sea, but children might also encounter a merman (a beautiful sea creature) or find a Gwen-Petryl Stone the size of a fist (a jewel glowing from within, prized by all but especially by the priests of the sea god, Efferd).

Fantastic realism means that even the fantastic and the miraculous seem logical within the framework of the world and that the world's fantastic and realistic elements are closely intertwined. Thus, while a single magician will not have the power to incinerate a city, an entire circle of suicidal evil magicians or a wrathful imperial dragon might well be able to do so. Said dragon might even be able to fly, but still needs to tend to wounds at times and always requires sufficient amounts of food (such as an ox every few days).

The lifestyle we know on Earth applies to Aventuria in most cases.

Basically, this means that the lifestyle we know on Earth applies to Aventuria in most cases. If we mention apples or iron within these pages, we usually mean the fruit or metal known in our real world. Objects that are dropped fall to the ground; a thrown spear follows a ballistic flight pattern; and cold-blooded murder is regarded as the most horrid of crimes in most cultures.

All realism aside, significant differences are found between Aventuria and the real world. While it might generally be said that the continent's most important political entities are on the technological level of the late Middle Ages or the early Renaissance, we have taken quite a few liberties as compared to European models. These changes result partly from the world's inherent fantastic elements and partly from the close proximity of highly diverse cultures.

Still, the technological level mentioned above can be regarded as a general baseline: printing and simple optical devices have been invented, expeditions to the borders of the world have been made (with discussions of the shape of the world trailing in their wake), armor technology has the advantage on weapons, and recent years have seen a slight rise in education and interest in the knowledge of old. The most important difference when compared to the early Renaissance is that firearms have not yet been invented.

On the other hand, the equality of genders in most parts of Aventuria is as important as the differences in technology. Here, women are found in many professions usually reserved for men, such as smiths or drovers, and they hold officers' ranks and high positions among the clergy of the Twelvegods. Relative tolerance for alien cultures, alien races, and alien species are also much more pronounced than in our world. (And yet, Tulamides or elves are still regarded with suspicion and superstition by the average Fountlandian.) Perhaps most important of all, the firm and proven knowledge that magic and the workings of the gods have always shaped the fates and the history of the Aventurian peoples also sets the common Aventurian apart from the average real-world human.

A Magical World

Of course, a fantasy world can support only so much realism. While approximately one out of 150 Aventurians might actually be able to wield magic, even the simplest peasants know that powerful wizards, sagely witches, and cranky druids exist; that dragons and harpies lurk in the mountains; that many hundreds of years ago a war of wizards laid waste to the land; and that Praios, God of the Sun and of the Law, dislikes the open use of magic.

> Aventuria is a fantastic world filled with wizards, witches, druids, unicorns, dragons, demons, fairies....

On Aventuria, it is well known that flying carpets soar through the air in the lands of the Tulamides. All elves are able to employ magic, and given the right number of ducats, a rotten tooth or an infected wound does not have to kill you, since magical help can be had for a price. True, an unbelievable amount of superstition goes hand-in-hand with magical wonders (resembling certain real-world fears of high technology or superstitions regarding the customs found in foreign lands), and magic is valued and feared in varying degrees across the various regions. Still, no Aventurian will be surprised if he observes an elf or sees a magician casting a spell. Of course, most humans will be suitably impressed once they see a real wizard at work—but then again, the average real-world human tends to be impressed by the work of a brain surgeon or stunt pilot.

People in Aventuria have a general understanding of users of magic. The guards of Aventurian settlements, for example, know that they need to cast magicians in heavy iron chains and gag them to prevent them from casting spells and escaping imprisonment. The proprietor of any large inn will be able to point the way to the next magicians' academy or temple dedicated to Hesinde or Praios. In addition, many rulers and wealthy merchants employ their own spellcasters to protect them from magical assassination, heal their wounds, or discover the intentions of business partners (or in some cases, to prolong their youth and increase their fortunes).

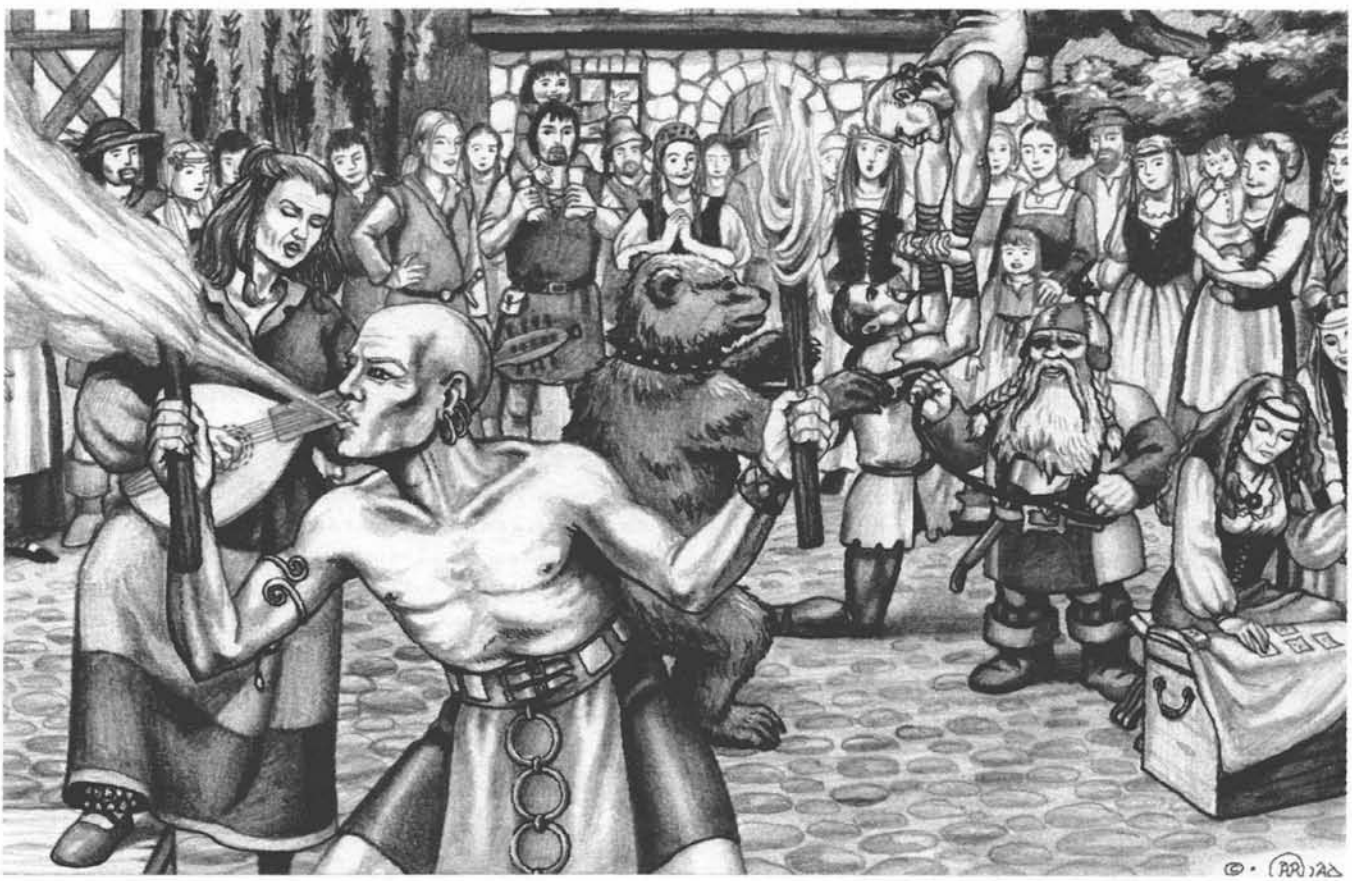
Still, performing feats of magic is a strenuous activity for humans, elves, and dwarfs. Natural magic, like that used by magical beasts and creatures, is rare. Thus, while Aventuria surely is a magical world, it is not a world ruled by magic. Unless a wizard or an elder dragon is present, Aventuria's rivers can be expected to flow down the mountains into the sea, its sky will be blue instead of green, and cows won't fly. And this leads us back to the "realistic" part of fantastic realism.

A World of Adventure

You might be able to picture life as an Aventurian: The land has cities and streets and markets, dukes and guards, priests and wizards, but this doesn't mean that all is peaceful in Aventuria. Not by a long shot.

Even in the rather civilized Middenrealm, the lands are made up of forests avoided by most sensible folk (since these woodlands usually harbor bands of brigands or even worse), steep impassable hillsides, or barren heaths devoid of paths or trails. Because of this isolation, ruins of bygone times are sprinkled throughout these regions, as are caves sheltering tyrannical dragons, enchanted lakes, and more—all right in the midst of a civilized area.

As fate would have it, however, these ruins might contain a legendary magical axe, the very axe needed for slaying the





tyrannical dragon. Or water might be needed from the enchanted lake so its healing properties may be delivered to the baroness's son, who has been poisoned by the dragon's breath. Of course, the baroness cannot spare her complement of men-at-arms (all ten of them) from their duties of keeping the peace at the fair, requiring heroes to do the job.

Away from the centers of civilization, a traveler must trek long distances to enjoy a hot bath or a good meal, let alone visit a temple or library. Many regions are wholly inhospitable (such as the Khôm Desert and the highest regions of the Rashtul Wall), or its inhabitants are ork tribes and eccentric magicians of questionable reputation. And yet, adventure beckons. An important message needs to be transported right across the territory of the ork tribe; the shady magician (who, unfortunately, is the only known specialist in chronomancy in this part of the world) must be contacted on behalf of the magicians' guild; or a group of lost explorers must be rescued from somewhere in the Khôm Desert. All of these are jobs for real heroes, to be sure.

Adventure abounds even in the heart of civilization. Nobles or wealthy merchants might engage in highly uncivilized games of intrigue or robbery to further their goals; hunger, revolt, or disease might threaten an unsuspecting city; or thieves and assassins might hold a city in their clutches by turning its hidden realms (such as roofs and sewers) against its inhabitants.

It seems to be a law of nature that the official authorities are understaffed in such moments of crisis, or have been bribed, or are engaged in other important activities, or are simply inept. Whatever happens, the heroes will be responsible for uncovering the intrigues of the duke's chaplain, bringing to justice the magic-using jewelry thief, or thwarting the spread of disease.

A Living World

Aventuria never stands still. Quite the opposite is true: Aventuria already has a lively history (see page 146) with an equally lively future yet to come. Heroes have often been instrumental in making history: They have prevented the assassination of a prince, organized the defense of an entire city against hordes of orks, and even helped a dwarf druid save an entire dwarf tribe. (All this and more took place in adventures previously published in *The Dark Eye*'s original German version, *Das Schwarze Auge*.)

> This is your world, and **having fun** is the most important part of playing the game.

Before we end this chapter, we want to mention the personal spin on this game, as evident in the tremendous fan activity observed in Germany. The "official" Aventuria presented in publications is really a collection of suggestions that are sufficiently balanced to offer maximum enjoyment through thrilling adventures and bringing a fantastic world to life. None of these publications, however, are intended as absolute dogma or inviolate law. When certain rules or facts in printed products interfere with the story developing around your gaming table, feel free to alter anything you and your players see fit—you have our blessings.

A Brief Survey of the Game Rules

At the table of Frenja, Trewman, Mirhiban, Rondrian, and Angrax, the cards are being shuffled for another game of Boltan as a stranger enters the taproom. After taking off his warm cloak, his eyes fall on a poster nailed to a wall near the bar. Shafir ben Rafid is a dark-skinned southerner with an athletic build, curved eyebrows, and long hair bound into a ponytail. He wears wide black breeches with golden trimmings and a shimmering red vest with golden embroidery.

Casually leaning against the wall, he intently studies the expression of a woman reading the parchment with great interest. Her brown curly hair falls to her shoulders, framing a freckled face. A rapier hangs from her side. Lost in thought, she turns her feathered hat around in her hands, then shakes her head as her lips form an amused smile.

"Is it interesting?" Shafir asks, nodding toward the poster.

"Well … maybe," she replies, and then adds with a big grin, "You can't read, can you? Well, today might be your lucky day. What's in it for me if I read it to you?"

Shafir looks deep into her brown eyes. "Most precious daughter of the sun, your countenance shines brighter than the most shimmering diamonds in Sultan Omar's treasure hoard. Oh, what could I, the humblest of jugglers, offer a beauty such as you? What indeed, but my glowing praise of your beauty …."

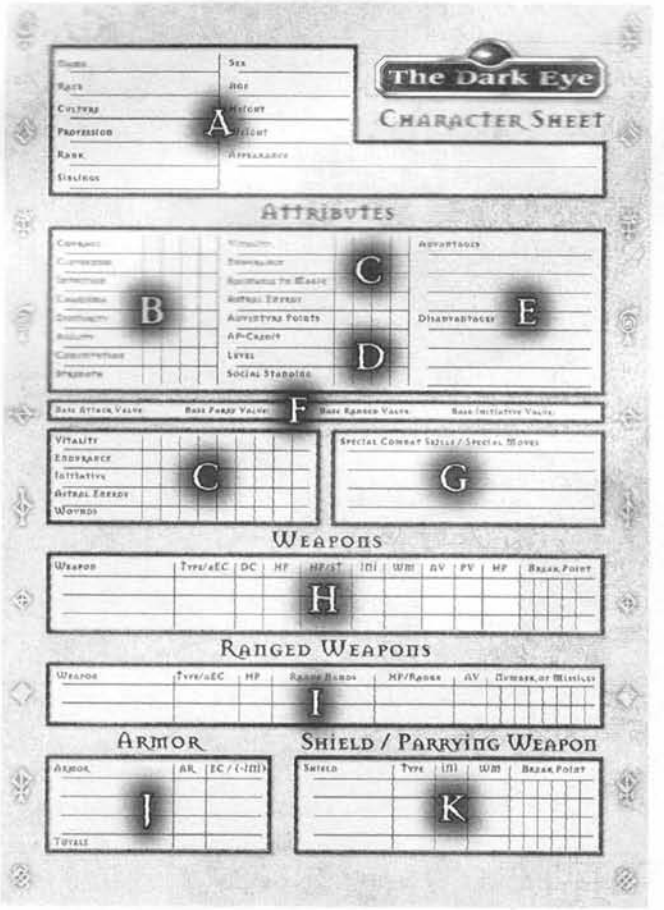
With the quickest of motions, he reaches into her hair and suddenly holds a shimmering silk flower in his hand. "… And of course," he continues, "this flower, of a silk as fiery as the red of your lips."

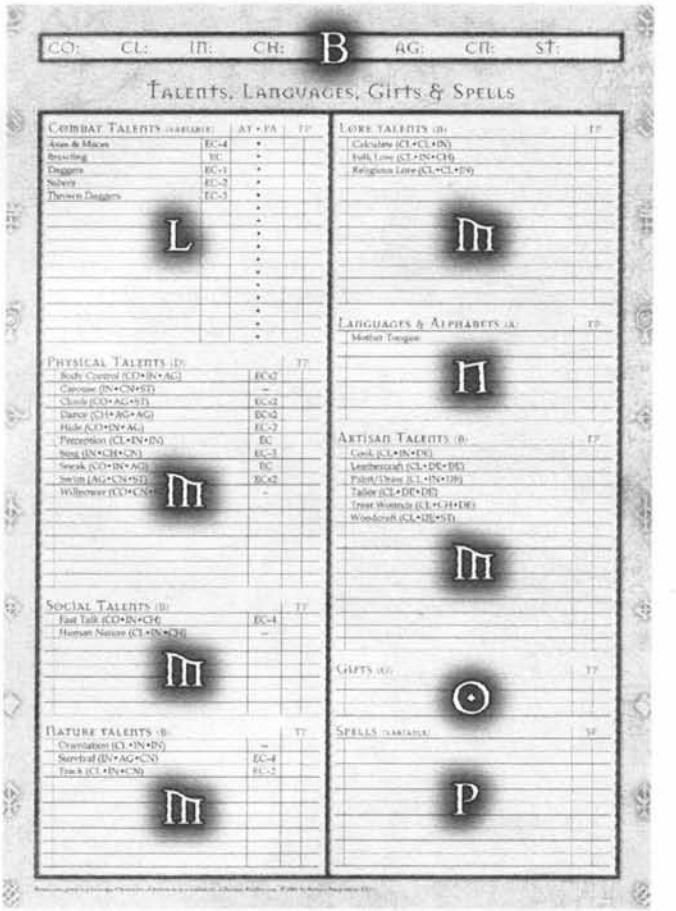
Amazed, the woman accepts the flower. "How did you do this?" she giggles. Shafir remains silent, shrugs his shoulders, and simply points to the parchment. "All right, you've earned it. It's a posting made by a duchess from around here, by the name of Naheniel Springsdance. She's looking for adventurers to help her find the lost elven city of Simyala. One silver per day, food and equipment provided. Heard anything about this city before?"

"Oh, ever so much, most beloved of women, which I would only be too glad to tell you. But my feet are aching from the long journey I have made today, and I think I might like nothing better than—"

Laughing, the woman interrupts. "All right, hold the niceties and theatrics! My name's Daria Termeli, and I would be honored to share my table and listen to tales of elven cities long since vanished."

"…and I would be honored to listen to tales of elven cities long since vanished."





Game Statistics

So far, we've told you what a role-playing game is and what a game session might look like, undoubtedly presenting you with words that are unfamiliar. You'll soon understand this "fantasy slang," which refers to certain peculiarities of the game world:



places, monsters, personages, or deities. More terms refer to game rules and data needed to represent a hero in play. In this chapter, we will try to bring these terms into perspective, but we won't hit you with every definition or teach you all the rules at once. Other chapters in this book are devoted to teaching you the rules.

The goal in this sectionis to acquaint you with many terms and teach you how play proceeds. If you plan to play a hero, all you need is a piece of paper to jot down your hero's statistics (a character sheet as depicted above in the box would be preferable), a few pieces of scrap paper, pens or pencils, and one twenty-sided die and one six-sided die.

The Dice

You will need six-sided (d6s) and twenty-sided dice (d20s) to play *The Dark Eye*, available from your local game store. The latter don't look like the dice you know from other games; their sides are numbered 1 through 20. You might have heard of other dice, such as the d4, d8, d10, or d12, but we won't need these in *The Dark Eye*. We might speak of a d3; this simply means that you roll a d6, counting a result of 1–2 as a 1, 3–4 as a 2, and 5–6 as a 3. Play goes more quickly if each player, including the Highlord, has three d20s and two d6s. Sometimes the type of die indicated will have a number before it (3d6 or 2d20, for example). This simply means you should roll the indicated number of that die type (3 six-sided or 2 twenty-sided dice, in our example).

Also, the rules will sometimes call for you to do a little basic math, like rolling 2d20/2 (2 twenty-sided dice with the total being divided by 2). When you do this, always round fractions of .5 or higher up and those below .5 down.

Notes on the Character Sheet

A: These **headers** define your hero's Aventurian features: **Race**, **Culture**, and **Profession** figure most prominently, since they determine modifiers to skills as well as Talent selection (see the descriptions on pages 73–89).

B: The **Attributes** of Courage, Cleverness, Intuition, Charisma, Dexterity, Agility, Constitution, and Strength are at any hero's core; Tests can be rolled against them on a d20 (see page 16). Since these Attributes are also at the core of the entire Talent system, you'll find them represented on both sides of the sheet. Social Standing, a measure of a hero's prestige in society, is handled much the same way (see page 17).

C: This is the first block of derived data—**Vitality (VI)**, **Endurance (ED)**, **Astral Energy (AE)**, and **Resistance to Magic (RM)**. We'll tell you on page 19 how to calculate these values. Some of this data will be repeated in the box directly below, since it is important for combat and will be modified by other combat-related factors (such as weapons used or armor worn).

D: These statistics derive from a hero's experiences: Heroes receive **Adventure Points** for going on adventures, and these points are "spent" to increase Attributes or Talent Prowess. The entry for **AP Balance** tells you how many Adventure Points your hero has to spend. Finally, **Level** is an overall indicator of your hero's total experience, derived from adding all AP he has ever received. More about this on page 124.

E: **Advantages** and **Disadvantages** define the hero from early on, possibly modifying other game data; see page 59 for more details.

F: This second set of derived data addresses combat: **Base Attack**, **Base Parry**, **Base Ranged Attack**, and **Base Initiative**. Together with your hero's Combat Talent Values, these determine AT, PA, Ranged Attack, and Initiative.

G: **Special Abilities** reflect specific knowledge a hero has gained. These abilities can be used to your advantage in certain situations (mostly combat), but you do not need to roll Tests against them.

H, I, J, & K: Here, you enter the game statistics of your melee and ranged weapons, your armor, and your shield. All the necessary information is found in the chapter on combat. You simply copy the information for all the weapons your hero owns.

L: Taking **Base Attack**, **Base Parry**, and **Base Ranged Attack** and combining these with your **Combat Talent** Prowess gives you the individual AT and PA Values with each type of weapon.

M: This is reserved for all noncombat **Talents**. You roll Talent Tests with 3d20, using Talent Prowess (TP) to improve your rolls. The basics of this are on page 17, and the detailed explanation begins on page 69.

N: **Languages and Scripts** are treated differently from all the other Talents (see page 83). Usually, Tests are not made against Language Talents.

O: **Gifts** are just like Advantages (see above), except they are handled like Talents.

P: Some Aventurians (for now, only the lea-elven culture and the profession of magician) are able to cast spells. Spells are treated exactly like Talents (see page 130).

Using one of the prepared character sheets in the Archetypes chapter will be the best way to follow our explanations. Above, we have reproduced a smaller version of a blank character sheet, followed by an item-by-item description of its entries. In the next chapter, we'll give you detailed instructions to create an Aventurian hero. But first, let's look at the more important terms found on the character sheet.

Attributes and Attribute Tests

To play a role-playing game, a hero must be defined by numerical values. During play, these values can be used for **Tests** to determine the outcome of various actions. The higher a hero's values, the better his chances of succeeding in a Test.

These basic values are called **Attributes**. They quantify a hero's physical as well as mental capabilities, and form the basis for a number of other values. They are also used for **Talent Tests** (see page 17).

The eight **Attributes** define a hero's most basic characteristics.

Attribute values for humans and humanoid creatures usually range from 1 to 21, with values of 8 through 14 being the most common. A hero is defined by eight (positive) Attributes: **Courage** (abbreviated **CO**), **Cleverness (CL)**, **Intuition (IN)**, **Charisma (CH)**, **Dexterity (DE)**, **Agility (AG)**, **Constitution (CN)**, and **Strength (ST)**. The first four (CO, CL, IN, and CH) are called *mental attributes;* the latter four (DE, AG, CN, ST) are called *physical attributes.*

Courage (CO): The ability to act quickly and with determination in critical situations. It also stands for daring and prowess, and for not being afraid of risks and unfamiliar situations. Used passively, Courage represents high willpower and mental fortitude, as well as resistance to fear and horror.

Cleverness (CL): This encompasses intelligence and logical thinking, the ability to analyze a situation and choose a course of action, and quick recognition of relations and contexts, both mundane and magical. High CL also represents accumulated knowledge and memory capacity.

Intuition (IN): This describes the ability to make the right decision without pondering too long, as well as making a quick assessment of people and situations when no hard facts and data are at hand. It also represents personal empathy and the ability to get in touch with the vibrations of astral power.

Charisma (CH): This Attribute represents personal magnetism, eloquence and leadership, appearance, and also the ability to use gestures and mimicry. Charisma also indicates the strength of a creature's magical aura.

Dexterity (DE): This refers to overall manual dexterity. It affects sleight of hand and hand-eye coordination, especially when used for precise tasks such as writing, painting, or picking locks.

Agility (AG): Basic body coordination, quick reactions and reflexes, knowledge of body proportions (such as arm length), take-off power, and more are defined by Agility. A high Agility rating results in graceful, precise movements.

Constitution (CN): This attribute is almost exclusively used passively. It determines physical toughness and fortitude, the ability to resist disease and poison, and forms the basis of Vitality and Endurance.

Strength (ST): Sheer muscle power and the ability to use it properly are dependent on strength. Along with Constitution, Strength determines a hero's general health.

Attribute Tests

When your hero tries to do something and the outcome is in doubt, the Highlord can ask for a Test. An **Attribute Test** is always based on the Attribute most appropriate for the task at hand. For example, you would be required to pass a Strength Test when trying to batter down a door, an Agility Test to walk across a narrow beam, or a Charisma Test to persuade a stubborn customs official to let you pass. A twenty-sided die (d20) is used for all Tests. The result you roll (including possible modifications) may not be higher than the tested Attribute.

Bargosh (ST 14) wants to lift a heavy iron trap door. The Highlord has decided in advance that a Strength Test will be necessary. Thus, Bargosh's player needs to roll 14 or lower to succeed.

Attribute Test: If the result of your d20 roll is smaller than or equal to the hero's Attribute Value, you succeed at the Test.

If the hero succeeds his Test, he is able to perform his chosen action. If the roll fails, the consequences are up to the Highlord—in most cases, it's easy to imagine the result. In our examples above, a failed Strength Test means the door does not yield . A hero who sneaks miserably (fails her Dexterity Test) will be detected, and a failed Charisma Test may result in anything from loud laughter to a heavy fine from the official.

Modified Tests

The Highlord may increase or decrease the difficulty of a Test if the situation warrants it. If the action is especially difficult, you add a number to the die roll; if it is relatively easy, you subtract something. Thus, if the door in the example above were pinned or weighted, a Strength Test +3 might be in order. In the case of a rotten door, a Strength Test –4 might be appropriate. In the first case, the player adds 3 to his die roll but the total still may not exceed the Attribute Value. In the second case, the player may subtract 4 from his roll. Adding to the die roll is known as a **Difficulty Increase**; subtracting from it is called a **Difficulty Decrease**.

Let's say that Bargosh's trapdoor is secured with a rusty bar. In this case, the Highlord calls for a Strength Test +4. This means that Bargosh (ST 14) needs to roll 10 or less because he is adding 4 to the die roll and the result cannot exceed 14.

Fumbles and Lucky Breaks

No matter how easy a task seems, a certain risk comes with any Test. This results in the following rule: A Test *always* fails if the die roll is a 20 (without applying increases or decreases). Such a cruel stroke of fate is called a **Fumble**. A roll of 20 is considered a failure even when a roll of 20



should pass the test (in the case of a character with Strength greater than 20 or one in which a Difficulty Decrease allows success with a roll greater than 20).

Depending on the situation, the Highlord may decide that a Fumbled Test has more drastic consequences than simple failure. For instance, a Fumbled Agility Test for a character trying to keep her balance might result in the hero slipping and falling; a Fumbled Cleverness Test might indicate that the hero draws a wrong conclusion and now believes that the common greeting among desert people is to slap each other's faces, hard.

A Highlord should use caution in confronting a hero with an invariably deadly situation due to a bad streak of dice-rolling luck. Fumbles should most often result in a low level of danger or an unpleasant or embarrassing situation.

Conversely, a Highlord may rule that an Attribute Test always succeeds on a roll of 1, regardless of Difficulty Increases. This would qualify as a **Lucky Break**.

The Highlord is within his rights to reject desperate rolls made on the slim chance that even the most impossible of tasks might be solved by sheer luck. For some actions, even a 1-in-20 chance isn't deserved.

Social Standing and Status in Society

We have already mentioned that role-playing does not occur in a vacuum but in a "realistic," approximately medieval world. This means that a person's origin and religion are important in determining how a person is perceived and treated by others. Equally important is a person's rank in society (or at least, the perception of this rank).

Social Standing: *Who* you are is as important as *what* you are.

We use **Social Standing (SO)** as a means of quantifying this rank. Social Standing depends on a hero's station at birth, his deeds and actions during his life, and his ensuing reputation. And while improving one's standing is a lot easier in Aventuria than it was in the real Middle Ages, most Aventurians still want to know whether the person they are negotiating with is honorable or noble or merely street scum.

Of course, in many situations, Social Standing doesn't figure into play at all—for example, when fighting monsters or abominations, or when trying to survive in the wilderness. But at most gatherings of humans, whether trading, feasting, or praying, *who* you are is as important as *what* you are.

Social Status in this game is handled similarly to Attributes, meaning it has a 1–21 range. Within this range, a rank of 1 describes criminals or hard-labor slaves, while a rank of 21 probably applies to only half a dozen people across Aventuria (Prince Brin, the Horas, the Patriarch of Al'Anfa, the Herald of Light, and perhaps a few others). Lower nobles generally rank no less than an 8, barons range from 10 to 12, dukes from 11 to 15, and so on. Burghers and craftsmen can fall anywhere between 4 and 10 depending on the size of the village, the quality and type of a crafter's wares, and so on. Day laborers such as farmhands or road builders generally rank below 5, and rich merchant lords might soar as high as SO 15.

In the framework of the game, Social Standing is an indicator of whether a hero is invited to certain social or political functions, or what patrons might take interest in the heroes—after all, the ruler of a nation is unlikely to employ a gang of cutthroats and vagrants to relay an important diplomatic note. In addition, SO also reflects a hero's renown and the range of activities he may get away with without losing face. Since heightened prestige can carry related responsibilities (some of which may preclude a hero from a life of adventure), heroes should not begin their careers with SO of greater than 12.

Talents

Attribute Tests are a great way to resolve simple tasks, but some situations during a game will challenge more than one Attribute. Sometimes, knowledge or experience gained over the course of many years might be more important than a "brute" Attribute power. Consider a perilous climb, for instance. A hero needs Courage as well as Strength and Agility to climb successfully, thus all three Attributes need to be tested. The hero's experience as a climber is also important. This experience, or the lack of it, should also figure into the appropriate Test.

Skills such as climbing, riding, healing, and so on are considered **Talents**. While Talents describe what a hero can do, **Talent Prowess (TP)** measures how experienced he is at doing it. Generally, Talent Prowess falls into a range from 0 to 21 (with certain exceptions allowing –3 through 26); TP partially depends on the corresponding Attributes. The maximum TP in any Talent may be no higher than the value of the highest of the three corresponding Attributes plus 3; for Combat Talents, only Strength and Agility are taken into account.

Sample TP values: An apprentice will hold a TP of at least 6 in his chosen craft, a journeyman will rank a score of 9, and a master will rate a score of 12. A person with TP of more than 15 is widely known as a highly-skilled specialist.

Consider the following examples. TP values greater than 15 indicate that the person has become known beyond the boundaries of his county or province, while a TP value higher than 18 makes him a household name even among people outside his craft. Analogies for other Talent areas are easy: a simple guardsman (or a professional brigand) wields his weapon with TP 6, while an experienced sergeant would have TP 9 and a combat-proven veteran or a highly-trained specialist (including the bodyguards of Aventurian rulers) would rank TP 12. A Talent Prowess score of 15 or higher might be seen among trainers at warriors' academies or sword masters of high repute, while 18 or higher would be characteristic of legendary heroes only.

Talent Tests

A Talent Test combines a hero's Attributes and his Talent Prowess to determine the outcome of an action. He simultaneously proves his physical capability and makes use of personal experience in the appropriate field. Consider our climbing hero. To make the climb, he must pass a total of three Talent Tests: a Courage Test, an Agility Test, and a Strength Test. If the hero has experience in climbing (i.e., she has Talent Prowess in Climbing), the

TP Value can be used to lower any or all of the respective rolls. Thus, Talent Prowess can serve as a kind of "emergency account" of free Attribute points.

Attribute Tests use only one die, but **a Talent Test is a combination of three Attribute Tests, failure of which can be modified with points of Talent Prowess.**

Here's how it works: The player rolls his first Attribute Test and may modify the test by any number of points up to the total of his TP. The player then rolls his second test, which may be modified using any remaining points. Finally, he rolls the third test, which also may be modified by any remaining points. The player cannot spend more Talent Prowess points than the total TP he has listed on his character sheet (i.e., the respective Talent). Thus, if he uses all TP points in passing the first Test, he has none to spend on the second and third Tests. If he needs to pass another Climb Test later in the adventure, however, the all TP points would once again be at his disposal.

We will discuss Talent Tests in greater detail beginning on page 69.

Daria (CO 12, AG 13, ST 12; TP: Climb 7) believes that the best apples are found on the highest branches. Since she is determined to pick every apple at the very top of the tree, the Highlord calls for a Climb Test.

Daria rolls a 14 on her Courage Test— two points too much, but her experience in climbing can compensate for her lack of courage so she uses two points of TP (leaving her with 5 points remaining). Her second Test (Agility) results in a 16. To succeed at the test, she must spend an additional 3 points, leaving her with 2 points for her final Test. She rolls a 5 for her Strength Test and succeeds, leaving 2 points of TP to spare.

Since Daria succeeded in all three Attribute Tests, she easily climbs to the top of the tree and picks an apple, only to find out that a fat worm has already beaten her to it!

Difficulty Increases and Decreases to Talent Tests

As with Attribute Tests, Talent Tests can be made more difficult with a Difficulty Increase when the action in question is difficult or outright daring. If the action seems easy, on the other hand, a Difficulty Decrease might be in order. These situational modifiers might arise if a Test is especially difficult (such as climbing in the rain), because the hero is distracted or hampered by armor, because the hero does or does not use appropriate tools, because the hero is rushed or perhaps has unlimited time for the job, and so on.



A Difficulty Increase subtracts points from Talent Prowess, while a Difficulty Decrease adds points to it.

In such cases, the hero's Talent Prowess rating for the corresponding Talent is modified *before* the Tests take place. This either reduces (for a Difficulty Increase) or increases (for a Difficulty Decrease) the number of Talent Prowess points available to the character.

If a hero's TP is a negative number (or if TP becomes negative due to a Difficulty Increase), the negative modifier must be applied to *each* of the three die rolls. Each die roll still may not exceed the respective Attribute Value. Thus, negative TP results in three Tests with automatic Difficulty Increases.

Shafir (CO 12, IN 13, CH 14; TP: Persuade 5) tries to get a good bargain on a "genuine Gyldenland" brooch (with which he hopes to impress Daria) but doesn't realize he's dealing with an experienced con artist. The Highlord rates this as an extremely difficult task and decides that a Difficulty Increase of 9 points is appropriate. This means that all of Shafir's rolls are treated as if his TP were –4 (TP 5 minus Difficulty Increase of 9 equals –4). The Courage Test roll is an 8—phew! The IN Test, however, results in a 10, causing the entire Persuade Test to fail regardless of the result of Shafir's roll for the Charisma Test. Since the Test failed, Shafir will have to pay a lot more for the brooch than he had intended.

A detailed introduction to the Talent system begins on page 69.

The Combat System

Attack signifies a hero's potential to hit an enemy, while **Parry** sums up his defensive potential. Weapons inflict **Hit Points** that are partially absorbed by **Armor Rating;** the remaining **Damage Points** are subtracted from the target's **Vitality.**

If you think that mountainsides to climb and locked chests to open might be enough of a challenge for your hero, remember that every hero encounters *enemies* on his journeys—enemies who hope to prevent the heroes from achieving their goals. These enemies may be animals who don't like the heroes traversing their forest (but who wouldn't mind feasting on their flesh), monstrosities bent on wholesale slaughter and destruction, or mercenaries and guards hired by the heroes' archenemy. Of course, this archenemy is not likely to refrain from further mischief simply at the request of the heroes, and such encounters are likely to result in combat. Once combat begins, you'll need rules to conduct it—rules that govern a fencing match atop the battlements of a ruined castle as well as a Thorwalian wrestling an enraged bear. Combat cannot be resolved with a single Test. Instead, it must be broken down into a series of Tests, each one representing individual attacks and parries. One failed Test does not indicate total defeat; it just means that one particular move was not as successful as the hero would have liked.

At the heart of *The Dark Eye*'s combat system are **Attack Value** and **Parry Value** (abbreviated **AT** and **PA**), which are calculated from Base AT and Base PA as well as Talent Prowess (such as TP with swords). The result is used for a Test on a d20, just like an Attribute Test: The attacker rolls a Test against his AT Value, while the defender rolls against his PA Value. Shorter yet: the attacker rolls an **Attack**, the defender rolls a **Parry**. If an attack succeeds and the defender fails to parry, the attacker has scored a hit inflicting a certain number of **Hit Points (HP)**, determined by weapon. The defender may subtract his **Armor Rating (AR)** from this amount of damage, and the resulting points are subtracted directly from his **Vitality (VI)** as **Damage Points (DP)**.

Initiative determines the order of the heroes' actions in combat.

Initiative (INI) determines who gets to act first in combat. At the beginning of each battle, Initiative is determined by modifying Base INI in certain ways. Combat is broken down into **Combat Rounds;** in a Combat Round, each combatant may normally take two **Actions** (his AT and his PA). The hero with the highest INI value starts combat by making an AT, to which the chosen defender may react with a PA; after this, play proceeds in order of INI, from high to low, until everyone has had the chance to make an attack. The next Combat Round then begins, and the battle continues through Combat Rounds until one side gives up, dies, or becomes incapacitated.

Detailed explanations of all terms and procedures used in combat begin on page 90.

Vitality Points, Astral Points, and Endurance

Vitality Points measure a hero's physical health, while **Endurance Points** measure a hero's current state of exhaustion.

In addition to Attributes (the basic physical and mental "building blocks"), Talents (experience in various fields of knowledge and actions), and the battle-related skills of Attack and Parry, heroes are characterized by two more characteristics. **Vitality (VI**, measured in **Vitality Points, VP**) represents a hero's physical health; it tells you how close your hero is to death. **Endurance (ED**, measured in **Endurance Points, EP**) represents a hero's stamina; it tells how tired he is and how much more strenuous activity he might perform before reaching exhaustion. Vitality and Endurance are functions of various Attributes, calculated before play begins (see page 33).

Endurance (or better: Constitution) is also the basis of a system to determine exhaustion during long journeys. It relates to the amount of goods a character can carry and how quickly he can travel. More information about this optional rule is on page 120.

A hero whose Vitality falls to 0 or below is as good as dead. He needs quick medical treatment (see the description of the Treat Wounds Talent on page 89). A hero whose VP falls to 5 or below is *incapacitated*; he may not fight, cast spells, or use most Talents. A hero whose Endurance drops to 0 is also incapacitated and must rest immediately in order to regain Endurance Points.

Note: On page 102, we present a detailed system of handling VP loss, while page 123 introduces you to *wounds* as an optional feature of combat. We recommend that you begin play using only the standard rules since they are easier to grasp and apply.

VP regeneration: 1d6 VP/night

AE regeneration: 1d6 ASP/night

ED regeneration: 3d6 EP/GT

Successful IN Tests and CN Tests increase these numbers.

Astral Energy (AE; measured in **Astral Points, ASP**) is the foundation of all magic. This mysterious energy



permeates the entire world of Aventuria. It can be gathered by spellcasters as if being stored in some kind of vessel. Astral Energy is the "fuel" for casting spells and is described in the chapter on Magic (beginning on page 130). If a character's Astral Energy reaches 0, she can no longer cast spells but is unhindered in all other respects.

Heroes who are priests of one of the Aventurian deities have a store of **Karmic Energy** (KE; measured in **Karmic Points**, KP). This represents a divine, intangible aura which can be draw upon to work miracles, representing the will of the gods on Ethra. For reasons of space, the rules governing priests are addressed in the rules set *Gods and Demons*, to be released at a later date. .

Regeneration

When a hero loses points (whether Vitality Points from fighting, Endurance Points from exertion, or Astral Points from spellcasting), these points are not lost forever. Instead, they regenerate while a hero rests.

Vitality and Astral Energy can be regained by resting for about six hours (the equivalent of a good night's sleep). The next morning, you roll 1d6 for Vitality and 1d6 for Astral Energy; the result is the number of VP or ASP your hero has regained. A successful CN Test (for Vitality) or IN Test (for Astral Energy) increases each of these scores by 1 point.

Endurance regenerates at a much faster rate: 3d6 points per Game Turn (one Game Turn equals five minutes) of rest. A successful CN Test adds an additional 3 points. More about regeneration, healing of wounds, and loss of fatigue is found on page 123.

Time and Space

To keep track of time in the game, we use two time units. In combat (or in other fast-action aspects of the game) we use the **Combat Round** (about three seconds in length, further subdivided into **Actions**). Other activities are measured using **Game Turns** (representing 5 minutes). Sometimes, earthly time units such as seconds, minutes, or hours (hours are counted even in Aventuria) are used when it makes the most sense.

Distances in Aventuria are measured in **Paces** and **Middenmiles;** one pace is equal to one earthly meter, while a Middenmile equals one kilometer.

> Combat Round=approximately 3 seconds
> Game Turn=5 minutes
> Pace=1 meter or yard
> Middenmile=1 kilometer or 6/10ths of a mile

Speed

A creature's **Speed** (**SD**) measures how fast it can travel. Speed is generally measured in paces per second; thus, SD 7 represents a speed of 7 paces (meters) per second—about the speed of a well-trained short-distance runner. Speed represents short-term movement, which we refer to as *tactical* movement. *Strategic* movement, describing travel over longer distances, is generally given in Middenmiles (kilometers) per day's journey. A group of adventurers bearing medium loads travels at a speed of about 30 Middenmiles per day.

More information about tactical movement, speed, and strategic movement begins on page 118.

A Hero Is Born

Back in the tavern, the ale has loosened the tongues of the travelers around the Thorwalian's table. Trewman can't stop raving about his home city of Gareth—its many splendid temples, huge marketplaces where almost anything can be purchased, and his own teacher, Alrik, who taught him history and ancient languages.

"If it is really that beautiful, Trewman, then why have you left the city of your fathers?" Mirhiban's voice, with her musical Tulamidyan accent, chimes above the crowd.

The explorer scratches his short mustache thoughtfully. "I believe because I'd had enough of simply being Alrik's aide. And because I could no longer stand poking around in old, dusty libraries. And then, in a tavern, I met Hesindiane … and, you guessed it, in Rahja's name, we fell in love."

His gaze wanders off, to an unseen, distant place. Abruptly, he shakes his head. "Hesindiane had already seen much of the Ethra. She had fought in the Battle of a Thousand Ogres, and had helped put a stop to Galotta's despicable deeds. She had even ventured forth along with the Sword of Swords, the highest priest of the church of Rondra, to vanquish a dark magician and his lackeys. Just imagine! She … ah, well.

"To cut a long story short … when I asked her to remain in Gareth and seal Travia's bond with me, she simply laughed. She said something like, 'Dear Trewman, there are so many things on the Ethra more interesting than playing housewife. I can still marry when the sun has come around for the fiftieth time for me. In two days I'm leaving Gareth, for I have hired on with an expedition into the eternal ice of Aventuria's farthest north.'"

"Well then, why didn't you accompany her, if you really loved her that much?" Frenja asks, wiping froth from her mouth.

"Ah, well … she didn't even ask me, you know? Besides, what do I know of the world? The real one, I mean, the one out there! Of course I've read much, but I've never even learned how to start a fire in the wilderness. I may have read something about the northern lands in the Aventurian Herald once, but that's about it. What good would I have been on such an expedition?"

"What good? Don't ye know? In Swafnir's name, you're some kind of explorer, aren't you? What better life would there be for an explorer than to go exploring?"

Trewman nods. "In a sense, you're right. I couldn't get the thought of traveling the Ethra and having adventures out of my head. Then one day, I just packed my things and took the next coach. And should I ever see Hesindiane again, I swear I'll have as much to tell her as she could tell me!"

"Well, womenfolk do keep their own counsel. You have to fight for them first," Angrax agrees in a rumbling voice.

"You're also out to impress some woman, dwarfie? Might as well start with me, then. Next round's on you!" Frenja says loudly, giving the dwarf an encouraging nudge.

"Balderdash!" Angrax cuts her short. "Women are scarce among my people, so they can afford to be choosy! If I wanted a dwarf woman, I would have to slay a dragon, at least! I'm a mercenary, not a dragonslayer. I go where I'm paid well."

"I'm a mercenary, not a dragonslayer. I go where I'm paid well."

"One moment, Angrax," Rondrian interrupts him in mild reproach. "Don't you mean to say, 'Where you are well paid and can be certain you're fighting the good fight, honoring the Lady Rondra in battle?"

"A mercenary's good fight is the fight that fills his pouch with ducats," the dwarf replies indifferently. Rondrian's brow wrinkles in anger. Mirhiban puts a hand on his shoulder, however, calming him before turning to Angrax.

"Well, I fully sympathize with you not helping that poor family rescue their daughter from the slave trader that abducted her," she tells the dwarf earnestly, giving the others a conspiratorial wink while the dwarf stares sullenly down his ale mug.

Suddenly, Angrax raises his head and lets his fist fall on the table, hard. "By my father's beard! How dare you insult me like this! Of course I would …." He sees the laughing faces of his companions and stops, shaking his head. "Damn womenfolk," he grumbles. Still, for the first time this night a small smile curves his lips, if only briefly.

Character Generation

We recommend playing your first adventure using one of the sample heroes provided in the Archetypes chapter. You may even come to like them and wish to continue playing them. More likely, though, you'll want to create your own hero from scratch sooner or later, tailoring a character exactly to your wishes.

This chapter will tell you how to create an Aventurian hero. While this may look long and complex at first glance, following our two sample heroes through the creation process will make the experience much easier for you, enabling you to create your own hero without complication.

Aventurian heroes don't fall from trees. They have parents, grow up in a certain culture, have preferences and secrets, and of course, they have had experiences before taking on the adventuring life. No Aventurian is like any other, and yet they all follow the same set of basic rules and assumptions governing their creation.

Generation Points

To ensure that all heroes of Aventuria are roughly on the same power level, they all start out with 110 **Generation Points (GP)**. These GP may be spent for any number of things: attributes, professions, and special advantages. Buying disadvantages or restrictions will increase the number of Generation Points at your disposal.



Generation Points let you create a hero to your very own specifications. How you use them and where you put your priorities are entirely up to you.

Imagine character creation as a bank account containing 110 GP. You may withdraw money from that account to purchase certain things; if necessary, you may temporarily overdraw your account. All that matters is that in the end, when hero creation is finished, your GP balance must be exactly zero.

Step 1: What Do I Want?

First, you have to decide which type of hero you want to play. Even a brief look at the archetypes will show you that there is tremendous variety, each having its own strengths and weaknesses. One archetype is a powerful fighter, another is learned and well educated, the next has been trained to survive in the wilderness, and still another makes his living by cheating at dice or breaking into the houses of his fellow citizens. Highly specialized heroes are possible, as well as generalists combining little bits of knowledge from a great variety of fields. Looking at the various cultures and professions will help you get acquainted with the basics. Maybe you want to play a nonhuman hero such as an elf or a dwarf. While this may limit your choice of professions, it provides you with the chance to play a really different persona.

We have included a preliminary listing of cultures and professions here, with the main information following in the next chapter. For now, you should keep one thing in mind: Not every profession is suitable for every culture. An Anvil Dwarf juggler doesn't make a lot of sense; neither does a Novadi ranger.



Lisa likes the "cloak and dagger" genre as exemplified by the adventures of the Three Musketeers very much. She would prefer to play a character taken from the pages of one of these stories. She wants to earn her keep by cheating others, as some kind of noble thief.



Anne, on the other hand, has something entirely different in mind. She wants to play a fiery-eyed, exotic female, a woman like Scheherazade from the Tales of the Arabian Nights—a proud woman with black hair falling to her waist and smoldering eyes, mysterious and intelligent.

Step 2: Pointy-Ears or Human—Species and Race

It's time to choose a race from among those living on Aventuria. Race not only influences your hero's appearance (such as ear type—pointed or round—and also height, hair color, and other features) but also dictates certain limits in Attributes and special abilities. For instance, all elves have the ability to weave magic, while Thorwalians are larger and stronger than other heroes.

After you have chosen a race (as presented in the short descriptions on page 23 as well as the detailed treatments beginning on page 38), note its starting values.

Note: The races mentioned here are just a small sample of the races and species found across Aventuria. The world description on page 144 hints at a large number of other peoples and cultures; these will be introduced in the follow-up rules companion, *Swords and Heroes*.

Races and Cultures

MIDDENREALMIAN (p. 38): Middenrealmians roughly resemble humans of the European Late Middle Ages. They have spawned three different cultures: **Garetians** (Middle Europe in the Late Middle Ages, p. 41), **Horasians** (Late Renaissance Italy/Early Baroque France, p. 43), and **Fountlandians** (Late Medieval Russia, p. 44).

> Unusual combinations of culture and profession are possible only at the game master's discretion.

TULAMIDES (p. 38): If you want to picture the Tulamides, think Medieval Near East. The options range from lively cities akin to the Baghdad of 1001 Nights, complete with the farmers of the surrounding river valleys (**Mhanadistan**, p. 46), to caravan folk and proud desert warriors (**Novadis**, p. 47).

THORWALIANS (p. 39 and 45): The harsh coasts of the north harbor powerful giants who like nothing better than sailing the seas on their fast dragon ships, listening to the endless sagas of their skalds at the hearth fire, and drinking all night long. If you think these Thorwalians might resemble real-world Vikings—well, you're right.

ELVES (p. 40): Deep within the dense forests and the uncharted steppes of northern and mid-Aventuria, an ancient people resides. They watch men and their doings with curious and somewhat amused eyes, for elves are totally different in their lifestyle. Now and then, however, a young elf might join a group of human adventurers to learn about human ways. All elves are born with magical powers. Elves, being raised in the wilderness, do not take on the human professions, but instead follow their own ways of educating and training their people (**Lea Elf**, p. 49).

DWARFS (p. 40): Dwarfs are another of the ancient peoples of Aventuria. They are small but hardy, renowned for being grumpy and stubborn, but equally famous for their craftsmanship. Most of them dwell in underground



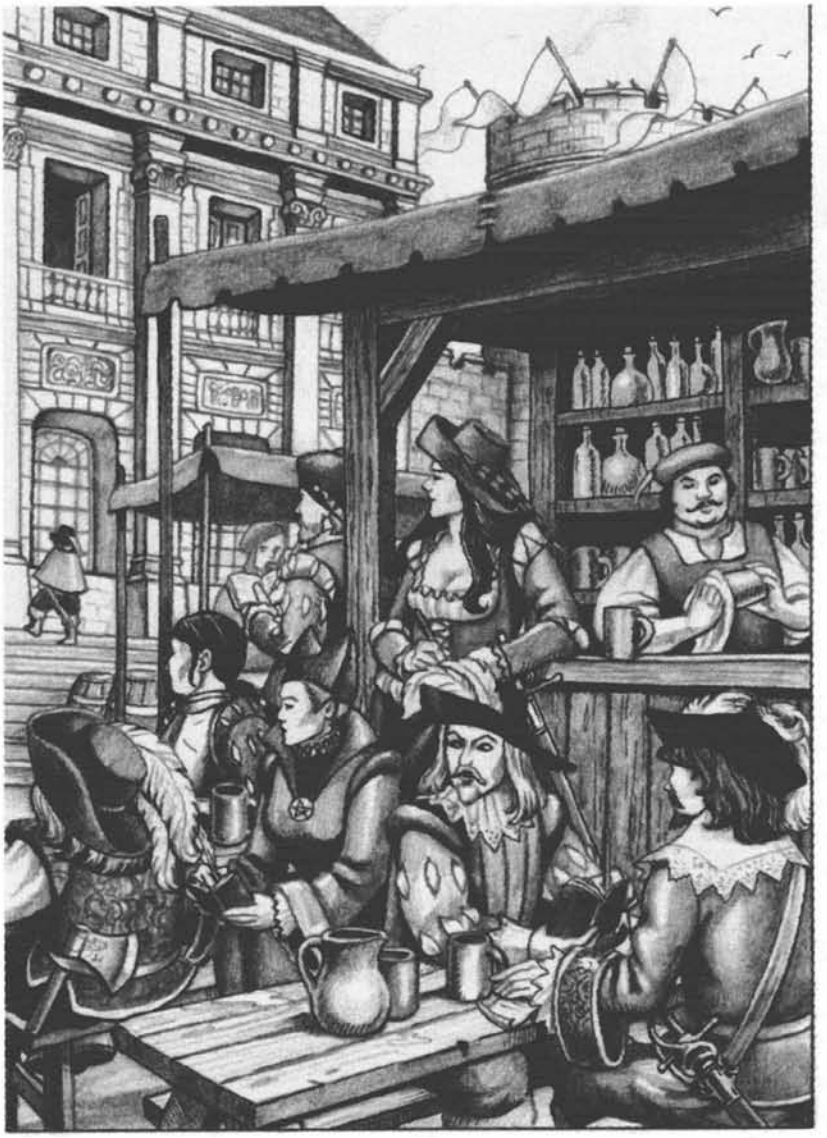
cities, the mighty halls of which are filled with many beautiful stone sculptures. Every so often, a dwarf will venture forth from these halls to mingle with the "big ones" and to make his living as a craftsman in one of the human cities. Sometimes, a young apprentice may even set out as an adventurer to find fabled treasures, or to fight the dwarfs' natural enemies: the dragons (**Anvil Dwarf**, p. 49).

Professions

> **Professions** represent a hero's past education and training. They can result from an apprenticeship or term of study, but a hero may have learned everything she knows on her own, the hard way.

Professions can be roughly divided into four groups: fighters, outdoors specialists, shady ones (also known as "characters who know their way around society"), and scholars. Overlaps will occur between these four broad groups, but in general, the distinction holds fairly well.

Elves have never really grasped the concept of professions. Still, you may find a few specialists among these people. For instance, there's the ranger, charged with hunting and organizing clan defense (p. 57), and the legend singer—elves who learn the clan's lore and history in order to preserve them for future generations (p. 57).



Fighters

The warrior is the most important type of fighter. Warriors must study at a Warriors' Academy for a certain length of time (p. 57). The mercenary enjoys a slightly worse reputation; this doesn't make him a bad fighter, though. While the warrior is mostly interested in honor, the mercenary cares most for money: He fights for whomever pays best (p. 53). The pirate is an entirely different type of fighter, making the sea his home. He is not interested in honor or glory, relying on raiding for loot (p. 55).

Outdoors Specialists

When you need someone who can survive in the wilderness or can catch that rare animal or locate an obscure plant for you, the hunter is the person you're looking for (p. 52). If you want to find a way through uncharted territory or want to track the movements of an enemy army, however, it's the scout you need (p. 56). Finally there's the messenger, at home equally in the wilderness and in the courts of the wealthy and powerful, who tries to get important messages to their destinations (p. 54).

Shady Ones

You can easily recognize the mountebank by her colorful clothing and the familiar balls and clubs she juggles. While people like to be amazed by this artistry, they also fear mountebanks due to their reputation for dishonesty (p. 54). The rogue faces a similar problem, envied by most for her free-wheeling way of life, but always suspected of making her living by cheating others out of their hard-earned cash through gambling, pick-pocketing, or breaking hearts (p. 56). The burglar, on the other hand, usually goes unnoticed by the public—as it should be, for otherwise she would quickly be thrown into the next dungeon (p. 51).

Scholars

The magician has had a long, strenuous, and often boring education, but he now proudly walks among the few able to employ the powerful art of magic (p. 52). The explorer, on the other hand, roams the world in search of knowledge. He is often sponsored by a university, a temple, or a magicians' guild, venturing into ancient ruins and places undisturbed by mortals for millennia (p. 51).

The physician has not had such an arduous education, but is nonetheless regarded as a true scholar by the common people. He knows how to treat the small pains of the farmers as well as the most mysterious illnesses plaguing the gentry, but he is not above earning his keep as a field surgeon or a dentist (p. 55). You'll mostly find him wandering from village to village, since he won't be able to earn much money in the larger cities with their established healers and hospitals.

Sample Characters



Lisa's noble scoundrel will definitely be human (a Middenrealmian, to be precise) because this suits her best. She grabs some paper and jots down the modifications appropriate for a hero from the Middenrealm (see p. 38): VP +10, EP +10, and RM –4. She rolls for body height on 2d20, resulting in 1.73 paces. Her hero weighs in at 73 greatpounds. She has free choice as to hair and eye color and settles on dark brown hair and green eyes.



Anne, however, opts for the Tulamide race. This culture makes it harder for women to get ahead in the world, but this intrigues her. She wants other Tulamides to believe her hero to be weak and in constant need of protection, while in reality

she is the one pulling all the strings. She writes down her respective modifications (see p. 38): VP +10, EP +10, RM –4, appraise +1, calculate +1, and dance +1. As for height, Anne rolls a 1 and a 6. This means her hero will be rather short (at 1.62 paces) and weigh 57 greatpounds. She opts for black hair and dark brown eyes.

Step 3: What Really Makes the Difference—Cultures

Once you've chosen a race, **culture** comes into play as the second decisive factor in forming a hero. Race determines a hero's biological features. The surroundings she grew up in (her people's customs and morals, skills common to the culture, the pastimes available), however, directly dictate what she has learned, regardless of her ultimate standing as a warrior or magician, prince or pauper. A culture's natural environment is important, as well as the culture's status as urban, rural, or nomadic; the importance of physical exercise; attitudes toward musical talents or learning; whether the culture qualifies as conservative or progressive compared to those around it; and many other factors.

Culture reflects directly on a hero's Talent values; it also regulates which professions are available to a hero. Of course, even a Thorwalian might make a living by being a burglar. This would be a lot harder in Thorwalian society (with their longhouses packed with entire families and almost never empty) than it would be in a large Horasian city, known for wealthy quarters full of isolated villas. A Thorwalian burglar would be a rather exotic hero, needing special permission from the Highlord. (We'd advise that such heroes remain disallowed, at least for the time being. The list of possible professions was devised in order to make the world more believable.)

Some cultures cost Generation Points, while others don't. This table lists respective costs. Most races have produced more than one culture; in these rules, we mention only the most important ones. You will find more information about these cultures, sorted by race, on page 38. Once you have chosen a culture, note the modifications of starting values that apply to the culture and subtract GP if necessary.



Lisa opts for the Horasian Empire as her hero's culture. This costs her 5 GP, reducing her total to 105 GP. She notes the following modifications that apply to heroes from the Empire (see p. 43): brawling +1, crossbows +1, daggers +1, fencing weapons +1, infantry weapons +1; dance +1, swim +1; etiquette +2, fast talk +1, human nature +2, seduce +1, streetwise +2; calculate +2, engineering +1, history +1, law +1, legend lore +2, religious lore +1; mother tongue Garethi (CL –2), tongues (Tulamidya or Rogolan) +5, read/write (Kuslik Script) +2, farming +1.

The tongues talent requires a choice between two language: that of the Tulamides or that of the dwarfs. She opts for the former so she will be able to address Anne's Tulamidyan hero in her native tongue, leaving Rogolan off her list.



Among the Tulamides, Anne is free to choose from the desert-dwelling Novadis and the city-dwelling Mhanadistani. She decides on Mhanadistani, for she imagines her hero as having had many experiences before setting out, more appropriate for a city person than a desert dweller.

Anne's choice does not cost her any Generation Points (leaving her with 110 GP). Anne jots down the following on a piece of scrap paper (see p. 38): brawling +1, daggers +1, sabers +1, wrestling +1; etiquette +1, human nature +1, seduce +1, streetwise +1; board games +1, legend lore +3, religious lore +1; mother tongue Tulamidya (CL –2), second language Garethi (CL –4); Farming +1.

Races and Cultures	Generation Point Cost	Page Number
Middenrealmian		p. 38
Garetia	0 GP	p. 41
Horasian Empire	5 GP	p. 43
Fountland	0 GP	p. 44
Tulamide		p. 38
Mhanadistan	0 GP	p. 46
Novadi	5 GP	p. 47
Thorwalian		p. 39
Thorwal	10 GP	p. 45
Elf		p. 40
Lea Elf	25 GP	p. 49
Dwarf		p. 40
Anvil Dwarf	20 GP	p. 49



Step 4: What I Was, and What I Have Become—Professions

As we have mentioned, a hero's life does not begin when she takes up adventuring. She was raised somewhere, has parents and friends and has had many life experiences. Maybe she studied at some kind of school (such as a magicians' or warriors' academy), or maybe she learned the craft of mountebank from her parents while traveling with them. Maybe she spent her youth in the wild forests of Aventuria, where she learned all a hunter or scout needs to know.

You could describe a profession as a hero's job, or perhaps some kind of archetypical occupation. Each profession is associated with certain Talents. Sometimes, the special education required for a profession might result in modifications to game statistics.

Below is a listing of the 14 professions available in these core rules. Not all professions are suited to all cultures. More details are provided in the description of the profession in question. As with cultures, some professions will cost Generation Points, meaning that you must subtract a number of GP from your account when you choose that profession. Jot down all the modifications associated with your chosen profession.

All professions have certain requirements regarding Attributes and Social Standing. These minimum requirements will be important when you determine your hero's Attributes in the next step.

Professions

	GP Cost	Requirements	Page Number
Burglar	0 GP	DE 13, CO 12, AG 12, SO 1–7	p. 51
Explorer	10 GP	CL 12, IN 12, COU 11, SO 7–12	p. 51
Hunter	10 GP	IN 12, AG 12, CN 11, SO 1–7	p. 52
Magician	20 GP	CL 13, CH 12, CO 11, SO 7–12	p. 52
Mercenary	10 GP	CN 13, CO 12, AG 12, ST 11, SO 1–7	p. 53
Messenger	0 GP	CO 12, AG 11, SO 5–8	p. 54
Mountebank	0 GP	CO 11, CH 12, AG or DE 13, SO 1–7	p. 54
Physician	0 GP	DE 13, IN 12, CH 11, SO 1–7	p. 55
Pirate	5 GP	CO 13, AG 13, ST 11, SO 1–7	p. 55
Rogue	5 GP	IN 12, CH 12, DE 12, SO 1–5	p. 56
Scout	10 GP	CO 12, IN 12, CN 12, SO 1–7	p. 56
Warrior	20 GP	CN 13, CO 12, AG 12, ST 12, SO 7–12	p. 57
Legend Singer*	0 GP	IN 13, CH 13, SO 1–10	p. 57
Ranger*	0 GP	AG 13, CN 12, SO 1–10	p. 57

* Legend singer and ranger are available only to Lea Elves.



Studying the professions available for humans from the Horasian Empire, two choices catch Lisa's eye: burglar and rogue. After some thinking, she settles on burglar: a rather ordinary woman by day, but a robber of the rich by night. With no GP cost for this profession, Lisa still has 105 points in her account. She looks at page 51 and writes down the burglar's starting values:

Requirements: CO 12, AG 12, DE 13, SO maximum 7

Starting Values: Daggers +3, throwing knives +1, wrestling +1; acrobatics +2, athletics +2, body control +5, climb +6, hide +5, perception +3, pick pockets +2, sneak +5, willpower +2; human nature +1, masquerade +1, streetwise +4; bind/escape +1, orientation +2, track +1; appraise +4, calculate +2, engineering +1; open locks +7, paint/draw +2



Anne fancies magician (or rather, magicienne), mountebank, and rogue. She thinks she would be most interested in playing a magicienne, a learned and intelligent woman whose enemies will flee in terror at the snap of her fingers. She gets together with her Highlord to invent a background story for her hero: Anne's magicienne is the first woman in three generations to be accepted into the Academy, due to her high degree of talent (and bribes paid by her father). This choice means that Anne must invest 20 GP, reducing her total to 90. Looking at page 52, Anne must jot many notes on her scratch paper:

Requirements: CO 11, CL 13, CH 12, SO at least 7

Stating Values: RM +2; ASP +6; Academic Training (Magicians' Academy), Spellcaster; staves +2; perception +2, willpower +2; etiquette +3, human nature +1, persuade +2; animal lore +1, arcane lore +7, board games +1, calculate +6, engineering +1, geography +2, heraldry +1, history +3, language lore +1, law +2, legend lore +2, plant lore +3, religious lore +2, starcraft +3; read/write (mother tongue script) +6, read/write (two from the following list: Old Tulamidyan, Glyphs of Unau, Kuslik Script, Tulamidya, Zhayad) +4 each, tongues (mother tongue) +2, tongues (Tulamidya or Garethi [not the mother tongue]) +4, tongues (Bosparano) +6, tongues (Proto-Tulamidya) +4; alchemy +4, paint/draw +2.

Her hero's mother tongue is Tulamidya. Only Garethi is left for the second slot. As for read/write, Anne learns the Tulamidya alphabet (see p. 38). For her other two scripts, she opts for Kuslik Script (being the most important writing system of the rest of Aventuria) and the Glyphs of Unau (being the writing system used by the Novadis).

Step 5: A Hero Takes Shape—Attributes

Once you know what you want to play, it's time to think about Attributes. Some of these will be dictated by your chosen profession. These are *minimum* values. You may increase them as appropriate for your hero. For your convenience, we provide a short recap of the eight Attributes (see page 14 for more information).

Some races and cultures have built-in Attribute modifications. Being a Thorwalian automatically increases your hero's Strength by 1 without a GP cost; for dwarfs, the ST increase is +2. When checking for minimum requirements, you are allowed to figure in these modifications to meet your requirements, i.e., a Thorwalian pays one point less for ST to qualify as a mercenary, and dwarfs pay two points less.

Note that Social Standing counts as an Attribute for purposes of buying points and conforms to the same standards.

Courage (CO): Strength of nerve in critical situations, daring and prowess, willpower
Cleverness (CL): Intelligence and logical thinking, accumulated knowledge, memory capacity
Intuition (IN): Quick assessment of people and situations, creative interpretation of clues
Charisma (CH): Personal magnetism, eloquence and leadership, also magical aura
Dexterity (DE): Sleight of hand, hand-eye coordination
Agility (AG): Body coordination, litheness of movement

Constitution (CN): Physical toughness, includes resistance to fatigue, poison, or illness
Strength (ST): Muscle power and the ability to use it properly
Social Standing (SO) is treated like an Attribute and indicates status in society, position in the hierarchy of power, and reputation.

Let's work step by step. Every hero starts with 110 GP. After choosing culture and profession, you deduct the costs for these two items, if any. In theory, you still have between 110 and 80 GP at your disposal. You can now spend these on the eight Attributes plus Social Standing in any way you like, as long as all Attribute Values fall between 8 and 14, and Social Standing falls between 1 and 12. You may not spend more than 100 points on your eight Attributes. After you have spent your points, figure in racial and cultural modifications. The final result determines whether you meet the minimum requirements for your chosen profession. Results may fall below 8 or rise above 14 due to racial or cultural modifications.

You do not have to spend all your GP at this stage; you may want to keep a few to buy Advantages (see the next step) without having to take Disadvantages. On the other hand, at this point you may "overdraw" your GP account, balancing it by taking Disadvantages in the next step. Once you have completed step 6, your GP balance must be exactly zero.



Lisa still has 105 GP. Her burglar's minimum requirements are CO 12, AG 12, and DE 13, with SO no greater than 7. Lisa would like to have AG 13 and DE 14 to be a highly skilled burglar. She wants to be able to adapt quickly to unexpected situations, and opts for IN of 12. To have CO 12, IN 12, AG 13, and DE 14, she spends (12 + 12 + 13 + 14) 51 GP, leaving her with 54 in her account.

Lisa has already decided on a modus operandi for her thief: She wants to sneak into the social events of the rich in order to case potential victims. This requires some Social Standing, so she opts for the maximum value available to a burglar (7), reducing her account to 47 points. Further, she opts for average CL and CN (11 each), takes slightly below average CH of 10 (to be somewhat unobtrusive), and slightly above average ST of 12. This spends (11 + 11 + 10 + 12 =) 44 GP, leaving her with a meager 3 points. Lisa decides to keep these in her account, hoping for some nice Advantage to come along.



Given the rather expensive profession of magicienne, Anne has only 90 GP left. Her requirements are CO 11, CL 13, and CH 12, with a minimum SO of 7. These Attribute values merely scratch the surface of the character Anne wants to play. She raises CL and CH to the maximums of 14 each. Buying CO 11, CL 14, and CH 14 (11 + 14 + 14 = 39) leaves her with 51 GP. Anne takes low values in CN and ST because she hopes to bypass most strenuous activity with the use of magic, choosing CN 9 and ST 8. Intuition, on the other hand, is quite important for magiciennes, so she spends 12 for IN. Anne decides to be on the safe side with DE and AG (11 each). This results in a total of (9 + 8 + 12 + 11 + 11 =) 51 points, bringing her GP balance to 0. Anne notices that she hasn't spent even a single point on Social Standing (she needs SO 7). What's more, she would like her Tulamide to be from a noble family, so merrily opts for SO 12. She has overdrawn her account by 12 points, and must compensate by taking Disadvantages during the next step.

Step 6: Far from the Crowd—Advantages and Disadvantages

You may want to breathe even more life into your hero by adding Advantages and Disadvantages. These can provide your hero with an interesting and colorful personality. Some races and cultures have Advantages and/or Disadvantages attached; your hero receives these automatically. The cost for these is already figured into the cost of the respective race or culture, so you don't have to concern yourself with such numbers.

The table on page 29 gives a complete listing of all Advantages and Disadvantages. Detailed descriptions begin on page 58. Note, however, that you may choose only from those Advantages and Disadvantages listed. Other choices are listed in the later descriptions (marked with asterisks) and are tied directly to races, cultures, or professions.

Most Advantages and Disadvantages are all-or-nothing propositions, meaning your hero either has such a trait or she doesn't (you cannot be "a little bit one-eyed"). Others, such as Greed or Violent Temper, are assigned numerical values indicating the strength of the trait in question. This value will sometimes be used for Tests (much in the way that Attribute Tests are rolled). Advantages are described in detail on pages 59-62, while Disadvantages are found on pages 62–65.

Advantages give your hero an edge during play, thus you spend Generation Points to acquire them. **Disadvantages** put certain limitations on your hero, in turn giving you additional Generation Points to spend. The maximum number of Generation Points gained by taking Disadvantages is 50; of these, no more than 30 may result from Negative Attributes (a subset of Disadvantages; see p. 64).

You might have a few GP left over from step 5, so in this step, you may use those points to buy Advantages. You also may start juggling points to get a balanced mix of Advantages and Disadvantages. Once you are finished with these calculations, your GP balance must be exactly zero. Should you choose not to spend some of your points, they become void right after you have finished step 6. You may not end step 6 with an overdrawn account.



Lisa reads through the Advantages and Disadvantages and picks those she believes might fit her burglar: Balance , Connections (to gain invitations to social functions), Contortionist (to reach places others would not be able to enter), Danger Sense, Luck, and Social Chameleon (to better blend into social events).

For Disadvantages, Lisa considers Curiosity (ties in with Lisa's concept of a "noble thief"), Fear of Open Spaces, and Greed.

After weighing her options, Lisa chooses Connections and Social Chameleon—in fact, Social Chameleon gives her a "discount" on Connections (see p. 62). She establishes that her burglar knows someone able to provide her with invitations—the majordomo of a highly respected family. The Highlord institutes a Social Standing of 12 for this person. Since Lisa has chosen the Social Chameleon Advantage, she must pay 9 GP instead of 12 GP for the connection. What's more, the Connections Advantage

A Word of Advice

Don't overload your hero with Advantages and Disadvantages. Even if you stay well within the limit of 50 GP, you might quickly end up with an exaggerated, caricature-like hero. Always take common sense into account when deciding which Advantages and Disadvantages really fit your hero.

Also, don't forget that Disadvantages should make for more interesting role-playing; they are not intended to be an easy source for more Generation Points! Once your hero has acquired Disadvantages, they may not be discarded easily. While playing a hero with fear of heights, bad eyesight, and an addiction to intoxicating herbs might be fun in the beginning, it will become annoying when your character has acquired fame and fortune but still can't look over the balcony of the king's palace to squint at the cheering crowds. In the event of disputes and doubts, the Highlord's word is always final.

means more than just a mere acquaintance, so Lisa's Highlord rules that the majordomo is actually the character's aunt, who does whatever she can to help in exchange for a percentage of the loot.

The Social Chameleon Advantage costs Lisa 7 GP, forcing her to deduct 16 points and giving her an overdraft of 13. She counteracts the deficit by taking the Disadvantages of Curiosity (8 pts.)and Greed (5 pts.).



Anne's method of selecting Advantages and Disadvantages is different, as she begins step 6 with an overdraft of 12 GP. She doesn't opt for any Advantages (she already has Spellcaster and Academic Training for free from her profession) but goes directly to the list of Disadvantages. She takes Fear of Rodents, Inaptitude with Artisan Talents, Prejudice, and Vanity into close consideration.

No set amount is in place for Fear of Rodents, but her Highlord deems this fear to be about as crippling as Claustrophobia or Fear of Open Spaces (i.e., –1.5 GP per point taken). Thus, for Fear of Rodents 2, Anne gets a credit of 3 GP. Inaptitude with Artisan Talents greatly inconveniences the magicienne, but then, who needs craft skills when you can do magic? As for Prejudice, she decides to direct it against elves: being a Tulamide, she has never even seen an elf, but her studies have informed her that this strange race of pointy-eared creatures works magic in a truly haphazard, even dangerous fashion. Anne's hero will have problems with elves for the rest of her life, even when (and if) she gets to know elves better.

Anne finally makes her decisions: she takes Fear of Rodents with a value of 6 (9 GP) and Prejudice (elves) with a value of 8 (4 GP). Her Inaptitude grants 10 GP, giving her 23 GPs, a credit of 11 GP after she has negated her overdraft. Now she can look at possible Advantages after all!

Anne decides on Astral Power and Good-Looking. She invests 4 GP into 2 additional ASPs, while 5 more turn her hero into a seductive beauty. She has 2 GP left, which she decides to pump into her Attributes. She increases CN to 10 and CO to 12. Now her GP balance is 0.

The text on Academic Training (Magicians' Academy) mentions an SO increase of 1 due to the social prestige of the Academy's seal. This point is now applied to the magicienne's SO, raising it from 12 to 13. This is higher than a starting hero's maximum SO, but the effects of Advantages count as extenuating circumstances, enabling a hero to transcend these limits.

Step 7: What Am I Good At, and What Should I Probably Not Do? Talent Values

So far, you have created the framework for your hero, which is the beginning of her personality. Now it's time to flesh her out. If you have decided to play a spell-casting hero (a magician or an elf), you should familiarize yourself with step 7a on page 31 before determining your Talent Values.

> No Talent can be advanced more than +3 beyond the value of the highest Attribute used in the corresponding Test.

This means that you must tally all information regarding Talents that you have acquired from choosing a race, a culture, and a profession. The number following each Talent listing is the respective Talent's TP (Talent Prowess). If any Talent appears more than once (say, in both the culture and the profession listings), you add the values together.

In addition, every hero has access to Basic Talents (see page 75); unless mentioned otherwise, these have a starting value of +0. The Basic Talents are body control, brawling, calculate, carouse, climb, Axes & Maces, cook, daggers, dance, hide, human nature, leathercraft, legend lore, orientation, paint/draw, persuade, religious lore, sabers, sing, sneak, survival, swim, tailor, throwing knives, tongues (mother tongue), track, treat wounds, willpower, woodcraft.

You should also include Gifts such as Dwarfnose or Danger Sense. These will be treated exactly like Talents, with a starting value of +3; they are Advancement Category E. (Gifts are characteristics that a hero is born with and are explained later. Advancement of talents is explained on page 124.)

Gifts are explained in the Advantages chapter. All Gifts are also Advantages. Advantages that are Gifts are marked accordingly. In the Core Rules, the only gifts listed are Dwarfnose and Danger Sense.

Advantages

Advantages	Cost GP
Aptitude for [Talent of Choice]	as per Talent
Aptitude for [Talent Group of Choice]	as per Talent Group
Astral Power	2 GP/ASP
Astral Regeneration	10 GP
Balance	10 GP
Bardic Voice	10 GP
Connections	SO of connection
Contortionist	25 GP
Danger Sense	15 GP
Direction Sense	3 GP
Dwarfnose	12 GP
Enduring	1 GP/EP
Equipment Advantage	1 GP/10 ducats
Good-Looking	5 GP
Good Memory	7/12 GP
Hard to Enspell	7 GP
High Resistance to Magic	3 GP per addl. point of RM
Immunity to Poison	10 GP
Inner Clock	3 GP
Language Instinct	10 GP
Left-Handed	5 GP
Luck	20 GP
Lucky Gambler	7 GP
Mental Compass	7 GP
Noble Birth	7 GP
Outstanding Attribute	8 GP+
Rapid Healing	10 GP
Resistance to Disease	7 GP
Resistance to Poison	7 GP
Social Chameleon	7 GP
Special Item	7 GP
Toughness	10 GP
Vigor	3 GP / VP

Disadvantages

Disadvantages	Cost GP
Arrogance	–1 GP each
Astral Block	–10 GP
Bad Hearing	–5 GP
Claustrophobia	–1.5 GP each
Code of Conduct	–10 GP
Color-Blind	–5 GP
Curiosity	–1 GP each
Fear of (Insects, Spiders, Reptiles…)	variable
Fear of Open Spaces	1.5 GP each
Fear of the Dark	–2 GP each
Fear of the Dead	–1 GP each
Fear of the Sea	–1 GP each
Greed	–1 GP each
Inaptitude for [Talent of Choice]	variable
Inaptitude for [Talent Group of Choice]	variable
Lame	–10 GP
Low Attribute	–10 GP
Low Resistance to Magic	–3 GP per point
Negative Attribute	variable
Night-Blind	–10 GP
Obligations	–12 GP
One-Eyed	–5 GP
Pathological Cleanliness	–1 GP each
Prejudice	–0.5 GP each
Prone to Illness	–7 GP each
Rage	–15 GP
Slow Regeneration	–10 GP
Superstition	–1 GP each
Ugly	–15 GP
Unattractive	–5 GP
Vanity	–1 GP each
Vengefulness	–1 GP each
Vertigo	–1.5 GP each
Violent Temper	–1.5 GP each

Caution: In some places when alternatives are given, a Talent may seem to be listed outside its group. For instance, in the listing of the hunter's Physical Talents, you'll see an entry listing "athletics or ride or boats +2." This does not mean that the boats Talent has switched to the Physical Talents group; it is placed here to illustrate the choices open to you. If you take the boats Talent as a result, you still enter the Talent into one of the boxes reserved for Artisan Talents on the character sheet.



Lisa now makes a list of all Talents appearing in the entries for "Middenrealmian" (p. 38), "Horasian Empire" (p. 43), and "burglar" (p. 52), as well as all the Basic Talents she has not yet recorded. The values of duplicate Talents stack: for instance, Lisa gets daggers +1 from her culture and another +3 from her profession, for a total of +4. Wherever she is presented with options, she picks one: she already chose the language of the Tulamides in lieu of the language of the dwarfs. As for her mother tongue, she replaces "CL –2" with 9, as her burglar's Cleverness is 11. For all Basic Talents not mentioned in her three listings, she adds "+0."

Thus, she gets:

Combat: Brawling +1, crossbow +1, Axes & Maces +0, daggers +4, fencing weapons +1, infantry weapons +1, sabers +0, throwing knives +1, wrestling +1

Physical: Acrobatics +2, athletics +2, body control +5, carouse +0, climb +6, dance +1, hide +5, perception +3, pick pockets +2, sing +0, sneak +5, swim +1, willpower +2

Social: Etiquette +2, fast talk +1, human nature +3, masquerade +1, seduce +1, streetwise +6

Nature: Bind/escape +1, orientation +1, survival +0, track +1

Lore: Appraise +4, calculate +4, engineering +2, history +1, law +1, legend lore +2, religious lore +1

Tongues and Scripts: Read/write (Kuslik Script) +2, tongues (mother tongue Garethi) +9, tongues (Tulamidya) +5

Artisan: Cook +0, farming +1, leathercraft +0, paint/draw +2, pick locks +7, tailor +0, treat wounds +0, woodcraft +0

Following the same procedure, Anne arrives at the following:

Combat: Brawling +1, Axes & Maces +0, daggers +1, sabers +1, staves +2, throwing knives +0, wrestling +1

Physical: Body control +0, carouse +0, climb +0, dance +1, hide +0, perception +2, sing +0, sneak +0, swim +0, willpower +2

Social: Etiquette +4, fast talk +2, human nature +2, persuade +2, seduce +1, streetwise +1

Nature: Orientation +0, survival +0, track +0

Lore: Animal lore +1, appraise +1, arcane lore +7, board games +2, calculate +7, engineering +1, geography +2, heraldry +1, history +3, language lore +1, law +2, legend lore +5, plant lore +3, religious lore +3, starcraft +3

Tongues and Scripts: Read/write (Tulamidya) +6, read/write (Glyphs of Unau) +6, read/write (Kuslik Script) +4, tongues (mother tongue Tulamidya) +14, tongues (Garethi) +14, tongues (Bosparano) +6, tongues (Proto-Tulamidya) +4

Artisan: Alchemy +4, cook +0, farming +1, leathercraft +0, paint/draw +2, tailor +0, treat wounds +0, woodcraft +0

By now, you know what your hero has learned so far as a result of her background and upbringing. Now you get the chance to adapt this "basic set" of Talents to your own ideas, turning your generic hero into an individual. To do so, we now provide you with another accounting of Generation Points—Talent GP, which can improve your hero's TP in her chosen Talents even more.

To calculate your Talent Generation Points, take the sum of your hero's Cleverness and Intuition and multiply by 20. The result is your total Talent GP.

Caution: In step 5, each GP you spent gave you one point in an Attribute. With Talent GP, the trade is different: cost is calculated by Talent Group as well as by the TP you want to achieve. Use the Talent Cost Table presented on page **31** as your guide. Most Talents use the B column, while Tongues and Scripts use the A column. Physical Talents use the D column. Combat Talents vary between columns C, D, and E.

Each advancement must be paid for separately. Thus, if you want to advance the Track Talent (from the Nature Talent Group) from a 3 to a 5, you first must pay 8 points for advancement from 3 to 4, then an additional 11 points to improve from 4 to 5, for a total of 19 Talent GP. A Talent can never be advanced more than +3 beyond the value of the highest Attribute used in the corresponding Test.

It's also possible to advance Talents that your hero doesn't have yet. First, you need to "activate" them. The activation costs are found in the table below. Once you have activated a Talent, you may enter it onto your character sheet with a starting value of +0 and may be advanced normally. You may not activate more than five Talents during hero creation.

Once game play begins, you may roll Talent Tests only if the Talent in question meets one of the following criteria: you have activated it during hero creation; it is a Basic Talent; or you have received a bonus on that Talent due to race, culture, or profession. If none of these apply, you may not roll Tests against that Talent (but see the section on switching to related Talents on page 73).

Should your hero possess a Talent with a negative value (which is entirely possible), you must pay the activation cost for every point below 0 until you raise it to 0. For instance, a dwarf with TP –3 in acrobatics (a Physical Talent) must pay 4 Talent GP each to advance the Talent from –3 to –2, from –2 to –1, and from –1 to 0. Only after you have paid the entire 12 GP can you actually activate the Talent (i.e., pay another 4 GP). You can now advance it normally, and may roll Tests against it during game play.

On the other hand, the same dwarf is able to roll Tests against his swim Talent (although it also starts at TP –3) because this is a Basic Talent. Basic talents do not require activation; they are automatically considered activated once you raise their ranks to 0.

Talent Cost Table

Value	A	B	C	D	E
Activation	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	2	2	3	4
2	2	4	6	7	9
3	3	6	9	12	15
4	4	8	13	17	21
5	6	11	17	22	28
6	7	14	21	27	34
7	8	17	25	33	41
8	10	19	29	39	48
9	11	22	34	45	55
10	13	25	38	50	65
11	14	28	43	55	70
12	16	32	47	65	80
13	17	35	51	70	85
14	19	38	55	75	95
15	21	41	60	85	105
16	22	45	65	90	110
17	24	48	70	95	120
18	26	51	75	105	130
19	27	55	80	110	135
20	29	58	85	115	145

A: Tongues and Scripts

B: Social Talents, Nature Talents, Lore Talents, Artisan Talents

C: Combat Talents: brawling, crossbows, javelins, throwing knives

D: Physical Talents, Combat Talents: chain weapons, Axes & Maces, daggers, infantry weapons, sabers, spears, staves, throwing axes, two-handed Axes & Maces, wrestling

E: Combat Talents: bastard sword, bows, fencing weapons, jousting, swords, two-handed swords

Note that, in a few exceptional cases such as the effect of an Advantage or Disadvantage, a Talent may swap categories.



Using the above-mentioned calculation of [(CL + IN) x 20], Lisa gets a total of 23 x 20=460 Talent Generation Points. She immediately sets to work on her most important Talents. First, she advances acrobatics from 2 to 5. Since this is a Physical Talent, column

D indicates that this costs her 51 points (12+17+22). She also increases athletics from 2 to 3, for a cost of 12 points. She wants to advance climb to 7, which will cost a whopping 33 points but might well be worth it. Open locks is already at 7, but Lisa wants a better score. Since it is an Artisan Talent using column B, the cost will be less prohibitive than for a Physical Talent: increasing her open locks TP to a very remarkable 10 costs her a total of 66 points (19+22+25).

Lisa wants to be able to defend herself, preferably with a weapon suitable for nightly forays. She advances daggers (column D) from 4 to 6 (22+27=49 points), and throwing knives from 1 to 5 (category C, thus 6+9+13+17=45). Unfortunately, daggers and thrown knives aren't much use against an opponent armed with a longer blade, prompting Lisa also to advance her skill with fencing weapons. While she certainly won't be carrying a bulky epee on her nightly outings, you never know when it might come in handy. Fencing weapons belong to the comparatively expensive E category, which means that raising the TP to 4 costs Lisa 45 points (9+15+21).

Lisa feels fairly satisfied with the most basic aspects of her hero's Talents, so she stops to do some calculating. So far, she has spent a total of 301 points (51+12+33+66+49+45+45), leaving her with 159 points still to spend. She remembers her idea of infiltrating noble functions, so she advances dance to 4 (7+12+17=36 Talent GP), etiquette to 5 (6+8+11=25 points), masquerade to 5 (4+6+8+11=29 points), and fast talk to 4 (4+6+8=18 points). The ability to drink someone under the table might also be useful, so she advances carouse from 0 to 3 (3+7+12=22 points).

Pausing for more arithmetic, Lisa figures what she has remaining (159–26–25–29–18–22=29 Talent GP). Of course, a burglar needs to know valuable loot from cheap baubles (11 points to advance appraise from 4 to 5) and should also have some basic knowledge about tying knots and fastening ropes (4+6+8=18 for advancing bind/escape from 1 to 4). With this, Lisa has spent her entire allotment of Talent Generation Points.

Step 7a: Is It Magic?

If you have chosen to play a magic-using hero (i.e., an elf or a magician), there is an extra step in Talent determination: your spell selection.

Each spell is treated as if it were a Talent of its own: you must first activate it and then you can advance it. Step 7a is relevant for you only if you are creating a magic-user; if not, skip to step 8.

Heroes with the Spellcaster Advantage have access to a third set of Generation Points: **Spell GP**. These are used to learn spells in exactly the same way that Talent GP are used to advance Talents. There is no such thing as a "basic spell" that would not need activation, nor do any races, cultures, or professions give starting values for spells.

A spellcaster first needs to activate each and every spell she wants to know by spending Spell GP. She then knows the spell and has **Spell Prowess (SP)** of 0 for that spell. By spending additional Spell GP, she can increase SP in a certain spell. The number of Spell GP available to a hero is determined using the formula [(CL+IN) x 5]. It's also possible to convert Talent GP to Spell GP (but not vice versa)—this indicates that the magician or elf has spent a lot of time trying to grasp the basics of magic to the exclusion of other more mundane skills. You may convert no more than [(CL + IN) x 10] Talent GP into Spell GP (i.e., no more than half your allotted Talent GP).

Since magicians and elves work magic in different ways, they have access to different spells. Some spells that originated in one group, however, have been copied over the years, leading to a spell so similar in effect that we use the same name in these rules for both. Some spells are typically elven (we call them *elven heritage*) while others are known only to human magicians (we call them *guild magic*). Some (which we call *general spells*) are found with elves as well as with humans.

Prior to beginning play, all hero **Magicians** have just finished their training at one of the Magicians' Academies. They have already learned the first Wand Enchantment (and have been presented with a magical wand into which this enchantment has been woven). These spellcasters are adept at guild magic and general spells. They use column A on the Spell Cost Table when advancing these spells; activation cost is 5 Spell GP instead of 1 when creating the character, however, and magicians cannot have an SP higher than 10 with these spells at the beginning of the game. Elven heritage spells known to guild magicians (for which they have not yet developed analogies) are advanced according to the C column. Activation cost is 15 when creating the hero. The maximum starting SP is 7.

The following spells have been classified as guild magic or general spells: *analytica arcana, attributio, auris nasis oculus, balm of healing, be my friend, breath of magic, clarum purum, claudibus clavistibor, duplicatus, fastness of body, foramen foraminor, gardianum, horriphobus, ignifaxus, light in the darkness, mutander salother, paralyze, penetration, see true and pure, spiritus armoricus, thunderbolt.*

Magicians have access to the following elven heritage spells: *move as the lightning, silence reigns supreme, sleep of a thousand sheep, unseen.*

Elves have the same number of Spell GP at their disposal as do magicians: (CL+IN) x 5. An elf needs to pay 10 GP to activate a general or elven heritage spell during hero creation; elves cannot learn guild magic at all prior to the beginning the game. Elves advance spells according to the B column of the Spell Cost Table, and their maximum starting SP is 10.

Elves have access to the following elven heritage and general spells: *attributio, auris nasis oculus, balm of healing, be my friend, breath of magic, clarum purum, eye of eagle, ear of lynx, fastness of body, fog flow far, light in the darkness, move as the lightning, see true and pure, silence reigns supreme, sleep of a thousand sheep, thunderbolt, unseen.*

Spell Cost Table*

Value	A	B	C
Activation	5	10	15
1	1 (6)	2 (12)	2 (17)
2	2 (8)	4 (16)	6 (23)
3	3 (11)	6 (22)	9 (32)
4	4 (15)	8 (30)	13 (45)
5	6 (21)	11 (41)	17 (62)
6	7 (28)	14 (55)	21 (83)
7	8 (36)	17 (72)	25 (108)
8	10 (46)	19 (91)	not possible
9	11 (57)	22 (113)	not possible
10	13 (70)	25 (138)	not possible

A: Guild magic and general spells for magicians.
B: Elven heritage and general spells for elves.
C: Elven heritage for magicians.
* Numbers in parentheses list the spell's entire cost, from activation up to this point prior to the beginning of play. Apart from activation costs, the table's progression mirrors that of the Talent Cost Table on page 31.

Spell GP: (CL + IN) x 5. No more than (CL + IN) x 10 Talent GP can be converted into Spell GP.

Guild Magic and General Spells for Magicians: activation cost during hero creation 5 points, column A, maximum starting value 10.

Elven Heritage for Magicians: activation cost during hero creation 15 points, column C, maximum starting value 7.

Elven Heritage and General Spells for Elves: activation cost during hero creation 10 points, column B, maximum starting value 10.

Anne must make a hard decision now: Should she concentrate on spells as much as possible, or should she go for a balance between spells and Talents?

First, she calculates her point allotment: she has 26 x 20=520 Talent GP, plus 26 x 5=130 Spell GP. She decides to take her most important Talents first, then puts the rest into her spells (knowing that she only pays half the cost of all Lore Talents due to the Advantage of graduating from the Magicians' Academy; see p. 59).

Since she hopes to fight as little as possible, Anne raises staves from 2 to 3 (12 Talent GP)—this will give her some modest skill with the quarterstaff. She raises willpower from 2 to 5 (51 points), etiquette from 4 to 6 (25 points), human nature from 2 to 5 (25 points), fast talk from 2 to 5 (25 GP), persuade from 2 to 5 (25 points), board games from 2 to 4 (should be 14 points but costs only 7 as a Lore Talent), and seduce from 1 to 8 (79 points). This uses 249 Talent GP (12+51+25+25+25+25+7+79).



Anne imagines her hero to be a lady of some standing who doesn't walk when she can ride, so she learns ride 4 (activation 4, advancement 39 points). She also needs some knowledge of Aventurian lore and opts for religious lore 6 (16.5, already halved), heraldry 3 (5, already halved), engineering 2 (2, already halved), and law 5 (12.5, already halved). This totals 39+16.5+5+2+12.5=75 points, leaving her with 196 Talent GP (520–249–75) that she converts into Spell GP.

Her basic 130 plus the 196 newly converted points give Anne a total of 326 Spell GP, which she uses as follows: The most important spell in her arsenal is surely be my friend, *since it allows her to charm other people; she learns this spell at the highest possible starting value of +10 (activation cost 5, plus advancement 65, for 70 points total). Almost as important is* see true and pure, *which allows her to read the feelings of others (SP +7: activation cost 5, plus advancement 31=36 points). The illusion spell* auris nasis oculus *might be handy to fool others (SP +5; 5+16=21 points).*

Should things get ugly, Anne wants to be able to defend herself with a thunderbolt *(SP +5, 21 points) and protect herself from harm with* fastness of body *(SP +3, 11 points). Should that prove insufficient,* move as the lightning *might help her to leave an area of danger quickly (SP +3; this is elven heritage and costs her 15+17=32 points). Since she might need to bandage wounded friends (especially since she is weak in combat), she opts for* balm of healing *+7 (5+31=36 points) as well as clarum purum +3 (11 points) as a defense against poison.*

Anne is also a bit of a magical scientist, so having breath of magic *(SP +5, 21 points) and* analytica arcana *(SP +3, 11 points) can't hurt. She likes* foramen foraminor, *which enables her to enter places where others don't want her (SP +3, 11 points). A spell to take care of prying guards might also be useful,*



so she takes sleep of a thousand sheep *(elven heritage, 32 points). All of this drains her account of 313 Spell GP to exactly zero.*

Anne's magicienne now has the following Talents:

Combat: Brawling +1, Axes & Maces +0, daggers +1, sabers +1, staves +3, throwing knives +0, wrestling +1

Physical: Body control +0, carouse +0, climb +0, dance +1, hide +0, perception +2, ride +4, sing +0, sneak +0, swim +0, willpower +5

Social: Etiquette +6, fast talk +5, human nature +5, persuade +5, seduce +8, streetwise +1

Nature: Orientation +0, survival +0, track +0

Lore: Animal lore +1, appraise +1, arcane lore +7, board games +4, calculate +7, engineering +2, geography +2, heraldry +3, history +3, language lore +1, law +5, legend lore +5, plant lore +3, religious lore +6, starcraft +3

Languages and Scripts: Read/write (Tulamidya) +6, read/write (Glyphs of Unau) +4, read/write (Kuslik Script) +4, tongues (mother tongue Tulamidya) +14, tongues (Garethi) +14, tongues (Bosparano) +6, tongues (Proto-Tulamidya) +4

Artisan: Alchemy +4, cook +0, farming +1, leathercraft +0, paint/draw +2, tailor +0, treat wounds +0, woodcraft +0

Spells: Analytica arcana +3, auris nasis oculus +5, balm of healing +7, be my friend +10, breath of magic +5, clarum purum +3, fastness of body +3, foramen foraminor +3, move as the lightning +3, see true and pure +7, sleep of a thousand sheep +3, thunderbolt +5

Step 8: Now for Some Math-Derived Base Values

In addition to Attributes and Talents, we need a few more values important to your hero (or rather, to you as the player portraying the hero). These are derived from various base values.

Vitality and Endurance

Vitality (VI) determines how often and how badly a hero can be hurt before dying. Vitality Points may be lost in any number of ways (combat, falling, fire, drowning) but getting them back requires effort (you need one of the various Talents to treat injuries, healing spells, or simply prolonged rest).

Vitality (VI): [(CN + CN + ST) / 2] + race modifier + Vigor Advantage (if chosen)
Endurance (ED): [(CO + CN + AG) / 2] + race modifier + profession modifier + Enduring Advantage (if chosen)

Endurance (ED) tells you when your hero runs out of breath, how long she can run or swim, and so on. Endurance is lost faster than Vitality, but regenerates faster and more easily (resting will restore Endurance).

Both values are determined primarily by your hero's Constitution (CN). For Vitality, Strength (ST) also plays a role, while with Endurance, a character's determination (as represented by her Courage, or CO value) as well as her flexibility (as represented by her Agility, or AG value) also figure into the calculation. When calculating Vitality and Endurance, always round up.

Combat Base Values

Combat ability is determined by Base Attack Value, Base Parry Value, and Base Ranged Value. All are calculated from the sum of three Attributes, divided by five (with mathematical rounding). Mathematical rounding means that if the result is 7.4 or below, it is regarded as 7; if it is 7.5 or above, it is regarded as 8. The Base Attack Values may be modified by various Special Abilities. The formulas are:

Base Attack Value: (CO + AG + ST) / 5
Base Parry Value: (IN + AG + ST) / 5
Base Ranged Value: (IN + DE + ST) / 5
Base Initiative: (CO + CO + IN + GE) / 5

Base Initiative is another value necessary for combat. Initiative (INI) determines who goes first in a combat, and the sequence in which all other combatants act. In a combat situation, Base Initiative will be modified by armor worn, weapon used, and the result of a d6 die roll.

Resistance to Magic

This value determines how easily a hero will fall victim to a spell. High willpower, a robust constitution, and an avid mind help heroes resist spells hurled at them. Mathematical rounding applies.

Astral Energy (AE): [(CO + IN + CH) / 2] + modifier + ASP gained from Astral Power Advantage (if chosen)

Base Initiative: (CO + CO + IN + GE) / 5

Resistance to Magic (RM): [(CO + CL + CN) / 5] – race/culture modifiers + profession modifiers (if applicable) + High Resistance to Magic Advantage (if chosen) – Low Resistance to Magic Disadvantage (if chosen)

Astral Energy

Magic-using heroes measure their spell capability in Astral Points. Astral Energy determines how many spells a hero may cast before becoming "burned out." The formula is as follows: (CO + IN + CH) / 2.

The modifier to Astral Energy depends on the type of magic used by the hero, and is found in the description of the respective race, culture, or profession.



Lisa's burglar has the following base values:

Vitality: CN 11 and ST 12 (11+11+12) result in 34/2=17, to which the Middenrealmian's racial modifier of +10 is added. With no further modifiers, the burglar begins play with 27 Vitality Points (VP).

Endurance: (12+11+12)/2=17.5; round to 18, add +10 for being a Middenrealmian, resulting in 28 EP.

Base Attack Value: [(12+13+12)=37] /5=7.4, rounded to 7.



Base Parry Value: [(12+13+12)=37] /5=7.4, rounded to 7.

Base Ranged Value: [(12+14+12)=38] /5=7.6, rounded to 8.

Base Initiative: [(12+12+12+13)=49] /5 =9.8, rounded to 10.

Resistance to Magic: [(12+11+11)= 34] /5= 6.8, rounded to 7; subtracting the racial modifier of –4 yields 3.

Astral Energy: Applies only to spellcasters, therefore she has none.



Anne's magicienne begins play with these values:

Vitality: (10+10+8)/2=14; add +10 for being a Tulamide, resulting 24 VP.

Endurance: (12+10+11)/2=16.5; round to 17, add +10 for being a Tulamide, resulting in 27 EP.

Base Attack Value: (12+11+8)/5=6.2, rounded to 6.

Base Parry Value: (12+11+8)/5=6.2, rounded to 6.

Base Ranged Value: (12+11+8)/5=9.4, rounded to 9.

Base Initiative: (12+12+12+11)/5=9.4, rounded to 9.

Resistance to Magic: (12+14+10)/5=7.2, rounded to 7; subtracting the social modifier of –4 and adding the magician's bonus yields 5.

Astral Energy: (12+11+14)/2=18.5, rounded to 19; add +6 for being a magician, +12 for the Spellcaster Advantage, +2 for the Astral Power Advantage = 39 ASP.

Step 9: Aggressive or Defensive—Attack and Parry Value

As we briefly mentioned earlier, melee combat consists of attacks and parries made by the combatants. Both maneuvers have their own values. If you increase your hero's Attack Value, she will be more likely to hit her enemies in combat (but will be hit more often herself if she has a poor Parry value). This is an aggressive style of fighting. If you raise your hero's Parry Value (but her Attack Value is low), she will not hit as often, but won't be hurt as much by her enemies. This is a defensive style of fighting.

It's time for you to decide which style you prefer for each weapon you use. You may distribute your TP between attack and parry as you see fit. The only rule is that the allocated TP may not be more than 5 points apart. You add your chosen number of TP to your base value as determined in step 8. Once you have done this, the distribution becomes fixed and can never be changed.

Thus, if you have 9 TP at your disposal, you might put 7 points into Attack and 2 points into Parry, or you might opt for any of the combinations 6/3, 5/4, 4/5, 3/6, or 2/7. Combinations 9/0, 8/1, 1/8, or 0/9 are not allowed because the difference between the two values would be greater than 5.

For ranged weapons, the procedure is somewhat easier: you simply add TP and Base Ranged Value to get your Attack Total—you can't parry with a ranged weapon, so you don't need a value for Parry. Jousting, which is also used to attack without parrying, is handled the same way: all points of TP are added directly to Base Attack Value.



Lisa's burglar has a Base Attack Value and a Base Parry Value of 7 each, with Base Ranged Value of 8. For crossbow and throwing knives, the procedure is easy: She adds TP to Base Ranged Value, resulting in a crossbow ranking of 9 and throwing knives ranking of 13. Sabers and Axes & Maces, both with TP 0, are equally simple: both result in AT 7 and PA 7.

For brawling, infantry weapons, and wrestling, Lisa has a TP of 1 each. When wrestling, she'd rather break free of a hold than attempt an attack, so she takes AT 7 and PA 8. She would rather take the offensive with the other two weapons,so she chooses AT 8 and PA 7.

Her TP 6 with daggers gives her more choices. Again, she would rather attack than defend, and puts 5 points into Attack and only 1 point on Parry: AT 12 and PA 8. She follows similar thinking with fencing weapons: 3 points into Attack and 1 into Parry, resulting in AT 10 and PA 8.

The final combat statistics for Lisa's character look like this: brawling 8/7, Axes & Maces 7/7, daggers 12/8, infantry weapons 8/7, sabers 7/7, throwing knives 12, crossbow 9, and wrestling 7/8.



Anne's magicienne has combat values of 6 for every weapon. This gives her a Ranged Attack with throwing knives of 6, also giving her AT 6 and PA 6 with Axes & Maces. Wherever she has a choice, she concentrates on defense: brawling, daggers, sabers, and wrestling all result in AT 6 and PA 7, while staves ranks AT 6 and PA 9.

Believe it or not, that's it! You may now enter all of your values onto your character sheet. Hero creation is almost finished!

Step 10: Going Shopping

Of course, your hero is not only defined by her "inner lights" but also by her appearance and her possessions. Starting equipment is determined by Social Standing and profession. All professions automatically begin the game with certain basic equipment. Social Standing throws in a set amount of money to round out starting equipment. Apply this formula:

Starting money equals SO x SO x SO farthings.

Very few Aventurians carry large sums of money. As a result, you should probably invest at least half of your money in equipment. If you're from the wilderness, you should probably spend nearly everything, for what good is money in the deep forest? Peruse the equipment lists from page 160 onward to equip your hero with everything she might need. If you need items not listed, feel free to ask your Highlord. She will tell you what is possible and what is not.

If you have opted for an Equipment Advantage, you might have even more money at your disposal. The Special Equipment Advantage might gain you possession of some larger object, such as a pack animal (that you cannot sell immediately to get more money!). You should be certain your hero is dressed and equipped according to her geographic, cultural, and social origin. This makes it easier for you to describe her in game-relevant terms.

Once you are finished, enter all equipment onto the character sheet. This is especially important for weapons and their game data because you will need these again and again.



Due to her profession, Lisa's burglar already owns dark everyday clothing (which she specifies as dark gray trousers, a black blouse, and light boots), a dark hooded cloak, dark gloves, a set of lock picks, 10 paces of rope with a grappling hook, a belt with hangers and loops, and a hidden dagger (with a secret sheath in her boot).

Her Social Standing provides her with (7x7x7) 343 farthings (or 3 ducats, 4 silver thalers, and 3 farthings). To advance her idea of a burglar attending social functions, Lisa buys an appropriate evening dress. Since this is not shown in any of the lists, the Highlord decides on a price of 2 ducats—while the dress is attractive, it's probably second-hand. Lisa adds a shoulder bag (for carrying loot) for 4 farthings, a small crowbar for 8 silver thalers, and a small knife for 5 silver thalers. All of this adds up to 3 ducats, 3 silver thalers, and 4 farthings, leaving her with just 9 farthings. This means she is basically broke and should be looking for an opportunity to fill her purse again.

Lisa's hero is now fully equipped and she begins to enter the information onto her character sheet.



Anne's profession description lists the following beginning items: a robe covered in arcane symbols and a horned cap. Both identify her as a graduate from a Magicians' Academy. Her wand has been enchanted with the first Wand Enchantment, and from her belt hangs a dagger in an ornamented sheath (as per the text she would only have a simple sheath, but Anne's Highlord agrees to let the sheath be ornamented for a cost of 50 silver thalers). She carries a small ceremonial dagger, ten sheets of parchment, and an ink bottle in her leather shoulder bag.



Her high Social Standing of 12 provides her with the impressive sum of (12x12x12=) 1,728 farthings. The ornamented sheath has already sucked up 5 ducats (or 500 farthings). She buys a fine wool cloak (300 farthings) and a parchment wrapper of waxed leather to shield her parchments from inclement weather (2 farthings). This leaves her with 8 ducats, 12 silver thalers, and 6 farthings, which she decides to save.

Step 11: Relax, Lean Back, and Let Your Imagination Run Wild

You only need a few more details now. A name for your hero would be a good idea. You should also think about your hero's personality and get an idea of how she will react to different situations during game play. Review the cultural and regional descriptions that are important for your hero. Once you have done this, look at the "20 Questions" on page 66 and try to answer all of them. You don't have to write down your answers, and none of your answers will have any bearing on your statistics. These answers will help you to better play your hero from the first gaming session onward.

Step 12: Go and Play. Now.

Step-by-Step Hero Creation

Starting Account: You have 110 GP.

Which Concept?

Think about the type of hero you want to play. If necessary, look at the sample heroes and the descriptions of races, cultures, and professions.

Which Race?

Choose a race. Note the modifications that apply.

Which Culture?

Choose a culture. Deduct the GP cost from your 110 GP. Note the modifications and starting values the culture provides.

Which Profession?

Choose a profession. Deduct the GP cost from your 110 GP. Write down the modifications and starting values the profession provides, as well as its requirements.

Attributes and Social Standing?

You should still have 80 to 110 GP in your account. Divide them among the eight Attributes and SO. You may not spend more than 100 GP on the eight Attributes combined. All Attribute Values must fall between 8 and 14. Social Standing must fall between 1 and 12. You may overdraw your account in this step, but you must balance it by purchasing Disadvantages later. (You needn't spend all your points right now.) You then figure in the Attribute modifications of your chosen race and culture. The result should allow you to fulfill the requirements of your profession. If not, adjust accordingly.

Advantages and Disadvantages?

You may purchase Disadvantages (including Negative Attributes) for a maximum of 50 GP, only 30 of which may be spent on Negative Attributes. Advantages and Disadvantages inherent in your chosen race/culture/profession are free (automatically). The respective GP costs have already been figured into the cost you paid for race, culture, or profession. If you want to increase a Negative Attribute you got automatically in this way, you get additional GP only for the additional increase. At the end of this step, your GP account must equal zero.

Negative Attributes are a subcategory of Disadvantages. They require certain actions during role-play, such as demonstrating a high level of arrogance in a hero. Trying to role-play too many Negative Attributes could become difficult and tiresome, so a hero may receive only 30 GP in Negative Attributes.

Talent Values?

Add up all Talent Values your hero acquired from race, culture, or profession. Supplement this list with all Basic Talents; unless a Basic Talent has not been modified by race, culture, or profession, starting TP is 0.

Now you get (CL + IN) x 20 Talent GP which you can spend to advance any of your Talents (see the Talent Cost Table on page 31).

You may also activate Talents that are not yet on your sheet. Increasing a Talent with a negative TP depends on the type of Talent: For a Basic Talent (see page 29), each point of TP below 0 costs you the Talent's activation cost. For all other Talents, you must pay the activation cost again after reaching 0 in order to increase it one place (i.e., Basic Talents have no activation cost as such; you just pay off any negative ranks).

You may not activate more than five Talents in this step. At the end of Talent advancement, no TP may rank more than 3 points higher than the value of the highest Attribute associated with that Talent (see the Talent descriptions beginning on page 73).

Optional: Magic Talents

If your hero is able to work magic, you need to determine her spells. To do this, you receive (IN + CL) x 5 Spell GP. In addition, you may convert any Talent GP left over from the preceding step into Spell GP (but not vice versa) on a 1 to 1 basis. You cannot convert more than half of your original Talent GP (i.e., (IN + CL) x 10).

Magicians may learn all guild magic and general spells according to the A column on the Spell Cost Table; activation costs 5 Spell GP each and maximum starting value is 10. Elves may learn all elven heritage and general spells according to the B column; activation costs 10 Spell GP each and maximum starting value is 10. Magicians may learn elven heritage spells, but must use the C column; activation cost is 15 Spell GP and maximum starting value is 7. Elves may learn all elven heritage and general spells according to the A column but are not able to learn guild magic at the beginning of play.

Determine Base Values

Vitality (VI): [(CN + CN + ST) / 2] + racial modifier + Vigor Advantage (if chosen)

Endurance (ED): [(CO + CN + AG) / 2] + racial modifier + professional modifier + Enduring Advantage (if chosen)

Base AT Value: (CO + AG + ST) / 5

Base Parry Value: (IN + AG + ST) / 5

Base Ranged Value: (IN + DE + ST) / 5

Base Initiative: (CO + CO + IN + GE) / 5

Resistance to Magic (RM): [(CO + CL + CN) / 5] – race/culture modifiers + profession modifiers (if applicable) + High Resistance to Magic Advantage (if chosen) – Low Resistance to Magic Disadvantage (if chosen)

Astral Energy (AE): (CO + IN + CH) / 2 + modifier + ASP gained from Astral Power Advantage (if chosen)

Attack and Parry Values

Determine Attack and Parry Values for every Combat Talent your character has acquired. For ranged Talents and jousting, TP is added directly to Base Ranged Value. For melee Talents, you may distribute your TP freely between Attack and Parry, as long as the final difference between the two is no greater than 5 points. Add these values to the respective Base Values.

Equipment

Every hero is granted basic equipment as listed in the respective profession descriptions. In addition, he receives SO x SO x SO farthings to go shopping.

Final Details

Look at the "20 Questions" on page 66 to help shape your hero's personality, and give her a name.

"Well," Shafir begins, raising his voice against the loud laughter from the next table, "it is my honest pleasure to relate to you my experiences, lovely Daria! For I have seen much, I say! Elves, lizards, trolls, giants, cyclopes, and even djinni, let alone goblins, orks, kobolds, and ogres; and the dwellers in the sea, the mermen—I've seen them all! Just say the word, and I shall be your humble teacher!"

He toasts Daria with his cup of wine, adding a brief bow.

"Oh, I see. A man of the world! I am quite impressed, worthy sir! Well, let us get started on giants, then. Teach me, wise Shafir, and I will listen with rapt attention."

Daria's lips form a smile, part friendly, part mocking, which the mountebank nonchalantly chooses to ignore. Instead, he begins to weave his tale, accompanied by many gestures. "Giants, I should want to say, have become rare on the Ethra. They grow to four times the height of even the largest man, and are as old as the world, and immortal. They possess tremendous strength, which they can use to … ah, well, rip a mighty bear apart without breaking a sweat. They are not clever, though, quite unlike the dragons, who are also among the most ancient species of our world."

"Let me guess," Daria interrupts, eyes wide open in mock admiration, "you have also talked to dragons, right?"

"Well, not in so many words, my flower of womanly beauty, but I came close. My grandfather once met an imperial dragon. And, believe it or not—to honor this creature, he gave me the very name I bear today: Shafir, the dragon's own name!

"You should know that dragons come in many shapes and types. For instance, the carping drake does not outgrow the meekest of ravens. As the name implies, it is full of mischief and bad humor, but its power and magical prowess are weak. Mighty Shafir, though, was as huge as a ship! And the treasure he guards in his hoard, far away in the highest peaks of the Eternans, is more valuable than the golden domes of the City of Light, even with the imperial jewels thrown into the pot! D'you know, back when my grandfather …." Suddenly, the mountebank interrupts himself, his black eyes widening in wild amazement.

"…the treasure he guards in his hoard, far away in the highest peaks of the Eternans, is more valuable than the golden domes of the City of Light!"

"What is it?" Daria asks, astonished, following his gaze toward the tavern door.

"An elf," Shafir whispers reverently, "a real elven woman in the flesh! Never did I think they would be such beauties …."

"So you're an expert on elves, too, eh?" Daria asks, shaking her head. "You've seen lots and lots of them, right? Come on, Shafir, don't begin to drool or I might get jealous."

Smiling amusedly, she turns his head back in her direction.

This chapter introduces you to the descriptions of the five races and eight cultures discussed in the Basic Rules. While the *Swords and Heroes* supplement will provide you with many more races and cultures, you can already create a wide variety of heroes using the material you find here.

All information is presented using the same format to make it easy for you to locate information and compare the various types.

Races

Each racial description begins with an entry called **Origins/Spread**. This informs you about the race's historical origin as well as the Aventurian region where you might find its members. The entry that follows is called **Build**, and gives you a physical description: body type, height, hair color, and so on.

Next is **Way of Living**, which tells you about important customs and social norms that apply to the entire race. Cultural differences between members of the race are examined in the section on cultures.

Mentality is also a racial feature describing important beliefs. **Specials/Racial Abilities** are most important with regard to the two nonhuman races.

The boxes labeled **Starting Values** give you information on hair and eye color, body height, and weight at a glance. Note that you don't have to roll for these values when creating a character. If you know what your hero is supposed to look like, you may simply choose (as long as you stay within the parameters mentioned).

The boxes also contain all modifications relevant for hero creation (see *A Hero Is Born*, page 21). This information includes "recommended" as well as "unsuitable" Advantages and Disadvantages. These should be regarded as suggestions; you may ignore them if your Highlord agrees. If your character concept absolutely demands, for example, a Disadvantage that is classified as "unsuitable," just talk to your Highlord to settle the respective details.

Middenrealmians



Origins/Spread: *The fair-skinned humans now known as the people of the Middenrealm originally hail from Myranor, known in Aventuria's myths and legends as Gyldenland. Landing on the continent's western shores, they spread across Aventuria to form the nations now known as the Middenrealm: the Horasian Empire, Andergast, Nostria, the Svellt Valley, the Fountland, and the southern city states. In some of these areas they form the majority of humans living there, while in others they have mingled with the indigenous population.*

Build: Their physical appearance varies. All hair colors are possible (blue-black hair, indicating Moha influence, is as rare as white hair, which indicates elven heritage). Eye color also runs the gamut from blue to green to brown, with only red and dark brown being rare.

Way of Living: Lifestyles also vary greatly between regions. From the down-to-earth Fountlandians to the highly civilized Horasians, a multitude of highly different cultures has emerged.

Mentality: As varied as the Midddenrealmian cultures may be, all share the belief in the Twelvegods. This belief has led to the creation of a strict hierarchy of nobility. The cult of the Twelvegods creates an attitude of common ground between all Middenrealmians, as well as a strong willingness to convert nonbelievers. The average Middenrealmian regards herself as the only truly enlightened creature in all of Aventuria.

Specials/Racial Abilities: The traits most often associated with these pioneers of old are adaptability, inquisitiveness, and the unshakable courage to build and rebuild. How much of this heritage from the first settlers still runs in the veins of the merchants and traders of today's imperial cities remains open for discussion, though. Hardly a hamlet can be found that has not produced at least one hero yet, someone who went to see the world and whose name is now spoken with reverence by the most noble and powerful on this continent—or so they will tell you.

Typical Names: Since Middenrealmian names vary by nation, this information will appear with the individual culture descriptions.

Starting Values
Eye Color/Hair Color: See above
Height: 1.6 paces + 2d20 cm (Range: 1.62–2 paces)
Weight: Height (cm) minus 100, in greatpounds
Modifications: VP +10, EP +10; RM –4

Tulamides



Origins/Spread: *Aventurian scholars usually agree that the Tulamides belong among the indigenous population of Aventuria, having probably originated in the Rashtul Wall. Today's Tulamides inhabit the area between Fasar and Selem, roughly speaking; the citizens of Punin, Anchopal, and Sylla are mostly of Tulamidyan stock. Both the Norbards (roaming the Fountland and the Nivese Steppes as traveling merchants) and the Khôm Desert's Novadis (who believe in the Onegod, Rastullah) are of Tulamidyan descent. Even as far south as Al'Anfa and the other southern city states, Tulamidyan blood runs in the people in almost the same strength as does that of the settlers from Gyldenland.*

Build: The Tulamides are of medium height, with light-brown skin, black or dark-brown hair, sharp-cut facial features, and dark eyes. (In the areas bordering the regions settled by the Middenrealmians you may also find Tulamides with lighter skin coloration, some of them having blue or green eyes and blond or red hair.) Since the Tulamides have a long tradition of keeping woodsmen slaves, constant intermingling has occurred between

the two races. You can easily recognize Moha heritage in smaller height, high cheekbones, and especially darker skin.

Way of Living: Many of the Tulamides live in large cities as traders or craftsmen (or beggars), but most eke out a living as country farmers. In the fertile river valleys of Mhanadistan, this can be quite a profitable way of living. They grow rice on the flood plains with rich pasturage for cattle to be found inland.

Mentality: The Tulamides are well known for their soft tempers and their friendliness. They are neither zealots nor dogmatists, but instead are generous and renowned for their splendid festivals, to which they often invite strangers and passing travelers. The Tulamides really know how to enjoy and savor life.

To afford their comforts, however, they must be efficient businessmen. This is the second important part of any Tulamide's soul: all of them work for their own best interests, and all know exactly what they want. In achieving their goals, Tulamides act with great cleverness and cunning, also adding a good bit of cynicism to the mix.

Among most Tulamides, women are not regarded as equals but are literally treated as the "weaker sex" that must be guarded and protected. Some professions are not open to Tulamidyan women. Exceptions to professions available for females are granted at the Highlord's discretion.

Specials/Racial Abilities: Tulamides are born merchants and have an uncanny knack with numbers. They are also very good with words, able to quickly confuse listeners who do not listen carefully. They are very adept at appraising items of value.

The Tulamidyan joy of life is best represented in their activities to please their deity Rahja, their musicality, and their expertise in cooking. The Tulamides rarely use swords, instead relying on other bladed weapons, the most famous of which is the famed Khunchomer. They love to ride horses and generally get along quite well with animals.

Typical Names: Tulamidyan names often equal job descriptions (such as Haimamud, which means storyteller). Names are composed of a first name and a father-name, which is introduced by ibn (with males) or saba (with females), indicating "son of" or "daughter of" (e.g., Abdul ibn Tulef or Aishulibeth saba Kazan).

Typical male names: Abdul, Achtec, Amir, Hamar, Jelef, Jikhbar, Kazan, Nasreddin, Saiman, Tulef, Zachen, Zulhamid. Typical female names: Aishulibeth, Allhina, Fayrishe, Heyeshan, Izmahban, Laila, Nedime, Nefret, Onchabeth, Shuhelja, Zulhamin.

Starting Values
Eye Color/Hair Color: See above
Height: 1.55 paces + 2d20 cm (Range: 1.57–1.95 paces)
Weight: Height (cm) minus 105, in greatpounds
Modifications: VP +10, EP +10; RM –4
Talents: Dance +1; appraise +1, calculate +1

Thorwalians



Origins/Spread: *The Thorwalians, a bold, seafaring people, originate from far Hjaldingard in Gyldenland. They were driven out a long time ago and came to settle on the northwestern coast of Aventuria. Since then, the Thorwalians have mingled with the Nivese, Norbards, and even Middenrealmians in many regions.* Now, their main settlement areas are the Gulf of Prem and the coast up north to Olport, as well as the Olport Stones.

Build: Thorwalians are large and muscular, often exceeding two paces in height. Hair and skin are fair, with the most common combination being blond hair (in all variations) and blue eyes (from pale blue to sapphire). Brown or red hair combined with green eyes are not uncommon; dark eyes and black hair are rare, though.

Way of Living: The term "Thorwalian" is often used to indicate those bold seafarers making a living as pirates, sea traders, and fishermen. Males and females are absolute equals. Thorwalians respect age, wisdom, and experience, but do not believe in authority based upon birthright alone.

Mentality: Thorwalians are brave, do not shy away from conflict, and are regarded as prone to brawling and able to hold their liquor well. They value personal freedom above all other ideals. They are well known for straightforwardness and loyalty, but are also infamous for their superstitions.

Specials/Racial Abilities: Colorful body paintings are rather popular in Thorwal, and many a seafarer is covered in tattoos. Some Thorwalians have become infamous for their uncontrollable fighting rages, known as Wealrage. While this ability is rare among Thorwalians, those who command it can turn into terrible, incalculable fighting machines.

Typical Names: Males: Angar, Ansgar, Garsvir, Halmar, Hjalmar, Torgal; Females: Algrid, Bridgera, Hjelgira, Swafnhild. Instead of a surname, Thorwalians add the name of their father or mother, complete with identifying suffix: -dottir (or, rarer, -dotter) for daughters, or -son for sons (e.g., Garsvir Hjelgirason).

Starting Values
Hair Color/Eye Color: See above
Height: 1.68 paces + 2d20 cm (Range: 1.7–2.08 paces)
Weight: Height (cm) minus 95, in greatpounds
Modifications: ST +1, CN +1, CO +1; VP +11, EP +10; RM –5
Disadvantages: Violent Temper 5
Talents: Athletics +1, carouse +1, perception +1; weather sense +2
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Direction Sense, Toughness; Rage (Wealrage), Vengefulness
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Social Chameleon; Fear of Open Spaces, Fear of the Sea

Elves (fey)



Origins/Spread: *The origin of the elves (who call themselves fey) is a mystery. They most probably hearken back to the Fey Globules. Their Aventurian homes are in the haunted forests of the Salamander Stones.*

Nowadays, four important elven subraces are known : silvan elves (Salamander Stones), lea elves (upper runs of Oblomon, Frisund, and Letta, Lake Alaavi, Thunderbrook, Kvirasim, Oblarasim, as well as quite a few human cities), ice elves (Grimfrost Wastes, Frozen Peaks, the coasts of Icebreak Bay and Amber Bay, Misty Peaks, and Yeti's Land), and steppe elves (isolated clans of lea elves who have become horse-riding nomads in the northern steppes).

Build: Elves are of a large and slender frame, and their beauty and elegance of movement have become legendary. Their most outstanding features are pointed ears and large, slightly slanted eyes, which scintillate with the strangest colors (whether amethyst or violet, an amber shade, a ruby's red, a sapphire's blue, an emerald's green, or even sprinkled with gold). High cheekbones and long necks enhance the alien impression. Elf males don't grow beards, which sometimes makes it hard to tell the men from the women, especially since both genders exhibit androgynous features. Both sexes have long, usually blond hair (black and silver hair are rare, but possible) that they wear loose.

Way of Living: Long ago, the elves embraced a culture similar to that of man. This culture declined millennia ago, and afterward the elves retreated into the solitude of the wilderness, where they live in a perfect agreement of nature and clan. Wicked tongues claim they have a predator's innocent cold-heartedness, knowing neither good nor evil. They sometimes dwell in tree houses that they construct by shaping living wood with their magic.

Procreation and Aging: Sometimes, an elf woman mates with a human man (never the other way around), with the result being a rare half-elf. Elves are much less fertile than humans, and elf women can control conception at will. Very few elf births occur, despite the elves leading rather sensuous lives.

Some elves literally live for a thousand years, but this is rare. It's true that elves live much longer than humans; an elf's life span is tied directly to her goals in life. Whenever an elf feels that she has fulfilled her goals, she bids her people good-bye and withers away in a short time.

Mentality: Elves recognize neither gods nor worldly authorities; they do not strive for power or wealth. Relations to humans and their world differ according to subrace. Steppe and ice elves live very secluded lives and only rarely leave their clans. Silvan elves do not particularly like humans, especially despising human ambition and greed. Of all the elven peoples, the lea elves are most open toward humans.

Elves feel closely akin to all animals, from graceful wild cats to annoying gnats. They don't like the "dead cities of stone" so favored by humans, and those who visit the cities often slip away in the evening to spend the night in the open, even when with human friends.

Some (few) elves have converted to the human way of life, however, and even live as craftsmen (for instance, bowyers or instrument makers) within city walls. Their wild cousins from the Salamander Stones or the Kvill leas have little tolerance for this, calling the urban elves *badoc*, a word without any proper translation but which signifies disdain for the human way of life. Elves value beauty in all its forms, loving poetry and music. Every elf has her own soul-instrument, most often a flute, and would never leave home without it.

Specials/Racial Abilities: Elves have highly developed senses: well-honed perception, very acute hearing, a fine sense of smell, and superb night vision. Thus, they dread bad smells, such as the stench of a wyvern or a linnorm, or the smell of foods (such as cheese or beer) that are created by processes of putrefaction or fermentation.

Since elves are always on edge due to their keen senses, rumor has it that they don't sleep at all. This is not really true; their sleeping and waking periods just follow a different pattern than those of humans. If need be, they can stay awake for an entire week as long as they don't exert themselves overmuch.

Typical Names: First name (given in the elven tongue of Isdira, determining an elf's place in the world) for males: Ardarell, Delayar, Felerian, Lamandrion; for women: Feyana, Himiyana, Olimone, Valaria. Second name (family or clan name, nickname, endearing name, memento of a special event, and so on): Lilac Runner, Rain Dancer, Rock Dew, Yew Spear.

Starting Values

Hair Color/Eye Color: See above

Height: 1.68 paces + 2d20 cm (Range: 1.7–2.08 paces)

Weight: Height (cm) minus 120, in greatpounds

Modifications: ST –2, AG +2, CL –1, IN +1; VP +6, EP +12; RM –2

Advantages: Bardic Voice, Good-Looking, Low-Light Vision, Resistant to Age, Resistance to Disease, Spellcaster

Disadvantages: Elven Worldview

Talents: Body control +3, carouse –2, dance +1, perception +5, sing +2, sneak +2; survival +2; paint/draw +1, play instrument +2

Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Balance, Danger Sense; Curiosity, Fear of the Sea

Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Hard to Enspell, Noble Birth, Social Chameleon, Dwarfnose; Bad Hearing, Greed, Lame, Prone to Illness, Rage, Superstition, Vengefulness

Dwarfs (Angroshim)



Origins/Spread: *The dwarfs (who call themselves Angroshim; a male dwarf is an Angrosho and a female is Angroshax) are an ancient people, heirs to a proud history and a long line of ancestors. Their skill in smithing is legendary and their underground kingdoms are reputed to hold treasures untold. The most important dwarf kingdoms can be found in the Anvil and Kosh Mountains, the Iron Forest, the Ingra Tops, and the Goldenrocks.*

Build: Averaging 1.4 paces tall, dwarfs are not exactly large; however, they are strong, tough, and long-lived. Their bones and muscles are sturdy and their lung capacity is enormous. Their bodies are so heavy that they find it hard to stay afloat in water, preferring to stay far away from all lakes, streams, and oceans. A dwarf's entire pride is in his beard, the splendor of which usually determines his reputation in the clan or tribe. Female dwarfs are of similar build and sturdiness as the males.

Dwarfen skin is often dark. Their hair runs the gamut from blond to red to gray to black, and their eyes shine like gemstones.

Way of Living: Dwarfs prefer to live underground. They live among their clans in the tunnels and caverns built by their great-great-ancestors. Here, they work their forges and hold their festivals—loud and lively happenings where the legendary dwarfen ale is consumed in huge quantities. Clan and family are at the center of any dwarf's life.

Females play a special part in dwarfen society, for they are rare: Only one female dwarf is born for every three males. The dwarfs worship Ingerimm (the god of the smithy in the humans' pantheon, known by the name Angrosh) as their sole deity, regarding him as their creator. They speak a common language called Rogolan.

Procreation and Aging: Dwarfs are fertile regularly throughout the year. Pregnancy lasts for about 250 days, with twins or triplets being the norm. Dwarfs become fertile at age 20 and are fully grown at 35. They live for up to three or four hundred years, but tales are told of Angroshim who occasionally have grown much older.

Mentality: While dwarfs can be hot headed, they are by no means impatient; quite the opposite is true. Because of their long life spans, they have a different sense of time than humans do. They might spend years working on a single weapon only to melt it down again because they don't like the design any longer. A dwarf may wait for years until he finally ventures forth to slay the dragon that wiped out his clan, but how terrible will his wrath be when he finally faces his foe! Dogged persistence and stamina are trademarks of any dwarf. Indecision is unknown to them. Dwarfs are reliable as friends as well as foes.

Specials/Racial Abilities: Dwarfs are renowned for their toughness, their ability to hold their liquor, and their dexterity. Living below the earth, they have grown accustomed to darkness and confined spaces. They start acquiring a thorough knowledge of minerals, ores, stone, and mining almost from the moment of birth. Many are accomplished smiths or are able to detect architectural peculiarities such as traps or secret doors with uncanny precision.

Typical Names: Males: Andrash, Bengram, Ogrim, Rabagash; Females: Agesha, Doresha, Gudelne, Xebrima. Dwarfs do not have surnames; instead, sons are identified by giving their father's name, while women add their mother's name (e.g., Lagorash, son of Jandrim). Dwarfs delight in giving male children a name starting with the same letter as the father's name (e.g., Arbosh, son of Araxash).

Starting Values
Hair Color / Eye Color: See above
Height: 1.28 paces + 2d6 cm (Range: 1.3–1.4 paces)
Weight: Height minus 80, in greatpounds
Modifications: AG –1, DE +1, ST +2, CN +2; VP +12, EP +20; RM –4
Advantages: Dwarfnose, Hard to Enspell, Low-Light Vision, Resistance to Disease, Resistance to Mineral Poisons
Disadvantages: Fear of Open Spaces or Fear of the Sea 5, Greed 5, Inability to Swim
Talents: wrestling +1; athletics –3, carouse +1, ride –1, swim –3, willpower +2; orientation +1; stone lore +1
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Direction Sense, Good Memory, Toughness; Fear of Open Spaces, Fear of the Sea, Greed, Superstition, Violent Temper
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Balance, Bardic Voice, Contortionist, Noble Birth, Outstanding Appearance, Social Chameleon; Claustrophobia, Fear of the Dark

Cultures

The entries describing the cultures presented in the basic rules consist of both a description and a section of game data.

Region describes the exact part(s) of Aventuria where you can find the culture, while **Way of Living** tells you about the culture's society. **Worldview and Customs** help acquaint you with the culture's peculiarities, while the **Clothing and Weapons** section offers hints on equipping a hero. **Portrayal** provides tips on how to role-play a member of this culture. Finally, we provide a few sample names.

As with races, cultures have been given starting values that you will need during hero creation. The entries also list the Generation Points you need to spend if you want to play a hero from this culture; the more advantages a culture offers, the more expensive it is.

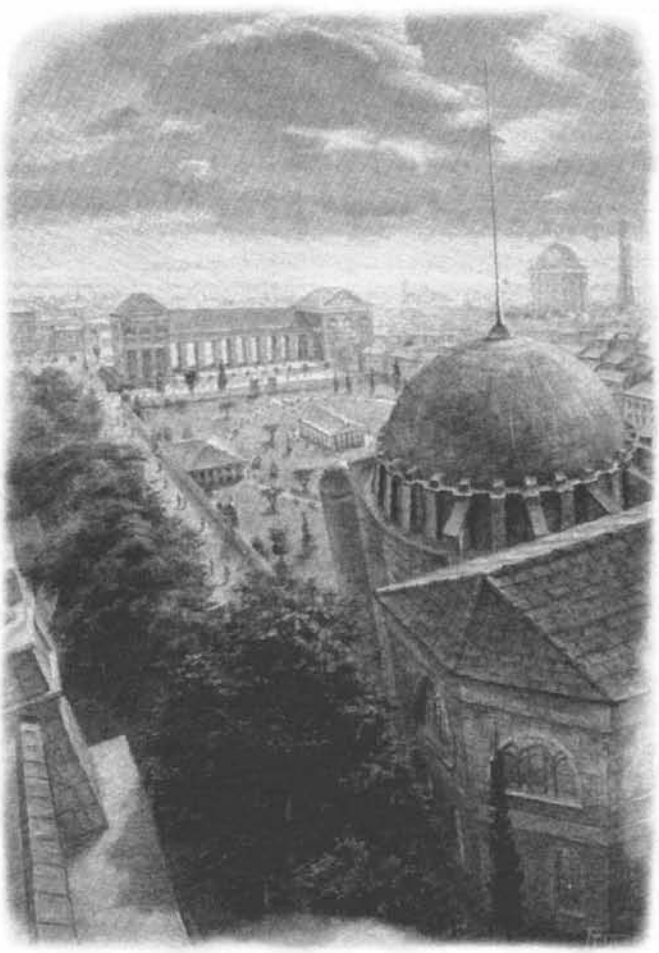
At the end of each culture description, you will find a list of professions that can be chosen.

Garetia

Although technically not correct, this term is used to describe the citizens of the Middenrealm (in its more narrow sense, Garetia stands only for the central region of the Middenrealm encompassing the imperial city and its immediate surroundings). Still, since this term is indiscriminately used throughout Aventuria in its broader meaning, we see no reason not to do so here. The Middenrealm


Garetian
Thorwalian
Horasian
Fountlandian

is the largest political entity in Aventuria, spanning more than 1,000 Middenmiles from east to west. The customs of its inhabitants vary accordingly within those boundaries.



Region: From the Sea of the Seven Winds between Havena and Grangor to the west up to the Black Sickle, the Troll Peaks, and the Sea of Pearls at Perricum in the east: this vast area holds all land types found in moderate climates, as well as all terrain features from plains to mountains and from swamps to steppes.

Way of Living: Approximately one-eighth of all Middenrealmians live in Gareth—twice as many as in all other cities of the realm combined. The burghers make a living on crafts and trading, or barely make it as day laborers. Most people of the Middenrealm, however, dwell in the countryside, living off the fruits of their fields. Goats and chickens are everywhere, even in the alleys of Gareth, and most farmers manage to own a brood sow as well. On the other hand, owning a cow means that you're wealthy, and eating venison is purely a noble's privilege.

Middenrealmian society is feudal, with the lower nobility—nobles and knights—forming the basis of the feudal pyramid, with the emperor in Gareth at its top.

Worldview: The worldview of all Garetians can be summarized in three phrases: The supreme powers are the Twelvegods; the Empire is based on divine right; and the Horasians are defectors. These tenets serve to unify the individual provinces. The farther away from the capital you travel, however, the less the ruler's influence is felt. Instead the provincial lord or the local nobility get the people's attention.

The cultural and topographical differences between the provinces are tremendous (see also *The Continent of Aventuria*, beginning on page 142). This is, of course, reflected in the population's worldview. For instance, the Albernians live in the land of fairy and will blame all their troubles on these magical creatures (they do have a somewhat mischievous nature), while Griffinforders tend to blame the recent Orkstorm for all the evils of the world.

Customs: Huge differences are found between provinces, so a few examples will have to suffice. If an Albernian sends you on your way with a wish for you to "walk the hard way," this has quite a positive bent, for that region's western part is covered in swamps which don't allow for errors in traversing them (thus, the hard way is the safe way). The mountainous province of Kosh is not renowned for its wealth. Calling someone a "Kosh baron" actually names him a pauper. Typical of the Kosh Mountains are the many small pieces of craftsmanship that are fashioned during the winter months and brought to the lowlands in summer by traders called "dosser chaps."

In Darpatia, where hospitality is highly valued, Travia is worshiped above all the other Twelvegods. In the rich and fertile area around Gareth where life under the "divine order" has always been good and the nobility is never far away, the cult of Praios is most prominent.

On the first day of the moon of Efferd (the "day of water"), the Festival of the Many-Colored Lights of Perricum takes place in that port city. Thousands of small rafts, laden with burning candles, are set onto the Darpat to drift into the sea. The Empire's most important festival is the Summer Solstice Celebration on 1 Praios; of almost equal importance are the National Holidays from 6 to 9 Rondra (which recall the victory over the Old Empire of Bosparan) and the Festival of Swords on 15 and 16 Rondra, during which large tourneys are held everywhere.

Clothing and Weapons: The common folk usually wear linen shirts, doublets, and woolen trousers (or skirts for women). Those who can afford it, though, dress after the latest Garethian fashion. Currently, court fashion consists of calf-length pleated cloaks, knee-length trousers, stockings of finest wool, shoes with only a few buckles, and a cap, often with feathers.

The Middenrealm's classical and most commonly used weapon is the long sword, also called a knight's sword. In wooded areas, hunting weapons such as the spear or bow are quite common. In the larger cities of the realm, all the weapons that money can buy are available.

Portrayal: Garetians are down-to-earth, god-fearing, and rather conservative. And yet, the huge variety of customs and subcultures gives you a lot of leeway in portraying your hero. A Garetian is the ideal choice for any new player. Simply avoid words that are too modern (cocktail, infotainment, dude, and so on) and take care to use the more "old-fashioned" forms of address of "thou" and "thine" to make your language sound more Aventurian. One of the most prominent character traits of Garetians is the need to set themselves apart from the Horasians. Garetians view themselves as more honest and more

ethical than the neighbors of the Vinsalt Kingdom, whom they usually regard as fops.

Typical Names: Males: Alrik, Fingorn, Gerion, Pagol, Praiodan, Stpien, Ugdalf; Females: Alinde, Fiana, Harika, Maline, Traviane; Surnames: Aldbridge, Berlind, Helmick, Lowangian, Stonecutter, Westing.

Starting Values

Generation Cost: 0 GP

Combat Talents: Bows or crossbows +1, brawling +1, daggers +1, infantry weapons +1

Social Talents: Etiquette +1, human nature +1, streetwise +1

Lore Talents: Heraldry +1, legend lore +2, religious lore +1

Languages/Scripts: Mother tongue, Garethi (CL –2), Tongues (Tulamidya or Rogolan or Isdira) +3

Artisan Talents: Farming +1

Possible Professions: Burglar, explorer, hunter, magician, mercenary, messenger, mountebank, physician, pirate, rogue, scout, warrior

Horasian Empire

Region: The Horasian Empire stretches from Grangor to Drôl, and is bounded by the Eternans and the Goldenrocks to the east. The Cyclops Islands are also under the Empire's jurisdiction.

Way of Living: The Fairfield, situated between Grangor and Neetha, is the heartland of the Horasian Empire. It is the most densely populated area of the Middenrealm—nowhere else will you find more cities on less space. (Note that you still cannot compare The Fairfield to today's conurbations; even less densely populated states like Kansas still have more people per square mile.)

The free farmers are able to make a fair living because they can easily sell their produce in the large cities. The townspeople, on the other hand, live on craft and trading. The Horasian Empire is also known as a haven for teaching and progress, and thus quite a few people earn their pay as aides to scholars or work in the "manufactories." Even the Horasian Empire has its fair share of beggars, however, living off the charity of the well-to-do.

The Fairfield is also the most influential trading center of Aventuria's west coast. Goods from all around the continent can be had in its harbors, and many an item totally unknown to Garetians is old hat for Horasians, or at least available in the markets of Grangor or Kuslik even if highly expensive.

Worldview: The Eagle Throne is the center of the world, and all Garetians are rebels and barbarians. The Fountlandians are barbarians, as well, as are the Andergastians and Nostrians—well, your standard Horasian does display at least some arrogance....

Horasians value their freedom. No other place in Aventuria holds as firm a stance against slavery as does The Fairfield. "Freedom" includes freedom of the mind; it is no accident that the most important temple of Hesinde, goddess of wisdom, is found at Kuslik. The Horasian Empire has also become a popular place for holding scientific meetings and congresses.

Another trait common to all Horasians is their love of life; they are truly free spirits. The main temple dedicated to Rahja sits at Belhanka. The wines from The Fairfield, especially the tickling Bosparanjan, are renowned across all of Aventuria. And if there is one fashion center on the continent, it is Vinsalt, not Gareth.

The Horasians share the Garetians' belief in the Twelvegods, but they are far more tolerant of other faiths. A unique feature of their spiritual world is the worship of Horas, legendary first emperor of the Old Empire (see the chapter on Emperors, Armies, and Demons starting on page 146) as a demigod. His cult is most popular among nationalists, some of whom have even resorted to attempts on the lives of Middenrealmian merchant houses or ambassadors.

Customs: In The Fairfield, free spirit runs high. Therefore, we will concentrate on customs of pleasure and entertainment for now. The Fairfield is the center of the Aventurian world of sports. The most popular team sport is called Imman. It was brought to the Horasian Empire from the north, quickly getting a foothold and finding a more than enthusiastic audience. Another favorite pastime is sipping good wine and playing Riva, a game that pits two toy fleets of ivory and ebony against each other.

Music and dance are valued throughout the Horasian Empire and are exported to the rest of the world. The rate of literacy even among the common people is high indeed.

Other arts are held in high esteem as well: intrigue, for instance. Everybody who wants to be somebody must become a member of at least one secret lodge. Not-so-secret brotherhoods also exist, such as the Society of the Friends of Aves, which counts among its members all those who can afford to travel for sheer pleasure or to support expeditions into the remotest corners of the continent. (Aves, a demigod, is the patron of travelers and fortune seekers.)

Clothing and Weapons: Common people favor long shirts and trousers, but owing to the mild climate, fabrics are lighter than elsewhere. Wide lace collars and corsets are typical of the Horasian Empire.

Nobles, as well as those who wish to look "better off," usually fall prey to new fashion trends, however ridiculous they may be. For instance, a male noble often wears a long, laced brocade jacket, wide knee breeches, high boots, and a wide-brimmed feathered hat. Ladies wear resplendent garments with narrow waists, opulent skirts, and daring necklines. Even women of standing, however, may be seen wearing comfortable trousers and boots at times.

As for weapons, daggers as well as fencing weapons such as rapiers or foils are most popular.

Portrayal: Horasians are fully aware that they live in the most progressive nation in all of Aventuria, which fills them with pride (and some measure of arrogance, too). Apart from this, Horasians like to look beyond their own country, to study the politics of other realms, and even regard themselves as brothers and sisters to all their fellow Aventurians. But make no mistake—this role serves as big brothers or sisters, for who wants to be on the same level as a lowly Garetian?

Typical Names: Horasian names sound softer than Garetian ones, often having more vowels (e.g., Tassilo, Darion,

Alrico, Antea, Rahjana, Naila); for persons of standing, surnames are often introduced with an infix (ay, di, ya): Savonio ay Desca, Lutrea ya Baltari, Lorion di Cabazzo.

Starting Values

Generation Cost: 5 GP

Combat Talents: Brawling +1, crossbows +1, daggers +1, fencing weapons +1, infantry weapons +1

Physical Talents: Dance +1, swim +1

Social Talents: Etiquette +2, fast talk +1, human nature +2, seduce +1, streetwise +2

Lore Talents: Calculate +2, engineering +1, history +1, law +1, legend lore +2, religious lore +1

Languages/Scripts: Mother tongue, Garethi (CL –2), Read/Write (Kuslik Script) +2, Tongues (Tulamidya or Rogolan) +5

Artisan Talents: Farming +1

Possible Professions: Burglar, explorer, hunter, magician, mercenary, messenger, mountebank, physician, pirate, rogue, scout, warrior

Fountland

Region: The Fountland is bounded in the south by the Sea of Pearls and the Dragon Stones, in the east by the Brazen Sword, in the west by the Green Plains and the Red Sickly, and in the north by the North Weal Downs.

Way of Living: The Fountland is a noble's republic. Every five years, the Nobles' Conclave at Festum chooses a Noble Marshall who represents the Fountland to other nations and also serves as the nation's chief warlord. The real extent of his power is based on his individual authority, though, meaning that often the title of Noble Marshall is no more than that: a title. If the ruler is weak, nobody will really obey him, regardless of title.

Every noble is proud of his title. This pride of place is such that even the poorest squire, who must earn his living by shining boots in the streets of Festum, regards even the richest merchant in all of Aventuria as nothing more than a mere commoner.

The nobles have absolute power. Most Fountland people are farmers in bondage, whose fate is tied to the will of their master, the bronnyar.

In the countryside and in the cities, daily life runs its course as it does in the rest of Aventuria. Festum, the capital of the Fountland, is the third largest city in Aventuria; it even has its own goblin quarter. However, the redfurs are allowed to work only in unpopular professions such as tanner or rat catcher.

Another remarkable feature of the Fountland is its infamous winter. It is especially severe in the northern region of Sevirya.

Worldview: The farmers regard the Twelvegods as the highest authority of all, but their bronnyar comes a close second. There exists a love-hate relationship between farmer and bronnyar: on the one hand, the farmer dislikes the bronnyar for the atrocities he commits, but on the other hand, the farmers are proud to do whatever they can to help their master prosper, for thus is the will of the gods. The bronnyar, in turn, customarily regards his serfs as lazy and sly, and this is all that needs to be said about the Seviryan farmers and how they see the world.

In Festum, though, things are quite different. Since this port city maintains a large merchant fleet, news from all over the continent is of the highest interest.

Customs: "Hitting the bottle like a Seviryan noble" has become a popular saying in the northeastern Middenrealm. To put it mildly, the phrase describes an overindulgence in alcohol.

All across the Fountland, "Ifirn's Dance" is well known. This is a children's game: at the first sign of snow, the children sing and dance, greeting "Ifirn's Stars" (i.e., the snow flakes, which were named after Firun's mild daughter). In reward, they are handed "Ifirn's Slices," brown bread covered thickly in beet weed and precious white sugar, a true delicacy compared to their usual diet of cabbage soup.

Clothing and Weapons: The farmers in bondage wear frocks and can usually afford no more than straw shoes, which they cover in rags come winter to prevent their toes from freezing. And even if they should acquire some money, they are only allowed to wear what is proscribed in the strict Fountlandian dress code: for furs, they may wear only dog, cat, or goat. Free Fountlandians are somewhat better off, as they may wear rabbit. However, lynx, ermine, and bear (as best exemplified by the famous tall bear skin caps) are reserved for bronnyars only.

Portrayal: The average Fountlandian is good-natured and friendly, but farmers tend to be conservative and stubborn. Townspeople, on the other hand, are more open to new ideas and have good minds for business.

All Fountlandians have heard stories of restive serfs being dragged by a bronnyar's horse, breaking all the offender's bones; most have actually seen it happen. This makes them wonder about the mildness of Garetian earls, who convene a court session before cutting off the hand of a thieving farmer.

All Fountlandians share a fear of the long, harsh winter—a winter you can survive only if you have prepared well. Fountlandians have been known to buy fur hats and thick wool fabrics in midsummer in the Fairfield, just because "the early Fountlandian never gets cold in winter."

Typical Names: Males: Baeryan, Colyev, Orshin, Wulfen; Females: Nayesha, Tyeika, Yanne; As surnames: Arauken, Laronov, Seversky.

Starting Values

Generation Cost: 0 GP

Combat Talents: Brawling +1, daggers +1, throwing knives +1

Physical Talents: Carouse +1, dance +1

Social Talents: Etiquette +1, human nature +1

Nature Talents: Orientation +1, survival +1

Lore Talents: Legend lore +2, religious lore +1

Languages/Scripts: Mother tongue, Garethi (CL –2), Tongues (Nujuki or Alaani) one +6, the other +2

Artisan Talents: Farming +1, leathercraft +1

Possible Professions: Burglar, explorer, hunter, magician, mercenary, messenger, mountebank, physician, pirate, rogue, scout, warrior

Thorwal

Region: The Thorwalians have settled along the coastline of the Sea of the Seven Winds from Kendrar to Olport, including the Prem Peninsula and the Olport Stones. Thorwalian quarters have also sprung up in many other port cities, sometimes even distant ones.

Way of Living: The Thorwalians engage in only limited farming and herding; instead, they have pledged themselves to the endless seas, roving all across the Sea of the Seven Winds (and often other oceans as well) as pirates, traders, and fishermen. Their ships, slender dragon ships or Ottas, are highly maneuverable, very robust, and feared everywhere. Thorwalian pirates not only attack other ships, but also plunder coastal villages and small port cities.

Both sexes are absolutely equal in Thorwalian society. It's common to see a red-bearded male, two children in his arms, standing on the quay and waving his heavily-armed woman good-bye, hoping for her safe return from her raiding expedition. Middenlanders who express amusement at such behavior have often had to see the dentist shortly afterwards.

At the core of Thorwalian society is not the family or clan, but the ship's community, or *Ottajasko*. These groups of forty to fifty men and women take to the seas in summer on one boat and share long houses in winter.

Worldview: The people of Thorwal worship Swafnir, son of war goddess Rondra and sea god Efferd, who roams the waters in the shape of a huge sperm whale, forever locked into fierce battle with the giant snake, Hranngar. Should Swafnir's strength ever falter, the end of the world will be nigh. For this reason, Thorwalians hold all whales and dolphins in high esteem and hate all whalers. They are a freedom-loving people who abhor slavery and slave holders, especially the Al'Anfians. When they decide to raid a village of Horasian invaders or capture a merchantman or an Al'Anfian torturer, they do not regard this as real piracy at all.

Customs: Apart from (perhaps) the people of northern Fountland, Thorwalians hold the absolute record in liquor consumption throughout Aventuria. The most infamous of their brews is the Premian Fire, a turnip liquor (or schnaps) that burns with a red flame (and in a person's throat as well).

Another typical feature of the Thorwalians is their colorful tattoos, often in the shapes of whales and dolphins.

Bath houses can be found everywhere in Thorwal, not only in cities and villagers, but in almost every farmstead. These are used for ritual washings with cold water (and in winter, with snow). Afterward, Thorwalians congregate and show their kinship in a common warm bath.

Thorwalians are a superstitious people. They often wear a whole slew of amulets around their necks, thus hoping to be protected from all kinds of evil imaginable. They also sew protective runes onto their clothing.

Clothing and Weapons: Thorwalians like to combine their classic garments (woolen trousers and linen shirts) with gaudy, extravagant clothing they have taken as plunder or bought in a foreign market. Heavy belts and girdles with ornamented buckles as well as leather doublets and bodices are typical, as are high seafarer's boots and broad bracelets. Except for different shapes and sizes, men's and women's clothing does not differ.

Thorwalians love axes of all kinds and types; especially typical is the "foretooth," a special type of throwing axe that they learn to use from an early age. They also value edged weapons such as sabers and cutlasses, sometimes carrying enough of these to equip a small army. Armor is regarded as cumbersome (and deadly when aboard ship). Thus, Thorwalians rarely wear armor heavier than a quilted leather tunic or a "toadshide," a leather vest studded with heavy rivets.

Portrayal: Playing a Thorwalian is quite simple and highly suited for beginning players. Just blend straightforwardness, pugnacity, and the ability to hold enormous amounts of alcohol with a love of raw strength. Add a bit of self-conceit and there's your hero. Sure, superstition and sudden gloomy mood swings will sometimes creep in, but the Thorwalian who runs away from a problem has not yet been born.

Thorwalians are proud of their traditions and would never part with them. They are proud of their parents, their people, and their Ottajasko. Not a Thorwalian exists who could not talk about the heroic deeds of her ancestors or her ship's community for at least three days.

Starting Values

Generation Cost: 10 GP
Modifications: EP +2
Disadvantages: Superstition 5
Combat Talents: Brawling +2, Axes & Maces +1, throwing axes +2
Physical Talents: Athletics +1, body control +1, carouse +3, swim +3
Nature Talents: Bind/escape +1, fish +3, orientation +3
Lore Talents: Legend lore +4, religious lore +1, starcraft +1
Languages/Scripts: Mother tongue, Thorwalian (CL –2), second language, Garethi (CL –4)
Artisan Talents: Boats +2, seafaring +2, woodcraft +1
Possible Professions: Hunter, magician, mercenary, messenger, mountebank, physician, pirate, rogue, scout, warrior

Mhanadistan

Region: Mhanadistan is the name for the highlands between the upper run of the River Mhanadi and its tributary, the River Gadang. This is the heartland of Tulamidyan culture.

Way of Living: As Tulamides, the Mhanadistani have no concept of nobility as found in the Horasian Empire, the Middenrealm, or the Fountland. Social standing and political power are based solely on wealth (and possibly also on magical prowess), not on the grace of birth. Thus, the office of duke or sultan has become hereditary only because the Mhanadistani assume that the money entitling the former holder of office to his rank remains in the family.

As everywhere in the world, townspeople live on trade, craft, and (to a large part) on begging. Those really desperate for quick cash often hire on with the El-Achami Academy of Mental Power, probably Aventuria's most infamous school of black magic, to take part in some "harmless" experiment.

The banks of the Mhanadi provide enough millet and wheat to feed the large city of Fasar. Numerous brooks and lakes crisscross a countryside that is also rich in livestock farming.

Mhanadistan is the cradle of the ancient Tulamides, the first human civilization of Aventuria. The Tulamides were later subjugated by the advancing Gyldenlanders. No more than 200 years ago, the country was still part of the Middenrealm, but finally managed to gain independence. The former baronies and dukedoms then degenerated into a collection of village states that are usually ruled by a so-called "bey."

Worldview: The word Tulamide simply means "human," and this is how the Mhanadistani view themselves: as heirs to those who created the first human civilization. This is in sharp contrast to the war-mongering Gyldenlanders, who don't have any sense of beauty or aesthetics.

Wealth means power and prestige and is seen as a highly desirable goal, if not the only goal worth pursuing. This view has led to an open battle between those with property and those without property. Nowhere in Aventuria will you find larger bands of robbers, some of which reach the size of small armies. Accordingly, estates have been turned into veritable fortresses to ward off this constant threat. A brigand chieftain who has amassed a fortune by constant successful robbery might well become a respected member of society, while an estate owner who has lost all in a raid might suddenly become an nonperson.

Most Mhanadistani believe in the Twelvegods, but are also open to other religions.

Customs: The Tulamide races are polygamous. A man may have as many women as he can manage to feed. He must declare one of them his main wife, the Shanya, who acts as head of the household and may even inherit her husband's power in the event of his death. This is nearly the only possible way for a woman to achieve a position of influence. Consequently, it is quite uncommon to educate women in ways beyond housekeeping, with certain exceptions, such as dancing. (In recent times and in cities of a more "Middenrealmian" bent such as Kunchom, though, "housekeeping" has taken on the additional meaning of "bookkeeping." And the exceptions as regards magicians or the cult of the Twelvegods are legion.) Customarily, husband and wife are promised to each other in early childhood (and in some cases, even before birth).

Slavery is allowed by law and is quite common. Even those Mhanadistani who cannot afford to buy a slave enjoy visiting the slave markets, both for the colorful sights and the chance to see a large number of splendid, half-naked young men and women up close.

Clothing and Weapons: All Tulamides like fine, colorful fabrics. A number of different fashion influences mix in the Mhanadi valley: knickerbockers, short doublets, flowing caftans, lace collars, and tunics are as common as turbans, head scarves, and straw hats.

The typical weapon of the Mhanadistani is the Kunchomer (a type of scimitar) and its larger cousin, the double Kunchomer (which must be wielded with both hands). A smaller curved dagger, both in light and heavy versions, is also quite popular. Scale and ring mail are favored over all other types or armor.

Portrayal: Role-play your Mhanadistani as tolerant, gentle, and friendly. He is no miser, has a sense for pleasure and the fine arts, and is fond of festivities. If his friends are short of money, he has no problem paying for them.

On the other hand, he does have an excellent eye for business and an instinct for gaining advantages. Blackmail is just a peccadillo for him, and the property of others is not nearly as sacred as his own. He never indulges in common theft though, but instead cheats his business partners in ways bordering on fraud. His quick tongue is one of his most valuable assets.

You understand the obvious benefits of slavery and the proper behavior of women, and may feel moved to share this wisdom with your companions on occasion

Starting Values

Generation Cost: 0 GP

Combat Talents: brawling +1, daggers +1, sabers +1, wrestling +1

Social Talents: etiquette +1, fast talk +2, human nature +1, seduce +1, streetwise +1

Lore Talents: board games +1, legend lore +3, religious lore +1

Languages/Scripts: mother tongue, Tulamidya (CL –2), second language, Garethi (CL –4)

Artisan Talents: farming +1

Possible Professions: Males: burglar, explorer, magician, mercenary, messenger, mountebank, physician, pirate, rogue, scout, warrior; Females: burglar, possibly magician, possibly messenger, mountebank, physician, possibly pirate, rogue

Novadis

Region: About half of the Novadis can be found in the Khôm Desert while the rest dwell in the large cities, most importantly Mherwed and Unau. Punin, Kunchom, Selem, and even far Festum also have significant Novadi communities.

Way of Living: The city-dwelling Novadis live on craft, farming, and breeding stock. The desert Novadis, on the other hand, travel the Khôm as nomads. A Novadi's wealth is in his animals, the most important of which is his horse. The only real horse people in Aventuria, the Novadis can perform legendary stunts on horseback and are known as unsurpassed riders.

The sexes are not equal in Novadi society. While an unmarried girl still has some freedom, once she marries she becomes her husband's property, just like his horse and his goats. In rare cases, though, a woman may find glory, power, and a reputation as a warrior by acting as an Achmad'sunni, a she-avenger (the word has formed the basis for the Garetian term, "amazon").

Worldview: The Novadis worship the Onegod, Rastullah. Some 260 years ago, he appeared to them in the oasis of Keft, presenting them with his 99 holy commandments and ordering his people to carry forth the one true faith into the world, if need be with fire and sword. The Novadis do not deny the existence of the Twelvegods but see them as no more than vassals to Rastullah, who aspire in vain to positions as supreme deities and will soon be crushed for their insolence.

Customs: Many of the wild desert tribes hail strangers with a staged mass charge. Those who turn tail and flee are ridiculed or even attacked in earnest, while those who keep their calm are held in high esteem and may claim right of hospitality.


Mhanadistan
Anvil Dwarf
Lea Elf
Novadi

Outside of the Khôm, the notion of shadow combat, usually performed in hidden places, has given rise to a great amount of speculation. It is both a religious act and an exercise, for "he who pleases Rastullah strengthens mind and body." Shadow combat is usually done with a Kunchomer and looks like a battle against an unseen enemy.

Novadi table manners are also worthy of note: They eat by using their hands, with the host hand-feeding the best bits to the honored guest.

Clothing and Weapons: The Novadis always wear some kind of head covering, such as a piece of cloth or a turban, for protection against the relentless desert sun. Loose, thin garments worn in several layers shield them from the heat of the day. Depending on clan or wealth, linen, wool, or even brocade fabrics may be used. Novadis do not like to part with their clothing styles even when away from the desert.

Typical Novadi weapons are the Kunchomer as well as the light riding spear, the jadra, used while on horseback. Their favored ranged weapon is the short bow.

Portrayal: However far away from the Khôm he may be, a Novadi will never part with his flowery language or with his pride or hot temper. His love for horses is proverbial, and seeing a noble breed of horse might just make him forget that his comrade has been in dire need of help for quite some time now ....

When a Novadi feels insulted, trouble is sure to brew. Unfortunately, even a stranger's casual glance may arouse his ire.

All Novadis are highly pious and always try to live up to Rastullah's 99 Rules. These govern a Novadi's entire life without doing anything to simplify it.

Starting Values

Generation Cost: 5 GP
Modifications: CO +1, EP +2
Advantages: Direction Sense, Heat Resistance
Disadvantages: Claustrophobia at least 5, either Arrogance or Violent Temper or Vengefulness at least 5
Combat Talents: Bows +1, brawling +1, daggers +1, javelins +1, jousting +1, sabers +1, spears +1, wrestling +1
Physical Talents: Athletics +1, body control +1, perception +1, ride +3, swim –1
Nature Talents: Orientation +3, survival +1
Lore Talents: Board games +2, legend lore +2, law +1, religious lore +1 starcraft +1
Languages/Scripts: Mother tongue, Tulamidya (CL –2)
Artisan Talents: Boats –1
Possible Professions: Males: magician, mercenary, messenger, mountebank, physician, rogue, scout, warrior; Females: mountebank, physician, rogue

The Lea Elf People

Region: Lea elves make their homes along the banks of the rivers north of the Salamander Stones, mostly on the upper run of the River Kvill, along the River Letta, and along the mid-Oblomon.

Way of Living: Lea elves live in villages built on pilings in the river meadows. The only known elven town is Kvirasim (see *The Continent of Aventuria*, beginning on page 142). They live by hunting, fishing, growing fruit and herbs, and trading with humans. Since they have a keen sense of smell, lea elves do not like food that has been created by fermentation or putrefaction, such as cheese or ale. Neither do they like milk, which should be reserved for young animals.

The elves have perfected many crafts, especially those of furrier, bowyer, and woodcarver. Their sense for jewelry, ornamentation, and all things beautiful is legendary.

Worldview: Like all elven peoples, lea elves do not recognize the human gods but instead revere "nurti" (i.e., life) and fear "zerzal" (death). They regard themselves as part of the community of all living creatures, and at the same time regard all living beings as part of themselves.

The human greed for worldly riches is alien to them and beyond their comprehension. From their point of view, a beautiful bow or a well-crafted flute are treasures worth seeking, but a pile of shimmering metal most certainly is not. Besides, what can you do with it except fear it being stolen?

Customs: Not much is known in Aventuria about elf customs and pastimes. Although humans occasionally visit elf villages, they rarely stay long and are usually not invited to festivals. Since elves have free and uninhibited love lives, marriages are rare. Those few that are known were glorious festivities, full of dance and song but totally without eating and drinking. Instead, the elves seemed to be cast into a rapture of lust for life by their innate magic and an inborn savageness.

Elves know neither laws nor courts of law, rather relying on a natural feeling of right and wrong that imbues each and every clan member to value her fellow elves' opinions enough to abide by their rulings voluntarily. The only punishment known to elves is banishment from the community. The sentenced elf continues to live with her tribe, but is shunned and ignored. The punishment usually lasts for a limited time, and in most cases, a day is enough to make the miscreant see the error of her ways. In especially severe cases, the punishment may be pronounced for life. Rumor has it that all elves join in a magical song that practically removes the expelled elf from their eyesight.

Clothing and Weapons: Lea elves fabricate almost all of their clothing from suede or a fabric named "wad." This is extracted from the cottonlike seed cluster of the wad rush and can easily be dyed and worked into durable, water-resistant clothing. They wear shirts and trousers that are usually form fitting and adorned with fringes, colorful embroidery, feathers, fur linings, or animal teeth. Typical of all lea elves are top boots of soft leather and the wad cloak, a sleeveless tunic usually dyed blue-gray or green.

Elves will don armor only in true cases of emergency; even then, they avoid metal armor because they find it unfamiliar and cumbersome. For weapons, elves prefer short bows of ash wood (sometimes also manufactured as composite bows, made from various types of wood, bone, and animal sinews) and fencing weapons such as hunting rapiers and daggers.

Portrayal: Of all the elf peoples, lea elves are closest to humans and thus easiest to role-play. One thing, however, needs to be perfectly clear: an elf is not human! She is more than a fighter who can also use magic. Thus, you should not take on the challenge of playing an elf until you have found your bearings in Aventuria.

As most scholars have surmised, the elf race is much older than the human one. Elves have mastered an intuitive form of magic that comes easily without long and arduous study. Because of this, they are usually wary of human magicians, not only those who dabble in the dark arts but of proven "white magicians" as well.

Elves find the notion of subjecting themselves to any mundane or spiritual authority as devoid of all dignity. They also abhor senseless cruelty, even when committed against their most hated enemies. They always voice these opinions clearly and loudly, and are often prone to ironic or even arrogant remarks about their perceived failings of the world of humans. A correctly role-played elf should now and again find herself in trouble due to a careless, arrogant remark about the strange customs and behavior of her human companions.

Starting Values

Generation Cost: 25 GP

Disadvantages: Inability for Religious Lore

Combat Talents: Bows +4

Physical Talents: Athletics +1, body control +2, climb +1, dance +2, hide +5, sing +2, sneak +3, swim +1

Social Talents: Seduce +3, streetwise –2

Nature Talents: Fish +1, survival +5, track +3

Lore Talents: Animal lore +2, arcane lore* +3, law –2, legend lore +2, plant lore +3

Languages/Scripts: Mother tongue, Isdira (CL –2), second language, Garethi (CL –4)

Artisan Talents: Bowyer +2, leathercraft +2, play instrument +3, treat poison +1, woodcraft +2

Spells: Spell GP equal to (CL+IN) x 5 points; may be used to improve all elven heritage and general spells as per column A; spell activation cost is 5 Spell GP, maximum SP at the beginning of play is 10; guild magic spells are unknown to elves and may not be learned.

Possible Professions: Legend singer, ranger

* Elves are able to use and advance Arcane Lore without having to meet the minimum Read/Write requirements as listed in the Talent description.

The Anvil Dwarfs

Region: The mountain kingdom ("mountain freehold") of Woodward in the Anvil Mountains is home to the anvil dwarfs. Some clans who have retained the anvil way of living have settled in the Darkencrest, the Thash Mountains, the Maraskan Chain, and the mountains of Kunchom.

Way of Living: Anvil dwarfs like to brawl, drink, and smear their bodies with a paste of fat and coal dust (which makes them look pretty dirty)—in short, they conform to every dwarf cliché ever put in place by humans and elves. Their underground settlements look like furnished mines, often illuminated only by the fires of the forges.

Worldview: Well, something exists outside the dwarf cities, but it is the faceless, impersonal world of the humans. Once there, you can get into trouble simply by jostling one of them, and you have to part with great-grandfather's ax before entering a simple tavern. This does not mean that dwarfs shun the world of humans, though. Quite the contrary—many anvil dwarfs go adventuring "for a good bashing." Still, they really feel at home only among their own clan.

Mentality and Portrayal: The dwarfs of the Anvil have always maintained a sense of independence, even from the other dwarf races. Their King Under The Mountain, Arombolosh, is regarded as one of the wisest and most capable of all dwarf rulers alive. Anvil dwarfs are not only renowned for their skill in weapon smithing (even among other dwarfs), but also for training the best fighters dwarfdom has to offer. They have squared off valiantly against enemy after enemy since time immemorial, not even shying away from mighty dragons. All this makes them even prouder and more self-important than dwarfs are ordinarily imagined to be.

Dwarfs can be unbelievably stubborn. Even if you're usually willing to compromise, your dwarf should every so often be rock-headed enough to bring the rest of your party to the brink of despair ("We will do it as I say. Father did it that way, and Grandfather before him. End of discussion!").

Dwarfs are not just small humans; we cannot stress this enough. Please do not turn your dwarf into a small, fearless copy of a human warrior. Instead, you should try to get into the dwarfen frame of mind and emphasize the character's alien nature. Try to imagine how it feels to walk across a sunny meadow if you dislike sunlight (and meadows, for that matter). Imagine the colorful curses your hero might spit from gritted teeth in such a situation. On the other hand, let your dwarf marvel at the sight of an ore vein or let him forget about his surroundings for a few moments while gazing at a perfectly crafted marble statue. And never forget that calling out, "This might be dwarfwork!" is the highest praise a dwarf can deliver.

Clothing and Weapons: Adventuring dwarfs favor their personal chain mail shirt (handed down from their forefathers or forged by themselves) as their chief garment. Beneath the armor, a dwarf usually wears servicable clothes, thick wool padding and over all, a cloak of hide or cloth. Dwarfs never remove their armor, neither in hot summer nor during the night. Ax and hammer are the dwarf's classical weapons; they are generally used two-handed. Only younger fighters employ a shield and then only in combination with short weapons (heavy dagger, hatchet, short sword). Dwarfs find human two-handed weapons far too unwieldy for their own use.

Starting Values

Generation Cost: 20 GP

Combat Talents: Brawling +1, crossbows +3, Axes & Maces +1, two-handed Axes & Maces +1, wrestling +2

Physical Talents: Athletics +1, carouse +3, climb +1

Social Talents: Streetwise –2

Nature Talents: Weather sense –2

Lore Talents: Appraise +3, engineering +1, legend lore +2, religious lore +2, stone lore +2

Languages/Scripts: Mother tongue, Rogolan (CL –2), second language, Garethi (CL –4)

Artisan Talents: Blacksmith or stonemason +3, light engineering +2, mining +3

Special Abilities: Armor Use I (chain mail shirt)

Possible Professions: Explorer, mercenary, messenger, physician

Professions

An Aventurian "profession" is not what you would expect in light of the modern use of the term. No professional burglar or rogue would ever identify this career when asked what they do for a living. The analogy falls completely flat when we think about lea elves, who do not even understand the concept of a "job." Instead, a hero's profession describes what she was doing before she decided to go adventuring, in the most general sense. Maybe she held an apprenticeship somewhere or even had academic training; maybe she had to fight her way through the back alleys of a large city, learning how to beg professionally or how to cut fat merchants' purse strings. Whatever her actual background, we refer to it as her profession. Professions provide an important influence on a hero's starting values.

In the listings below, some professions show items or conditions indicated as "Special." Anything listed in this category is not automatically provided to the character through purchase of the profession. The item or feature is purchased automatically, however, if the character takes the "Special Item" Advantage. Items listed under "Equipment" come automatically with the chosen profession.

Burglar



Treasure in Aventuria has always been distributed unevenly, but it's all there for the taking for those daring few who know how to get it. This is not only the creed of the back-alley cutpurses, but also of other, more refined con artists. While the cutpurses wait for their targets to come to them, burglars simply break and enter into the villas and palaces of their noble prey. Sure, the risk is higher, but the results might be that much greater.

Many burglars steal not only for their own gain, but also to pay tithe to Phex, god of thieves and merchants, hoping that the coins so donated may one day pay off. Many a Tulamidyan tale speaks of Phex-pleasing thieves who, in the end, achieved wealth and even a prince's (or sultan's) daughter's hand in marriage.

Burglar (0 GP)

Requirements: CO 12, AG 12, DE 13, SO not more than 7
Combat Talents: Daggers +3, throwing knives +1, wrestling +1
Physical Talents: Acrobatics +2, athletics +2, body control +5, climb +6, hide +5, perception +2, pick pockets +2, sneak +5, willpower +2
Social Talents: Human nature +1, masquerade +1, streetwise +4
Nature Talents: Bind/escape +2, orientation +2, track +1
Lore Talents: Appraise +4, calculate +2, engineering +1
Artisan Talents: Open locks +7, paint/draw +2
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Connections; Greed
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Bad Hearing, Claustrophobia, Fear of the Dark, Lame, Night-Blind
Equipment: Dark clothing, dark hood or cloak, dark gloves, set of lockpicks, 10 paces of rope, grappling hook, belt with hangers and loops, hidden dagger
Special: Connections to her home region's underworld (fence, beggar in the know, and so on) for a total SO of 20 (apart from this, treat like the Connections Advantage)

Explorer



Explorers spend most of their time in ruined temples or dusty libraries. They are always searching for something—new methods of engineering, rare plants, or long-forgotten manuscripts. They research the genealogies of the mighty or scour remote jungles for treasure. Their main use for all this knowledge and all these findings is the historical value, and this often gets explorers into trouble with less honorable (and greedier) treasure hunters.

Secrets of any kind seem to magically attract explorers, and they are prone to making monologues about their favorite research topic for hours on end, regardless of any listeners. They tend to be somewhat less familiar with the more practical aspects of life and must rely on others for help with minor issues such as defense against enemies. Their companions rarely complain, however, for in return they usually get important translations of warning inscriptions in ancient temples or sound legal advice when in danger of being thrown in jail.

Explorer (10 GP)

Requirements: CO 11, CL 12, IN 12, SO at least 7
Combat Talents: Crossbows +1, staves +2
Physical Talents: Body control +1, climb +2, perception +4, ride +3, swim +1
Social Talents: Etiquette +3, fast talk +2, human nature +1
Nature Talents: Orientation +3, survival +2, track +2, weather sense +2
Lore Talents: One Talent from the following list at +7: anatomy, animal lore, arcane lore, engineering, geography, heraldry, history, language lore, law, plant lore, religious lore, starcraft, stone lore, alchemy, bowyer, cartography, light engineering, mining; a second Talent from the same list at +5; a third talent from the same list at +3 (should you choose one or more Talents for which the explorer gets bonuses anyway—see listing after these parentheses—the bonuses do not stack. Instead, you must redistribute the standard bonus from the list below to another Talent from the above list); Also appraise +3, arcane lore +3, calculate +4, engineering +1, geography +2, heraldry +1, history +5, language lore +3, law +1, legend lore +2, religious lore +3, starcraft +2

Languages/Scripts: Read/write mother tongue script +6, read/write two scripts of choice at +4 each, tongues (two foreign tongues of choice) at +6 each, two more tongues at +2 each
Artisan Talents: Boats +1, cartography +5, paint/draw +4, open locks +1, treat poison +1, treat wounds +2
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Curiosity, Dwarfnose, Good Memory, Language Instinct
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Superstition
Equipment: Sturdy and weatherproof clothing, hard boots, raincoat, dagger or similar light weapon, rucksack, waterproof leather map case, charcoal pencil, 20 sheets of simple paper, magnifying glass
Special Item: experienced horse with saddle, bit, and bridle, or small boat

Hunter



Most hunters dislike the city, regarding it as too large, too loud, and too dirty. They prefer the solitude of the wilderness as well as the brutal honesty of nature and the creatures found there. Often, their only companion is a tame animal to keep them company in the loneliness.

Hunters are usually shy and reserved toward other humans. They have mastered the art of surviving in the wild and have learned the best places to set traps. They also know how not to get lost, how to tell edible plants from poisonous ones, and even how to predict the weather. A hunter may have been born in the wild, thus literally "inheriting" his profession, but there are some who had to learn it the hard way after seeking refuge in the wilderness or on the run as wanted criminals.

Some hunters actually earn hard cash by their profession. Almost every baron has a gamekeeper in his employ who keeps order in the forests of the fief, defeats poachers, and guards against the intrusion of brigands or other evil folk.

Hunter (10 GP)

Requirements: IN 12, AG 12, CN 11, SO not more than 7
Modifications: EP +2
Combat Talents: Bows or crossbows or javelins +5, daggers +3, spears +3, staves or Axes & Maces +1, wrestling +2
Physical Talents: Athletics or ride or boats +2, body control +2, climb +2, hide +5, perception +5, sneak +5, swim +2, voice mimicry +1, willpower +2
Nature Talents: Bind/escape +3, fish +2, orientation +3, survival +5, track +6, traps +6, weather sense +5
Lore Talents: Animal lore +5, plant lore +3
Artisan Talents: Bowyer or train animals +4, butcher or tanner/furrier +3, cook +1, leathercraft +2, tailor +2, treat disease +2, treat poison +3, treat wounds +2, woodcraft +2
Special Ability: Marksman
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Danger Sense, Direction Sense or Mental Compass; Claustrophobia
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Bad Hearing, Fear of Open Spaces, Lame
Equipment: Sturdy and weatherproof clothing, hunting weapon of choice (bow, crossbow, or spear), dagger, components for three animal traps, rucksack, waterskin, haversack, flint and tinder, sleeping bag, small tent
Special Item: Pack animal with bridle and bags, or trained hunting dog/hunting falcon

Magician



Only a special few are able to wield magic. Those who have been trained in its ways are highly respected throughout Aventuria. Most magicians graduate from a magicians' academy; private tutoring is rare, but not unheard of. Academic classes not only encompass all things magical, but also the basics of alchemy, history, philosophy, and many other sciences.

No two curricula are ever alike, since academies run the gamut from Horasian illusionist magic to Tulamidyan djinni summoning to sinister Brabakian demonology. One thing is common to all magicians (and magiciennes, as is the female form), however: when they leave the academy, they are still at the beginning of their careers.

Despite (or because of) all the years of intensive study; new magicians do not know much of the real world and are often somewhat naive. A magicienne's extensive training usually does not allow her to learn weapons other than daggers or staves. While she may be able to hurl a devastating fireball, she is still unfamiliar with much about the world beyond the academy walls. Her primary motivation will always be a thirst for knowledge, both in the magical and non-magical sciences.

Magician (20 GP)

Requirements: CO 11, CL 13, CH 12, SO at least 7
Modifications: RM +2, ASP +6
Advantages: Academic Training (Magicians' Academy), Spellcaster
Combat Talents: Staves +2
Physical Talents: Perception +2, willpower +2
Social Talents: Etiquette +3, human nature +1, persuade +2
Lore Talents: Animal lore +1, arcane lore +7, board games +1, calculate +6, engineering +1, geography +2, heraldry +1, history +3, language lore +1, law

+2, legend lore +2, plant lore +3, religious lore +2, starcraft +3

Languages/Scripts: Read/write mother tongue script +6, read/write two from the following list: Ancient Tulamidyan, Glyphs of Unau, Kuslik Script, Tulamidya, Zhayad at +4 each, tongues (mother tongue) +2, tongues (Tulamidya or Garethi [not as mother tongue]) +2, tongues (Bosparano) +6, tongues (Proto-Tulamidya) +4

Artisan Talents: Alchemy +4, paint/draw +2

Spells: Spell GP in the amount of (CL+IN) x 5 points; may be used to improve all guild magic and general spells as per column A; spell activation cost is 5 Spell GP; maximum SP at the beginning of play is 10. Elven heritage spells known to magicians may be advanced as per column C; spell activation cost is 15 Spell GP; maximum SP at the beginning of play is 7. *Eye of eagle* and *fog flow far* are not known to magicians and may not be chosen at the beginning of play. A beginning magician has already learned the secret of the First Wand Enchantment.

Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Good Memory, Inner Clock, Language Instinct; Arrogance, Vanity

Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Hard to Enspell; Color Blind, Low Resistance to Magic

Equipment: Robe covered in arcane symbols, pointed hat or horned cap, wand with First Wand Enchantment, ceremonial dagger, ink bottle, quill, 10 sheets of parchment, dagger or magician's foil, leather shoulder bag

Special Item: None

Mercenary



Not every noble can afford to maintain a cadre of knights or a standing army. Thus, mercenaries are highly popular across Aventuria since you can send them home when you no longer need them. Mercenaries live to fight, even when off duty. They might talk for hours on end about the siege of one particular fortress or the penetration power of catapults and crossbows.

Mercenaries rarely learn their craft in academies, instead acquiring it on the bloody testing grounds of the continent's battlefields. They are rough customers who fight for money and loot or sometimes just for fighting's sake. They laugh at heroic motivations, and yet they know that, despite all their loud and blustering appearance, none of them will ever gain any real glory and that most of them will never become more than a replaceable name on their employer's payroll. Small wonder then that many mercenaries try to make a living as freelancers or end up as thugs employed by a large city's thieves' guild.

Mercenary (10 GP)

Requirements: CO 12, AG 12, CN 13, ST 11, SO not more than 7

Modifications: VP +1, EP +2

Advantages: Toughness

Combat Talents: Bastard sword or chain weapons or Axes & Maces or fencing weapons or sabers or swords or two-handed Axes & Maces or two-handed swords +5; a second Talent from the previous list at +3; bows or crossbows or javelins or throwing axes or throwing knives +3; also brawling +3, daggers +3, infantry weapons +3, wrestling +3

Physical Talents: Athletics +2, body control +1, carouse +3, climb +2, hide +1, sneak +2, willpower +1

Social Talents: Human nature +2, streetwise +1

Nature Talents: Bind/escape +1, fish +1, orientation +1, survival +2, track +2, traps +2, weather sense +1

Lore Talents: Animal lore +1, appraise +1, engineering or treat poison +1, heraldry +1, law +1, warcraft +3

Languages/Scripts: Tongues (a foreign tongue of choice) +4

Artisan Talents: Boats or drive +2, cheat +2, leathercraft +2, tailor +2, train animals or blacksmith or carpenter or cook or woodcraft +2, treat wounds +2

Special Abilities: Armor Use I (leather armor or similar), Off-Handed Weapon I, Shield Fighting

Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Rapid Healing; Superstition

Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Academic Training (Warrior), Noble Birth; Prone to Illness, Slow Regeneration

Equipment: Simple but flashy clothing, sword or similar weapon, dagger, leather armor (or similar), set of cutlery, dish, linen bag, dice, bottle of liquor, working knife, canteen, sleeping bag

Special Item: Experienced horse with saddle, bit, and bridle

Messenger



A messenger serves as her master's hands, eyes, and ears. She is reliable and well aware of her responsibilities. Regardless of any obstacles (be they snow storms, flooded roads, or lame horses), she knows only one goal: to get the message to its recipient. She has learned all about the uncertainties of road travel in Aventuria, knows how to avoid tolls and where to find the best horses, and has memorized many possible shortcuts as well as the easiest mountain passes.

While privately-employed messengers are common, there are also several messenger agencies that offer their services to those who can pay. The most famous of these are the Beilunk Riders. Former members (who may have quit due to old age or injury) are highly regarded everywhere. The knowledge they have gained in their occupation might prove invaluable to any adventuring career.

Messenger (0 GP)

Requirements: AG 11, CN 12, SO 5–8
Modifications: EP +2
Combat Talents: Bows or crossbows +1, Axes & Maces or sabers +1, daggers +2, wrestling +1
Physical Talents: Athletics +3, boats or climb +1, body control +1, perception +3, ride +5, swim +1, willpower +4
Social Talents: Etiquette +4, human nature +1, streetwise +1
Nature Talents: Orientation +5, survival +2, track +1, weather sense +3
Lore Talents: Animal lore +2, calculate +2, geography +3, heraldry +3, law +2
Languages/Scripts: Tongues (two foreign tongues chosen by the player) at +4 each, read/write mother tongue script +3
Artisan Talents: Cartography +5, paint/draw +4
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Direction Sense or Mental Compass
Equipment: Sturdy and waterproof clothing, hard boots, raincoat, melee weapon of choice, waterproof scroll tube, linen bag, waterskin
Special Item: Experienced horse with saddle, bit, and bridle

Mountebank



Dancers, performers, acrobats, musicians, jugglers, prestidigitators, wags, and animal tamers are all part of the mysterious mountebank people who are often shrouded in a romantic veil. In reality, their lives are characterized by traveling down dusty roads, performing on dirty fair grounds, and being harried by disgruntled militiamen. Once the audience begins to gather around their colorful wagons and tents to watch the performance, however, all the hardships are forgotten and the artists live only for the cheers of the crowd.

Mountebanks are usually regarded as bright and optimistic, but also have a reputation of being superstitious, unreliable, and prone to thievery—not out of greed or spite, but rather out of childlike curiosity for anything that might catch their eye. Even mountebanks who part with their troupe to take up the real adventurer's life tend to retain these characteristics, which may alternately drive their companions to outbursts of joy and fits of anger.

Mountebank (0 GP)

Requirements: CO 11, CH 12, AG or DE 13, SO not more than 7
Combat Talents: Brawling +2, daggers +1, staves +1, throwing knives +2, wrestling +2
Physical Talents: Acrobatics or athletics or juggling +5; another Talent from the previous list at +3; also body control +5, carouse +1, hide +1, pick pockets +1, sing or dance or voice mimicry +3. The mountebank also receives both climb and ride and must assign +2 to one of these skills and +1 to the other.
Social Talents: Fast talk +3, human nature +4, masquerade +2, streetwise +3
Lore Talents: Animal lore +2, appraise +2, geography +1, legend lore +2
Languages/Scripts: Tongues (one foreign tongue of choice) +4
Artisan Talents: Cheat or paint/draw or play instrument or train animals +4, a second Talent from the previous list +2, cook +1, drive +2, tailor +2, treat wounds +1
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Contortionist, Social Chameleon; Curiosity, Superstition
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Arrogance
Equipment: Simple but flashy clothing, working tools (juggling balls, juggling clubs, deck of cards, three throwing knives, shackles, simple musical instrument, make-up, ventriloquist's dummy), dagger, linen bag, wineskin
Special Item: Mule laden with suitable props and equipment for a splendid one-man show

Physician



The art of healing is a complex science, and not everyone can be a studied medico. Often, a physician is the best a member of the lower classes can hope for when looking for healing. Physicians can take the form of army surgeons, tooth-breakers, or barber-surgeons in the cities, or as sellers of wondrous tinctures who roam the countryside with their wares. The profession is a mixture of factual knowledge of the body and the properties of healing herbs, as well as puffing talents. Physicians share a deep-rooted rivalry with the studied medicos, who often have the "unlearned" competition thrown out of town by a lawyer's edicts.

Physician (0 GP)

Requirements: IN 12, CH 11, DE 13, SO not more than 7
Advantages: Resistance to Disease
Combat Talents: Brawling +1, Axes & Maces or sabers +1, daggers +2, staves +2, wrestling +3
Physical Talents: Carouse +2, perception +2, willpower +1
Social Talents: etiquette +1, fast talk +4, human nature +5, persuade +1, streetwise +3
Nature Talents: bind/escape +1
Lore Talents: anatomy +3, arcane lore +1, calculate +3, law +1, legend lore +1, plant lore +4, religious lore +2
Languages/Scripts: read/write mother tongue script +4, tongues (foreign language of choice) +4
Artisan Talents: cook +4, treat disease +3, treat poison +3, treat wounds +6
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: none
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Fear of the Dead, Vanity
Equipment: simple clothing, dagger, blood-stained leather apron, linen bag, bone saw, scalpel, bandages, half a dozen blood-stanching or fever-lowering herbs, leather-bound bit of teething wood
Special Item: bag with preserved healing herbs (5x Four-Leaf Loneberry, 2x Whirlweed, 1x each Donf, Menchal, Olginroot—see page 160), high-quality surgeon's tools (gives a Difficulty Decrease of 3 points on treat wounds Tests)

Pirate



Off the coasts of Aventuria, bold privateers try to have their own special share of the sea trade. Upon seeing the skulls and bones, many a merchantman has preferred surrendering part of her cargo to being forced to fight for her life. Most pirates are independent, working only for themselves, but others, especially in the south of Aventuria, own letters of marque, attacking only those ships that are hostile to their home port.

All types of pirates exist: those who are too poor to do any decent trading (found especially on the Cyclops Islands), those who like slaughtering their prey, and even highly placed merchant lords who forced to resort to piracy to pay off their debts or avenge themselves. The Thorwalians have often been called a nation of pirates, quite unjustly.

One thing is common to all pirates: they value their freedom. Most are content on a regular diet of brawling, sipping rum, and visiting a well-built port whore. All that's needed to complete their perfect world is a heavily laden cog without an escort appearing on the horizon.

Pirate (5 GP)

Requirements: CO 13, AG 13, ST 11, SO not more than 7
Advantages: Balance
Disadvantages: Greed 5
Combat Talents: Brawling +3, Axes & Maces or sabers or swords +4, a second Talent from this list at +2, daggers +2, javelins or throwing axes or throwing knives +3, a second Talent from this list at +2, wrestling +1
Physical Talents: Acrobatics +1, athletics +2, body control +4, carouse +3, climb +4, swim +3
Social Talents: Human nature +1, streetwise +1
Nature Talents: Bind/escape +3, fish +3, orientation +2, weather sense +3
Lore Talents: Appraise +2, engineering or starcraft or carpenter +2, geography +2, warcraft +2
Languages/Scripts: Tongues (foreign language of choice) +4
Artisan Talents: Boats +4, leathercraft +2, open locks +1, seafaring +4, treat wounds +1, woodcraft +2
Special Abilities: Off-Handed Weapon I
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Superstition, Toughness, Violent Temper
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Fear of Open Spaces, Fear of the Sea
Equipment: Clothing (simple but colorful), melee weapon (usually cutlass), throwing weapon, grappling iron with 10 paces of rope, broad belt, colorful headband, wineskin or bottle of liquor
Special Item: Small rowboat or sailing boat

Rogue



Rogues have been shaped by the city streets in which they grew up. This is their world, and this is where they excel. In the wilderness, on the other hand, they quickly become hopelessly lost.

Life has taught rogues to rely only on themselves. They usually get by on odd assortments of con jobs, with a few brief romances thrown in for good measure due to their almost proverbial powers of seduction. Most rogues know their city watchmen well enough to tell who will turn a blind eye for a few silver coins.

Rogues are masters of rigged games (such as hiding a pea beneath one of three shells) and they try their hands at "chance-free games of chance"; they know where to get the cheapest drugs (and are paid handsomely for this knowledge) and frequent infamous dives full of even more infamous customers. In these places, they seek (and often find) people who want something done quickly, no questions asked.

Rogue (5 GP)

Requirements: IN 12, CH 12, DE 12, SO not more than 5
Advantages: Danger Sense
Combat Talents: Brawling +2, Axes & Maces or fencing weapons or sabers or swords +2, daggers +3, throwing knives +2, wrestling +1
Physical Talents: Athletics +2, board games or juggling or masquerade +2, body control +1, carouse +3, climb +1, dance +3, hide +3, perception +2, pick pockets +5, sneak +3, willpower +1
Social Talents: Cheat or seduce +5, with the second Talent from this pair at +2; etiquette +2, fast talk +5, human nature +5, streetwise +5
Nature Talents: Orientation +1
Lore Talents: Appraise +3, calculate +2, legend lore +1
Languages/Scripts: Tongues (foreign language of choice) +4
Artisan Talents: Open locks +2
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Connections, Lucky Gambler, Social Chameleon; Greed, Superstition, Vanity
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Noble Birth
Equipment: Elaborate but inexpensive clothing, feathered hat, marked deck of cards or dice, bottle of liquor or small bag of drugs, hidden knife in sheath (usually in boot), dagger, one-handed weapon
Special Item: Connections Advantage for 20 GP; the framework of +/–5 does not apply here (but the maximum SO 15 still applies).

Scout



Millennia of human farming and agriculture have not succeeded in totally cultivating Aventuria—not by far. Many trackless areas remain: woodlands, highlands, mountains, steppes, and deserts. A few hardy souls call these regions their second home and have learned them much better than the tangles of streets and alleys in the cities. Sometimes, they hire on with roving adventurers, merchants on their way into uncharted territory, or the army as scouts, but most often they make a sparse living as hunters, outlaws, or cattle thieves. All share a profound knowledge of nature and its hardships, and most seem to like animal companions better than human ones.

Scout (10 GP)

Requirements: CO 12, IN 12, CN 12, SO not more than 7
Modifications: EP +2
Combat Talents: Bows or crossbows +1, Axes & Maces or sabers +1, daggers +2, spears or staves +3, wrestling +2
Physical Talents: Athletics or ride or boats +4, with a second Talent from this list at +3 and the third at +2; body control +2, climb +3, hide +4, perception +6, sneak +4, swim +2, willpower +2
Nature Talents: Bind/escape +3, fish +2, orientation +5, survival +5, track +5, traps +2, weather sense +3
Lore Talents: Animal lore or plant lore or warcraft +2, geography +2, heraldry +1
Languages/Scripts: Tongues (one foreign tongue of choice) +4
Artisan Talents: Cartography +3, cook +1, leathercraft +2, paint/draw +4, tailor +2, treat disease +2, treat poison +3, treat wounds +2, woodcraft +2
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Direction Sense or Mental Compass
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Fear of Open Spaces, Lame, Prone to Illness
Equipment: Sturdy and weatherproof clothing in natural colors, spear or quarterstaff, dagger, rucksack, waterskin, flint and tinder, sleeping bag
Special Item: Experienced horse with saddle, bit, and bridle or trained tracking dog

Warrior



The profession of warrior is respected throughout Aventuria. Large cities, as well as very wealthy families, sponsor special academies where talented applicants are trained to become weapon masters after years of arduous study. Graduates from such schools are not only trained in the proper use of a variety of weapons, but also gain a special privilege: Their "warrior's diploma" allows them to participate in nobles' tournaments with sword and lance even if they are not of noble birth.

The diploma also paves the way for an officer's career in the army or even the guards, something that is impossible for a common fighter. And yet, no two warriors are alike. Depending on the academy they attend and the demands of their teachers, warriors may vary widely with regard to capabilities and ethics.

Warrior (20 GP)

Requirements: CO 12, AG 12, CN 13, ST 12, SO at least 7
Modifications: VP +2, EP +3
Advantages: Academic Training (Warrior), Toughness
Disadvantages: Code of Conduct (Uprightness)
Combat Talents: Bastard sword or chain weapons or Axes & Maces or fencing weapons or sabers or swords or two-handed Axes & Maces or two-handed swords +6, a second Talent from the previous list at +4; also brawling +2, daggers +2, infantry weapons or spears +3, bows or crossbows or javelins +4, wrestling +3, two additional Combat Talents of choice at +3 each
Physical Talents: Athletics +5, body control +2, carouse +1, climb +1, perception +2, ride +3, willpower +5
Social Talents: Etiquette +3
Nature Talents: Bind/escape +1, orientation +1
Lore Talents: Anatomy +1, arcane lore +3, calculate +2, law +2, legend lore +3, heraldry +3, history +2, religious lore +2, warcraft +5
Languages/Scripts: Read/write mother tongue script +4
Artisan Talents: Leathercraft +2, treat poison +1, treat wounds +3
Special Abilities: Armor Use II, Off-Handed Weapon I, Shield Fighting I
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Noble Birth, Rapid Healing; Arrogance
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Lame, Prone to Illness, Rage
Equipment: High-quality clothing, boots, sword or a similar weapon, dagger, shield, chain mail shirt or metal armor (AR 4 or 5), weapon repair set, warrior's diploma
Special Item: Trained horse with saddle, bit, and bridle

Legend Singer

Most elf tribes have at least one legend singer. It is the task of these gifted elves to pass on the ancient traditions to the younger generations. Young legend singers often move from clan to clan listening to and learning the tales and traditions of other singers. Sometimes, a young legend singer may become curious enough to visit the (i.e., the humans) in search of their tales.

Legend Singer

Requirements: CH 13, IN 13, SO not more than 10; lea-elf culture
Combat Talents: daggers +2, spears +2
Physical Talents: acrobatics +2, dance +5, juggling +2, perception +2, sing +5, voice mimicry +3
Social Talents: fast talk +2, human nature +4, persuade +3, seduce +3
Lore Talents: animal lore +3, arcane lore +3, history +2, legend lore +6, plant lore +2, starcraft +3
Artisan Talents: paint/draw +2, play instrument +5
Elfsong: Magical Melody
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Arrogance, Good Memory
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Greed, Noble Birth, Rage, Violent Temper
Recommended Spells: *be my friend*, *breath of magic*, *see true and pure*
Equipment: traveling clothes, dagger, spear, musical instrument (soul instrument)
Special Item: none

Ranger

Professions in the human sense are rare among the elves, who lead traditional clan lives in which everyone shares in the work at hand. A few elves, however, are specialized in certain activities. The most important of these are the rangers, who regularly leave their village alone or in small groups to scout the area or go hunting. In rare cases when enemies—usually orks or humans—stray into the tribe's area, it falls upon the rangers to drive them off. Only if this fails or if the enemy appears in large numbers does the rest of the clan take up arms.

Ranger (0 GP)

Requirements: AG 13, CN 12, SO not more than 10; lea-elf culture
Combat Talents: Bows +3, daggers +3, spears +3, wrestling +2
Physical Talents: Athletics +3, body control +3, climb +2, hide +3, perception +3, sneak +3, swim +1
Nature Talents: Bind/escape +3, fish or traps +3, orientation +3, survival +3, track +3, weather sense +3
Lore Talents: Animal lore +5, plant lore +3, starcraft +1
Artisan Talents: Boats +2, bowyer +3, butcher or tanner/furrier +3, treat wounds +1
Special Abilities: Marksman
Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages: Danger Sense, Enduring
Unsuitable Advantages and Disadvantages: Noble Birth; Greed, Night-Blind, Rage
Recommended Spells: *eye of eagle*, *move as the lightning*, *sleep of a thousand sheep*
Equipment: Light clothing, cloak, elven bow, quiver with 20 arrows, dagger, shoulder bag, musical instrument (soul instrument)
Special Item: None

Advantages and Disadvantages, Characteristics

Undecided and dismayed, an elf stands in the doorway, looking across the crowded barroom. Her hair falls down to her hips, red as a fox's fur and clothing her tall frame like a silken cloak. Her hand rests on the grip of her wolf's-head knife. Her large, slightly pointed, almond-shaped eyes intently scan the room. The moment they meet Shafir's astonished gaze, the elf's decision is made.

"Fey'jam to you, strangers and friends," she addresses Daria and Shafir. "My name is Ranari Aytann'lyriamalwaar—you may call me Ranari." Her voice is low but firm, sounding like a song rather than spoken words. As she intones her name in Isdira, the elven tongue, Shafir thinks he hears a second voice at the same time.

Ranari's moss-green eyes show clear signs of fright as she continues. "Rooms such as this one, where humans take shelter, barely leave room for me to breathe. Thus, I made camp away from the path in the forest. I was almost asleep when I suddenly heard the fast beating of hooves followed by a low cry, the clashing of weapons, a thumping sound, human voices murmuring, the rustling of leaves—and then, silence. It all happened so fast. By the time my bow was ready, all had ended.

"I approached the site of the scuffle silently and cautiously. When I got there, I found a human, clad like one of your riding messengers. He was lying on the ground, unconscious, and his horse had run away. I found it a few paces off, grazing peacefully. Judging from the tracks, there must have been half a dozen enemies, probably some kind of ambush. I tended to the young man's wounds as best I could.

"When he awoke, his first action was to reach for his belt. What he had hoped to find—a bag, he said—was no longer there. He pleaded with me, injured as he was, to leave him lying out there and hurry to the inn as quickly as possible to get help. He said his life would be in vain without this bag, the contents of which were of importance to the Imperial Protector. Thus I have run here, and now I beg of you: Help him!"

"My name is Ranari Aytann'lyriamalwaar—you may call me Ranari."

It takes Daria and Shafir, locked in rapt attention, a few moments to understand that the elf means them and no one else. "Well, yeah … I mean, of course …" Shafir stammers. "I will surely help you, most beautiful of women … only … half a dozen, wouldn't that be … too many …?!?"

At this point he is interrupted, for the group at the next table has also listened to Ranari's tale. A young man in green-gold garments gets up, clearing his throat before speaking, "You need not go alone. We would be honored to accompany you." He waves to indicate his companions: a Thorwalian, a Tulamide, a warrior from Gareth, and a dwarf.

"Well," Daria finally breaks in, rising eagerly, "if we're talking about a message for the Imperial Protector here, we'd better get going! Surely he will not be stingy if we return what has been stolen from him!"

This breaks the ice. All jump up from their chairs and grab their weapons. Only Mirhiban remains hesitant. She has been eyeing the elf suspiciously the entire time. Never before has she met such a creature, but she has heard much about them during her training. All are gifted with some kind of innate magic, but they never learn how to use it properly. "It is like teaching the thesis of a combat spell to a five-year-old," the words of her mentor come back to her. "They use spells without understanding, without reflecting on their background. And to make matters worse, they refuse to submit to any kind of Praios-pleasing order! They are heathens, these elves—they are a danger to rational humanity as guided by the Twelve. Should you ever face an elf, be on guard and act aloof, or it may mean your doom!"

Mirhiban contemplates remaining in the safety of the tavern, but rises and joins her companions in following the elf out of the inn. She does not want her newfound friends to run blindly into an ambush.

Advantages and Disadvantages

The list of Advantages and Disadvantages that follows is just a basic selection. You may use these descriptions as the basis for more Advantages and Disadvantages that you might want to introduce into your own campaign. The Highlord's permission must be obtained in designing new choices.

- As already mentioned earlier, you may choose Disadvantages totaling no more than 50 Generation Points. Points spent for race, culture, or profession do not figure into this total. As opposed to Attributes and Talents, Advantages and Disadvantages rarely change during a hero's adventuring career (but refer to the section on lowering Negative Attributes on page 131). Most of them never change, so think carefully about how you will burden your hero.
- Gifts such as Dwarfnose or Danger Sense are an exception: these are special powers or abilities occurring at birth that are treated just like Talents. They come with a certain starting value, they can be advanced, and you can roll Tests against them. The difference is that a hero can receive Gifts only during hero creation—they cannot be activated at a later date.
- Also peculiar are the Negative Attributes, part of the Disadvantages (see page 64). These are treated in the same way as Positive Attributes (including Tests rolled against them); they simply represent a hero's weaknesses. These are special because instead of making adjustments to die rolls in certain situations, Negative Attributes require a player to role-play his character in a certain way. The Highlord should monitor the players' methods of playing Negative Attributes in their characters; players who forget to use them gain an unfair advantage since they gained a GP bonus in character creation but suffer no penalties in actual play.
- If a listed entry does not show a GP cost but an asterisk (*) instead, this means that the Advantage or Disadvantage is tied to a race, a culture, or a profession. You pay for it when you pay for the race, culture, or profession. This applies only to those identified as Advantages and Disadvantages, but not for those listed as Recommended Advantages and Disadvantages (these you pay for normally).
- Some Advantages or Disadvantages come in more than one level (such as Resistance and Immunity to a specific poison, or Unattractive and Ugly). If race or culture already gives you the "base" form of the Advantage or Disadvantage, you need only pay the difference if you want to choose the "advanced" version. For instance, a dwarf with Resistance to Mineral Poisons (7 GP) needs to pay only 3 GP to get Immunity to Mineral Poisons (originally 10 GP). In the entries describing these Advantages (and certain others), the rules state that these may not be used together; however, characters receiving these Advantages in the "base" form due to race or culture are allowed to "trade up" as such and own the "advanced" version instead.
- The Special Abilities available to some starting heroes are not listed in this chapter, although they can be learned later in the game. Since almost all of the Special Abilities introduced in the Basic Rules are combat related (such as Armor Use or Shield Fighting), they are described in the chapter on combat (page 90.). The *Swords and Heroes* supplement will give you many additional Special Abilities.
- The Advantages/Disadvantages Academic Training Magician, Astral Power, Astral Regeneration, and Astral Block are only open to characters who already have the Spellcaster advantage.

Advantages

Academic Training (Magician) (*): Your hero spent his youth at a magicians' academy, where he received comprehensive training in the art of magic and related fields. This means that during hero creation, he can advance all Lore Talents at half price (up to and including TP 10) and must pay only half the activation costs. This discount does not apply to advancement after the game has begun.

Upon graduating from the academy, the hero has a magician's seal tattooed onto the palm of his hand. This seal increases the hero's SO by 1 (after hero creation is finished).

Only heroes who have already taken the Spellcaster Advantage may take this Advantage. The advancement bonuses for Academic Training and Aptitude (see page 59) are not cumulative; thus, a hero may use the benefits of Academic Training in a certain Talent area prior to the beginning of game play, while he can draw on the benefits of an Aptitude afterwards. The 1-point bonus for a single Talent as described in the entry on Aptitude still applies.

Academic Training (Warrior) (*): Your hero spent his youth at a warriors' academy where he received comprehensive training in the arts of war. This means that during hero creation, he can advance all Combat Talents at half price (up to and including TP 10) and must pay only half the activation costs. This discount does not apply to advancement after the game has begun.

Upon graduating from the academy, the hero is presented with a warrior's diploma that allows him to use any weapon, to participate in all tournaments, and to embark on an officer's career in many armies and guard units. This warrior's diploma increases the hero's SO by 1 (after hero creation is finished). The advancement bonuses for Academic Training and Aptitude are not cumulative; thus, a hero may use the benefits of Academic Training in a certain Talent area prior to the beginning of game play, while he can draw on the benefits of an Aptitude afterwards. The 1-point bonus for a single Talent as described in the entry on Aptitude still applies.

Aptitude for [Talent of Choice] (GP cost as per Talent): Your hero receives an additional point of TP for his chosen Talent prior to the beginning of play. In addition, the selected Talent may be advanced more easily in the future: it always uses the next easier (i.e., left) column on the Advancement Cost Table. GP cost depends on the selected Talent:

Aptitude for a Social, Nature, Lore, or Artisan Talent: 6 GP
Aptitude for a Physical Talent: 12 GP

Aptitude for a Combat Talent of Advancement Category C: 9 GP
Aptitude for a Combat Talent of Advancement Category D: 12 GP
Aptitude for a Combat Talent of Advancement Category E: 15 GP

This Advantage can be taken only once by a hero. It cannot be combined with Aptitude for [Talent Group of Choice] in the same category, nor can it be used in conjunction with an Inaptitude for the same Talent Group. Aptitude for a single language or script is not possible. The advancement bonuses for Academic Training (see page 59) and Aptitude are not cumulative; thus, a hero may use the benefits of Academic Training in a certain Talent area prior to the beginning of game play, while he can draw on the benefits of an Aptitude afterward. The 1-point bonus for a single Talent as described still applies.

Aptitude for [Talent Group of Choice] (GP cost as per Talent Group): Your hero shows special aptitude for an entire Talent Group, such as all Combat Talents, Physical Talents, or Lore talents. When advancing a Talent from his chosen Talent Group, the hero always uses the next easiest (i.e., left) column on the Advancement Cost Table. GP cost depends on the selected Talent Group:

Aptitude for Social, Nature, Lore, or Artisan Talents: 20 GP
Aptitude for Physical Talents: 40 GP
Aptitude for Combat Talents: 50 GP

This Advantage can be taken only once by a hero. It cannot be combined with Aptitude for [Talent of Choice] in the same category, nor can it be used in conjunction with Inaptitude for the same Talent Group. For Aptitude with languages and scripts, see Language Instinct. The advancement bonuses for Academic Training (see page 59) and Aptitude are not cumulative; thus, a hero may use the benefits of Academic Training in a certain Talent area prior to the beginning of game play, while he can draw on the benefits of an Aptitude afterward.

Astral Power (2 GP each): For each 2 GP spent, your hero receives 1 additional Astral Point; you cannot gain more than 5 ASPs in this way. Only heroes who have already taken the Spellcaster Advantage may take this Advantage.

Astral Regeneration (10 GP): Your hero regenerates 1d6+2 ASP per phase of rest; Intuition Rolls to retrieve lost Astral Points and for rituals to increase your ASP total receive a Difficulty Decrease of 2 points. Only heroes who have already taken the Spellcaster Advantage may take this Advantage. It cannot be taken together with the Astral Block Disadvantage.

Balance (10 GP): Your hero receives a Difficulty Decrease of 3 points on all acrobatics, athletics, and body control Tests, and a Difficulty Decrease of 2 points on all AG Tests as long as these Tests involve balancing, mid-air turns, or regaining one's footing on trembling ground. Also, he can deduct 20% (round up) from the damage point total for all falling damage (after figuring in the body control Test).

Bardic Voice (10 GP): Your hero has a beautiful voice and an innate feeling for music. All of his singing Tests receive a Difficulty Decrease of 5 points, while all other Tests on Social Talents that involve the active use of the voice receive a Difficulty Decrease of 2 points. This Advantage has no effect on Tests related to elfsongs.

Connections (SO of acquaintance in GP): Your hero has a good friend whom he can ask for help if necessary. The type of help the hero can expect (and how often) depends on the character and profession of the connection and is subject to your Highlord's discretion. Each acquaintance costs you a number of GP equal to her SO, and must remain within +/–5 points of your own SO, with a maximum SO of 15 for your connection. You may take this Advantage more than once.

Contortionist (25 GP): Some people have flexible joints, enabling them to do amazing things with their bodies such as creeping into tight spaces or wriggling out of chains. Contortionists receive a bonus of 1 point on the following Talents: acrobatics, bind/escape (when used for escaping), body control, dance, hide, juggling, and sneak. They advance these Talents as if they were one Advancement Category easier. Combat actions that are concerned with evading or wriggling are also easier.

Additionally, this Advantage gives your hero one bonus point on Wrestling Parries and allows him to advance Wrestling as if it were one category easier. To take the Contortionist Advantage, your hero needs an AG of at least 14; your hero's ST maximum drops by 4 points when you take this Advantage. This Advantage may not be taken together with the Outstanding Attribute: Strength Advantage.

Danger Sense (15 GP, Gift): This Gift can warn your hero of impending danger; he becomes very hard to surprise. This Advantage does not allow a hero to see the future. When your hero is in a situation of constant danger (such as combat), its usefulness is somewhat limited. Danger Sense may warn of an ambush, however, or may speed reaction time in a surprise situation; see page 98.

Tests against Danger Sense should always be rolled secretly by the Highlord. If the Test succeeds, she informs the player that he has some inkling of imminent doom but does not know details. This Gift's starting value is 3; Tests are rolled against CL/IN/IN.

Direction Sense (3 GP): All orientation Tests (and all survival Tests used for finding your way) receive a Difficulty Decrease of 5 points. Direction Sense is limited to the hero's native terrain type—this may be a large but uniform area such as the Khôm Desert, the northern steppes, or the Rashtul Wall, but not a city (this would be better represented as Area Knowledge, an Advantage you will find in *Swords and Heroes*). Direction Sense may not be combined with the Mental Compass Advantage.

Dwarfnose (12 GP, Gift): Your hero has developed a supernatural instinct for detecting hidden corridors, secret doors, or hidden cavities within stone structures (natural and man- or dwarf-made). As long as TP is below 7, the Highlord may roll Dwarfnose Tests in secret. If the Test succeeds, the player receives a hint to the location of the room or feature in question. The player is not given information about size or type, however, let alone ways of entering it. When a hero's TP reaches 7 or above, Dwarfnose Tests can be rolled at the player's request, but these cost him 1d6 EP.

This Gift's starting value is 3; Tests are rolled against DE/IN/IN.

Enduring (1 GP each): For each GP spent, your hero receives 1 additional Endurance Point; you cannot gain more than 5 Endurance Points in this way. A hero who spends at least 3 GP on this Advantage tires more slowly, i.e., his Exhaustion Threshold is CN +1 points instead of CN points; a hero who spends at least 5 GP on this Advantage raises his Exhaustion Threshold to CN +2.

Equipment Advantage (1 GP per 10 ducats): Each GP of Equipment Advantage provides your hero with additional ducats to spend on equipment (but not to keep beyond hero creation). A more advanced version of this Advantage is the Special Item Advantage (see page 62); both Advantages can be combined.

Good-Looking (5 GP): A good-looking hero is particularly attractive to others because of his face, body, or grace of movement. All Tests on Social Talents and all other Talent Tests that are rolled against Charisma receive a Difficulty Decrease of at least 1 point each. Cross-racial effects (even the best-looking dwarf might fail to get the attention of an elf) is at the discretion of the Highlord. This Advantage cannot be combined with the Unattractive or Ugly Disadvantages.

Good Memory (Spellcasters: 12 GP / Others: 7 GP): Your hero may roll additional CL Tests to get information if and when the situation warrants (Highlord's decision). Also, languages and spells may be advanced at 75% of their standard costs (round up).

Hard to Enspell (7 GP): A hero with this Advantage has an innate resistance against magic. This is not only a boon, but may also be a curse, for it affects harmful spells as well as beneficial ones. All Domination, Healing, and Transformation spells cast at the hero receive a Difficulty Increase of 3 points. This applies to all spells from other fields of magic that result in domination or transformation. This Difficulty Increase is cumulative with all other modifiers, for instance Resistance to Magic (if applicable). Only spells directly centered on the hero are affected by Hard to Enspell; area effect spells or the indirect effects of spells are not changed. This Advantage may be chosen only by heroes who are not able to cast spells themselves (i.e., have not taken the Spellcaster Advantage).

Of the spells mentioned in the Core Rules, the following are affected by this Advantage: *attributio*, *balm of healing*, *be my friend*, *clarum purum*, *horriphobus*, *move as the lightning*, *mutander salother*, *paralyze*, *see true and pure*, *sleep of a thousand sheep*, *spiritus armoricus*, *thunderbolt*, *unseen*.

Heat Resistance (*): Creatures who are resistant to heat do not suffer damage from high temperatures as long as the temperature does not exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit. They incur only increased Endurance loss in such conditions if they exert themselves. This Advantage does not protect against spells based on heat or fire.

High Resistance to Magic (3 GP each): Your hero is more resistant to harmful magic. Each point of RM improvement costs 3 GP; you may gain a maximum of 3 additional points by taking this Advantage several times.

Immunity to Poison (10 GP): Your hero is extremely resilient against one particular type of poison (e.g., snake poison, mineral poison, plant-based poison, and so on). When rolling Resistance Tests against this type of poison, a hero's CN is treated as if it were 15 points higher. This Advantage does not help against poisons from groups not specified. You cannot combine Immunity to Poison with Resistance to Poison. Your Highlord must approve the type of poison you select.

Inner Clock (3 GP): A hero with this Advantage is able to ascertain the correct time of day within a span of 15 minutes, even without being able to see the sky, when just woken from sleep or unconsciousness, or when in dark dungeons for many days.

Language Instinct (10 GP): Your hero treats all living languages as if they belonged to the language family of his mother tongue. "Living languages" in this context means that the hero must learn the language from a native speaker.

Left-Handed (5 GP): Left-handed people have a few minor advantages in combat. During the first 5 Combat Rounds, their enemies receive a negative modifier of 1 point to their Parry. Left-handed persons may learn Special Abilities applying to left-handed or two-handed fighting at 75% of their original cost (round up). Some weapons and objects may be unusable for left-handed persons because they were designed with right-handed bearers in mind.

Low-Light Vision (*): In bad lighting conditions, your hero receives only half the negative modifiers to AT, PA, and Ranged Attack Values, as well as perception Tests (always rounded in his favor). More details on these negative modifiers are on page 106.

Luck (20 GP): A hero with the proverbial lucky charm may repeat any single die roll (an AT, a PA, a damage roll, a Talent test, and so on) once, for a maximum of up to three different rerolls per day (the actual number is determined secretly by the Highlord by rolling 1d3-1 at the time the player requests his first reroll). The more advantageous of the two rolls (from the hero's point of view) always counts. A hero may even force enemies to reroll in combat or call for a second damage roll.

Lucky Gambler (7 GP): In any game of chance, an IN Test usually determines whether Phex is on your hero's side (and whether the hero is able to interpret the god's hints). If your hero has the Lucky Gambler Advantage, these rolls receive a Difficulty Decrease of 7 points. Success means that the hero has better chances of drawing a card, succeeding on a die roll, and so on.

Mental Compass (7 GP): Your hero always knows where north is. He receives a Difficulty Decrease of 7 points on orientation Tests (and on survival Tests used for finding his way). At sea or in the desert, the Difficulty Decrease may be as much as 14 points (Highlord's discretion). Mental Compass cannot be combined with the Direction Sense Advantage.

Noble Birth (7 GP): Your hero is the offspring of a noble family. He is heir to an appropriate title and is exempt from standard judicial procedure in some situations. He does not stand to inherit his parents' holdings, however, since he has older siblings in line before him or his family no longer has any claim to the fief. The title due him, for example, is noble or baron (or a regional equivalent). To be the offspring of a noble, you need Social Standing of at least 8; to be the offspring of a baron, you need

Social Standing of at least 10. If you are of Noble Birth, the cost for the Special Item Advantage is reduced to 3 GP (originally 7).

Outstanding Attribute (minimum 8 GP): Your hero may begin play with an Attribute Value of 15 (before bonuses resulting from race, culture, or profession are applied). You may choose this Advantage more than once; applying it to different Attributes costs 8 GP each time. If you apply it to the same Attribute several times, starting value and maximum value are increased by 1 point for the second and each subsequent Advantage taken. Each additional increase is accompanied by an increase in GP cost: to improve an Attribute from 15 to 16 costs 10 GP, from 16 to 17 costs 12 GP, and so on (i.e., GP cost goes up 2 points per each 1-point advancement). You may continue increasing Attributes as long as your GP account holds out.

Consider a player who spends 14 GP to buy his hero ST 14. If he wants to begin play with ST 16, the cost is 18 GP (8 to raise his score from 14 to 15, and another 10 for the leap from 15 to 16).

If our human were a Thorwalian, the racial bonus (ST +1) is applied after this Advantages is taken, thus giving the hero ST 17.

You may not increase an Attribute that will be lowered due to race or culture.

Rapid Healing (10 GP): A hero with this Advantage regenerates 1d6+2 VP per period of rest; CN rolls to regain lost VP receive a Difficulty Decrease of 2 points. This Advantage cannot be combined with the Slow Regeneration Disadvantage.

Resistance to Age (*): Your hero is immune to the effects of old age (within his natural age span). This may either mean that from a certain point in time onwards, his aging process slows down remarkably, or that he does not have to suffer the usual frailties of old age (both physical and mental ones). This Advantage is usually reserved for only a few races, such as elves—a human who happens to be resistant to age should have a very good reason for this "miracle." (Besides, the church of Praios might take interest in a hero who seems not to age, for something like this surely involves black magic.)

Resistance to Disease (7 GP): Your hero has an extremely healthy immune system. When rolling Resistance Tests against diseases, his CN is treated as if it were 7 points higher. Resistance to Disease may not be combined with the Prone to Illness Disadvantage.

Resistance to Poison (7 GP): Your hero is strangely immune to one particular type of poison (e.g., snake poison, mineral poison, plant-based poison, and so on). When rolling Resistance Tests against the chosen type of poison, his CN is treated as if it were 7 points higher. This Advantage does not help against poisons from groups not specified. You cannot combine Resistance to Poison with Immunity to Poison. Your Highlord must approve the type of poison you select.

Social Chameleon (7 GP): A hero with this Advantage gets along astonishingly well in unfamiliar social environments and suffers only minor negative modifiers to his Social Talents if he moves within an unfamiliar culture or unfamiliar surroundings. When choosing the Connections Advantage (q.v.), he pays only 75% of the connections' SO in GP and may choose from within a range of SO +/–7 (but still cannot transcend the maximum of SO 15).

Special Item (7 GP): A Special Item is a piece of equipment or a special condition that would usually be too expensive or inaccessible for your hero at the beginning of his career. The nature of this item should fit the hero's profession (e.g., a horse for a warrior). The profession description tells you which special item would be appropriate. If the profession description says, "none," then your hero cannot take this Advantage. Magical items are out of the question; your hero must win these through adventuring.

Spellcaster (*): Your hero has been trained in the ways of magic, enabling him to cast spells (varying by profession or culture). He gains (CO + IN + CH) /2 ASP (round up) plus 12 ASP (and perhaps more depending on culture and profession). More information on spellcasting heroes is found in the description of the magician profession (see p. 52), the lea-elf culture (see p. 49), and the chapter on magic (p. 130).

Only heroes who take this Advantage can gain the Advantages of Academic Training (Magician), Astral Power, Astral Regeneration, and the Astral Block Disadvantage.

Toughness (10 GP): Normally, a hero whose VI drops below 0 falls into a coma, with 1d6 x CN Combat Rounds separating him from death. Should his VI fall below zero until it equals his negative Constitution, the hero is irrevocably dead. A hero with the Toughness Advantage is allowed to multiply CN by 1.5 (round up) when making these calculations. More information appears on page 101.

Vigor (3 GP each): For each 3 Generation Points spent, your hero receives 1 additional VP. Only 5 additional points are possible in this way.

Disadvantages

Arrogance (–1 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute (mentioned on p. 64). Arrogance causes a hero to take a highbrow approach toward others, demeaning them and showing little faith in their capabilities. Whether this is because of class arrogance or some kind of exaggerated code of honor is up to you. Arrogance should affect Tests on Social Talents.

Astral Block (–10 GP): Your hero regenerates only 1d6 – 1 ASP per period of rest; Intuition Rolls to retrieve lost Astral Points and for rituals to increase your ASP total receive a Difficulty Increase of 2 points. Only heroes who take the Spellcaster Advantage may take this Disadvantage. It cannot be taken together with the Astral Regeneration Advantage.

Bad Hearing (–5 GP): Your hero's hearing ability is impaired. While he is still able to perceive loud sounds, he can no longer hear whispering. All perceptions Tests that rely on hearing receive a Difficulty Increase of 5 points. Also, communicating in a language he knows only slightly becomes harder (with the exact effects at the Highlord's discretion).

Claustrophobia (–3 GP per 2 points): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero feels severe uneasiness when having to enter

narrow corridors, low-ceilinged rooms, and similar structures; advise Highlord as to appropriate penalties. Some possible game effects are listed in the summary entry "Negative Attributes" (p. 64).

Code of Conduct (–10 GP): Your hero must have at least three firm rules of conduct governing his life and his actions, to which he adheres even in the face of utmost adversity. Should the hero ever break with these principles (for instance, to save his life), he should suffer restrictions to his actions for a period of time depending on the severity of the action (at the Highlord's discretion). Typical Codes of Conduct are religious codices or the code of a noble knight.

Color-Blind (–5 GP): Your hero can perceive only shades of gray; this may cause Difficulty Increases to various Tests (Highlord's decision depending on the situation). This also incurs a negative modifier of 4 points to all Ranged Tests at long range (more than 50 paces). This modifier does not apply when other penalties due to bad visibility (fog, darkness) are already in effect.

Curiosity (–1 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero feels a compulsion to take an immediate look at anything that seems to be even remotely interesting, regardless of any risks. Curiosity is a typical example of a Negative Attribute that does not actually disadvantage a hero, but rather forces certain patterns of action upon him.

Elven Worldview (*): Elves are not entirely of this world, something that most elves would freely admit. They regard most things, creatures, and actions in this world with a peculiar view as to how everything might be related. They also have a somewhat detached view of outsiders, due to their longevity.

On the downside, this means that elves need to learn much more about connections and relations—or at least, apparent connections and relations—before they feel ready to act upon them. They must spend an additional 50% Adventure Points (plus all other modifications that might apply) if they want to improve Talents, Gifts, or Spells, or want to learn Special Abilities. Thus, an improvement that would normally cost 4 points will cost 6 points for an elf.

The exceptions to this are Talents in which elves are granted bonus points due to their race (body control, dance, perception, sneak, survival, paint/draw, play instrument, and sing), Elfsongs, and three pre-selected elven heritage spells (if using the elven professions, you have to choose the spells listed therein). These increased costs do not apply during hero creation and thus have no influence on the expenditure of Talent GP or Spell GP.

Fear of [Insects, Spiders, Reptiles, Rodents, Fire, Water, or other] (variable cost): This is a catch-all entry for a number of Negative Attributes. They require the hero to react in an exaggerated manner in certain situations or encounters. Such fear might quickly turn into panic, preventing a hero from taking sensible actions. A hero's phobias are usually determined by culture and origin, but sometimes also by key experiences in his life.

Whatever phobia you choose, it can qualify for the GP cost bonus only if it has the potential to actually impede your hero in play and to go beyond the normal urge for self-preservation. For instance, Fear of Albino Lions is far too specific to be valid, while Fear of Highly Aggressive Poisonous Snakes is not a Disadvantage at all, since most sensible creatures are afraid of highly poisonous snakes.

Phobias that can be triggered rather frequently (such Fear of Spiders or Fear of Fire) gain you 3 GP per 2 points in this Negative Attribute, while those that are triggered less often net you only 1 GP per point in the Negative Attribute. Some phobias (e.g., Fear of the Dark or Fear of the Sea) have special consequences or effects and have entries of their own.

Fear of Open Spaces (–3 GP per 2 points): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero feels severe uneasiness while in large, open spaces. Being on the open sea or on wide, treeless plains might lead to outright panic, but even a large city square or a treeless meadow might be cause for unease.

Fear of the Dark (–2 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero feels severe uneasiness while in the dark. This may apply to tunnels and caves, but also to dark forests and even to the dark of night. This phobia is severe enough to merit 2 Generation Points for each point in this Negative Attribute.

Fear of the Dead (–1 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero is mortally afraid of everything to do with death. This applies especially to encounters with undead or within tombs, but just being near a worshiper of Boron may be enough to trigger a feeling of uneasiness. See Negative Attributes for possible game effects.

Fear of the Sea (–1 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero dreads any kind of water travel, whether on a ship or a boat, as well as swimming, whether in a lake, the ocean, or a large river. The farther away from the shore, the worse the effects of this phobia become. See Negative Attributes for possible game effects.

Greed (–1 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero's greed for riches and treasure sometimes lets your hero behave irrationally. This Disadvantage applies not only to gold or treasure, but also magical artifacts, potions, or anything else that may be of value. See Negative Attributes for possible game effects.

Inaptitude for [Talent of Choice] (–GP as per Talent): Your hero is remarkably poor at one particular Talent. This means that he must invest more Adventure Points when advancing the chosen Talent; costs are calculated according to the next column to the right on the Advancement Cost Table (i.e., the more expensive one). This Disadvantage can be taken only once per hero, and it must be applied to one of the Basic Talents (see p. 75). A hero with this Disadvantage may not take Inaptitude for [Talent Group of Choice] using the same group that the chosen Talent is from. Generation Points gained depend on the Talent chosen, as follows.

Combat Talents, Social Talents, Nature Talents, Lore Talents, or Artisan Talents, as well as the Physical Talents of carouse, dance, hide, sing, and swim: –4 GP

All other Physical Talents except those listed above: –8 GP

A hero may not advance a Talent during hero creation for which he has an Inaptitude. Any Inaptitude must be approved by the Highlord.

Inaptitude for [Talent Group of Choice] (–GP as per Talent Group): Your hero is remarkably poor at one particular

Talent Group (i.e., Combat Talents, Physical Talents, Nature Talents, Social Talents, Lore Talents, Languages/Scripts, or Artisan Talents). This means that he must invest more Adventure Points when advancing the chosen Talent; costs are calculated according to the next column to the right on the Advancement Cost Table (i.e., the more expensive one). This Disadvantage can be taken only once per hero. A hero with this Disadvantage may not take Inaptitude for [Talent of Choice] using a Talent from the chosen Talent Group. Generation Points gained depend on the Talent Group chosen:

Languages/Scripts: –5 GP
Social Talents, Nature Talents, Lore Talents, and Artisan Talents: –10 GP
Combat Talents: –15 GP
Physical Talents: –20 GP

A hero may not advance any Talent during hero creation for which he has an Inaptitude. Any Inaptitude must be approved by the Highlord.

Lame (–10 GP): Your hero is stricken with a lame leg, a fractured knee, or something similar. He loses 2 points of Agility (this applies to his Agility maximum) as well as 1 point of SD (although this cannot fall below 1). Additionally, he loses 1 point of Base AT and 2 points of Base PA. This physical impediment cannot be corrected later in the game, not even by the best of prosthetics or magic.

Low Attribute (–10 GP): One Attribute, which was assigned only 8 points while spending Generation Points, is now lowered to 7. Improving this Attribute later in the game costs twice the usual points. The chosen Attribute may not be one for which the hero will gain a class or culture bonus. This Disadvantage can be chosen more than once, but only if applied to different Attributes.

Low Resistance to Magic (–3 GP each): Your hero is more susceptible to the influences of magic than others. His Resistance to Magic may not be lowered by more than 3 points by taking this Disadvantage more than once, nor may it drop below zero.

Night-Blind (–10 GP): All of your hero's negative modifiers due to bad lighting conditions are doubled. The negative modifiers due to complete darkness are unaffected (see p. 106).

Negative Attribute (variable GP): Negative Attributes represent all those small and not-so-small differences between reality and the hero's view of life. Since reality is usually the stronger of the two, heroes sometimes suffer from phobias or compulsions that are governed by the subconscious and cannot be controlled by the hero (as opposed to Code of Conduct, for example, which the hero must observe willingly). Typical Negative Attributes are Arrogance, Claustrophobia, Curiosity, Fear of Heights, Fear of [Insects, Spiders, Reptiles, Rodents, Fire, Water, and others], Fear of Open Spaces, Fear of the Dark, Fear of the Dead, Fear of the Sea, Greed, Pathological Cleanliness, Prejudice, Superstition, Vanity, Vengefulness, and Violent Temper.

Heroes have two possible ways of dealing with Negative Attributes during game play:

• The first (and easiest) is to apply the Values of Negative Attributes as Difficulty Increases to all Talent Tests which are affected by the Negative Attribute. Attribute Tests incur a Difficulty Increase of half the Negative Attribute value (round up). "Affected by" the Attribute means that the Negative Attribute is always applied whenever the hero is confronted with a triggering mechanism or situation (i.e., he hears the scurrying of rats, the sun sets, he must move close to a fire, and so on).

Example: Raidri the Seducer is struck with a deep-rooted Fear of Heights (at a value of 8). Due to an unlikely succession of unfortunate mishaps, he finds himself on a small window sill, three floors above a busy street, and only barely dressed. His options are few: He might try to climb to the roof (which would require a climb Test), or he could try to force open the wooden shutters that are barred from the inside (ST Test).

The Highlord, of course, is fully aware of Raidri's little problem with heights, and thus she takes her time in colorfully describing to the player just how close he is to tumbing to his death, consequently imposing a Difficulty Increase of 8 points to the climb Test (equaling his Fear of Heights value), or a Difficulty Increase of 4 points to the ST Test (half the Fear of Heights value since this is an Attribute Test).

Raidri decides to take his chances at climbing to the roof—and barely makes it. He finds an unlocked upper window and returns to safe ground. Now he would like to escape as unobtrusively as possible. The ensuing sneak Test does not incur the Difficulty Increase, since Raidri is now back inside the house and the triggering condition for Fear of Heights is no longer present.

• The second method for using Negative Attributes is to have the hero roll Tests against the actual Attribute. If such a Test succeeds (i.e., the player doesn't roll higher than the Attribute Value), the hero succumbs to the effects of the Attribute. The consequences of this are determined by situation and Attribute. A successful Violent Temper Test, for instance, might indicate that the hero acts without self-control, tact and diplomacy be damned! On a successful Claustrophobia Test, the hero starts sweating and is barely able to concentrate due to a feeling of oppression. The effects also depend on the degree to which the Test succeeded, and the effects are always determined by the Highlord. At worst, they may result in the hero being completely inable to act until he has been led to safety by someone else.

Example: If Fear of Heights were Raidri's only problem, he would now be safe. Alas, he is also highly curious (Curiosity 7). As he flees, he passes a door and hears an agitated argument. Although he knows that lingering here could place him at severe risk, he would dearly love to know what the discussion is about. The Highlord calls for a Curiosity Test, and Raidri's player passes by rolling a 4. Thus, he neglects all danger, puts his ear to the door, and starts listening, hearing quite a few things that he didn't care about in the first place. The sounds of the conversation are soon blocked out, however, by the cries of the maid who has just dropped by and is now yelling for help.

The various Negative Attributes are not weighted evenly. Their point values depend on how much they impede or inconvenience the hero and how common the trigger is. You will find the actual numbers (from half a point to as much as 2 points per point of a Negative Attribute) listed in the individual descriptions. If you want your hero to have a Negative Attribute not listed here, your Highlord decides on the point value.

Negative Attributes range from 5 through 12 points. You may choose more than one Negative Attribute, but the total number of Generation Points gained from negative Attributes may never exceed 30. Those that you gain by race, culture, and/or profession are not figured into this total. If you want to increase a Negative

Attribute you gained via race, culture, or profession, you must include the points gained by such an increase in the 20-point maximum.

Negative Attributes may be reduced in severity during your hero's adventuring career (see page 129).

Obligations (–12 GP): Your hero has entered into a special obligation with a social, arcane, or religious group. He may not (and should not want to) violate these obligations. This is similar to the Code of Conduct Disadvantage (see p. 62), except that an obligation is much more serious and confers stronger penalties for violation (even if involuntary or unknowing). The Disadvantage often implies that your hero must take commands from the group to which he is committed, and that he often travels in their employ or at least under their orders, which may limit his freedom of choice during adventures.

One-Eyed (–5 GP): Your hero has lost an eye during his life or has lost the ability to see with this eye. He incurs a negative modifier of 4 points on all Thrown Weapons Tests and all Missile Weapons Tests at targets of less than 10 paces distant. This physical impediment cannot be corrected later in the game, whether by magic or any other means.

Pathological Cleanliness (–1 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero feels extremely uneasy whenever he or something (or someone) in his surroundings is dirty. He will have trouble concentrating on anything except cleaning up at the first possible opportunity.

Prejudice (–1 GP per 2 points): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero has preconceived opinions about a certain group (members of a certain race or culture, one of the sexes, or certain ethnic groups). He will not back away from these opinions, even if challenged or presented with contrary evidence. Just like the Curiosity Disadvantage, this is a Negative Attribute that does not disadvantage a hero with die rolls, but forces certain patterns of action upon him. See Negative Attributes for possible game effects.

Prone to Illness (–7 GP): Your hero is susceptible to diseases of all kinds. When rolling Resistance Tests against disease, his CN is treated as if it were 5 points lower. Prone to Illness may not be combined with the Resistance to Disease Advantage.

Rage (–15 GP): Your hero falls into a blood rage (which the Thorwalians call Wealrage) whenever a certain event occurs. In most cases, this event is his own spontaneous anger (such as a successful Violent Temper Test), serious injury (failure of a Willpower Test after suffering heavy damage), or consumption of certain substances.

Once in a rage, your hero employs his most dangerous weapon (including magic) against his most hated enemy—or the nearest person, if no enemy is in sight. His CO, AT, and HP are increased by 5 points. Parry becomes impossible, and the hero does not feel pain while raging. The rage lasts until the hero runs out of Endurance (losing 2 EP per combat action) and passes out. Thorwalians receive 18 GP instead of 15 when taking this Disadvantage.

Slow Regeneration (–10 GP): Your hero regenerates only 1d6 – 1 VP per period of rest; CN Rolls to retrieve lost Vitality Points receive a Difficulty Increase of 2 points. It cannot be taken together with the Rapid Healing Advantage.

Superstition (–1 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute. Superstitions usually refer to items or circumstances that produce bad luck or misfortune as believed by the hero. If you take this Disadvantage, you must specify the exact nature of your superstition. Some superstitions are grounded in reality.

Ugly (–15 GP): This is the more severe version of the Unattractive Disadvantage. Everything described for Unattractive also applies for Ugly, except that the Difficulty Increase is 5 points instead of 2. Also, an Ugly hero will find it very hard to blend in with a crowd, since others are more likely to remember his face. Ugly may not be combined with Unattractive or with the Good-Looking Advantage.

Unattractive (– 5 GP): This is the opposite of the Good-Looking Advantage (see p. 61). Your hero's appearance is unattractive, even repulsive when compared to his species' norm, leading to consequences in the reactions of his fellow men (or dwarfs or elves). All Social Talent Tests, as well as all Talents Tests involving interaction with others (those using CH as their basis) receive a Difficulty Increase of 2 points. The exceptions to this are Tests meant to intimidate someone else.

The Highlord decides whether this Disadvantage works cross-species, and whether those accustomed to the hero's presence become immune to its effects. The stronger form of this Disadvantage is called Ugly. These two Disadvantages may not be taken by the same player. Unattractive may not be combined with the Good-Looking Advantage.

Vanity (–1 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute. A vain hero tries to look his very best and tries to be as impressive as possible at all times. This makes him easy to manipulate, since his ego might force him to go beyond reasonable behavior.

Vengefulness (–1 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero will always want revenge whenever he feels slighted, and doesn't think about the consequences or weighing means against measures. While Violent Temper calls for immediate action, Vengefulness allows for careful planning and execution of the scheme of revenge.

Vertigo (–3 GP per 2 points): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero panics whenever he is in a situation where he might fall from a great height. In extreme situations, he might feel the "tug of the deep," imagining that the abyss were about to devour him. See Negative Attributes for possible game effects.

Violent Temper (–1 GP each): This is a Negative Attribute. Your hero has a tendency to overreact whenever he feels slighted in any way. This may lead to situations that will endanger him (and probably his comrades as well).

20 Questions for Your Hero

The following pages present a catalog of questions that you should consider after you have finished creating your hero. You do not need to write down all the answers in detail (although this can't hurt), nor must you answer all the questions. The exercise is to help you get into the role of your hero and to portray her as accurately as possible.

Until now, all you really knew about your hero were her game statistics and details of her appearance, such as height and hair color. These do not tell you about her personality, which is what role-playing is all about. The better you can picture your hero's idiosyncrasies, likes, and dislikes, the easier it will be for you to react appropriately in a given game situation. Now you will know what she is likely to talk about at the nightly camp fire, which dark secrets from her past she may harbor, what her favorite foods are, and so on.

With every detail you add to make your hero more complex and realistic, you will find the game more fun, until finally you'll get to the point at which role-playing gets really exciting. You'll find that you've stopped playing just a constructed personality and you've immersed yourself into the "reality" of the game situation. No longer are you simply portraying the mighty mercenary Alrik, but you've gotten to know Alrik Wallbreaker, who ran away from home when he was little, served aboard a ship for some time, has been hooked on Premian Fire ever since, and distrusts magicians.

To help you reach this point of character development more quickly, the following list of questions is provided to give a rough framework for making your hero a unique personality. You will find additional background information in the world description (especially the section on your hero's homeland) as well as the cultural description that is relevant to your hero.

- **What does your hero look like?**

How does she wear her hair? Is she fat, slim, or lanky? Does she have broad shoulders? Is her face distinctive or beautiful?

Appearance depends not only on race and culture, but also on profession. You won't find many weak warriors, nor are you likely to see many fat burglars. You should also try to give your hero at least one distinctive feature.

- **What impression does your hero make on strangers?**

What would someone meeting your hero perceive at first glance? Does she move in an elegant or a clumsy fashion? Does she look friendly or aloof? Does she wear (or carry) something that catches the eye?

Dwarfs are not exactly known for graceful movement, and a warrior in heavy mail will not look like a paragon of elegance. A lightly armored Horasian fencing master, on the other hand, will give an entirely different impression, especially since style means everything in his homeland.

- **How did your hero grow up?**

Does she have siblings? Who are they? What are their names? Are they younger or older than your hero? Does your hero like her siblings? What is (or was) the profession of her parents? Are they still alive? If not, how did they die? Did your hero grow up in a village, a city, or a small hut deep in the forest? Did she have a shielded childhood, or did she have to learn to fight for her life early on? Were there any special events in her youth that somehow shaped her, like the death of a good friend, an unjust punishment by a noble, an ork raid, or the observation of an act of divine intervention?

A hunter will probably have spent her childhood in the forest or a small village, while a warrior or magician might have been separated from his family early in life to spend his long academic training in an foreign city.

- **Does your hero still maintain close contact with childhood friends or relations?**

In addition to her parents, important people might be old friends, former teachers, or patrons—maybe even an old flame who has married someone else in the meantime.

Warriors and magicians are likely to have at least one favorite teacher. It's also possible that a burglar was taken in by an older colleague who taught her his craft.

- **Why did your hero take up adventuring?**

Did she leave her home because she just wanted to see the world? Did she become an adventurer by accident, or was it a cruel twist of fate? Does your hero try to accomplish particular goals, or does she just take it one day at a time?

Some heroes leave their home just for the sake of adventure or to get rich and famous. Others are confronted with adventure by chance, find it to their liking, and never again leave its path.

- **Did your hero ever leave home prior to becoming an adventurer?**

Has she traveled far? Why?

Few Aventurians travel much, for traveling is dangerous, strenuous, and expensive. Mountebanks, on the other hand, regularly travel the continent from one end to the other, and pirates are on the move continuously. If your hero has traveled extensively, you should know why.

- **Is your hero religious?**

If the answer is "yes," was he raised that way, or did he convert due to some special event (such as witnessing a miracle), or was he once within a hair's breadth of death but was saved? If he's not religious, why not? Has he never had an interest in the gods, or did he fall from the faith? Why?

In Aventuria, gods are portrayed as beings who sometimes interfere directly in the affairs of mortals—for instance, when one of their devout followers prays for and is granted a miracle. Nearly everyone takes the existence of the gods for granted and believes in them; agnostics are rare in Aventuria. This does not automatically mean that your hero must be a devout worshiper and regular temple-goer. Elves, for instance, have a distant view of the gods and do not engage in any formal worship at all.

- **What is your hero's opinion on magic?**

Does she regard magic as a given of everyday life, or has she never before seen the casting of a spell? Is she afraid of magic, or does she use it like a tool, just as she would a sword or a set of keys?

The average Aventurian does not have much experience with magic, instead regarding it as something mysterious and frightening, best not discussed openly. While in many of the larger settlements magicians are a fact of life, even there they do not cast spells frequently in view of strangers. In the countryside, the occasional hermit might be rumored to possess weird powers, or a druid living just inside the forest might allegedly be capable of talking to animals. Whether such powers are regarded as good or evil depends on the situation. Elves see magic as a fact of everyday life, while dwarfs regard it with caution. Magicians, of course, "live" magic.

- **For who or what would you hero risk his life?**

Would he be willing to risk his life at all? Or does he regard doing so as the one thing that makes life worth living? Is he willing to take risks to get rich and famous? Or would he forego glory in lieu of regular pay?

A warrior's concept of honor might imply that he must risk his life for the poor and the weak. A mercenary, on the other hand, would quickly put himself out of business if he were to face danger without adequate payment.

- **What is your hero's greatest desire?**

Is there anything she has always wanted to see, experience, or achieve? Does she aspire to lofty ideals? What kind of material wealth would she most like to possess?

This question addresses personal aims as well as altruistic ones, realistic plans as well as utopian ones. For an elf, the welfare of the clan might well be a prime motivator; on the other hand, a dwarf's fondest wish might be to take a bath in a trough full of golden coins.

A Word from the Wise: On Choosing Heroes

As Highlord, you will probably want to be present when your players create their heroes. By doing so, you can ensure an interesting as well as balanced group composition. You should give your players as much freedom of choice as possible and yet ensure that all the necessary "basic types" are covered. You need a fighter (a hero with well-developed Combat Talents and high VI) to succeed in combat. A diplomat (a hero with high TP in the Social Talents, knowledge of the urban way of life, and perhaps high Social Standing; despite the monikers, rogues and burglars would also fit this category) ascertains that the group can make itself heard and maintain a certain standing in the eyes of the law.

The outdoors specialist (high TP in the Nature Talents, knowledge of animals and how to treat them) keeps the group alive while out in the wild, while the scholar (highly developed Lore Talents, broad selection of languages, possibly with spell-use capability) can translate ancient scrolls and inscriptions, and may be able to get more information from colleagues or institutions.

To make such a group possible, the rules provide three professions from each of these four fields, some of which overlap. You might want to allow a party of four scholars or four outdoors specialists, but this will burden you with extra work in customizing official adventures to the needs of your group. Adventures you create yourself will probably be limited in options. If group composition is more varied but still misses one of the basic elements, you must make certain that everyone knows the group's weaknesses and is contributing to solve them. In some (rare) cases, you might want to play on these weaknesses for heightened tension, but don't overdo it.

If you are in a hurry to start playing, feel free to use the archetypes (with prepared character sheets) provided with these rules, perhaps allowing for minor modifications to better suit the players' wishes. Consider allowing swaps of Attributes (as long as the requirements of the hero's profession are not violated). Changes in hair color, eye color, height, and weight (within the racial and cultural parameters) are always acceptable. You might even figure out an archetype's cultural modifiers, remove them, and substitute them with the modifiers from a different culture (if the profession is allowed in this culture), for instance turning the Tulamidyan magician into a Garetian one. Finally, you might allow changes to equipment by ignoring all items owned and giving players a full purse to spend as they like.

Two final notes on hero creation are important. You may have noticed that, despite all the options, eligible character choices are somewhat limited. This is only a temporary situation, since *Swords and Heroes* will list all Aventurian races and cultures as well as all nonspellcasting professions, while *Magic and Witchcraft* will address magic in detail. *Gods and Demons* will describe the details of the Aventurian gods, thus your choices will multiply dramatically. Remember that players can always create their own professions should you choose to allow them. If you allow them to do so, however, take care to retain game balance. "Paladins" who fight as well as warriors, cast spells as well as trained magicians, and work divine miracles are highly unbalancing and will quickly cause other players to lose interest in the game. Their heroes will probably be nothing more than extras needed only for adventure dressing.

Regardless of all the options, we strongly advise you not to allow evil characters; such characters are not included in these rules for two very good reasons. First, a character who is portrayed in an evil manner will sooner or later (probably sooner) create tensions and ill will at the gaming table. Second, playing evil characters (especially in the cinematic sense) tends to get boring, since certain traits and behaviors are repeated again and again; accurately portraying a psychopathic murderer should be left to trained psychologists anyway.

This does not mean that all heroes must be saints, beginning each day with a prayer to the Twelvegods and helping old ladies across the street at every opportunity. The game has plenty of room for weirdos, egotists, nonconformists, and above all, real humans with all their weaknesses (remember that list of Disadvantages). It makes heroes much more believable if they experience inner conflict every now and then, or if they sometimes must bend the law a little (or at least think they must). These choices make characters much more interesting than stereotypical "good" or "evil" characters, and it makes for tremendous role-playing.

• **What is your hero most afraid of?**

What are her personal fears? Are any of them rooted in her race's or culture's worldview?

Fears can occur on a personal level (such as minor phobias), but they can also include mortal fear of a powerful archenemy. Often, they result from the legends and myths of the hero's homeland. Your hero's Negative Abilities are a good way of reflecting such fears.

• **What about your hero's morals and ethics?**

If your hero had the chance to cut the purse of a rich merchant and get away with it, would she do it? What if the money was an old woman's only possession? Would she modify the truth to gain an advantage? Would she lie to a priest? Would she do so if this could protect a friend from great harm? Does she believe in the wisdom of judges and nobles in the administration of justice? Would she punish a caught thief by herself, or would she leave this to the authorities? What opinion does she hold of nobility?

Rogues, pirates, and burglars usually do not follow the laws, for if they did they would be forced to quit their professions—or starve. Warriors, on the other hand, are usually taught to abide by the law. Only rarely will an Aventurian question the rights of the nobility or the wisdom of the law, for nobles and the laws are determined by the gods, just as the weather and the seasons. Elves, however, have particular morals of their own that often clash with the values of humans.

• **How does your hero treat strangers?**

Does she harbor any prejudices? How does she view elves, dwarfs, and humans of other races? (Or, if she is an elf or dwarf, how does she view humans in general?) Has she even seen a member of a different species before, or does she only know of them from tales and rumors?

Most Aventurian townspeople know of goblins, trolls, orks, and achaz only from hearsay. In southern Aventuria, a single elf can cause quite a stir. Thus, people tend to be highly suspicious of members of other races. Orks are a common sight in the northern Middenrealm, where they are regarded as bloodthirsty and wily. In the Fountland, goblins sometimes dwell within human cities, being recruited for the lowliest of manual labors.

• **How much does your hero value life?**

Does she view killing as a craft just like any other, or does she try to preserve life whenver she can? Does she value the life of an ork in the same way as that of a human/elf/dwarf?

Most humans see orks and goblins on about the same level as animals, and in some places, elves are likewise regarded. Warriors and mercenaries have been trained in the art of killing, but this does not mean that they would not condemn wanton slaughter as much as the next human.

• **What does your hero think of animals?**

Does she regard them as simply a source of food, or does she perceive them as dangers to her life? Does (or did) she have an animal herself, possibly a pet or mount with a personality all its own (a dog, a cat, a horse)?

Only true beings of the wild (and elves, in particular) would ever think of attributing personalities to animals or plants. Most Aventurians wouldn't think twice about slaughtering an animal for food.

• **Does your hero have a sense of beauty?**

Does she love music or art? Is she able to enjoy the beauty of a sunset? Or does she find aesthetics in combat? Does she care for current fashion?

Hard-working people often have no time to appreciate art and beauty, while well-situated heroes may have learned what should be regarded as beautiful or tasteful. Beauty is always in the eye of the beholder, however: Dwarfs, for instance, have an entirely different sense of beauty than elves. While the former praise the beauty of a perfectly-wrought weapon, the latter would rather marvel at a waterfall or the singing of the wind.

• **What are your hero's favorite foods and beverages?**

Does she prefer ale to wine, or vice versa? Or would she prefer mead or goat's milk? Does she believe that real heroes drink only brandy? Does she always insist on having meat for dinner, or could she imagine vegetable stew for a change? Does she insist on dishes and cutlery with every meal, or would she use her fingers and sink her teeth into a freshly roasted leg of mutton, dripping with grease?

Most Aventurians cannot afford meat more than once per week, and they rarely have more than watery ale or thinned wine. Eating with knife and fork is usually reserved for the well-to-do, and napkins are almost unheard of, even in those circles.

• **What about your hero's love life?**

Is your hero seductive or chaste? Is she experienced, or shy and clumsy? How does she react to flirting? Is she already spoken for? (If so, by whom?) Might she still be suffering from a tragic love affair? Is she searching for the perfect mate?

For a rogue, jumping from one affair to the next is usually the way of life. Warriors and magicians only rarely have time for romantic pursuits, which might be because their intense studies simply don't offer many opportunities.

• **Is there a dark secret in your hero's past?**

Has your hero ever done anything she would like to remain forgotten? Does she have enemies? Is there anything with which she could be blackmailed?

Many heroes hail from a close-knit community, and they leave despite close ties to their fellows, or may have been cast out. Revealing such an experience to others requires great trust—trust you put only in a companion who has proven himself time and again.

• **What are your hero's dominant character traits?**

Is she composed or does she have a temper? Flighty or calm? Embittered or joyful? Thoughtful or spontaneous? Earnest or impish? Curious or staid? Self-confident or self-conscious? Well-mannered or loutish? Mild-mannered or merciless? Suspicious or trusting? Is she hard working, or does she prefer the more pleasant parts of life? What does she like best and what doesn't she like at all?

This is a far-reaching question. The qualities you could think of are next to endless, and each may be more or less pronounced in your hero. Try to describe your hero in as many words as come to mind easily. This will help you on your (and her) first adventures.

The Talent System

Hair ruffled by the wind and hearts pounding, the companions hasten along a dark forest path. The flickering light of the lanterns causes bizarre shadows to appear, and the nocturnal sounds of the forest—the unexpected cracking of a twig here, the far cry of an animal there, and the fluttering of large wings high above—seem to be louder than usual; unnaturally loud in the darkness.

"Just a few moments more," Ranari whispers, "it can't be far now."

Suddenly loud moaning pours from the undergrowth, and Mirhiban lets out a high-pitched scream before she notices that the sound is coming from the injured messenger.

"It's all right," Shafir whispers into her ear, his voice shaking slightly. "It startled me as well."

The magicienne throws him a quick glance, wondering whether he might share her distrust of the elf woman. Near the path crouches the messenger, his face wracked with pain, clutching his bandaged leg. As soon as he recognizes the elf, he looks as though a great weight has been lifted.

"Thank the gods! It's you!" he cries.

In an instant, Trewman is at his side, loosening the bandage and expertly studying the wound with quick fingers.

"Doesn't look good. Fracture, needs to be put in splints," he mumbles to himself while searching his bag. "And there's dirt in the wound, oh my. Wait a moment … let's see … shouldn't be too hard. Here, bite into this."He pushes a piece of wood between the teeth of the bewildered Beilunk Rider. Soon after, a low scream of pain is heard, accompanied by a cracking noise.

In the meantime, the others have been searching the scene of the battle.

"Seven persons, as far as I can tell," Ranari states.

"They were waiting in ambush in the undergrowth," Daria and Angrax add from the right side of the path. "They probably knew he was going to pass here. See? Here they tied some rope—they only needed to pull it tight to trip his horse."

"This must be one important message he was carrying for seven people to attack a single messenger," Rondrian adds.

Meanwhile, Mirhiban watches the wounded man with intense concentration. "There seems to be a lingering arcane aura, the type of which I cannot easily classify," she whispers excitedly.

"You what?" Frenja asks

"Well, I detect magic."

"Magic?!" The Thorwalian immediately takes three steps back and brandishes her axe.

"Dead right. It's probably the aura of something the messenger carried. There's still a faint magical emanation originating at his belt. How interesting! Maybe a magically sealed letter, or some kind of astral message? It must have been a really strong spell or I wouldn't still be able to detect it."

"And there's dirt in the wound, oh my. Let's see . . . shouldn't be too hard. Here, bite into this."

"However that may be, friends," Rondrian cuts her short, "we should start following whoever did this. Otherwise, the thieves will get away easily. Any suggestions?"

"'Course," Frenja grumbles, still clutching her amulets and keeping some distance from the magicienne. "We follow them, bash their heads in, and take that magic whatchamathingie away from them."

Rondrian shakes his head. "I was talking strategy here, not bashing. Trewman, do you believe the messenger might be able to stay here alone for a while, or is he hurt too badly for that?"

At this point, the Beilunk Rider cuts in, sounding weak but firm. "I will manage. Don't bother with me—I can take care of myself. But I beg you: Get back this message! If you manage this, I'd be glad to wait the entire night in this forsaken forest!"

Rondrian gives him an approving nod. "Good man! All right, then. I would like to suggest the following: Ranari and Daria form the vanguard and follow the tracks. Trewman, Mirhiban, Shafir, you keep to the middle so that you'll be protected in case a fight breaks out. Angrax, take point with me. Frenja, you bring up the rear. After all," he adds with a wry smile, "you're probably the fastest of us at entering a fray. Besides, enemies sometimes attack from behind, and a strong fighter in the rear is essential."

"As you say, skipper. You should know best about fightin'," the Thorwalian nods her approval.

"Take positions, people!" Rondrian cries.

At this, Ranari tugs his sleeve. "Friend, we should be silent if we want to catch an enemy," she admonishes him softly.

As you know by now, a Test (against one of the eight Attributes) is used to decide the success or failure of many actions undertaken by a hero. Many situations during a game challenge more than one of a hero's Attributes, and sometimes experience and/or specialized knowledge are more important than "raw" Attributes. For instance, a hero climbing a tower would need to employ Courage, Strength, and Agility, all of which should be tested by the Highlord. In addition, it's important whether the hero is an experienced climber, and such knowledge—or the lack of it—should be figured into the appropriate Test.

Skills such as climbing, riding, healing, and so on are called **Talents**. While Talents describe what a hero can do, Talent Prowess (TP), which is made up of individual Talent Points, measures just how experienced she is at doing it. After we have explained Talent Tests, we will give brief descriptions of all available Talents, along with information as to which Attributes influence the Talent in question (sometimes, one single Attribute is particularly important for a specific Talent; in this case, the Attribute is listed twice, meaning that two of the three rolls are made against the same Attribute). We will also tell you whether wearing armor or carrying loads *encumbers* your hero and which Talents are *related* to other Talents (meaning that experience in one Talent may be used to substitute for another one).



When reading the descriptions of the various cultures (as well as the different professions), you can clearly see that great diversity exists as to how proficient a hero may be with a certain Talent. The Talent Listing (a list of all the hero's Talents) reflects a hero's life circumstances: whether she was brought up in the Khôm Desert or in the Fountland, or whether she once lived as a hermit or in a large town surrounded by many other people. Talents also give you a good indication of your hero's character traits, preferences, and weaknesses—a much better picture than her physical and mental Attributes alone could provide.

Along these lines, never regard your hero's TP as mere data measuring her capabilities in certain areas, but rather as a broad outline of her personality. Such a point of view might help you accurately play your hero's character right from the start. For instance, negative TP in Swim (such as a dwarf would have) not only indicates that your hero will have a hard time rolling Swim Tests, but also that you should portray him as having a general dislike of water and traveling across water. (Curing her of this dislike and teaching her to swim would probably present your fellow players' heroes with an interesting challenge; gradually advancing skills and learning new ones is part of a role-playing game's special appeal.) Thus, a TP of 0 in one particular Talent usually indicates that the hero has never given any real thought to this skill, and usually doesn't plan on using it. For instance, a hero with 0 TP in Play Instrument wouldn't be able to tell a horn from a lyre and couldn't make either of these instruments produce anything even closely resembling a melody.

Talent Tests

A Talent Test combines a hero's Attributes and her Talent Prowess to determine the outcome of an action. She simultaneously proves her physical capability and makes use of personal experience in the appropriate field. To go climbing, a hero needs to pass three Attribute Tests in succession: a Courage Test, an Agility Test, and a Strength Test. If the hero has experience in climbing (i.e., she has Talent Prowess in Climb), these points may be used to override failed Tests (when necessary) by lowering any or all of the rolls. She may spend as many points as her TP Value in the respective Talent.

Daria (CO 12, AG 13, ST: 11; TP: Climb 6) wants to scale an ancient wall. The Highlord calls for an unmodified Climb Test. Daria's player rolls 13 for the Courage Test, 10 for the Agility Test, and 14 for the Strength Test. Without her TP of 6 in Climb, the three-part Test would have failed on the first roll (the Courage Test). Due to her TP of 6, however, she may subtract 1 from the first roll; the Courage Test is therefore successful and Daria has 5 more points of TP to spend. The Agility Test was successful, but 3 more points are needed to pass the Strength Test. In the end, the hero passes all three Tests and thus passe the Climb Test without even using all of her available TP (she still has 2 points left).

It is important that you follow this procedure for every Talent Test: The player rolls her first Attribute Test (if necessary, modified by part or all of her TP), followed by the second one (modified if necessary), and finally the third (once again, modified if necessary). The player cannot spend more points of TP than the total amount of TP he has in the respective Talent.

Note: Players are *not* permitted to total the Values of all three Attributes (plus their TP) into a lump sum and then roll 3d20 against that, comparing sum to sum. Neither is it possible to roll three times in advance and assign the results to the three Subtests afterwards. A player *may* roll three separate dice (in different colors, preferably) at the same time; in this case, she needs to assign one die to each particular Test beforehand.

Since TP Values represent a hero's skill in one particular action, they are not really "spent" in Talent Tests—your hero begins her next Test with the full number of TP at her disposal.

Negative Talent Values

Should a hero have a negative TP in a Talent, or should her TP drop below zero due to situational modifiers (see below), she must add this number to all of her three Test rolls (while still trying to beat her Attribute Values); thus, negative TP always lead to Difficulty Increases (see below) on all three Tests.

Angrax, son of Angarosh (AG 12, CN 16, ST 15) is a typical dwarf. His knowledge of liquids is restricted to ale, liquor, and irritating little puddles of water in the mines – small wonder that his Swim TP is –3. Unfortunately, he is suddenly expected to swim across a small lake no more than ten paces across to get to the unguarded backside of a water castle, a task judged "daily routine" by the Highlord and thus meriting neither a Difficulty Increase nor a Decrease. In short, a standard Swim Test applies(AG/CN/ST).

Angrax's player rolls 8, 15, and 2, indicating that the first Test succeeds despite the +3 Difficulty Increase. The second Test (CN Test +3) fails (15 + 3 = 18), since Angrax does not have points of TP he could spend to lower his result. Angrax can't use his third roll, good as it is, to compensate for the second one, and thus experiences serious problems halfway across the lake.

Difficulty Increases and Decreases to Talent Tests

Talent Tests may be made more difficult (a Difficulty Increase) when the action in question is unusually difficult or outright daring (such as a Climb Test +5 for scaling a wall without any handholds). If the action seems rather easy, on the other hand, a Difficulty Decrease might be in order (such as a Sneak Test –3 to get past a drunken guard). In such cases, the hero's TP in the corresponding Talent is modified *before* the Tests take place. In essence, this either reduces the number of TP points that can be spent (if there is a Difficulty Increase, such as Climb Test +5) or increases it (if there is a Difficulty Decrease, such as Sneak Test –3).

Such *situational modifiers* might arise because a Test is particularly difficult (like picking a lock of dwarfen construction on a rich merchant's strongbox); because the hero is encumbered or impeded (such as having just burned her hands so they hurt with every move); because she has the right equipment or not (a set of lockpicks would be handy in our example below); because of time constraints (like the city guard being on one's heels); or because of numerous other factors.

Daria (who has TP 10 in Pick Locks) would incur the following Difficulty Decreases and Increases in the example just constructed: dwarfen lock +5, numb fingertips +3, high-quality lockpick –2, time constraints +3. All in all, this translates into a Difficulty Increase of 9 points. This Increase is now balanced against the hero's TP, leaving Daria with a TP of just 1. Without her lockpicks, her TP would have dropped to –1, which would have meant adding 1 to all three Test rolls (once against IN, twice against DE).

A second example: The Highlord calls for a Cook Test –3 for preparing grits. Shafir has a TP of 1 in Cook. Since the Difficulty Decrease is added to his TP, he may now roll as though he had a TP of 4 in Cook.

The following table lists the most common modifiers you might encounter during your games. You can use these entries to judge all other modifiers that might arise.

Modifiers to Talent Tests

Task Difficulty	Increase/Decrease
Can easily be done unskilled	–7
Has been part of the hero's training	–3
Is daily routine	+/–0
Needs a bit of concentration	+3
Is exacting	+7
Is really hard	+12
Can't be done without suitable equipment	+18
Is next to impossible, even with equipment	+25

Open and Contested Talent Tests

You have just learned the easiest and most basic method of determining whether a Talent Test succeeds or fails: A Difficulty Decrease or Increase is applied if appropriate, then the player rolls the dice to find out whether the hero's points of TP are sufficient to make up for high rolls where needed. In some situations, however, you'll want to know just *how* well the hero succeeded in a Test. To help you better judge this, we have devised two variant Test mechanisms: Open Talent Tests and Contested Talent Tests.

Open Tests and Remaining Points of TP

As Highlord, keep in mind that the results of Talent Tests can be graded. The more TP points a hero has left after the third Test (thus after passing the Talent Test), the better she was in applying that particular Talent. The number of remaining points is especially important when determining the artistic or monetary value of a piece of art or craftsmanship, and even more so in spellcasting. If 10 or more points remain after the Test is finished, we call this a *masterly* Test; if 19 or more points remain after the Test is finished, we call this a *perfect* Test.

A hero may never finish with more points than her original TP Value in the Talent in question—not even with a significant Difficulty Decrease. Thus, a beginner with TP 3 can never have more than 3 points left after a Test is finished, not even with a Difficulty Decrease of –10 due to very easy circumstances—she just isn't able to achieve a *masterly* result.

This game mechanism becomes especially important when you want to compare Tests to each other; for instance, during a competition, or the comparison of two heroes' Play Instrument Tests during a musical contest. In the end, the hero who has more TP points left at the end of the Test wins. If both heroes are left with the same number of TP after passing their respective Talent Tests, the hero with the higher overall TP wins the contest. If both happen to have the same overall TP, the hero with the highest relevant Attributes wins.

A typical use for the Open Test is any type of chase, especially when you track the actual distances covered by the involved parties (by using a hex grid or graph paper). The more points of TP left after the Test, the more hexes or squares the party has moved. Once the pursued party has gained a sufficient lead (in hexes or squares), the Highlord might rule that they are out of their pursuers' range

Highlord's Advice: When to Call for Attribute Tests and When to Call for Talent Tests

Usually, Attribute Tests are called for when no Talent is suited for the task at hand (for instance, you will not find a Talent such as Bash Down Doors in the Talent Listing) or when passive use comes into play (Talents almost always represent active use of one's physical or mental capabilities). The following guidelines should help you decide.

CO Tests are rather frequent, both for withstanding shock or terror or to reach a decision and show determination. CO-based Talents, on the other hand, represent actual willpower actively used to force someone (or oneself) to do something.

CL Tests can be used to decide whether a hero remembers some seemingly minor bit of information at the right time, whether she is able to identify complex patterns, or how good her general education is. CL-based Talents, on the other hand, are usually Lore Talents dealing with the availability of specialized knowledge and with adapting it to the situation at hand.

IN Tests are used to determine whether a hero notices something with her five (or more) senses, or whether she can "feel" her way into a situation and act accordingly. The active use of this Attribute during a Talent Test, while usually dealing with perception as well, may also be used to enable a hero to reach quick, intuitive decisions. In combat, IN Tests are often used to represent quick tactical decisions.

CH Tests often determine the first impression a person gives, especially if done involuntarily. CH-based Talents, on the other hand, are used when your hero wants other creatures to do something for her in a specific situation.

Additional note concerning the Charisma Attribute: Usually, aura and personal magnetism (as well as looks) only work at their full values when dealing with members of the same species (with humans, usually only with members of the same race). A dwarfish populist orator is not likely to get the same response or recognition from humans than from his dwarf kinsmen, while elves will probably only shake their heads at him, regardless of his Charisma. Aventuria is far from being free of prejudice, superstitious prattle, and implicit (or even explicit) racism. You can figure this into a game by lowering a person's Charisma value on a scale from 1 (a Mhadanistani in Garetia) to 5 (an ork among elves) when dealing with members of other races. This applies to simple Attribute Tests as well as many Tests on Social Talents.

Of course, this disadvantage slowly disappears the longer you know such a person. Among groups of player heroes, it should only be an issue at the start of play, if at all. It's best to do away with Tests and Attributes entirely when playing out group interaction.

These modifications never change a hero's Charisma as ii applies to animals or for the purpose of casting spells.

DE Tests come into play whenever a hero needs manual dexterity or quickness: for instance, to thread a needle or to carefully remove weight from a pressure-triggered trap. DE-based Talents are usually craft skills having to do with creating or adorning items.

AG Tests are used to put a hero's overall physical litheness or quickness of movement to the test. These are rare since Athletics and Body Control account for most of these features (and both can be used passively). Still, Agility is highly important in combat, figuring prominently into dodging and various special combat moves.

CN Tests are rolled to find out whether a hero collapses due to exhaustion, whether she can withstand illness or poison, or to check how fast she recovers. CN-based Talents are quite rare, since CN is normally used passively.

ST Tests are normally used to determine whether a hero is able to lift, drag, or carry a certain amount of weight, or whether she is able to bash down a door or bend an iron bar. Few Talents employ Strength in an aimed manner, although ST does figure prominently into a great number of Physical Talents.

(escaped beyond the next hill, got lost in the crowd, outdistanced the enemy chariots, and so on).

You might want to use accumulation of remaining points of TP to reflect progress in long-term tasks (such as erecting a building or library research). In such instances, the Highlord decides how many Talent Points are needed in all, whether more than one hero is allowed to contribute to this overall total, and the frequency of such Tests.

Breathing heavily, our heroes reach a wide river. The villainous earl they are pursuing has just crossed, having made certain that all boats remaining on the heroes' side of the river have been rendered useless (escaping with the only one left undamaged). The Highlord rules that repairing one of the damaged boats requires at least 8 points of TP left over from Woodcraft Tests, that no more than two heroes may join in the repair work, and that Tests may be rolled once every 15 minutes of game time.

Frenja (who, as a Thorwalian, is well acquainted with damaged boats) and Angrax (who, as a dwarf, has a natural aptitude for all kinds of crafts) set to work with their axes and carving knives, requiring a Woodcraft Test for each of them. Frenja passes her Test with 2 points to spare, while Angrax has 4 points of TP remaining after his Test. With a total of 6 points left over, a second Test is necessary three turns (15 minutes) later. In this Test, Angrax learns that while he knows a lot about woodcraft, his knowledge of boats is somewhat lacking (i.e., he fails his Test); Frenja, however, succeeds with 3 points unspent, thus bringing the total to 9, beating the value of 8 set by the Highlord. The heroes have managed to repair the boat within 30 minutes. All they can do now is hope that their quarry has not gotten too much of a lead in the meantime.

Contested Tests

Another approach is possible when creating a direct contest between two Talents. In this method, one player's degree of success affects the difficulty of another player's attempt to counteract the action. In other words, if player A rolls with great success, player B's chances to defeat player A just became far more difficult.

If Daria succeeds in a Sneak Test with 5 points of TP to spare, the guard at the gate needs to pass a Perception Test +5 to notice her. Additional modifiers might also come into play to make the Test even harder for the guard.

Typical Contested Tests (i.e., Tests that are made harder by the success of opposing Tests) include Perception (modified by someone else's Cheat, Hide, Juggling, Sneak, and so on), Human Nature (modified by someone else's Fast Talk, Persuade, Seduce, or other score), and Cheat (modified by someone else's Cheat). Usually, the modifier comes from the "active" Talent, that is, the Talent used to achieve a desired result.

If this rule leads to too much die-rolling for your tastes, just settle on a single Test with a situational modifier. Instead of having a hero roll once for sneaking and then rolling six times for the six guards' Perception Tests, for example, a Highlord might simply call for a Sneak Test with a Difficulty Increase of 6 points.

Careful, though: The two mechanisms—Open Tests vs. Contested Tests—are impossible to use at the same time. You may, however, employ Difficulty Decreases and Difficulty Increases in both types of Test.

Automatic Success and Failure

The Talent system also has provisions for Automatic Successes and Failures. Whenever you roll a double 20 (i.e., the dice come up 20 in two out of the three Tests), the Talent Test automatically fails, regardless of the hero's TP Value. In the same vein, a double 1 always stands for success, regardless of actual TP (and regardless of the result of the third roll). The "double results" do not have to be rolled consecutively to count as automatic failure or success. In those rare cases when a double 1 is rolled in an Open or Contested Test and the Test still doesn't succeed (because not enough points of TP are left or because the contester passes his roll), the Test is treated as if 0 points of TP are left unspent.

If all three Tests come up 1 or 20, you get either a spectacular success (which might be rewarded by the Highlord by giving the hero an immediate 1-point increase of the Talent Value) or an equally spectacular Fumble, which can have dire consequences (although not lethal ones). As usual, the nature of these consequences is up to the Highlord.

Optional: Alternative Attributes

These rules assume, for example, that the three Attributes most important for climbing are CO/AG/ST. On the other hand, this might be the wrong combination of Attributes for assessing whether a wall is actually climbable, since you don't really need Agility or Strength to judge the difficulty of a climb. In addition, climbing experience will still come in handy. The solution in this case might be a Test against CO/CL/IN on the basis of the hero's points of TP in Climb. The exact choice of the Attributes to be rolled against is up to the Highlord, and may be substituted as the situation warrants.

The Talents

On the following pages, you will find a complete listing of all Talents relevant for game play.

Basic, Specialized, and Professional Talents

Some Talents are known by every hero to at least a certain degree; these are listed on the character sheet as **Basic Talents**. You may always roll a Test against such a Talent, even when your TP is 0 or worse. Basic Talents may be advanced up to a value of 10 without any restrictions and don't need to be activated.

On the other hand, a hero who grew up in the dark alleys of an Aventurian backwater town and knows about foreign lands only from hearsay (and has never learned to read, so she can't even resort to books) will not have even the slightest notion of Geography, meaning that such a skill is found only among **specialists**. This is why we call them **Specialized Talents**. To advance such Talents, you need special training or education from an expert (who might be a fellow hero). These Talents appear on your character sheet only when they are part of a hero's race, culture, or profession, or else after they have been activated (by paying "activation costs" during hero creation or at a later stage in your hero's life, as described on pages 30 and 31, respectively). If none of these conditions apply, or if TP after activation is still lower than 0, you may not roll any Tests against such a Talent and may, at best, fall back on a related Talent (see below). If such Talents appear on the character sheet at all, they are put in brackets.

Finally, some Talents are tied to a hero's **profession** and might well be esoteric gibberish for nonmembers of the profession. To learn such a **Professional Talent** (i.e., advance it beyond TP 0), you need prolonged on-the-job training. In game terms, this means that the Talent in question may be advanced only if the hero clearly devotes time to practicing it during game play. These talents appear on your hero's character sheet only if they have been provided by race, culture, or profession, or else if they have been activated (see above); else, they are put in brackets. Once again, Tests against these Talents are allowed only with a TP of 1 or greater.

Falling Back on Related Talents

Since a hero's knowledge will always be limited, many Talents will exist that she knows nothing about. If the hero is faced with a Test against a Talent of which she is ignorant, the player may elect

Highlord's Advice: The Length of Talent Tests

Sometimes you'll want to know how long it takes a hero to pass a Talent Test, especially in cases where a specific task needs to be finished against a deadline, or when the lock-picking burglar can already feel the foul breath of pursuing orks on her neck. You will not find this information in the respective skill descriptions, since we believe that common sense as well as real-life experience should see you through in about 95% of cases.

Just in case, here's a good rule of thumb. Many Talent Tests take no more than a few *actions* (see time management in combat, page 95), while others need an entire *game turn*; other tasks might take an entire *time unit* (see page 20) or even half a day (this applies to most Tests for crafting items). More detailed information on this topic will be found in the forthcoming *Swords and Heroes* rulebook.

It's also possible to disregard time and just do the job at hand with the utmost concentration and attention to detail. This works only in situations where there is no Difficulty Increase to the Test (and it doesn't work with Tests that are influenced by events beyond the hero's control—you can't take your time to effect a gracious landing when suddenly being thrown from your horse). But when you do have the time to work carefully, your task may succeed automatically. In such a case, you need to spend at least twice the time you would normally spend when rolling the Test regularly. If you need to accumulate points of unspent TP (see above), this effectively doubles the span of time that passes between Tests, but it allows you to add your full number of TP to your accumulating total each time. If the heroes take their time, the Highlord might even ease up on the Difficulty Increase on really hard tasks.

to fall back on her knowledge in a related skill. Since related skills usually don't convey the same knowledge as the needed Talent, the Test against the Replacement Talent incurs a Difficulty Increase. The further apart the two skills are, the higher this Difficulty Increase becomes. The Increase is then subtracted from the Replacement Talent's TP Value.

The individual Talent descriptions clearly state which Talents you may fall back on and which Difficulty Increases you incur when doing so.

While Asleif has never even come close to a horse in his entire life (meaning he doesn't have the Ride Talent), he became quite agile (Body Control 11) during his early career on the high seas and his later adventuring life, so he feels perfectly capable of joining his friends in a horseback chase—after all, there's really nothing a Thorwalian can't do if push comes to shove.

Barely into the forest, the Highlord calls for Ride Tests to avoid some low-hanging branches. Since Asleif has never learned how to ride, his player now rolls a Body Control Test +10, meaning that Asleif is left with exactly 1 point of TP out of his original 11. Fortunately, his values in Courage, Intuition, and Agility are excellent, and the Thorwalian, while certainly not an elegant rider, nonetheless somehow manages to remain on the back of his trusty steed "Sauerbraten."

Encumbrance (EC) and Effective Encumbrance (EEC)

Usually, the Encumbrance Value of a set of armor or a carried container tells you of any Difficulty Increase your hero incurs by wearing the armor or carrying the heavy equipment. Further information is in the chapters on *Combat* (page 90) and *Encumbrance and Carrying Capacity* on page 120.

Effective Encumbrance (EEC) is a value that takes into account the effect of armor or load on the various Talents: Heavy armor is more bothersome to an acrobat than to a drover. Also, armor EC may be lowered by the Armor Use Special Ability (see page 100).

If a hero wearing toadshide (EC 2) were to roll a Swim Test (EEC=ECx2), this Test would automatically incur a Difficulty Increase of (2 x 2 =) 4 points, regardless of all other situational modifiers. On the other hand, a Test on Survival (EEC=EC–4) would not incur a Difficulty Increase (and no Decrease, either).

Combat Talents

Highlord's Advice: There are no Talent Tests for Combat Talents. Instead, TP is divided between Attack and Parry and added to the respective base values, the exceptions being Jousting (used only for attacks, thus all points of TP are added to Attack Value) and ranged weapons (all points of TP are added to the Ranged Attack Value). Once this is done, combat is conducted on a blow-by-blow basis (see page 95).

Falling Back on Related Talents: Some Combat Talents are quite similar to one another, meaning that an experienced sword fighter can just as easily wield a saber. When using a related weapon, a total of 5 points is subtracted from the TP Value, split like this: 2 points are taken from AT, while 3 points are taken from PA. If a hero tries to fight with a weapon that she does not know how to use and it has no related weapon, the hero uses it with her Base Attack Value and her Base Parry Value, plus the modifiers mentioned above (AT–2, PA–3).

Effective Encumbrance: Like most Physical Talents, Encumbrance plays a vital part in combat. In melee combat, it is split evenly between Attack Value and Parry Value; in case of an odd value, the Attack modifier is rounded down and the Parry modifier is rounded up. In ranged combat, EEC is subtracted from the Ranged Attack Value.

Shafir draws his saber (AT 11, PA 9) to defend himself against a robber. Since he is wearing leather armor (AR 3, EC 3) and Saber use has EEC=EC–2, he incurs an Effective Encumbrance of 1 (for 3–2=1). He now must split this EEC value between Attack and Parry. Because 1 divided by 2 = 0.5, he rounds down for Attack, yielding 0,

and rounds up for Parry, yielding 1. Thus, Shafir's Attack Value remains at 11 (for 11–0=11), while his Parry Value drops to 8 (9–1=8).

Encumbrance cannot usually be ignored, but in a few cases, you don't need to calculate it (like when a hero is not in a fight, but instead is trying to figure out another's combat abilities by watching him).

Advancing and Maximum Values: Some Combat Talents are harder to learn or advance than others, which translates into the columns on the Advancement Cost Table (ACT; page 125). The maximum value a hero can attain in a Combat Talent is equal to the higher of her AG and ST Attributes, plus 3. Thus, a warrior with AG 12 and ST 15 may advance her Combat Talents to a maximum TP of 18.

Since we will address Combat Talents in more detail in an atmosphere more conducive to combat (in the chapter on the *Combat System*), this chapter simply lists those values that are relevant for learning and advancing Combat Talents.

Axes and Maces (Armed Melee; Basic Talent)
EEC: EC–4
Related Skills: Sabers, Two-Handed Blunt Weapons
Advancement: D

Bastard Sword (Armed Melee)
EEC: EC–2
Related Skills: Swords, Two-Handed Swords

Bow (Ranged Combat)
EEC: EC–3
Related Skill: None
Advancement: E

Brawling (Unarmed Combat; Basic Talent)
EEC: EC
Related Skill: None
Advancement: C

Chain Weapons (Armed Melee)
EEC: EC–3
Related Skill: None
Advancement: D

Crossbow (Ranged Combat)
EEC: EC–5
Related Skill: Bow
Advancement: C

Daggers (Armed Melee; Basic Talent)
EEC: EC–1
Related Skills: Brawling, Fencing Weapons
Advancement: D

Fencing Weapons (Armed Melee)
EEC: EC–1
Related Skills: Daggers, Swords
Advancement: E

Basic Talents

These Talents are available to all heroes, even if some might rank at TP 0 or even a negative TP. They don't need to be activated, and all heroes may roll Tests against them.

Combat: Axes and Maces, Brawling, Daggers, Sabers, Throwing Knives

Physical: Body Control, Carouse, Climb, Dance, Hide, Perception, Sing, Sneak, Swim, Willpower

Social: Fast Talk, Human Nature

Nature: Orientation, Survival, Track

Lore: Calculate, Legend Lore, Religious Lore

Languages and Scripts: Tongues (mother tongue)

Artisan: Cook, Leathercraft, Paint/Draw, Tailor, Treat Wounds, Woodcraft

Specialized Talents

Only a hero who has actively learned or studied such a Talent may use it. Unless they are listed under the hero's race, culture, or profession, they must be activated and can only be learned from experts. You may roll Tests against them only if TP is at least 1.

Combat: Bastard Sword, Bow, Chain Weapons, Crossbow, Fencing Weapons, Infantry Weapons, Javelins, Jousting, Spears, Staves, Swords, Throwing Axes, Two-Handed Blunt Weapons, Two-Handed Swords, Wrestling

Physical: Acrobatics, Athletics, Juggling, Pick Pockets, Ride, Voice Mimicry

Social: Etiquette, Masquerade, Persuade, Seduce, Streetwise, Teach

Nature: Bind/Escape, Fish, Trap, Weather Sense

Lore: Animal Lore, Appraise, Arcane Lore, Board Games, Engineering, Geography, Heraldry, History, Language Lore, Law, Plant Lore, Starcraft, Stone Lore, Warcraft

Languages and Scripts: Tongues [every foreign tongue as an individual Talent], Read/Write [every alphabet is regarded as an individual Talent]

Artisan: Blacksmith, Boats, Cartography, Cheat, Drive, Pick Locks, Play Instrument, Tattooing, Train Animals, Treat Disease, Treat Poison

Professional Talents

These Talents can be learned only from teachers. Unless they are listed under the hero's race, culture, or profession, they need to be activated and can be learned only from experts. You may roll Tests against them only if TP is at least 1.

Combat: None

Physical: None

Social: None

Nature: None

Knowledge: Anatomy

Languages and Scripts: None

Artisan: Alchemy, Bowyer, Butcher, Carpenter, Farming, Light Engineering, Mining, Stonecutter/Jeweler, Stonemason, Tanner/Furrier

Related Skills: Spears, Two-Handed Blunt Weapons
Advancement: D

Javelins (Ranged Weapons)
EEC: EC–2
Related Skills: Throwing Axes
Advancement: C

Jousting (Armed Combat; AT only)
EEC: Not applicable
Related Skill: None
Advancement: E

Sabers (Armed Melee; Basic Talent)
EEC: EC–2
Related Skills: Axes and Maces, Swords
Advancement: D

Spears (Armed Melee)
EEC: EC–3
Related Skills: Infantry Weapons, Staves
Advancement: D

Staves (Armed Melee)
EEC: EC–2
Related Skill: Spears
Advancement: D

Swords (Armed Melee)
EEC: EC–2
Related Skills: Bastard Sword, Fencing Weapons, Sabers
Advancement: E

Throwing Axes (Ranged Combat)
EEC: EC–2
Related Skills: Javelins, Throwing Knives
Advancement: D

Throwing Knives (Ranged Combat; Basic Talent)
EEC: EC–3
Related Skills: Javelins, Throwing Axes
Advancement: C

Two-Handed Blunt Weapons (Armed Melee)
EEC: EC–3
Related Skills: Axes and Maces, Infantry Weapons
Advancement: D

Two-Handed Swords (Armed Melee)
EEC: EC–2
Related Skills: Bastard Sword, Sabers, Swords
Advancement: E

Wrestling (Unarmed Combat)
EEC: EC
Related Skill: None
Advancement: D

Physical Talents

Highlord's Advice: Many Physical Talents lend themselves to both Open and Contested Tests. Some Tests may also be rolled in secret by the Highlord.

Encumbrance: With almost all Physical Talents, Encumbrance plays a vital part. It does not need to be taken into account, however, when a hero is simply trying to assess a situation and not actually attempting to act (like studying a mountainside by means of her Climb Talent).

Advancement: Advancement costs for Physical Talents are read from column **D** on the table on page 125.

Acrobatics (CO/AG/ST) (Specialized)

This Talent is especially important for mountebanks because it covers everything they have trained for in their careers: balancing, swinging on a rope or trapeze, somersaulting, cartwheeling, and vaulting. When your hero wants to perform an action that would be worthy of a circus artist, the Highlord can ask for an Acrobatics Test. Less spectacular feats of controlled movement, such as rolling after having been thrown off a horse, are instead handled by Body Control. A hero needs to have a minimum TP of 4 in Body Control to be allowed any Acrobatics Tests.

Requirement: Body Control 4
Effective Encumbrance: EC x 2
Related Skill: Body Control (+5), Athletics (+10)

Athletics (AG/CN/ST) (Specialized)

This Talent represents the ability to focus Strength, Agility, and Constitution into one single action and excel at classical athletic events, not only to achieve in a sports competition, but also because the ability to carry heavy loads or run long distances is needed for many professions.

Athletics Tests might be used to increase a hero's sprinting speed (see page 118), to reduce endurance loss when running long distances, to support a Strength Test made for lifting weights, or to increase a hero's maximum jumping height or distance (see page 119).

Effective Encumbrance: EC x 2
Related Skill: Body Control (+5), Acrobatics (+10)

Body Control (CO/IN/AG) (Basic)

This Talent is useful in many common but unpleasant situations: slipping on a narrow staircase, falling from a horse, or jumping clear of a collapsing bridge or falling debris. In all these cases, you need to exert Body Control. The more difficult the situation, the higher the Difficulty Increase will be. Rules for falling (and taking damage while doing so) are on page 121.

Effective Encumbrance: EC x 2
Related Skill: Acrobatics (+5), Athletics (+10)

Carouse (IN/CN/ST) (Basic)

Heroes are sometimes involved in drinking bouts that take them to their limits. While being drunk usually leads to an increase in Courage or a temporary decrease in certain Negative Attributes (especially those having to do with fears), on the downside, all other Positive Attributes are decreased drastically and Negative Attributes such as Curiosity, Superstition, and especially Violent Temper are increased.

If your hero succeeds in a Carouse Test, she can negate these ill effects. A successful Carouse Test also prevents the usual hangover after a night of heavy drinking.

Effective Encumbrance: None
Related Skill: None

Climb (CO/AG/ST) (Basic)

When your hero wants to attempt a difficult climb, a Climb Test is in order. "Difficult" refers to scaling a castle wall or braving a sheer cliff—getting onto a tavern table or something similar does not require such a Test. Depending on the type and height of the obstacle to be climbed, appropriate Difficulty Increases may be

in order. Using climbing aids (pitons, ropes, pegs, hooks) leads to a Difficulty Decrease. A hero with the Vertigo Disadvantage either rolls a subsequent Vertigo Test (effectively creating her own Contested Test) or instead incurs a Difficulty Increase (probably equaling her Vertigo value) on her Climb Test.

Since climbing carries the chance of falling, prospective climbers are advised to read the rules for falling and damage from falling on page 121.

Effective Encumbrance: EC x 2

Related Skill: Athletics (+5), Acrobatics (+5), Body Control (+10)

Dance (CH/AG/AG) (Basic)

Being able to dance is more important than you may think: Not only will it help your hero make an impression at noble courts and receptions, but the Talent might also come in handy during elves' or witches' feasts. On such occasions, a failed Test might make even the most impressive hero look ridiculous and may even cost her social prestige. Use of this Talent covers basic coordination of movement and a feel for rhythm; if your hero wants to engage in one of the more complex courtly dances, she'll also need a sound knowledge of Etiquette.

Effective Encumbrance: EC x 2

Related Skill: Body Control (+5), Acrobatics (+5)

Hide (CO/IN/AG) (Basic)

This Talent allows your hero to quickly choose and find a suitable hiding place when necessary. A failed Test indicates that your hero didn't hide well enough (and thus, underestimated her pursuers' Perception) or she simply couldn't decide on a suitable hiding place ("Shall I take the chair or the wardrobe, or would jumping on the chandelier be the best idea?"). If no opportunities for hiding exist (say, on the playing field of Havena's Imman stadium during a game break), the Highlord may disallow such a Test. The Highlord may decide to roll for your hero in secret so that you may not automatically know whether the Test was successful. A Contested Roll (vs. someone else's Perception) could also be used.

Effective Encumbrance: EC–2

Related Skill: Sneak (+10), Body Control (+15)

Juggling (CO/CH/DE) (Specialized)

This Talent encompasses the sleight-of-hand tricks a mountebank can use to make a living at a fair or to save his life when in the clutches of unscrupulous bandits: juggling balls, ventriloquism, fire-eating, and so on. This Talent applies to "side interests" such as a friendly game of craps, but does not address cheating on card and dice games (see the Cheat Talent).

Effective Encumbrance: EC x 2

Related Skill: Cheat (+10), Pick Pockets (+10)

Perception (CL/IN/IN) or (CL/IN/DE) (Basic)

"I put my ear to the door—do I hear anything?" This is one of the most frequently asked questions during a game session. Whenever your hero wants to gain information related to the five senses, a Perception Test is the way to do it. Perception applies to smelling fragrances as well as spotting distant targets, to identifying poisoned wine by taste as well as tracing filigreed engravings. All Tests should be rolled in secret by the Highlord. Tests involving hearing, listening, tasting, or smelling should be rolled against CL/IN/IN; those involving tactile sense are based upon CL/IN/DE instead. A failed Test indicates that your hero didn't notice anything or that she receives misleading or incorrect information.

Effective Encumbrance: EC (This is the upper limit; at the Highlord's discretion, EEC can vary according to situation.)

Related Skill: None

Pick Pockets (CO/IN/DE) (Specialized)

Whether it's cutting purses or stealing from a stranger's pocket, many heroes of shady reputation employ this Talent quite frequently. Several factors determine the establishment of Difficulty Increases: Does the victim suspect robbery? How bulky is the loot? Does the thief work with an accomplice who bumps into the victim or distracts her in another way? The possibilities are many. A player might be awarded Difficulty Decreases by describing her action precisely and explaining why it should improve her chance of success. An attempt to Pick Pockets can be countered by a successful Perception Test.

Requirement: To advance Pick Pockets beyond TP 10, your hero must have a minimum TP of 4 in Human Nature.

Effective Encumbrance: EC x 2

Related Skill: Juggling (+10)

Ride (CH/AG/ST) (Specialized)

Your hero does not need this Talent as long as she simply sits on a horse led by someone else or one that moves very slowly. A hero who has never learned to ride, however, will not be able to cause a horse to move in a specific direction when the animal has other ideas (such as having its eyes on a green meadow, or smelling delicious oats).

Ride Tests are required when your hero wants her horse to perform in an extraordinary manner: Riding at a hard pace or jumping obstacles (even low ones) cannot be done without passing a Test first. Riding across difficult terrain or without reins incurs Difficulty Increases. The more spectacular the feat you want the horse to attempt, the higher the Increase should be (as a rule of thumb, jumping higher than 1.5 paces or farther than 5 paces should incur drastic Increases).

Ride Tests are also used for steering flying animals such as pterodactyls or hippogriffs. Such Tests automatically incur a Difficulty Increase of +5 if the hero has no experience with flying creatures; other Increases may be warranted for only occasional use of flying creatures.

Effective Encumbrance: EC–2

Related Skill: Body Control (+10), Acrobatics (+15)

Sing (IN/CH/CN) (Basic)

Although not everyone is blessed with a bard's voice, practice and training can improve most voices. The Sing Talent can be used for solo singing, reciting a heroic epic, or accompanying instrumental music. Being able to sing or recite properly not only comes in handy when you're a member of a professional choir (which is not likely), but also when your hero wants to be initiated into certain cults or follow a liturgy. The Talent is, of course, absolutely indispensable for professional singers, bards, and skalds.

Effective Encumbrance: EC–3

Related Skill: None

Sneak (CO/IN/AG) (Basic)

Successful sneaking depends not only on your hero's body control, but also on the type of terrain and the hero's clothing. Sneaking across packed earth may be possible for a bare-footed hero without any Sneak Test at all. On the other hand, trying to sneak through a forest while wearing riding boots (which make

it impossible for your hero to feel twigs before stepping on them) takes a great deal of skill.

Difficulty Increases to Sneak Tests should be governed by three factors: natural features, armor, and footwear. A Sneak Test may be countered by a successful Perception Test. The Highlord may (and should) make your hero's rolls secretly so that you may not automatically know whether she succeeded in her Test.

Effective Encumbrance: EC

Related Skill: Body Control (+10), Hide (+10)

Swim (AG/CN/ST) (Basic)

A hero with TP 2 in Swim can tread water and move in a specific direction at a very slow pace. Thus, she won't have to roll a Swim Test when falling into a small pond. Swim Tests become necessary in all instances in which your hero wants to perform an extraordinary action while in the water: diving, carrying an encumbering load, pulling a companion, or fighting (for fighting under water, see page 106).

Some factors need to be taken into account when determining Difficulty Increases; movement of the water (raging breakers or a mountain torrent may result in a Difficulty Increase of up to 8) and your hero's armor are especially important. Distance covered when swimming is determined by a hero's Endurance (see page 118).

Effective Encumbrance: EC x 2

Related Skill: Athletics (+15)

Voice Mimicry (CL/IN/CH) (Specialized)

This Talent is most often used to imitate animal voices. A higher TP also enables your hero to imitate human voices. In both cases, the hero must first have sufficient time and opportunity to study and memorize the specific sounds and to practice imitating them. It would take a master with TP of at least 15 to answer a question by the Minister of State of the Horasian Empire in his own voice.

Requirement: Perception 4

Effective Encumbrance: EC–4

Related Skill: None

Willpower (CO/CN/ST) (Basic)

Willpower reflects the ability to withstand pain. Thus, high TP will be useful not only when tortured, but also in combat (to prevent collapse after suffering substantial damage) or when force-marching.

Willpower also comes into play when your hero tries to resist temptation, stifle a laugh, or bite back a taunting remark when inappropriate. (In some cases, a Willpower Test might be less appropriate than a Violent Temper Test or a Pride Test—or the hero's TP in Violent Temper or Pride might be imposed as a Difficulty Increase on the Willpower Test.)

Effective Encumbrance: None

Related Skill: None

Social Talents

Highlord's Advice: Many Social Talents lend themselves to both Open or Contested Tests; some Tests may also be rolled in secret by the Highlord.

Encumbrance: With Social Talents, Encumbrance is less important than it is for Physical Talents. In some situations, encumbrance might be a factor. The EEC listed for each Talent is the upper limit; at the Highlord's discretion, EEC can be lowered (or ignored) according to the situation.

Advancement: Advancement costs for Social Talents are read from column **B** in the table on page 125.

Etiquette (CL/IN/CH)

A hero may suddenly find herself among distinguished company—perhaps she was invited to a courtly ball as reward for a special service, or maybe she is shadowing a villain at the duke's court. How does she correctly address the duke's daughter? Whom does she greet first? What is the coat-of-arms of the house of Stormrock-Mersington? Furthermore, which wines are currently in vogue? What is the current fashion at the Horasian court? Is it a serious *faux pas* to serve sweet pastries with mutton soufflé? Keeping track of these minutiae is difficult for most players; thus, your hero should be knowledgeable in the field of Etiquette. The Highlord may make your hero's rolls in secret so that you do not automatically know whether she succeeded in her Test.

Effective Encumbrance: EC–2

Related Skill: None

Fast Talk (CO/IN/CH) (Basic)

This Talent enables your hero to dazzle people with a barrage of words, causing them to—at least temporarily—agree with the hero's ideas and act in his favor. The Talent may be used in a variety of situations.

Beg: This use of the Fast Talk Talent covers choosing the right disguise and knowing the right words to move passers-by to pity to throw you a few coins. Begging is not restricted to the poorest of the poor, for whom it is a necessity of life—it has also become a real "profession" taught by highly organized guilds of beggars that have sprung up in many large cities.

Haggle: If possible, haggling should be played out between the Highlord and player instead of simply resorting to a Haggle Test. The Highlord may take the hero's Haggle TP as a guideline as to how easily (and how far) a merchant can be beaten down. If pressed for time in a game session, on the other hand, you may find it preferable to roll Haggle Tests instead. In this case, the haggling player may go for a lower price by setting an appropriate Difficulty Increase: +0 for a 5 % discount, +1 for 10 %, +2 for 15 %, and so on. A Contested Test would also be possible. If the character is the seller, transactions for selling to customers are also treated by using this Talent.

Lie: You might think that lying would be second nature to nearly every hero, but then again, some characters have been raised to be far too honest and trusting to speak a lie even if their lives depended on it. Lying can be used successfully only if the victim has no possibility of finding out the truth at that particular moment. A successful Lie Test can result in the victim refraining from checking out the truth.

The Highlord may decide to make your hero's rolls in secret so that you do not automatically know whether she succeeded in her Test. A character may counter a successful Lie Test by succeeding at a Human Nature Test. The ability to wriggle out of tense situations or belittle your hero's misdeeds in the face of guards, judges, or spouses (although conceptually not exactly the same), is also treated using this Talent.

Requirement: To advance Fast Talk beyond a TP of 10, your hero must have TP of at least 4 in Human Nature.

Effective Encumbrance: Depending on the situation, a range of EC–4 to ECx2 (such as begging in visible armor).

Human Nature (CL/IN/CH) (Basic)

A Human Nature Test helps a hero notice and understand the true plans of a character played by the Highlord. In this way, you can check a guide's reliability as well as a horse trader's honesty. Human Nature Tests are **always** rolled in secret by the Highlord, who then informs you about your hero's feelings about the person in question—which might well result in a complete misjudgment.

To prevent a lucky hero from identifying the adventure's major villain by rolling a successful Human Nature Test, the Highlord may impose a secret Difficulty Increase upon such a Test. Usually, this Increase equals the level of the Highlord's Character. A Contested Test against the Lie Talent of the character in question might also be a good idea.

To judge the intentions of a character of a different species, a Difficulty Increase is generally in order, the exact amount of which is up to the Highlord. For ease of reference, this Talent is called "Human Nature" and applies to all races equally instead of creating several Talents such as "Dwarfen Nature," "Ork Nature," and so on.

Effective Encumbrance: None

Related Skill: None

Masquerade (CO/CH/AG) (Specialized)

Difficulty Increases and Decreases are at the Highlord's discretion for this Talent, and depend greatly on the hero's stature and the chosen masquerade. (A huge Thorwalian will most certainly have problems posing as a delicate Moha girl.) A successful Masquerade Test results in the hero being accepted in her new "identity" by those in her surroundings. Take note of the number of TP remaining after the Test is finished (see page 71).

Effective Encumbrance: Varies from no Encumbrance to ECx2

Related Skill: None

Persuade (CL/IN/CH) (Specialized)

If used correctly, the Persuade Talent creates a change of mind lasting for at least a few days and is thus more effective than Fast Talk. The Highlord decides upon Difficulty Increases or Decreases based on the "victim's" Cleverness and outlook on life. Heroes interested in a career as a charlatan or demagogue will find this Talent indispensable.

Requirement: Human Nature 4

Effective Encumbrance: Varies; perhaps EC–4

Related Skill: Fast Talk (+10)



Seduce (IN/CH/CH) (Specialized)

The Seduce Talent determines the hero's magnetism toward members of the opposite (or, if the hero is thus inclined, the same) sex of the same species. A successful Talent Test indicates that the "victim" of the seduction attempt will take a liking to the hero. The details of this and what the seduced person will want to do for the hero must be judged according to the respective game situation. If the person to be seduced is uninterested in the hero, a Difficulty Increase may be in order. Trying to seduce a member of a different species (say, a dwarf seducing an elf) should incur a marked Difficulty Increase; trying to seduce a member of the same sex might incur a lower Difficulty Increase, at the Highlord's discretion.

Requirement: Human Nature 4

Effective Encumbrance: EC–2

Related Skill: Varies; possibly Fast Talk (+1) or Persuade (+10)

Streetwise (CL/IN/CH) (Specialized)

This Talent enables a hero to quickly get her bearings in a foreign city. Successful Tests will prompt the Highlord to answer questions such as: Where must I be wary of guards? Where do I find a cheap place to stay? Where can I best ply my trade (cutting purses, perhaps)? Which temple is most likely to pity a poor soul willing to sing any god's praise in exchange for a hearty meal? The Highlord may decide to roll your results in secret so that you do not automatically know whether the Test succeeded.

Effective Encumbrance: EC–4

Related Skill: Human Nature (+10)

Teach (CL/IN/CH) (Specialized)

Not everyone is able to pass knowledge on to others in such a way that they actually learn well. Since most heroes will not care much for settling down and starting a career as a professional teacher, this Talent will likely be used most for Highlord characters. If your heroes want to engage in teaching, see page 126 for more information.

Requirement: To advance Teach beyond TP 10, your hero needs a TP of at least 4 in Human Nature.

Effective Encumbrance: None

Related Skill: Persuade (+10)

Nature Talents

Highlord's Advice: Both Open and Contested Tests are possible with these Talents. Some Tests may be rolled in secret by the Highlord.

Encumbrance: With Nature Talents, Encumbrance is less important than for Physical Talents. In some situations, encumbrance might be a factor. The EEC listed for each Talent is the upper limit; at the Highlord's discretion, EEC can vary according to situation.

Advancement: Advancement costs for Nature Talents are read from column **B** on the table on page 125.

Bind/Escape (DE/AG/ST) (Specialized)

If your hero wants to tie someone up, a Bind/Escape Test will be necessary only if the binding is meant to last for at least a few hours. Escaping from such bonds requires an Open Test with a Difficulty Increase equal to twice the binder's Bind/Escape TP left unspent after the original Bind Test.

A bound hero can try to Escape once per 30 minutes. Besides experienced hunters, many Thorwalians are also experts in this Talent since they tie a great number of loops and knots during their ship-handling chores.

Effective Encumbrance: EC x 2
Related Skill: Seafaring (+10)

Fish (IN/DE/ST) (Specialized)

Before your hero can even attempt to catch a fish, he needs TP of at least 1 to be able to judge whether trying to fish in a given body of water is even worth the bother (no Test necessary). Once past this stage, a successful Fish Test indicates that *something* has bitten the hook (or was caught in the net), but more importantly, that the hero selected the right bait to attract and catch an edible fish of sufficient size to feed him (providing at least one ration).

Effective Encumbrance: EC
Related Skill: Survival (+10)

Orientation (CL/IN/IN) (Basic)

This Talent determines your hero's ability to identify compass directions and to find her way across unfamiliar terrain. Seafarers (such as Thorwalians) and desert dwellers (such as Novadis) are especially adept at this since the ability to find their way in highly monotonous surroundings is paramount to them. A keen sense of orientation is also handy when exploring large buildings or underground complexes. Orientation Tests may be rolled in secret by the Highlord, especially in difficult situations (monotonous ice fields, underground labyrinths). In those cases, rolling the Tests secretly is recommended.

Effective Encumbrance: None (In some situations, the Highlord might penalize a hero whose field of vision is limited by a helmet, with a Difficulty Increase of up to 3 points.)
Related Skill: Starcraft (+10)

Survival (IN/DE/CN) (Basic)

This Talent serves as a catch-all for anything that might be important for surviving in the wilderness: choosing a campsite and setting up camp, starting a fire, finding firewood that will burn even when wet, and so on. Usually, the whole procedure is abstracted into one single Test. If it fails, something unpleasant happens during the period of time covered by the Test; for instance, your hero's tent may be swept away during the night because she greatly underestimated the small stream next to the tent. The Highlord may make your hero's rolls in secret so that you do not automatically know whether the Test succeeded.

Effective Encumbrance: EC–4
Related Skill: None

Track (CL/IN/CN) (Basic)

This Talent governs finding and following a trail or set of tracks. Difficulty Increases or Decreases depend on the type and condition of terrain. The Highlord should call for a new Track Test at each change of terrain type or condition. Modifiers usually range from –7 (freshly fallen snow) to +12 (naked rock). Some conditions (e.g., a dust-free marble floor) may not allow Track Tests at all. The number of TP remaining after the Test determines the amount of information available to the hero. Track Tests may be rolled in secret by the Highlord.

Requirement: To advance Track beyond TP 10, your hero needs a TP of at least 4 in Perception.

Effective Encumbrance: EC–2
Related Skill: Perception (+10)

Traps (CL/DE/ST) (Specialized)

This Talent encompasses constructing, placing, and disguising a trap for wildlife. A successful Test indicates that an animal is actually caught in the trap. On a related matter, a Track Test does not determine whether animals live or pass near the trap—this decision is up to the Highlord (representing the trap's surroundings) and may be relegated to chance.

A trapper with TP of at least 6 is able to devise traps that are hard to detect even by human eyes. In these cases, Contested Perception Tests (possibly aided by high TP in Traps) can be rolled to detect the trap.

This Talent does not apply to the construction of mechanical traps within buildings, tunnels, caves, and so on. Such devices belong in the province of the Engineering Talent.

Requirement: To advance Traps beyond TP 10, your hero needs a TP of at least 4 in Survival.

Effective Encumbrance: EC–2
Related Skill: Survival (+10)

Weather Sense (CL/IN/IN) (Specialized)

Heroes adept at Weather Sense can literally feel changes in the weather, usually early enough to adopt protective measures such as donning a heavy coat, ducking for cover, and so on. Heroes from cities or from regions with very stable weather patterns are not usually skilled in this Talent. The Highlord is advised to roll Weather Sense Tests in secret.

Effective Encumbrance: None
Related Skill: Survival (+10)

Lore Talents

Highlord's Advice: Lore Tests may be rolled in secret by the Highlord, depending on the situation. This is especially useful when the hero has only superficial knowledge of the topic in question. Thus, the Highlord may help or hinder hero groups, depending on the course and the needs of the adventure.

Contested Tests are not often used with Lore Talents. Points of TP left unspent (see page 71), on the other hand, often determine the quality of a hero's knowledge, especially regarding unspecific questions ("Do I know anything about the Wizard Wars?"). They might also be used to reflect library research.

Encumbrance: Encumbrance due to wearing armor or carrying loads might play a certain role if some "Artisan" aspect applies to the Lore Talent in question. Usually, EEC does not apply.

Advancement: Advancement costs for Lore Talents can be read from column B on the table on page 125.

Anatomy (CU/CL/DE) (Professional)

This Talent represents knowledge of the human (or nonhuman) body, its structure, and how the inner organs work together; it is the basis for all the healing arts. Since knowledge of this kind is gleaned only from studying corpses or convicted criminals, the profession of anatomist is not highly regarded by most people; in some areas, it is forbidden altogether. An anatomist, however, is much better at correctly diagnosing dangerous wounds and organic diseases than certain other occupations (and gains a Difficulty Decrease of half her TP in Anatomy applied to her Treat Wounds, Disease, and Poison Tests). She also knows where the body is most vulnerable, translating to an additional point of damage in unarmed combat if the anatomist has TP of at least 10 in Anatomy.

Requirement: Cannot take Fear of the Dead Disadvantage

Related Skill: Treat Wounds (+5), Treat Disease (+5)

Animal Lore (CO/CL/IN) (Specialized)

Successful hunting is based on solid knowledge of the behavior of common animal species. An Animal Loremaster may also attempt to judge species that are as yet unknown to her, since she may try to compare them to those she does know. Successful Animal Lore Tests may serve to identify a particular species, to predict animal behavior, or may even (combined with a Sneak Test and the use of an appropriate weapon) determine success or failure of a hunt.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Can vary by creature—Ride (+10) or Survival (+10)

Appraise (CL/IN/IN) (Specialized)

Heroes will win, discover, steal, or be given a variety of items in their careers. Every item—for example, a small ring adorned with a blue stone or a silver bird miniature—has an intrinsic value. To learn the approximate worth of a piece of jewelry, your hero needs to succeed at an Appraise Test. If you pass this Test, the Highlord gives you a rough selling price for the item.

When buying items for yourself, an Appraise Test can help you learn the true value of overpriced goods. The Highlord may decide to make your hero's rolls in secret so that you do not automatically know whether the Test succeeded. The Appraise Talent applies only to estimating monetary values, not to making guesses ("appraising" situations, distances, and so on). These game functions are covered by other Talents.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Stonecutter/Jeweler (+5)



Arcane Lore (CL/CL/IN) (Specialized)

The Alanfanian sorcerer grins and rubs his hands. What will happen next? Might this scintillating ring really be an artifact of the lizardfolk of old? Why do the tracks of the elf end abruptly, as if he vanished into thin air? Why is it dark outside?

All of these questions might be answered by anyone (not only a magician) who has devoted some time to the study of the arcane arts, whether through perusal of dusty tomes or from practical, woebegone experience—maybe a scrap of such knowledge will separate victory from defeat in the final confrontation.

This Talent is one of the magician's most important tools of the trade.

Requirement: To advance Arcane Lore beyond TP 10, your hero needs TP of at least 6 in Read/Write (any culturally suitable language).

Related Skill: None

Board Games (CL/CL/IN) (Specialized)

This Talent confers knowledge of the game rules of the most important board games (such as Urdas, Garadan or the Tulamidyan Camel Game, which is played far and wide across Aventuria and has developed many local variations). It also provides knowledge of technique, tactics, game strategy, assessment of the positions of playing pieces, appraisal of chances to win, and so on.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: In certain situations, Warcraft (+10)

Calculate (CL/CL/IN) (Specialized)

Similar to Read/Write, actual Tests using this Talent will be rare during game play. A hero with TP 0 may be able to count, but not calculate. He is also able to differentiate between many and few, and between more or less. Heroes with TP 1 or 2 have a hard time counting and calculating and must use their fingers and toes. A TP of 3 indicates knowledge of basic arithmetic operations. A TP of at least 4 is needed to be able to roll Tests in many other fields of study, while the really arcane stuff (geometry, calculating roots, calculating interest, or the early intricacies of infinitesimal calculus) requires TP of at least 6.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: None

Engineering (CL/CL/DE) (Specialized)

Knowledge of Engineering may be useful in a number of situations. This Talent encompasses knowledge of the basics of physics, such as the lever law, frictional force, block and tackle, inclined planes, and so on. If your hero wants to construct improvised mechanical devices (e.g., room traps, throwing devices,

or blocks and tackles), she must succeed an Engineering Test to get the contraption to work. A more complex device demands a higher Difficulty Increase.

Knowledge of light engineering (i.e., precision mechanics), such as the working of locks, lock traps, musical clocks, and so on, is not covered by this Talent but falls into the province of Light Engineering.

The Highlord may roll your hero's Tests in secret so you will not know whether the Test succeeded until the device is used for the first time.

Requirement: To advance Engineering beyond TP 10, your hero needs TP of at least 6 in Calculate, Paint/Draw, and Read/Write.

Related Skill: Light Engineering (+10)

Geography (CL/CL/IN) (Specialized)

Knowledge of a country and its people can be gained either by spending long hours in a library or by traveling to the respective parts of Aventuria. Usually, practical experience beats booklore any time. On a successful Geography Test, the Highlord provides the hero with the geographical facts relevant to the location in question (such as landscape morphology, climate, soil type, navigable rivers, crossable passes, and so on.). High TP in this Talent also means that a hero is somewhat knowledgeable about manners and customs of a people, but does not have much detailed knowledge (this falls under the Etiquette Talent).

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Legend Lore (+10)

Heraldry (CL/CL/DE) (Specialized)

While the Etiquette Talent covers common ways of interacting with others—especially at court—at best, it gives only superficial knowledge of the meanings of coats-of-arms. Heraldry is solely devoted to the history, development, and spread of heraldic devices of all types (coats-of-arms, shield and field insignia, helm crests, banners, standards, and the like). This Talent also addresses the relations between the most important noble houses, as well as issues of lineage and heritage. Using the Heraldry Talent, a hero may determine what particular province a certain knight may be from, and whether he really is a scion of an old noble as he claims or just a pretender using an imaginary coat-of-arms. Finally, the Talent provides knowledge of the colors and banners of the various regiments (and their subdivisions) of all larger empires.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Etiquette (+10)



History (CL/CL/IN) (Specialized)

Aventuria has a 3,000-year tradition of written history. The legends and traditions of most peoples reach back even further into the past, of which only dim myths and ruins exist. Since most heroes are likely to be confronted with ancient relics and other remnants from Aventuria's past (because adventuring sends them anywhere from ancient tombs to ruined fortresses), having an expert historian in the group might often be useful. Because history relies heavily on written documents, a historian should be able to not only read these texts (via the Read/Write Talent), but also to classify them according to period and judge them for their historical merits and authenticity (as determined by History Tests).

Requirement: Read/Write 4

Related Skill: Legend Lore (depending on topic, either +5 or +10)

Language Lore (CL/CL/IN) (Specialized)

Knowing many languages might be important for a merchant traveling the world, but it doesn't help much when encountering an obscure dialect or when discovering an inscription that looks "vaguely Tulamidyan" and uses a script all its own. In these cases, Language Lore comes into play. The Talent covers the relations between the known languages of the world, as well as their development, branches, and their various alphabets. The Highlord may allow Tests against this Talent when your hero has knowledge of a related language and wants to apply this to an unknown language or script, or to analyze a dialect or a later stage of the language. Per 2 points of TP in Language Lore, a hero may learn one language of his choosing.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: None

Law (CL/CL/IN) (Specialized)

This Talent concerns the legal procedures of the various Aventurian nations and people, most prominently guild law, state law, criminal law, and the laws of the church of the Twelvegods. This is especially important for traveling heroes, since laws and regulations vary widely across the continent. The Talent is useful in dealing with all those infractions of local law that are inevitably committed by groups of heroes (use of poison, insulting of nobles and clergy, laws on weapon use). The Highlord may decide to roll your hero's Test in secret.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Etiquette (+10)

Legend Lore (CL/IN/CH) (Basic)

Heroes versed in this Talent are not only acquainted with the mores and customs of foreign peoples (or their own), but are also able to identify particular gods and mythic heroes and to recite a people's most important sagas and legends. Thus, this is not only a Talent for diplomats and "ethnologists," but also for traveling singers and storytellers. Tests on important myths or legends of one's own culture are rolled only in exceptional cases.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: As per topic, possibly History (+10) or Religious Lore (+10)

Plant Lore (CL/IN/DE) (Specialized)

A person versed in Plant Lore knows where to look for familiar and/or useful plants and how to judge the effects of strange and unknown plants, since she can compare them to those she does know about. Whenever your hero wants to concoct plant-based healing potions or poisons, she will need to apply this Talent.

Depending on the situation, Tests can become necessary in three areas: finding plants, identifying them, and using them to brew elixirs. When looking for plants, a failed Test may simply mean that no appropriate specimen grows nearby. Failed Tests for identifying or processing plants may have much more dire consequences. The Highlord may make your hero's rolls in secret so that you may not automatically know whether she succeeded in her Test.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Survival (+10)

Religious Lore (CL/CL/IN) (Basic)

This Talent concerns knowledge of basic tenets and religious rites relating to your hero's belief. It is required for clergy, unless they want to attract unwelcome attention in one of the temples dedicated to a brother or sister god. The Talent also covers knowledge of divine myths and saints' legends, as well as appropriate and devout forms of addressing a priest. Heroes who have become knowledgeable about their own faith (i.e., have TP of at least 7) may also "branch out" into other religions.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: As per topic, possibly History (+10) or Legend Lore (+10)

Starcraft (CL/CL/IN) (Specialized)

Starcraft not only includes astrology as a way of prophesying and telling the future, but also applies to navigation by the stars, methods of telling the time, ways of cataloging heavenly phenomena, and other related topics, including theoretical knowledge of the movements of heavenly bodies, on which all the fields of study listed here rely. Since good telescopes are as rare as they are expensive, this Talent is usually reserved for those of great patience and good eyesight.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: None

Stone Lore (CL/IN/DE) (Specialized)

Skill in this Talent means that your hero is able to recognize various types of stone for construction purposes, and also enables her to search for mineral veins or mine for gems or precious metals. This includes basic knowledge of the material properties of the various types of stone, ore, and gemstones.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: None

Warcraft (CO/CL/CH) (Specialized)

Acting bravely during a large field engagement is what warriors train for, but actually conducting the battle by commanding troops and devising tactics is something else altogether. Troops must be moved, supported, and motivated. The terrain as well as the enemy's tactical capabilities must be scouted. No less important is determining the precise moment of a strike, let alone finding favor in the eyes of the gods. Strategy and tactics are as much a part of this Talent as the colonel's decisions on the field of battle.

A hero who wishes to lead more than ten warriors into battle and live to tell about it should have TP of at least 7 in Warcraft.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: In matters of strategy, possibly Board Games (+10)

Languages and Scripts

Highlord's Advice: Rolling Tests in these Talents is probably a rare thing during game play; instead, the number of TP in any given language is used to measure the complexity of expression your hero can achieve.

Effective Encumbrance: EEC does not apply except in very special cases, such as your hero trying to communicate while wearing a full helmet with visor down or when carrying her backpack in her teeth.

Common Tongue: Aventurian heroes automatically have TP of CL –2 in their mother tongue, which should be enough to provide even "simple-minded" heroes with a reasonable communicative ability.

Heroes who have traveled a bit have often mastered a second language (usually Garethi or Tulamidyan) with TP equal to CL –4. Proficiency in reading and writing is covered by the Read/Write Talent.

Advancement: Advancement costs for Languages and Scripts are read from column **A** on the table on page 125.

Read/Write (Chosen Script) (CL/CL/DE) (Specialized)

In the same way that different languages have developed, different scripts have also been invented. Knowledge of each different script is regarded as a separate Talent that must be activated and advanced independently of all other scripts.

Tests using this Talent will be rare during game play. A hero with TP 0 can neither read nor write the script in question. TP 1 or 2 indicates the ability to identify some letters, pronounce them, and recognize a few words. To be able to read or write short, simple sentences in a reasonable time, a hero needs TP of at least 1/3 the script's complexity (see below). Once a hero has a TP of at least half the script's complexity, most everyday texts may be read (or written) fluently. The maximum TP value for any script is equal to that script's complexity—once your hero has achieved such mastery of an alphabet, even such details as geographical origin or the approximate age of the text may be determined. Quite a few other Talents require a minimum TP in Read/Write, without which the respective Talent cannot be used at all. In these cases, your hero needs to know such scripts with at least the required TP value.

To decipher individual letters of Proto-Tulamidyan (complexity 16), a hero needs TP of 2 ; short sentences may be deciphered (on a word-by-word basis) with TP of at least 6. For understanding one of the edicts of one of the last Diamond Sultans,

you need TP of at least 8 (and, of course, you must also be able to understand the language itself to make any sense of the text at all).

Aventurian Scripts

Kuslik Signs: 31 letters; complexity 10

Tulamidyan: 56 syllabic signs; complexity 14

Sacred Glyphs of Unau: 19 letters and diacritic marks; complexity 13

Isdira: 27 letters, plus many subtle diacritic marks; complexity 15

Rogolan: 20–24 letters, some of them with alternate values; complexity 11

Proto-Tulamidyan: 300 syllabic signs, letters, and diacritic marks; complexity 16

Nanduria: 26 letters; complexity 10

Zhayad: several hundred letters and syllabic signs; complexity 18

Chrmk (Zelemja): over 5,000 highly complicated signs; complexity 18

Tongues (mother tongue) (CL/IN/CH) (Basic)

Tongues (foreign language) (CL/IN/CH) (Specialized)

Like scripts, each language is learned as a separate Talent. Your hero always knows her mother tongue with TP of CL –2, and she may also know a foreign language with TP of CL –4. Other languages must be learned the hard way.

To identify a language, your hero needs TP of at least 1 in this tongue; basic communication along the lines of "Me hungry!" requires TP of 2. To understand and pronounce simple sentences, your hero needs TP of at least 4. A TP of at least one-third the language's complexity usually enables your hero to communicate fluently in the language, while a TP of at least half the language's complexity means that your hero has near-native competence (but still speaks with a slight accent). Most texts (even those dealing with philosophy or arcane theory) rarely go beyond complexity 15.

The most common Aventurian languages, ancient and present, are detailed in the table below.

The Languages of Aventuria

Garethi Family

Garethi is the current "standard" language and most important trade language; its maximum complexity is 18; for alphabet, it uses the Kuslik Signs.

Bosparano is the standard language of the Old Empire, now used only for ritual purposes. Its complexity is 21; its later stages also use the Kuslik Signs.

Tulamidyan Family

Tulamidyan is the second most important trade language; its maximum complexity is 18; for alphabet, it uses either the Sacred Glyphs of Unau or "classical" Tulamidya (see below), depending on region and religion.

Proto-Tulamidyan has been dead for about one thousand years. Its complexity is 21; in its most recent form, its script consisted of 56 syllabic signs, and prior to that, it used around 300 letters and syllabic signs.

Alaani is the complex language of the Norbards; its complexity is 21. It doesn't have an alphabet of its own, in most cases relying on the Kuslik Signs instead.

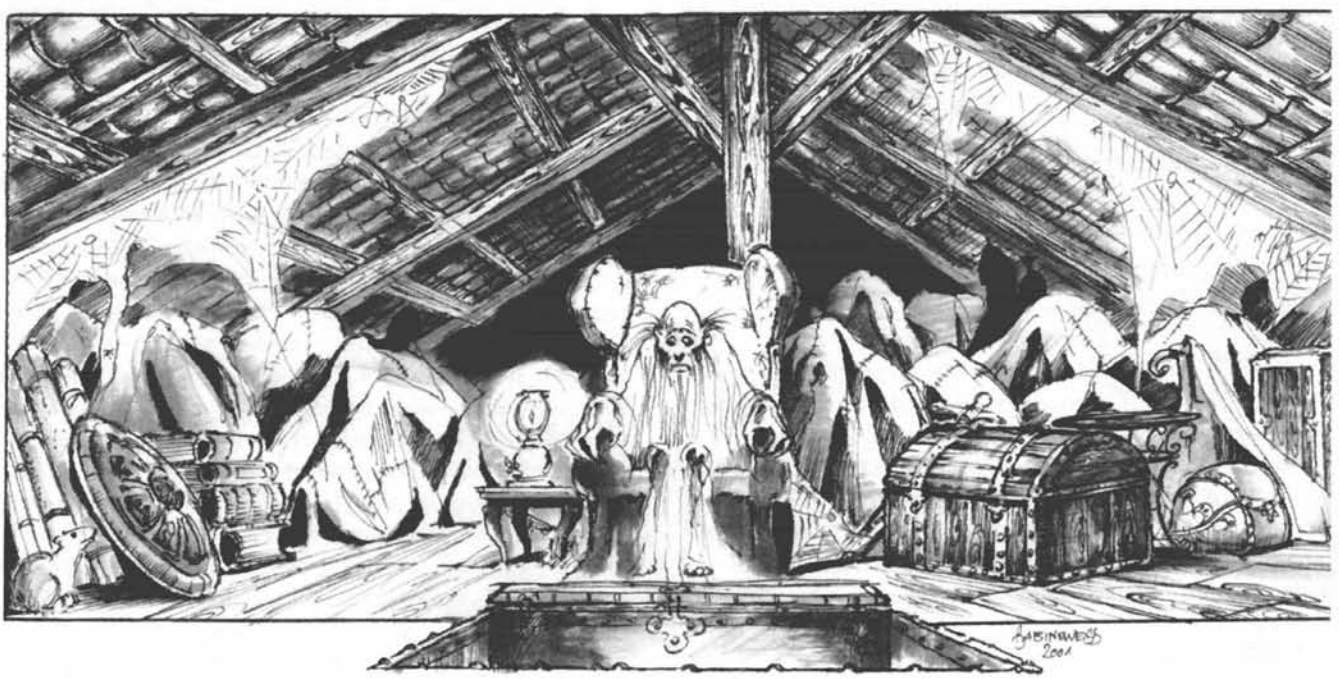
Various Unrelated Tongues

Nujuku is the language of the Nivese (complexity 15), which exists only in spoken form.

Mohic is used as a cover term for the various dialects of the woodsmen (no written form; complexity 15).

Thorwalian developed from Hjaldingar, or "Saga Thorwalian" (complexity 18; Thorwalian runes) and in modern times has been enriched by many Garethian loanwords (complexity 18; Kuslik Signs).

Isdira is the language of all the elven peoples, with 27 intricate letter signs (complexity 21).



Rogolan is used by the dwarfs, based on 24 angular dwarfen runes (complexity 21).

Orkish has no written form and is subdivided into "standard" Orkish known as **Ologhaijan** (complexity 15) and the "common" orkish tongue of **Oloarkh** (complexity 10).

Goblinic has no written form; complexity is 12.

Rssahh is the common tongue of all scaly folk (complexity 18, written in Chrmk).

Secret Languages

Zhayad is the secret magicians' cipher (with a phonetic/syllabic script of its own; complexity 15). It is said to be the only language that allows an individual to communicate with demons.

Atak is a sign and symbol language (complexity 12) employed by Tulamidyan merchants as well as thieves and beggars with equal ease.

Vixish is also known as "thieves' cant," composed of common words with new meanings and without any written form, except for a set of warning signs collectively known as "marks" (complexity 12, including knowledge of the marks).

Languages belonging to the same family as your hero's mother tongue are somewhat easier to learn: you only pay 75% of the AP cost (round up) to advance languages from the same family, as long as TP in these related languages do not exceed TP in your mother tongue. This does not apply to the use of Talent GP during hero creation.

A hero from Garetia (CL 12) who wants to advance her TP of 10 in Garethi (her starting value) to 11, pays only 11 AP (14 x 0.75=10.5, rounded up to 11); if she were to advance her TP of 10 in Bosparano to 11, she would also pay only 11 APO. To advance unrelated Rogolan from 10 to 11, she would need to pay 14.

Artisan Talents

Highlord's Advice: Artisan Tests are usually rolled as Open Tests (with the possible exception of appraising the value of another craftsman's work). Contested Tests are quite rare. Points of TP left unspent (see page 71), on the other hand, are usually the deciding criterion for determining the quality of a created item, the success of treating someone, and so on.

Encumbrance: Depending on the action in question, wearing armor or carrying a backpack may hinder the work and might thus impose a Difficulty Increase; on the other hand, when appraising the value of another craftsman's work (which usually falls back on other Talents anyway), Encumbrance does not figure into the equation. The Highlord should impose Difficulty Increases based on common sense if it would appear that armor might be a nuisance. Good examples of this would be Talents relying heavily on Dexterity or Agility, such as Play Instrument or Cheat, but also Tattoo or Treat Wounds.

Advancement: Advancement costs for Artisan Talents are read from column B on the table on page 125.

Alchemy (CO/CL/DE) (Professional)

This Talent is used when your hero wants to create nonmagical potions and mixtures. You tell your Highlord which alchemical brew you want to concoct so that she can determine Difficulty Increases or Decreases for the relevant Alchemy Test. Of course, your hero needs to have all necessary materials as well as the recipe on hand before being allowed to begin the Test.

A failed Test can have any number of consequences: Your experiment could result in a fetid green puff of smoke, or could cause an explosion leveling an entire city block. Usually, your Highlord will be fair and will hint at the possible consequences of a failed Test. A successful Alchemy Test may also be used for discovering something about the effects of an unknown potion; however, a failed Test may spell disaster (the Highlord shouldn't shy away from rolling such Tests in secret).

Requirement: Calculate 4, Read/Write 4; also, access to a laboratory or (as regards analysis) at least a portable field kit.

Related Skill: Plant Lore (+10)

Blacksmith (DE/ST/CN) (Specialized)

Blacksmiths (who also work in brass and bronze) are mostly concerned with the creation of agricultural tools, shoeing horses, or producing small items such as nails, bolts, chains, and hinges. They are also capable of repairing weapons.

While *weaponsmiths* are also able to forge rakes, door fittings, or chest bindings, their true specialty lies in weapons, which they are able to create and appraise.

Armorers have perfected the art of smithing, specializing fully in metal armor; they are able to repair harnesses, lamellas, and chain mail shirts.

Tinsmiths, finally, are able to work with metal sheets (including shaping metal tubes), and also install these. Their expertise also comprises riveting and soldering. They, too, are able to repair armor.

Repairing a dented set of metal armor requires a successful Test incurring a Difficulty Increase equal to the armor's AR; this Test requires 15 minutes per point of AR (oiling and cleaning takes an equal amount of time). Smoothing a notch in a blade requires a successful Test incurring a Difficulty Increase of (5–original BF) points. Lowering a blade's BF to its original value requires a successful Test incurring a Difficulty Increase of (10–original BF); if the original BF was below 0, two such Tests are needed, at half a day per Test.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: None

Boats (AG/CN/ST) (Specialized)

This Talent encompasses skill with all manner of propelling small water vehicles–rowing, sailing, paddling, or punting. Your hero should have no difficulties moving her craft across a still pond—sooner or later, she will get to the other side. Sailing, whitewater canoeing, and similar feats require a successful Boats Test. You cannot handle larger sailing ships by using this Talent; Seafaring (and a large crew) cover those skills.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Seafaring (+5)

Bowyer (CL/IN/DE) (Professional)

Bowyers and crossbow builders are concerned with creating missile weapons of all kinds, and are the only specialists able to create tension-based projectile weapons (as well as the corresponding missiles). They are also able to appraise the value of such weapons.

To craft a bow or crossbow, your hero first needs the right materials for bow and string (plus shaft and trigger for a crossbow), and then needs to succeed in a number of skills incurring certain Difficulty Increases (see table, below). Each Test requires half a day; if it fails, you may try to salvage your efforts by immediately rolling another Test, this one suffering a Difficulty Increase of twice

the usual amount. If this Test also fails, the entire weapon is ruined and all materials are lost.

To craft arrows or bolts, you need wood and tips, as well as a successful Bowyer Test to correctly fix the tips and the fletching. Crafting a bolt or arrow takes half a day. The Difficulty Increases can be read from the following table.

Type	Create	Missile
Shortbow	4 Tests	Test +/–0
Longbow	6 Tests	Test +1
Warbow	7 Tests	2 Tests +3
Light Crossbow	4 Tests	2 Test2 +/–0
Heavy Crossbow	12 Tests	2 Tests +1

Requirement: Woodcraft 4
Related Skill: Woodcraft (+10) or Light Engineering (+10)

Butcher (CL/DE/ST) (Professional)

Butchers know how to kill edible animals correctly, get as many useful foodstuffs out of them as possible, and turn these into durable hams, sausages, or pieces of meat. They can also tell how long meat will remain edible, and how much to sell it for in the market. They know the vulnerable points of the animals they work with from day to day, and thus, similar to anatomists, can cause an additional point of damage in unarmed combat when fighting animals resembling those known to them, provided the butchers have at least TP 10. (Of course, the bonuses for being a butcher as well as an anatomist are not cumulative; even a skilled anatomist-butcher does not cause 2 additional points of damage in unarmed combat.)

Requirement: None
Related Skill: possibly Fish (+10) or Animal Lore (+10)

Cartography (CL/CL/DE) (Specialized)

A cartographer is skilled at creating maps and plans, both of buildings and of landscapes. During game play, successful use of this Talent means that a hero's Orientation Tests receive Difficulty Decreases if the hero is in a tract of nature or in a cave system that she has already explored and mapped. She should also get useful advice on proper mapping from the Highlord, and is better able to judge traveling distances. Trying to read maps without this Talent is hard and confusing, and might easily lead to misinterpretation.

Requirement: Paint/Draw 4
Related Skill: possibly Orientation (+10) or Starcraft (+10)

Cheat (CO/CH/DE) (Specialized)

Depending on the success of the Test, your hero may either multiply the amount of money at stake in a game of chance, or, if the game is really played out between Highlord and player, she may alter dice rolls, exchange cards, or something of this nature. A failed Test may have dire consequences for a hero. Infamous cheaters tend to have short life expectancies in Aventuria. It is possible to notice that someone is cheating by rolling a successful Perception Test; this can be treated as a Contested Test (see page 73).

A high TP in Cheat may actually help you in succeeding such a Perception Test yourself (Highlord's decision). But beware—wrongly accusing someone of cheating may be reason enough to be challenged to a duel! Cheat Tests might be rolled in secret by the Highlord.

Requirement: Human Nature 4
Related Skill: Juggling (+10)

Cook (IN/CL/DE) (Basic)

If your hero wants to impress guests (either at home or by the campfire) with a delightful meal, she needs to succeed in a Cook Test, perhaps incurring a Difficulty Increase for complex meals. If your hero barely makes the Test, she has prepared the food without actually poisoning herself (or others). She needs at least 3 points of unspent TP after the Test to have prepared a dish that actually tastes good; for a culinary delight, at least 6 points of unspent TP are necessary. Heroes from a noble background (or a similar background that boasts fine culinary tastes) might want to further specialize—experts for sweets or gravies are common among cooks at noble courts.

Requirement: None
Related Skill: possibly Fish (+10), Survival (+10), or Alchemy (+10)

Drive (IN/CH/DE) (Specialized)

The difficulty of a Drive Test is mainly determined by the type of vehicle to be driven and the number (and species) of draft animals. Trying to keep a four-horse carriage on the road requires a Drive Test +4, while moving a simple cart drawn by a stolid mule is a lot easier (say, –5).

Hazardous maneuvers (e.g., passing a city gate at a brisk gallop or trying to halt a brewery cart drawn by six panicking Darpatian oxen) incur Difficulty Increases.

Requirement: None
Related Skill: None

Farming (IN/DE/CN) (Professional)

This Talent encompasses knowledge of the soil, of sowing and harvesting, and of cultivating fields as well as storing agricultural produce. It may also be used to tell poisonous plants from edible ones, thus enabling heroes to survive on, say, a deserted island after being shipwrecked. Also, a hero skilled in Farming is able to assess the value as well as the quality of foodstuffs—and he knows how to use a plow, a rake, and a threshing flail.

Requirement: None
Related Skill: possibly Plant Lore (+10)

Leathercraft (CL/DE/DE) (Professional)

Traveling parties of adventurers should check their footwear and their clothes on a daily basis. If a hero with TP 0 in Leathercraft announces that she wants to repair her shoes herself (to save money), she should be made to regret this during her next march. Some professions are highly specialized in the field of working with leather: Cobblers and saddlers deal in leathercraft of all kinds (leather clothing, upholstery, and leather armor), but are specially trained to manufacture and repair shoes and saddles. Cobblers are the only craftsmen who are able to fully restore damaged leather armor.

Requirement: None
Related Skill: Tailor (+10)

Light Engineering (CL/DE/DE) (Professional)

This skill is based on gold or jewel smithing, enabling heroes to create jewelry or filigree works of gold, silver, moonsilver, or other precious metals. Light Engineers are therefore able to appraise the value and quality of jewelry as a matter of course. However, the Talent's usefulness doesn't stop there: Further applications entail engravings in various metals (say, for engraving shields and medals, or for creating artful copperplate printings), casting small and even minute forms (for seal matrices,

including forging these), and finally putting all these small components together to create clockworks, minute locks, tiny crossbow mechanisms, or musical clocks. Light Engineers often work closely with stonecutters and jewelers, and often are experts at these skills themselves.

Requirement: Paint/Draw 4
Related Skill: None

Mining (IN/CN/ST) (Professional)

This Talent covers professional digging of tunnels and shafts, as well as supplying them with air ventilation and sewage disposal systems. Also, skill in Mining allows heroes to assess dungeons and other subterranean constructions: Which creatures built them? Have any changes occurred in construction recently? These and related questions may be answered by rolling Mining Tests. Of course, this is a Talent in which dwarfs really excel.

Requirement: To advance Mining beyond TP 10, your hero needs TP of at least 4 in Stone Lore.

Related Skill: possibly Stonemason (+10)

Paint/Draw (CL/IN/DE) (Basic)

During game play, anything that needs to be drawn, painted, or mapped should be created by the players themselves. A tremendous discrepancy can exist, however, between the artistic skills of a player and those of the hero. When meeting with primitive tribes, flattering portraits of tribal leaders may do wonders toward winning the favor of the leader—and may even provide your hero with a reputation (albeit unfounded) as a powerful magician. A talented painter stands to gain great monetary benefits by becoming a court painter or by paining murals or decorative accents in the homes of the wealthy.

Requirement: None
Related Skill: Limited applications: Cartography (+10), Stonemason (+10), or Tattoo (+5)

Pick Locks (IN/DE/DE) (Specialized)

No thief should be without this Talent. When your hero wants to open a lock without the proper key (by using lockpicks, hairpins, knives, and so on) you will be asked to roll a Pick Locks Test. Depending on the situation and the complexity of the lock(s), you may expect a Difficulty Increase. A failed attempt to pick a lock often breaks the tool your hero was using, depending on the degree of failure. Your hero's next attempt to pick the same lock is made more difficult (in most cases, by +3). This Talent can also be used to disarm certain types of mechanical traps (Highlord's decision). Failure always means that the hero has sprung the trap and must suffer its full effects.



A hero trying to open a lock without being skilled in this Talent must succeed a DE Test that incurs a Difficulty Increase of at least 10 (even more for complicated locks). Improvised tools decrease difficulty by 1 point, proper lockpicks by 2 points.

Requirement: None
Related Skill: Light Engineering (+5)

Play Instrument (CL/IN/DE) (Specialized)

A successful Play Instrument Test can mean a supplementary source of income in civilized regions, or might allow free lodging in an inn. The Talent might also be used to soothe an angry bear. Your hero may specialize in one instrument or try to master several. She needs a successful Test to use the instrument in any meaningful way, but if she really wants to entertain an audience, she should have at least 4 points of unspent TP after the Test.

Requirement: None
Related Skill: None

Seafaring (DE/AG/ST) (Professional)

For small water craft, the Boats Talent is quite adequate. Only trained seafarers, however, are able to steer and maintain larger ships with more than one mast. Setting sail, measuring water depth, maintaining the intricate system of oars, and supervising cargo are especially important, but repairing small leaks and correctly coiling ropes and chains are also part of a seafarer's shipboard chores.

Requirement: None
Related Skill: Boats (+10)

Stonecutter/Jeweler (IN/DE/DE) (Professional)

These professions deal with the cutting, smoothing, polishing, and setting of all kinds of gems and crystals, not only for purposes of simple adornment, but also for magical ones.

Requirement: To advance Stonecutter/Jeweler beyond TP 10, your hero must have TP of at least 4 in Stone Lore.
Related Skill: Light Engineering (+10)

Stonemason (DE/DE/ST) (Professional)

Stonemasons can form sculptures of stone, work in high relief or bas-relief, and assess the value of various types of stone for their work. They may also check the stability of a building or a stone bridge (but not a tunnel or mine shaft). Also, a stonemason is able to determine how many different materials a building is made of, and how many stones and how much mortar will be needed to erect a particular building.

Requirement: Stone Lore 4
Related Skill: possibly Mining (+10)

Tailor (CL/DE/DE) (Basic)

This Talent encompasses mending and patching clothing, such as replacing missing buttons or ties, sewing on patches, and darning socks. A hero with high TP in this Talent may make alterations to any type of clothing or may even create garments from scratch. A professional tailor can turn cloth into various articles of clothing, and may be able to literally create works of art out of simple cloth. Trained tailors may be able to turn worn and torn clothes back into presentable garments. Of course, a hero skilled in this Talent may assess the monetary value of items of clothing.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Leathercraft (+10)

Tanner/Furrier (CL/DE/CN) (Professional)

This Talent is used to cure the hide or skin of animals to make it more durable as well as attractive, so that it might be used in the creation of leather goods or furs. Practicing this often-unpleasant craft requires a strong stomach and a special "intuitive alchemy." Tanners and furriers are able to appraise both the quality and the monetary value of fur and leather goods. Some specialize in preparing animal trophies of all kinds.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Alchemy (+10), Butcher (+10)

Tattoo (IN/DE/DE) (Specialized)

Adorning the skin with colorful pictures is a favored practice of the Thorwalians, who have spread the art across the port cities of Aventuria. A tattoo artist needs to know how best to place a particular motif, how much color to use on certain skin types, and most important, she needs to know how to wield the tattooing needle. Only tattoo artists are able to create lasting skin pictures.

Requirement: Paint/Draw 4

Related Skill: Paint/Draw (+10)

Train Animals (CO/IN/CH) (Specialized)

When your hero wants to teach her animal a new trick (such as teaching a horse to "silent guard" or teaching a dog to fetch or sit up), a Train Animals Test will be in order. Difficulty Increases can be applied due to previous failed attempts (+2 for every prior failed Test), due to difficulties inherent in the trick (Highlord's decision), or due to the animal's (in)ability to learn as well as its loyalty to its teacher. The Highlord has the right to disallow teaching any tricks she deems to be beyond the mental or physical capabilities of the animal.

Requirement: To advance Train Animals beyond TP 10, your hero must have TP of at least 4 in Animal Lore.

Related Skill: depending on animal, either Animal Lore (+10) or Ride (+10)

Treat Disease (CO/CL/CH) (Specialized)

All known Aventurian diseases, even dreaded wound fever, can be cured by means of this Talent. To do so, the healer must succeed at *two* Treat Disease Tests. The first one serves to identify the symptoms and determine necessary balms, herbs, or medicines. (This Test might incur a Difficulty Increase of half the disease's level if the illness is already in the patient's system but hasn't manifested any symptoms yet.)

After this has been successfully done, the second Test is made to treat the disease; this Test incurs a Difficulty Increase corresponding to the disease's level. On a successful Test, the patient regains a number of Vitality Points equal to the number of TP points left unspent after finishing the Test (of course, the patient can't regain more VP than she lost due to the illness).

The next day (and each day thereafter), continued treatment is possible, this time incurring a Difficulty Increase of only half the disease's level; again, unspent points of TP translate into cured VP (again, no more than the maximum number of points still lost due to the illness).

If the first Test fails, healing simply doesn't occur; if one of the continuing treatment Tests fails, the healing process stops and the patient loses 1d6 VP.

The diagnostics Test takes at least 1 GT to perform, while the treatment Test takes at least 6 GT. Continuing treatment Tests may



be attempted only after 24 hours have passed; if such a Test fails, no further attempts are possible.

The diagnostic Test is rolled secretly by the Highlord, since the character cannot be certain of a correct diagnosis. The treatment Test suffers severe Difficulty Increases if the diagnosis fails.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Treat Poison (+10)

Treat Poison (CO/CL/IN) (Specialized)

As with Treat Disease, two separate Tests are necessary. The first one (modified by half the poison's level rounded up in the case of especially insidious poisons), if successful, lets the healer identify the type of poison and the necessary remedies, which may need to be bought or gathered. Once the remedy has been prepared, a second Treat Poison Test, if successful, halts the poison's effects. The second Test always gets a Difficulty Increase equal to the Poison's Level. If this Test is successful, the poison is neutralized and the patient regains 1 VP per point of TP left unspent after finishing the second Test. Continuing treatment is also possible, requiring a third Test in which the Difficulty Increase is half the poison's level.

A failed diagnostics Test means that the healer doesn't know or recognize the poison and that no healing is possible; a failed treatment Test means that healing doesn't occur (a Fumble indicates that the patient suffers an additional 1d6 points of damage). A failed Test for continuing treatment means that the patient suffers an additional 1d6 points of damage.

The diagnostics Test requires at least 5 CR to perform, while the treatment Test takes at least 1 GT. Continuing treatment Tests may be attempted only after 12 hours have passed, and may be attempted only once regardless of success or failure.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Alchemy (+10), Plant Lore (+10), Treat Disease (+10)

Treat Wounds (CL/CH/DE) (Basic)

This Talent heals cuts, bruises, fractures, and other injuries due to trauma.

First Aid: A mortally wounded person (0 or negative VP) may be saved from death by a hero with this Talent. The hero must succeed at a Treat Wounds Test with a specially-calculated Difficulty Increase; multiply the victim's negative VP by 2 to determine the Difficulty Increase. For a victim with 0 VP, the Difficulty Increase is 0.

The length of the Test, measured in CR, is equal to the victim's negative VP multiplied by 2, less the number of points of TP left unspent after the Test. The Test requires a minimum of 1 CR.

If this Test fails, the wounded hero suffers an additional 1d6 points of damage; if he still survives, the Treat Wounds Test may be repeated. If either the first or second first aid Test succeeds, the hero is stabilized at 1 VP. No additional points of VP may be restored using this Talent, whether by the same hero or another hero.

Speed Recovery: Two separate Tests are necessary here. The first one assesses dressing and cleaning the wound, while the second one lets the patient regain a number of Vitality Points equal to half the number of TP points left unspent after finishing the Test (rounded down). These healed VP are in addition to those gained by natural (nightly) healing, and they return at the same time (i.e., while regenerating, *not* directly after the Treat Wounds Test). The next day (and every day thereafter), *one* continuing treatment Test is possible, the success of which increases the hero's regenerative abilities. For every 3 points left unspent after a continuing treatment Test, the hero regains 1 additional VP during her next period of rest (note that with 5 points of TP unspent, the hero would regain only 1 VP).

If the Test for cleaning and dressing fails, no healing is possible and the patient has an increased chance of contracting wound fever (Difficulty Increase of +3 to the CN Test). If the healing Test or the continuing treatment Test fail, natural healing is suspended for 24 hours and the patient loses an additional 1d6 VP. (If the healing Test fails, no continuing treatment is possible.) The cleaning Test requires 4 Game Turns. The healing Test and the continuing treatment Test require 6 GT each.

Of course, the patient can't regain more VP than she lost due to her wounds.

Wounds: To actually heal a *wound* (see also the chapter on combat on page 102), you first must succeed at a cleaning and dressing Test (as above) that incurs a Difficulty Increase of 1 point per wound taken. (This is the same Test used for healing regular damage; if you use rules for wounds, the cleaning and dressing Test applies both to wounds and normal damage, all in one Test.) The second Test, dealing with stimulating the hero's recovery, incurs a Difficulty Increase of 3 points per wound.

If the second Test fails, healing does not set in; on a Fumble, the hero loses an additional 1d6 VP. If the Test succeeds, the patient's CN Test used for determining healing receives a Difficulty Decrease equal to the points of TP left unspent after the Treat Wounds Test.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Anatomy (+10)

Woodcraft (CL/DE/ST) (Basic)

As in real life, many possible applications exist for this Talent in a gaming situation: a cart or a boat may need repair, a weapon or a tool may need to be improvised, a child may desperately need a new wooden toy, and so on. A passed Woodcraft Test indicates successful manufacture or repair of a wooden object. Complicated devices or ornamented carvings should incur Difficulty Increases.

Requirement: None

Related Skill: Carpenter (+5)

Combat Rules

The companions have been sneaking through the forest for more than an hour when suddenly, Daria brings the group to a halt by uttering a low call. "Be silent! Lights out! I think we've got them!" She's barely able to finish her sentence before a chilling cry comes from somewhere in front of them. "Argh! Help! I'm blind!" a male voice yells, terrified.

Suddenly, everything happens very fast. First comes a cry of "In Swafnir's name, have at them!" as Frenja, brandishing her skraja, runs past the companions. The others are stupefied for a few seconds, until Rondrian manages to angrily complain, "Oh, the stupidity! Blasted Thorwalians! All right, people, the time for strategy is over. For Rondra—Charge!"

Long before the companions reach the clearing, they hear the whirling of Fenja's skraja and the ringing sounds of metal clashing with metal. The enemy numbers exactly seven, as surmised earlier. Six of them, all clad in dark clothes and barely discernible against the light of their campfire, are just getting up and drawing their weapons. The seventh continues yelling, staggering aimlessly toward the edge of the forest, hands pressed against his eyes.

Ranari's first attack surprises her enemy, resulting in a gaping leg wound. Rondrian, on the other hand, stays his blow for a few moments.

"Draw your sword and fight!" he snarls at his opponent. "By Rondra, the Lady of Battle, I will not strike a helpless foe!" The bandit, while surprised, does not hesitate to comply.

Shafir has drawn his saber. Quickly and powerfully, like a wild cat, he approaches one of the black-garbed bandits, circles around him, and lunges at him. His blow hits his enemy's sword arm, painfully disarming the bandit. The mountebank kicks the weapon into the undergrowth, sheathes his saber again, and throws himself at his enemy bare-fisted. "Let's see what you're really made of, you stinking troll fart!" he yells, hitting his enemy with a vicious uppercut. The bandit stumbles and goes down.

Meanwhile, Mirhiban's clear voice can be heard. "Thunderbolt!" she yells, pointing her left fist threateningly at one of the bandits, who suddenly collapses amidst cries of pain.

Amid all the fighting, Trewman stands untouched, gripping his traveling staff somewhat awkwardly, his eyes wide.

"Let's see what you're really made of, you stinking troll fart!" he yells, hitting his enemy with a vicious uppercut.

"Eureka!" he says, more to himself than anyone else. "A real fight!"

"Down, boy!" a voice suddenly bellows from behind, and a kick to his ham knocks him to the ground, moaning and bewildered. A blade swishes less than an inch above his head, artfully parried from below by Angrax, who has suddenly appeared right next to Trewman.

"That was a close one, scholar! And now back into the bushes with you!" the anvil dwarf pants while ducking another blow and raising his mighty ax. But to save Trewman, Angrax has ignored his own enemy. The bandit takes his chance, but the blow glances off the dwarf's thick leather armor. Angrax gnashes his teeth. "By the beards of my ancestors, this you will regret!"

Like a wild bull, Angrax takes a running start and rams the shaft of his ax into the bandit's belly. The man in dark dress falls and stops moving.

Misty jungle vales and glittering crystal caves, sorrowful kings and sage magiciennes, scheming merchants with glib tongues, mysterious sphinxes in searing deserts, hermits dwelling on mile-high stone needles, thieves in oriental bazaars—all of these are challenges and scenery for thrilling, tragic, or humorous game situations.

But something would be missing from high adventure fantasy role-playing without sword fights between chivalrous combatants, eagle-eyed bowmen, cutlass-wielding pirates (or ax-wielding barbarians), or nighttime rooftop fencing duels. In a harsh world such as Aventuria, combat is often the last chance (and sometimes the first or only means) of settling a conflict, and some ferocious monstrosities and creatures from beyond understand nothing but the language of cold steel. Tactical planning, the changing fortunes of battle, a hero's immediate danger, and the possibility of grasping victory by one's combat prowess alone make combat situations a thrilling and important element of both role-playing sessions and rules sets.

We want the combat rules of *The Dark Eye* to reflect this thrill without trying to govern every possible detail and losing the fun in the minutiae of bookkeeping. We also must ensure that the rules are not arbitrary and that they do not leave all power of decision to the whims of chance or the mood of the Highlord.

The rules for combat are designed to be modular. Like using a construction set, you decide which elements you deem important for inclusion in your game. After consulting with your gaming group, you may want to add some or all of the optional rules, depending on whether you want to achieve a high degree of fantasy "realism" or are instead interested in a fast, playable system.

We have developed these rules according to two criteria: the first is to offer a high degree of playability, and the second is to design them with a minimum of dice-rolling and table-consulting while still creating a suspenseful enactment of a "real" combat situation.

Basically, you need only the rules on Combat Talents, a grasp of the concepts of Attack, Parry, Hit Points, Armor Rating, and Damage Points, and a brief survey of the rules for Ranged Attacks. Everything else may be used or ignored at your discretion. We have thus subdivided the rules into three stages:

The Basic Rules, or **Rules of Stage 1 (R1)**, cover only the concepts mentioned above, as well as notes on the flow of game play.

The Advanced Rules, or **Rules of Stage 2 (R2)**, improve combat by making it more thrilling and usually even faster. These rules are often dependent on specific situations and require you to slip into your hero's personality and determine her most likely reactions in combat. If you play a warrior or a mercenary, you should seriously consider using the Advanced Combat Rules. Rules of Stage 2 are clearly designated as **Optional.**

The Expert Rules, or **Rules of Stage 3 (R3)**, add much more detail to combat, but can slow down actual play. These are special rules that usually apply only in particular situations. Plan to discuss these rules on a case-by-case basis with your gaming group to decide whether any of these rules are important enough to apply in the appropriate situations.

In published adventures (except those of introductory levels) we usually assume that Rules of Stage 2 are in effect; you can easily ignore (at least for now) the Expert Rules. We provide all Rules of Stage 1 in this book, while also introducing the most important Rules of Stage 2. The remaining Rules of Stage 2 (plus those of Stage 3) will be found in the *Swords and Heroes* supplement.

In the Beginning: Determining Combat Values

When creating your hero, you should calculate the following values and list them on your character sheet:

- Your hero's **Base Attack Value** (BAV) is calculated as follows: (CO + AG + ST) /5, using mathematical rounding—i.e., 7.4 is rounded down to 7, while 7.5 is rounded up to 8.
- Your hero's **Base Parry Value** (BPV) is calculated as follows: (IN + AG + ST) /5, again using mathematical rounding.

These Base Values are modified by your hero's Combat Talents (TP). You may distribute these TP freely between AT and PA; the difference between assigned points of TP may be no more than 5 points. The only exception to this is Jousting, an attack-only technique (no parry is possible), for which all Talent Points are added directly to Base Attack Value.

Once you have allocated your points of TP, you may not change them again, whether from one combat to the next or in a combat itself. AT and PA values change only because of changes in the corresponding Attributes or the allocation of newly-acquired Talent Points. A special section on the character sheet is reserved for Combat Talents.

- **Base Ranged Value** (BRV) is important for attacking at a distance; it is calculated as follows: (IN + DE + ST) /5, again using mathematical rounding. You add your hero's entire TP in the respective Ranged Combat Talents. To hit a target in combat, you simply roll a Test against the appropriate Ranged Value (RV). Ranged Combat will be treated in more detail in later chapters.
- Your hero also needs **Base Initiative Value** (BIV). The formula is: (CO + CO + IN + AG) /5, again with mathematical rounding. For one entire combat, a hero uses this Base Value plus a 1d6 roll to determine initiative. More about initiative and the structure of combat rounds is found beginning on page 97.
- Many heroes, and especially professional fighters, have access to one or more **Special Abilities** to use in combat. If your hero has one of these Special Abilities, record it on the character sheet. Such abilities determine, for instance, whether your hero might be less encumbered by wearing armor, whether initiative will be modified, and so on.
- List your hero's weapons and pieces of armor on your character sheet, and fill in the respective AT and PA Values. All these Values will then be modified by **Encumbrance (EC) due**

to armor (see page 101) and **Weapon Modifiers (WM)**. Armor EC does not apply equally to all Combat Talents. Techniques that rely on swift maneuvering feel the encumbering effects of armor more strongly than those that rely on the brute force of a blow or thrust. Therefore, the entries for individual Combat Talents list **Effective Encumbrance (EEC)**.

- Finally, determine your Vitality and Endurance values before play begins.

Improving Basic Values and Individual Attack and Parry Values

Gaining experience (and thus improving Attributes and Talents) has a crucial effect on Attack and Parry, because these Values can rise as a result of improved Attribute Values and added TP in a Combat Talent. (Rarely, a hero loses Attribute points due to a drastic event or serious injury, forcing Basic Values to be lowered.) If BAV or BPV are increased due to an Attribute rise, all individual AT and PA Values increase as well. If TP in a particular Combat Talent is improved, you must decide whether to increase AT or PA in this Talent, while maintaining the maximum difference of 5 points between AT and PA (aside from possible exceptions to this 5 points due to differences in Base Values, or due to armor Encumbrance). If you increase TP in the Jousting Talent (which has only an AT score) or in any Ranged Attack Talent, AT goes up correspondingly.

Combat Talents

As you already know, Combat Talents are never used for Talent Tests. Instead, they are used to modify the Base Value for Attack, Parry and Ranged Combat as described on page 91. More information on the various Combat Talents, their use in battle, and their effects will be found in the pages to come.

Falling Back on Related Talents: Some Combat Talents are similar to one another, meaning that an experienced sword fighter might be able to easily wield a saber. When using a related weapon, 5 points are subtracted from the TP Value, with 2 points taken from AT and 3 points taken from PA. If a hero must use a weapon that she does not know how to use and has no related weapon, the hero uses it with her Base Attack Value and her Base Parry Value, modified by the penalties mentioned above (AT –2, PA–3).

Axes and Maces (Armed Melee; Basic Talent)

This category includes two types of weapons, both of which cause damage mainly by the sheer force of their blows. The first type is the ax: any heavy, broad blade fixed to a shaft that causes damage by the force of the blow and sharpness of the blade (or double blade). The second type is the mace: a blunt weapon intended to concentrate crushing, bone-breaking damage in one area. These are usually quite heavy and sometimes equipped with spikes to be more effective against armored opponents. Maces, clubs, and war hammers belong in this group.

These weapons are never longer than one pace and weigh no more than three greatpounds; longer and/or heavier weapons can be used only with two hands. The delineation between the various types of axes and the various types of hammers cannot be clearly defined, thus the same Talent is used.

EEC: EC–4

Related Skills: Sabers, Two-Handed Blunt Weapons

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Battle ax, brabak lad, club, foretooth, linnorm slayer, mace, orknose, ravensbeak, skraja, throwing ax, throwing club. *Improvised:* ax, branch, chair leg, hatchet, stick, torch

Special: None

Advancement: D

Bastard Sword (Armed Melee)

Many swords or sabers can be used with either one hand or two hands. Depending on a hero's Strength, these may be wielded like swords, sabers, or two-handed swords. You can take advantage of all their special properties only when you have learned the corresponding Talent. Despite their tremendous weight, bastard swords allow for displays of swordplay almost like fencing weapons, which is why skill with a bastard sword is often regarded as the pinnacle of sword-fighting.

EEC: EC–2

Related Skills: Swords, Two-Handed Swords

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Bastard sword, rondracomb, tuzak knife

Special: Bastard sword, rondracomb, and tuzak knife may be used as polearms or as melee weapons with equal ease. You always need both hands when fighting with this Talent; a shield or parrying weapon may not be used.

Advancement: E

Bow (Ranged Combat)

The bow is the weapon of choice for steppe, desert, and Ice dwellers. Elves, orks, and the people of Meadows, as well as the Novadis, are known for their skill with this weapon.

Bow size ranges from the compact short bows of the Novadis up to the Meadowian longbow. Using bows and arrows correctly is not easy.

EEC: EC–3

Related Skill: None

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Composite bow, elven bow, longbow, short bow, war bow

Special: Damage inflicted by an arrow automatically causes a *wound*.

Advancement: E

Brawling (Unarmed Combat; Basic Talent)

This Talent covers the ability to cause damage by use of hands, feet, or teeth (punches, uppercuts, claw attacks, head butts, bite attacks, knee-jerks, and an Achaz's tail attack are equally at home here). It also includes defense against such attacks by evading, blocking, or simply stepping aside. Attacks using hands or feet usually cause 1d6 points of damage against a victim's Endurance; in addition, half the damage rolled (rounded up) is also subtracted from Vitality.

EEC: EC, WM and HP/ST as per style

Related Skill: None

Weapons Usable With This Talent: None

Special: None

Advancement: C

Chain Weapons (Armed Melee)

A chain weapon consists of a heavy weight fastened to a wooden haft by one or more chains (the length of which is almost equal to the length of the weapon's haft). These weights are often made more dangerous by the addition of thorns or spikes. Parrying with a chain weapon is difficult; parrying *against* attacks made with

chain weapons is also difficult, and since they may be used to attack across shields, such attacks are especially hard to parry.

This Talent is also used for delivering lashes (for punishment purposes), and includes whips with several weighed ends (such as a cat-o-nine-tails).

EEC: EC–3

Related Skill: None

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Morning star, ogreslap, oxherd

Special: Chain weapons negate the Parry bonuses provided by shields (see page 103); parrying such an attack incurs a Difficulty Increase of 2 (for weapons that might be used to parry chain weapons; daggers and certain other weapons are unable to parry against chain weapons).

Advancement: D

Crossbow (Ranged Combat)

A crossbow is an improved version of a regular bow; it fires a projectile that gathers momentum from a drawn bow string. Crossbow-type weapons have a shaft, a trigger, and a pulling mechanism, and are fired by pointing the device at an enemy and pulling the trigger to release a bolt.

EEC: EC–5

Related Skill: Bow

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Heavy and light crossbow, ironwooder, loadster

Special: Damage caused by a bolt automatically causes a *wound*; this does not apply to the balls fired by a loadster.

Advancement: C

Daggers (Armed Melee; Basic Talent)

This category includes all bladed weapons used for piercing and slashing attacks that have limited use as parrying weapons. Weapons in this category measure no more than two spans in width and no more than half a pace in length; it includes everything from a table knife used in combat to a heavy dagger. Daggers typically have a straight blade sharpened on both edges.

EEC: EC–1

Related Skills: Brawling, Fencing Weapons

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Dagger, dragonstooth, heavy dagger, hunting knife, long dagger, short sword, waqqif; *improvised:* eating and working knives, throwing dagger, throwing knife

Special: Daggers cannot be used to parry attacks with chain weapons, two-handed blunt weapons, and two-handed swords.

Advancement: D

Fencing Weapons (Armed Melee)

These weapons differ from swords; they have especially thin blades and slender tips measuring no more than one pace in length, and richly decorated basket hilts, or artfully ornamented quillons. Fencing weapons are both elegant and fast. They are regarded as fashionably "modern" by some, and as "fool's weapons" by others.

EEC: EC–1

Related Skills: Daggers, Swords

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Epee, foil, rapier weapons or two-handed blunt weapons

Advancement: E

Special: Fencing weapons cannot be used to parry attacks from chain



Infantry Weapons (Armed Melee)

This category includes any short blade fastened to a long haft; the blade may be used for both cutting and for stabbing. Sometimes these weapons are equipped with hooks to grapple or unhorse enemies.

EEC: EC–3

Related Skills: Spears, Two-Handed Blunt Weapons

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Bill, glaive, halberd, partisan, storm scythe, warunk hammer, wyrmspear. *Improvised:* scythe

Special: Infantry weapons measure about two-and-a-half paces long and must be wielded with two hands; using a shield at the same time is not possible. Infantry weapons usually belong to the Distance Class of Polearms.

Advancement: D

Javelins (Ranged Weapons)

Javelins are hunting weapons common throughout Aventuria; in earlier times, they were used in most Aventurian armies. Javelins come in various sizes; some can be propelled forward by short throwing sticks. Stick or staff slings, rare as they might be, also fall within the bounds of this Talent.

EEC: EC–2

Related Skill: Throwing Axes

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Javelin, spear, wooden spear

Special: None

Advancement: C

Jousting (Armed Combat; AT only)

This Talent describes charging with a lance on horseback. It is an attack-only Talent and is treated just like a Ranged Attack Talent. Parrying with a readied lance is not possible. More about jousting is found on page 106.

EEC: Not applicable

Related Skill: None

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Djadra, jousting lance, war lance

Special: No parry is possible.

Advancement: E

Sabers (Armed Melee; Basic Talent)

These weapons are similar to swords. Their blades are sharpened on one edge, and they often have a pointed tip. Unlike swords, sabers are used primarily for cutting and rarely for thrusting. This category includes everything from short cleavers to elegant cavalry sabers to heavy, almost ax-like weapons.

EEC: EC–2

Related Skills: Axes and Maces, Swords

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Cleaver, cutlass, kunchomer, saber, short sword, waqqif

Special: None

Advancement: D

Spears (Armed Melee)

This category includes two types of weapons: those measuring no more than two paces in length and usually wielded with one hand (marked "1H" in the listing below) along with a shield, and those weapons longer than two paces that require both hands to be wielded effectively, preventing the use of a shield ("2H" below). Unlike infantry weapons, spears are employed for thrusting only, with the blunt end being used for parrying (if a spear is used for parrying at all, which is rare, especially with the long variety).

One-handed spears may be thrown effectively, but usually are treated as improvised weapons. Two-handed spears are nearly impossible to throw.

EEC: EC–3

Related Skills: Infantry Weapons, Staves

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Djadra (1H), greatspear (2H), hunting spear (1H), partisan (2H), spear (1H), trident (1H), wooden spear (1H), wyrmspear (2H). *Improvised:* war lance on foot (2H)

Special: One-handed and two-handed spears are treated differently (see above). Spears marked "1H" are used single-handedly and incur –3 points on AT Tests and –1 HP, as compared to the data listed in the Aventurian Weapons Table on page 112. HP/ST are increased by 1 each, and DC drops to M. If you use these weapons with two hands, use the data as listed in the table.

Advancement: D

Staves (Armed Melee)

A simple wooden staff of no more than eight spans in length may be used as an effective weapon in the hands of a skilled user. Usually, quarterstaffs are not simply wooden sticks but are specially hardened and wound with metal bands or fitted with caps or (rarely) blades on both ends. Staves are two-handed weapons; use of a shield is not possible.

EEC: EC–2

Related Skill: Spears

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Magician's staff, quarterstaff, two-lilies

Special: As per weapon

Advancement: D

Swords (Armed Melee)

Swords are bladed weapons ranging from 0.5 to 1.25 paces in length. About three-quarters of the members of the sword family have the blade sharpened on both edges. Swords can be used for both piercing and stabbing. Their quillons (parrying guards) can allow for complex defensive maneuvers.

EEC: EC–2

Related Skills: Bastard Sword, Fencing Weapons, Sabers

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Kuslikian saber, longsword, rapier, saber, short sword

Special: None

Advancement: E

Throwing Axes (Ranged Combat)

Such weapons are common among dwarfs and Thorwalians. They can be difficult to use since they rotate around their lateral axis during flight. Most are sharpened on all edges and are made entirely of metal. Throwing cylinders and throwing sticks also can be used with this Talent.

EEC: EC–2

Related Skills: Javelins, Throwing Knives

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Foretooth, throwing ax. *Improvised:* bottle, stone

Special: None

Advancement: D

Throwing Knives (Ranged Combat; Basic Talent)

Knives and daggers are the most common thrown weapons throughout Aventuria. Not every knife or dagger is suitable for

throwing. Only those weapons that are specially counterbalanced and have light-weight handles can be used properly for throwing. This category also covers throwing disks, rings, and stars, as well as darts and throwing thorns.

EEC: EC–3

Related Skills: Javelins, Throwing Axes

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Dart, fountthorn, throwing dagger, throwing disk, throwing knife, throwing ring, throwing star. *Improvised:* various knives and daggers

Special: None

Advancement: C

Two-Handed Blunt Weapons (Armed Melee)

These weapons (which, despite their moniker, sometimes have sharp blades but never sharp tips) must hit their target with the utmost precision in order to cause the optimum amount of damage. If the head of the weapon misses, the haft causes little or no damage. These weapons cannot be used for thrusting or stabbing, and are ineffective as parrying weapons.

EEC: EC–3

Related Skills: Axes and Maces, Infantry Weapons

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Barbarian ax, dwarfmallet, orknose, rock cleaver, war hammer, warunk hammer. *Improvised:* pick, sledge hammer, woodcutter's ax

Special: Since both hands are needed to wield these weapons, a shield may not be used at the same time.

Advancement: D

Two-Handed Swords (Armed Melee)

This Talent covers all long-bladed weapons larger and heavier than a standard sword that are primarily used for cutting, but may also be used to thrust in short-distance combat. Parrying is possible with them (although the attempt is much slower with these weapons than with the more universally useful bastard swords). Bastard swords may be wielded by use of this Talent, since the weapon types are related.

EEC: EC–2

Related Skills: Bastard Sword, Sabers, Swords

Weapons Usable With This Talent: Andergaster, bastard sword, boronssickle, double kunchomer, greatsword, rondracomb, tuzak knife

Special: With the exception of the andergaster and the boronssickle (which are classified as polearms), two-handed swords may be used as melee weapons or polearms, depending on the situation. Since you need both hands to wield these weapons, you may not employ a shield at the same time.

Advancement: E

Wrestling (Unarmed Combat)

This Talent involves all techniques of grabbing, holding, immobilizing, tripping, or throwing an enemy, as well as defensive measures against such attempts as simple tumbling or breaking of a hold (which might also be used to escape the chokehold of a kraken or a snake). Wrestling attacks either cause 1d6 points of damage or they disadvantage an enemy, making follow-up attacks easier; see page 107 for more about this.

EEC: EC

Related Skill: None

Weapons Usable With This Talent: None

Special: None

Advancement: D

Combat



Before your heroes finally get to cross swords, a few final details are important. Players (as well as Highlords) are wise to keep a pen and some scrap paper handy to jot down a few variable values (Vitality, Endurance, Initiative). If you want to keep track of these ever-changing values on your character sheet, you're likely to turn it into scrap paper, too, sooner or later.

- Each combatant must choose the primary weapon to be used in combat, and must select the appropriate Combat Talent. Some weapons or combinations of weapons may be wielded by using more than one Talent; shifting between various styles of fighting and movement patterns related to these is allowed only when changing weapons. This does not apply to fighting with a bastard sword and changing from one-handed to two-handed fighting (this remains a two-handed fighting technique).
- Record your hero's current AT and PA Values, his current AR, and his current VI, ED, and ASP. Meanwhile, the Highlord does the same for your heroes' enemies.

Combat begins with the Highlord describing the basic situation, the players declaring their actions, and players and Highlord rolling for initiative.

Exchange of Blows and Initiative

Knowing who is able to act using which skill and causing which amounts of damage (i.e., AT Value and weapon HP) is important—but quite often, one well-aimed blow ends the fight before it can even begin. So, it is important to know who goes first in combat and what the sequence of combatants will be.

Space and Time

Once combat begins, narrative game time, which is extremely loose as to timekeeping, gives way to a more concrete means of keeping time that we call combat time. Its basic units are Combat Rounds and Actions.

A **combat round** is defined as a unit of time needed for a single exchange of blows, meaning that each of the combatants gets an opportunity to attack and parry once; a combat round is equal to roughly three seconds. In any combat round, the **actions** of all combatants are resolved in order of initiative ranking (highest initiative going first). Initiative is counted down number by number, with each number representing one **initiative step** or **phase**.

Normally, each combatant is allowed two actions per combat round: an **attack action** and a **defense action**. A hero can perform an attack action at her own initiative step, while her defense action may be taken any time during the combat round in reaction to an opponent's attack. Some enemy actions (such as animals having two or more attack opportunities) may force a hero to convert an attack action into a second defense action (see page 98).

Additionally, actions exist that are neither attack nor defense, but instead qualify as combat maneuvers or manual actions (such

as gestures needed for spell casting, or cranking the tension lever on a crossbow). These are simply called actions. To succeed in such a maneuver or task, you usually must spend more than one standard action. A hero may perform up to two of these actions in combat, instead of attacking and defending. The first of these actions takes the place of a hero's attack action during his initiative step, while the second action always takes place eight initiative steps later.

Free actions, such as yelling a warning or activating an artifact, take so little time that heroes get one free action per standard action during any combat round. Free actions may be performed at any time during a combat round, provided you have already taken one of your regular actions in the round (if it's not your turn and you haven't had your defensive action yet, you may not perform a free action). You may not perform two free actions in the same initiative step. Should two free actions be declared at the same time, the free action of the combatant with the higher initiative is resolved first.

During combat, it may be important to determine the **distance** between two or more combatants, or to determine their exact **positions**. This is handled easily if you use some kind of floor plan (or game board or mat) with a square grid on it, on which you can represent both heroes and enemies by using tokens. Painted metal or plastic miniatures, in combination with models resembling terrain features, work best here, and are fun to work with.

When using floor plans, the basic unit of measurement (and thus, the size of one square) is equal to one pace (equal to a real-world meter). This applies to measuring distances in ranged combat or spellcasting, and also in chase situations. The basic unit of turning is 45 degrees, so that a miniature is always facing one of the sides or one of the corners of a square on the floor plan.

When players and Highlord can easily imagine the surroundings in the adventure, floor plans and miniatures may be used or ignored at the discretion of the group.

Free Actions

Step: The hero may take one step in any direction of her choice; this action is often combined with an attack or defense action.

Turn: The hero may take one 45-degree turn as a free action. This might not improve her position, but may prevent her from exposing her back to an enemy.

Call: This may be a cry of warning, a short command, or even a curse, provided it is no longer than three words.

Get Down: Dropping to the floor (because a dragon approaches overhead or your hero wants to evade the aim of a sniper or magician) requires an AG Test. If this Test fails, the hero still drops to the floor but takes 1d6 EP damage and loses 1d6 points of initiative. In any case, the hero is able to lie on the ground but incurs penalties from this special attack position (see page 106).

Drop Weapon or Item: "Dropping" does not mean "setting down carefully." Dropped items or weapons could be damaged during fighting, or could land in a place inaccessible to the hero.

Activating an Artifact Worn on Body or Held in Hand: Command words or movements for such items are usually short, thus not necessitating a full action (although exceptions could exist depending on the item).

Standard Actions

Attack Action: A normal attack or a Called Attack (AT+) takes one standard action.

Defensive Action: Parrying a blow takes one standard action.

Move: One standard action is needed to move as far as your maximum SD Value and still watch your surroundings so that you may use your full Parry Value. The Move action always allows you a 180-degree turn, regardless of the distance moved. For each 90 degrees turned, however, you lose one pace from your maximum allowed distance. Moving to an enemy and attacking in the same combat round is possible only by choosing a Move action and then turning a Defensive action into an Attack action (incurring a Difficulty Increase of 4 on the AT Test). A hero may not attack an enemy and move away afterward.

Sprint: Moving three times your SD Value uses up two standard actions. You may do this only once per combat round. A sprinting hero may neither dodge nor parry. Making a 90-degree turn costs you one pace of movement.

Position: This action includes getting up from the floor, changing enemies, and so on.

Assess Situation: Your hero may use a standard action to observe and evaluate the combat situation (see page 97), thus increasing her INI. Doing so usually takes two standard actions unless your hero has the Alertness Special Ability, which reduces this to one standard action.

Draw Weapon: To unsheathe a weapon carried at one's belt takes a standard action; if the weapon's sheath is on a hero's back, the process takes two actions. Five standard actions are needed to unsling a shield carried on a hero's back. A hero with the Quick Draw Special Ability needs a only a free action, one action, and three actions, respectively.

Long-Term Actions

Use Item: This action comprises searching for and finding items not readily accessible, such as items carried in a hero's backpack (such as healing potions and elixirs) or belt pouch (10 actions for an item in a belt pouch, and at least 20 actions to find an item in a backpack; a successful DE Test cuts this time in half). Putting a weapon away in an orderly manner is also governed by this action—sheathing a weapon or slinging a shield takes twice as much time as drawing or unslinging it.

Reload: Depending on the missile weapon and its mechanics, nocking an arrow or bolt and drawing the string or cocking the crossbow take various amounts of time. The Ranged Weapons Table on page 110 lists all such information.

Use Talent: If your hero wants to employ a Talent during combat (such as climbing to move into a better position, or picking a lock to help the party escape from combat), a method similar to the Open Talent Test (described on page 71) is recommended. You assign a number of actions to the task at hand and subtract points of unspent TP from this number. This tells you exactly how much time is needed to perform this Talent in combat. Using a Talent in combat should always incur a Difficulty Increase (see page 16), but also can count as a Special Experience (see page 126).

Casting a Spell: Depending on complexity, casting a spell requires a varying number of actions. Combat-related spells fall into a range from 1 action to 7 actions . All actions needed for casting a spell must be spent in direct sequence, and may not be interrupted by other actions (except the Move and Turn free actions), or the spell fails. Exact casting times for all spells are found in the spell description section beginning on page 134.

Initiative Value

The first blow in combat goes to the character who has determination (CO), grasp of the situation (IN), mobility (AG), and just a little luck. At the beginning of each battle, each player rolls 1d6 and adds the result to the hero's Base Initiative Value, calculated (CO + CO + IN + AG) /5. The result is the current Initiative Value (INI). (Some intelligent races gain further modifiers to INI, while most animals, monsters, and supernatural creatures come with a fixed Base Initiative Value that has already been calculated.)

Initiative modifiers are also applied depending on a hero's armor (equal to the armor's EC; see page 101), and sometimes for the weapon she wields (to a maximum of +/– 2 points; see page 111). A combatant with the Combat Reflexes Special Ability gets an additional bonus of 4 points to Initiative Value (see page 98). Exhausted or *wounded* combatants incur corresponding negative modifiers to INI (see the rules on Incapacitation and Wounds on page 101).

An experienced mercenary, Alrigio has CO 14, IN 11, and AG 12, resulting in a Base Initiative Value of 10 (14+14+11+12=51; 51/5=10.2, rounded to 10). Since his weapon is a kuslikian saber (INI modifier +1) and he wears a cuirass (EC 2; Alrigio's Armor Use Special Ability drops this to EC 1), his Base Initiative Value is still 10 after figuring in equipment (+1 due to weapon, –1 due to armor). Thus, his INI in any fight will range from 11 to 16 (10+1d6).

Instead of striking the first blow, a combatant may allow the opponent to attack first. This means the hero voluntarily lowers her INI to that of her opponent, allowing him the first blow. She may, however, return it to its maximum value (minus negative modifiers due to **wounds**, for example) at any time by using the Assess Situation action to gain the upper hand again.

Optional Rule: Superior Numbers

When more than two characters are engaged in combat, determine each combatant's INI Value as described above. The larger party in a combat gains a bonus of +1 per additional person, to a maximum of +4. When a hero fights against more than one enemy at the same time, he lowers his Base Parry Value by 1 point per additional enemy, to a maximum of 2. In the same way, the Base Attack Values of combatants ganging up on the same enemy are increased by 1 each.

Five heroes are attacked by eight marauding orks. Since three more orks are fighting than players, each ork receives +3 to his INI Value. If two orks gang up on one hero, each ork has AT +1, while the hero has PA –1.

Sequence of Actions in Combat

In each combat round, heroes act according to their INI Values, beginning with the highest number. In case of ties, the combatant with the highest Base Value goes first; if still tied, both actions happen simultaneously. It's best if the Highlord asks each player to announce her hero's INI Value so that the Highlord may list all the heroes' values along with those of the enemy, thus leading to a sequence of actions.

Using the heroes vs. orks example, the warrior Jandara has a Base INI of 12; the amazon Dana and the mountebank Escallo each have 11; Alrigio the mercenary has INI 10; and the Punin magician Meranthus has 9. None have any modifiers. Their rolls are 6 (Jandara), 4 (Dana), 3 (Escallo), 4 (Alrigio), and 6 (Meranthus).

The Highlord knows that the ork leader has a base INI of 12; for his motley crew, she assigns an average INI of 9 each. The rolls are 5 for the leader and 6, 5, 2, 2, 1, 1, and 1 for the other orks. This leads to the following sequence: Jandara goes first on step 18, followed by the ork leader on 17. Dana, Meranthus, and one of the orks act on 15, with Base INI being the tie-breaker: Dana first, Meranthus second, the ork last. Escallo, Alrigio, and the second ork all act on 14; Escallo goes first, followed by Alrigio and the second ork. Finally, the remaining orks act on INI 10.

Using the optional Superior Numbers rule, the situation changes since all orks gain a modifier of +3 to their INI rolls: the ork leader strikes the first blow in step 20, followed by Jandara on 18 (she beats the first ork's 18 due to her higher Base INI Value). The second ork acts on step 17, with Dana and Meranthus on 15, Escallo, Alrigio, and two orks on 14 (once again, Base INI determining the order), and finally, the rest of the orks act on 13.

During combat, Initiative may change if the combatants suffer damage or wounds, if they are maneuvered into disadvantageous positions, if they are enspelled (whether for their benefit or detriment), or if they change weapons. Changes in INI are applied immediately after the affecting event: If a combatant with INI 12 takes an arrow in the leg in Initiative Phase 13, her INI immediately drops by 4 points, delaying her action(s) until phase 8. Should INI fall below 0 as a result of such delays, a combatant loses one attack action per combat round, meaning that she might only be able to defend herself.

Assess Situation Action: When a hero stops and studies the combat situation for two consecutive actions (usually for one complete combat round) and succeeds an IN Test, he may reset his Initiative to the maximum possible value (as if he had rolled a 6). Of course, this fails if the hero is unable to assess the combat situation because his ability to move or observe is impeded, for example, if magically blinded or lying on the ground. For each two points of TP in the Warcraft Talent, the Assess Situation Test gets a Difficulty Decrease of 1 point. Heroes with the Alertness Special Ability need to spend only one action, and need not roll an IN Test.

Elgara (INI as modified for weapon and armor: 11) has lost most of her combat options by falling (result of a Fumble; INI–2) and suffering a leg wound (INI–4), and having rolled badly (a 1) when first determining INI. Now that she has dispatched her direct opponent to meet Boron, she takes time to assess the situation, take a deep breath, and then re-enter combat: She spends two actions to bring her current INI of 6 (11+ die roll of 1, plus –2 for the fumble, plus –4 for the wound) to 13 (11+ maximum die roll of 6, then –4 for the wound).

Gaining initial Special Abilities is described in the Profession chapter. Each profession comes with a list of which Special Abilities go with that profession. If a Special Ability is not on that Profession's list, it cannot be taken prior to beginning gameplay. After character generation, characters must spend APs to gain new Special Abilities.

Special Ability: Alertness

A hero with this Ability may spend only one action (instead of two) to grasp a combat situation and raise her INI Value to the maximum possible value (as if she had rolled a 6 during Initiative determination). She does not need to roll an IN Test to succeed in

the Assess Situation action. IN Tests to determine whether a hero is surprised (see below) automatically get a Difficulty Decrease of 4 points.

Requirement: IN 12

Cost: 200 AP; burglars, hunters, mercenaries, messengers, mountebanks, pirates, scouts, and warriors pay only half cost.

Special Ability: Combat Reflexes

This Ability increases a combatant's Base Initiative Value by 4 points, giving her a definite edge in combat. This Ability may be used only when your hero's EC is no more than 3 (including possible benefits of the Armor Use Special Ability).

Requirement: Base Initiative Value minimum of 10; usable only with EC 3 or less

Cost: 300 AP; mercenaries, pirates, and warriors pay only half cost

Special Ability: Quick Draw

This is the Ability to get a weapon out of its sheath as quickly as possible. A hero with the Quick Draw Special Ability may unsheathe a weapon as a free action, needs only one action to draw a weapon carried on the back, and only three actions to unsling a shield.

This Ability may also be applied to using javelins, throwing axes, and throwing knives (for throwing knives, bandoliers and arm sheaths are treated as belt sheaths).

Requirement: AG 12, DE 10

Cost: 200 AP

Optional Rule: Converting Actions

Normally, a combatant has one attack action and one parry action per combat round. The attack action is taken during the initiative step determined by the character's INI Value. The defensive action may be used at any time to react to an enemy attack.

When your hero faces multiple opponents, she might like to parry first and then wait for reinforcements, forego her attack, or delay her attack—or she may decide to send as many enemies to Boron as possible as quickly as she can. To reflect this, a hero may convert an attack action into a defensive action, and vice versa; by doing so, the converted action incurs a Difficulty Increase of 4 points.

Converting actions is not possible for a hero wielding chain weapons, two-handed blunt weapons, two-handed swords, infantry weapons of 2.5 paces or more in length, and with improvised weapons of any kind.

To convert an action, you must announce this intention no later than your own Initiative step; once you have announced your intention of converting an action, you may not reverse the decision. Converting a defensive action results in two attacks in one combat round; your second attack takes place at INI–8. Converting an attack results in two parries in one combat round; the second parry may be taken as needed. If INI–8 is less than 0, the hero may not make a second attack in that round; this applies even if INI–8 drops below 0 after your Initiative step due to events (such as wounds) occurring after your Initiative step and before your second attack.

A combatant armed with a quarterstaff or a two-lilies and whose TP with the respective weapon is at least 10 may convert actions without incurring the Difficulty Increase of 4 points. A combatant using a shield may convert attack actions into defensive actions without incurring the Difficulty Increase of 4 points.

Optional Rule: Surprise and Ambush

Few of the battles your hero will fight will be orderly duels between opponents on equal footing. The vast majority will be chaotic melees in which one side may have a distinct advantage; for instance, being able to choose advantageous terrain.

In a **surprise** situation (for instance, two groups discovering each another unawares), confusion reigns. Before heroes can fight, they must first shake off the effects of surprise before they can roll for Initiative. This is done by succeeding an IN Test (which may be rolled once per combat round at the beginning of the round). For each combat round after the first, this IN Test receives a Difficulty Decrease of 2 points (cumulative). The Warcraft Talent and the Danger Sense Advantage both have important aspects regarding surprise: for each 2 points in the Talent or Gift, the IN Test receives a Difficulty Decrease of 1 point.

When determining Initiative, both parties use only their Base Initiative Values (without rolling 1d6 but applying the Superior Numbers optional rule if the players have opted to use it).

In case of an **ambush** (meaning that the defender does not detect the attacker until it's too late), each ambushing attacker gets one free attack action. Those attacked in this manner must succeed at an IN Test (incurring a Difficulty Increase of 3 points if missile weapons are employed in the ambush) to be able to dodge or parry at all. After this initial free attack, combat begins following the standard rules, but the defenders must first succeed at a second IN Test as described above to be allowed to roll for INI. The attackers, on the other hand, are allowed to roll for initiative immediately since they were not surprised. The Warcraft Talent and the Danger Sense Advantage play an important role: for each 2 points in the Talent or Gift, the IN Test receives a Difficulty Decrease of 1 point.

A hero whose weapon is sheathed is still at a disadvantage once he realizes that he is under attack. To fight back, he must spend at least a Draw Weapon action to arm himself (and maybe more than one action; see the description of this particular action).

Once the attackers have been revealed and the ambushed party has time and space to react, standard combat ensues (or ends if the ambushed party retreats or the attackers suddenly flee). If the ambushers spring their trap too late, or are in turn surprised by those they intended to attack, the rules for surprise apply as listed above.

Attack and Parry Rolls

In a combat round, the character with the highest INI attacks first by making an attack action. This means that she tries to hit the defender by stabbing or swinging at him. A Test against the attacker's Attack Value (for short, Attack Test or simply Attack) decides whether the attack is successful. The attacker rolls 1d20; a result equal to or lower than the AV number indicates a success. For example, a hero with AV 14 may roll no higher than 14 on 1d20.

If an attack is successful, the defender typically has a chance to deflect the blow by using a weapon or shield, or by dodging.

This maneuver is called a Parry. To parry, a hero rolls 1d20. The defender may not roll higher than her Parry Value to be successful.

If an attack succeeds and the corresponding parry fails, the attacker has scored a **hit**. The defender suffers damage based on the weapon's **hit points**, modified by the defender's armor. If both attack and parry succeed, the defender has blocked the blow and suffers no damage.

After the Attack and Parry rolls have been made and any damage is resolved, the next combatant in the Initiative sequence makes her attack.

Hits and Damage

Being hit (i.e., failing a parry against a successful attack) is usually a painful affair. The defender takes damage and may even lose some of her fighting prowess. When an attacker has scored a hit, he rolls for damage as indicated by his weapon's **hit points** (HP). Usually, the roll is one or more d6 to which a set bonus is added; the respective information is found in the Aventurian Weapons Table under the column labeled, "HP." Thus, a saber (HP: 1d6+3) causes damage of 4 to 9 Hit Points, subtracted from a character's Vitality Points (VP) as necessary (see *Armor and Encumbrance* below).

Optional Rule: More Damage Due to High Strength (HP/ST)

When using a weapon in melee, exceptional Strength allows you to inflict more damage than is normally possible. The relation between high Strength and additional damage is a function of the weapon's type: high Strength works better with cutting and crushing weapons than with piercing weapons. Thus, each weapon is assigned two values: a *threshold value* indicating the Strength a hero needs to wield the weapon in a controlled way, and *damage increments* indicating how many additional points of ST your hero needs to inflict 1 additional hit point (or even more) per strike. If a weapon has HP/ST of 12/2 (in the case of the battle ax), a hero must have Strength 12 to control the weapon, and Strength 14 (12+2) to inflict one additional point of damage. A hero with ST 16 inflicts 2 additional points, ST 18 results in 3 more points, and so on.

Elgara (ST 15) inflicts 1d6+5 hit points with a sword (HP 1d6+4, HP/ST 11/4). If she increased her Strength to 19 (either permanently by spending Adventure Points, or temporarily by drinking an elixir of Strength or receiving a Strength-increasing spell), she would then inflict 1d6+6 HP.

On the Aventurian Weapons Table, threshold value and damage increments are listed in the column labeled "HP/ST." Additionally, some Aventurian weapons need a minimum Strength score to be wielded effectively; combatants who do not meet this minimum ST may use these weapons only as *improvised weapons* (see page 114).

Armor and Encumbrance

The purpose of armor is to reduce some of the damage inflicted by an opponent's successful hit. After the hit points caused by a successful attack have been determined, the defender's Armor Rating (AR) is subtracted from this amount. Any remaining points are taken off the defender's Vitality as Damage Points (DP). (If the result is a negative DP number due to armor, the hero simply does not take any damage.)

Armor encumbers the person wearing it. All types of armor have a numerical value to describe the weight and bulk of wearing armor: **Encumbrance (EC)**. This number reflects any Difficulty Increase incurred by wearing the armor.

Effective Encumbrance (EEC) is a more complex value. It compares the weight and bulk of the different armor types to the various Talents that a hero might attempt. Thus, a character wearing a padded tunic will attain different EEC results when attempting to use the Axes and Maces Talent as opposed to the Crossbows Talent.

Each piece of armor has an EC value, and each Talent has an EEC calculation. Consult the Talent being used and insert the armor's EC value into the EEC calculation. Using the Throwing Axes Talent (EEC=EC–2) for a character wearing a padded tunic (EC=2), the EEC is zero (2–2). For Crossbows (EEC=EC–5), the EEC is –3.

The EEC then becomes a modifier to the TP Value of the chosen Combat Talent. If the EEC value is 0 or a negative number, the respective armor does not encumber the hero at all. (In the example above, the padded tunic does not encumber a hero using Throwing Axes or Crossbows.)

For an EEC value of 1 or greater, the EEC value is applied to the TP Value of the chosen Combat Talent by dividing the modifier evenly between the hero's AV and PV. If the EEC value is odd, the larger part of the value is applied to PV and the smaller to AV.

A hero wielding a quarterstaff (Staves Talent; EEC=EC–2) and wearing a long chain mail shirt (AR 4, EC 4) and a leather helmet (AR/EC +1/+1) has an Encumbrance of 5 (EC 4+ EC 1=EC 5).Her Effective Encumbrance is 3 (5–2=3). Her AT thus drops by 1 point, and her PA drops by 2 points.

Finding a sensible balance between protection and freedom of movement becomes paramount when selecting armor. Personal taste figures into armor selection, as do price and weight. The Aventurian Armor Table (p. 101) gives important values for different armor types. Some types of armor may be combined with others (such as a cuirass over a padded tunic), thus combining their AR and EC, while this is clearly impossible with other types (say, two helmets). If in doubt, use common sense (or Highlord judgment, if necessary).

After selecting your armor, total all AR Values to find your hero's total AR. Do the same for Encumbrance. Pieces of armor that have a "+" entry in front of their AR Value do not have any protective value; they must be worn with other pieces of armor to be effective (see below).

Due to special training, some heroes become so accustomed to wearing heavy armor that they are less encumbered by such armor than untrained heroes (i.e., EC is lower for such heroes than that listed in the table). This Ability, called Armor Use, may be learned (or improved) during a hero's adventuring career. Two levels are possible: either EC–1 with certain types or armor, or EC–1 with all types of armor). Remember that armor is not the only possible source of encumbrance for heroes. A heavy backpack will also hinder a hero, as well as large amounts of treasure or great numbers of weapons.

Special Ability: Armor Use I

City guards rarely wear armor other than padded tunic and helmet; likewise, anvil dwarfs are seldom seen without chain mail. When someone wears the same type of armor day after day, this Ability allows you to reduce EC by 1 point for the typical type of armor.

Requirement: ST 10

Cost: 150 AP; Starting Advantage for mercenaries (applicable armor as decided by player and Highlord) and anvil dwarfs (chain mail shirt)

Special Ability: Armor Use II

Heroes who fight in varying types of heavy armor (EC 4 or greater) for at least a year and who wear armor most of the time typically become so accustomed to it that whatever armor the hero uses receives a 1-point EC reduction. This applies to armor worn as an overall set, not each individual piece. This reduction is not cumulative with the specific EC reduction gained by Armor Use I.

Requirement: ST 12, Armor Use I

Cost: 300 AP, half cost for all fighting professions; Starting Advantage for warriors

Aventurian Armor



All types of armor listed below are assumed to be created by an appropriate craftswoman (saddler, armorer) and are tailored to fit an individual hero. While some armor types (chain shirts, cuirasses, leather helmets, and iron caps) may be mass-produced (and sell for only 75% of the prices listed here), their Encumbrance is increased by 1 point as compared to custom-made items. This penalty is ignored if a ready-made item just happens to be the right size; on a roll of 1, 2, 3, or 4 on 1d6 for chain shirts and a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d6 for all other items, the armor fits as well as if it were custom-made.

There is no such thing as "personalized armor" that encumbers a hero less than the values noted below, but specially enchanted mail or sets of armor crafted from extraordinary materials do exist; these might display a different ratio of AR to EC. Armor that is found or salvaged fits properly only on a roll of 1 on 1d6 (or 1, 2, or 3 for any for of chain) if it is of the appropriate size category (human or dwarf); otherwise, "adopted" armor has EC increased by 1.

Note: Dwarfen armor weighs roughly three-quarters of the weights listed in the table, but costs the same.

Armor Descriptions

Chainmail Shirt: This term applies to all tightly woven wire ring mesh; it offers good protection and is easy to wear, but is also heavy. Chain shirts have short sleeves. They are of such simple construction and easy use that adapting any mass-produced or found chain mail armor to one's own size is easier than with all other types of armor.

Cuirass: This is a breastplate that conforms reasonably well to the chest shape of a human (or dwarf) body. It is made of hammered steel held in place by two crossed leather straps. Cuirasses are especially favored by light cavalry and infantry.

Garethian Plate: This is a heavy but somewhat flexible type of armor for foot soldiers. It is constructed entirely of overlapping pieces of plate and protects the body from the collarbone down to the knees and fingertips. It usually comes with a sounder to protect the head (see below).

Horasian Leather Cuirass: A type of plate armor used by Horasian heavy cavalry, this consists of breast and back plates with long leg greaves, extra armor for head, shoulders, and arms, mail gauntlets, and a visorless helmet. The entire set is intended to blend seamlessly and may not be combined with other types of armor.

Leather Cuirass: This is a set of armor fashioned to match the human body, with reinforcing shoulder pads. Essentially, this is hardened leather armor, created by boiling multiple layers of leather in hot wax (cuir boulli). It is light, tough, and cheap, making it rather popular.

Light Plate: This consists of a steel breast and back plate (crafted as two movable pieces) with added lamellar aprons for thigh protection. It is popular with cavalry and pikemen.

Long Chainmail Shirt: Similar to the standard chain mail shirt, this piece covers the wearer down to the thighs and has long sleeves. It is as versatile as the standard chain mail shirt with regard to size adaptation.

Mirror Mail: This type of armor is typical of Tulamidyan potentates. It consists of very fine chain mesh with integrated or layered pieces of plate that glitter like many small mirrors (hence, the name; such sets of armor are usually richly decorated). Warriors from the Middenrealm often refer to this type of armor derogatorily as "bastard plate."

Padded Tunic: These are typically made of two layers of rough linen or cotton that are stitched together to create tubes and/or pockets, which are then filled with horsehair or dried seaweed. Ideally, these are worn beneath a cuirass or light plate (in these cases, AR and EC stack), but they can also be worn on their own, since a padded tunic (also called a *gambeson*) softens the impact of a blunt weapon.

Padded Underclothes: These must be worn underneath all types of metal armor (chain, plate) to avoid grazing or bruising; they consist of double-layered linen stockings, tunic, gloves, and cap. The underclothes' AR and EC do *not* stack with the metal armor worn over the padding; the listed values apply only when padded underclothes are worn on their own.

Scale Mail: This leather armor has small bronze scales sewn or riveted into it and is lined with felt on the inside. This type of armor is traditional in northwestern Aventuria and has become rather expensive.

Thick Clothes: The listed AR applies only if worn as a complete set (shirt, trousers, jacket, shoes). All types of thick or winter clothing, fur clothing, full-leather wilderness clothes, leather jackets worn over street clothes, and various types of brocade or silk festive clothing (only those with many layers of lining or padding) fall into this category. Normal street clothes, loincloths, fine silk clothing, and Rahja garments count as (unencumbering) AR 0. AR provided by thick clothes does *not* stack with armor worn over it.

Toadshide: Thick leather with heavy rivets, especially liked by Thorwalians.

Tournament Jousting Armor (complete set): This type of armor is used by riders taking part in tournaments. It is always tailored to the wearer and is often adorned with engravings or

embossing work. Despite its high AR, this is a kind of "sports equipment" and is a good way of showing off one's wealth.

Armor Enhancements and Helmets

Pieces of armor that have a "+" entry in front of their AR Value do not have any protective value of their own; they add their AR bonus only when the torso of the hero donning them is also similarly protected. This means that a hero must wear AR 2 armor to benefit from a helmet, AR 3 armor to benefit from leather greaves, or AR 4 armor to benefit from chain or plate greaves. If the torso is not adequately protected, an opponent will simply aim for the larger, more vulnerable area.

Baburian Hat: This leather helmet is reinforced with metal bits and has a long neck guard of chain mail strips. This type of helmet is popular throughout the entire Tulamidyan area.

Chain Greaves: Protection for the lower arms, shins, and possibly shoulders, these are made of chain; gloves and stockings may also be added.

Chainmail Cap: This close-fitting cap also offers shoulder protection; it requires underclothes (see above).

Great Helmet: This massive, visorless iron helmet is of roughly cylindrical shape with a flat top. A type of cavalry helmet, it is currently out of fashion.

Iron Cap: A cap made of metal and sporting a broad rim, it is popular with demolitions soldiers.

Leather Greaves: Protection for the lower arms, shins, and possibly shoulders, these are made of leather; gloves and stockings may also be added.

Leather Helmet: In most cases, this is simply a cap made from hardened cuir boulli; more advanced versions also boast edge and seam reinforcements of leather or metal strips.

Morion: A type of helmet that is widespread throughout the Horasian Empire, it is distinguished by an upward sloping rim at the front and back.

Plate Mail Greaves: Protection for the lower arms, shins, and possibly shoulders, these are made of metal plate; gloves and stockings may also be added.

Sounder: A type of helmet used in Garetia, it has a broad neck guard and often a movable visor. The sounder is usually worn with a steel "beard" (for throat and chin protection).

Storm Cap: A tight-fitting helmet without a rim.

Aventurian Armor Table

Type of Armor	AR	EC	Weight (greatpounds)	Price (silver thalers)
Chain mail shirt	3	3	6.5	150
Cuirass	3	2	4	60
Garethian plate	6	4	14	750 +
Horasian leather cuirass	8	5	17	1,000 +
Leather cuirass	3	3	4.5	80
Light plate	4	3	7.5	250
Long chain mail shirt	4	4	10	180
Mirror mail	5	4	10	1,000 +
Padded tunic	2	2	3	40
Padded underclothes	1	1	2.5	25
Scale mail	5	5	12	1,000
Thick clothes	1	1	*3	as per make
Toadshide	3	2	4	60
Tournament jousting armor (complete)	12	10	*30	2,500 +
Baburian hat	+2	+2	3	60
Chain greaves	+1	+1	3.5	120
Chain mail cap	+1	+1	3.5	80
Great helmet	+3	+3	4.5	80
Iron cap	+1	+1	1.5	30
Leather greaves	+1	+1	2	40
Leather helmet	+1	+1	1.5	20
Morion	+2	+1	4	75
Plate mail greaves	+2	+2	3.5	150
Sounder (including beard)	+3	+2	5	80
Storm cap	+2	+1	3.5	70

*These weights are approximate.

Optional Rule: Incapacitation, Wounds, and Loss of Initiative Due to Severe Damage

If your hero is hit in combat, she may suffer more than loss of Vitality; she may also find her combat prowess impeded, or she may be afflicted with long-term wounds and injuries.

- Whenever a combatant loses more DP than she has points of CN from a single blow (or the effects of a spell), she suffers a **wound** (see below). If the number of DP suffered is more than twice a combatant's CN, she automatically takes two wounds; in addition, she must succeed an immediate Willpower Test (with a Difficulty Increase corresponding to the amount of damage exceeding her CN) to remain standing. If the Test fails, she falls for 1d6+3 combat rounds. A hero can suffer only as many wounds as her CN divided by 2 (rounded down); any more than this at one time and she will be bedridden.
- A combatant is immediately **incapacitated** whenever her Vitality falls to 5 or fewer VP.
- Should a combatant's Vitality drop to 0 or lower (also see below), she is in a mortal coma and will die within **1d6 combat rounds times CN Value** unless first aid or magical healing is rendered immediately. Should Vitality drop below an amount equal to a hero's negative CN, the character dies immediately and irrevocably. Combatants with the Toughness Advantage may multiply CN by 1.5 (rounding up) in such situations.

A mortally wounded hero may be saved if another character makes a successful Treat Wounds Test. This test suffers a Difficulty Increase equal to the hero's negative VP times 2. This treatment requires a number of CR equal to the patient's negative VP minus

points of TP left unspent after the Treat Wounds Test (but never less than 1 CR). If this Test fails, the hero suffers an additional 1d6 points of damage; the Test may be repeated next round (provided the hero is still alive).

Wounds are marked on the character sheet, and the above-mentioned Decreases are cumulative: If a hero has suffered three wounds, she has AV–6, PA–6, BRV–6, INI–6, AG–6, and SD–3.

Some Friendly Advice: If you notice that a mortally wounded hero is beyond all help, you might consider allowing her some final words—some parting shot at the world or her enemies. A hero's demise should be dramatic whenever possible.

Alrigio (CN 13) lies in a pool of his own blood, a vicious crossbow bolt deep in his shoulder. Since this was the last in a series of recent injuries (among them, a broken leg due to a hit from a greatsword), he is at –5 VP and has lost consciousness.

Alrigio's player rolls a 3 on his 1d6 roll, indicating that Alrigio has 39 more combat rounds to live—more than enough time for his friend Meranthus to stop the bleeding and stabilize Alrigio (by succeeding at a Treat Wounds Test +10, which lasts 10 CR).

Wounds

In certain circumstances, a combatant may suffer a wound due to a severe hit (see p. 102 regarding taking damage greater than the CN value from a single blow). Some weapons (see the lists of melee and ranged weapons) automatically cause a wound whenever they inflict DP. Wounds may represent broken bones, internal injuries, brain concussions, and so on.

If your hero suffers a wound, her Attack, Parry, Ranged, Base Initiative Values, and Agility are lowered by 2 points each. Speed is lowered by 1 point. (The lowering of Agility does not affect any other Base Values.) The Highlord decides the exact location and any further consequences (if any) of a wound.

Wounds may also result from falling (if the fall causes more damage than the hero has points of CN), or from fire, acid, and so on, but may not result from offensive spells such as *Thunderbolt*, from most poisons, or from suffocating.

Wounds heal more slowly than lost VP, although the healing process may be helped along by Talent Tests and magic. Wounds and DP are tracked separately, meaning that your hero may suffer from the effect of a wound long after she has regained her entire Vitality.

Optional: Effects of Low Vitality and Endurance

In real life, humans cannot be driven to their breaking point without any ill effects until they suddenly and unexpectedly collapse. Instead, being out of breath or taking "only a flesh wound" impedes people. But there's real life and there's role-playing—and a game doesn't want to mirror real life too closely, especially if this entails lots of bookkeeping. Therefore, the following rules may be applied.

- A hero whose Vitality drops below half her basic VI incurs a Difficulty Increase of 1 point on all Attribute Tests (including AT and PA), and a Difficulty Increase of 3 points on all Talent Tests and Magic Tests. Additionally, SD drops by 1 point (but never below 1). If Vitality drops below one-third of normal, the Difficulty Increases are 2 and 6, respectively, with SD reduced by 2 (but never below 1). If Vitality drops below one-fourth of normal, the Difficulty Increases are 3 and 9, respectively, with SD reduced by 3 (but never below 1). At 5 VP or less, your hero becomes incapacitated, and at 0 VP or less, she is mortally wounded and falls into a coma.
- Loss of Endurance also causes Difficulty Increases on Tests, but the process is less severe. If your hero is at less than one-third of her Endurance, she incurs a Difficulty Increase of 1 point on all Attribute Tests (including AT and PA), and a Difficulty Increase of 3 points on all Talent Tests and Magic Tests. If Endurance drops to below one-fourth her normal score, the Difficulty Increases are 2 and 6, respectively. At 0 EP or less, your hero is incapacitated and should rest. When your hero's ED drops to below one-third, she automatically takes one point of Exhaustion; if her ED drops to 0, she takes 1d6 points of Exhaustion.

These rules apply in addition to all other negative AT/PA modifiers resulting from combat; the Difficulty Increases are always cumulative, i.e., if your hero is at less than half her VI and at less than one-third of her ED, she incurs a Difficulty Increase of 2 points on Attribute Tests and a Difficulty Increase of 6 points on Talent Tests.

Some creatures, such as demons and undead, are never affected by loss of VI or ED (at least not until they are destroyed, that is). Some herbs, elixirs, or spells may let a hero ignore such losses, and Thorwalian wealragers as well as Fjarningar berserkers do not feel loss of VI and ED as long as their rage lasts. (More information on wealragers and berserkers will be found in the upcoming *Swords and Heroes* supplement).

Optional Rule: Called Attacks (AT+)

Particularly effective attacks may be attempted by aiming at a specific part of the defender's body. Such maneuvers increase the damage to the defender (due to heightened impact or an aimed blow to vital body locations), but they also increase the attacker's risk.

Such maneuvers are the basis for many special attack forms, Special Abilities, and combat maneuvers that you will find in the upcoming *Swords and Heroes* rulebook. The basics are covered here.

When making a Called Attack (AT+), the attacker announces before rolling the die which Difficulty Increase she wants to voluntarily impose on her AT Test—thus *calling her blow*. This number is added to the roll, which may not exceed the attacker's AT Value. If an AT+ succeeds despite the Difficulty Increase and the defender's Parry fails, the Difficulty Increase is added to the weapon's hit points. The called Increase may not be higher than the hero's TP with her current weapon.

The rules for Incapacitation and wounds (see above) apply fully for Called Attacks. Thus, a Called Attack allows your hero to cause more damage to her opponent and bring her down more easily.

If an AT+ fails, the attacker incurs a Difficulty Increase to her next action (most likely her parry) equaling the Difficulty number imposed on her Attack. Thus, if an AT+4 fails, the attacker's next parry incurs a Difficulty Increase of 4 points.

Dana has AT 16 and PA 14 with her amazon saber. To quickly eliminate one of the three zombies currently menacing her, she decides on an AT+8 against one of the zombies, and rolls a 5, indicating a

hit. She now causes 1d6+12 HP with her amazon saber (1d6+4 plus 8 points due to the successful AT+8). Had she rolled 9 or higher, she would have missed, and her next parry against a zombie attack would have been lowered to 6.

Methods of Parrying

To defend against an Attack, two distinct actions are open to your hero. First, she may try to parry with her weapon. This action comprises blocking or deflecting the blow, as well as countering the enemy's attack with combat moves of her own and threatening the enemy with a possible counter strike (without actually stepping aside). This is accomplished using a hero's PV with the chosen weapon (modified by Encumbrance, weapon modifiers, and so on); this is the most common way of parrying.

Second, a hero may try to block or deflect an attack with a shield. To do so, she uses her Base Parry Value plus the shield's PA modifier plus the Shield Fighting Special Ability (if applicable).

The defender must state which type of defense she will be using prior to rolling her Parry Test. If she rolls a 1, she has succeeded in a Lucky Parry, which may bring about special consequences (see page 104).

Parrying With a Shield

Shields are used to block an opponent's blow or deflect it harmlessly. They do not add to a hero's Armor Rating, even though they do cover certain regions of the body. A combatant using a shield attacks using a one-handed weapon and primarily uses her shield for parrying (though this is not always possible, since attacks can come from the wrong side of the shield); thus, the shield's PA Value must be taken into account.

Use of a shield is tied to a hero's Base PV. Like weapons, shields have weapon modifiers (which depend on size and weight) that indicate how many points are added to Base PV, how many points are subtracted from your offensive weapon's AT value (or the value of the Brawling AT if the shield is used for bashing), and whether INI is reduced. In addition, the effectiveness of a shield is influenced by the hero's skill in using shields, as reflected by the Off-Hand Weapon and Shield Fighting (I or II) Special Abilities. Depending on how many of these Abilities a hero has (they build upon one another), the hero receives 1, 3, or 5 additional points with which to increase her parry.

Finally, skill with a hero's offensive weapon also influences her shield parry ability. If a hero's PA Value with her offensive weapon is at least 15, her shield parry is increased by 1 point.

If a hero uses a shield, the final PA Value is calculated as follows: Base PV + PA modifier of the shield + points from Off-Hand Fighting or Shield Fighting + possible 1 point due to high PA in her offensive weapon.

Of course, a combatant using a shield cannot wield a two-handed weapon at the same time.

Enemies wielding a chain staff, any chain weapon, a whip, or a two-handed flail may ignore a shield's PA weapon modifier.

When employing shields, pay attention to the Break Point rules (see page 105), since shields have a tendency of wearing out after a few fights.

Special Ability: Off-hand fighting

This Ability represents a hero's skill in using parrying weapons, shields, and off-hand weapons, enabling the hero to better coordinate left-hand and right-hand movements in combat. This Ability lets your hero add 1 additional point to her Parry Value when using a shield or a parrying weapon.

Requirement: AG 10

Cost: 300 AP; Starting Advantage for mercenaries, pirates, and warriors

Special Ability: Shield Fighting I

This ability lets your hero add 2 points to her Parry Value when using a shield. These points are cumulative with the bonus gained with Off-hand fighting, giving a total of 3 points.

Requirement: ST 12, Off-hand fighting

Cost: 200 AP, half cost for pirates; Starting Advantage for mercenaries and warriors

Special Ability: Shield Fighting II

This Ability represents advanced training with a shield and provides a hero with 2 additional points to her Parry Value when using a shield in combat. This bonus stacks with those gained from Off-hand fighting and Shield Fighting I, for a total of 5 points.

Requirement: ST 15, Off-hand fighting, Shield Fighting I

Cost: 200 AP; half cost for mercenaries and warriors

Aventurian Shields

Chain weapons have the ability to swing past a shield, meaning that a hero using a shield may not use the shield's PA bonus when fighting against an opponent armed with a chain weapon. Any shield (being heavy as well as bulky) carried on a character's back or in her hand leads to a Difficulty Increase equal to its negative AT modifier on all Physical Talent Tests.

Simple Wooden Shield: This type of shield usually resembles an escutcheon; it consists of wooden boards glued together crosswise, and is covered in leather on the edges and on the front side.

Reinforced Wooden Shield: This shield resembles an escutcheon, an octagon, or is simply round. It is made of wooden boards glued together and reinforced with iron bands around the edges. Iron bands or rivets cover the front (enemy) side; its back is covered in felt.

Thorwalian Shield: This is a large, round wooden shield with an iron rim and an iron hump in its center; as is the Thorwalian style, such shields are often painted with colorful ornaments.

Leather Shield: This is a round wooden frame covered in several layers of tough leather (sometimes also rawhide or fur); this type of shield is popular with horse people (such as orks or Novadis).

Great Leather Shield: This is a larger version of the simple leather shield. Its framework is usually oval or teardrop-shaped; it is constructed especially for use on horseback.

Greatshield (Horseback Shield): This is a large, teardrop-shaped rider's shield made of several layers of wood and leather glued together; it is usually painted in the bearer's colors.

Buckler: This is a small fist shield made of wood and/or leather; often, a buckler is simply a hemisphere with a thin rim.

Common Aventurian Shields

	Weight	WM	INI	BP	Price
Simple wooden shield	3.5	–1/+3	–1	3	40
Reinforced wooden shield	4	–2/+3	–1	0	50
Thorwalian shield	4.5	–2/+4	–1	3	60
Leather shield	2	–1/+3	0	5	30
Great leather shield	3	–1/+4	–1	6	75
Greatshield	5	–2/+5	–2	2	100
Buckler	1	0/+1	0	–2	90
Metal buckler	1.5	0/+2	0	–2	60

Notes: Weight is given in greatpounds. **WM** stands for Weapon Modifier; the number in front of the slash indicates the penalty to the AT Value of the hero's main weapon; the number after the slash indicates the shield's bonus to PA Value. **INI** stands for the shield's Initiative modifier, which is applied in addition to the main weapon's INI modifier. **BP** equals Break Point (see page 105). **Price** is given in silver thalers (for simple versions without ornament).

A buckler cannot be used to parry two-handed blunt weapons or two-handed swords.

Metal Buckler: This is a fist shield made of steel, usually a central dome with a rim the width of a hero's hand. The inside is covered in leather or felt. Metal bucklers may not be used to parry two-handed blunt weapons.

Optional: Lucky Blows and Fumbles

The following rules bring a larger element of chance into combat—lucky hits and fumbles that may happen to the best of heroes once in a while. If you decide to use these rules, plan to use the entire package.

Lucky Attacks

If an attacker rolls a 1 on her AT Test and the defender fails at a desperate Parry (see next paragraph), she has struck a very lucky blow. Such a **Lucky Attack** is always a hit, regardless of other modifiers. In addition, if your hero immediately passes a "verification check" (by rolling a normal AT Test and scoring a hit with all due modifications from the original roll), she has turned her Lucky Attack into a Critical Hit. (This second attack roll does not count as an extra attack, but is considered a Test to verify the possible bonus of the lucky attack; it is rolled immediately after the hero has rolled the 1.)

The defender may then attempt to parry. She may parry such a Lucky Attack only by rolling successfully against half her PA Value (rounded down). If the Parry fails, the attacker scores a normal hit if she couldn't "verify" her Lucky Attack. If she achieved a Critical Hit, additional HP await the unlucky target.

On a Critical Hit, the attacker rolls damage as usual and *doubles* the number of HP rolled. If the roll of 1 occurs on an AT+, the additional points from this Called Attack are added to the total HP after doubling; the same applies for additional HP due to high Strength. In other words, modifiers are never doubled; only the basic damage roll is doubled. Finally, a Critical Hit always leads to a wound, which may further impede a combatant or may even disable her in case of an incapacitating blow (if you are using the rules on Incapacitation).

Lucky Parry

If a defender rolls a 1 on her PA Test and is able to "verify" this roll (as above), she has succeeded in a Lucky Parry; if she cannot "verify" her roll, she has still succeeded in a normal Parry.

A Lucky Parry counts as an additional free action, meaning you don't have to spend your defensive action for this CR and may retain it for some other action (such as a second Parry). The additional action must be used in the same combat round that it is gained.

Attack Fumbles

Fumbles may occur with any type of attack, even with Called Attacks. Whenever your hero rolls a 20 on her AT Test, she has Fumbled her attack; the attack automatically fails, regardless of modifiers, even if your hero has an AT Value of 20 or higher. She can avoid the unpleasant consequences, however, by succeeding at an immediate Attack roll (before her opponent is allowed to react; once again, this is not an extra attack, but simply a "verification" Test). Such a Test may incur Difficulty Increases depending on the situation. Should the "verification" AT Test fail, the unfortunate hero rolls 2d6 and reads the result off the Fumble Table (see below); otherwise, the attack simply fails and nothing happens.

An Attack Fumble may never be turned into a successful attack even if the verification roll is a 1 (after all, this is not an additional attack but a verification roll).

Ansgar tries to dispatch an ork with a mighty blow (AT+8) so he may aid his beleaguered friends. Ansgar is waist-deep in water, incurring a Difficulty Increase of 2 points. He rolls a 20, which is not only well beyond his TP in Axes and Maces (TP 16) and the modified value for his AT+ (which would have been 6), but also indicates a Fumble. His verification roll is 8, which adds insult to injury (once again, a 6 would have been needed). Ansgar must now roll 2d6 and consult the Fumble Table. He rolls a 9, indicating that he drops his ax into the murky water.

Parry Fumbles

If your hero rolls a 20 on her PA Test, she has Fumbled her Parry. She can avoid unpleasant consequences by succeeding at an immediate "verification" PA Test (before her opponent is allowed the chance to react); this Test may incur Difficulty Increases depending on the situation. Should she succeed in this "verification" PA, the Fumble is simply treated as a failed Parry. Should the "verification" Parry Test fail, the unfortunate hero rolls 2d6 and reads the result off the Fumble Table (see below).

The Effects of Fumbles

In addition to suffering a Fumble's special effects (see table), a hero also loses all remaining actions during the combat round in which the Fumble occurred. This may mean losing an Attack or Parry in the round.

Optional Rule: Break Point

All weapons and shields are provided with a *Break Point* (BP) indicating how easily the items break in combat. Tests for breaking or splintering are required when:

- A Critical Hit (see above) is parried using a shield or a weapon (the defender may freely decide whether she used the shield or her weapon for this particular parry), or
- A Called Attack of +10 or greater is parried using a shield or a weapon, since such mighty blows strain both the attacker's weapon and the defender's weapon or shield.

When one of these conditions is met, the Highlord interrupts the current battle and asks affected players to roll 2d6. If the result of this roll is lower than or equal to the weapon's or shield's BP, the item breaks or splinters. If the result exceeds the BP, the item remains intact but its BP Value is increased by 1 point. This is marked on the character sheet so it will be remembered in the future (these events are fairly rare, so players tend to forget them). A weapon with a Break Point of 0, 1, or a negative number cannot be broken and ignores such rolls, but the item's BP is still increased by 1 point.

A weapon's BP increases due to continuous use. Once per adventure (the timing is chosen by the Highlord), BP is raised by 1 point if the weapon has been used in at least one combat. These points can be negated by regularly tending to a weapon (oiling it, sharpening it, replacing the leather grip, and so on). The Highlord determines how "regularly" a weapon should be maintained; maintenance should occur after any long and difficult battle or one against many foes, but might be necessary only once after several minor scuffles. The players are responsible for announcing their intentions to service their weapons; the Highlord is not responsible for reminding them.

An armorer is able to repair weapons (resulting in lower BP). This costs about 1 ducat per point of BP repaired. Weapons with an original BP of 0 or less may be repaired only by their original manufacturer.

Broken wooden shafts from axes or polearms may be replaced, but broken blades may never be repaired. The best that can be done in such situations is to reforge the weapon from the remaining materials.

Optional Rule: Distance Classes

Weapons are available in many varying lengths, leading to the emergence of various fighting styles based on weapon length. For instance, wielding a dagger to fight an opponent armed with a greatsword presents interesting possibilities; determining the more effective weapon becomes difficult. As long as the combatant with the greatsword can keep the dagger-wielding character at bay, the latter has no means of damaging her opponent; if she gets past the greatsword's reach, however, her opponent can do little to avoid having the dagger thrust between his ribs.

Fumble Table

2d6	Effect
2	**Weapon Destroyed:** Disorientation leads to INI –4 and the hero's weapon is damaged beyond use. He must draw a new weapon next round, spending actions appropriately. If the hero's weapon is a sturdy one (BP 0 or less), treat as a roll of 9–10 (Weapon dropped) instead, but the weapon's BP is increased by 2 points (which is of no consequence to a really indestructible weapon). With a natural weapon (for heroes, a fist or foot), treat as a roll of 12 (Self-mutilation).
3–5	**Fall:** The hero drops to the ground and is **prone** until she manages to get up (requiring a Position action and an AG Test). She is INI –2 due to disorientation.
6–8	**Tripping:** The unlucky hero loses 2 points of INI due to disorientation.
9–10	**Weapon Dropped:** The fumbler must spend a full Position action to retrieve her weapon; she must succeed an AG Test to accomplish this. Instead, she may change her weapon or flee. If the weapon is a natural one, treat as 3–5 (Fall). INI –2 due to disorientation.
11	**Injured by Own Weapon:** The hero suffers damage from her own weapon (roll for HP normally) and is INI –3 due to disorientation.
12	**Self-mutilation:** The hero takes severe damage from her own weapon (roll for HP normally, but subtract directly from VI as DP, ignoring armor), possibly incurring a **wound** (if DP taken exceeds CN). She is INI –4 due to disorientation.

length and possible distance ranges in combat. The groupings are referred to as **Distance Classes (DC)**; these are **Close-Quarter** (abbreviated **C**; unarmed combat, daggers, and so on); **Melee** (**M**; typically, one-handed weapons such as swords, axes, and so on); and **Polearm** (**P**; spears and infantry weapons). These groups clearly and cleanly define **distances**; some weapons may be used in more than one Distance Class (see the Aventurian Weapons Table, p. 112).

Combat usually begins at the greatest Distance Class selected by any participant (the result of the choice of weapon). If a combatant wants to close the distance—i.e., lower the DC—she must succeed at an Attack. The defender may try to parry this attack. If the parry succeeds (or the attack fails in the first place), the DC of the combatants does not change; if the attack succeeds and the parry fails, though, the attacker has managed to lower DC by one category. This maneuver counts as a hero's Attack action in a combat round, but it does count as scoring an actual hit; an opponent does not suffer damage from such a maneuver.

To escape an opponent, your hero must succeed at an Attack; this attack counts as a hero's Attack action in a combat round (although it is a maneuver and not a "real" attack, and thus does not cause any damage). It is seen as a Test to verify whether the DC increase succeeded.

Attacks and parries meant only for increasing or decreasing DC are not influenced by DC modifiers (see below), but are modified by EC and similar factors, just like any normal attack. If a

hero wields a weapon unsuited for the current Distance Class, she incurs negative modifiers on AT and PA as follows.

- If an opponent runs under your hero's reach (for instance, if the hero uses a polearm in melee range, or a sword in close-quarters range), the hero's AT and PA incur Difficulty Increases of 6 points each.
- If a hero is forced to extend her reach (for instance, if using a close-quarter weapon in melee range, or a melee weapon in polearm range), her AT incurs a Difficulty Increase of 6 points.
- A close-quarter weapon cannot be used at polearm range.
- A polearm weapon cannot be used at close-quarter range.

Optional Rule: Special Situations in Combat

A number of possible combat situations necessitate special Difficulty Increases or Decreases. The following list gives a few examples for Combat Test modifiers (as they apply to normal humans without any special training). The Highlord can use these as a guide in determining penalties in other conditions.

Special Combat Conditions

Fighting in moonlight (or similar lighting conditions)	AT+3/PA+3
Fighting in starlight (or similar lighting conditions)	AT+5/PA+5
Fighting in total darkness	AT+8/PA+8
Fighting in shallow water (up to the knees)	PA+2
Fighting in waist-high water	AT+2/PA+4
Fighting in shoulder-high water	AT+4/PA+6
Fighting underwater	AT+6/PA+6
Fighting against flying creatures	AT+2/PA+4
Fighting against invisible creatures	AT+6/PA+6
Combatant is prone	AT+3/PA+5
Opponent is prone	AT–3/PA–3
Combatant on horseback*	AT–1/PA+1
Opponent on horseback*	AT+2
Opponent has numerical superiority	all Tests +1
Heroes have numerical superiority	AT–1

* These modifiers are not applied if both combatants are on horseback.

Individual modifiers (such as those for water or visibility, including invisibility) are not cumulative with each other (a hero cannot stand in knee-deep as well as waist-high water at the same time), but different conditions can be combined; thus, fighting a flying opponent while standing in knee-deep water by the light of the moon incurs AT+5 and PA+9.

Water dwellers are subject to the same modifiers as land dwellers when fighting in water; however, they are exempt from all underwater penalties. Some creatures with night-sensitive vision are not subject to visibility penalties, and many similar exceptions exist. If in doubt, ask your Highlord.

Optional Rule: Jousting

The first attack by any cavalry unit, whether light or heavy, is the mounted lance charge. Few hardy infantry veterans are likely to muster the courage to face a massive cavalry charge. Instead of lances, the Novadi light cavalry favors the djadra, a light lance that may also be used on foot as a spear or even a javelin.

Remember that AT value in Jousting (an attack-only Combat Talent) is calculated by adding a hero's entire TP in Jousting to the Base Attack Value. Jousting has an Effective Encumbrance of 0, meaning that armor does not impede the hero (due to the horse the hero is astride). A lancer's INI equals 1d6 plus any points of TP left unspent after a Ride Test.

A djadra must pass a Break Test if it causes more than 15 HP with a single hit; it breaks automatically if it is rammed into the ground with full force (i.e., when missing a target close to the ground). A heavy war lance must pass a Break Test if it causes more than 20 HP with a single hit.

To hit an opponent on foot, a rider wielding a lance must first succeed a Ride Test followed by a Jousting Attack. This attack is treated like a Ranged Attack; the Test is modified as per the table below, with all appropriate modifiers being cumulative.

If a Jousting Attack fails, the rider must succeed at an unmodified Ride Test to stay in the saddle. She must spend at least two Move actions to turn her horse around and charge anew. A Jousting Fumble always means that the lancer falls off her horse, suffering 2d6 DP.

An opponent on foot can try to avoid a lance attack (AG Test, modified by EC) or deflect the lance off his shield; the AG Test incurs a Difficulty Increase of 4 due to the attack's Distance Class, and the shield parry incurs the same Difficulty Increase due to the attack's impact. If the dodge or the shield parry succeeds, the attack has been foiled and the rider must succeed at a Ride Test to remain on horseback.

Hit Points for jousting are found in the table.

Unarmed Combat

While armed combat may come to be the daily life of your heroes, whether for battling bandits or the arch-fiend's minions, trying to settle differences "the old-fashioned way" (let alone resolving the traditional tavern brawl) will probably be quite common as well.

Many unarmed combat styles have been developed and perfected throughout Aventuria. Detailed here are the most important basic techniques of unarmed combat; the truly advanced styles (free style, fisticuffs, and hruruzat for Brawling and gladiator's style, Unau School, and hruruzat for Wrestling) will be introduced in the *Swords and Heroes* supplement.

To determine AT and PA Values in unarmed combat, proceed as usual: Talent Prowess is divided among AT and PA, with no more than five points of difference between the two. Armor Encumbrance is applied (EEC=EC). The Initiative modifier for unarmed combat is –2; Distance Class is close-quarters. Brawling and Wrestling are the two common techniques.

Both techniques cause HP (ED) instead of normal HP; this special type of HP is subtracted from Endurance, and only half of the amount rolled (rounded up) is subtracted from Vitality.

Both basic unarmed techniques and two-handed techniques disallow the use of a weapon or shield; in Brawling, there is no difference between attacking with one's left or right hand.

Brawling

This Talent is the skill of causing damage by use of your hands, feet, or teeth (punches, uppercuts, claw attacks, head butts, bite attacks, knee-jerks, and even an Achaz's tail attack). It includes defending against such attacks by evading, blocking, or simply stepping aside.

Attacks using hands or feet (including shoes and gloves) usually cause 1d6 HP (ED).

Wrestling

This Talent includes all techniques of grabbing, holding, immobilizing, tripping, or throwing an opponent, as well as defensive measures such as tumbling or actively breaking a hold (which might be used to escape the chokehold of a kraken or a snake).

Wrestling attacks either cause 1d6 HP (ED) or they disadvantage an enemy, making follow-up attacks easier. Throws and special holds have one of two effects: they relieve an opponent of 1d6 points of INI, or of 1d6 points off the next attack. Additionally, a wrestler can try to get an opponent into a chokehold by a successful unparried Wrestling AT (unparried in this case means that the parry attempt fails). An opponent can break a chokehold only by succeeding at a Wrestling PA. The attacker's subsequent Wrestling attacks gain Difficulty Decreases of +1, +2, +3, and so on (i.e., 1 point per round) and cause 1d6+1, 1d6+2, 1d6+3, and so on HP (ED); this damage is to Endurance only and never carries over to Vitality. The defender's PA Tests are increased by 1, 2, 3 points and so on (i.e., 1 point per round).

More on TP (ED)

Unarmed blows and kicks, as well as human bites or tail-slaps by the non-human Achaz (using the Wrestling Talent) cause 1d6 HP (ED), half of which are subtracted also from Vitality (rounded up). **Threshold value** for HP/ST is 10 and the **damage increment** is 3; in short: HP/ST 10/3. Refer to the optional rule for More Damage Due to High Strength on page 99 for more explanation.

DP suffered are essentially not "real" DP, because a hero usually wants to exhaust the opponent (or make her unconscious) by using these techniques, not kill her. After a battle has ended, lost points of ED are regained at the rate of 3d6 EP per game turn (or 4d6 with a successful CN Test). If a regenerating hero is attacked again, combat resumes at her current ED Value.

Optional: Depending on the situation, the rules for Called Attacks (AT+; see page 102) and Lucky Attacks and Fumbles (page 104) might be applied. Wounds are usually not part of unarmed combat, unless you choose to interpret Critical Hits as automatic wounds.

Brawling versus Wrestling

It is possible to wrestle a boxer and vice versa; in other words, to bring two different unarmed combat techniques to bear against each other. Simply roll AT and PA and apply the rules given above to determine the appropriate results. Thus, a wrestler who parries a Brawling Attack deflects the blows, while a brawler defending against a Wrestling AT simply sidesteps the attacker. There is one



important exception: A combatant caught in a chokehold can *only* free herself with a successful Wrestling Parry.

Optional Rule: Unarmed versus Armed Combatants

Attacking an armed opponent without any weapon and without special training is usually an act of sheer desperation, but at certain times, other options might not be available (for instance, when running away isn't possible).

Unarmed combatants may parry weapon attacks; a failed parry means the victim suffers full damage as normal, and a successful parry means the victim suffers half the damage the weapon would have caused on an unparried hit. (Damage is rounded up, and additional HP due to Called Attacks or HP/ST are applied *before* halving.)

Two exceptions exist where the parrying character does not take the halved damage: if the armed attacker is wielding a weapon in close-quarters DC (such as a dagger), or if the unarmed combatant runs under her armed opponent's reach, closing the distance to close-quarters. In the latter example, we assume that the unarmed combatant is directing her defense action against her opponent's weapon arm, not his weapon.

An unarmed combatant may attack an armed opponent if the DC is close-quarters or melee; in the latter case, the attack receives a Difficulty Increase of 6 points. If the armed opponent parries the unarmed attack, the unarmed attacker suffers half the weapon's base damage (rounded up; HP/ST or points from Called Attacks are ignored). To close the distance when unarmed, your hero must succeed at an unparried AT+4. If this attack is parried, the unarmed attacker suffers half the weapon's HP in damage as above.

Ranged Combat

Not all Aventurian combat occurs eye-to-eye. Especially in large engagements, many heroes and their opponents will be equipped with bows or crossbows, and many hunting (or ambushing) heroes would rather rely on bow and arrow instead of short sword and light armor.

When a hero employs a Ranged or Thrown Weapon to hit a target from a distance, she must succeed at an AT Test against her corresponding Ranged Talent (calculated from Base Ranged Value plus TP in the respective Talent; see page 91). Several factors also figure prominently into Ranged combat: size of target, distance to the target, cover, and movement of the target. These factors are examined below.

Size of Target

Many archery targets are available to heroes, ranging from tiny silver coins up to full-grown dragons. To speed up play, target sizes are divided into various categories.

Cover for Targets

Targets under partial cover are more difficult to hit. As a result, such targets move up in difficulty category: A goblin (a medium-size target) whose lower body is behind cover (so a hero can see only his torso and head) is actually treated as a small target. If the hero could see only the goblin's head, it would then be treated as a very small target. Poor lighting conditions and other visibility problems (such as fog) can be treated in a similar way by changing the size category to make a target "smaller" than it actually is for purposes of hitting it from a distance.

Moving Target

Moving targets are usually treated as if they are one category smaller. A snake darting through the grass—usually a very small target—becomes a tiny target because of its movement. If the target is especially fast (Speed 10 or more) or purposely moves in a zigzag, it is treated as if it were two categories smaller. Such evasive movement is usually restricted to intelligent enemies (and rabbits), thus preventing our snake from becoming even harder to hit.

If such modifiers cause a creature's size category to fall below tiny, each class below tiny (say, "very tiny," "extremely tiny," and so on) results in an additional Difficulty Increase of +3 (instead of the usual +2) on Ranged Tests. A snake (+6) that darts behind a rock (+2) with only its head visible (+3, +3) would need a Ranged Test at +14 to be hit.

Distance to Target

Distance to a target is divided into categories: *Very Close* (–2), *Close* (+/–0), *Medium* (+4), *Far* (+8), and *Extremely Far* (+12). Each ranged weapon has distance values of its own, reflecting the fact that it is easier to hit a target 60 paces away with a longbow than with a javelin. The numbers in parentheses represent Difficulty Increases or Decreases to Ranged Attack Tests, which are cumulative with the modifiers for target size.

The Aventurian Ranged Weapons Table lists information for each weapon's distance categories. A distance of 0 paces up to the first number in the entry counts as *Very Close;* distance from the first number to the second counts as *Close*, and so on. These distances do not reflect a weapon's maximum range; instead, they cover those ranges for which accurate aim is still possible.

Of course, the bolt for a heavy crossbow has a much longer range than 180 paces, but beyond this distance hitting a target becomes a matter of chance rather than skill, determined by the Highlord's decision rather than a die roll. When using the table and the modifiers, you may want to treat the Difficulty Increases due to target size and distance in a more gradual manner; for example, firing a light crossbow at a target 30 paces away might require a Ranged Test +5 instead of +8.

Difficulty Increases By Target Size

Category	Example	Test Modifier
Tiny	silver thaler, dragon's eye, mouse, toad	+8
Very small	snake, pheasant, cat, raven	+6
Small	wolf, doe, sheep	+4
Medium	goblin, elf, human, ork, dwarf	+2
Large	horse, steppe ox, ogre, troll	+/–0
Very large	barn door, dragon, elephant, giant	–2

When in doubt as to the correct category for a target, the Highlord makes the decision.

Aventurian Ranged Weapons

Improvised Thrown Weapons: Stones and bottles, standard (melee) daggers, and some spears fall into this group. For improvised weapons, Difficulty Increases per size category are applied, increasing by 3 points per category instead of 2 per category, beginning with +/– 0 for "very large" targets (which shows the difficulty in using these weapons in a meaningful way). You may not perform special combat actions (such as a Ranged Attack+) with improvised weapons.

Composite Bow: This bow is constructed from elements made of various materials (horn, strings, wood), giving it increased draw power; it can be used only by heroes with ST of at least 15.

Dagger: May be used as an improvised weapon in ranged combat; heavy daggers, long daggers, and most types of special daggers cannot be used for throwing at all.

Elven Bow: Somewhat shorter than a longbow, this weapon's elven heritage is obvious. Only very rarely will you find this weapon in human hands.

Foretooth: A Thorwalian weapon, usually carved with runes or ornaments and displaying a complex trajectory. Throwing Axes Tests incur an additional Difficulty Increase of 1 when using a foretooth.

Fountthorn: A throwing dagger unique to the Fountland, it is closer to a dart than an actual dagger. It has a three-edged blade, but only limited melee capability.

Heavy Crossbow: This crossbow must be cocked with a small winch, which is either attached to the weapon or built into it. Reloading takes a long time, but its range and accuracy are unbeatable. After any long journey, it must be checked to determine whether this complex weapon has become soiled (a roll of 19 or 20 on 1d20 indicates excessive dirt). A thorough cleaning requires 3 game turns. If the weapon is not cleaned, all Ranged Tests incur a Difficulty Increase of 3 points until the weapon is cleaned, and any roll of 19 or 20 leads to a Fumble. These penalties disappear after the weapon has been cleaned.

Ironwooder: This weapon has an attached cartridge containing 10 light crossbow bolts. Pulling back the cartridge simultaneously cocks and reloads this type of repeating crossbow. After any long journey, it must be checked to determine whether this complex weapon has become soiled (a roll of 19 or 20 on 1d20 indicates excessive dirt). A thorough cleaning requires 3 game turns. If the weapon is not cleaned, all Ranged Tests incur a Difficulty Increase of 3 points until the weapon is cleaned, and any roll of 19 or 20 leads to a Fumble. These penalties disappear after the weapon has been cleaned.



Javelin: This is a wooden spear with an iron tip, usually four spans long and balanced for flying. An iron tip is fastened to a straight, heavy wooden shaft by long iron bands.

Light Crossbow: This crossbow is cocked by means of a so-called goat's foot; it is popular both as a hunting weapon (with intricate ornamentation for the wealthy) and as a simple country militia weapon. Loading time as listed in the Aventurian Weapons Table is doubled for heroes with ST below 12.

Loadster: A loadster is a crossbow variant that shoots small balls of stone or lead instead of bolts. It is highly popular for bird hunting.

Longbow: The length of this bow (made of ash or yew) equals the height of a grown man (eight spans or more); it has high tension power and thus great range and tremendous stopping power. It is most common in the northern Middenrealm and in Nostria and Andergast. A wielder needs a minimum ST of 15.

Short Bow: The typical hunting bow used throughout all of Aventuria, this bow has a length of four to six spans and often has two bends or curves. It is popular as a weapon used from horseback.

Spear: While a standard spear may be thrown, it is treated as an improvised weapon (see above) when used in this manner.

Throwing Ax: Most of these small weapons are "sharpened on all edges" and are built entirely of metal; while examples built with wooden hafts and separate ax heads are known to exist, they are rare.

Throwing Disk/Ring/Star: These are metal disks with sharpened or jagged edges. They are popular for the ability to throw many of them at once in a hail of missiles (rules for such volleys are found in the *Swords and Heroes* supplement).

Throwing Knife/Dagger: These knives and daggers are balanced especially for throwing. They are usually weighted at the tip and have no quillons or pommel. A throwing dagger's grip is normally wrapped only in thin leather, while a throwing knife's handle isn't wrapped at all.

War Bow: This is an extremely sturdy short bow; it can be used only by a hero with ST of at least 16.

Wooden Spear: This simple, straight spear has a wooden tip hardened by fire; heavier models (at least 10 ounces heavier than normal at 70 ounces or more) have tips of stone or horn and cause 1 additional HP. Primitive societies favor these weapons.

Aventurian Ranged Weapons Table

Weapon	HP	Ranges	HP+	Weight	Loading	Price
Throwing Knives Talent						
Dagger	1d6	1/3/5/7/10	(0/0/0/–1/–1)	20	—	20 S
Fountthorn	1d6+2	2/4/6/8/15	(+1/0/0/0/–1)	30	—	40 S
Throwing dagger	1d6+1	2/4/6/8/15	(+1/0/0/0/–1)	20	—	30 S
Throwing knife	1d6	2/4/6/8/15	(+1/0/0/0/–1)	10	—	15 S
Throwing disk/ring	1d6+1	2/4/8/12/20	(+1/0/0/0/0)	10	—	35 S
Javelins Talent						
Djadra	1d6+4	5/10/15/25/40	(+1/0/0/–1/–2)	80	—	120 S
Javelin	1d6+4*	5/10/15/25/40	(+3/+1/0/–1/–1)	80	—	30 S
Spear	1d6+3	5/10/15/25/40	(+1/0/0/–1/–2)	80	—	30 S
Wooden Spear	1d6+2	5/10/15/25/40	(+1/0/0/–1/–2)	60	—	10 S
Throwing Axes Talent						
Foretooth	1d6+4	0/5/10/15/30	(–/+1/+1/0/–1)	50	—	60 S
Stone, bottle	1d6	1/2/4/8/12	(0/0/0/–1/–1)	10	—	—
Throwing ax	1d6+3	0/5/10/15/25	(–/+1/+1/0/–1)	60	—	35 S
Crossbow Talent						
Heavy crossbow	2d6+6*	10/30/6/100/180	(+4/+2/0/–1/–3)	200/ +4	30	350 S / 20 F
Ironwooder	1d6+3*	5/10/15/20/40	(+1/0/0/0/–1)	200	3 (20)	400 S / 15 F
Light crossbow	1d6+6*	10/15/25/40/60	(+1/+1/0/0/–1)	150/ +3	15	180 S / 15 F
Loadster	1d6+4	10/20/30/60/100	(+3/+1/0/–1/–1)	120/ +5	8	200 S / 6 F
Bow Talent						
Composite Bow	1d6+5*	10/20/35/50/80	(+2/+1/+1/+0/+0)	35/ +2	3	80 S / 25 K
Elven bow	1d6+5*	10/25/50/100/200	(+3/+2/+1/+1/0)	25/ +3	3	Not Sold
Longbow	1d6+6*	10/25/50/100/200	(+3/+2/+1/0/–1)	30/ +3	4	60 S / 40 K
Short bow	1d6+4*	5/15/25/40/60	(+1/+1/0/0/–1)	20/ +2	2	45 S / 25 K
War bow	1d6+7*	10/20/40/80/150				
(+3/+2/+1/0/0)	45/ +4	4				
100 S / 60 K						

Weight and *Price* are for one weapon / one missile.
Weights are given in ounces.
Loading gives the number of actions needed to reload the weapon.
HP+ column: Refer to *Optional Rule: Range and Hit Points* (p. 114).
* If a hit by this weapon causes damage, it also causes an automatic wound.

Readying a Ranged Weapon

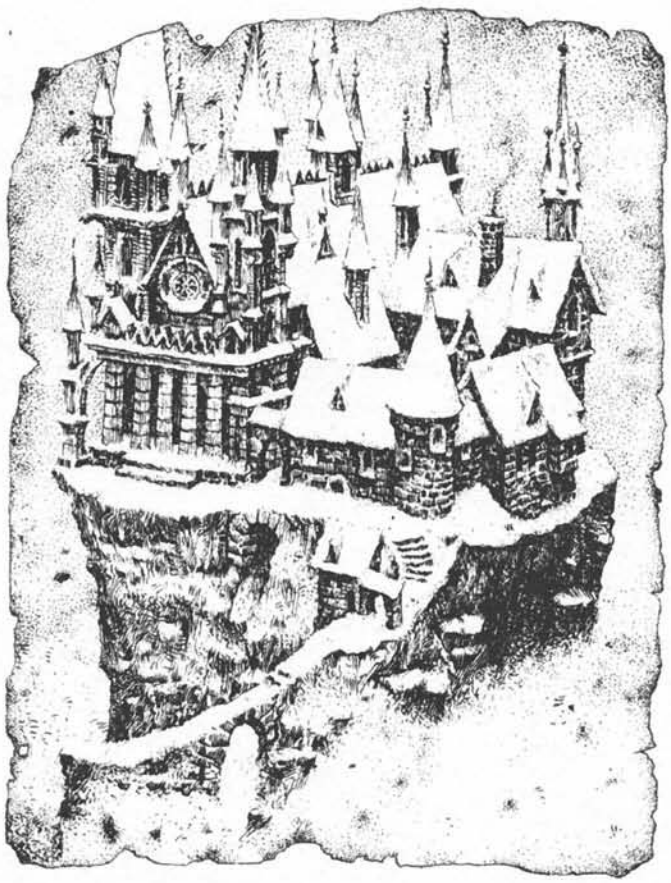
An archer who wants to attack a target suddenly appearing at a range of up to 10 paces must have her weapon already in hand and armed (dagger or ax in hand, bow or crossbow drawn or cocked). On the other hand, no hero is able to hold a bowstring taut indefinitely—the draw force of a bow is several greatpounds and the hero will tire or damage the weapon. If a hero insists upon trying to do so, she must succeed at a ST Test for every CR after the first; if this Test fails, the arrow flies away harmlessly. A Fumble result probably means that the weapon is damaged. (Note: Heroes are wise to disengage bowstrings on long journeys to avoid damaging the bow or breaking the string. Bows must be cared for in the same way as swords; a missile weapon falling into water, for example, must be dried and restrung before it can be used again.)

A hero must spend 30 actions to attach a new string to a bow; to refit a disengaged one takes 6 actions. Nocking an arrow, pulling the string, and firing takes three actions (bows with high tension may need more actions). This qualifies as "rapid fire," since taking aim is not included in the sequence; such firing incurs a Difficulty Increase of 2 on the AT Test. To avoid this Increase, your hero needs to spend one action aiming properly. If she wants to attempt a Ranged Attack+, she adds half as many actions as the Difficulty Increase she wants to impose to the shot.

Crossbows and tension weapons are somewhat easier to handle in this respect. They are usually carried with the strings in place and may even be carried with the string pulled taut for some time (no more than an hour). On the other hand, cocking these weapons takes a lot of time, as evidenced by the entries in the "Reloading" column of the Aventurian Weapons Table. The modifiers for rapid fire and Ranged Attacks+ as listed above for bows apply for crossbows as well.

A hero with the Quick Loading Special Ability is much faster at actions such as fitting or refitting a string, cocking, and loading; heroes with the Marksman Special Ability incur only a Difficulty Increase of 1 for rapid fire (instead of 2).

Pulling a throwing weapon from a sheath or drawing a knife or ax from a belt takes one action. The act of throwing the weapon counts as a second action. Avoiding the above-mentioned Difficulty Increase of 2 by taking careful aim takes another action. Spears, which are usually carried in one hand, may be used without spending an action to draw them.



Optional Rule: Range and Hit Points

The distance from archer to target not only affects a hero's chance to hit, but also the penetration or damaging power of the missile used. An arrow is more powerful when fired at close range than when it tumbles out of the sky after a long flight. This is calculated in the Aventurian Ranged Weapons Table by listing modifiers in parentheses that indicate how normal HP are affected when the weapon is used at the five distances. Thus, the first number in the "AT+" column refers to "extremely close" distance, and the numbers that follow apply to the distance categories up to the maximum range of the weapon.

Optional Rule: Self-Imposed Difficulty Increases (Ranged Attack+)

As in melee combat, your hero may try to bolster her weapon's HP by imposing a Difficulty Increase on her Ranged Attack roll. This represents carefully aiming for a vital spot. All other Increases (size, distance, cover, and movement) apply as well. If such a carefully aimed shot fails to hit the intended target (i.e., the AT+ roll fails), the attack misses completely.

The maximum Difficulty Increase your hero may impose on her Called Attack is equal to her TP in the respective Ranged Talent; half of these points (rounded up) are added to the attack's HP in case of a hit. A Ranged Attack+ requires more time to aim; divide the Difficulty Increase imposed by 2 to determine the number of additional actions needed. Heroes with the Marksman Special Ability truly excel at this, since they need less time to aim and may even cause more damage.

Special Ability: Marksman

A Marksman may add her entire Difficulty Increase to her HP when succeeding at a Ranged Attack+ (see above); also, she only incurs a Difficulty Increase of 1 point (instead of 2) when rapid firing.

Requirement: TP in the respective Ranged Talent of at least 7; must be learned separately for each Ranged Talent

Cost: 300 AP, mercenaries pay only half cost; Starting Advantage for hunters and rangers

Special Ability: Quick Loading (Bow or Crossbow)

A hero with this Special Ability is skilled at quickly getting an arrow from her quiver (or off the ground), nocking it, and pulling her bow taut; loading time for all arrows and bolts is 1 action less than the number listed in the Aventurian Weapons Table. A hero may alternatively specialize in quick-loading crossbows; in this case, she needs only 75% (rounded up) of the loading times listed in the Aventurian Weapons Table. You may take this Special Ability twice: once for bows, and once for crossbows.

Requirement: ST 12, DE 12, TP in Bow or Crossbow of at least 7

Cost: 200 AP; hunters, mercenaries, and rangers pay only half cost

Aventurian Melee Weapons

Optional Rule: Weapon Modifiers

Some weapons are easier to use than others; many others have certain advantages (such as high damage) that are trade-offs for difficulty in handling. These characteristics are reflected in three ways: first, they are described in the short weapon descriptions in this chapter; second, their modifiers to AT, PA, and INI are listed in the Aventurian Weapons Table; and third, the weapons are grouped in Distance Classes (DC). Modifiers are more easily understood when viewed in relation to other weapons in the same DC. Also, Weapon Modifiers (WM) cannot be used without also using DC values, and vice versa.

Difficulty Increases for AT and PA can be as high as –2/–4.

Aventurian Weapons Table

Type	HP	HP/ST	Wt.	Length	BP	INI	Price	WM	Notes	DC
Daggers										
Dagger	1d6+1	12/5	20	30	2	0	20	0/–1	(thr)	C
Dragonstooth	1d6+2	11/4	40	40	0	0	120	0/0		C
Heavy dagger	1d6+2	12/4	30	35	1	0	40	0/–1		C
Hunting knife	1d6+2	12/5	15	30	3	–1	50+	0/–2		C
Knife	1d6	12/6	10	25	4	–2	10	–2/–3	I	C
Long dagger	1d6+2	12/4	30	40	1	0	45	0/0		C
Throwing dagger	1d6+1	12/5	20	25	2	–1	30	–1/–2	thr, (I)	C
Throwing knife	1d6–1	12/6	10	20	2	–1	15	–2/–3	thr, (I)	C
Fencing Weapons										
Epee	1d6+3	12/5	40	90	3	+2	150+	0/–1		M
Foil	1d6+3	13/5	30	90	4	+3	180+	+1/–1		M
Rapier	1d6+3	12/4	45	90	2	+1	120	0/0		M
Sabers										
Cutlass	1d6+3	12/4	70	75	2	0	50	0/0		M
Kunchomer	1d6+4	12/3	90	80	2	0	130	0/0		M
Machete	1d6+3	13/3	90	50	3	–1	40	0/–2	I	C, M
Saber	1d6+3	12/4	60	90	2	+1	100	0/0		M
Waqqif	1d6+2	12/5	35	45	2	–2	60	–1/–3		C
Swords										
Kuslikian saber	1d6+3	12/4	70	80	1	+1	160	0/0		M
Short sword	1d6+2	11/4	40	50	1	0	80	0/–1		C, M
Sword	1d6+4	11/4	80	95	1	0	180	0/0		M
Bastard Swords										
Bastard sword	1d6+5	11/4	100	115	1	+1	250	0/0	2H	M, P
Rondracomb	2d6+2	12/3	130	130	1	0	no	0/0	2H, Pr	M, P
Tuzak knife	1d6+6	12/4	100	130	1	+1	400	0/0	2H	M, P
Two-Handed Swords										
Andergaster	3d6+2	14/2	220	200	3	–3	350	0/–2	2H	P
Boronssickle	2d6+6	13/3	160	180	3	–2	400	0/–3	2H	P
Double kunchomer	1d6+6	13/2	150	130	3	–2	250	0/–2	2H	M, P
Greatsword	2d6+4	12/3	160	155	2	–1	250	0/–1	2H, Pr	M, P
Infantry Weapons										
Bill	1d6+3	13/4	120	250	5	0	70	–1/–1	2H	P
Glaive	1d6+4	13/3	120	200	5	–1	45	0/–2	2H	P
Halberd	1d6+5	12/3	150	200	5	0	75	0/–1	2H	P
Partisan	1d6+5	13/3	150	200	4	0	80	0/–2	2H	P
Scythe	1d6+3	13/4	100	160	7	–2	30	–2/–4	I, 2H	P
Storm scythe	1d6+4	13/3	120	180	5	–1	40	–1/–2	2H	P
Wyrmspear	1d6+5	13/4	120	180	2	0	120	0/–2	2H	P
Spears										
Djadra	1d6+5	12/4	80	200	6	–1	120	0/–3	P	
Greatspear	2d6+2	11/4	150	200	3	–1	100	0/–1	2H	P
Hunting spear	1d6+6	12/4	80	200	3	–1	80+	0/–1	thr	P
Javelin	1d6+3	11/5	80	100	4	–2	30	–1/–3	thr,(I)	M
Spear	1d6+5	12/4	80	190	5	–1	30	0/–2	thr	P
Trident	1d6+4	13/3	90	140	5	0	50	0/1	I	P
Wooden spear	1d6+3	12/5	60	150	5	0	10	–1/–3	thr	P
Staves										
Magician's staff	1d6+1	11/5	90	150	N/A	0	no	–1/–1	2H	MP
Quarterstaff	1d6+1	12/4	80	150	5	+1	40	0/0	2H	MP
Two-lilies	1d6+3	12/4	80	140	4	+1	200	+1/–1	2H	MP

Aventurian Weapons Table (Cont.)

Type	HP	HP/ST	Wt.	Length	BP	INI	Price	WM	Notes	DC
Axes and Maces										
Battle ax	1d6+4	13/2	120	90	2	0	50	0/–1		M
Brabak lad	1d6+5	13/3	120	90	1	0	100	0/–1		M
Chair leg	1d6	11/5	40	40	8	–1	no	–1/–1	I	C, M
Cleaver	1d6+2	11/4	60	30	2	–1	20	–2/–3	I	C
Club	1d6+2	11/3	100	80	3	0	15	0/–2		M
Hatchet	1d6+3	11/4	70	50	5	–1	20	–1/–2	I	M
Linnorm slayer	1d6+4	11/3	95	50	1	–1	120	0/–1		C, M
Mace	1d6+4	11/3	120	75	1	0	50	0/–1		M
Ravensbeak	1d6+4	10/4	90	110	3	0	130	0/0		M
Sickle	1d6+2	12/5	30	50	6	–2	25	–2/–2		C
Skraja	1d6+3	11/3	90	70	4	0	50	0/0		M
Stick	1d6+1	11/4	60	80	6	0	1	0/–2		
Throwing ax	1d6+3	10/4	60	40	2	–1	35	0/–2	thr, (I)	C
Torch	1d6	11/5	30	50	8	–2	0.5	–2/–3	I	C, M
Two-Handed Blunt Weapons										
Barbarian ax	2d6+4	15/1	250	120	3	–2	150	–1/–4	2H	M
Dwarfmallet	1d6+5	13/3	120	120	1	–1	150	0/–1	2H	M
Orknose	1d6+5	12/2	110	100	4	–1	75	0/–1	2H	M
Pick	1d6+6	13/2	200	100	5	–3	20	–2/–4	I, 2H	M
Rock cleaver	2d6+2	14/2	150	120	2	–1	300	0/–2	2H	M
Sledge hammer	1d6+5	13/2	250	90	5	–3	30	–2/–4	I, 2H	M
War hammer	2d6+3	14/2	180	100	2	–2	120	–1/–3	2H	M
Warunk hammer	1d6+6	14/3	150	150	2	–1	150	0/–1	2H	M, P
Woodcutter's ax	2d6	12/2	160	110	5	–2	80	–1/–4	I, 2H	M
Chain Weapons										
Morning star	1d6+5	14/2	140	100	2	–1	100	–1/–2		M
Ogreslap	2d6+2	15/1	240	120	3	–2	180	–1/–3		M
Oxherd	3d6+3	15/1	300	110	3	–3	250	–2/–4		M
Close-quarter Weapons (Brawling)										
Fist/kick/ headbutt	1d6 (ED)*	10/3	—	—	—	0	no	–1/–2*		C
Shield bash	1d6+1(ED)	11/4	-----	-----	as per shield	-----	-----	2/0	I	C

Notes for Weapons Table

HP: Hit Points of the weapon; (ED) indicates that the attack causes Endurance damage, plus half the rolled TP (rounded up) as damage to VP. An asterisk (*) indicates that parrying this attack with hand, foot, or head leads to damage equal to half the weapon's HP (rounded up).

HP/ST: HP increase due to ST. The value before the slash is threshold value; the value after the slash is damage increment; see page 99, Optional Rule: More Damage Due to High Strength.

Weight is listed in ounces.

Length is listed in half-fingers (cm).

Price is listed in Silver Thalers.

BP: Break Point of the weapon; see page 105.

Price: A listing of "no" means the weapon is not for sale.

WM: Weapon Modifiers to AT and PA Values.

Notes: Abbreviations are as follows.

I: this is an improvised weapon, usually a tool. Ranged weapons that are not really balanced for melee combat also fall in this group, and are marked **(I)**—see notes in text.

thr: weapon may also be used for throwing (see Ranged Weapons Table); **(thr)** means that this melee weapon may be used as an improvised ranged weapon.

2H: two-handed weapon; using a shield with this weapon is not possible.

Pr: weapon may be wielded only by privileged persons (warriors, certain religious followes, and so on); see the notes for the respective weapon(s).

DC: the Distance Class (Close-Quarters, Melee, Polearms) in which the weapon is used.

N/A used in any listing means "not applicable."

Negative AT modifiers are rare and usually apply only to extremely unbalanced weapons, such as chain weapons and extremely long weapons. INI modifiers range from –2 to +2 points.

None of the weapons listed in the "Daggers" entry can be used to parry blows by chain weapons, two-handed flails, two-handed blunt weapons, or two-handed swords.

None of the weapons listed in the "Fencing Weapons" entry can be used to parry blows by chain weapons, two-handed flails, or two-handed blunt weapons.

Optional Rule: Weapons and Size

The table above, as well as the following weapon descriptions, assume that (unless otherwise noted) all weapons have been crafted for humans. This means that elves may use them without difficulties, but dwarfs are likely to experience problems as described here.

- Dwarfs using weapons not specifically manufactured for their use (all weapons except dragonstooth, dwarfmallet, linnorm slayer, rock cleaver, and wyrmspear) incur a negative modifier of 1 point each to Attack, Parry, and HP; these modifiers are in addition to all other modifiers. Daggers and spears are exempt from this rule.
- Dwarfs using weapons not manufactured for their use that are longer than 1.3 paces (exception: spears) incur a Difficulty Increase of 3 points each to AT and PA, and a penalty of –2 to HP.
- Weapons that might be used in one of two Distance Classes by humans (such as C, M or M, P) can be wielded by dwarfs only in the lower DC.
- Dwarfs may have "human–style" weapons specially made to their size specifications; this costs three times the listed price, but eliminates the Difficulty Increases to AT and PA (but does not affect the restriction concerning DC). The length of such a weapon is 75% of the length of the corresponding human weapon and causes 1 HP less damage. It's no wonder that dwarfs tend to favor their traditional blades.

The Highlord may rule that a dwarf can obtain his weapons in his homeland and thus be spared the extra penalties and expense described above. If a dwarf's weapon is ruined during an adventure, he may be at the mercy of whatever weapons he can find for sale, and the above rules should then be applied.

Optional Rule: One-Handed vs. Two-Handed Use

Each weapon description clearly states whether a weapon is used with one hand or two hands. Some weapons may deviate from this norm under special circumstances.

- Some weapons that are typically wielded with two hands are balanced enough to be used with one hand if the hero is strong enough (normally, at least ST 15). If this is the case, you may fight with the weapon using its appropriate Talent (Axes and Maces, Sabers, Swords); threshold value and damage increments due to high Strength (as per the optional rule) are increased by 1 each.
- If your hero is forced to wield a two-handed weapon with only one hand (for instance, because one hand has been injured), she loses 2 points of AT, 3 points of PA, and causes 3 fewer hit points.
- If the weapon in question is a spear not designated "2H" in the Aventurian Weapons Table, the hero loses 3 points of AT and inflicts 1 fewer hit point if the spear is used single-handedly (see also the description of the Spears Talent on page 94). HP/ST are increased by 1 each, and DC drops to M. If you use these weapons with two hands, the data remain as listed in the table.

Improvised Melee Weapons

While any object can be used (or misused) as a weapon, most objects of daily life are not manufactured with combat in mind. Should your hero be forced to fight with chair legs, ale mugs, arcane books, and so on, however, the following restrictions apply.

- You may not perform special combat actions (except an Attack+) with improvised melee weapons.
- Improvised melee weapons cause a Fumble on a roll of 19 or 20; the "verification" Test to avoid the dire consequences of a Fumble incurs an additional Difficulty Increase of 5 points.
- Improvised melee weapons do not survive well in combat; whenever an attack with an improvised weapon is parried by a regular weapon, or whenever you parry the blow of a regular weapon with an improvised weapon, you must roll an immediate Break Test (see page 105).
- Several items of theoretical use in combat (such as earthen pots) are best treated by using the Brawling Talent, causing 1d6+1 (ED) HP. Such weapons do not have Break Points, as they can be used only once.

Weapon Descriptions

The categories in parentheses indicate the correct weapon category for each item. Some weapons easily fit in more than one category.

Andergaster (Two-Handed Swords): The favorite weapon of Almadian and Horasian double mercenaries, this is an extra-long two-handed sword.

Ax (Axes and Maces): This is the short hand ax, usually used for chopping firewood; in normal combat, it is considered an improvised weapon.

Barbarian Ax (Two-Handed Blunt Weapons): This is a massive, double-bladed ax used mainly in northern Aventuria. There it is typically reserved for Thorwalians, Fjarningars, and Gjalsker Landers). Wielding this ax requires a minimum ST of 15.

Bastard Sword (Bastard Swords or **Two-Handed Swords):** This weapon is a "bastard" cross between a sword and greatsword; depending on the situation, it may be wielded using one or two hands, giving it great versatility in combat.

Battle Ax (Axes and Maces): This is the basic type of ax crafted for combat; it is known across all Aventurian cultures.

Bill (Infantry Weapons): An economical and widely used militia weapon, these are favored for the ability to unhorse riders.

Boronssickle (Two-Handed Swords): This is a very long, curved sword with a blade and a half (one side of the blade is sharp for its entire length, while the other side is sharp for only half its length), intended for use against cavalry. It usually comes without



a parrying handle. Despite the name, the weapon has no direct relation to the church of Boron (except for being highly useful for sending opponents to Boron's realm).

Brabak Lad (Axes and Maces): This is a particular variety of mace, sporting a heavy metal ball spiked with several thorns. The ball is usually painted to resemble a face, explaining the weapon's name. The brabak lad's central spike may be used for thrusting (using the Daggers Talent), but doing so incurs a Difficulty Increase of 3 points. If the spike hits, it inflicts 1d6+6 HP.

Chair Leg (Axes and Maces): This entry represents all improvised weapons grabbed on the spur of the moment when nothing else is available.

Club (Axes and Maces): This is basically a heavy stick improved by the addition of iron bands, long iron nails driven through it, and so on.

Cutlass (Sabers): A broad-bladed weapon sharpened on one edge and sporting a basket hilt, this is the typical sidearm of mariners, pirates, and seafarers.

Dagger (Daggers): The universal sidearm of most Aventurians, a dagger usually has a straight, one-span blade sharpened on both edges. It is a poor weapon for parrying.

Djadra (Spears): A Tulamidyan short cavalry lance, highly popular with the Novadis; these may be used from horseback as well as on foot, and even as a thrown weapon. The data in the Aventurian Weapons Table are for melee use.

Double Kunchomer (Two-Handed Swords): This is an impressive Tulamidyan bladed weapon, often carried by bodyguards or harem wardens for purposes of deterrence.

Dragonstooth (Daggers): A broad-bladed and highly sturdy dagger of dwarfen manufacture; human-size versions are almost unheard of.

Dwarfmallet (Two-Handed Blunt Weapons): A specially crafted two-handed dwarfen weapon, these cannot be wielded by any other folk.

Epee (Fencing Weapons): This is a very slender sword with an exaggerated basket hilt; the blade is usually sharpened on one edge only, and the weapon has a pronounced tip. Epees are regarded as the pinnacle of fencing weapons.

Foil (Fencing Weapons): This is a fencing weapon without a blade in the traditional sense (no sharpened edges); instead, it has a sharp point. A foil has a bell-shaped hand guard with broad parrying guards, and is highly flexible.

Glaive (Infantry Weapons): A commonly used infantry weapon with a broad blade sharpened on one side and without a point. Like the bill, it is typically held in one hand and employed in loose formation fighting.

Greatspear (Spears): A long spear with a broad blade, usually with stopper and hand guard, this weapon is mainly used for hunting large deer.

Greatsword (Two-Handed Swords): This classic two-handed sword has a relatively broad blade sharpened on both sides. It is weighted heavily toward the front (and is thus difficult to wield), but causes tremendous amounts of damage. The greatsword is a priviledged weapon for warriors, mercenaries, and nobles.

Halberd (Infantry Weapons): This is the classic infantry weapon of choice. When used by skilled specialists in combat, the power of these weapons is amazing.

Hatchet (Axes and Maces): A butcher's tool, it may also be used as an improvised weapon.

Heavy Dagger (Daggers): This is a dagger sporting a longer and broader blade than usual; it is a common sidearm or, when decorated, an officer's weapon.

Hunting Knife (Daggers): A slightly curved, very sharp knife used primarily for skinning animals. They sometimes have a serrated back and/or disemboweling hook(s).

Hunting Spear (Spears): This hunting weapon, especially common among silvan elves, features a stopper right behind the blade to prevent the weapon from penetrating too deeply into the animal. It may be used one-handed by a hero with ST 16 or greater.

Javelin (Spears): This is a wooden spear some four spans long with an iron tip and balanced for flight. The iron tip is fastened to a straight, heavy wooden shaft by long iron bands. In melee combat, it is an improvised weapon.

Kunchomer (Sabers): This is the typical Tulamidyan saber. The blade broadens out from the handle along its length, thus becoming heavier toward the tip. The weapon does not have a point.

Knife (Daggers): This category comprises all eating, working, and carving knives not specifically balanced for combat. The blades measure half a span to a full span in length; they are improvised weapons.

Kuslikian Saber (Sabers or **Swords):** This is a straight sword, usually with a blade and a half (like the Boronssickle), with a tight and ornately decorated basket hilt, which is why it is sometimes called a basket sword. It is very popular with mariners.

Linnorm Slayer (Axes and Maces): This is a dwarfen hand ax with an extremely long-bearded blade (meaning the lower part of the blade is much longer and 'beardlike' compared to the upper part); for its small size, it is extremely heavy.

Long Dagger (Daggers or **Fencing Weapons):** A long, slender dagger which may be used as an off-hand weapon as well as a primary weapon.

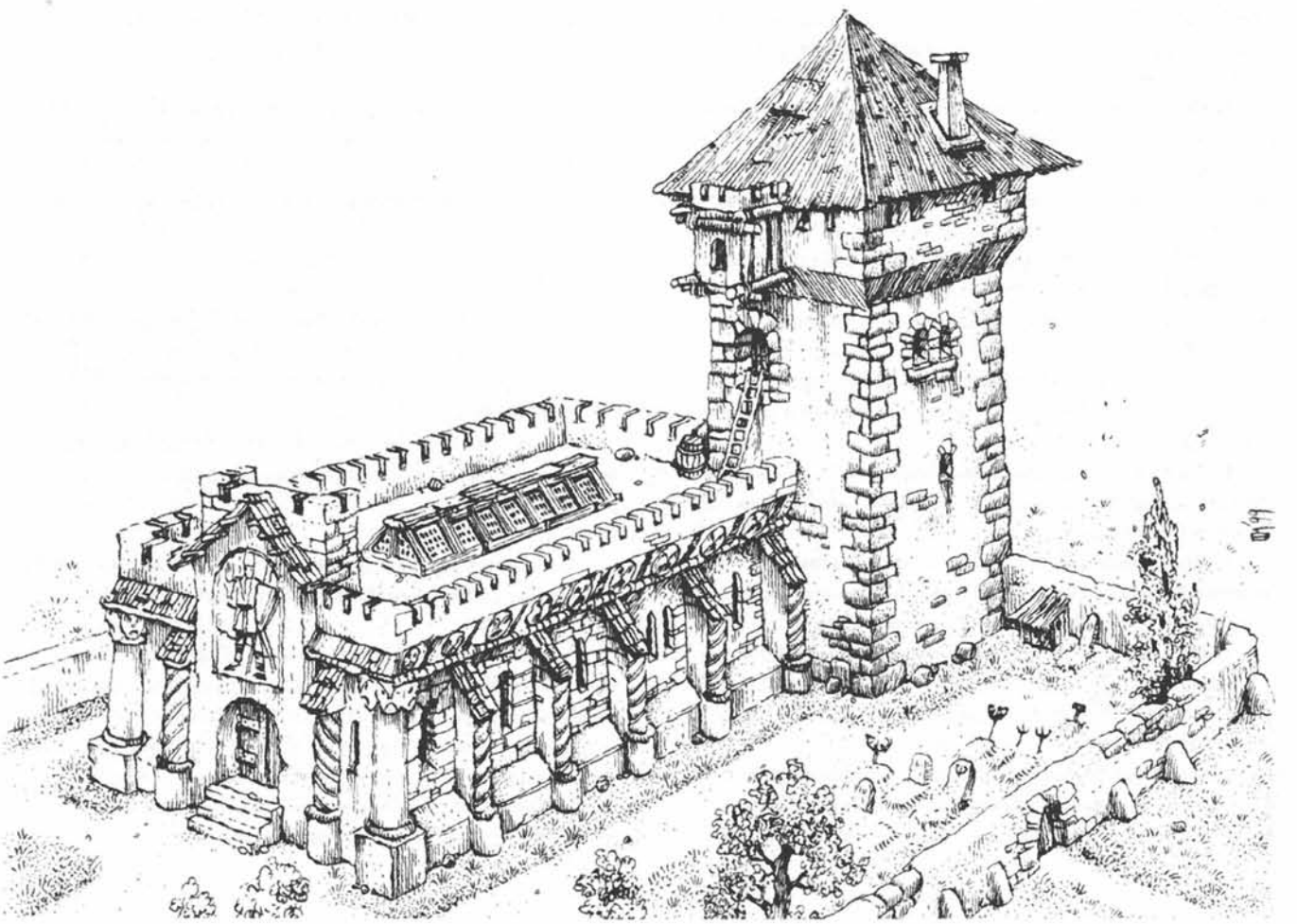
Mace (Axes and Maces): This is the prototype for all blunt crushing weapons, with up to eight iron concussion blades protruding from a central shaft. Maces excel at breaking bones and shattering armor.

Machete (Sabers or **Axes and Maces):** This working knife is heavily weighted at its tip and is normally used to cut down vegetation. It is considered an improvised weapon in combat.

Magician's Staff (Staves): Ritual instrument and sign of station for all magicians, this is a richly decorated and unbreakable quarterstaff. These cannot be purchased; such staves are given by academies to their graduates.

Morning Star (Chain Weapons): Also called "ball and chain," this weapon has a metal ball, usually with protruding metal spikes, attached to a wooden haft by a short chain. A morning star may be used to hit over the top of a shield, thus ignoring shield protection. Those weapons able to defend against a morning star do so with a Difficulty Increase of 2 points.

Ogreslap (Chain Weapons): This weapon is similar to the morning star, but has two balls to the morning star's one. Due to its weight, the weapon requires a minimum ST 15 to be wielded. An ogreslap may be used to hit over the rim of a shield, thus ignoring



shield protection. Those weapons able to defend against an ogreslap do so with a Difficulty Increase of 2 points.

Orknose (Axes and Maces or **Two-Handed Blunt Weapons):** This Thorwalian ax has a rather drawn-out, bearded blade (like the Linnorm slayer); it may be used one-handed by a hero with ST 14 or greater.

Oxherd (Chain Weapons): This weapon is similar to the morning star but has three balls to the morning star's one; due to its enormous weight, the weapon requires a minimum ST 16 to be wielded. An oxherd may be used to hit over the rim of a shield, thus ignoring shield protection. Those weapons able to defend against an oxherd do so with a Difficulty Increase of 2 points.

Partisan (Infantry Weapons or **Spears):** This is a polearm with a broad thrusting blade and symmetrical side blades; it is often used by court guards.

Pick (Two-Handed Blunt Weapons): A tool that may also be used as an improvised weapon.

Quarterstaff (Staves): This is a straight wooden staff, two fingers in diameter and approximately one and one-half paces in length. It is often shod with iron bands or caps at both ends to prevent splintering.

Rapier (Fencing Weapons or **Swords):** This is a slender sword with a decorated hand guard. The dividing lines between swords, rapiers, and epees often become blurred.

Ravensbeak (Axes and Maces): This is a typical light cavalry hammer with a blunt side as well as a sharp side.

Rock Cleaver (Two-Handed Blunt Weapons): A specially crafted, two-handed dwarfen weapon that cannot be wielded by any other folk.

Rondracomb (Bastard Swords or **Two-Handed Swords):** This is a long, delicately balanced bastard sword with a serrated blade. It is a sign of status of the church of Rondra and is given to followers who prove themselves worthy.

Saber (Sabers or **Swords):** A saber has a slightly curved blade sharpened on one edge and a pointed tip. It has a basket hilt or guards for hand protection, but no parrying handles. This is a typical cavalry weapon.

Scythe (Infantry Weapons): Mainly a peasant's harvesting tool, it is sometimes used (mainly by revolting peasants) as an improvised weapon.

Short Sword (Daggers or **Sabers** OR **Swords):** This weapon has a straight blade, short parrying handles (sometimes parrying disks), and a short pommel.

Sickle (Axes and Maces): Basically a curved blade used for harvesting crops or herbs, a sickle may be used only as an improvised weapon in combat.

Skraja (Axes and Maces): This double-bladed Thorwalian hand ax often has an additional long spike at its tip.

Sledge Hammer (Two-Handed Blunt Weapons): A heavy tool that may be used as an improvised weapon.

Spear (Spears): This is a wooden shaft roughly one and one-half paces in length with a lance-like thrusting blade, currently used almost solely by hunters. A spear may be used one-handed by heroes with ST 16 or greater; it may also be used as a (rather poor) ranged weapon.

Stick (Axes and Maces): This is the most primitive form a weapon can take—just a straight stick or tree branch, moderately balanced or carved into a straight shape. Only rarely (for instance, those used by city guards) are sticks actually crafted of smoothed wood.

Storm Scythe (Infantry Weapons): When the blade of a scythe is fastened along a haft rather than across it, the result is a storm scythe, a typical country militia weapon.

Sword (Swords): This is the general term for the Aventurian longsword with a straight parrying handle.

Throwing Ax (Axes and Maces): Throwing axes are quite rare; they have wooden hafts and separate ax heads, and may be used as improvised weapons in melee.

Throwing Dagger (Daggers): These daggers are balanced especially for throwing (they are somewhat longer and heavier than throwing knives), and are usually weighted at the tip and lack a parrying handle or pommel; thus, they are treated as improvised weapons in melee.

Throwing Knife (Daggers): These knives are balanced especially for throwing, are usually weighted at the tip, and lack a parrying handle or pommel; thus, they are treated as improvised weapons in melee combat.

Torch (Axes and Maces): Using a torch (as an improvised weapon), you can literally make things hot for your opponents (especially those from the animal kingdom). Whenever a torch causes normal damage (not simply hit points, but DP), it causes an additional 1d6–1 DP of fire damage. If the die roll is a 6 on this roll, however, the flame is extinguished immediately after causing damage.

Trident (Spears): This is a fishing tool used throughout Aventuria's western coasts; it may be used as an improvised weapon.

Tuzak Knife (Bastard Swords or **Two-Handed Swords):** This is a Maraskanian sword with a slightly curved blade and a half (like the Boronssickle). This weapon is light for a bastard sword. To get the best result from it, it must be wielded with great speed, necessitating a minimum AG of 15.

Two-lilies(Staves): An exotic weapon from the Grangor area, a two-lilies is a staff measuring one pace in length. Broad dagger blades with small barbed hooks have been affixed to either end.

Waqqif (Daggers or **Sabers):** A broad, curved dagger and the traditional token of honor or wealth among the Tulamides (and especially the Novadis).

Warhammer (Two-Handed Blunt Weapons): This is a general term for one of the most varied classes of weapons (for instance, the dwarfmallet is a member of this class). Sometimes, spikes are added to the hammer to better penetrate armor.

Warunk Hammer (Two-Handed Blunt Weapons or **Infantry Weapons):** This is a highly effective multi-purpose weapon. It combines a long thrusting point, a large, flat hammer head, and a straight ax blade. These metal parts are fastened to the weapon's long shaft by iron bands, making it possible to use the hammer for parrying purposes. Stabbing with the thrusting point (using the Spears Talent with a Difficulty Increase of 3) causes 1d6+5 HP.

Woodcutter's Ax (Axes and Maces): An improvised weapon best used against trees.

Wooden Spear (Spears): This is a simple, straight spear with a wooden tip hardened by fire; heavier models (10 ounces or more) have tips of stone or horn and cause 1 additional HP. Primitive tribal societies favor these weapons.

Wyrmspear (Infantry Weapons or **Spears):** Dwarfen variant on the partisan. It cannot be wielded by any other folk.

Other Rules

Time and Space

Aventurians know different ways of measuring time and the passing of months. In game terms, however, we need two different time units for short and very short intervals. We use the **combat round** (which lasts about three seconds and is further divided into actions and initiative segments) and the **game turn** (representing five minutes) as units in *The Dark Eye* game system. Furthermore, we sometimes use the real-world terms of second, minute, or hour to clarify circumstances.

Distances are measured in **paces** and **Middenmiles** in Aventuria, where one pace equals one meter and one Middenmile equals one kilometer in real-world terms. From time to time, the units "span" (20 centimeters) and "finger" (2 centimeters) might be used.

Combat round = about 3 seconds
Game turn = 5 minutes
1 Middenmile = 1 kilometer
1 pace = 1 meter
1 span = 20 centimeters
1 finger = 2 centimeters
1 greatpound = 1 kilogram
1 ounce = 25 grams

Movement

These game rules differentiate between two types of movement: *strategic* and *tactical*. Strategic movement is used for covering long distances such as marching and traveling; tactical movement, on the other hand, is used for short distances and/or short spans of time, for example, during chases around a castle or across a city.

Strategic movement is most often expressed in Middenmiles per day. Tactical movement is measure in paces per second.

Tactical Movement

Tactical movement is used in play when heroes are involved in a chase situation or other fast action. Two values are of special importance: a creature's maximum speed and its endurance (i.e., the amount of time it can continue at maximum speed).

Maximum Speed: For the following discussion, we assume that a healthy and able person (a term that should apply to most heroes) has a maximum speed of 8 paces per second (abbreviated in game terms as SD 8). The same applies to most other civilized, two-legged creatures such as elves, orks, goblins, or achaz. Very agile heroes (AG 16+) may move at SD 9, while clumsier ones (AG 10 or less) can only move at a maximum of 7 paces per second (SD 7). Owing to their short legs, dwarfs only manage a maximum speed that is 2 points less than the numbers just mentioned. A hero can increase his SD (his distance per second) with a successful Athletics Test (see page 76); the maximum SD is increased by 0.2 (one span per second faster) per remaining TP. Such a test enhances only one race or sprint, and so is valid for a maximum of ED seconds (see below).

The speed of other creatures can be found in the chapter describing creature statistics.

Encumbrance: A hero's SD is decreased by 1 point for every point of Encumbrance due to armor worn (EC; see page 101). Loads carried by a hero (e.g., in a backpack) also count as Encumbrance depending on the hero's Carrying Capacity (see page 120). Nevertheless, he can move at least one pace per second.

Endurance: A hero's Endurance (ED) depends on her Courage, Agility, and Constitution plus possible modifiers. The Endurance Value determines the length of time (measured in seconds) that a hero may move at her maximum speed (sprinting). After this time has elapsed, she must fall back to long-distance running, which is half as fast as sprinting (rounded up) and can be maintained ten times longer. After this point, she can move only at marching speed (see below; equals SD in Middenmiles/hour). After a game turn of marching speed, the hero can again move at maximum speed.

Frenja has good AG for a Thorwalian (13), so she usually moves at SD 8; she is wearing a toadshide (a typical Thorwalian studded leather vest) with AR 3/EC 2, but is otherwise unencumbered (no additional EC for heavy loads). This means that Frenja has SD 6 when sprinting or while fighting; she can move a maximum of six paces per second (SD 8–EC 2=SD 6). Her ED of 33 means she can maintain this speed for 33 seconds—not long for a trained sprinter, but quite an achievement for an armored fighter.

Note: If you wish to play out battles using lead miniatures (25 mm scale), consider using a bendable tape measure to measure movement or playing on a floor mat covered with preprinted squares.

Swimming

If a hero is pursued by a water creature and can't reach safety after a few seconds, she needs skills other than swimming; these rules therefore do not provide a table for determining swimming speed. The distance a swimmer can traverse before tiring might be important, though. This distance is determined by a hero's Talent Prowess in Swim and her Endurance. Apply the following formula: **Talent Prowess times Endurance times 15 equals swimming distance in paces.**

This feat implies that the swimmer wears little or no armor (i.e., loincloth, EC 0) and is unencumbered. Encumbrance figures into the swimming formula as follows: **Talent Prowess times Endurance times (15–[2 x EC]) equals swimming distance in paces.** This means that you multiply TP by ED and multiply the result by a third number (calculated from 15 minus double the current EC Value).

If a hero is simply treading water to stay afloat, treat the numbers calculated above as the number of seconds the hero can continue treading. To remove a piece of encumbering armor, she must succeed a Swim Test modified by the total Encumbrance

of her armor and backpack (if any). If the hero fails this Test, she loses [1d6 times ED seconds] of her precious time without accomplishing anything in her favor. If your hero tires and begins to suffer damage from drowning, see *Damage by Drowning* on p. 123.

The aforementioned Talent Prowess in Swim should be modified by water conditions; further information is provided with the Swim Talent description on page 78.

Diving: Distances and times for diving are dependent on the environmental conditions (i.e., diving depth, water temperature, preparations made by the diver, and so on), so we'll provide a few hints governing diving. The distance a diver can traverse underwater is **TP: Swim TP x ED/10 paces.** Be sure to include the vertical distance (diving depth).

A long-distance diver (ED 60; TP: Swim 18) is able to stay underwater for about 108 paces before she must resurface (she can traverse a distance of 104 paces, plus reaching a depth of 2 paces and rising 2 paces to the surface). A pearl diver with the same characteristics can dive to a depth of about 50 paces (if he wants to come up again): 54 paces into the deep and 54 back to the surface.

Long Jumping and High Jumping

Heroes must sometimes jump chasms, roofs, or into the lower branches of a tree in a hurry, since they might find themselves being chased by wolves or guards. The following rules determine how far or how high your hero can jump.

An unencumbered hero who is not exhausted can jump a number of spans equal to (AG+ST–EC) with a running start. Five fingers can be added per remaining point of TP from an Athletics Test. Without a running start, the distance is half the above value.

An unencumbered hero who is not exhausted can jump a height equal to (AG+ST–EC)/4 spans with a running start. Two fingers can be added per remaining point of TP from an Athletics Test. Without a running start, the distance is half the above value.

For a real running start, a hero needs at least 5 paces of free movement to attempt both long jumping and high jumping. If you fail the Athletics Test, this has no negative effect on the distance you tried to jump, but the Highlord might want to determine applicable effects in the event of a Fumble.

These jumping distances are reduced if the hero is encumbered or exhausted. Armor worn or weight carried influences TP in Athletics (the exact value for this is ECx2). Also, overexertion means a loss of one point of ST in this calculation.

Daria (AG 13, ST 12; TP: Athletics 5) is fleeing from the guards, who disapprove of her method of reorganizing the ownership of things. The guards are lagging some distance behind when Daria suddenly notices a ditch about four and a half paces wide that once belonged to the old town fortifications. The guards are not so far behind that she could risk climbing in and out of the ditch in time, so she decides to jump the distance. Her base jumping distance is 13+12=25 spans; she retains all her points from an Athletics Test (meaning 5 fingers, equaling half a span more). 25.5 spans equal 5.1 paces, so Daria jumps the ditch easily and can continue her flight.

Crawling, Bellying, Balancing, Sneaking, and Similarly Uncommon Types of Movement

Should these actions be chosen by heroes in the course of a game, the Highlord should determine distance covered and attainable speed. These are all cases of Tactical Movement. Crawling and Bellying having a Movement Value of 0.5 to 1; Balancing ranks between 1 and 2; Sneaking can rank as high as 2 (expressed in paces per second). Two paces per second is also the highest speed at which a hero can examine terrain or surroundings for hidden features such as traps, secret doors, and so on and still avoid the possibility of *surprise*.

Strategic Movement

Strategic Movement—sometimes referred to as traveling speed or marching speed—is used to calculate the average distance that a group of heroes can travel in one day. Traveling speed is always based on the speed of the slowest member of a group.

The following basic guidelines apply: A group moving on foot can travel 30 Middenmiles a day; on horseback, they can travel about 40 Middenmiles. These distances can be traveled in good measure without exhausting heroes or riding animals. Forced marching is also possible, which results in 45 Middenmiles (on foot) or 60 Middenmiles (on horseback). Forced marching in this manner can be done only once every two days.

Of course, the distances listed above are subject to the terrain type. Difficult terrain slows movement considerably, whereas a good Imperial road can speed up travel (not to mention offering amenities like wayside inns at regular intervals along the road).

Weather must also be taken into account; in severe cases, it can slow travel to one-half the normal distance. (In extreme weather—say, a hurricane, an ice storm, or noon in the Khôm Desert—even Aventurian heroes tend to stop and rest unless the business is so urgent that the distance per day is irrelevant.)

Most carts travel about the same speed as people on foot, and fast carriages (rare and expensive) travel about as quickly as people on horseback. Riverboats traveling upstream are as fast as a person on foot, while downstream, they are as fast as someone on horseback. Ships along the coast can travel up to 120 Middenmiles a day.

More rules for planning your travels in Aventuria can be found in the upcoming *World of Aventuria* supplement.

Travel Distances Per Day (in Middenmiles)

Group moving on foot	30
Group moving on horseback	40
Forced marching on foot	45
Forced marching on horseback	60
Ox cart, horse carriage	25–30
Riverboat upstream/downstream	20/40
Traveling coach	50
Express coach (changing horses)	120
Messenger on horseback (changing horses)	180
Galley (8 hours/day)	70
Galley (express, 12 hours/day)	100
Freight ship, sailing (12 hours/day)	120

Express ship, sailing (12 hours/day)	140
Express ship, sailing (24 hours/day)	250

Modifiers for Terrain

Imperial road	x 1.1
Normal road/open grassland or steppe	x 1
Cart roads/woodland paths	x 0.8
Light woodland	x 0.75
Hills	x 0.75
Rocky desert	x 0.6
Forest	x 0.5
Sandy desert	x 0.5
Mountains (along a path)	x 0.3
Jungle paths	x 0.2
Heavy forest	x 0.1
Jungle	x 0.1
Swamp	x 0.1

Weather Modifiers

Drizzle/Stifling heat	x 0.9
Strong winds	x 0.9
Frost	x 0.9
Very high temperature	x 0.8
Heavy rain/fog	x 0.5

The heroes know that their friend and patron Brenno ter Bruin is to be beheaded in three days in Nasha, exactly at noon. (He's innocent, of course!) Unfortunately, the heroes are at Chorhop. A storm keeps the ships confined to the harbor, and Bargosh the dwarf stalwartly refuses to be ride any of the four-legged monsters.

The distance from Chorhop to Nasha is about 60 Middenmiles on roads that are not very sophisticated, but still useable. Even with a day of forced marching followed by normal traveling speed, they will not even be halfway to Nasha on the evening of the next day. (Forced march 45 Middenmiles, on a cart track (x 0.8) equals 36 Middenmiles; adverse weather conditions (x 0.5) equals 18 Middenmiles.) The next day, normal traveling speed without weather delays (the storm has calmed) lets the heroes travel 24 Middenmiles (30 x 0.8). Another forced march on day three (with the weather stifling hot) nets them another 32 Middenmiles (Forced march 45, cart track (x 0.8) = 36; weather conditions x 0.9). Only 17.6 miles remain to reach Nasha, so all things being equal the heroes will be one hour late. They can only hope that the executioner in Nasha will not display the same sense of punctuality as his colleague in Gareth would.

Some final comments on Encumbrance and marching distances are important. These rules do not provide a table for calculating the effect of Encumbrance (due to armor or carried weight) on traveling speed, yet Encumbrance does influence marching speed. A hero will use a pack animal or carriage whenever possible to carry a load, and unless she knows she is traveling through an area with bandits, monsters or other enemies, she will not be wearing armor. Heroes who nevertheless try to accomplish a day's march in full plate should have to cope with the effects of exhaustion (presented below), which the Highlord can use at his own discretion.

Optional Rule: Exhaustion

In addition to Endurance, which is used for short-term exertion, we also need a statistic to show how exhausting difficult marches, night watches, and fights are for the hero. This is called Exhaustion; a hero may collect a number of points of Exhaustion equal to her Constitution without suffering any ill effects. Everything exceeding this limit is called Overexertion. This impedes a hero: for each point of Overexertion a hero acquires, she receives a point of Encumbrance (EC), which is added to the EC resulting from armor or heavy loads.

Additionally, Overexertion lowers the effective value of a hero's Constitution—she is more vulnerable to illnesses, poison, and even wounds. Every point of Overexertion leads to a Difficulty Increase of one point on all CN Tests. If a hero has collected as many points of Overexertion as she has Constitution, she will collapse from exhaustion.

When traveling, a hero suffers one point of Exhaustion from a one-hour march (carrying a light load and clad in sensible clothing). The same applies to a forced ride. A forced march results in two points of Exhaustion per hour. As many as two points per hour may be added for adverse weather conditions (great cold, stifling heat, strong wind, and so on), and even more points are applied if a hero's carrying capacity is exceeded (see below.)

Endurance Affecting Exhaustion: Actions that lower the ED of a hero to less than one-third of his normal score automatically inflict a point of Exhaustion. If a hero's ED reaches zero (e.g., in combat), she suffers 1d6 points of Exhaustion. If a hero lands in a situation in which she needs her ED (swimming, unarmed combat, and so on) and she is already Overexerted, she must subtract 2 points of her ED for every point of Overexertion; normal exhaustion doesn't overexert a hero again.

Regeneration of Exhaustion: Overexertion and Exhaustion can be reduced by rest and sleep: a hero regenerates one point of Overexertion *or* two points of Exhaustion per hour of rest; an hour of sleep regenerates twice this amount (2 points of Overexertion *or* 4 points of Exhaustion), but this requires proper sleep; elven meditative dozing doesn't count as sleep but as rest. During the resting phase, you cannot do any physically challenging work—even gathering firewood or repairing your armor!

Encumbrance and Carrying Capacity

It is a fact of role-playing that heroes overestimate their carrying capacity, often trying to outdo a pack mule. Of course, *so* many interesting and useful things can be found on an adventure—things that will surely come in handy later. To be safe, heroes tend to gather up everything: broken knives, chair legs, dead toads, rusty anvils—you name it, and into a hero's backpack it goes. If you as a Highlord, are plagued by this kind of problem, feel free to inform your players about the total weight of all the items carried by their heroes. This usually does the trick. If it doesn't, however, you will find solace in the rules for Encumbrance and Carrying Capacity.

First, total the weight of clothing, armor, money, potions, artifacts, and so on carried in the hero's backpack, pouch, or elsewhere on her person. To this sum, add *half* the weight of her clothing and armor currently worn. (Thus, a chain mail shirt inside a backpack would count for its full weight.) The final sum represents the total weight carried by the hero.

A hero's Carrying Capacity in greatpounds (an Aventurian greatpound is roughly equivalent to one real-world kilogram) is equal to her Strength. (If you multiply ST by 2.5, you get the corresponding weight in pounds.) As long as a hero is carrying no more than this amount, her overall performance will not be hampered.

For each 50% of weight carried beyond this value, a hero's Encumbrance (EC) increases by 1 point, both during combat and when calculating movement values and/or Talent Tests related to movement (e.g., Acrobatics or Climb). This also means that a hero will suffer an additional point of Exhaustion per hour of marching.

A carried weight of more than twice the hero's Carrying Capacity Value means that she must rest at regular intervals. Of course, the lower a hero's Constitution (CN), the more frequent such periods of rest will become. Use the following rule of thumb: a hero thus encumbered must rest for a full game turn after walking for a number of minutes equal to her CN Value. Sprinting is not possible at this level of Encumbrance.

Should the total weight carried equal or exceed four times her Carrying Capacity Value, she must put down her load after a period equaling five times her CN in paces. Thus, a hero with a CN Value of 12 will need a minute's rest every 60 paces. When encumbered in this way, neither sprinting nor running is possible.

Setting a maximum Carrying Capacity is tricky at best, since humans have been known to carry astonishing loads for short periods of time. The Highlord is advised to make a decision based on her own life experience and common sense. Extraordinary feats of strength are best resolved by a Strength Test.

Animals can carry higher loads for short amounts of time as well. The numbers that follow apply to long marches.

Approximate Carrying Capacity of Animals

Horse, mule	150 greatpounds
Racing horse, donkey	120 greatpounds
Pack horse	200 greatpounds
Camel	350 greatpounds
Dog	15 greatpounds
Ox	180 greatpounds



Things That Might Hurt You Other Than Combat

More than just unfriendly contemporaries can harm your hero—danger lurks everywhere (isn't that part of the definition of "hero?"). The next few paragraphs present some rules concerning different kinds of danger and damage.

Poison and Diseases

Aventuria plays host to a large number of substances not meant for human (or elven, or dwarfen . . .) bodies. These extracts and concoctions can cause serious damage, from mandrake extract (which can cause nausea and even death) to the utterly fatal purple lightning. Numerous diseases also await heroes, ranging from harmless colds to the Zorgan pox, which can force humans, elves, and dwarfs to bed—or even kill them.

Usually, the strength (level) of a poison or disease is listed in its description, as well as the damage it can cause and how often a hero must roll for damage. A creature can fight these afflictions (against which armor is useless) with its Constitution. For poisons, the chance to resist it is attempted at the beginning of the poisoning; for diseases, before every damage roll.

The hero is allowed a Constitution Test that is increased by the level of the disease or poison. If this Test succeeds, the hero suffers only half the damage rolled; if the roll is succeeded by +10 or more, the hero suffers no damage at all for this poison or damage roll. The Constitution Test can be modified by Advantages or Disadvantages such as resistances or immunities.

More about poisons and diseases is found on page 158.

Damage from Falling

Since Aventurian heroes are somewhat tougher than real-life people, they stand no chance of breaking their necks when stumbling on the sidewalk (if you can find a sidewalk inAventuria). Yet falling from even low heights can be quite dangerous. In addition, the danger is the same to a level 20 sword master falling from his wind dragon as it is to a level 1 witch slipping from her broom in mid-flight.

Every pace of height your hero falls inflicts 1d6–1 DP; armor offers no protection against this. Your hero may try to roll with the impact or land at least somewhat gracefully; this is accomplished by succeeding a Body Control Test, which incurs a Difficulty Increase of 1 per pace fallen (to a maximum of +10 for a 10-pace fall). For every unspent point of TP remaining after rolling this Test, you may subtract one damage die of your choice after you have rolled for damage; i.e., you may subtract the highest dice first, thus *really* minimizing damage.

Asleif is swinging on a banner over the castle court to give the villainous Count Angrond a taste of his skraja. Asleif might have thought about the fact that Count Angrond, being an old miser, probably didn't spend many ducats to buy quality flag cloth. He discovers this fact the hard way and follows Sumu's Grip (i.e., gravity) eight paces downward in the direction of the nicely paved castle court. Luckily, Asleif already knows certain maneuvers that apply to boarding actions (TP: Body Control 11; apart from that, there's nothing a Thorwalian can't do) and he can try not to hit the pavement headfirst. Asleif retains 2 points from his Body Control Test +8; the damage rolls for falling 8 paces come up 5, 4, 3, 2, 2, 1, 0, 0, from which Alseif may take away two dice (the 5 and 4, of course), meaning that his graceful effort causes only 8 points of damage.

A conscious and controlled jump from a great height also requires a Body Control Test, again with a Difficulty Increase of 1 point per pace of height (this does not include jumping off a table). If your hero succeeds in this Test, falling damage (as calculated according to the notes above) is subtracted only from her Endurance, not her Vitality. Should the Test fail, however, your hero's controlled jump has turned into a crashing fall, causing full damage to her Vitality.

Instead of a Body Control Test, a hero may decide to use an Athletics Test for a controlled jump.

These rules apply to falls onto hard surfaces such as stone floors or packed earth. DP may be modified for falls onto other surfaces at the Highlord's discretion (surely, crashing into a haystack does not hurt as much as landing in a spiked pit).

Of course, falling damage can lead to Incapacitation (see page 101) or long-term damage. The latter is entirely up to the Highlord's discretion.

Damage by Fire

Fire is not only your hero's friend during winter nights—it may also endanger her, especially when out of control. Small wonder, then, that all cultures both fear and revere fire.

As far as *The Dark Eye* game is concerned, we need to differentiate between two types of fire or heat damage:

- Touching a hot flame, glowing object, cone of steam, a splash of burning oil, or being hit by a red-hot object or a burning torch—in other words, an event that happens once and only for a brief period of time—inflicts between 1d3 and 4d6 HP, depending on the amount of substance encountered. The target's AR protects from this kind of damage, but for every 10 HP of damage applied to the armor, its AR is reduced by 1 (having soaked up damage). Fire damage of this kind may cause wounds (see below.)
- When a hero's clothing is aflame, she has been drenched in boiling oil, or she tries to move across a burning room, damage is rolled in full each and every CR that the condition exists, and there is no chance of the flames dying down until the hero has doused her clothing, washed away the oil, or exited the room. Wearing burning clothes or crossing a burning room or meadow inflicts 1d3 DP/CR; falling into a blazing bonfire or crossing a flaming inferno (such as trying to save the cat from the alchemist's burning lab) inflicts 2d6 DP/CR. Being completely submerged in boiling oil or breaking through a lava lake's crust (and thus falling into the lake itself) are events well beyond needing rules for fire damage.

Fire damage may cause *wounds* if the DP suffered in any single CR are higher than the hero's CN. Dragonhide armor protects against fire damage in the second example with only half its AR (rounded down), while all other types of armor are of no use whatsoever. Wet clothing or the use of wet blankets reduces damage by 1 (perhaps even 2) point per round, but for no more than 1d6+3 CR.



Optional Rule: Damage by Choking

If a hero has enough time to prepare and breathe in, and can manage to concentrate, she may hold her breath for a number of CR equal to her ED Value. Any type of physical activity (even walking, but more likely diving or breaking a chokeholds) cuts this span of time in half (i.e., ED/2). The same is true when a hero must hold her breath without prior warning or starts choking due to unknown causes.

Once this period has passed (or immediately in the case of a chokehold), the following procedure is used to calculate damage. Once per CR, your hero must succeed at a CN Test that incurs a (cumulative) Difficulty

Increase of 1 per passing CR. Thus, in the first CR the Test is unmodified; in the second, it is at +1, the third is at +2, and so on. If this Test succeeds, the hero loses only one point of ED; if it fails, she loses 1d6 points of ED. When her ED reaches 0, the hero immediately falls unconscious. If she is still deprived of air, she will lose 1d6 VP per CR until she dies from suffocation or the source of damage is removed.

Optional Rule: Damage by Drowning

A hero can usually stay afloat for {Swim TP x ED x [15–(ECx2)]} seconds before she starts to drown. Once this time has passed, you can assume that her strength has failed and she is fighting a watery death. Once every CR, she must succeed a Swim Test that incurs a (cumulative) Difficulty Increase of 1 per passing CR. Thus, during the first CR the Test is unmodified; in the second CR it is made at +1; in the third at +2; and so on.

If a Test succeeds, the hero loses only 1 point of ED; if it fails, she loses 1d6 points of ED. When her ED reaches 0, the hero immediately falls unconscious and begins to sink. From this moment on, she will lose 1d6 VP per CR until she is either saved or received by Efferd in his realm under the waves.

Regeneration

An Aventurian hero can easily lose Vitality, Endurance, or Astral Points through combat, accidents, diseases, exhaustion, or magic. Regaining these points is important if a hero wishes to continue his adventures.

Rest

Endurance is regained almost as quickly as it is lost. For each game turn that a hero doesn't engage in exhausting physical action (meaning that she is sitting or lying down, isn't reading complicated books or performing magic, and so on) she regains 3d6 EP; if she succeeds a CN Test, she regains 3d6+6 EP. A hero can never regain more points than her normal base value.

Regeneration of Exhaustion

Exhaustion and Overexertion caused by marches or extremely tiring activities may be reduced through rest and sleep. One point of Overexertion **or** two points of Exhaustion can be regained per hour of rest (no physical activity); two points of Overexertion **or** four points Exhaustion are regained per hour of sleep.

Nightly Regeneration

Aventurian air is said to be extremely potent with healing energy, and just as important, Aventurian heroes are a sturdy people. Under normal circumstances, a hero can roll 1d6 once per day to regain lost Vitality points after having rested for at least six hours. A hero may also make a CN Test after this phase of resting to see whether she can regenerate one additional VP. The Rapid Healing Advantage and the Slow Regeneration Disadvantage apply to this regeneration, as well as the CN Test.

Heroes with Astral Energy may also regenerate this energy by resting. This requires a separate roll of 1d6, the result of which is restored to the hero's current AE. Magicians also have access to the Astral Regeneration Advantage and the Astral Block Disadvantage, which are handled like the corresponding Advantages and Disadvantages for Vitality. To increase Astral Regeneration by one more point, magic-wielding heroes may roll an IN Test.

Both types of regeneration might require modifiers due to the environment—a hearty meal and a soft bed are helpful in regenerating energy, whereas a ragged blanket and a hard floor are a hindrance to healing. The Highlord can apply modifiers ranging from +2 to –7 points, which are figured into the 1d6 roll. Negative results mean that no regeneration took place (a hero does not lose more points). Vitality and Astral Energy may not regenerate beyond their original values.

Healing by Using Talents or Magic

Lost Vitality may also be regained by using the Treat Wounds Talent (see page 89) or the spell *Balm of Healing*. No form of healing can restore more points than were lost. No healing method exists, whether magical or mundane, that can regenerate Endurance or Astral Points. Exhaustion cannot be reduced by any means other than rest and sleep.

Potions

Many alchemical and herbal remedies can aid healing and nightly regeneration, but only Magic Healing Potions and Magic Potions can instantly regenerate a hero's Vitality or Astral Points. These potions are rare and expensive, but such a draught is a useful form of life insurance for heroes who live in constant danger. Magic Potions and Magic Healing Potions come with many different qualities. More about the different kinds of healing herbs, which mainly help the regeneration process and rarely have instant effects, can be found on page 158.

Healing of Wounds

Wounds heal more slowly than normal Vitality Points. In fact, wounds can heal properly only if treated professionally. Short-term potions and spells don't help the wounded, and circumstances such as Overexertion can further damage a hero.

The rule for untreated wounds is as follows. The wounded person is allowed one CN Test per day; its difficulty is Increased by **three times the number of open wounds** she has remaining. If the Test succeeds, one of the wounds heals but will have a lasting ill effects (the exact effects are left to the Highlord's discretion).

If a wound is treated with the Treat Wounds Talent, the CN Test of the victim ignores the penalty for the number of wounds and is actually made easier by applying the number of Talent Points retained from the Treat Wounds Test. No ill effects will remain after healing. Such mundane methods (natural healing and Treat Talents) can heal only one of a victim's wounds per day.

Balm of healing, a universal healing spell, may also be used to treat wounds: per 7 AP put into the spell, one wound is healed (without ill effects) if the Arcane Test is successful. Further information is found in the description of the spell on page 139.

For every 7 VP regenerated by a Magic Healing Potion (not just a run-of-the-mill herbal mixture), one wound closes automatically (and has no further ill effects). By using this magical means or *balm of healing*, it is possible to treat more than one wound per victim per day. Divine intervention can speed up healing, but the required circumstances and liturgies will be discussed in the *Gods and Demons* rules supplement.

Adventure Points and Experience

Adventure points are a means of measuring all the experiences a human has during his life, but especially for measuring what a hero achieves in his heroic exploits. These experiences can be either general or special. Special experiences are those concerned with events such as killing a monster or solving a riddle, whereas general experiences concern the small details we all learn during our lives, but never really notice.

Both kinds of experience are represented by **Adventure Points (AP)** that the Highlord awards after an adventure or an important chapter in an adventure. A good Highlord doesn't hand out these points for free; the heroes must get the feeling that they have earned each and every one of these points. Only by this careful distribution will they experience the thrill of real character development.

Special Experiences are always related to using a Talent (rarely an Attribute) and mean that a hero may increase this Talent because of this experience. On the character sheet, you will find small boxes in front of every Talent. These are used to track those Special Experiences your hero has with the respective Talent. The Highlord might also want to take notes regarding this, since it helps her track the influence of experience on the heroes' Talents.

It is nearly impossible to give a proper rule of thumb to a Highlord regarding distribution of Adventure Points. In most adventures in *The Dark Eye* game system, heroes have a goal to be reached, so a fixed number of AP can be awarded at the end of the adventure if this goal is achieved. Conquering intelligent enemies, countering villainous plans, and other accomplishments are usually part of the goal, so special AP for combat connected with this goal will not be applied. On the other hand, a journey through dangerous territory such as the Khôm Desert or the Orkland can be an experience that is awarded with many AP, even without a single fight.

A gaming session of about five hours in length should typically result in 50 to 100 Adventure Points for a hero, depending on what she has experienced; Special Experiences are added to this amount. Commercial adventures for *The Dark Eye* always have recommendations at the end for awarding Adventure Points for certain goals that are achieved. They also offer suggestions as to what kinds of Special Experiences might be used in the module.

Advancement

Like Generation Points at the beginning of your hero's life, Adventure Points are a kind of bank account but without overdraft. These accumulated Adventure Points can be spent to improve your hero's Talents, Attributes, Spell Prowess, Vitality, Astral Energy, and Endurance, or to get rid of Disadvantages. The basic principle is that advancing a Talent or Attribute becomes more difficult as it becomes higher. This is based on the Advancement Cost Table (ACT, see next page) which gives you the cost for improving all of a hero's characteristics.

The table is easy to read: to advance a Talent with an Advancement Factor of "D" from TP 7 to TP 8, a hero needs 39 Adventure Points.

Advancing Talents

Talents are skills which can be learned and advanced; they depend on several factors (mostly on the Attributes of a hero, but also from other circumstances) and are used more proficiently the more they are applied.

Improving a Talent becomes more expensive (costs more Adventure Points) as a prospective Talent Prowess reaches higher levels, and also depends on the complexity of the respective Talent. The categories in the Advancement Table reflect the complexity of a Talent (or spell). Languages and scripts are category A and thus advance according to the first column. Social, Lore, Nature, and Artisan Talents advance according to column B; physical talents use column D. Armed fighting techniques and Ranged Combat Talents have categories which you will find in the respective Talent descriptions.

The maximum value a Talent may reach is a TP equal to the highest attribute used in the Talent Test plus 3 (see page 73 for Talent Tests). Combat Talents use AG or ST, whichever is higher, plus 3. A normal human (without exceptional Attributes) may have a maximum TP of 24 (maximum of any attribute plus 3).

Raidri currently has TP 14 in Climbing. The Attributes belonging to this Talent are Courage, Agility, and Strength, for which his stats are 11, 11, and 12. He may advance his TP for the last time to reach 15. He can't advance it any further because none of his Attributes are high enough. If he advances his Strength to 13, he could then improve Climbing again.

Activating Talents

"Activating" a Specialized or Professional Talent (increasing TP 0 to TP 1) means acquiring basic knowledge and always costs a higher base amount. This is represented in the table as ACT; the same number of points is required to advance a negative TP by 1 point. (Negative Talent Prowess is an exception that is explained in the respective Talent description.)

The Activation Cost of Talents depends on the experience a hero already has; that is, which level (a general measure of a hero's experience) she has reached. The value for the Activation cost is ACT=Level x Level x Activation Factor, with each category having its own Activation Factor. If a level 7 hero wants to learn the art of Engineering (a Lore Talent, category B, Activation Factor 2), she must cough up 7x7x2=98 AP. This represents the fact that it is more difficult to "teach an old dog new tricks." A hero may have difficulties integrating new knowledge into her view of the world if she is very experienced. She does things the way she has always done them, because that's the way she knows to do them . . . even if it is not always the best solution. Activating a Talent always requires a teacher or Special Experience.

If Darina (level 3) wants to advance her TP in Traps from –1 to 1 after a wilderness adventure, so she can at least catch a rabbit next time, she must spend 36 AP: 18 each to improve from –1 to 0 and from 0 to 1. Traps, as a Nature Talent, has an Activation factor of 2; 3 x 3 x 2 is 18. To activate the Weather Sense Talent, which is completely unknown to her (TP 0), she needs 18 AP to raise it to a value of 1.

The exceptions to this rule are Basic Talents, which do not need to be activated; you may raise them from 0 to 1 for the low costs given in the table. If a Basic Talent starts with a negative value because of certain modifiers, you must pay the respective higher costs for advancements in the negative range, and then to TP 1.

Advancement Cost Table (AC Table, ACT)

To advance a Talent, choose the appropriate column. Find the current level and the desired level, and pay the cost listed at the higher level. For example, a Talent with Advancement Factor "D" being raised from TP 7 to TP 8 will cost a hero 39 Adventure Points. Costs are paid for every level that is increased.

	Adventure Points per Category							
Value	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**
Neg.	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT
0	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT	ACT
1*	1/ACT	2/ACT	2/ACT	3/ACT	4/ACT	6/ACT	8/ACT	16/ACT
2	2	4	6	7	9	14	18	35
3	3	6	9	12	15	22	30	60
4	4	8	13	17	21	32	42	85
5	6	11	17	22	28	41	55	110
6	7	14	21	27	34	50	70	140
7	8	17	25	33	41	60	85	165
8	10	19	29	39	48	75	95	195
9	11	22	34	45	55	85	110	220
10	13	25	38	50	65	95	125	250
11	14	28	43	55	70	105	140	280
12	16	32	47	65	80	120	160	320
13	17	35	51	70	85	130	175	350
14	19	38	55	75	95	140	190	380
15	21	41	60	85	105	155	210	410
16	22	45	65	90	110	165	220	450
17	24	48	70	95	120	180	240	480
18	26	51	75	105	130	195	260	510
19	27	55	80	110	135	210	270	550
20	29	58	85	115	145	220	290	580
21	31	62	95	125	155	230	310	620
22	33	65	100	130	165	250	330	650
23	34	69	105					
140	170	260	340					
690								
24	36	73	110	145	180	270	360	720
25	38	76	115	150	190	290	380	760
26	40	80	120	160	200	300	400	800
Activation Factor	1	2	3	4	5	7.5	10	20

The abbreviation "ACT" means Activation Cost, i.e., the number of Adventure Points you need to acquire basic knowledge in a Talent in which you have no previous experience. It is calculated (Level x Level x Activation Factor); level refers to the hero's current level, and the Activation Factor is the number you find at the bottom of the table.

* Improving a Talent from 0 to 1 costs the list value for Basic Talents (they do not need to be Activated); in all other cases, you must pay the Activation Cost.

Angrax, a dwarf, begins the game with a Swim TP of –2. His first adventure, which takes place on a riverboat (and which he survives thanks to a cunningly devised snorkel he has built), gets him 150 Adventure Points. He wants to spend as many as he can on improving his Swim Talent to avoid being ridiculed by his friends. Swim is a Basic Talent as well as a Physical Talent (it uses category D), and Angrax, as a dwarf, has the Inaptitude for Swim Disadvantage. This means he must use column E. Improving TP –2 to TP –1 costs him 20 AP (2x2x5); the same applies to improving TP –1 to 0. Swim is a Basic Talent, but Angrax started the game with a negative value in this Talent, and thus must pay another 20 points to raise the value from 0 to 1.

From now on, he may advance this Talent at normal costs, but he still must use column E in the table: 73 more AP advance Angrax's TP in Swim to 5 (9+15+21+28). Improving his TP in Swim has thus cost him a whopping 133 Adventure Points—and has driven his swimming teacher to the brink of madness ….

Angrax may retain the remaining 17 AP (the player notes these under AP Credit) for use at a later time.

An Important Note: You can't simply improve Talents because you have some leftover AP handy. The Talent needs to have been used during your adventuring life, resulting in some experience with it (meaning Special Experiences). Heroes may teach one another or visit a teacher (someone who has a better value in the Talent than the pupil), but a teacher will instruct you only in return

for adequate payment. You can advance the Talent by teaching yourself, but this involves a longer study time. More information about methods of learning is provided following the table.

Methods of Learning

As already mentioned, several methods may be used to improve Talents, Gifts, Attributes, and so on. These are Special Experiences, Teachers, Mutual Teaching and Learning, and Teaching Yourself.

The Learning Time Unit

When learning Talents and Skills, players commonly ask how long it takes before a Talent or Skill can be advanced. The answer is the "Time Unit," which is two hours of full concentration on one special activity. A human (or elf, dwarf, or other race) can't ignore the activities of daily life while learning, and their brains have limits to the amount of information that can be absorbed at one time. A maximum of four Time Units per day is allowed to be spent on learning (which also means you can't Advance more than four Talents per day). This rule is designed to show players how much time must be spent to Advance a Talent, and that even the Aventurian day has only 24 hours.

The number of time units needed to advance a skill is discussed below.



Special Experiences

Talents that were used frequently in an adventure (commercial scenarios usually include a list for this purpose) or that could be trained for specially (Highlord's decision) should be recorded as Special Experiences.

These Talents can be advanced by one point immediately after the adventure (or during an appropriate interval of time during the adventure) without incurring time or monetary costs, using the column in the Advancement Cost Table to the left of the appropriate column (the next easier one, that is). The checkmark next to the Talent that was advanced is then erased (and until it is erased, no new Special Experience can be gained). Talents in which you have gained Special Experience should be Advanced prior to Improving other Talents, as the Highlord may decide that these experiences are forfeited after a certain period of time.

Even after Angrax learned to swim, he still spent most of his time aboard the ship near the mast (happy not to gain any marks next to his Swim value). Shafir was a bit more active: He managed to swim around the riverboat several times, trying to eavesdrop on the people in the captain's cabin to learn where the smugglers hid their loot in the steep river banks. He has earned a mark next to his Swim value for Special Experience. He gained 150 points during this adventure, and spends 34 of these to Advance his Swim TP from 8 to 9. Without Special Experience, he would advance his Talent using the column to the right, spending 45 AP instead of only 34.

When a hero earns a Special Experience in a Talent for which she has no prior experience (TP of 0 or below), she can Activate it for a lower cost (one column to the left on the table). This incurs no time or monetary costs.

Teachers, Mutual Teaching, and Learning

The best way to learn a Talent is to pay a visit to a teacher who is a specialist or even a luminary in the appropriate subjects. Quite often these teachers are "retired" adventurers, but many professions, such as mercenaries, scouts, or physicians, like to pass on their knowledge to younger generations. Typically, not all Talents have teachers—some are rarer than others, and for some, there are none at all. Keep in mind that Aventurian artisan guilds or sage circles like to keep their trade secrets to themselves. If they agree to teach you, will do so only in exchange for gold and other appropriate favors.

The heroes themselves probably have had different kinds of experiences in many areas. They probably talk about how exciting it was to visit the count, or how much fun they had fighting the goblin bandits. But they might also overhear the baron's daughter chatting about how the Thorwalian made a fool of himself by not respecting the relevant etiquette (and how he could have avoided this), or the elf might show a hero how she could have noticed the goblins before her party was ambushed. If heroes discuss such matters for a long time (especially if they examine their mistakes),

they might gain some benefit for the appropriate Talent (in the above-mentioned example, Etiquette or Track).

Mutual teaching and learning is normally not a group dynamic activity. You must decide who is the teacher and who is the pupil, so this may be classified as learning with a teacher. The teacher must have a TP of at least 7 in Teach *and* in the Talent he will teach. Both his TP values must be higher than the pupil's value in the relevant Talent.

If Shafir wants to teach a colleague new and exciting juggling tricks, and the other already has TP 9 in Juggling, Shafir must have TP of at least 10 in both Teach and Juggling.

The high number of TP necessary in Teach may be decreased by use of teaching materials, quiet surroundings, concentrated learning, an appropriately equipped teaching place, and so on, but these conditions can be found only with real teachers, not around the cooking fire (i.e., not through mutual teaching and learning).

Cost in AP: Improving a Talent with the help of a teacher costs as many Adventure Points as listed in the ACT (page 128). If the pupil has a very good teacher (i.e., TP of at least 15 in Teach), she may use the column to the left of the relevant one (meaning the next easier column).

Cost in Time: The time cost for mutual teaching and learning or having a Teacher is measured in Time Units equal to the AP cost given in the ACT. Assume that traveling heroes have only one Time Unit per day available for learning or teaching. If the heroes have more time on their hands, perhaps because they must wait for a fellow adventurer to recuperate, they may spend more time units.

Monetary Cost: Estimate a teacher's fee by multiplying the AP cost found in the ACT by the teacher's number of TP in Teach, counted in farthings. Teachers who have TP of 15 or higher are very rare, and most like to be *really* well paid (meaning they charge at least double the above amount). A hero usually doesn't charge a fellow adventurer for teaching, but you never know ....

Teaching Yourself

If you have enough time (but not enough silver), you can try to teach yourself, a process consisting of daily exercises, visits to the library, and discussions with like-minded people. This is the most common method of learning.

AP and Time Costs: If you want to Advance a Talent or Attribute by teaching yourself, you must spend more AP than listed in the ACT: You must use the column to the right of the appropriate one, meaning the next harder column. If you want to Advance a Talent beyond TP 10, you must use the column two spaces to the right. You need the same number of Time Units for teaching yourself as the AP cost in the harder column that you use.

Cost: Usually none, but if you spend all your time practicing Talents, you won't get a lot of chances to earn money (and thus buy food, clothing, equipment, and so on).

Optional Rule: Making Learning Easier

The learning methods discussed so far do not need any Tests to determine success and can be applied quickly. If you want to use a learning process that is more detailed, you can adjust the learning process in the following way. Depending on the Teaching Test, Talent Advancement might cost fewer AP.

Teachers, Mutual Teaching, and Learning

At the end of the learning period (calculated using the AP costs from the ACT), the teacher rolls a Teach Test; leftover Talent Points can be subtracted from the AP cost of the pupil (but at least one AP must be spent).

As an alternative, you may keep the AP costs and instead, use a Teach Test to decrease the time spent learning. In this case, the teacher rolls a Teach Test *before* the teaching process starts. Any leftover TP are subtracted from the Time Units calculated by the ACT.

In both cases, the Test is modified by the following amounts:

Sum of CL and IN of the pupil is above 30	–3
Teaching place is well equipped	–3
Teacher has an established place for learning	+/–0
Inadequate teaching materials	+3
Sum of CL and IN of the pupil is below 20	+3
No teaching materials/teaching from memory	+7

Inadequate teaching materials are usually a problem in mutual teaching and learning, while established teachers normally have a well-equipped teaching place.

In case of an Automatic Success of the Teach Test (she rolls a 1), the pupil is considered to have a Special Experience (see above) in the Talent he is learning during his instruction. He may use this directly after the learning process to advance TP. An Automatic Failure in the Teach Test (she rolls a 20) immediately decreases the TP of the pupil in the corresponding Talent by 1 point (he learned incorrect techniques or contradictory theories).

Teaching Yourself

At the end of the learning period, a hero may roll an Intuition and a Cleverness Test, modified by the TP she is trying to gain. If one of the two Tests succeeds, she saves 10% of the calculated AP costs; if both Tests succeed, she saves 20% of costs.

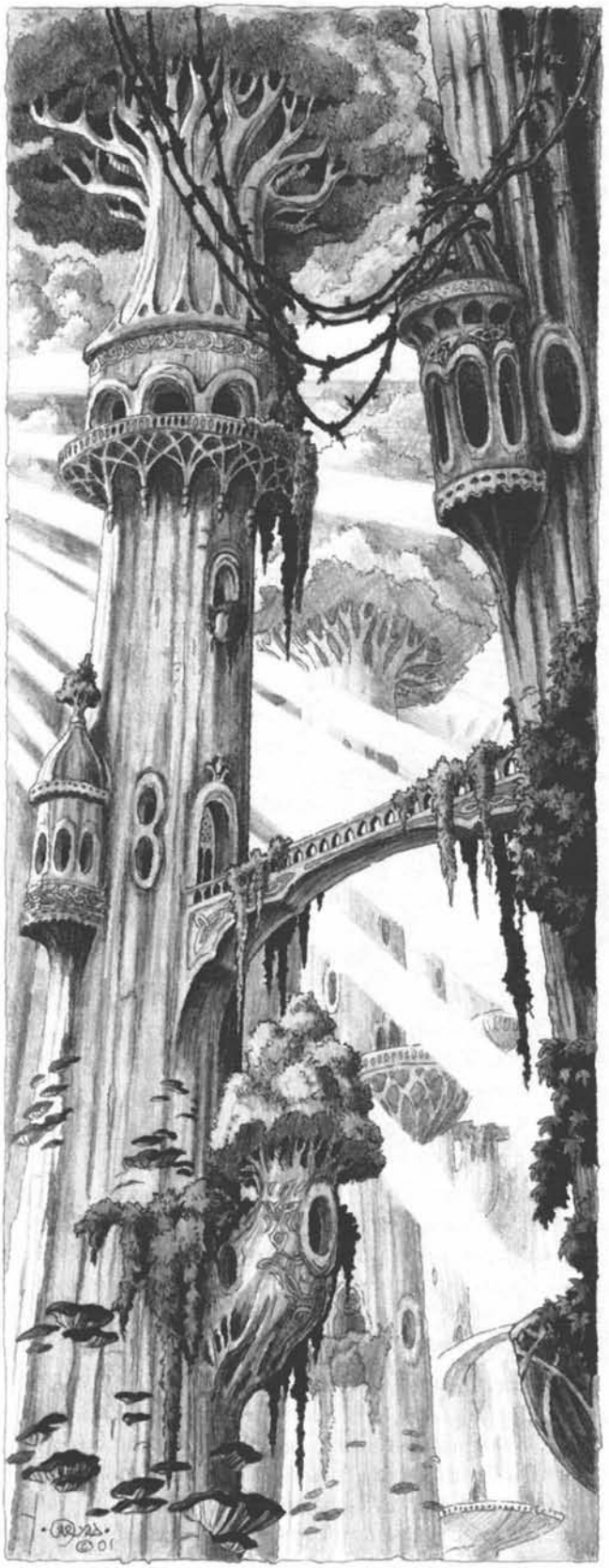
Improving Attributes

Attributes may be advanced only under certain conditions: It's very hard to increase them, and nature has limits—you can't turn a sickly couch potato into a strong man who can bend iron bars. The Advancement Costs for Attributes are found in column H of the Advancement Cost Table; these values are used without modifiers due to race or culture.

Lotgrima, a Thorwalian, wants to raise her Strength from 13 to 14. She has a bonus of +1 to ST due to her race. Raising her Strength from 13 to 14 actually counts as raising it from 12 to 13, thus costing 350 AP. Her friend Oriel Lindenwind (a lea elf) wants to increase his ST as well—from 11 to 12. As an elf, he has ST–1, so he must pay the cost as if he were Improving from 12 to 13, the same amount as Lotgrima's attempt: 350 AP.

You may advance attributes in a mix of teaching yourself and mutual teaching (thus resulting in column H) or you may benefit – in rare cases – from a Special Experience. You need a number of time units equal to the AP cost found in the ACT.

The maximum value of any Attribute is 21, modified by race, culture, or profession bonuses or decreases. A hero whose racial bonus is AG+2 may advance his Agility to 23; a hero whose race



functions at CN–1 can have a maximum Constitution of 20. The Outstanding Attribute Advantage can increase this value.

The maximum value for any of a hero's Attributes is 1.5 times the hero's starting values (rounded down). Thus, a hero who begins the game with CN 8 can achieve a maximum CN of 12. If the value of an Attribute changes, statistics derived from that Attribute change as well; you'll need to recalculate the values in these cases.

Changed Attribute	Values That Might Be Affected
CO	ED, BAV, Base INI, RM, AE
CL	RM, AE
IN	BPV, BRV, Base INI, AE
CH	AE
AG	ED, BAV, Base INI
DE	BRV
CN	VI, ED, RM
ST	VI, BAV, BPV, BRV, HP Bonus

Improving Gifts

Gifts are very rare "supernatural" Talents, skills, or abilities that a hero possesses at birth and can't be activated in any way. A Gift that a hero possesses may be Advanced like a Talent, but only by teaching yourself or Special Experience. The costs are found in column G. The maximum value of a Gift is a number of points equal to the value of the highest Attribute used in the respective Test, plus three.

In this publication, you will only find two Gifts: The Danger Sense Advantage and the Dwarfnose Advantage. These are explained on pages 62 and 63.

Improving Spell Prowess

An Aventurian magic-user's knowledge of her various spells may be advanced just like Talents; the costs depend on the complexity of the spell as well as its source. Special skills (like Wand Enchantments and Elfsongs) have a fixed AP cost. You will find more about this (especially the Advancement Categories of spells) in the chapter about magic.

A hero may advance Spell Prowess by any of the learning methods discussed previously. The maximum value of a Spell Prowess is a number of points equal to the value of the highest Attribute used in the respective Arcane Test, plus three.

Improving Endurance, Vitality, and Astral Energy

Under normal circumstances, these values only change if the relevant Attributes (see above) change, but it is possible to gain additional points by a mix of meditation techniques, hard training and sheer experience. There are no teachers and no Special Experiences for these values, so the relevant columns are just those explained below. To determine the AP cost you don't look up the final value you want, but the points you already *bought*. Thus buying your third VP always costs 60 AP regardless of how high your final VI is.

The maximum points mentioned below **do not include** any points derived from the Astral Power, Enduring, or Vigor Advantages (remember, these may be taken only at the start of the game), or from the points that a hero gains through race, culture, or profession.

- The maximum number of Vitality Points a hero can "buy" in addition to her base value equals half her CN Value (rounded up); the "bought" VP use column H of the AC Table to determine their costs.
- The maximum number of Astral Energy Points a hero can "buy" in addition to her base value equals her CH Value (rounded up); the "bought" ASP use column G of the AC Table to determine their costs. According to Hero Type (elf or magician), rituals may be used that gain the hero additional ASP, but which also cost AP (see Improving Astral Energy on p. 134).
- The maximum number of Endurance Points a hero can "buy" in addition to her base value equals double her CN Value (rounded up); the "bought" EP use column E of the AC Table to determine their costs.

Acquiring Special Abilities

Some "professional secrets" are granted only to members of one's own guild, academy, mage circle, and so on. These Special Abilities (such as knowledge of Wand Enchantments or Elfsongs, or the ability to use special combat maneuvers) have fixed AP costs listed in their descriptions. The time cost is usually 20% of the AP in the table, or is explicitly given in the description of the respective Ability.

Reducing Disadvantages

Most of the Disadvantages a player takes during hero creation may be reduced during the adventuring life, although with some difficulty. We recommended an AP Cost equal to the cost in GP multiplied by 100. To completely eliminate the Prone to Illness Disadvantage (–7 GP) by a supreme effort, you'll pay 700 AP.

The Highlord decides whether it is possible to purge a Disadvantage. In contrast to most of the Disadvantages, Negative Attributes may be reduced during the course of the game by teaching yourself, using Special Experience (in most cases), or by visiting a teacher. The base cost of Decreasing a Negative Attribute is similar to the cost of Improving a Positive Attribute. Subtract the new value of the Negative Attribute from 21; then using column G on the AC Table, find the value for 18 to determine the AP cost.

To reduce Fear of the Sea from 4 to 3 points, you need 260 Adventure Points: 21–3=18, which amounts to 260 AP on column G.

Treatment of Negative Attributes by a soul healer is risky and complicated, and is treated in the description of the relevant Talent in the *Swords and Heroes* supplement.

Level

Level is a measure of a hero's accumulated experience, determined by the sum of Adventure Points she collects. Every hero begins her adventuring life at Level 1. Once she has accumulated 100 AP, she advances to Level 2; 300 AP take her to Level 3, and so on (see the table below).

Players must maintain a running total of their Adventure Points. Upon reaching a new level, points are not discarded, but remain as the pool to which new points are added. A hero doesn't subtract points from this number if she uses AP to Advance Talents or Attributes. For this reason, two different boxes appear on the character sheet, one for Adventure Points and one for AP Credit.

To advance a Level, you need to acquire the points required for the previous level, plus an additional 100, as per the formula shown in the box.

The table below shows the number of Adventure Points needed to gain the respective Levels.

Of course, Levels and Adventure Points are abstract game mechanisms, intended only for reference for players and Highlords. No hero (or any inhabitant of Aventuria) knows or talks about them. Nobody in Aventuria would say, "Oh look, it's Wolfheart, a warrior of Level 13." Instead, they would say something like, "Look! It's the famous Wolfheart, who has slain the terrible wyrm of Snirkelford!" During the game, Levels are important only for the Activation Cost of Talents.

Levels may be viewed as a measure of the accumulated experience of your hero to estimate her reputation (her good reputation, that is: glory, fame, importance, and social status) as well as her "general life experience," and can be used just like Attributes for Tests if the Highlord wishes.

AP	Level
0	1
100	2
300	3
600	4
1,000	5
1,500	6
2,100	7
2,800	8
3,600	9
4,500	10
5,500	11
6,600	12
7,800	13
9,100	14
10,500	15

As the heroes invade a clearing, Daria holds back. Instead of joining the fight, her trained eye searches for the Beilunk Rider's bag against the background of the forest in the light of the flickering campfire. Around the fire, where the fighting is fiercest, lie several blankets and bags; two skinned rabbits are roasting on a spit. She is unable, however, to detect a bag like the one described by the Rider. She recalls the last moments before her companions' attack. A man had called for help, and when the companions reached the clearing, one of the strangers was stumbling into the dark, hands pressed against his face.

"Now think, Daria," she mumbles to herself. "Where would you hide your most recent loot in case of attack? Mirhiban mentioned some kind of magical ward, or something to that effect. If she's right, and if the man yelling for help tripped this ward, that leaves two options: Either the man dropped the bag—but then it would still be lying on the ground—or he still has it. In that case, he probably heard Frenja's battle cry and tried to make off with his loot. After him!"

Daria sneaks ahead to the place where the stranger disappeared. The footing gets harder and harder as she ventures into the forest, away from the fire. Suddenly, crack! A dry twig breaks loudly.

"Rats! Why can't I be in a street, instead of in the bushes!" she thinks, when suddenly a weak, hoarse voice catches her ear: "Cordovan? Is that you?"

Daria doesn't answer, but instead draws her dagger and carefully moves in the direction of the voice. The stranger's rasping, terrified breath leads the way. She cannot even see him until he is directly in front of her. Eyes wide open, he nonetheless stares into nothingness and does not notice her. His back pressed against a tree, he holds his sword in both hands, moving it like a cane to find his way. Next to him, Daria spots a dark patch that stands out against the pale moss—the Rider's bag! In the blink of an eye, Daria grabs the bag from the ground. The man gasps in panic and strikes in Daria's general direction, but she easily evades the blow and retreats quickly.

"Never tangle with thieves better than yourself! Now run and tell your master that Phex gives what you take for yourself, and takes what others may take from you!" she whispers. Then she turns and runs back to her companions.

As Daria returns to the clearing, the fight is over. Four of the thieves have fled and two are unconscious, temporarily treated by Trewman and bound by Rondrian. The warrior turns his attention toward Frenja, who, leaning on her ax, watches him.

"By the gods, Frenja! Why did you charge like this? You gave our advantage away! We had explicitly agreed . . ."

". . . to sneak up to them and then attack. Even then, I probably would have been entering the fray fastest, anyway," the pirate ends his sentence with a wide grin.

"Since you insist on being more stupid than usual, we're in a fine mess right now: the Rider's bag is gone! These two don't have it, and Mirhiban hasn't been able to find it!"

Daria chooses this moment to make her entrance into the clearing, bag dangling from her finger. "Calm down, Rondrian," she smiles. "I've got it. I think Mirhiban was right in assuming that a protection was triggered. The man who took this is still blind. Perhaps you should look at this."

She hands the bag to the magicienne, who sits down by the fire and begins to study it.

"You need to be careful with unknown magic," she explains to the others, while gingerly pulling a small metal box, its seal broken, out of the bag.

"You see?" she says, pointing to the box. "Looks like someone has released the spell by breaking the seal. I reckon that only the recipient of the box knows how to open it without causing damage. Rondrian, this confirms your assumptions about the importance of this message. Such a magical lock can only be created by laborious effort. It needs an arcanovi cast on the object in order to bind another spell into it; I'd guess it was a version of lightning find you. To tell you more, I'd need an analytica arcana, of course. That would help us analyze this artifact's arcane lines. Unfortunately, I have not yet progressed very far in my studies of this spell."

"Such a magical lock may be created only by laborious effort. You need to cast an arcanovi on the object in order to bind another spell into it."

"Very well," Frenja states, eyeing the small box suspiciously, her hands again clutching her amulets. "I don't understand a thing, but I do hate this magic stuff! Tell me: Is this dangerous, or isn't it? Can it hurl lightning, give us warts, or turn us into mice? And what do we do with it now?"

"We should give it back to the Beilunk Rider, so he may deliver it to its recipient," Ranari answers, her red hair resembling a shimmering sunset in the light of the fire as she pulls it behind her pointed ears. "But see, Frenja: Magic is not necessarily evil. Magic is part of some creatures, like earth is part of nature, and blood is part of your body. All that matters is how you use magic—to do good, or to cause evil. Magic may well be helpful. Just look!"

She snaps the slender fingers of her left hand, and suddenly a bluish-white ball of pure light hovers just above her outstretched palm. The shimmering ball seems to have a life of its own; its inner light seems to be changing over and over, flowing then pulsating. Wide-eyed, the Thorwalian stares into the soft glow.

"This orb will lead our way back, Frenja-fey," Ranari says, turning around. She does not notice Mirhiban glancing at her balefully.

Aventuria is more than a world of agile swordsmen and crafty rogues. A certain spell cast at the right moment has been known to change the course of Aventurian history, doom entire kingdoms, or bring death and madness upon men, but magic has also helped save mortally wounded people, unearth long-forgotten lore, and protect man and animal from terrible demons. Magic is a power that may be used for good as well as for evil. Mastery of magic needs a high degree of self-discipline and long years of study, unless a user wants to perish at magic's whim.



Aventurian magic comes in many shapes and sizes. Guild magic as taught by magicians is the most highly respected, but druids as well as witches jealously guard their own spells and formulas. Elven magic, on the other hand, is the oldest form of magic on the continent. Magic is such a part of elven nature that elves can work wonders by the power of sheer thought alone.

If you have decided to play a magician or an elf, you have probably wondered already how this art might translate into game rules.

This chapter will explain it all—that is, it will give you all the information you need to play a magic-using hero in Aventuria. The information that follows has been rigorously condensed from the wealth of lore available on the subject, and the *Sorcery and Witchcraft* rules supplement will give you the full scope. The rules in this chapter will suffice, however, for many game sessions to come.

Astral Energy

All magically endowed creatures are able to access an internal reservoir from which they draw strength for casting spells. In game terms, this reservoir is called Astral Energy (AE); for ease of play, it is measured in Astral Points (ASP), just as Vitality is measured in Vitality Points. Casting (or trying to cast) a spell drains AE by using up a certain number of ASP, as is evident from the respective spell descriptions.

Your hero uses this energy to tap into the powers of the magical spheres and bend a small part of it to her will, changing it into a desired form, shape, or effect. The larger this change is supposed to be, the higher the amount of energy (ASP) will be to perform it.

Successfully casting a spell deprives the caster of the listed number of ASP; failing to cast it still costs half the listed amount (rounded up).

Regeneration of Astral Energy

Astral Energy, once used for a specific spell, is not lost forever. Like Vitality, AE increases during nightly periods of rest. For every restful night (i.e., under the same conditions as those required for your hero to regain lost Vitality), you roll 1d6 to determine the number of ASP a hero regenerates during this time, in addition to the 1d6 rolled for regeneration of Vitality. If you succeed an IN test after a good night's sleep, you regain one extra point of AE.

The Astral Regeneration Advantage or the Astral Block Disadvantage may modify these results (see pages 60 and 62, respectively), but other factors may also influence ASP regeneration. Most important among these is the quality of your hero's resting place. Sharing your bed with hordes of lice and bugs, or spending the night in a cold and damp forest are not as conducive to regeneration as a sound sleep in a magician's warm bedroom. Astral Energy, just like Vitality and Endurance, may never be regenerated beyond its starting value.

Spell Prowess

So far, Aventurian scholars have catalogued several hundred different arcane spells, of which we present only those 27 that are the most commonly known. Since casting a spell is different for each and every dweomer, we reflect this by requiring magic-users to develop skill in each spell separately. Thus, each spell has an associated Spell Prowess (SP), similar to each Talent measured in Talent Prowess. Spell Prowess represents knowledge of the techniques, formulas, and gestures related to a given spell, as well as an understanding of the magical pattern needed to shape it.

Spells are tied directly to a hero's physical and mental Attributes, which come into play when casting. For instance, sensing emotions needs Cleverness, Intuition, and Charisma, while sealing a lock by means of a *claudibus clavistibor* spell draws upon Cleverness, Dexterity, and Strength.

You need to take all of these Attributes as well as your hero's SP into account when trying to correctly cast a spell.

Arcane Tests

When your hero wants to weave magic, she must first succeed at an Arcane Test. The mechanism used here closely resembles that of Talent Tests, with SP substituting for TP. Thus, you roll 1d20 three times as indicated by the spell's description, trying not to roll higher than your hero's relevant Attribute(s), and, if necessary, compensating with your hero's SP points (see page 71 for a detailed description of a Talent Test).

Mirhiban the magicienne (CL: 14, DE: 11) tries to open a lock by casting a foramen foraminor *spell (her SP with this spell is 3; the Arcane Test is rolled against CL/CL/DE). Mirhiban's player rolls 15, 11, and 12. She spends 1 point of SP to pass the first CL Test, succeeds in the second CL Test, and must spend another point of SP to succeed at the DE Test. Thus, the Arcane Test succeeds (with one point of SP left). The Highlord decides that this is a moderately complex lock, causing Mirhiban to spend 5 ASP to cast the spell successfully. Had she failed at her Arcane Test, she would have failed at casting the spell but still would have lost 3 ASP (5/2=2.5, rounded to 3).*

Adverse circumstances (for instance, a target's Resistance to Magic; see below) may result in a negative number of SP. If this is the case, this negative value must be added as a Difficulty Increase to all three Subtest rolls (in exactly the same way as handling Talent Tests with negative TP).

The rules for automatic success (a roll of 1) or automatic failure (a roll of 20) at a Talent Test also apply in full to Arcane Tests—however, the results (especially for Fumbles) are usually a lot more spectacular. In the case of extremely successful Tests, the Highlord may rule that casting the spell costs fewer ASP than listed in the spell description; in any case, such a roll counts as a *Special Experience* for the sake of the Improvement rules.

Arcane Tests may be modified with Difficulty Increases or Decreases by the Highlord, depending on the situation. The most important value to take into account is Resistance to Magic, which measures a creature's innate resistance against domination or transformation spells.

Resistance to Magic

Casting a spell is not as easy as simply releasing magical energies and sitting back to watch what happens. One of the important characteristics of the game world is that it resists change. For inanimate items, this resistance is hard to classify; a stone is a stone is a stone, quite impervious to the will of a magician. With living creatures, however, this will to resist change can be given a numerical value: **Resistance to Magic (RM)**.

You have already calculated this value during the creation of your hero. It depends on her Courage, Cleverness, and Constitution scores, as well as modifications from culture, Advantages, and Disadvantages. The formula is repeated in the box.

Resistance to Magic

RM = [(CL + CO + CN) / 5] +/– modifiers
+/– Advantages & Disadvantages – Negative Attributes

What does this formula mean? It means that your hero's Courage, Cleverness, and Constitution are added up and the sum is divided by five (with mathematical rounding). From this result, you add or subtract modifiers for race, culture, or profession, and for Advantages or Disadvantages (including Negative Attributes; see below). The final result is Resistance to Magic (RM), measuring your hero's mental prowess against certain types of magical attacks. While the formula may look formidable at first sight, you'll soon get used to it—and after all, if you want to dabble in the magical arts, it can't hurt to know what your hero is up against.

Attributes: Every living creature has a certain chance of resisting a spell. For intelligent creatures (i.e., heroes and most characters played by the Highlord), this resistance is influenced by some of the Attribute Values. Courage represents high willpower, Cleverness stands for critical reflection of one's actions, and Constitution reflects the body's toughness and resistance against physical transformation. These three Attributes form the basis of the formula for deriving RM.

Modifiers: The descriptions of the races, cultures, and professions indicate that Thorwalians are highly superstitious, while magicians are really hard to scare (to give just two examples). Features such as these are reflected by modifiers to RM.

After you have calculated your hero's RM, add or subtract all appropriate modifiers. These are shown in the box.

If more than one modifier applies, they are calculated against each other. Thus, a Thorwalian magician would have a total modifier of –3 (–5 as a Thorwalian, +2 as a magician, equaling –3).

Modifiers to RM

Race: Middenrealmian –4, Tulamide –4, Thorwalian –5, Elf –2, Dwarf –3
Profession: Magician +2

Advantages and Disadvantages: A hero may be especially resistant or susceptible to magic by grace of birth. This is reflected by the High Magic Resistance Advantage and the Low Magic Resistance Disadvantage. These modifiers are independent of race, culture, and profession, and are incorporated into the RM score regardless of modifiers. Another Advantage is Hard to Enspell, which affects all dweomers cast directly at your hero; see the Advantage's description on page 61.

Negative Attributes: Should a spell have consequences that can trigger a Negative Attribute (such as a blindness spell affecting a hero with the Fear of the Dark Disadvantage), the hero's Negative Attribute Value is subtracted from her RM against this particular spell only. For spells specifically meant to create fear or horror (such as *Horriphobus*), the target's RM is lowered by half the sum of **all** Fears (all Negative Attributes the target possesses with the words "phobia" or "fear" in the name), rounding down. The Highlord decides if (and when) Negative Attributes come into play when calculating RM.

Our well-known hero Trewman has CO 11, CL 14, and CN 11; as a human explorer from Garetia, he incurs the standard –4 modifier for Middenrealmians; his Negative Attributes are Curiosity 6 and Fear of Heights 6. His RM amounts to 3.

If the evil magician Burvar wants to turn Trewman into a toad, his Mutander *Test gets a Difficulty Increase of 3 points (the value of Trewman's RM). If Burvar tries to make Trewman flee in panic by means of a* horriphobus *spell, however, he would not incur a Difficulty Increase, since half of Trewman's Fear of Heights (6/2=3) would lower his RM by 3 points to 0.*

Resistance to Magic becomes important any time your hero wants to break an intelligent creature's will or try to dominate her. Almost all domination spells (such as *be my friend* or *horriphobus*), spells that read creatures' minds, and spells of transformation (such as *paralyze* or *mutander*) invoke RM.

In all these cases, the Arcane Test incurs a Difficulty Increase equal to the target's RM. If in doubt, look at the individual spell descriptions; if RM applies to the casting, the remark "(+RM)" will appear in the "Test" line of the spell description.

The sinister dark magician Koromo is confronted by two heroes wanting to thwart his evil plans. Before the heroes can act, he

hurls a horriphobus *at each of them. Warrior Alborn (CO 13, CL 10, CN 13, Fear of Heights 4, Fear of the Sea 4, –4 due to being a Middenrealmian) has a total RM of –1 (13+10+13/5=7); 7–[(4+4)/2]–4=–1), while Star Trail the elf (CO 11, CL 13, CN 12, no relevant Fears, –2 for being an elf) has a total RM of 5.*

Koromo (CO 12, IN 14, CH 14) has SP 5 in horriphobus. *To enspell Alborn, Koromo has 6 points of (virtual) SP at his disposal (5– (–1)=6); in Star Trail's case, this number is reduced to zero points (5–5=0). Koromo rolls 14, 8, and 16, which is barely enough to send Alborn off screaming, then rolls 12, 4, and 15, which is not enough to affect Star Trail. Since the clever elf knows that beating magicians at the domination game is never a good idea, she decides to send a hearty* thunderbolt *in return.*

Since animals possess at least some sentience, most get Resistance to Magic as well. We will not list RM values for all the animals in Aventuria, but the entries in the section on *Aventurian Animals and Monsters* (p. 151) will give you guidelines.

Optional Rule: Forcing a Spell's Effect

Whenever a spell overcomes Resistance to Magic (i.e., when the Arcane Test succeeds despite a Difficulty Increase caused by the target's RM), this means that the threads and patterns of magical energy have found their way through "cracks in the mind's walls," in some way "diffusing" into the target's mind. A magician may try to increase his spell's chance of success by literally "battering" at these walls.

If a hero feels uncertain as to whether her points of SP will be enough to pass the Arcane Test, she may try to have her spell take effect "the hard way" by investing additional ASP, thus lowering the Difficulty Increase on the Test (effectively canceling out all or part of a target's RM).

A caster spends these points prior to rolling the Test, granting her a "cushion" of "virtual SP." The relation between additional ASP spent and the Difficulty Decrease is not 1 to 1. One point of Difficulty Decrease costs 1 ASP; two points of Difficulty Decrease cost 2 ASP; three points cost 4 ASP; four points cost 8 ASP; five points cost twice again as much (i.e., 16 ASP); six points cost twice again as much (i.e., 32 ASP); and so on. If the Arcane Test fails despite all this effort, all additional **and** all regularly spent points of ASP are lost. Instead of losing only half the invested ASP on a spell failure, all points are spent.

For every additional point gained in this way, Casting Time (see below) is increased by 1 action. As a result, the caster will always be noticed by her target, regardless of how unobtrusive her spell would have been normally.

Star Trail (CL 11, CH 12) wants to put a Tulamidyan guard to sleep by means of a sleep of a thousand sheep *spell (SP 5). She assumes that the timeworn veteran may not be easy to enspell, thus she invests an additional 8 ASP to decrease the difficulty of her Test by 4 points. The guard has RM 5, which is quite respectable for a soldier; due to the additional 8 ASP (a 4-point bonus) Star Trail invested, however, this drops to 1. Star Trail now needs to succeed at a Test +4 (SP 5 minus RM 1) and rolls 7, 1, and 8. This would have been enough to pass the Test even without Forcing it. The guard immediately drops as if dead instead of slowly snoozing away, and when he wakes up, he will certainly know that he didn't simply nod off, but was most likely enspelled.*

This method of Forcing a Spell's Effect cannot be used with all spells; the complex farsight and analysis spells cannot be affected, nor the manipulation of complex structures.

A hero cannot use this method to simulate knowledge he doesn't really have; that is, he may not Force more points of SP than his SP Value with the respective spell.

Casting Spells on More Than One Target

Some spells may be directed against more than one target at the same time. If this is the case, use this general rule (indicated in every applicable spell description): Apply the highest RM among all the targets **and** the total number of targets as Difficulty Increases to the Arcane Test.

If more than one target is to be enspelled at the same time, the spell's effect per individual target may be somewhat weaker than normal (since the points of SP left over after casting sometimes determine power or duration of a spell). On the other hand, casting at multiple targets costs fewer ASP per target when you're trying to enspell more than one creature.

Aysha the magicienne (CL 12, IN 14, CH 13) must defend herself against a troop of aggressive orks and decides to drive them off by casting a mass horriphobus *(SP 7). Fortunately, orks are not known for high RM (their race incurs a modifier of –6), but in droves (five of them are present) they tend to be bothersome. The highest RM among the blackfurs is the leader's RM of 3, which means that Aysha's* horriphobus *Test incurs a Difficulty Increase of 8 points (RM 3 + 5, for the number of orks). This is bad news for her SP 7, since all Tests must succeed despite a Difficulty Increase of 1 point each.*

The dice come up 10, 11, and 13, meaning that the Charisma Tests fails by the smallest possible amount, and Aysha is now in real trouble.

Of Wand Enchantments and Elfsongs

Experienced magicians, as well as elves, have mastered a variety of rituals thatthey may use to create very special effects—perhaps flames suddenly shoot from a magician's Wand, or an elf manages to calm aggressive animals by the power of song alone. These special rituals are known as Wand Enchantments and Elfsongs.

In game terms, both are treated as Special Abilities, meaning they have a fixed AP cost for learning them; once learned, they are considered "known" and need not be advanced further.

Both types of rituals are deeply rooted in the respective magical worldview and cultural world of the two groups. Elves may never learn Wand Enchantments, while magicians may never learn Elfsongs.

A listing of the Wand Enchantments and Elfsongs used in the Basic Rules follows the spell descriptions (page 139).

Wand Enchantments

A magician's Wand is usually crafted from blood elm or stone oak wood, individually tailored to measure up to its wielder's expectations. It is carved with runes and arcane symbols and capped on both ends. Such a Wand is presented to every magician

after graduating from his academy and literally bonds with him. It is both a sign of his status and a "vessel" for some of the most potent guild magic spells. (This is the reason that the magician's wand is listed as "not for sale" on the Aventurian Weapons Table.)

Small wonder, then, that the guilds jealously guard the secrets of the Wand Enchantments. It is a trying task to enspell a Wand so that it may do the caster's bidding.

A magician who receives training outside of an academy does not receive a Wand automatically. Depending on the situation, the Highlord may grant a Wand to a magician who trains elsewhere, but this is highly unlikely.



Elfsongs

It seems only natural that the elven love of music and intuitive knowledge of magic should meet in the skill of Elfsongs. True-blooded elves are able to work miracles by the power of their voices and their skill at playing instruments (most elves have a special affinity to a soul instrument). Around half a dozen Elfsongs are currently known outside the elven homelands; three of these are presented later.

Experience for Spellcasters

Magic-wielding heroes have the unique ability to increase their depository of Astral Energy and Improve Spell Prowess using their individual spells.

Advancing Spell Prowess

An Aventurian magic-user's knowledge of her various spells may be advanced just like Talents; the costs depend on the complexity of the spell and its origin. Most importantly, elves and magicians may learn spells that were prohibited to them during hero creation, provided they find an appropriate source of instruction.

To simplify play for now, the rules will allow magicians to advance general and guild magic spells according to category **B**, and elven heritage spells according to category **C** of the Advancement Cost Table (ACT). Elves advance their own spells and general spells according to Category **A**, and guild magic spells according to category **D** of the Advancement Cost Table (ACT). Spell Prowess may be advanced in the three ways mentioned on page 128; the maximum value of Spell Prowess for any spell may not exceed a number of SP points equal to the value of the highest Attribute used in the respective Arcane Test, plus three.

Activation Costs for spells are the same as Activation Costs for Talents (see the section regarding advancement of Talents); to activate a spell, find its column and look for the respective table entry. Thus, a guild magician of eighth level would pay 29 points to learn a new elven heritage spell (using column **C**). Minimum cost for spell Activation is always a number of Adventure Points equal to Activation Factor x 5.

Improving Astral Energy

This Value usually changes only if the respective Attributes changed (see the section on increasing Attributes), but it is possible (through very rigorous exercise with a teacher or by teaching yourself) to gain additional points.

The maximum points that may be acquired in this way do not include the points derived from the Astral Power, Enduring, or Vigor Advantages (remember that these may be taken only at the start of the game).

The maximum amount of Astral Energy a hero can "buy" in addition to her Base Value equals her CH Value (rounded up). The "bought" ASP use column G of the ACT to determine their costs. According to Hero Type, rituals are available that gain a hero additional ASP, but also cost AP.

These rituals are *Great Meditation* for magicians and *Salasandra* for elves. Both rituals require a spellcaster to retire for at least a full month (magicians usually return to their academy, while elves always move back to their clan) to try to get in touch with "the Power" (i.e., a CL Test for a magician and an IN Test for an elf). If the magician or elf is unable to perform the ritual among colleagues or family, (because he is too far away or was exiled), the Tests incur a Difficulty Increase of 3 points each. Regardless, these rituals require the expenditure of 500 Adventure Points.

The result of the CL Test determines the number of points acquired by a magician. Even if the Test fails, a magician gains an additional CL/3 points of ASP; if the CL Test succeeds, he gains one additional point. Elves gain IN/3 points of ASP, plus one extra point if the Test is successful. Such a ritual may be performed only once a year.

Improving Resistance to Magic

Most newly created heroes will have RM of around 3; this Value changes only if one of the underlying Attributes (CO, CL, or CN) changes, or if Negative Attributes influencing RM are lowered by the hero. It's important to recalculate RM if one of the basic

Attributes changes, since this simple arithmetical operation might help you to better withstand the forces of evil.

Learning Wand Enchantments and Elfsongs

Learning one of these special rituals requires experience and the expenditure of Adventure Points (i.e., learning a Wand Enchantment or Elfsong is treated just like learning a Special Ability). The respective Wand Enchantment and Elfsong descriptions tell you the cost for each of these rituals.

Magicians must learn Wand Enchantments in numerical sequence (1st, 2nd, 3rd), while elves are free to choose whichever Elfsong they like (the listing is in ascending order of AP costs for purely statistical reasons).

Magicians start play knowing the First Wand Enchantment (and they possess a staff so prepared). Elves, on the other hand, may start with knowledge of an Elfsong, but must pay for it in Generation Points (see the descriptions of the individual Elfsongs at the end of this chapter).

Learning a Wand Enchantment or Elfsong requires Time Units equal to half the number of AP spent. A hero may learn these rituals only from a teacher (a guild magician or an experienced elf).

Casting a Wand Enchantment from a Wand or playing an Elfsong (that is, actually attempting one of these spells) does not cost any AP, but does cost ASP.

The Basic Aventurian Grimoire

The following pages list the 27 spells detailed in the Core Rules. These are the basic tools of an elf or magician's trade that allow him to shape the world according to his will. This is just a small selection from the vast number of possible spells, rituals, and magical activities in Aventuria. The *Sorcery and Witchcraft* supplement will offer many more.

Explanation of Terminology

The spell's name is printed in boldface.

Origin: Tells you whether the spell originated as elven heritage or guild magic (or both); usually, a spell's origin shows in its name (pseudo-Latin for guild magic, a flowery phrase for elven heritage).

Technique: Action(s) required by the magic-user to cast the spell.

Casting Time: The length of time needed to prepare and cast the spell, measured in actions (of which a hero usually has two per combat round); these actions must be spent consecutively. Do not confuse this with a spell's Duration (see below).

Test: Abbreviations for the three Attributes needed for a spell's Arcane Test. Spells that attack a target directly often incur the target's resistance to Magic as a Difficulty Increase; such spells are marked by "+RM." If a spell succeeds but no points of SP remain (i.e., all of them were spent in casting), the spell is treated as if 1 point of SP remained for purposes of Range and Duration.

Cost: Number of ASP required to cast the spell.

Range: Maximum range at which the spell can be cast. For spells that take effect in a spherical zone around the caster, this stands for the radius of that sphere. For a cone-shaped zone extending from the caster, this stands for the length of the cone. A range of "caster" means that the spell only works on the caster herself, while "Touch" indicates that the caster must touch the person or object she wants to enspell.

Duration: The spell's maximum duration, usually given in Combat Rounds or Game Turns. Spells that require a constant supply of Astral Energy (i.e., a set number of ASP per round) in order to be maintained may be ended at any time by the caster. **Instant** means that the spell takes effect directly after casting it; such an effect is subject to other effects and natural processes, but may not be dispelled. **Permanent** means that the spell takes effect immediately but its effects do not go away, even if the caster stops concentrating on the spell. A permanent effect may be dispelled only by an appropriate counterspell.

Effect: How the spell functions in game terms after it has been successfully cast.

SP and SP*: These values are often used to determine spell range and/or duration. **SP** stands for the hero's current Spell Prowess with the spell in question, while **SP*** refers to points of SP left over after casting (i.e., after passing the Arcane test).

Initial Spell Prowess

Before a hero may cast a spell, she must activate it first, just like a Talent; activated spells may be advanced just like Talents. After activation, the hero "knows" a spell with SP 0. A starting hero receives (CL + IN) x 5 Spell Generation Points to activate and advance spells; in addition, she may convert as many as (CL + IN) x 10 Talent Generation Points into Spell GP. The costs for activation and advancing spells prior to the start of game play are found in the table on page 125.

Magicians: Magicians advance all guild magic spells, as well as general spells, according to column **B**; activation costs 5 Spell GP each. The highest possible SP is 10. Elven heritage spells known to magicians are advanced according to column **C**; activation costs 15 Spell GP each. The highest possible SP is 7. *Eye of eagle* and *fog flow far* may not be chosen by newly created magicians.

Elves: Elves advance all elven heritage and general spells according to column **A**; activation costs 5 Spell GP. The highest possible SP is 10. Newly created elves may not learn guild magic spells.

Analytica Arcana
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster looks at the person or object she wants to examine and speaks the formula.
Casting Time: At least 10 actions
Test: CL/CL/IN
Cost: 10 ASP
Range: 1 pace
Duration: as Casting Time

Effect: The caster discovers the type and origin of a spell found in an item (including elixirs, potions, and artifacts) or on a person. Depending on SP*, the information may be more or less accurate. The caster is not able to discover the exact spell, though, unless it is a spell she knows how to cast herself.

Attributio
Origin: Guild magic *and* elven heritage
Technique: The caster touches her hands to her temples and concentrates.
Casting Time: 5 actions

Test: CL/CH/ Target Attribute
Cost: 7 ASP
Range: Caster, Touch
Duration: SP* game turns

Effect: The caster increases one Attribute Value by 2 points for the spell's duration. The subject of the spell may be the caster or another individual. The entry "Target Attribute" for the third Subtest stands for the Attribute to be increased.

Auris Nasis Oculus
Origin: Guild magic *and* elven heritage
Technique: The caster concentrates and mutters the formula with eyes closed.
Casting Time: 5 to 15 actions (depending on the number of components in the illusion)
Test: CL/CH/DE
Cost: 5 ASP for each sound, smell, or image
Range: SP times 3 paces
Duration: Up to 1 game turn

Effect: The caster is able to create illusory sounds, smells, and three-dimensional (but stationary) images of no more than 30 cubic paces in size. The three types of illusions may be combined freely. Should a target examine the illusion using a sense not involved in the illusion (such as touching an illusory chair or trying to smell an illusory ork), the spell's effect is negated for that character.

Balm of Healing
Origin: Guild magic *and* elven heritage
Technique: The caster places her hand on a wound and repeats the incantation until healing sets in.
Casting Time: 1 GT, plus at least 5 actions for healing to begin
Test: CL/IN/CH
Cost: 1 ASP per VP, but always at least 7 ASP
Range: Caster, Touch
Duration: Instant (Healing sets in after 5 actions, thus making it possible to snatch even mortally wounded heroes from death's jaws.)

Effect: For each ASP invested by the caster, the target immediately regenerates 1 VP lost due to injury, illness, poison, and so on. Any poison or disease is *not* eliminated (further damage could continue). A caster may heal herself, but for no more than SP times 2 VP.

When treating wounds (see page 102), the following rules apply. The Arcane Test incurs a Difficulty Increase equal to twice the number of the patient's wounds. For every 7 ASP spent, one wound may be healed completely. You do *not* need to spend 7 ASP each for healing damage and treating the wound; one ASP expenditure (with the listed Difficulty Increase) is sufficient.

Be My Friend
Origin: Guild magic *and* elven heritage
Technique: The caster looks his target in the eye and speaks the incantation.
Casting Time: 5 actions
Test: IN/CH/CH (+ RM)
Cost: 7 ASP
Range: 3 paces
Duration: SP* game turns

Effect: The caster charms her target into believing that the caster is his best friend. The target will do his best to comply with the caster's every wish. He will answer all questions asked by the caster truthfully and will follow all suggestions made by the caster, unless these endanger his life, compromise his moral integrity, or grossly contradict common sense.

The target's RM is lowered by half the sum of all Negative Attributes that allow him to be "manipulated" (i.e., Arrogance, Curiosity, Prejudice, Vanity, Vengefulness, and Violent Temper); the result is rounded down.

Breath of Magic
Origin: Guild magic *and* elven heritage
Technique: The caster views her target and breathes the incantation.
Casting Time: 4 actions
Test: CL/IN/IN
Cost: 5 ASP
Range: 15 paces
Duration: 1 CR.

Effect: This spell lets the caster detect traces of active magic on a person, item, or any currently active magic force. If some kind of magical force is in effect around a target, the caster perceives a reddish glow for about 2 seconds. Depending on points of SP left over after casting, the caster may determine the strength and approximate structure of the magical aura. The caster may view any number of targets before the spell's duration expires.

Clarum Purum
Origin: Guild magic *and* elven heritage
Technique: The caster puts her hand over the target's heart and recites the formula.
Casting Time: 7 actions
Test: CL/CL/CH (with a Difficulty Increase of half the poison's level; round down)
Cost: 1 ASP per level of poison (must be invested prior to casting), to a maximum total of ASP equal to SP
Range: Caster, Touch
Duration: Instant

Effect: This spell stops the effects of poison coursing through a person's veins. It only prevents further damage from that poison; it does not regenerate lost VP. If the poison's effect was something other than damage (such as Attribute reduction), it stops immediately. The caster may heal herself as well as others with this spell.

Claudibus Clavistibor
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster puts her hand on a door (or chest lid) she wants to close and recites the formula.
Casting Time: 3 actions
Test: CL/DE/ST
Cost: As determined by the caster; however, no less than 3 ASP and no more ASP than the caster's SP
Range: Touch
Duration: SP* game turns

Effect: This spell locks a door, chest lid, or similar locking device by means of magic; it also increases the material's hardness. Only high Dexterity, brute force, or magic can prevail against the magical lock. It is important to note how many points of SP the caster has left after passing her Arcane Test (i.e., SP*).

Pick Locks: Add SP* to the ASP invested in *claudibus clavistibor* and multiply by 2. The result equals the Difficulty Increase to a Pick Lock Test needed to open the door, plus any

modifiers that might have already applied before the casting of the spell.

Brute Force: Add SP* to the ASP invested in *claudibus clavistibor*. The result equals the Difficulty Increase to a Strength Test needed to bash in the door (or break the lock open), plus any modifiers that might have already applied before the casting of the spell.

Magic: Add SP* to the ASP invested in *claudibus clavistibor*. The result equals the number of ASP needed to open the lock with a *foramen* spell.

Duplicatus
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster raises her hands, palms out, in front of her face, spreads her fingers, and shifts her hands against each other repeatedly; while doing so, she recites the formula.
Casting Time: 5 actions
Test: CL/CH/AG (Difficulty Increase of +1 per double)
Cost: 8 ASP per double
Range: Caster, Touch (If the caster wants to create a double of a companion, she must touch him first.)
Duration: Maximum of SP* times 2 combat rounds

Effect: By weaving this spell, the caster creates one or two illusory double(s) of herself which mimic her movements, but also move around her and sometimes merge with her, making it harder for an opponent to hit the caster in physical as well as in magical combat.

For any successful Attack against the caster, roll 1d6: On a roll of 1–3 (or 1–2 if two doubles have been created), the caster is hit; otherwise, the blow hits one of the doubles, causing no damage whatsoever. This rule applies for Ranged Attacks and spells cast against the magician.

A caster may create up to two doubles of herself and each of her companions, provided she has sufficient ASP.

Eye of Eagle, Ear of Lynx
Origin: Elven heritage
Technique: The caster puts her hands to her temples and concentrates.
Casting Time: 5 actions
Test: CL/IN/DE
Cost: 5 ASP
Range: Caster, Touch
Duration: 1 game turn

Effect: All of the caster's senses are greatly increased, giving her a Difficulty Decrease equal to SP* on all Perception Tests.

Fastness of Body
Origin: Guild magic *and* elven heritage
Technique: The caster moves her hands across her chest while speaking the incantation.
Casting Time: 3 actions
Test: IN/AG/CN
Cost: Bonus AR times bonus AR in ASP (i.e., desired AR squared), but always at least 4 ASP
Range: Caster
Duration: up to a maximum of 1 GT

Effect: The caster creates an invisible set of armor which does not encumber, to a maximum Armor Rating equaling SP.

Fog Flow Far
Origin: Elven heritage
Technique: The caster speaks the incantation and exhales into her cupped hands.
Casting Time: 5 actions
Test: CL/DE/CN
Cost: 7 ASP
Range: 5 paces (maximum distance from caster to fog cloud; the cloud's dimensions are decided by the caster)
Duration: 1 hour

Effect: This spell creates an absolutely opaque cloud of mist, the shape of which is determined by the caster. Its volume is a function of the number of points of SP left over after casting; as a rule of thumb, figure SP* times 20 in square paces.

Foramen Foraminor
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster touches the lock to be opened thrice with her hand, speaking the formula while doing so.
Casting Time: 5 actions
Test: CL/CL/DE (plus possible Difficulty Increases)
Cost: Between 2 and 10 ASP, depending on lock
Range: Touch
Duration: Instant; the lock remains open until someone locks it again.

Effect: This spell opens mechanical locks, bolts, and other fasteners on doors, chests, and similar items. The caster does not need to know anything about the actual locking mechanism she is facing. If used as a counterspell to *claudibus clavistibor*, *foramen* breaks this spell but the lock still remains closed. To open it, *foramen* must be cast a second time. The possible Difficulty Increase depends on the complexity of the lock as well as the size of its closing mechanism (a huge bolt versus a tiny one, for example).

Gardianum
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster raises her Wand above her head and rotates it around once; spellcasters without a Wand mimic the action, forming a large circle above their heads with both hands.
Casting Time: 2 actions
Test: IN/CH/CN
Cost: The resulting shield blocks a number of HP equal to the ASP invested by the caster, plus her Courage, plus SP*. The shield is destroyed as soon as it has blocked this number of HP, or as soon as a game turn has elapsed after its creation.
Range: The spell creates a dome of 3– pace radius centered on the caster's feet.
Duration: Until the invested ASP are used up, to a maximum of 1 game turn.

Effect: The caster creates an invisible, dome-shaped shield of protection in which her comrades may also take refuge. The shield absorbs all types of raw magical damage, that is, HP and/or DP caused by direct magical attacks (such as the *thunderbolt* or *ignifaxus* spells), but does not protect from normal weapons that have their HP increased magically (nor does it protect against Transformation or Domination spells).

Horriphobus
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster shakes her fist at her target and yells out the formula.
Casting Time: 3 actions
Test: CO/IN/CH (+ RM)
Cost: 7 ASP; if used against more than one target, 6 ASP per target

Range: 7 paces
Duration: 3 game turns

Effect: The target loses heart, perceiving the caster to be a creature from his darkest dreams or an invincible foe. His morale is broken and he either runs away screaming or cowers in the nearest corner in primal fear. This spell works against all types of thinking and feeling creatures, but not against slime monsters or insects, or against undead or demons.

Horriphobus may be cast on several targets at once. In such a case, apply the highest RM of all targets *and* the total number of targets as a Difficulty Increase to the Arcane Test.

The target's RM is lowered by half the sum of all her fears (i.e., Negative Attributes with the words "fear" or "phobia" in the names); round down.

Ignifaxus
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster raises her right hand to her shoulder, concentrates, then suddenly points at her target with her index and middle fingers.
Casting Time: 4 actions
Test: CL/AG/DE
Cost: Number of HP in ASP
Range: 21 paces
Duration: Instant

Effect: A ray of raw elemental power shoots from the caster's fingers—a lance made of fire and light. Prior to casting, the magic-user decides how many d6 of damage her fiery lance should inflict. She may choose a number of damage dice up to her SP.

After successfully casting the spell, the dice rolls are totaled into one HP sum. For each 10 HP inflicted, a target also loses 1 point from his AR (unless "clad" in a *fastness of body* spell). A target may also take a wound or become incapacitated on the spot.

Light in the Darkness
Origin: Guild magic *and* elven heritage
Technique: The caster snaps her fingers while speaking the incantation.
Casting Time: 2 actions
Test: CL/IN/DE
Cost: 1 ASP per game turn
Range: The light extends outward for SP paces.
Duration: Number of ASP invested

Effect: This spell conjures up a small ball of light with a bluish-white glow, about as bright as a torch, hovering directly over the caster's hand. The light cannot be directed from a distance. It burns cold, does not ignite objects, and does not cause burn damage.

Move as the Lightning
Origin: Elven heritage
Technique: The caster concentrates on all her muscles and sinews and mutters the incantation.
Casting Time: 2 actions
Test: CL/AG/CN
Cost: 7 ASP
Range: 7 paces or caster
Duration: SP* times 3 CR



Effect: By casting this spell, the caster increases the recipient's speed tremendously. In combat, this grants an increase of 2 points each to AT and PA, and doubles the Speed and Base Initiative values. Also, Athletics TP is doubled for feats such as running and jumping. The caster may use the spell on herself or on others.

Mutander Salother
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster touches her target with both hands (or her Wand) and recites the formula.
Casting Time: 10 actions
Test: CL/IN/CN (+ RM)
Cost: (a) 18 ASP; (b) 31 ASP; (c) 49 ASP (one of which is lost permanently)
Range: Touch
Duration: (a) SP* hours; (b) SP* days; (c) permanent

Effect: The caster may turn a living creature into another living creature (or a plant) of smaller size. In cases of extreme size differences (Highlord's decision; for example, trying to transform an ogre into a mouse), a Difficulty Increase of 2 may be in order. If the target is to be transformed into a plant, a Difficulty Increase of 4 is always applied.

Depending on the intended duration of the transformation, different ASP costs apply (see "a," "b," and "c").

Paralyze
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster smacks her right fist into her left palm and recites the formula.
Casting Time: 2 actions

Test: IN/CH/ST (+ RM)
Cost: 13 ASP per target; if used against more than one target, 11 ASP per target
Range: 7 paces
Duration: SP* game turns.

Effect: The caster may magically immobilize one or more opponents by completely turning them into a substance with the hardness of a diamond and the strength of metal (the target's weight doesn't change, though). The magically held target may not move, but cannot be harmed by normal weapons, fire, or similar damage. Items held in a victim's hand or carried on her body are not petrified. It is possible to cast *paralyze* on several targets at once. In such a case, apply the highest RM of all targets plus the total number of targets as a Difficulty Increase to the Arcane Test.

Penetration
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster rests her forehead against the obstacle she wants to see through and concentrates.
Casting Time: At least 5 actions (see also Duration)
Test: CL/IN/CN
Cost: 4 ASP, plus 1 ASP per span of matter to be penetrated.
Range: See Cost
Duration: ca. 5 combat rounds (Casting Time plus 5 actions)

Effect: The caster may see through obstacles as if she were on the other side of the barrier. While magically penetrating an obstacle, she can do nothing else.

See True and Pure
Origin: Guild magic *and* elven heritage
Technique: The caster focuses her thoughts on her target and mutters the incantation.
Casting Time: 2 actions plus Duration
Test: CL/IN/CH (+ RM)
Cost: 4 ASP per 5 CR
Range: 7 paces
Duration: Equal to ASP invested

Effect: This spell allows the caster to divine the target's feelings and moods. The caster needs to see her target for the spell to take effect, although the target does not need to face the caster. If cast successfully, *See true and pure* grants a brief glimpse into the target's current emotional state, enabling her to identify basic feelings such as hostility toward the caster. The spell does not enable the caster to actually read minds, and does not work on emotionless creatures such as undead or demons. It cannot divine the emotions of animals.

The target's RM is lowered by half the sum of all Negative Attributes that might allow her to be "manipulated" (i.e., Arrogance, Curiosity, Prejudice, Vanity, Vengefulness, and Violent Temper); round down.

Silence Reigns Supreme
Origin: Elven heritage
Technique: The caster mutters the incantation, then touches a finger to her lips.
Casting Time: 2 actions
Test: CL/IN/CH
Cost: 1 ASP per 3-pace radius and game turn
Range: As per ASP invested, to a maximum of SP in paces
Duration: As per ASP invested

Effect: The caster creates a spherical zone in which air no longer carries sound waves. This applies to sound originating within the zone as well as sound entering from the outside. The zone may move with the caster, if desired.

Sleep of a Thousand Sheep
Origin: Elven heritage
Technique: The caster mimics yawning while uttering the incantation.
Casting Time: 7 actions
Test: CL/CH/CH (+ RM)
Cost: 7 ASP; if used against more than one target, 6 ASP per target
Range: Up to SP in paces
Duration: SP* times 30 minutes

Effect: The spell puts one or more living creatures to sleep. A target awakens immediately when attacked or shaken. The caster must see the target while casting. The target must be in a position of rest (sitting, standing still, lying down, or otherwise stationary) prior to the casting of the spell. When cast on more than one target, the Difficulty Increase equals the highest RM plus 1 per additional creature.

The caster may add more ASP than necessary to Force success of the spell's effect.

Spiritus Armoricus
Origin: Guild magic
Technique: The caster rubs her temples (or those of the creature she wants to enspell) and mutters the formula.
Casting Time: 5 actions
Test: CO/CL/CN
Cost: 12 ASP per game turn
Range: Caster, Touch
Duration: As per ASP investment (must be determined in advance)

Effect: This spell strengthens the recipient's self-esteem and his inner links between body and soul, and thus increases his RM by SP* points. Against farsight spells, RM is increased by SP* x 1.5 points (rounded down).

Thunderbolt
Origin: Guild magic *and* elven heritage
Technique: The caster points her left fist at her target and shouts the invocation.
Casting Time: 2 actions
Test: CL/AG/CN
Cost: 1 ASP per DP inflicted. If the caster does not have many ASP available, the target suffers only as many DP as the caster has ASP.
Range: 7 paces
Duration: Instant

Effect: The caster conjures up an invisible magical strike that bypasses any normal armor. Damage is 2d6 + SP*. The total number of DP is subtracted directly from the target's Vitality.

Unseen
Origin: Elven heritage
Technique: The caster pronounces the incantation and nods. All creatures who are to become invisible at the same time must be holding hands with the caster during the entire duration.
Casting Time: 3 actions per person
Test: CL/IN/AG (with a Difficulty Increase of 3 per additional person)
Cost: 5 ASP per person multiplied by the number of game turns desired
Range: Caster, Touch

Duration: As per ASP invested

Effect: The caster becomes briefly translucent and then completely disappears from view. The spell works only on living creatures, never on unliving matter such as clothing, equipment, or weapons (except when carried on a person). Invisible creatures can be perceived by other senses (smell, touch) and may leave tracks.

Wand Enchantments

Imbuing a Wand with a Wand Enchantment requires a long and arduous ritual lasting at least a full day. The activation of magical abilities (Second Wand Enchantment and onward) after the appropriate ritual has been completed counts as a free action.

The First Wand Enchantment

This is the most basic of Wand Enchantments. The caster uses it to create a mental bond between his Wand and himself, which enables him to imbue it with more spells later on. In addition, the First Wand Enchantment makes the Wand unbreakable; it can be destroyed only by very potent magic.

To succeed at this enchantment, the magician must pass a Talent Test against CL, CH, and DE, with a Difficulty Increase of 1; half the magician's CL Value (rounded down) may be used as TP for purposes of making up for failed rolls. In brief, this means a (CL/CH/DE) Test +1.

The enchantment requires the expenditure of 21 ASP, one of which is transferred into the Wand and thus permanently lost. All magicians begin play with a magician's staff already imbued with the First Wand Enchantment; thus, you do not need to subtract this point of ASP from your starting amount.

Learning the First Wand Enchantment is part of learning to be a magician, and so does not cost AP.

The Second Wand Enchantment

This enchantment turns the Wand into the magical equivalent of a torch which may be turned on or off at will, without using ASP. The Wand's fire is genuine, igniting flammable substances, but does not burn away at the Wand itself.

To successfully imbue his Wand with the Second Wand Enchantment, a magician must succeed at a (CL/CL/DE) Test +2 (with half his CO Value being used as TP). The enchantment requires the expenditure of 23 ASP. Learning the Second Wand Enchantment costs 150 AP.

The Third Wand Enchantment

Once this power has been bonded to the Wand, the magician can use it to turn his Wand into a rope measuring 10 paces in length. If the rope is thrown up into the air, it fastens itself around an inanimate item as specified by the magician, untying itself at the magician's command. The rope *cannot* be used to bind or entrap living creatures.

The Third Wand Enchantment requires the expenditure of 19 ASP and a successful (CL/CH/DE) Test +3 (with half the magician's DE Value being used as TP). Learning the Third Wand Enchantment costs 200 AP.

Elfsongs

An elf wanting to play or sing an Elfsong must succeed at a Play Instrument and/or Sing Test, as noted in the Elfsong's description. An elf physically unable to do so (no instrument, being tied up or gagged) cannot weave an Elfsong. Of course, being able to play the instrument in question helps a lot.

The Song of Caring

The elf weaves into her singing a number of questions concerning a person she cares for. By means of this song, she can learn whether the person in question is healthy, ill, or even dead, as well as other information. The answer to these questions arrives in the form of emotional images of a general nature. Real communication or concrete answers are not possible.

A *Song of Caring*, which usually lasts for 15 minutes, requires a Play Instrument Test +2, a Sing Test +2, and the expenditure of 5 ASP. To learn the Song of Caring, an elf must spend 50 AP; to acquire the Elfsong during hero creation, she must spend 1 GP.

Magical Melody

While performing this Elfsong, the elf puts herself into a trance, tuning herself to the astral streams flowing through her surroundings. Once she awakens from this trance, she finds her magical capabilities improved: During the next hour, all her Arcane Tests receive a Difficulty Decrease of 3.

Magical Melody requires a Play Instrument Test +4 and a Sing Test +4. The melody's trance lasts for about 30 minutes and costs 7 ASP.

To learn the *Magical Melody*, an elf must spend 100 AP; to acquire the Elfsong during hero creation, she spends 2 GP.

The Song of Peace

While the Elf is playing this song, she creates a zone of peace (with a radius of 50 paces) all around her which makes it impossible for intelligent creatures to initiate or sustain combat actions. Even animals lose their aggressive tendencies and calm down. Unfortunately, neither demons nor undead are affected by this song.

Creating and maintaining a zone of peace requires a Play Instrument Test +5 and the expenditure of 10 ASP per hour. At the beginning of each subsequent hour, the elf must repeat the Test and expend another 10 ASP if she wants the effect to continue.

To learn the Song of Peace, an elf must spend 250 AP; to acquire the Elfsong during hero creation, she must spend 1 GP.

The day after: Praios' Golden Disc rises majestically over the inn at the edge of the Imperial Forest and sends its rays through the colorful glass of the bull's-eye panes right onto the table already set for breakfast. Here the companions sit, accompanied by the Beilunk Rider and the ruling baron of the region. The fractured leg of the Beilunk Rider has already been completely healed during the night, owing to the combined magical healing skills of Mirhiban and Ranari. The two captured thieves are given into the custody of the baron's guard and are led away for questioning. The baron has decided to give the Beilunk Rider two of his guards as an escort on his way to Gareth. The matter seems very important.

Before leaving the inn, the baron turns to the companions one last time. "You have acted with courage and cleverness. I owe you my heartfelt thanks for this, as well as highest recognition of your deeds. If a Beilunk Rider is waylaid on my lands and a message of such importance is stolen from him, it would not bring me glory in the eyes of our Imperial Protector, as I am responsible for the safety of this region. And, as the intricately styled seal might hint, had the thieves been successful, the enemy would have gotten its dirty hands on military secrets.

"As you may know, even after their defeat at the very gates of Gareth, the orks still hold much of northern Aventuria. Each barony will be called to send its best and most talented people to Gareth, two months from now. The Imperial Protector intends to send spies into ork-held territory, to determine ways and means of driving the blackfurs out once and for all. There is secret talk of creating an entire border province to effect just this, and the name "Heroes' Trust" has been heard in court circles. It would appear that you could be among those who might be worthy of such a task. Think about it! Meanwhile, take this as my thanks."

He places a well-filled leather pouch on the table.

Even before the baron has closed the door behind himself, Angrax pours the contents of the bag onto the table and, with gleaming eyes and the tip of his tongue between his teeth, starts counting.

"Twenty ducats!" he proclaims, smiling broadly, and starts counting again.

"We divide that between us, Angrax, just to make that clear," Daria says, smiling but with a stern tone in her voice.

"Yes, yes, sure," the anvil dwarf grumbles, "we divide it. But let me count it another two or three times ...."

And humming happily, he continues to let the coins jingle between his palms.

"Now that we have a real elf with us," Daria proclaims, munching a piece of bread thickly spread with butter, "we should think again about the note on the wall there, this search for a lost elven city, right? I mean, glory this and glory that, but do you really want to go to the lands occupied by the orks? With Frenja at our side, I don't think we would make such good spies after all ..."

"You wanna get rid of me, you daughter of a stinking troll fart?" the Thorwalian asks, but the rude words only thinly disguise her tone of sadness and hurt.

Rondrian nudges her in a friendly way. "In the forest with the thieves we would have been lost without you, although we should discuss your combat strategies over a good glass of brandy. Concerning myself, I would be happy if I could count you among my colleagues in the future!"

"After all," Angrax adds, "we haven't decided the drinking contest yet!"

"Say ... does that mean," Trewman interrupts, "that we're about to decide to go on another adventure together?"

"To be honest," Mirhiban's melodic voice sings, "the last adventure sort of ambushed us, didn't it? But to answer your question—yes. I would like to journey onward with you for a while longer."

Saying this, she avoids looking at Ranari.

"As long as we do not spend our days in the narrow alleys of your stone cities, Feyam, I am also at your side," the elf says.

Frenja, her good humor back, thunders in her usual volume: "With all that sobbing and stuff, I'll get me eyes wet and me throat dry! Now—elves' treasure or baron's spies? I'd say, have a mug of ale first and then we'll see ...."

"Elven cities ..." Shafir whispers, and he stares, a dreamy look in his eyes, at the parchment pinned to the wall, "... lost cultures ... lizards ... dragons ..." and then, returning his attention to his companions, "Have I told you the story of my uncle and the Dragon yet? That's how I got my name, you must know!"

The Continent of Aventuria



Aventuria is a continent on the world of Ethra, a place similar to Earth. Many Aventurians think their world is a disc, but theories are blossoming everywhere that Ethra is actually a sphere.

From north to south, Aventuria runs about 3,000 Middenmiles. The broadest part measures about 2,000 Middenmiles from coast to coast. That may not seem very large, but consider that traveling from one end of the continent to the other using Aventurian means of transportation such as horses, mules, or walking takes at least three months.

In the following paragraphs you will find short descriptions of the most important regions of Aventuria. More in-depth information will be presented in the supplement *The World of Aventuria*.

The Eternal Ice, Yeti's Land, and the Far North

The northernmost Aventurian island is called Yeti's Land. Here, grim winter holds sway for most of the year, and only during a few short weeks which count as spring, summer, and fall all rolled into one does the ice retreat along the narrow coastal areas, whereas the mountains further inland are covered in eternal ice and snow. Yeti's Land is inhabited by its namesakes, the Snow Bogeys, commonly known as Yetis. Only a few men have dared travel to this island, but legends abound of what you might find there: legendary hoards of gold, lost elven cities, or even Evil itself.

To the north of Yeti's Land is only eternal ice (even in summer, the ice nearly reaches the island) as far as one can see. There are numerous rumors of the legendary "polar diamond" waiting to be discovered, or the "flying ships of the High Elves" that were lost in the ice.

The far north of the continent consists of the Ice Cliffs, the Ice Peaks, and the Misty Peaks. The Grimfrost Wastes are also found here, harsh mountainous areas where only a few brave souls dare live: mostly daring fur hunters, the Fjarningar Ice Barbarians, and a few scattered tribes of Ice Elves. Apart from these, no intelligent creature is dumb enough to stay here.

The Northern Steppes

Between the northern coastal mountain ranges and the Salamander Stones stretches a large plain. This endless steppe is dotted with a few scattered groves and some shrubbery, though in summer, the grass grows as tall as a man. Few real settlements are found here, and the few that exist consist of only a handful of huts. Towns are an even rarer phenomenon, and in such places (for example, the gold-digging town of Oblarasim) life is rougher and tougher than anyplace else.

Most of the people living here are nomads, such as the Nivese, a nomadic people who migrate along with their large herds of Karen (long-horned animals with thick, shaggy fur, comparable to real-world reindeer) from their southern winter camps to the summer meadows in the north every spring, and back again in the fall.

The Brazen Sword

In the far northeast, a mighty mountain range marks the boundary of the continent of Aventuria: the Brazen Sword. Many have tried to scale the giant mountains, the highest peaks being 12,000 paces high, but as yet none have succeeded. The lands beyond the Brazen Sword are known only from ancient legends and myths.

The rugged valleys are scoured for copper and tin, but resources are scarce. Marble is also mined, and alchemists pay a lot of gold for the very pure sulfur that is found in this region. It is arguable whether the people who ruin their health in the poisonous fumes make any real profit from this kind of trade, as they tend to fall ill and die young.

The biggest mystery of the Brazen Sword is the ancient dragon Fuldigor, who is supposed to be so big that a copse of thousand-year-old oaks grows on his back.

From time to time, expeditions are sent to find Fuldigor, or the All-Wise, as he is also known. Few people have come back from such voyages, and it is even rarer that anyone can actually tell a tale of getting the advice of Fuldigor at all.

The Fountland

The natural boundaries of the Fountland are the sea to the south, the Brazen Sword to the east, the Dragonstones, the Red Sickle, and the Green Plains to the west, and the mountain range at Bjalthorn to the north. Fount and Wealbeck, the most important traveling routes, are the lifelines of this Noble Republic. Its capital is Festum, where the Noble Marshal resides and is elected by the noble Congregation every five years. Festum is very cosmopolitan, and its inhabitants try to keep pace with the fashions and cultures of Gareth and Vinsalt, the capital cities of the Horasian Empire and the Middenrealm.

The further north one goes, the deeper the forests become, the longer the winter season gets, and the wilder the lands grow. In Sevirya, where Firun casts a snowy blanket more than a pace deep, the Bronnjars are the undisputed rulers who reign over the lands and their serfs with iron fists. Not only the forests and wildlife are sturdy, but also the human inhabitants who are especially renowned for their drinking prowess. The rough climate is a good reason to warm up from the inside, and from the lowliest peasant up to the highest Bronnjars, people drink as if there was no tomorrow. If you excel at this activity, they will honor you as a national hero.

The Salamander Stones

The Salamander Stones, a chain of mountains as high as 3,000 paces, run along the southern boundaries of the Nivese Steppe from east to west. Their deep dales and canyons are riddled by clear brooks and rills, and their slopes are covered by thick turquoise fairytale forests. The Silvan Elves call this wild region their home. They say you can find their villages only if the inhabitants want you to, which is very rare.

The lake dwellings of the Lea Elves lie in the depressions of the Kvill. These elves are a bit more open toward humans when compared to their relatives from the Salamander Stones, and if you happen to meet an elf in Aventuria, chances are she is a Lea Elf. Kvirasim, one of the most interesting towns in Aventuria, should be mentioned here: It consists mostly of tree houses. Both humans and elves live here.

Orkland and Svellt Valley

Stone Oak Forest, Great Olochtai, and Firun's Wall surround the dry steppe, where trees are scarce, as if trying to hinder its dark brown and black-furred inhabitants, the orks, from leaving the grasslands. This interpretation, of course, was made by humans, who wished the black-furred creatures had never ventured forth and waged bloody war on the human population in the Orkstorm.

Orks live in tribes. They do not practice agriculture, but they hunt (steppe cattle and Orkland rabbits) and keep some cattle. They know much about forging, but are, foremost, hunters and warriors, so that their artisans create sturdy, useful things rather than mere decorative articles. They view conquered enemies in the same, practical way: Those who are strong enough may live on as slaves.

The valleys of the river Bodir and its tributaries are far wetter than the steppe, so the swamps and wetlands play host to a few Achaz, lizard people who usually live far more to the south.

As mentioned, the orks only recently led an attack against the humans and managed to get as far as Gareth. The first cities that the blackfur army reached were Deepenborg, Lowangen, and Gashok. These were conquered and still owe tribute to their new lords. Tjolmar was not conquered, and was spared any pillaging because (as the rumor goes) its dwarfs' betrayal bought the town its freedom. Run-down Enqui wasn't even interesting enough for the blackfurs—no wonder, as most of its population consists of wanted criminals and its harbor is strictly avoided unless you're about to die. Apart from this, Enqui is under the rule of the Thorwalians, whom even the orks seem to fear.

Thorwal

If you like loud hollering, proper brawling, and boozing until you fall off your chair, then you'll like the Thorwalian lands. The giant Thorwalians are a very lively kind of people!

Thorwal is the only nation where almost all rulers are elected freely, if you can call this odd assortment of mostly independent settlements a political entity at all. The "capital," also called Thorwal, is renowned for its cosmopolitan ways and the wizard Academy of Clear Sight. Other important places are Prem, where the most famous schnapps of Aventuria is distilled (known as Premian Fire), and Olport, where the forefathers of the Thorwalians are said to have come from legendary Hjaldingard, in Gyldenland.

Thorwalian society has always been characterized by absolute equality of the sexes. Men and women have the same duties and are equally good at defending themselves. In the inland area, sheep breeding and agriculture are the mainstays of the population, whereas along the coast, people live from fishing and sea trade. Thorwalians are said to be the best sailors in Aventuria. One should not forget that Thorwalians are also feared as pirates, especially in the Horasian Empire. A deep enmity exists between them and the slavers' cities of the south, especially Al'Anfa.

Nostria and Andergast

Nostria and Andergast are two small kingdoms in western Aventuria, sandwiched between Thorwal and the Middenrealm. Nostria is bounded by the Sea of Seven Winds, the Ingval River and its tributary, the Ornib, and by the Tommel River. Andergast lies to the east of Nostria. Nostria and Andergast have been at war for almost 1,900 years, almost since the first day of their founding. They have been at peace now for some years and one might think that the age of feuds is over, but battles lasting generations have bled both countries, and more than just one generation will be needed for them to recover.

The inhabitants of the Middenrealm traditionally mocked the countless wars, battles, and skirmishes. The people from Andergast and Nostria, on the other hand, didn't think it was too funny joking about poor peasant armies trying to defend a little oak copse against the "enemy." They say that an old pitchfork causes the same kind of death as a shiny steel sword. One village, Joborn, has suffered particularly. This village has changed ownership so often during the centuries of war that it has become impossible to tell on which side it originally belonged.

Both countries have an abundance of forests and wildlife. The ork wars have not spared Andergast—it still must cope with the devastation wreaked by the orks, while Nostria always gets into trouble with its Thorwalian neighbors, who occupy Salza and northwestern Nostria at the time.

The Middenrealm

The political entity called the Middenrealm, or New Empire, is the largest state of Aventuria. It stretches from the coast of the Sea of Seven Winds between Windhague and Havena to the Black Sickle, the Troll Peaks, and Perricum on the Sea of Pearls.

The supreme ruler of the feudal state of the Middenrealm is (in theory) the Emperor (right now, Imperial Protector Prince Brin), who rules from his throne in Gareth, the largest city in Aventuria (almost 200,000 inhabitants). Nominally, the entire nation belongs to the Emperor, who assigns parts of it to his vassals as fiefs. Those so enfiefed owe the Emperor their thanks and loyalty and in return get the Empire's protection. These provincial lords form the next tier of power in the Middenrealm. They, in turn, assign smaller fiefs to loyal earls who, in turn, hold sway over a number of barons. Below the baronial tier is an almost indeterminable body of lower nobility.

The realm is divided into twelve Provinces: Albernia, Almada, Beilunk, Darpatia, Garetia, Kosh, the Northern Marches, Meadows, Griffinsford, Warunk, Windhague, and Tobria.

The **Kingdom of Albernia**, which lies to the west, is located on the Sea of Seven Winds north of the Great River. Its capital Havena is the most important port on the Sea. Nowhere else in Aventuria can you find as many fairies as in Albernia, and there are rumors that even the Great River is actually a creature from the fairy realm.

South of Albernia is the **Margravedom of Windhague.** Harben, the capital of this province, is one of the most important naval harbors in the Middenrealm, home of the Empire's Western Fleet.

East of Windhague, you will find the **Northern Marches.** The river section between Elvenhus and Elenvina has gained a certain infamy among river traders, not only due to its many rocks and rapids but also due to persistent river pirates. Also famous are the secret machinations of its druidic circles and its rather too ambitious dukes.

The **Kingdom of Kosh** lies to the east of the Northern Marches, separated from that province by the Kosh Mountains; the province also claims the foothills of the Higher Anvil. Kosh is one of the strongholds of Aventuria's dwarfs, who make up roughly

one-quarter of the population and live in so-called mountain kingdoms. Although the dwarfs are nominally subjects of the Emperor, only their respective King of the Mountain may pass judgment on a dwarf.

The **Kingdom of Almada**, the southernmost province of the New Empire, stretches north of the river Yaquir. Its strategic position between the Horasian Empire and the imperial capital of Gareth makes it a crucial linchpin in Imperial politics and economy—important enough for the Imperial Protector (and the Emperor before him) to give Almada's stubborn inhabitants (many of whom are of Tulamidyan descent) a lot of leeway. Almada also serves as a bulwark against the Novadis from the Khôm Desert, who try time and again to spread their belief in Rastullah with fire and sword.

Kosh's neighbor to the northeast is the province of **Griffinsford**, once a bountiful land. Both province and city suffered terribly during the Orkstorm, when the city was captured by orkish hordes and the countryside was ravaged by marauding troops. Although the invaders have been driven from most of the province, you are still bound to encounter the occasional troop of stragglers or even whole pockets of orkish resistance.

The core province of the Middenrealm is the **Kingdom of Garetia** located to the east of Kosh, whose sovereign resides in the imperial capital of Gareth. Most of this province is made up of fertile fields, cultivated centuries ago. The activities of Garetia's inhabitants are largely concentrated on one single effort: supporting the imperial capital of Gareth and its nearly 200,000 citizens. Garetia is steeped in history and legend, right down to the Demon Fallow south of Gareth, the site of the First Demon Battle in 1561 before Haal—a place forever marred by the magical energies unleashed there.

Perricum, a harbor town at the mouth of the Darpat River, is also part of Garetia. The supreme command of the empire's Sea of Pearls Navy is headquartered here.

North of Garetia lies the province of **Darpatia**. It is a region of wide fields and meadows, renowned for the Darpat bull. There are extensive woodlands in the east. Most of the province is flat, except for the mountainous east that rises up to a thousand paces in the region of the Troll Peaks. The river Radrom forms the boundary with the province of Warunk. The Darpatians are usually regarded as a friendly and open sort of people. **Rommilys**, the capital of Darpatia, is located on the Darpat River. **Warkhome**, a garrison town in northern Darpatia, is mostly known for military matters, including the well-known Royal Warkhomian Academy of Strategy and Tactics.

North of Darpatia (in fact, the northernmost of all provinces of the Middenrealm) is the aptly named province of **Meadows**, the center of Aventurian cattle breeding. Here, cattle barons hold sway over large plots of lush meadows, reside in splendid manors (even if not of noble birth), enjoy their wealth, and apart from that hate one anothers' guts. Meadows stretches from the Darkencrest along Lake Lamprey, up to the Red Sickle.

North and east of Warunk is **Tobria**, the Middenrealm's largest province. It defends the New Empire from the goblins and other evil creatures living in the Black Sickle. Just ten years ago, the city of Ysilia and large tracts of the province were almost totally destroyed by a large-scale incursion of ogres. Tobria also marks the Middenrealm's border with the Fountland, where a constant struggle for possession of the city of Vallusa, just on the other bank of the Misa River, takes place. Most of Tobria is sparsely settled, and the population clusters around the cities.

Mendena became Tobria's capital after the devastation of Ysilia. This well-defended, bustling port city has around 3,000 inhabitants.

Beilunk (7,950 inhabitants) is also called the Pearl of the Radrom Valley, although the name is probably meant ironically since the city is mostly surrounded by swamps. Its economic importance is due to its position at the mouth of the Radrom, opening into the Gulf of Perricum.

The small Margravedom of Beilunk lies south of Tobria with the capital Beilunk (c. 8,000 inhabitants) at the mouth of the Radrom itself being one of the major ports on the Gulf of Perricum. Also to the south of Tobria some miles up the Radrom you'll find Warunk, a margravedom – or better: a city-state with some surrounding baronies ruled by an eccentric but peaceful botanicist and famed for its cheese.

Arania

Arania is the largest nation of the Tulamides, located from east of the Rasthul Wall to south of the Middenrealm's eastern parts. The border between the New Empire and Arania runs 50 Middenmiles south of Perricum. To the south, the Gadang, the Mhanadi, and the Gorian Desert form the boundaries with Mhanadistan.

Arania is a nation of ancient traditions and mysteries. Monuments such as the tomb houses of the Mage-Moguls can still be found in idyllic yew forests and secluded date groves, holding unknown treasures and works of magic. Arania is also a nation of fertile wheat fields and bountiful fruit and wine gardens. Only in Goria, home to the inhospitable Gorian Desert and its tough nomads who subsist on ostrich breeding, will you find drought and barrenness in Arania.

Arania has become an important commercial power, not only due to its high yield of produce and craftsmanship, but also due to but also due to the Aranian Principal Trade Company which controls a significant part of the caravans to the south and west and the shipping between the Gulf of Perricum and the mouth of the Szinto river. In Arania, someone who makes a fortune by trading or adventuring may even buy his way into the ranks of nobility, since earning money comes naturally to all Aranians and is regarded as a virtue.

Women are held in high regard in Arania and, contrary to the situation in the southerly Tulamidyan nations, they wield considerable power, controlling the treasury and dominating trade.

Arania's capital city of **Zorgan**, located where the Barun-Ulah flows into the Gulf of Perricum, presents itself as a center of culture and learning, but also as an example of a well-fortified city. Around 30 percent of its roughly 14,000 inhabitants are Middenlanders.

Maraskan

Maraskan, separated from the mainland by 40 Middenmiles of Marasakan Sound, is a large island, 700 Middenmiles long and more than 200 Middenmiles broad at its widest point. The island is covered in thick jungles into which clearings have been cut and cities and roads have been built. Maraskan's spine, though, is a huge mountain chain, rising up to more than 6,000 paces at its highest peaks in the north.

Until the year 6 before Haal, Maraskan was an independent kingdom, thriving on trade with the Fountland, the Tulamidyan cities, and the Middenrealm. The invasion by the Imperial Legions of Emperor Reto took the island by complete surprise and forced King Frumold into exile at Festum; until the present year, Maraskan has been ruled by duke Herdin, a loyal vassal first of the Emperor and now the Imperial Protector. The fact that the island's potentates are too divided to ally against him has greatly helped him; should Maraskan ever ally against the Middenrealm, Herdin would be swept away like a leaf in the wind. Still, perpetual jungle warfare is the order of the day for the Imperial troops on the island.

Life in Maraskan is a lot like life in the Middenrealm or Arania, with the exception of the belief in the Twin Gods, Rur and Gror. The priests of the Twin Gods still have great influence over the rural population. The cult's most holy site is at **Boran**, a city still held by Prince Denderan, son of former King Frumold and unofficial leader of the resistance against the Middenrealm.

The Horasian Empire

For most of its existence, the political entity that is now called the Horasian Empire was known as the Fairfield. It stretches from the western coast on the Sea of Seven Winds from Grangor to Drol and is protected from the searing heat of the Khôm Desert to the east by the Gold Rocks and the Eternans. Fertile land and a temperate climate are the reasons for this region's wealth, creating a land where many Aventurian traders have their headquarters.

The Eagle Throne of Horas ("Horas" is a title comparable to "Emperor") has its seat in Vinsalt, built upon the ruins of Bosparan at the Yaquir River, which had once been demolished by the Garetians. It has not been forgotten what the Middenrealm had done to the old capital, so that a traditional enmity between the two great realms has emerged.

The Horasian Empire is regarded (and regards itself) as the epitome of culture. Countless Horasian noble houses copy the fashion of Vinsalt; all swords whose blades are broader than two fingers are scorned as barbaric. It is also a country of secret societies and lodges. While in other regions an enemy is usually defeated in an open battle, Horasians prefer intrigue. This doesn't mean, however, that a Horasian nobleman wouldn't be able to defend his honor with sharp steel.

The Cyclops Islands also belong to the Horasian Empire; they are a province ruled by the Sea King in Rethis on Hylailos. On these islands live the last of the legendary one-eyed giants, masters of the forge, who gave their name to the region.

The Mhanadi Valley

The Mhanadi is one of the most important rivers in Aventuria. The Tulamides live on the fertile river meadows sandwiched between the confluence of the Gadang and the Mhanadi rivers and the Mhanadi delta at Kunchom. They are one of Aventuria's native tribes, differing in appearance from the average descendant of the Gyldenland immigrants in their mostly black hair and dark complexions. The Mhanadi valley is an extremely fertile region where rice and other vegetables grow and where fruit is abundant. The fields are so fertile that they can feed whole cities. The biggest of these is Fasar, a large crucible of peoples, famous not only for its legendary rich and powerful Gracious Ones, but also for its dark wizard academy, Al'Achami.

Other cities on the Mhanadi are Kunchom, Rashdul, and Mherwed. Mherwed is mostly populated by Novadis believing in Rastullah; fairytalelike Rashdul is ruled by the Wizard Sultan Hasrabal, and Kunchom, with its annual juggling festival, attracts not only people in need of entertainment, but also thieves and other rabble.

The Khôm Desert and the Caliphate

The Khôm Desert, the largest of its kind in Aventuria, is home to the Novadis, proud riders and desert warriors with a firm belief in Rastullah, who unveiled his 99 Commandments at the oasis at Keft some 250 years ago. Since then, they strive to defend their faith and to convert others if possible. The Caliph of Unau (now residing in Mherwed) is the mundane ruler, and Mherwed and Unau are its capital cities while Keft is its religious center. The Caliph governs the tribal sultans on the one hand, and on the other, the emirs and beys (roughly comparable to the Middenrealm's counts and barons, but "civil servants" of the Caliph, not independent rulers) who rule the desert border regions and cities such as Mherwed.

One of the most important of these borderlands is the Shadif, renowned in all of Aventuria for its magnificent horses with souls of fire and elegance.

Al'Anfa and the Southern City States

Al'Anfa, Aventuria's second-largest city and the center of slave trade, is not known as the "Plague Boil of the South" for nothing. It is home to one of the two largest temples dedicated to Boron, the Death God. In Al'Anfa, a special rite is known which involves narcotic weeds and human sacrifice.

Nowhere else is the difference between rich and poor so visible as in Al'Anfa. Not that the poor are any poorer here than anywhere else, but the rich are just utterly, stinking rich. Compared to an Al'anfanian grand (one of the members of the most important families of the city), a Middenrealmian duke looks suspiciously like a have-not.

The traditional enemy of Al'Anfa is Brabak. Just a short while ago, the city on the mouth of the Mysob was able to win a war against its huge rival. Battles and permanent readiness to defend itself, however, forces Brabak to spend too much money on military matters, so that the city becomes poorer and poorer. A lot of "free thinkers" flock to this city to study at the Academy of Black Magic, where they feel "free from stupid conventions."

The other cities of the region, such as Chorhop, Sylla, and H'Rabaal, are former colonies of the Middenrealm but are now independent, like the small jungle kingdom of Trahelia. Hot-Alem is the only region that is still left to Gareth.

Steaming Jungles

The Rain Mountain range, over 6,000 paces high, marks the southern border of the continent, and its slopes and valleys are covered in thick rain forests. If you want to survive here, where giant constrictor snakes silently glide, crocodiles lurk in the shallow waters, poisonous vipers tend to crawl under your blankets and into your boots, or mighty saber-tooth tigers prey on the lonely traveler, you need courage and you need to know everything about this region's plants and wildlife. The best teachers of such knowledge are, of course, the woodsmen who live here, called Moha (this is a generalization, as this is only the name of their largest tribe). But

Emperors, Armies, and Demons—
the History of Aventurian Civilization

Los and Sumu
The primeval god Los killed the earth giantess Sumu at the dawn of time. His tears shed from remorse turned into the living creatures who now inhabit the world, and his drops of blood turned into the gods.

The Gyldenland Settlers
About 2,650 years ago, the Hjaldings from northern Gyldenland landed in today's Olport. They are the forefathers of the Thorwalians. A hundred years later, settlers reached the coast of the Fairfield.

Bosparan
Legendary capital of the Old Empire

Horas
Divine ruler who founded the realm of the Gyldenland settlers. He appeared in 2485 before Haal, and was apotheosized 500 years later.

Emperors of Peace
A dynasty of wise emperors ruling from 1849 until 1612 before Haal.

Fran-Horas, "the Bloody One"; First Demon Battle
In 1561 before Haal, the Battle of the Imperial Army was waged under Fran-Horas against the rebellious Garetian army. The battle did not bring any decision, so the emperor summoned the Archdemons.

Dark Ages
About 1550 before Haal until 1150 before Haal, period of emperor assassinations, decay, and pagan cults.

Hela-Horas, the Beautiful Empress
Ascended to the throne in 1010 before Haal, when the empire once again flourished. Declared herself Divine Empress against the will of the Praios clergy. The Second Demon Battle ended her reign.

The Fall of Bosparan
993 before Haal: After the Second Demon Battle, the Garetian army followed the fleeing enemy back to Bosparan. They razed and plundered the old Imperial City. Gareth was declared the new capital.

Old and New Empire
The Bosparan Empire is usually called the Old Empire. Today, this name is also sometimes used for the Fairfield or the Horasian Empire. After the Old Empire, the New Empire followed with its capital at Gareth, today's Middenrealm.

Emperor Raul
Raul was the first emperor of the New Empire. The traditional crown of the Garetian Emperors was named after him. He reigned until 940 before Haal.

Priest-Kings
Dynasty of Praios priests who ruled the New Empire with an iron fist. Their era was ended by an uprising of the population.

Rohal the Sage
Probably the most powerful wizard in Aventurian history. He led the rebellion against the Priest-Kings and ruled the New Empire from 527 before Haal until 404 before Haal.

War of the Wizards
403 before Haal until 398 before Haal: A devastating war was waged among the wizard guilds for the succession of Rohal.

Oath of Baliiri
249 before Haal: Oath of the noblemen of the Fairfield sworn at the hunting castle of Baliiri near Vinsalt to fight for independence of the region from Gareth. The ensuing civil war ended with a victory for the Fairfielders.

Haal
Last emperor of the Middenrealm. He mysteriously vanished during the 17th year of his reign while on a hunt in the Fountland.

Ogre Battle
10 Haal: Battle at the Troll Gate between Black Sickle and the Troll Peaks. Galotta, former court wizard, lined up an army of more than one thousand ogres and wanted to march against Gareth.

Orkstorm
17 to 19 Haal: Battle campaign of the orks, starting from Orkland and reaching to the northern Middenrealm.

these copper-skinned, small but agile inhabitants of the wilderness do not like contact with the pale people. Only very rarely will trade force them to interact with the "trespassers" in order to barter their famous Moha poisons for iron weapons.

Altoum and the Forest Islands

Snowy white beaches, lonely coves, lush green jungle—suddenly, a hail of arrows suddenly rains down on you. The Forest Islands, a remote chain far from any kind of civilization, are a favorite hiding place of the Southern Pirates. You can get treasure maps in every third-rate pub between Havena and Neersand, and some of these might actually be real.

The only traces of civilization among the Forest Islands are woodsmen who have settled Token, Iltoken, Sokkina, and Benbukkala. The reason for this can be seen in the wealth of spices this region has to offer: Trade of the precious substances is mostly in the hands of the Fountlandian merchant house, Stoerrebrandt. Many woodsmen live in the inner parts of the islands, but usually shun contact with the self-declared white rulers of their home.

One of the ruling factions in the Charybbean Sea, as this region is also called, is the Black Serpents, a group of pirates counting several hundred members, whose headquarters is in Charypso on Altoum. Other powers are the colonial fleets of the Fountland, the Horasian Empire, and Al'Anfa as well as some daring pirate captains and quite a few Thorwalian Ottas who defend their profit with teeth and claw.

The History of Aventuria

We begin our short history of Aventuria (seen from the vantage point of Middenrealmian historians, that is) some 2,500 years ago. This is not the beginning of the reckoning of years, of course, because even then, the mythical fight of the creator-entities **Los** against **Sumu** had taken place many eons before. The world had already had its share of wars among gods and giants; dragon and troll kingdoms had prospered and were lost again, and many more events had come to pass that are now lost in the mists of time.

Some 2,500 years ago, then, settlers from **Gyldenland** reached the shores of today's Fairfield. These were the ancestors of most of the people who now live between Paavi and Brabak. There were already native Aventurians living on the continent at that time—the woodsmen in the southern jungles, the Nivese in the northern steppes, and the Tulamides in the Rashtul's Wall and the Mhanadi Valley—but the culture and civilization of these Gyldenlandish settlers influenced most of the peoples of today's Aventuria.

In the year 2485 before Haal, the divine **Horas**—who is still revered as an "arch saint" in the lands between Grangor and Drôl—founded a realm with **Bosparan** as the capital. He reigned for 500 years, and his empire kept expanding even after his death. Horas' empire sent out expeditions, followed by armies, and conquered new territories. Trolls, dwarfs, and goblins tried to withstand the conquerors, but were not able to stop their expansion. Cities like Punin, Havena, and Gareth were founded at that time.

Around 1870 before Haal, Belen-Horas ascended to the throne and proclaimed himself Divine Emperor—arousing the anger of the gods, they say. As the empire lacked armies to control its immense borders, the lands were ravaged by trolls. Then the ogres, giantlike devourers of human flesh, managed to invade as far as Gareth and had a lavish, horrible feast among the population.

After the death of the regent, more peaceful times finally arrived. For almost 250 years, the so-called Peace Emperors reigned. Haldur-Horas ended this period. He thought that Gareth didn't pay enough taxes to the metropolis of Bosparan and so sent out an army to subdue the city on the Gardel. Two months later, he was murdered.

His son, Fran the Bloody One, wanted to avenge his father. He imprisoned and executed Garetians wherever and whenever he could, and a bloody civil war ensued. The Imperial Army was unable to defeat the Garetian troops, and Fran-Horas summoned the Archdemons, who destroyed both the Garetian armies and his own armies. This battle became known as the First Demon Battle. Only a handful of people survived. Fran-Horas refused to speak or eat again, and finally vanished. Four years later, his horrified shrieks suddenly rang in the palace for hours. No one has seen him since, and his body was never found.

Now the Dark Ages commenced. Orks came pouring into the Empire and no army was left to drive them off. Religion and science were defeated, and for hundreds of years, barbarism and the darkest pagan cults reigned supreme. Only when elves and dwarfs allied against the orks could the blackfurs be defeated.

The Empire slowly recuperated, until **Hela-Horas**, also called the Beautiful Empress, declared herself a goddess—against the will of the Praios clergy in Gareth. She ordered the rebelling fanatics burnt in public.

Again, the Garetians managed to muster an army. They marched against Bosparan. Hela's troops approached them, and at **Brig-Lo**, both armies met each other. Hela also summoned the demons, who tried to destroy the Garetians in the **Second Demon Battle**. But the gods would not watch these utterly evil events any longer. Four warriors clad in golden armor—rumor still holds that they were Praios, Rondra, Efferd, and Ingerimm in avatar form—marched with the Garetians and drove off the demon spawn. The Bosparan army panicked and ran away, and the Garetians followed them up to Bosparan and razed the city. Only the palace walls finally stopped the Garetians.

Suddenly, the sky opened up and lightning struck a breach into the walls so that the way to the Empress's quarters was free. With one last effort, Hela tried to summon a skeleton army. As she was about to send it against the attackers, a voice was heard that said, "It ends here, Hela." The Empress slipped from her throne, dead.

This was the end of the Old and the Beginning of the **New Empire**. Gareth was declared the capital, and the former army leader **Raul** was crowned emperor.

During the ensuing years, known as the era of the **Wise Emperors**, peace ruled. Maraskan and the Fountland were settled. Emperor Ugdalf, unfortunately, died very young, when his son Rudo was only three years old. A council of priests took over the realm's rule until Rudo came of age—and actually beyond, because the heir to the throne was killed the day before his coronation.

The followers of Praios saw this as a chance to seize power and strengthen their place at the top of the Twelvegods' churches.

Because the knights and followers of Rondra would surely not agree with this, the Praios priests closed down the Lioness's temples one after another and hunted and killed their clergy. The common people had a hard time under the rule of the **Priest-Kings**, groaning under the weight of taxes and tithes, called "God's Thanks." Starvation and finally an open uprising were the results.

This rebellion was led by an old man: **Rohal the Sage**. He managed to drive out the Priest-Kings. After accomplishing this, he ascended to the throne himself and stayed there for more than 120 years. Education and science once again flourished, elven poetry became the fashion of the day, and countless wizarding schools were founded. But the population eventually grew suspicious of Rohal's long reign. Slogans erupted, such as "Get rid of the Demon on the Emperor's Throne!"

"Fare thee well!" was the simple answer of the sage. He left the throne room and was never again seen in Gareth. Suddenly, the realm was left without a ruler. A powerful wizards' guild proclaimed that Rohal was one of them, and that they owned the right to the throne. Another guild proclaimed the same, and thus the **Wars of the Wizards** ensued. After a great cost in lives and devastation, the Wars of the Wizards ended without a victor. A council of noblemen and generals declared in the "Garetian Pamphlet" that a member of the House of Gareth should be Emperor again.

The New Empire had reached the zenith of its power. Again, the orks came, and only tribal disagreements among the blackfurs saved human civilization. One province after another declared independence from Gareth, first of all being the Fairfield. The noblemen of the Old Empire swore at the hunting castle **Baliiri** near Vinsalt that they would not put down their weapons until they had thrown off the rule of the Garetians. A civil war raged for eight years and ended with the utter defeat of Gareth. The **Peace of Kuslik** only let the New Empire make clear that the new ruler at Vinsalt was not allowed to call himself emperor.

From then on, the Empire started to fall apart rapidly. The Fountland, Maraskan, the Khôm Desert, Al'Anfa, and other cities in the South became independent. Only when Emperor Reto ascended to the throne did times seem to improve. In the year 6 before Haal, he was able to win back Maraskan. His son **Haal** was able to hold the island, and he also finished the **Ogre Battle** as the victorious party. During the seventeenth year of his reign, though, he suddenly and mysteriously vanished—some say he fell victim to a hunting accident, while others claim he was deified. Whatever the truth, after this unfortunate event misfortune again seemed to rule supreme. Count Answin of Ravensmound tried to contest the right of succession of Haal's son Brin in order to occupy the throne himself, causing another civil war. Brin's faithful friends put an end to this, however, and the prince finally took over the heavy burden of his father's legacy. As his father's death had not yet been proven, he didn't assume the title of Emperor, but that of an Imperial Protector. Queen Amene of Vinsalt used the confusion in the Middenrealm to declare herself Horas again.

The most recent momentous event in Aventurian history, the effects of which are still felt in the present time, was the **Orkstorm**. This simple word succinctly describes the Second Ork War that began on 23 Peraine in 17 Haal (the first day of the Great Year 2000 according to orkish reckoning) and has not really ended yet.

On that fateful day, two ork invasion forces sallied forth from the Orkland: roughly 10,000 orks out of the Thash Gap and an additional 5,000 south of Hilval's Head. Tjolmar immediately granted free passage to the orks in exchange for being spared; Deepenborg fell on 2 Rahja, Lowangen was surrounded on 24 Rahja, Yrramis fell on 6 Praios of year 18 Haal, and fortress Griffinstone was consumed the next day.

After the virtual obliteration of the Svelltian City League, the orks were content with consolidating their power for a time. Lowangen was forced to pay tribute but was spared. The orkish forces, led by **Sadrak Whassoi**, the "Black Marshal," regrouped, and part of the Korogai tribe settled in the Rorwhed. In Phex of 18 Haal, imperial border troops led by Prince Brin and Marshal Rastan scored their first victories at the northern edge of the Darkencrest and in the area between Darkencrest and Kosh.

The rest of the year saw ork attacks against Trallop and Griffinsford, all of which were thwarted until the beginning of 19 Haal. The reinforced human troops prevented an ork flanking maneuver at the **Battle of Rhodenstone,** in which the Order of Keeping held the Darkenbrook and prevented Prince Brin's troops from being surrounded.

A new ork offensive began on 19 Praios of 19 Haal. Around 1,500 Kologai, led by Sharraz Garthai, charged into the camps of Brin's Orkwarder Legion and massacred the troops (fortunately, the prince was on his way to Griffinsford with part of his forces at the time). The Tordochai began their march on Griffinsford on the Imperial Road on 21 Praios. On 28 Praios, more than 10,000 orks led by Sadrak Whassoi crossed the Shadow Pass and cut directly into the heart of the margravedom of Griffinsford. On the same day, Marshal Rastan's Thuranian Legion was wiped out in the Battle of the Fog Stone. In the following weeks, the blackfurs won more and more ground until the Tordochai captured Griffinsford on 18 Rondra, almost without resistance.

The date 24 Rondra saw the beginning of the **Battle of Orkwall,** which ended in harsh defeat for the imperial troops, who were forced to fall back to Warkhome. Almost the entire margravedom of Griffinsford was annexed by the orks and renamed **Darkenmarch**, with Sharraz Garthai as its ruler.

Meanwhile, the imperial regiments combined with elite units from Maraskan, regarded as the most combat-experienced troops in the entire empire. Albernia and Darpatia, which were still dealing with the aftermath of Answin of Ravenmound's bid for power, were unable to send reinforcements. The same held true for Meadows (which was threatened directly by another ork force) and Almada (which needed to guard its southern borders against a possible invasion by Queen Amene).

While thousands of orks engaged in a highly visible feint attack on Warkhome to give their marshal more room for maneuvering, the main ork contingent embarked down the Width (a tributary of the Great River). At Ferdok, the orks turned west along the Rakula in the direction of Gareth but were held up by the thaw and the heroic resistance of the monks of Marano.

Finally, on 1 and 2 Phex, the **Second Battle of Silk Meadows** took place. It was long and hard, but the imperials finally carried the day. The orks were routed, but many managed to fall back into the Darkenmarch. Several retaliatory attacks by the imperials in Ingerimm and Rahja in 19 Haal finally resulted in the retaking of Griffinsford; the orks were driven back to **Bearswold**.

This is the situation in the spring of 20 Haal, the time in which *The Dark Eye* game is set. All in all, around 25,000

humans and 10,000 orks probably died during the Orkstorm. The Middenrealm and northern Aventuria will probably suffer the aftereffects of this event for years, even decades, to come. The northern reaches of the Middenrealm and the pitiful remains of the Svelltian City League are rife with opportunities for adventure. Griffinsford will be rebuilding for years. Yrramis is still held by the orks, while Deepenborg and Lowangen pay hefty tributes. Tjolmar has become somewhat isolated due to its "betrayal" at the beginning of the war.

The Gods of Aventuria



The Origin of the Gods

"At the beginning of time, the primeval god Los wandered through the Eternity of Nothingness and met the earth giantess Sumu, who had created herself. Her appearance deeply angered Los, as he had thought himself the only being in Eternity, and thus he decided to kill Sumu. The earth giantess fought bravely and wounded Los before he managed to defeat her. Twelve drops of blood fell from Los's wound onto the dead body of Sumu. Suddenly, the primeval god felt remorse for what he had done, and he shed many a thousand tears that also fell on the earth giantess. From the twelve drops of blood, the Twelvegods emerged, and from the teardrops, the humans and all living creatures."

This is the official Aventurian creation myth that the Churches of the Twelvegods teach; this is the most popular religion in Aventuria. We want to take a closer look at these beliefs. Priests of the Twelvegods are usually called deonts; they can work wonders that invite the gods to meddle in the affairs of mortals.

The Twelve form a pantheon: a society of gods. Although the centuries have seen many arguments and even open fights that threatened the unity of the Churches of the Twelvegods, they all recognize one another as being part of the one "true" faith.

Each of the Twelvegods has his or her symbolic animal, and the months are each assigned to one god (both the symbolic animal and the month are listed in the paragraphs that follow). The Aventurian year begins in summer (to be more precise, at the summer solstice), on the first day of Praios (written as 1 Praios).

More information about the gods and their priesthoods, their liturgies, and their deonts, especially as player character professions, can be found in the upcoming *Gods and Demons* supplement.

Praios (Griffin, July)

The prince of the gods is Master of Light and Sun and also the god of Truth, Law, and Rulership. The most magnificent and wealthy temples are dedicated to him—they are mostly found in larger cities, not so often in the countryside. His deonts, clad in gold and red, are known for their strictness and truthfulness. The cult of Praios is traditionally very widespread among the nobility and does not trust magic at all.

Rondra (Lioness, August)

Rondra is the goddess of War, Courage, Anger, Honor, Thunder and Lightning—these are her domains. Rondra's temples are often well fortified. Her deonts wear a white tabard bearing a red lioness over a chain mail shirt as a uniform. The priest ranks are similar to those in the military. Priests are proud and never shun a challenge. The biggest forms of blasphemy for them are cowardice and deceit.

Efferd (Dolphin, September)

Efferd is the god of Water and Sea, patron god of seamen and fishermen. Temples dedicated to him are found in every port and in regions plagued by aridity. Efferd's deonts wear vestments in blue and green, shun fire, and eat uncooked food. Their temples are usually lighted by the wondrous gleam of turquoise or yellowish-red Gwen Petryl Stones.

Travia (Wild Goose, October)

Hearth and Home, Hospitality, and Faithfulness in Marriage are sacred to Travia. Her temples are in almost every town—they are usually not as magnificent as those of other gods, since most of the gold and silver offered there goes to feed the poor and provide quarters for the homeless. The deonts, clad in orange and red, are usually mild-mannered and friendly, but they certainly know how to convince a visitor to part with some of his money and give it to the needy—especially if you are someone who tries to make money through hospitality (such as innkeepers).

Boron (Raven, November)

Boron is the god of Sleep, Oblivion, and especially Death. His temples are dark, forbidding buildings made of black stone. His temples are visited by the living only if someone they know has died. If an undead creature haunts a region, locals might seek the advice of the silent, serious deonts in their black robes. In Al'Anfa, Boron is the highest of the gods—even humans are sacrificed to him. This, as well as certain other "differences" has long caused a schism between the Al'Anfan and the Punin rites.

Hesinde (Snake, December)

Hesinde is the goddess of Wisdom, Science. The Arts, Magic, and Alchemy also fall into this category. Her deonts, who are clad in yellow and green, seek out knowledge to collect and keep as well as magical artifacts that their temple might want to own. You can find temples dedicated to Hesinde in every large town, and most of them are of astonishing architectural beauty.

Firun (Polar Bear, January)

Firun is the god of Hunting and Winter. He has earned himself the name "The Grim" and is seldom approached directly in prayer. Most of the time, people pray to his daughter, Ifirn, who is friendlier. Few temples of Firun exist; they most often lie at the northern outskirts of a settlement and look more like hunting lodges than proper temples. His deonts are clad in fur and leather and are very serious, silent types, who are closer to the laws of the wild than to compassion and mercy.

Tsa (Rainbow Lizard, February)

Tsa, also called "The Young Goddess," is Life, Renewal, and Change. Her deonts, in their rainbow-colored robes, are well liked wherever they go. People prefer to travel in their company, as the blessing of Tsa is obviously more popular than that of Boron among Aventurians.

Temples to Tsa can be found in all larger towns and often lie in parks or groves.

Phex (Fox, March)

Cunning Phex is the patron god of Thieves and Merchants, and it is said that the stars are blessed by him. The Cunning One (or The Fast One) has temples in almost every town, both official ones that are visited by merchants, and—so it is told—secret ones where thieves go to pray. His deonts try to be utterly inconspicuous and don't wear any kinds of robes, just a brooch in the form of a fox. Phex is also patron god to many adventurers. Even hardened warriors sometimes send a quick prayer to the Fox if they can't get to their goal by fighting, but only through cunning.

Peraine (Stork, April)

Agriculture, Herbs, and Healing Lore are the domains of Mistress Peraine. Thus, you can find her temples in nearly every village, but also in larger cities, where the deonts, clad in green, often run hospitals. Obviously, traveling heroes sometimes need Peraine's help—some wounds and illnesses can be healed only at her temples.

Ingerimm (Hammer and Anvil, May)

Hammer and Anvil (instead of an animal) are the sacred symbols of Ingerimm. He is the god of Fire, Artisans, and Smiths, so it is not surprising that the dwarfs revere him, usually as their sole god. The deontship of Ingerimm has a temple in almost every larger town, and these mostly look like large forges and not traditional temples. Sometimes, they organize exhibitions of precious works by artisans.

Rahja (Mare, June)

Rahja is the goddess of Wine, Intoxication, and Love. She protects lovers, but also dancers and courtesans who pray to her. Her deonts are clad in translucent robes of a brilliant red and are experts in integrating visitors to the temple into the Eternal Feast of the Goddess and communicating her wondrous excitement.

Demigods

Aventurian mythology calls all descendants of the gods "demigods," no matter if they were parented by other gods, giants, or mortals. Of these, far too many exist to be listed in this short chapter. The one we must mention here is Swafnir, son of Rondra and Efferd according to traditional mythology, who travels the oceans in the form of a giant whale. Swafnir is the most important god of the Thorwalians and is more revered in Thorwal than the Twelve themselves—which also means that whaling ships are not at all liked in Thorwal.

Other Gods

First we must mention The God Without a Name, or Nameless One, the nemesis of the Twelvegods, whose worship is expressly forbidden in the whole of Aventuria. Still, one hears rumors time and again whispering of secret temples where cultists try to summon the power of the "Golden One."

On Maraskan, the twin gods Rur and Gror are worshipped. Maraskan's mythology claims that Ethra, the world on which Aventuria is situated, is a discus that Rur has thrown to his brother.

Rastullah is the one-god that is worshipped in the Khôm Desert and parts of Mhanadistan, and he does not accept any other gods apart from himself.

The Nivese are the nomads of the far North. They revere the Sky Wolves, especially the chief of the pack, Gorfang, and his merciful daughter Liska.

The woodsmen in the southern jungles worship countless spirits, the most important being Kamaluq, the Divine Jaguar.

Creatures and Monsters



Aventurian Creatures—Animals and Monsters

Aventuria is populated not only by races to which your heroes might belong, but by millions and millions of other creatures, ranging from the smallest weevil to the largest dragon. None of these exist just to pester your daring adventurer or hero—an animal usually attacks only if it is in need of food, protecting its young, feeling threatened, or convinced you want to take away its prey. A hero usually doesn't care about the motivations of an opponent when faced with a raging saber-tooth tiger, but the Highlord should still try to incorporate the motivations of opponents. The game world tends to "feel" more realistic the less your players get the impression that they encounter only "sword fodder" to keep them busy. Rather, allowing them to cope with their opponent's outlook on life will be more satisfying. Using a sword might in many cases be a viable possibility, but not in all situations. An encounter with a troll, a dragon, or an excited lizard person requires cunning and diplomacy—that's where good role-playing starts.

The stats given for the following creatures are those of an average individual of the group, and can be toned down or beefed up as you prefer to reflect development and the situation. We recommend a range of plus or minus 25 percent when changing the values. AR values listed as "Varies" depend on the armor worn by the creature at the time.

Cultured Races

More cultured races exist in Aventuria than just humans. We have had a close look at elves and dwarfs, and will now examine other cultures that are not meant to be used as player characters (for now).

Achaz (Lizard People)

Geographical Spread: Lizard people live mostly in the swamps around Selem, around Loch Harodrol, in the boggy depressions around the Forest Islands and the southern end of Aventuria, in the Bodir Valley, and on Maraskan.

Physique: Lizard people are thin, slightly taller than humans, and move very gracefully. They have a ragged ridge on the forehead that grows across the top of the head, down the back of the head, and down the neck and back to the tip of the tail. Tough scales provide natural armor to the lizard people. Cold causes their metabolism to slow, making them move more slowly. Achaz living in the north do not have this problem, but they must hibernate.

Habits: Southern lizard people live in dwellings built on pilings, and those in the Bodir Valley live in buildings that look surprisingly like beavers' homes. Achaz tribes subsist on what they can get from their territories; hunting and fishing provide most of the food, while fruit gathering is rarer. Farming is known only to a few small clans in the more civilized areas of Aventuria.

Clothing and Weapons: Lizard people do not wear clothing, only a type of belt used to carry bags and pouches. The favorite Achaz weapon is the spear.

Base INI:	8	**RM:**	3
AT:	10	**SD:**	8
PA:	8	**ED:**	32
VI:	22	**AR:**	2
HP:	1d6+3 (spear)		

Goblins

Geographical Spread: Most goblins live on the Green Plains and the Red and Black Sickle, but even in the Fountland, some tribes are known to be living according to their ancient traditions. The rest of Aventuria is plagued by goblin tribes who live the lives of highwaymen. Some human bandit groups use goblins as scouts.

Physique: Goblins grow to the height of large dwarfs. A goblin's body is squat with unusually long, powerful arms, but these creatures are less muscular than orks. Shaggy red fur covers the entire body.

Habits: Male goblins hunt and plunder (which is the same thing, according to their view of the law) while female goblins look after their young. Female goblins, who can sometimes be sorceresses, are revered as sacred creatures and usually lead the families.

Goblins live in grass-covered huts. Mountain tribes live in natural caves or old dwarf mines. They are neither very tough nor strong and thus not very courageous, but they are very cunning when hunting in large groups or ambushing outsiders.

Clothing and Weapons: Goblins usually dress in furs or rags which are held together by leather thongs. They prefer spears as weapons.

Base INI:	7	**RM:**	1
AT:	9	**SD:**	7
PA:	8	**ED:**	20
VI:	14	**AR:**	Varies
HP:	1d6+2 (goblin spear)		

Ogres

Geographical Spread: Ogres usually live in the Rashtul's Wall, though scattered tribes can be found across the whole of Aventuria.

Physique: Ogres are huge bipeds measuring about two and a half to three paces tall. Their bodies are rather plump, by far heavier than those of humans, and their pallid skin is hairless but surprisingly thick and makes for superb natural armor.

Habits: Ogres eat anything that moves and is smaller than they are. They have developed a specific taste for human flesh, making negotiations between humans and ogres next to impossible (okay, absolutely impossible).

Ogres live in extended families and occupy caves or ruins that they use as headquarters while they are away on their sometimes days-long hunts.

Clothing and Weapons: The only clothing worn by an ogre is a loincloth, and the only weapon they can build themselves is a club.

Base INI:	12	**RM:**	0
AT:	10	**SD:**	10
PA:	6	**ED:**	40
VI:	50	**AR:**	2
HP:	3d6+4 (club)		

Orks

Geographical Spread: Orks mostly live in the Orkland, but many settled in the Svellt Valley after the Orkstorm. Outcast orks can be found everywhere in Aventuria, so you will every so often encounter orks in the employ of a villain, doing dirty work for low pay or congregated as bands of marauding orks.

Physique: Orks, also known as "blackfurs" due to their dark, shaggy body hair, are smaller than humans but are stronger. Their faces are dominated by two protruding lower tusks; their eyes are colored red, gray, black, or yellow.

Habits: Typically, orks are tent nomads who keep dwarf ponies and steppe cattle. They live in a rigid caste system ruled by a single law: The Right of the Strongest. Their pantheon tends toward war and hunting.

Females have no rights whatsoever and are not even given names. They belong to the chieftain and are borrowed by his followers—they are no more than animals that give birth to more orks.

Orks know a bit about smithing. Their work is not beautiful, but is sturdy. They fear nothing more than magic, which makes it extremely easy to enchant them.

Clothing and Weapons: Orks favor cloaks and kilts as well as leather greaves and helmets. The most important orkish weapons are the scimitar, double-bladed ax, war hammer, and javelin.

Base INI:	8	**RM:**	0
AT:	11	**SD:**	7
PA:	8	**ED:**	55
VI:	27	**AR:**	Varies
HP:	1d6+3 (scimitar)		

Trolls

Geographical Spread: Most trolls dwell in caves in the (aptly named) Troll Peaks, their ancient home. The occasional troll can be

found almost anywhere in the northern regions; some of them even live close to human settlements. "Bridge trolls" are a widespread problem in Aventuria: Buildings made from stone attract them magically, and once a troll has found a place sheltering her from the elements and where she is given "gifts" regularly, she will be hard to drive out. Usually, these creatures can be made to "troll off" (i.e., push off) by offering them larger gifts.

Physique: Trolls can grow to be four and a half paces and are quite strong. Their bodies are fully covered in thick fur, giving them good natural armor together with their tough skin. The hair on their heads (and their beards, if male) tends to reach down to their loins.

Habits: Trolls eat mostly plants—the troll pear or the troll flower, for example. If they are plagued by a sudden attack of extreme hunger, they might rush off into the next fruit plantation. It is said that you need only one hungry troll to ruin a wealthy farmer.

Trolls also love sweets. If you must parley with them, it will be useful to have licorice or a few sweets handy to convince the stubborn fellows. They are also very keen on miniature items, especially carvings or little figurines.

Clothing and Weapons: Trolls prefer furs for clothing (+2 on AR, already figured into the values below). They prefer clubs or huge axes as weapons (the latter cause 4d6+8 HP).

Base INI:	11	**RM:**	8
AT:	10	**SD:**	7
PA:	8	**ED:**	120
VI:	60	**AR:**	3
HP:	3d6+3 (club)		

In Caverns Deep and Dungeons Dark

All too often, heroes have to venture forth into dark caves, deep tombs, or the labyrinthine corridors of a castle's basement—these might look very inhospitable to humans, but that does not mean that nothing lives there ....

These creatures have TH, or Threat Values listed, which are explained later.

Tomb-louse

Tomb-lice can be encountered throughout the cellars, catacombs, and caverns of Aventuria, as long as the place in question is dark and damp—even in forests. They resemble common woodlice but are much bigger—about two to two-and-a-half paces long. They have very dangerous mandibles.

Tomb-lice are astonishingly agile in combat (for giant bugs, that is) and can attack twice per Combat Round against the same enemy. Many a time has a fleeing tomb-louse caused serious trouble for otherwise well-equipped and combat-experienced adventurers, leading them into dangerous and unstable subterranean regions.

Base INI:	4	**RM:**	12
AT:	11	**SD:**	4
PA:	5	**ED:**	30
VI:	25	**AR:**	4
TH:	7	**HP:**	1d6+3

Giant Ameba

The giant ameba calls the whole continent of Aventuria home and prefers the same habitat as the tomb-louse. It looks like a large, translucent slime blob about three paces in diameter. Amebas attack by creating pseudopods they use to envelop their prey, but mostly they hang from ceilings and wait for prey to come to them. They also use pseudopods for movement.

Since amebas are *very* slow, avoiding them is usually easy. They will doggedly (and sluggishly) follow hero groups as long as possible. Sometimes, giant amebas carry indigestible remnants of their previous victims, and many an adventurer has used this to her advantage, plundering the creature after killing it.

Base INI:	3	**RM:**	18
AT:	12	**SD:**	0.25
PA:	0	**ED:**	100
VI:	40	**AR:**	0
TH:	6	**HP:**	1d6+3

Linnorm

Linnorms are six-legged distant relatives of true dragons, though they grow no more than four paces long. They are not hot-blooded enough to breathe fire, but are hot enough for really bad breath. This stench is so disgusting that elves can fight linnorms only with ranged weapons or magic. A linnorm's smell remains with heroes who fight it (as well as those simply clearing an abandoned lair) for quite some time; Charisma is reduced by 3 points, which makes all Tests designed to make a positive impression on someone much more difficult. This smell cannot be washed away, and only time will cleanse the heroes of it; CH points return at the rate of 1 per week.

Like dragons proper, linnorms hoard items of value (2d20 ducats is the average value of a linnorm hoard). If you take something from this hoard, you suffer the same Charisma loss as that suffered from the creature's breath while fighting.

Linnorms can attack with claws, bite, and tail. They are quite fast and can attack twice per Combat Round (during their Initiative Phase and five phases later), and can use two of their three attacks this way each round. The AT and HP values below are for claws, bite, and tail, respectively.

Base INI:	12	**RM:**	6
AT:	10/6/8	**SD:**	5
PA:	5	**ED:**	90
VI:	50	**AR:**	4
TH:	12	**HP:**	1d6/2d6/1d6+3

The Eternal Ice of the Far North

In the far north of Aventuria under the eternal ice, huge treasures are said to wait for intrepid heroes. The ice deserts and glaciers are far more inhospitable than the Khôm Desert, yet there are some creatures who make this wasteland their home. A typical example is the so-called "lurker in the snow."

Wild Beasts

Animal	Base INI	AT	PA	VI	AR	HP	AG	ED	RM	TH	Notes
Adder	7	11	0	7	1	1d6+1	3	12	5	0	1)
Bat	12	5	0	2	0	1	18	30	0	2	2)
Fox	10	15	12	15	2	1d6+2	15	70	0	3	
Wolf	8	10	6	25	2	1d6+3	10	90	1	4	
Rat	12	5	0	3	0	2	4	20	0	5	3)
Eagle	10	6/17	6/2	18	2	1d6+1/2d6	1/30	60	3	7	4)
Orkland Bear	7	8	6	45	2	1d6+2	7	50	3	8	5)
Alligator	8	12	3	20	3	2d6	5	35	6	8	6)
Sand Lion	8	14	8	40	1	2d6+4	16	70	4	11	
Forest Elephant	6	12	6	70	3	2d6+5	9	40	4	14	7)

1) The emerald adder is about the same size and danger as a grass snake.
2) If an attack succeeds, the bat has hit an unprotected area; the HP are thus DP. TH refers to a swarm of 1d6 animals.
3) If an attack succeeds, the rat has hit an unprotected area; the HP are thus DP. TH refers to a horde of 2d6 animals.
4) The values after the slash are for a dive attack.
5) The Orkland bear has two attacks per CR (in the same Initiative Phase, against the same opponent).
6) The alligator has two attacks per CR (one in the Initiative Phase and another 5 phases later).
7) AT and HP are for tusks; for trampling, the values are AT 6, HP 3d20.

Lurker in the Snow

A lurker is about one pace long, and its white fur serves as camouflage in its habitat. It attacks everything that is edible, even if it is larger than the lurker itself. It usually ambushes its prey. If a lurker in the snow is hurt in combat, it grows more aggressive and dangerous: For every point of Vitality it loses, it gets one additional point of INI and one additional HP.

Base INI:	8	**RM:**	12
AT:	12	**SD:**	8
PA:	5	**ED:**	20
VI:	20	**AR:**	2
TH:	6	**HP:**	1d6 (initial)

In the Steppe

A good part of the Aventurian north is covered in grassland. An abundance of plant life is found here, and from spring to fall the steppe looks like a sea of flowers. Karen, half-domesticated relatives of deer, are typical in this type of region, and they travel in large herds across the land, together with the people of the Nivese. But the northern steppe also plays host to other creatures (apart from countless little rodents and birds).

Mammoth

The mammoths, up to four paces high, are the true masters of the northern tundra. Their thick, reddish-brown fur keeps them warm in winter. Sometimes, the Nivese hunt old or weak mammoths that can no longer keep up with the herd. Even an old mammoth yields enough meat to keep an entire clan alive for several weeks.

Mammoths can attack with their tusks or try to trample an opponent. Statistics for both kinds of attack are provided below (tusks/trample).

Base INI:	6	**RM:**	3
AT:	12/6	**SD:**	9
PA:	4	**ED:**	50
VI:	130	**AR:**	5
TH:	18	**HP:**	4d6+4/5d20

Pseudobasilisk

A pseudobasilisk looks like a fat snake about two paces long with bright green scales and a yellow horn on its head. It emits a terrible stench. If attacked, it splashes the face of its opponent with a poisonous substance. This acid causes a cough attack for 1d6 DP that makes its victim unable to do anything for 2d6 CR. It also causes a CH loss of 4 points, which is restored only if the victim washes herself with water and soap (water alone is not enough).

Base INI:	7	**RM:**	8
AT:	12	**SD:**	1
PA:	0	**ED:**	50
VI:	20	**AR:**	1
TH:	3	**HP:**	See above

In the Mountains

The Aventurian mountain ranges present heroes with many adverse conditions: Avalanches, falling rocks, and the chance of falling are not the only dangers here—the indigenous animal life can also pose a threat.

Harpy

Harpies are unnatural creatures about the size of humans. A harpy has a woman's head and breasts, but the body of a large bird. They can be encountered anywhere in Aventuria. They are as intelligent as humans, if slightly deranged, and often spell doom

for unwary travelers. Friendly and helpful one moment, they may turn on unsuspecting heroes in the blink of an eye and attack with their dangerous claws. Alternatively, they may initiate vicious combat only to suddenly break it off and flee even if they were at an advantage, as their whimsy strikes them.

The mountain ranges of southern Aventuria are home to entire swarms of these creatures. The sound of half a dozen or so harpies shrieking is one of the most terrible noises you can hear, and many a hero has been put to flight by this screeching alone. A Highlord should ask her heroes for CO Tests to determine whether they remain unimpressed and stand and fight, or whether they run away in panic.

Roll for initiative for a harpy with 2d6 plus Base INI.

Base INI:	6	**RM:**	10
AT:	15	**SD:**	15
PA:	10	**ED:**	60
VI:	40	**AR:**	2
TH:	5	**HP:**	1d6+4

Griffin Cat

This strange creature can be found in the forested mountains of Southern Aventuria. The griffin cat is only about half a pace long and has a spotted leopard head and the body of a cat, but its forelegs and wings are those of a falcon. It thrives almost exclusively on rats, which is why the people of Hôt-Alem like to domesticate them.

Base INI:	14	**RM:**	10
AT:	12	**SD:**	16
PA:	12	**ED:**	50
VI:	12	**AR:**	2
TH:	5	**HP:**	1d6+2

In the Forests

Large parts of Aventuria are covered with thick forests, where many things lurk that may satisfy a hungry hero—or barely let him escape unscathed.

Tree Dragon

Dragons will be discussed in greater detail later on, but the tree dragon will be examined here: It is the ideal "test subject" for a group of young heroes. It is small (wingspan of three paces, length from head to tip of tail is two and a half paces) and has the intelligence of a simple child (CL 5). But never underestimate even the lowliest member of the dragon family!

Tree dragons like to nest in the tops of trees, but do not build the nests themselves. Instead, they like to drive out forest birds as large as eagles. Their green scales serve as camouflage. They create hoards, but collect things of no value.

While fighting, the tree dragon uses its fire breath causing one point of damage per CR for every opponent.

Base INI:	10	**RM:**	10
AT:	10	**SD:**	15
PA:	9	**ED:**	90
VI:	60	**AR:**	7
TH:	13	**HP:**	1d6+6

Forest Spider

Forest spiders have black fur and grow to be about one pace long. They like to build their webs large to ensnare whole forest regions with their sticky nets and threads—deadly traps for their usual prey, which consists of kids, rabbits, or other small animals. The spiders are not poisonous, but kill with their strong mandibles.

Base INI:	6	**RM:**	8
AT:	9	**SD:**	3
PA:	0	**ED:**	15
VI:	60	**AR:**	7
TH:	4	**HP:**	1d6+1

Under the Heat of the Desert Sun

The desert is arid and inhospitable—every Aventurian child knows that. The difference in temperature is remarkable: While the heat during the day is almost unbearable, during nighttime, water could nearly freeze over—if there were any. And still, even in these regions, animal life can be found, including one important specimen.

Giant Ant

Giant ants live as solitary animals, not in colonies like their smaller kin. Sages have not yet discovered how they manage to reproduce, but maybe they are the result of a black magic experiment gone bad (or not)?

Humans are a favorite prey of the two-paces-long giant ant. In combat, it is protected well by is chitinous armor. With every bite (successful, not parried attack) the giant ant splashes its opponent with acid that melts through every armor and causes 1d6–2 DP.

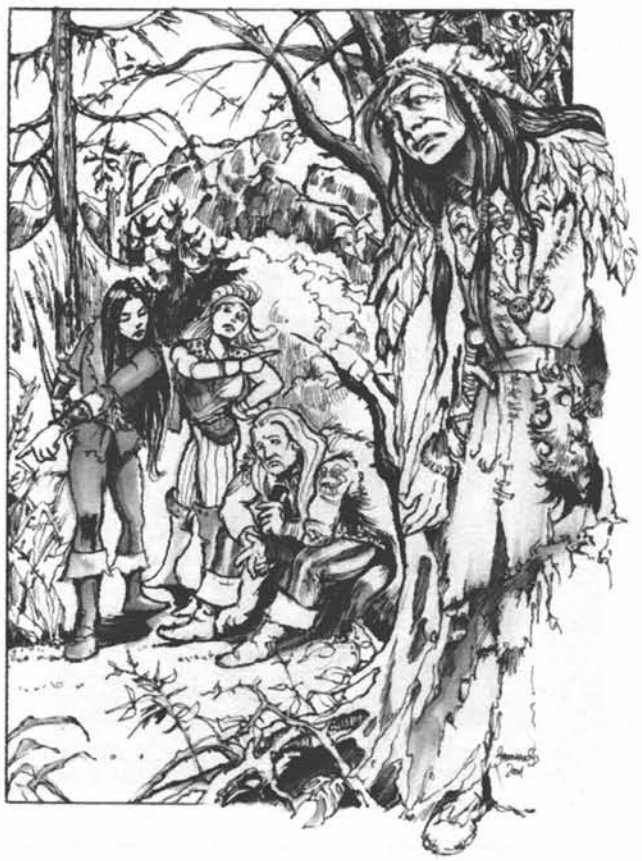
Base INI:	9	**RM:**	15
AT:	8	**SD:**	4
PA:	0	**ED:**	30
VI:	25	**AR:**	4
TH:	8	**HP:**	1d6+3+acid

Swamp Things

The swamps of Aventuria are not only dangerous because of the risk of drowning . . . no, among other terrible things lurking there, you might also encounter a species in its natural habitat which is said to have its origins in the Seventh Sphere of the Demons.

Morfu

The best thing one can say about morfus is that they move rather slowly. A group's best option when dealing with one of these monstrosities is to run away as fast as possible. A morfu attacks by shooting twelve poisonous horn splinters from wartlike muscle discs up to a distance of five paces. Although the creature can



sense only heat and vibrations (it cannot see, hear, or smell), these splinters are unerringly aimed at the same target. Morfus do not pursue their prey, obviously knowing full well the futility of such endeavors. A morfu has enough warts to attack ten times with its splinters (i.e., around 120). Damage listed is per splinter.

Base INI:	2	**RM:**	18
AT:	15*	**SD:**	0.5
PA:	4	**ED:**	100
VI:	50	**AR:**	1
TH:	14	**HP:**	1d6–1+ poison

* 12 Ranged Attacks with a Ranged Attack Value of 15 against a single victim at Very Close range. Splinters can't be dodged; on an Attack roll of 1, the respective splinter finds an unshielded spot on the target (i.e., ignores armor); splinters that cause damage are poisonous: Level 5, 1d6+1 DP per splinter.

In Steaming Jungles

The jungles of southern Aventuria and Maraskan are often called the Green Netherhells. You will find one of the reasons for this below.

Disdychonda

The disdychonda is a carnivorous plant that not only devours insects, but also likes the taste of humans. It has a very thick stem of about one pace in height, and on its top grows a large, violet bell-shaped flower. Four thick, fleshy leaves of up to six anglepaces (square paces, that is) cover the ground. If an animal or a human steps on one of these leaves, it snaps shut and emits a paralyzing poison with a very fast onset. The victim is wrapped up and transported to the stem, which oozes a digestive fluid.

If you get caught by a disdychonda and are unable to free yourself, you will receive 1d6 DP per CR. The leaf will release its victim only after it has received 10 DP (the leaf's AR is 4). Alternatively, you could hack at the stem for 20 DP, but this is possible only with magic or ranged combat if you don't want to get wrapped up yourself.

In the Dark Sea and Deep Oceans

In Aventuria, life is not restricted to the land. Oceans and lakes present a few deadly dangers for traveling heroes, as well.

Krakenewt

The body of a krakenewt is about four paces in diameter; its eight tentacles each measure about six paces in length. You can find this beast in every ocean of Aventuria, in the open sea as well as near coastal regions. A krakenewt is an amphibious kraken that often travels into coastal regions to look for prey in swamps. Its intelligence is equal to a rat. It attacks only to sate its hunger, but does not shy away from eating humans.

To cut off a tentacle, a single blow with a bladed weapon must cause 10 DP. The threat rating is given on both land/water.

Base INI:	15*	**RM:**	10
AT:	8**	**SD:**	2
PA:	0	**ED:**	30
VI:	120	**AR:**	1
TH:	10/15	**HP:**	1d6+6

* to calculate INI underwater: +2d6; on land: +1d6
** depending on environment, up to eight attacks per CR

Sea Serpent

Sea serpents grow to lengths of 30–40 paces, with diameter of around two paces. They have teeth as long and sharp as two-handed swords. If you happen to meet a sea serpent, you should turn and run as fast as you can (or turn your ship as fast as you can, although our money would be on the serpent). But sea serpents don't really want to hurt humans. They mostly ignore solitary swimmers and small boats. If there are natural enemies to the sea serpent, they are the sperm whale and the giant kraken. Unfortunately, larger ships are often mistaken for these and attacked without mercy.

Such an encounter will be a difficult one even for high-level heroes on a sturdy warship, as you can tell from the stats below. Never use these serpents as direct opponents for your heroes, but rather create an adventure in which they must trick a sea serpent into doing something or find out why a particular specimen keeps haunting coastal areas. A large sea serpent might also attack the heroes' ship on its way back from a successful treasure hunt, robbing them of everything they have, only to let them barely escape with their lives and start their next adventure as soldiers of fortune again.

Base INI:	10	**RM:**	15
AT:	8	**SD:**	10
PA:	0	**ED:**	about 1,000
VI:	450	**AR:**	3
TH:	21	**HP:**	3d20

Wild Beasts

So far, we have introduced you only to fantastical creatures, ones that you wouldn't encounter on Earth. But the lands between Brabak and Paavi are also home to many animals similar to terrestrial species. On page 153 is a table with statistics for many of these animals. This is not supposed to be complete—the data below is only supposed to serve as a guideline to help you create your own animals. The table is not sorted alphabetically, but according to degrees of danger.

Unicorn

Unicorns can't be placed into any of the above categories properly, so they deserve a paragraph of their own. Theoretically, one may encounter unicorns anywhere in Aventuria, but they are extremely rare. They are always male and immortal, so it is said. The few things we know about these snow-white stallions with horns on their foreheads are gleaned from myths and legends, and these vary from region to region. One thing these sources agree upon is that unicorns love virgins and become quite tame if they see one. Apart from that, each unicorn is a unique individual: some are mild-mannered and gentle, some cunning, and some explosive in their temperament.

Unicorns have their own special form of magic that does not rely on formulaic spells, which means that the game data listed below represent the barest minimum. Unicorns may attack with horn and hooves. They will never fight to the death without a good cause. Attacks are listed below as horn/hooves.

Base INI:	15	**RM:**	15
AT:	12/10	**SD:**	18
PA:	12	**ED:**	20
VI:	60	**AR:**	2
TH:	14	**HP:**	1d6+3/2d6+2

Undead

Not everything ends with death in Aventuria—sometimes it happens that an evil necromancer takes bodies out of their graves and turns them into his servants. If you meet one of these and suffer from Necrophobia, you'll have to fight down your panic before you can take sensible actions.

Skeleton

After some time has passed, any corpse (most of them, anyway) invariably turns into a skeleton: only bones and pieces of metal armor remain. To fight a skeleton effectively, you need to use axes, blunt weapons, or edged weapons. Swords and scimitars cause only half damage, while spears, fencing weapons, daggers, and arrows are absolutely useless. When you happen to meet a skeleton for the first time, you will have to succeed a CO Test at +2 (don't forget Necrophobia!) to avoid running away in panic. Armor and



Weapon values are determined by the type of armor or weapon being used by the individual skeleton.

Base INI:	10	**RM:**	5
AT:	8	**SD:**	5
PA:	2	**ED:**	Unlimited
VI:	30	**AR:**	Varies
TH:	8	**HP:**	Varies

Zombie

Zombies are decomposed corpses brought "back to life," but these have not yet decayed so far as to become skeletons. Their appearance is terrible indeed: seeing a zombie requires a Courage Test +4 (don't forget Necrophobia), with success meaning that the hero does not run away screaming in panic. These creatures of darkest magic are so slow and lumbering that they cannot move while wearing armor. Neither can they use weapons; instead, they fight with their hands (what is left of them). The only way to destroy a zombie is to literally hack it into little pieces; cutting off the head is not sufficient.

Base INI:	7	**RM:**	10
AT:	7	**SD:**	4
PA:	0	**ED:**	Unlimited
VI:	22	**AR:**	0
TH:	6	**HP:**	1d6+2

Mummy

Mummies begin "life" as dead people who are embalmed and wrapped in bandages. Mummies are exceptionally strong—as strong as four very strong warriors. Nonmagical weapons cause only half damage (rounded down). Mummies display another

terrifying ability: Their body parts (say, a severed arm) continue to fight independently, or at least try to hamper the mummy's opponents. Anyone who sees something like this must succeed a Courage Test +5 (don't forget Necrophobia) at that instant and at the beginning of every mummy encounter in the future, or run away screaming.

Mummies can be fought quite effectively with fire. Hitting a mummy with a burning torch inflicts 2d6 DP, and casting an *Ignifaxus* spell causes double damage.

Base INI:	12	**RM:**	15
AT:	7	**SD:**	5
PA:	7	**ED:**	Unlimited
VI:	45	**AR:**	2
TH:	12	**HP:**	1d6+4

Dragons

Dragons are not "warm-up monsters"—they are majestic beings, often endowed with the ability for magic, and an encounter with them should be nothing less than the dramatic peak of an adventure. They are intelligent and communicate via their own telepathic language. Their blood is boiling hot, and they are usually able to breathe fire. Even their smallest relative, the Dwarf or Sparkle Dragon, eats first-level heroes for breakfast. The three-headed Giant Wyrm can roast a whole party with its flame breath. So please, keep dragons from appearing in your adventures until your heroes are worthy of them, whether as opponents or allies.

Demons

The world of demons is complex, and even a brief trip into their realm would be too elaborate to incorporate into this chapter. Their homelands are not in Aventuria, not even on Ethra, but in the so-called Seventh Sphere, also known as the Netherhells, the seething chaos surrounding all ordered existence. Demons must be summoned—they can't just hop over to Aventuria because they want to. Even though—or maybe because—they do not come from this world, they are very powerful beings. Only the best wizards or battle-hardened fighters dare stand in their way, and only spells harm them. Magic weapons and divine interference can hurt them permanently.

This summary is not supposed to make you eager with anticipation, but is instead supposed to warn you against introducing demons that even experienced wizards fear. If inexperienced heroes meet such a demon, the encounter can only end in their deaths, and they won't even have the satisfaction that their souls will come to rest in Boron's realm. No, they will languish in the Netherhells for eternity.

If you want to know more about demons, consult the *Gods and Demons* rules supplement.

Create Your Own Monster

Feel free to create your own monsters. Always take into account game balance, however—your players won't have much fun with an opponent they can't beat; neither will they like a legendary monster that can be slain by a single blow. More interesting than just a high HP count are cunning and artful natural weapons, a fantastic appearance that is easy to describe to players, and an interesting way of life that fits well into the Aventurian ecology.

Poisons, Diseases, and Herbs

Be Dead Certain—Poisons of Aventuria

In Aventuria, arguments are sometimes solved with murder by poison. Generally, use of poison grows more popular from North to South, so it is no wonder that the diversity of poisons available is greater in the South. While you will have trouble getting simple weed in proper, lawful Warkhome, you merely need to visit the market in Al'Anfa to get the most poisonous powders from the nearest bazaari.

According to the *Indexus Warkhomicus*, the following poisons have been particularly outlawed: *Boabungaha, Gonede, Kukris,* and *Purple Lightning*. Getting caught creating one of these is punishable with incarceration for 30 years; owning one of these is usually punished by five years of imprisonment. Don't expect mercy if you get caught murdering with poison!

If you are searching for poisons, you should seek out apothecaries or alchemists in big cities. They will help you, however, only if you know the right password, have a letter of recommendation from a "good" customer, or if you happen to have incriminating evidence against the seller that he wouldn't like seen by the guards.

If you want to improvise a poisonous substance, assume that it causes as many d6 damage as its Level, and that the onset is faster for higher Level poisons. For poisons that are supposed to reduce Attributes rather than Vitality, you can use three times as many "point hours" as the poison's Level (meaning 2 points of ST for a 3-hour duration with a Level 2 poison.)

The following paragraphs give a concise listing of some popular poisons, but of course many more exist. **Level** indicates how many points more difficult the CN Test will be. The value for **Effect** before the slash means full effect; the one after the slash is half the effect (depending on the CN Test). **Onset** gives the precise time that the poison starts having the aforementioned effect. **Duration** gives the amount of time the poison is effective. **Price** stands for the usual price per dose, which may vary locally.

More information on damage from poisons and fighting them with high constitution scores is found on page 121; healing of poisoning is on page 158.

Arachnae

Paralyzing weapon poison, distilled from Cave Spider venom.

Arachnae is often used in abduction attempts.

Level: 1
Effect: Paralyzation: AT and PA –2 /AT and PA –1
Onset: Immediate

Duration: 1 hour; if CN Test succeeds, half an hour
Price: 5 D

Boabungaha

This inhaled poison is probably the most sought-after product that the forest people of the Rain Mountains produce; they sometimes barter it for very high quality metal weapons. Boabungaha is one of the most potent poisons available, and in all likelihood, only magical help can save the victim.
Level: 19
Effect: Suffocation (1d6 DP/CR)/Breathing difficulties (1d6–2 DP/CR)
Onset: 5 CR
Duration: Until death; with successful CN Test, only 50 CR
Price: 250 D

Fear Poison

This magical weapon poison doesn't cause physical damage, but forces the victim to flee in panic from the first creature it sees after being poisoned.
Level: 4
Effect: Immense fear of everyone else/CO–5
Onset: Immediate
Duration: 1 GT
Price: 25 D

Goldglue

This is a sticky contact poison which is most often used to secure doorknobs and other objects.
Level: 5
Effect: 2d6–3 DP per hour/1d6 DP per hour
Onset: Immediate
Duration: 2d6 hours; with successful CN Test, 1d6+1 hours
Price: 30 D

Gonede

Weapon poison distilled from the Yellowtail Scorpion's venom; highly popular with certain rapacious desert tribes.
Level: 8
Effect: 1d6+5 DP per GT, cramps, spasms, retching (all Attributes at –2)/1d6+1 DP per GT, all Attributes at –1
Onset: 10 CR
Duration: 5 GT
Price: 70 D

Half-Poison

An alchemical elixir that enters the bloodstream and has a demoralizing and dazing effect on the victim, restricting his bodily coordination.
Level: 8
Effect: CO, CL, IN, AG, DE, ST are halved (also changes basic values)/same values at –3
Onset: Immediate
Duration: 4 GT
Price: 60 D

Kukris

This deadly weapon or ingestion poison is easy and safe to handle for the user, and is especially popular in Southern Aventuria. Assassins often call it "Kingmaker."
Level: 12
Effect: 1d6 DP per CR, itching (CL and DE at –1), cramps (ST and DE at –3)/1d6–2 DP per CR
Onset: 10 CR (damage and itching), 15 CR (cramps)
Duration: until death; with successful CN Test, 30 CR
Price: 90 D

Purple Lightning

This ingestion poison, a powder devoid of both smell and taste, is the ideal choice for the discriminating assassin—and the most deadly poison on the continent. Often, the victim is absolutely unaware of being poisoned; the only clue is a purple mist in her field of vision, and then—zap—she is dead. After killing its victim, the poison doesn't even leave a trace.
Level: 20
Effect: 2d6 DP per CR/1d6 DP per CR
Onset: Immediate
Duration: Until death
Price: 300 D

Diseases and Plagues

Luckily, real plagues and epidemics (such as the infamous and deadly Zorgan Pox) are quite rare in Aventuria. They are usually attributed to the machinations of disease-spreading demons or even the Nameless One (and are thus treated with magic or prayers). Minor problems such as fevers, on the other hand, are common even among heroes, but for people with a tough Constitution, they are more an annoyance than a real threat.

The following three diseases are presented as examples of the types of illnesses heroes can contract.

Causes tells about possible ways of contracting the disease. **Duration** gives two numbers separated by a slash. The number to the left of the slash indicates incubation time, while the number to the right refers to the length of the disease's course (unless healed). **Effect** lists the damage. **Level** is the Difficulty Increase for a Constitution Test—see page 121 for the resistance of high Constitution against diseases. Heroes in the grip of a disease do not regenerate VP or Exhaustion normally during the night (if they are able to sleep at all).

Bloody Snot

This is a type of cold common in rainforests, causing a cough and low-grade fever.
Causes: Traveling in rainforests, contact with infected people, rarely through tropical wood or spices.
Duration: 3 days/1d6+6 days
Effect: 1d3+1 DP per day; ST, AG, AT, and PA are reduced by 2 points; bed rest decreases the duration of the illness by 1d6 days.
Level: 3

Wound Fever

This feverish disease causes restless sleep, weakness, and linguistic confusion; severe cases culminate in coma and death.

Causes: Dirty wounds (due to rusty weapons, bites from monsters, and so on). After suffering at least 5 DP from dirty wounds (through fighting, animal bites, thorn hedges, and so on), at the end of the day roll a CN Test. If the Test fails, the hero contracts the disease. Modifiers for the Test are as follows: +1 if loss of VI is more than 25%, +2 for over 50%, +3 if the wound was caused by teeth or claws, +4 if caused by undead, –5 if the hero has the Resistance to Disease Advantage (because she is a dwarf or elf). "Wound" in this case means any type of injury, not necessarily a wound according to the rules on page 102.

Duration: 1 day/2d6 days

Effect: 2d6–1 DP on the first day, 2d6–2 on the second, 2d6–3 on the third, and so on. ST is reduced by 1 per day (unless you succeed a CN Test).

Level: 6

Paralysis, or Basilisk's Gaze

This causes paralysis as flesh is turned to stone. This even affects the eye muscles (hence the disease's name). After being turned to stone on the outside, the inner organs turn to stone as well, leading to a quick death.

Causes: Touching undead (on a roll of 19 or 20 on 1d20), staying in a basilisk's nest (17–20 on 1d20)

Duration: 7 days/1d6+3 days

Effect: AG and ST are decreased by 1d6 points per day; if both values reach 0, the hero turns to stone and loses 2d6 DP/hour

Level: 8

Herbs of Aventuria

A few important healing herbs are described below, complete with the following information.

Geographical Distribution means the parts of the continent where the plant can be found.

Found In describes the type of terrain where it usually grows.

Price gives the average price, which can vary regionally.

Test lists the Difficulty Increase applied to a Plant Lore Test if one tries to find the herb in the wilderness. The Increase is based not only on the rarity of the plants, but also on the similarity to other plants with which it might be confused.

Donf

This swamp plant eases illnesses if its fresh stem is chewed (can make the CN Tests for paralysis easier).

Geographical Distribution: South of Gerasim, across the entire continent.

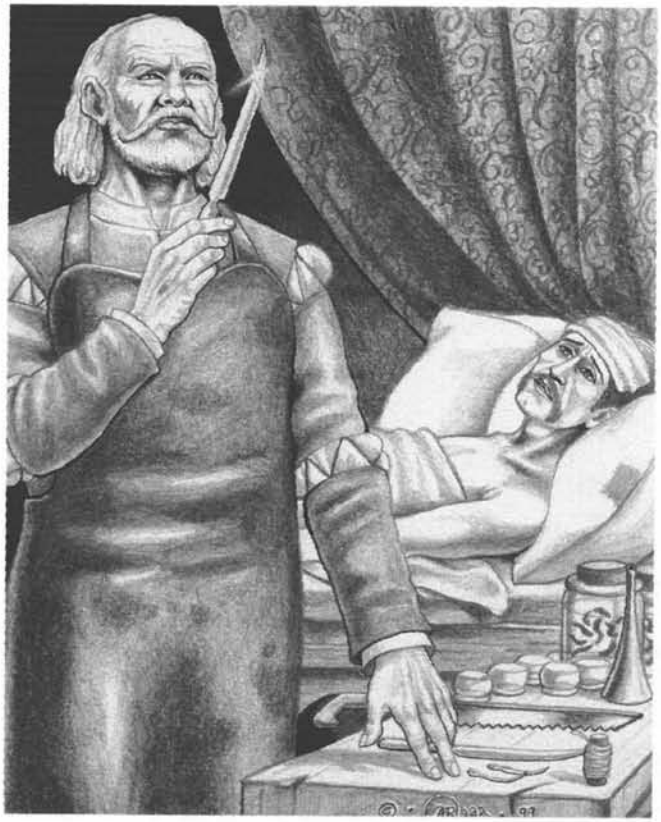
Found In: Swamps

Price: 12 D per portion of stem preserved in grain alcohol

Test: +8

Four-Leaf Oneberry

The classic healing herb, this should have a place in every adventurer's backpack. Each treatment regenerates 1d3 VP. With a successful Treat Wounds Test, 1d6 VP.



Geographical Distribution: North of the Yaquir, in the whole of Aventuria

Found In: Forests/edges of forests

Price: 3 F per berry

Test: +8

Kajubo

Kajubo is not a healing herb in the strictest sense, but the buds allow a person to stop breathing (underwater, in a poisonous cloud, and so on) without harm for 3 game turns.

Geographical Distribution: Altoum, Souran, Nikkali.

Found In: Edges of forests, coastal regions

Price: 10 D for five buds preserved in oil

Test: +21

Menchal

The juice of the menchal cactus is able to halve the effect of poisons.

Geographical Distribution: Khôm Desert

Found in: Desert and edge of desert

Price: 18 S per portion of juice

Test: +10

Olginroot

This is a rare moss of dark green color. Each dose reduces the Poison Level of a poison by 1 (however, never less than half of the poison's Level). It also decreases all damage rolls caused by diseases or poisons made on the day after consumption by 1 DP. Treat Poison and Treat Disease Tests receive a Difficulty Decrease of –1 per patch eaten.

Geographical Distribution: Rashtul's Wall

Found In: Highlands, mountains, forests

Price: 3 D per patch of moss
Test: +25

Whirlweed

Another classic herb, this is used to treat a hero's most common health problem—wounds. It heals 10 VP if placed on a fresh wound.
Geographical Distribution: The whole of Aventuria
Found In: Steppes
Price: 1 D per portion
Test: +5

Equipment

A hero can't run around naked trying to gather treasure or kill dragons—but you already know that. If a hero wants to be successful in an adventure, she needs not only cunning and strength, but also the right equipment. Equipment must be located and purchased using the standard currency of Aventuria: gold ducats, silver thalers, copper farthings and iron kreutzers. **1 ducat (1 D) = 10 thalers (10 T) = 100 farthings (100 F) = 1,000 kreutzers (1,000 K).**

Every piece of equipment has weight, measured in ounces; one ounce equals 25 grams, and 40 ounces equal one kilogram or Aventurian greatpound. As you already know, the weight carried by a hero should not exceed his Carrying Capacity (ST in greatpounds) if the hero is not to be Encumbered (see page 120). Aventurian money also has weight: one ducat or five thalers or ten farthings or ten kreutzers each weigh an ounce.

Non-Magical Equipment

Every town and most small villages have shops that sell basic goods for daily needs. To equip a hero, first choose the right type of clothing. Fur mitts and hats are probably not needed if you want to venture into the southern jungles, and traveling is not made easier if you try to have fun in the ice desert clad only in a loincloth. Normal street clothing, which does not protect against icy cold, weighs about 120 ounces and costs 20 T; winter clothing weighs 200 ounces and costs 30 T.

These prices are averages and may vary according to town or city depending on rarity and demand. At the "Last Equipment Store Before the Brazen Sword," for example, prices might tend toward extortion ranges, and fishing gear will come cheaper in a port city like Havena than in a desert oasis.



A few words about torches

A hero who must carry a torch in a low corridor can't see anything because he is looking right into the flame. He can still see the general direction of the corridor, but won't notice the goblin who is standing near the wall five paces ahead. In such cases, you need a lantern, or if the heroes march one after the other, the second person should carry the torch. Matches are unknown in Aventuria; flint, steel, and tinder are the Aventurian "lighter."

Equipment	Weight	Price
Candle	2	1 F
Candle lantern	20	5 T
Climbing hooks (10)	50	5 T
Cloth bag 15	4 F	
Fishhook and line	1	2 F
Flint and steel	5	6 F
Frying pan, iron, 30 cm diam.	80	8 T
Goose quills (10), or stylus	1	4 T
Grappling hook with 10 paces rope	30	10 T
Hammer	40	8 T
Hand ax	40	15 T
Kettle	70	15 T
Knife, fork, and spoon	10	5 T
Lamp oil	10	5 F
Leather backpack (15 greatpounds capacity)	40	4 T
Magnifying glass	5	8 D
Needle and thread	2	8 T
Oil lamp	10	1 T
Parchment, 10 sheets	1	12 T
Rope, 10 paces	55	7 T
Storm lantern, oil	30	12 T
Tent, 2 people, without floor	600	from 3 D
Tinderbox	8	2 T
Torch	20	5 F
Water skin, 1 liter	5	1 T
Woolen blanket	60	2 T

Magical Equipment

Heroes rarely have an opportunity to acquire a magical item, since these can't be purchased at a favorite market stall. Only in unusual circumstances will a shop owner bid a hero to come into his back room with the words, "I have something very special for you here." Sometimes, a patron will lend heroes a magical artifact or even give it to them as a gift if the solution to a problem affords such measures. Normally, however, a hero must earn the right to possess such a wondrous thing—by stealing it from a dragon's hoard or an evil necromancer, for example.

Below, you will find some magical objects that heroes might encounter during their adventuring lives, but don't overdo it! Use the sum of an adventuring group's Adventure Points as a rule of thumb: one magical item or an elixir may be acquired by the party for every 5,000 Adventure Points.

Elixirs: Magical potions may have many different effects; a Strength elixir, for example, can increase a person's ST by 1d6+1 points for 1d6+1 combat rounds. Or an elixir might reduce your weight by half to help you cross a rickety bridge. Or perhaps a potion turns you into a mouse. Only very rarely can you buy elixirs for less than 50 ducats.

Other magical liquids are poisons, such as the Half-Poison or the Fear Poison that were mentioned earlier (p. 158).

The most popular elixir is probably the Healing Potion. Depending on its recipe, it heals between 6 and 30 VP and costs about 1 ducat per VP that can be regenerated.

Magical rings and amulets: These pieces of jewelry are often imbued with magic spells (see the list of spells on page 135) which may, for example, turn the wearer invisible when a key word is uttered, or make her incredibly beautiful and charismatic, or let her speak an animal's language. Quite often, they can be used only once. Sometimes, a jeweler has a magical ring or amulet for sale without even knowing what abilities it possesses. *If* he knows an item is magical, expect prices in the three-digit ducat range.

You are free to design other artifacts in your Highlord laboratory, but keep game balance in mind. If a party of heroes has a magical remedy for every little problem encountered, even the most exciting adventure will turn into a snore-a-thon.

Food

Food and drink keep heroes healthy. A hero needs about three liters of water and a greatpound of food per day if she is subject to average exertion. A short list of food is provided below. These items can be preserved and are useful as trail rations. Prices, again, are the average charged; you will pay less in a good year if you buy your food on a farm than if you buy something in a town where a fair taking place.

Type of food	Weight (Ounces)	Price
Dried beans	20	4 K
Flat bread20	3 K	
Hard cheese	20	2 F
Dry sausage	20	3 F
Dried meat	20	7 F
Smoked kipper	20	7 K
Sheep's cheese	20	15 K
Bacon	20	8 F
Bread	20	1 F

At the Tavern

Even the strongest heroes need occasional rest, and most like to do so under a firm roof. You can find inns along the more important roads, in larger villages, and in towns. The quality of these houses can vary greatly (see notes on regeneration on page 123). Many of these houses are clean and well managed, but others have fleas hopping about, and more bedbugs than feathers in your bed. Aventurians don't like these annoying little critters either, but conditions such as these are considered normal and are accepted if the price is right. The fees below are average for well-run, bug-free establishments.

Menu Item	Price per Person
Stew	3 F
Meat dish	7 F
Fish dish	5 F
Bread and sausage	2 F
Bread and cheese	1 F



Pint of ale	6 K
Cup of cheap wine	9 K
Spirits	6 K

Overnight Stay	Price
Straw bag in dormitory	2 F
Single room	3 T
Double room	5 T

Note that taverns and inns are not solely used as resting places for heroes. Every town has taverns of different reputations. One might be famous for potential patrons just waiting for heroes to come by to accept a deal. Another might play host to the complete alumni from the nearby jail and dungeons—such an establishment might be useful for fencing stolen goods or finding information (for a price, of course) that you can't get elsewhere.

Domestic Animals

Horses: If you own a riding animal, you can consider yourself quite wealthy. Even an older horse of average quality costs 40 to 50 ducats, a sum for which a chancery scribe must scrimp and save for a whole year.

Donkeys: A donkey costs only about half the sum of a horse (25 ducats) but is more of a pack animal than a riding animal. Carrying an adult human for a long time makes a donkey quite exhausted; this is worse if it is a warrior in armor.

Mules: Mules occupy the middle ground between horses and donkeys, costing about 35 ducats. They can carry a rider, but are not the riding animal of choice for a great warrior. If a mule is as large as a horse, the price goes up.

Dogs: You can buy man's best friend for next to nothing. If you don't insist on a dog with a pedigree to put a count to shame, you can just wait for the next litter from that street dog on the next corner; wait for mama to go search for food, and swipe one of the puppies. If you care for the little pup, feed it, and treat it well, you'll have a faithful companion. When it is grown, it might even defend you from danger.

Highlord Tips

So, you've been chosen to run the game for your role-playing group? Don't despair. Don't panic. Take it easy.

Don't let all the tasks and rules wear you down. Running a role-playing game is fun. You're the one who has all the information, and you may chuckle silently at your heroes' clumsy attempts to unravel the mysteries you've set up so cunningly. You alone choose from the huge variety of characters that you portray in the course of an adventure (even the high, mighty, and evil). You are in a position to create the game world as well as determine the fate of your heroes—in a very real sense, you are the personification of their fate.

• Your most important task is to create a suspenseful and entertaining game session.

Try to cater to your players' wishes and interests. If your players love detective stories, give them mysteries to solve. If they delight in exploring undiscovered countries, choose your adventures accordingly. Your players' tastes should also be considered in other crucial areas of gaming style. Do they want few or frequent fights, and do they prefer their fights portrayed realistically or theatrically (do mood and role-playing hold center stage instead of hack and slash)? Do they like moments of horror (terrifying scenes, gruesome discoveries) to be described in gory detail, or do they only want sketchy descriptions? Regardless, don't give in to one player wish in particular—to keep your adventure more exciting and entertaining, ignore requests for more treasure and more Adventure Points.

• Never count on your players to follow the adventure path you have in mind.

Players simply don't do this. Whenever possible, they will do something you didn't expect or plan for. That's fine, since spontaneity is one of the great strengths of role-playing—but it may force you to react to unexpected behavior. Slowly but surely, try to get the heroes back to the adventure you've scripted. Don't let this faze you. There's always a way of getting things back on track.

Don't feel awkward when your players take great interest in details that you never would have bothered to think about, while at the same time overlooking the most obvious clues placed right under their noses. This does not mean that you're failing to do your job—it's just a common trait of role-playing groups. Just continue placing your clues and your players are bound to find them sooner or later.

If things ever really go awry, don't shy away from taking a timeout to adapt your story line to the heroes' current actions.

• Be fair.

If one of your players has a brilliant idea that would absolutely unsettle your entire adventure, don't simply say, "You can't do that, period!" Such arbitrary decisions leave players with a bad taste in their mouths. Instead, try to find an explanation rooted in the game's background and offer a logical reason for why an idea won't work. If you don't succeed in this and the player's reasoning happens to be flawless—well, wing it from there. This is usually easier than you might think, since you don't work against the players but with them, and their input might provide you with helpful hints as to how to arrive at the intended goal anyway.

• Be fair in dealing with each player on the same terms.

Everybody has the right to enjoy the gaming session. Be sure that not only the loudest or fastest player gets all the action, and never stop asking other players what they intend to do. Try to make certain that no player remains uninvolved for a prolonged amount of time, even if their hero's abilities aren't suitable to the situation. If a problem (such as the workings of a trap) may be solved only by the application of "real-world" knowledge (by thinking and experimenting), do not exclude any player from contributing simply because his player does not have the necessary Talents. If a hero's contribution would be absolutely out of place, most good players will refrain from doing so, anyway.

• Be informed.

Prepare for every game session in advance. Organize your adventure notes by using self-stick notes, copies, and flowcharts. Make copies of your players' character sheets and ask the players to describe their strengths and weaknesses, their spells, and their magical items. Initiate a short "briefing" at the beginning of each game session to recall what has happened so far. The less you need to peruse your books during game play, the more fluid and exciting your sessions will become.

A good idea is to record important names and data on note cards. An even better idea is to supplement these lists with a selection of randomly chosen first and last names, and a wide selection of equally random peculiarities and mannerisms (such as "bald," "bad breath," "overly nervous," "weather-worn," and so on). You may simply and unobtrusively assign such names and qualities to any characters that heroes happen to meet in the course of an adventure. If your players can always tell important characters from unimportant ones because the former have names and the latter don't, then you're making matters too easy for them. A world in which everyone at least has a name is much more believable and interesting.

Should you fail to have certain information on hand at the right time despite all preparation, just wing it. Nobody will complain about the adventure being different from what is written as long as everyone is having fun.

• Do not take the ruling, "What you say, you do—what you don't say, you don't do" too literally.

It can be taken for granted that a hero dresses each morning after getting up—but drawing a weapon in the face of danger cannot be assumed. Should a hero proceed to do something outright stupid, there's a good chance he has simply misunderstood the situation. Drawing a weapon against a superior number of enemies might result in an untimely death, and in such a situation, you might want to ask a player if he is aware of just how many opponents the party is facing, and allow him to rethink his actions accordingly.

• Don't let a hero die just because of a rotten dice roll.

A hero does not need to die simply because he Fumbled an AG Test to walk down a set of slippery stairs. Likewise, a random Critical Hit by a random goblin's saber shouldn't kill a hero halfway into an adventure, even if the rules clearly call for the hero's death.

This doesn't mean, however, that Aventurian heroes shouldn't die. They just shouldn't die senseless deaths. If a hero insists on walking directly into a lethal trap, his death might be earned. He'll have to face the consequences. If heroes try to "play rough," feel free to show them that the world of Aventuria is at least as rough as they are. (And yes, villains are just as able to lay ambushes, call an AT+, or use poison as heroes are—but it's best if heroes don't force you into such an "arms race" in the first place).

• Provide players with helpful hints.

Use such hints sparingly, however, for the players should solve the adventure, not you. Try to place these hints in a manner befitting your game; for instance, by having a hero suddenly notice some new detail, or a Highlord character giving useful advice.

• Never relegate heroes to the role of mere spectators.

As impressive as it may seem to let heroes watch a duel between very powerful Highlord characters, this is likely to leave them unsatisfied. Always strive for your heroes to be the decisive factor in a "clash of the titans"—for instance, by letting the heroes take advantage of the fight to liberate the master villain's treasury key, or by freeing his captives.

• If possible, don't send Highlord characters to accompany your hero group.

If this is unavoidable (for instance, because the adventure absolutely requires a magician but none of the players has a fitting character), refrain from letting this character affect the game too much. The heroes should hold center stage in all adventures. Highlord characters are either antagonists or fill minor roles.

• Don't pamper your heroes with magical equipment or Adventure Points.

If your group of heroes owns the *Sword of Arch-Demon Smacking* and includes a personal buddy of the goddess Hesinde, then something has really gone wrong with your game. In fact, you've stripped yourself of all options for presenting exciting adventures to your players. An adventure can be exciting only if the heroes encounter believable foes and must give all they can to win the upper hand. If you think your players deserve a great reward, make them work for it—and never forget to think about the reward's consequences beforehand. Really powerful artifacts have brought many an adventure to a grinding, premature halt.

It is very important, however, that your heroes feel they are advancing up the money and power scales, that they are able to handle greater dangers than before, and, most of all, that they have become something special—heroes recognized as such by their fellow Aventurians.

• Plan for the long term.

Encountering a villain again and again over the course of many adventures and finally besting him in a dramatic confrontation is much more satisfying than beating him after the very first encounter. Highlord characters on the heroes' side are also more interesting if they are old acquaintances known from earlier adventures. Once a friendship between heroes and a Highlord character has developed, the disappearance—or even murder—of the character becomes a pressing and personal manner for your heroes.

Adventure Points and other rewards should be considered as part of such long-term planning. For instance, knowing that the heroes need the aforementioned *Sword of Arch-Demon Smacking* to successfully confront an opponent at the end of the adventure and that it will be destroyed in that confrontation makes placing it in the heroes' hands so much easier.

• Let your heroes feel that their actions have an impact on their environment.

If your heroes dispose of a tyrannical ruler or save a kindly king, such events do not go unnoticed. In fact, they have consequences for an entire nation and its bordering states. Such actions should have effects on the heroes' reputations, their social status, and their adventure options. After all, you would not expect Imperial Protector Brin to trust common street thugs with a mission of vital importance to the Middenrealm.

• If you don't like Aventuria as presented in our publications, just change it.

You are the Highlord, and are entitled to make decisions about your world. Always take into account, however, that every change may make it more difficult to adapt commercial adventures to your world (i.e., your version of Aventuria). We do not want to prevent you from deviating from the play style of "fantastic realism" if your group prefers their role-playing sessions in a "fairy-tale" or "ultra-realistic" style. You simply need to remember that you will have to change the rules to reflect this. If you don't mind the additional work, go ahead and change whatever you like.

• Rules are simply tools to facilitate entertaining and exciting play.

Rules are not set in stone, and if some rule or other stands in your way when preparing an adventure, it is your right as Highlord to change or ignore it. Then again, you should do this only to maintain your story line or prevent players from feeling they're being treated unfairly.

• Handing Out Adventure Points

One of the most important tasks of being a role-playing game "organizer" (besides being actor, director, and scapegoat all rolled into one . . .) is handing out Adventure Points. In commercial adventures, these are usually awarded as a lump sum at the end of the adventure (or occasionally, after a long scene in the adventure). We also list in text what Special Experiences the heroes will most likely have. Then again, players are inventive and prone to finding their own solutions, so they might encounter situations we (or you) simply couldn't imagine. You'll need to decide for yourself how many Adventure Points to award your heroes and which Special Experiences to allow. (The same applies, of course, to any adventure you create on your own.)

Levels measure a hero's experiences in life, combining accumulated knowledge in teachable skills with more diffuse values such as "maturity." Since this combination is hard to quantify, we opt for giving out Adventure Points in lump sums and making notes of Special Experiences for heroes—Special Experience always refers to the use of Talents (or Spell Prowess). Earlier, we stated: "Talents that were used frequently in an adventure (commercial scenarios usually include a list for this purpose) or that could be trained for specially (Highlord's decision) should be recorded as "Special Experiences." To keep track of this, appropriate boxes are provided in front of the Talent listings on the hero sheet.

What Qualifies as a Special Experience?

While this question is really tough to answer and is intimately tied to each specific game situation, we will try to give you some guidelines. Experiences are Special if:

- They use a hero's Talents that haven't been used much before (such as a Garetian courtier studying Maraskanian animals for the first time; such a choice makes Special Experiences for extremely specific Talents rare indeed);
- The Experience occurs under stress (such as a thief trying to pick a lock in the midst of combat or a healer trying to set a broken leg using improvised means in a rapidly moving coach) or, generally speaking, when a Test incurs a substantial Difficulty Increase and still succeeds;
- The Talent is being used heavily for prolonged lengths of time (such as daily Survival Tests while crossing the Lizard Marshes; however, daily Woodcraft Tests when devoting 15 minutes per day to carving a wooden statue of a giant ameba would not qualify); or
- The adventure explicitly lists Time Units available for studying or practicing a particular Talent, provided the heroes are not directly awarded Talent Points ("In the next three days, the heroes are taught the basic techniques of steering large sailing ships.")

Checking off a Special Experience on the character sheet should also be allowed when your hero has extraordinary success (rolls a double 1) when using a Talent.

Traveling through an Aventurian forest for the fifth time in a row most certainly does not count as a Special Experience (regardless of the number of 1's rolled in any Tests). Fulfilling a self-imposed task at one's leisure also does not qualify. Above all, a Talent Test treated as routine or even easy (meaning the Test does not incur any Difficulty Increase; see page 16) does not come close to qualifying as a Special Experience.

Players may try to stretch the rules and achieve Special Experiences. For example, if a player suddenly rolls without any apparent reason and announces afterward that she has just passed a Climb Test +8, feel free to ignore this. Some players will also purposely maneuver their heroes into difficult situations in the hope of succeeding at an Increased Test to grab a few more Adventure Points. Confront them with the drastic consequences of failed Tests once in a while, just to get them to cool off.

Special Experiences with Attributes

Players will gain Special Experiences with Talents or spells quite often, but Attributes do not readily lend themselves to Special Experiences. To really draw benefit from using an Attribute, a hero must usually work long and hard (or exercise extreme repetition).

For instance, working in a quarry, as a woodcutter, on a galley's oar banks, or experiencing prolonged travel on foot with a heavy load might earn a Special Experience sooner or later. Wearing armor while traveling, however, or simply carrying your backpack or weapons everywhere will not earn Special Experience. Lifting the occasional overturned cart or bashing in a door also does not qualify.

Special Experience with an Attribute should be awarded only in special situations in which the heroes underwent some kind of "practice" program or had formative experiences.

Adventure Points From Combat

When the heroes fight intelligent humanoid creatures, you should award AP according to the creatures' Threat Values (TH). The outcome of such an encounter, however, depends on much more than simple creature statistics. (A good measure of the real danger posed by a fight is the number of VP lost by the heroes during the encounter, measured as a percentage of total party Vitality.)

In commercial adventures, AP earned from combat are pre-calculated, assuming average statistics for heroes of the level(s) the adventure is intended for.

Adventure Points Are Neither Behavior Points Nor Diligence Awards

AP should be awarded in two cases: for experiences a hero actually learns from or for clever/fitting/innovative player solutions for problems posed in an adventure.

In the first case, your hero must actually gain something out of the experience. Thus, watching the birth of a demigod may earn less experience than trekking through an unknown stretch of wilderness; although the demigod may be spectacular, he is also so incomprehensible that the heroes may not glean much information other than the fact that he exists, whatever that may mean. The wilderness, on the other hand, will most likely have tested the heroes' capabilities to their fullest.

In the second case, players often have unconventional ideas—ideas that neither you nor the authors of the adventure could have foreseen. Yet these ideas actually help the heroes solve the problem at hand.

APs are *not* awarded for "role-playing in character"—we simply assume that players portray their heroes according to their abilities (Attributes), personalities (Advantages and Disadvantages), training (Talents) and their social situations (Social Status, Profession) in a fitting manner. Should a hero not behave in an "Aventurian" manner or a manner befitting her role, your have a much stronger means of correction than the awarding (or reducing) of AP: the entire game world, including the rest of your hero group. Even Aventuria has something akin to "public opinion." Customs (sometimes even laws) dictate how people should interact with each other, and Social Status provides a means of regulating a hero's prestige.

AP are also *not* awarded for trying to hog the spotlight all the time. In the same vein, there won't be any AP deductions for sitting silently in a corner during gameplay. Anyone who delights in a passive role during play will also have to be content with reacting to events around him instead of acting himself.

If, on the other hand, a *player* constantly tries to dominate the group, tries to draw attention to himself by means of softly spoken jokes or game-disrupting remarks, plays against the rest of the group, or tries to turn every gap in the rules to his favor just to be "the best," then talk with him. He may favor a different playing style than the rest of the group, or he may have a personal problem with one or more of the other players. He might also simply not get along with you, which leaves you few options other than finding someplace else for him to play.

Player Tips

Now that we have provided all these words of wisdom for the Highlord, we would like to offer some advice to the players.

The following observations concerning "good role-playing" are not meant to discourage you or to insinuate that you need theatrical training to have fun when gaming. They are simply meant to help you avoid the most typical beginner's mistakes, which could lead to arguing or bad moods at the gaming table. We were beginners once, too, and culled the following notes from our own collection of early mistakes.

• Describe your hero and her actions.

Create a mental picture of your hero that you can easily convey to others. Provide her with a personality quirk, characteristic items of clothing, or a liking for some particular food. Most of all, describe her actions as if you were doing them. "As soon as the ork shaman begins to whirl his bone club around, I dive for cover!" Diving beneath the table yourself is strictly optional, though.

• What you say, you do—what you don't say, you don't do.

If you want your hero to do something, announce your intention. Your Highlord will not allow for belated statements that your hero would "of course" have done—something you didn't care to mention earlier. On the other hand, once you have stated a particular action, there's no backing down—if you state that your hero is doing something, she is doing exactly that. If you notice the next moment that your idea probably wasn't very bright, your hero, analogous to you, notices the same fact somewhat too late. (Such things happen, and in the Highlord Tips, we have included advice on dealing with these.)

• Stay within the game at all times.

Even when your hero may be sitting idly for the moment, your companion rogue, who is trying to sneak around the corner, probably doesn't want to be distracted by the latest football results or the statistical probabilities of finding various herbs in the Fountland. And should you happen to remember a really rare, absolutely un-Aventurian, and extremely vulgar joke that just begs to be told, let it lie—enough funny moments will happen in the game without resorting to out-of-game jokes.

• Keep player and hero knowledge apart.

If the Highlord gives information to another player and you overhear it, *your hero* won't have this knowledge. If you happen to have read in a novel that the king who has sent you on a quest will die within the year, your hero will be in no position to utter prophecies of death and doom.

• No game data exist in Aventuria.

Your heroes are simply not able to compare Treat Wounds Values to determine who is the better healer, since *heroes* have never heard of things such as "Talent Prowess," or "Generation Points," or "Adventure Points," or "Initiative Modifiers." When advancing a hero, keep in mind that your hero does not know that advancing Charisma by 1 point may grant improvements to eleven of her currently active Talents. Instead, spend your AP according to the hero's in-game experiences. (In short, *The Dark Eye* game is not meant to cater to the habitual min-maxer.)

• Your hero cannot be in more than one place at a time.

Games can turn chaotic when heroes split up and events occur in more than one location simultaneously. Most players will want to be where the action is. Thus, when a hero finds something really interesting in one room, there's no chance your hero in the next room will know about this, and thus no reason why she would suddenly change rooms until she is told.

• The Highlord is always right.

She is the judge, and she is even allowed to break the rules (if absolutely necessary) for the sake of the game. Should you ever feel unfairly treated or believe that the Highlord is not playing in accordance with the rules, you should make a mental note of the situation and talk to your Highlord afterward (so you don't disrupt the flow of the game with arguments).

• The Highlord is not your enemy.

Don't try to outwit her or play tricks on her; you are playing together, not against each other. If the game has degraded to the point that everyone is playing against each other, exciting adventures have become impossible. The best you can do at that point is try to find out who's strongest, and that gets old rather quickly.

• Show regard for your fellow players.

All the other players have the same rights to an enjoyable game, even if you may have the loudest voice or present the best ideas. The game lives off the current story, which in turn follows a certain plot. Even if your hero's backstory is really exciting or downright tragic, you don't need to tell it *right now*.

The above statement also relates to gaming styles. The players in your group may have different likes and dislikes concerning combat or magic, detective plots versus exploration adventures, and so on. Find a common denominator (and inform your Highlord about it).

• Stick to the rules.

Don't try to be "better" than the other players by cheating when reading the dice, performing incorrect calculations in your hero's favor, or similar cheap tricks. No one is "better" in role-playing, and nothing you may gain at the gaming table will help make you rich and famous in real life—unless you would like to lose your gaming group when you're caught and branded a cheater.

• Role-playing is a game, so don't take it too seriously.

If your hero is insulted by another character, remember that it's an insult hurled at your *hero*, not at *you*, and there is no need to feel offended. If a fellow player tries to conjure demons by performing all kinds of mumbo-jumbo and using lots of pseudo-Latin words, odds are that he is just playing his role as a necromancer and hasn't suddenly become a Satanist for real.

Should your hero ever die, you certainly might find this tragic or frustrating, depending on the situation. Then again, if she had a memorable death, something heroes and players alike will be talking about for years to come, this should be ample compensation. And never forget: It was just a figment of your imagination! You can create a new character. The adventure goes on and on!

Archetypes

People from all walks of life roam the fantastic world of Aventuria—from the ice elves in the far north to the dark-skinned woodsmen of the continent's deep jungles. Of course, members of one people or another will always be found who travel Aventuria in search of adventure. This means that players can choose from a huge variety of different heroes.

In these pages, we will present eight different, pre-generated heroes (which we call "archetypes"). These will allow you a first glimpse of the tremendous diversity of heroes at your fingertips. We have even provided fully completed character sheets for these eight archetypes. This will allow you to get right into the action if you so choose, without having to spend time on character generation.

To make it easier for you to identify with your chosen hero, we have provided each archetype with a short introduction in narrative form. Of course, these introductions are only meant to convey a certain impression of the character as we perceive him or her—if you have different ideas about your chosen hero, her background, or her behavior, feel free to alter our descriptions as you see fit. Additionally, if we mention a certain gender in a description, feel free to change it to a character of the opposite gender. All archetypes are suitable for both sexes. You only need to decide on a name and some physical details, and off you go!

Garetian Warrior

"By the beard of King Alrik—I'll make you pay for this, vile knave!"

Pipe smoke drifted in thick plumes through the tavern like the infamous Havenan fog. Men and women sat on benches, talking to each other and drinking. Rondrian, however, did not partake in any conversation. Slowly, he turned his mug in circles on the table's wooden boards. His interest was fixed on the three ruffians over in the far corner who were clearly up to no good. The tavern boy had managed to duck the not-so-friendly rap on the head they had aimed at him, and the maid had deftly parried their dirty jibes about some outstanding parts of her anatomy. Now, however, they had turned their attention to the portly innkeeper, whose red, knobby nose was disfigured by sores.



"Look there, just like an elephant!" they jeered. "I've seen one of these fatties in Kunchom once. It did a handstand when you pulled its trunk. Let's find out whether our fatty here can do the same trick, shall we?"

With this, the churl was already on his feet, making for the bar. Rondrian chose this moment to act.

"This is quite enough," the warrior stated calmly. "Leave the innkeeper alone, or I'll have to teach you something about how a guest should behave."

"You will, indeed? And how will you do this, Mister Important?" the other sneered.

"Like this," Rondrian replied, unperturbed, and slapped the ruffian on the cheek. In the blink of an eye, the warrior had drawn his sword. "Do you think this is answer enough? Or shall I repeat the lesson with steel?"

The troublemaker slowly struggled to his feet again, wiped the dribble of blood from his mouth and nose, and joined his fellows, who were already on their way out. Rondrian sheathed his weapon and returned to his seat.

"More ale, innkeeper!" he ordered.

Background

Only those who have a Warrior's Diploma may call themselves "warriors;" all others are simply fighters or mercenaries. To get such a diploma, you must graduate from one of Aventuria's warriors' academies. Most large cities boast at least one of these institutions, financed either by a rich noble family, the city itself, or an organization devoted to the advancement of fighting prowess.

Academies may exist for a number of reasons. For instance, they may cater to young nobles who are not in the line of inheritance. Many a noble master has sponsored academy training for an illegitimate child (secretly, of course); in some cases, gifted children of commoners have also been enrolled. Although these "foundlings" are usually given a hard time by students of nobler birth, it is often they who graduate at the top of their class. Depending on who pays the money, the claims and the curriculums of such schools may vary widely.

Students usually enter an academy at age 12. They are taught strategy and tactics, how to use most of the standard weapons (and a few of the uncommon ones), and riding, but also etiquette and other important elements of everyday life. At the age of 17, they usually leave the academy to pursue careers.

The academies also instill their students with the most important difference between warrior and mercenary: "Rondra's virtues." These are honor, pride, honesty, and selfless championship of the causes of the weak. Warriors feel committed to these ideals, which sometimes makes them hard to understand. Not every situation can be solved with bare steel—sometimes trickery more in line with the teachings of Phex is required. Making a warrior see this need, however, is a long and arduous process. Some plans a warrior will never condone regardless of how hard you try, such as using poison to kill an enemy.

Warriors from the Middenrealm are devoted to the emperor's house, even if they are not of noble birth themselves. They believe in the feudal system which has been delivered to the world by the gods—but only as long as the subjects are not maltreated or taxed more harshly than necessary. Warriors are well respected wherever they go, with knights or barons often treating them as equals.

Clothing, Weapons, and Equipment

Warriors prefer Rondra's colors: red and white. They usually try to remain well groomed and well dressed. The warrior's classically distinctive item of apparel is the chain mail shirt. Warriors are trained in wearing this type of armor and find it no more uncomfortable than others would find a normal shirt.

Warriors usually carry a piece of cloth and a lump of fat for cleaning their weapons, flint and tinder, torches, and—if of noble birth—a banderole with the family coat-of-arms. They often ride valuable warhorses, which are their most treasured belongings.

Quotes

"Are you certain you want to parry my sword with this spit?" (said to a Horasian noble about to employ a foil)

"I want neither gold nor silver for saving your daughter, good woman. Rondra's grace is all the reward I need."

"By the beard of King Alrik—I'll have you pay for this, vile knave!"

"In the name of Rondra!"

A Garetian Warrior Begins Play

Game Data: 31 VP, 31 EP; RM 2, CO 12, CL 10, IN 11, CH 9, DE 9, AG 12, CN 13, ST 12, SO 8

Advantages and Disadvantages: Academic Training (warrior), Code of Conduct (uprightness), Low Resistance to Magic (–1), Toughness

Talent Listing: Bastard Sword +3, Bow +5, Brawling +3, Chain Weapons +3, Axes & Maces +0, Daggers +6, Infantry Weapons +4, Sabers +0, Swords +10, Throwing Knives +0, Two-Handed Swords +8, Wrestling +6; Athletics +5, Body Control +2, Carouse +1, Climb +1, Dance +0, Hide +0, Perception +2, Ride +8, Sing +0, Sneak +0, Swim +0, Willpower +5; Etiquette +4, Fast Talk +0, Human Nature +3, Streetwise +1; Bind/Escape +1, Orientation +1, Survival +0, Track +0; Anatomy +1, Arcane Lore +3, Calculate +2, Heraldry +5, History +2, Law +2, Legend Lore +4, Religious Lore +3, Warcraft +8; Read/Write [Kuslik Script] +4, Tongues [Garethi—mother tongue] +8,



Tongues [Tulamidya] +3; Cook +0, Farming +1, Leathercraft +2, Paint/Draw +0, Tailor +0, Treat Poison +1, Treat Wounds +6, Woodcraft +0

Combat Statistics: Bastard Sword 9/8, Bow 11, Brawling 10/7, Chain Weapons 10/7, Axes & Maces 7/7, Daggers 12/8, Infantry Weapons 9/9, Sabers 7/7, Swords 14/10, Throwing Knives 6, Two-Handed Weapons 12/10, Wrestling 10/10

Special Abilities: Armor Use II, Off-Handed Weapon I, Shield Fighting I

Equipment: Sturdy trousers made from thick wool, fine shirt, padded underclothes, heavy leather boots, sword, dagger, shield, chain mail shirt (AR 4), blazoned tunic, weapon repair set, woolen blanket, hurricane lantern, flask of lamp oil, flint, steel, tinderbox, 2 tar torches, warrior's diploma, leather rucksack, 2 ducats, 94 farthings

Horasian Burglar

"Phex be damned! When did they get a dog?"

"So this is how it feels when you're on the other side of the law," Niam thought, amused. Well, what she was doing at that moment wasn't completely legal, and if she were caught she'd be sent to the dungeon without further ado. But then again, they say that the end justifies the means—and her end was as justified as they come.

A bit earlier, things had almost gotten ugly while she was climbing the wall of a richly decorated house. The guards had appeared out of nowhere while the burglar still clung to the wall, looking like a huge spider. Had it not been for Niam's friend, the warrior Rondrian, who had intercepted the guards and engaged them in a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of Perricum scabbards, she would have been done for. The cat-burglar gave a sigh. She had never thought the straightforward warrior capable of such a ruse—but then again, it would take moons to talk him out of his feelings of guilt for his "dishonorable actions." *Ah, well.*

In the pale moonlight, Niam looked around the office. *Ah, there's the desk. Not the most imaginative hiding place, but why not look there first?* she thought. The drawer was locked and the mechanism obscured by shadows, forcing Niam to check it out by touch alone. *How primitive—almost an insult to my abilities.* She inserted a hairpin—of the finest Vinsaltian goldsmithing, topped with a pearl—into the keyhole. In half the blink of an eye, the lock sprang open with a soft click. The thief opened the drawer, took out a pile of parchments, and crawled back to the window where she could read by the light of the moon without being observed from the outside.

There it was, in black ink on white parchment: "Vito da Stronza, 200 D."

So it was true: "Boronvito," the infamous assassin with an impressive bounty on his head, was actually in the employ of the "honorable merchant" who owned this villa. Excited, Niam smoothed her Drôl lace collar—this was the evidence she had been looking for!

Background

Burglars are rarely born as such. While some people may steal out of passion—for the thrill of it without actually needing the money—these are rare, legendary phantoms that are never caught, perhaps due to their far-reaching connections among the other well-to-do.

Usually, however, people turn burglar because life didn't give them any other choice. Sometimes they hail from one of the disreputable quarters of town, with no chance of ever being accepted as an apprentice by an honest master craftsman—thus being forced to steal from early on simply to survive. However varied their individual backgrounds and life stories may be, all share the same dream: the "job of their life" that will allow them to settle down and buy a large villa with a view of the sea in Kunchom or some other city where life is good, retiring from the life of crime.

Until then, even the burglars of the class-conscious Horasian Empire try hard to bask in the more refined ways of life which they see every day. As long as it does not impede their work, they wear fashionable accessories as easily as the next noble. Cultivating a certain style is almost a must: living the life of an elegant connoisseur is a common way of stressing one's personal style, as is leaving some personal token (for instance, a rose) behind after a job.

Still, every burglar must remember one thing: Stealing from one's comrades is regarded as primitive and dishonorable by most burglars.

Clothing, Weapons, and Equipment

Burglars prefer tight-fitting clothes in inconspicuous colors while on the job. A lot of pockets, small as well as large, visible as well as hidden, are essential. These are needed to keep various utensils such as hairpins, wires, lockpicks, or sawing cords. Larger items, such as crowbars, are usually put into a rucksack. You will never find a burglar without a rope and an assortment of grappling hooks.

Burglars only rarely carry encumbering weapons; most often they are content with a simple dagger. They have learned to use the foil or epee skillfully, although they do not carry such weapons while "at work." They prefer to avoid fights, wishing to remain undetected. If spotted, they usually make tracks rather fast—unless they must defend their friends, which they will do without hesitation.

Quotes

"Well, well—what do we have here? Oh, how *nice*. Not really Silasian brass, but a *most* convincing fake!"

"Phex be damned! When did they get a dog?"

"Begging your pardon, noble sir . . . I must have mistaken the door. No hard feelings, eh?"

A Horasian Burglar Begins Play

Game Data: 27 VP, 28 EP; RM 3, CO 12, CL 11, IN 12, CH 10, DE 14, AG 13, CN 11, ST 12, SO 7

Advantages and Disadvantages: Connections 10, Curiosity 9, Greed 5, Social Chameleon

Talent Listing: Brawling +1, Crossbow +1, Axes & Maces +0, Daggers +6, Fencing Weapons +4, Infantry Weapons +1, Sabers +0, Throwing Knives +5, Wrestling +1; Acrobatics +5, Athletics +3, Body Control +5, Carouse +3, Climb +7, Dance +4, Hide +5, Perception +3, Pick Pockets +2, Sing +0, Sneak +5, Swim +1, Willpower +2; Etiquette +5, Fast Talk +4, Human Nature +3, Masquerade +5, Seduce +1, Streetwise +6; Bind/Escape +4, Orientation +2, Survival +0, Track +1; Appraise +5,

Calculate +4, Engineering +2, History +1, Law +1, Legend Lore +2, Religious Lore +1; Read/Write [Kuslik Script] +2, Tongues [Garethi] +9, Tongues [Tulamidya] +5; Cook +0, Farming +1, Leathercraft +0, Paint/Draw +2, Pick Locks +10, Tailor +0, Treat Wounds +0, Woodcraft +0

Combat Statistics: Brawling 8/7, Crossbow 9, Axes & Maces 7/7, Daggers 12/8, Fencing Weapons 10/8, Infantry Weapons 8/7, Sabers 7/7, Throwing Knives 13, Wrestling 7/8

Equipment: Dark gray trousers, black blouse, light boots, dark hooded cloak, dark gloves, set of lockpicks, 10 paces of rope with grappling hook, belt with hangers and loops, hidden dagger (in boot), evening dress, shoulder bag, crowbar, knife, 9 farthings

Garetian Explorer

"I knew it! I have always known it!"

With a grinding sound, the heavy stone block slowly moved aside and revealed a corridor too narrow for more than one person to enter at a time. Cobwebs hung from the ceiling, dancing like silver swirls of mist in the lantern's light.

"There must be a draft," Trewman mumbled absent-mindedly. "They built a second exit, just as I've surmised."

Just as he was about to step bravely into the corridor, Trewman thought better of it. The lantern's candle had burned down to a stump, and replacing it would surely be a good idea. Hastily, Trewman searched his rucksack for a new candle. No sooner had he found one and taken it out, however, than it slipped from his fingers and fell to the ground. It rolled into the corridor, following the slightly sloping floor into the darkness. Cursing, the explorer jumped after it. Only three steps to the candle, two, one—and suddenly there was a low clicking sound and the floor tile under his foot sank, just by half a finger's breadth. Trewman propelled himself forward immediately, gripping the candle and rolling out of harm's way as he ducked the razor-sharp metal blade that passed narrowly above his head.

"Well, who'd have thought they'd built traps triggered by floor tiles," he thought. Only then did he notice how close he had come to being killed. No matter, though—he didn't have time for such gloomy thoughts right now. From the other end of the corridor, something gleamed and caught his eye. Throwing caution to the wind, he ran ahead and stepped into the entryway of a large hall, large enough to lose the light of his lantern somewhere in its lofty heights. Finally, he saw in all its glorious detail, the thing that had caught his eye. "Well, I'll be," he mumbled. "Just as I've always known! The Golden Dragon of Han'Shapur does exist."

Background

More often than not, explorers come from a sheltered family background, their parents being most interested in educating their children and allowing them to train in Hesindian studies from an early age. Only a very few are street brats who came to the attention of one of the many Hesinde temples because of their cleverness, allowing them entry into a temple school without being suited for the office of priest. Other explorers are simply wealthy fellows with a passion for exploration and the search for ancient yet obscure treasures—such as the fossilized clam money the distant ancestors of Benbukkula's woodsmen used millennia ago.

Whatever their motivation, those who want to dedicate their lives to science need one thing above all: lots of spare time with no need for other income. Thus, explorers tend to be wealthy people (at least initially); otherwise, they couldn't spare the money. An expensive but unsuccessful expedition may reduce even the richest independent explorer to a pauper. No success on the expedition means no items to sell on the limited antiquities market (not that any explorer worth her salt would sell items of real scientific value, but then again, expenses have to be met somehow). A failed expedition also means a blot on the explorer's reputation, making it that much harder for her to acquire new patrons. Such impoverished explorers often take up the adventuring life by selling their knowledge to patrons of a not-so-scientific bent.

Many organizations and societies exist that an explorer may belong to in the Middenrealm, but one is especially deserving of mention: the Royal Ethragraphic Society, the aim of which is to explore and map all known (and unknown) lands.

Clothing, Weapons, and Equipment

Explorers favor comfortable, durable travelers' clothes, often of earthy colors: woolen trousers and shirt, a cape that may double as a blanket, leather boots, and often some kind of hat. If pressed to fight, they usually rely on a dagger. Their multifarious equipment forces them to carry voluminous backpacks with them, to which pans and a protective sheet made of waxed linen are attached. These rucksacks hold optical instruments (such as a magnifying glass or a telescope), alchemical solutions (such as ether, for putting nefarious insects to sleep), alcohol (for properly conserving specimens), or a plant press. Explorers also need parchment and quills, at least one sketch book, and a map of the area they intend to travel in (if one is available, of course)—and last but not least, a southfinder.

Quotes

"I knew it! I have always known it!"

"Fascinating!"

"This river flows into the Mysob. Really! I know what I'm saying, trust me on that!"

A Garetian Explorer Begins Play

Game Data: 26 VP, 26 EP; RM 3, CO 11, CL 14, IN 13, CH 12, DE 13, AG 9, CN 11, ST 10, SO 7

Advantages and Disadvantages: Curiosity 6, Direction Sense, Good Memory, Vertigo 6

Talent Listing: Brawling +1, Crossbow +4, Axes & Maces +0, Daggers +1, Infantry Weapons +1, Sabers +0, Staves +5, Throwing Knives +0; Body Control +1, Carouse +0, Climb +4, Dance +0, Hide +0, Perception +7, Ride +3, Sing +0, Sneak +0, Swim +1, Willpower +0; Etiquette +4, Fast Talk +6, Human Nature +2, Streetwise +4; Orientation +3, Survival +2, Track +2, Weather Sense +2; Animal Lore +2, Appraise +8, Arcane Lore +5, Calculate +6, Engineering +5, Geography +5, Heraldry +4, History +7, Law +5, Legend Lore +4, Plant Lore +3, Religious Lore +8, Starcraft +2, Language Lore +3; Read/Write [Kuslik Script] +7, Read/Write [Tulamidyan] +7, Read/Write [Zhayad] +5, Read/Write [Nanduria] +3, Tongues [Garethi] +12, Tongues [Bosparano] +9, Tongues [Tulamidya] +9, Tongues [Proto-Tulamidyan] +6, Tongues [Isdira] +2, Tongues [Mohic] +4, Tongues [Rssahh] +5; Boats +1, Cartography +5, Cook +0, Farming +1, Leathercraft +0, Paint/Draw +4, Pick Locks +1, Tailor +0, Treat Poison +1, Treat Wounds +2, Woodcraft +0

Combat Statistics: Brawling 7/6, Crossbow 11, Axes & Maces 6/6, Daggers 7/6, Infantry Weapons 6/7, Sabers 6/6, Staves 9/8, Throwing Knives 7

Equipment: Sturdy wool trousers, linen shirt, leather vest, sturdy shoes, raincoat, heavy dagger, quarterstaff, rucksack, waterproof leather map case, charcoal pencil, 20 sheets of simple paper, set of cutlery, small hammer, dusting brush, pair of pincers, magnifying glass, 22 farthings

Thorwalian Pirate

"I say! In Swafnir's name!"

The waves rippled softly in the harbor basin. The moon had long since retreated behind dense clouds that promised rain during the night. The weather was perfect for the three dark figures sneaking along the quay. The large woman in front seemed to like the rising breeze the most.

"I strongly doubt we're doing the right thing here. After all, it's not the poor fisherman's fault that . . ."

"In Swafnir's name!" tall Walla interrupted the warrior in a loud whisper. "Horasians took us from our ship. Horasians put us into jail. A Horasian jailer now has a bruise on his forehead for this. And now, it's a Horasian fisherman's turn to help us make good our escape, I say!"

". . . and before we even get to the boat, Horasian ears will see to it that we're thrown back into the dungeon. Why can't the two of you just be silent!" the second woman, more slender than the first, hissed.

The threesome climbed a ladder down to a wooden pier. Small fishing boats were moored there, and Walla inspected each of them closely.

"We'll take this one," she finally whispered. She motioned her companions to follow her and cut the rope tying the jolly to the pier.

"We'll row out of the harbor—only then do we set sail. You go port, Rondrian, you starboard, Niam," the Thorwalian ordered.

Both her friends looked at her without understanding.

"Oh, such landlubbers you are!" Walla hissed. "Rondrian to the left, Niam to the right. In Swafnir's name, this will be a jolly good trip!"

Background

Thorwalians excel at sailing since their barren country is not well suited for farming. The colorful sails of the dragon ships from the north can be seen on all the seas—and evoke fear everywhere, much to the astonishment of most Thorwalians. True enough, the corsairs of the southern seas indeed make a living by raiding other ships and may justifiably be called "pirates," but a Thorwalian would vigorously object to being given the same epithet—after all, *they* only raid villages of the Horasian whale killers, or ships of the hated slave traders from Al'Anfa. Actually, the Thorwalians sink most of the ships they capture, cargo and all—indicating that the northern roughnecks may indeed be more interested in the statement than the looting.

Landlubbers usually believe that being raided by Thorwalians is like a big, jolly fistfight, not really a life-threatening event. Anyone who has actually seen a dragon ship come up, however, would surely beg to differ. Or take the case of the proverbial fisherman from the Fairfield, who was forced underwater repeatedly until finally, in fear of imminent death, yelled out, "The Horas is a whore!" as instructed by his Thorwalian tormentors. He probably didn't quite catch on to Thorwalian humor.

Men and women are absolutely equal in Thorwalian society—and equally fearsome in combat. A woman heavy-handedly commanding a ship full of roughnecks fond of boozing is the rule rather than the exception. On the other hand, never ask a female Thorwalian if she'd like an escort for the evening, since the dark streets can be so dangerous. She would surely take offense and hit you—hard.

Clothing, Weapons, and Equipment

Thorwalians are rarely seen without striped trousers and leather vests. They love heavy, richly decorated belts and girdles, as well as amulets that protect the bearer from the hungry grasp of sea monsters or the evil tricks of the ship's kobold.

For weapons, Thorwalians favor axes and fore-tooths. Ship's crews are usually also equipped with cutlasses.

Quotes

"And then we hit the Horas—hoye hoye hum—and then we hit the Horas—hoye hoye hum—and then we hit the Horas—hoye hoye hum." (refrain of a favorite Thorwalian song; basic decency prevents us from printing the individual stanzas)

"I couldn't care less how much you paid for the passage. The owl has just called thrice, there was a spider in the yard, and a seagull circled round the crow's nest exactly seven times—I won't put out today, and that's the end of it!"

"I say! In Swafnir's name!"

A Thorwalian Pirate Begins Play

Game Data: 33 VP, 33 EP; RM 1, CO 15, CL 8, IN 10, CH 12, DE 12, AG 13, CN 14, ST 15, SO 4

Advantages and Disadvantages: Balance, Greed 5, Low Resistance to Magic (RM –1), Superstition 5, Violent Temper 5

Talent Listing: Brawling +7, Axes & Maces +8, Daggers +2, Sabers +2, Throwing Ax +5, Throwing Knives +2, Two-Handed Axes & Maces +5, Wrestling +1; Acrobatics +2, Athletics +4, Body Control +5, Carouse +7, Climb +7, Dance +0, Hide +0, Perception +3, Sing +0, Sneak +0, Swim +6, Willpower +0; Fast Talk +0, Human Nature +1, Streetwise +1; Bind/Escape +7, Fish +6, Orientation +5, Survival +0, Track +0, Weather Sense +5; Appraise +2, Calculate +0, Geography +2, Legend Lore +4, Religious Lore +1, Starcraft +1, Warcraft +2; Read/Write (Kuslik Script) +0, Tongues (Thorwalian) +6, Tongues (Garethi) +4, Tongues (Tulamidyan) +4; Boats +6, Carpenter +2, Cook +0, Leathercraft +2, Paint/Draw +0, Pick Locks +1, Seafaring +6, Tailor +0, Treat Wounds +1, Woodcraft +3

Combat Statistics: Brawling 13/11, Axes & Maces 14/11, Daggers 11/8, Sabers 11/8, Staves 8/7, Throwing Axes 13, Throwing Knives 10, Two-Handed Axes & Maces 13/9, Wrestling 10/8

Special Abilities: Off-Handed Weapon I

Equipment: Striped trousers, blue blouse, colorful leather vest, high boots, skraja, throwing ax, grappling iron with 10 paces of rope, broad belt, colorful headband, bottle of liquor, various amulets, 23 farthings

Tulamidyan Mountebank

"I have performed in front of emperors and kings!"

Flames leaped from the three lower stories of the castle keep and smoke billowed from the windows near the roof. Long ago, much too long ago, the cries of the young girl had ceased.

"If he succeeds, I'll pay him his weight in gold," the man with the black beard murmured. "And if he doesn't," he added in a bitter voice, "then, by the Twelve, I'll have his head."

Enthralled, everyone's eyes were fixed on the rope. High above the ground, the rope led to the window of an adjoining building, fastened to the window of the burning tower only by a grappling hook. The crowd heaved a collective sigh: a man appeared out of the smoke, silhouetted in the window. In his arms, he held a bundle—the girl!

"Please, Shafir . . . oh Mistress Tsa, help him!" a Thorwalian woman in the crowd breathed. The dwarf and elf next to her kept silent, yet they felt the same as their companion.

Up above, Shafir stepped onto the rope. He nearly slipped, but regained his footing by swinging the child's body as a counterweight. Step by step, he crossed the abyss below. Halfway across, he suddenly had a coughing fit. For a second or two, it seemed he would slip and fall. The crowd gasped and moaned, but the man managed to steady himself once again—barely. Finally, he reached the window on the other side, where he gave his burden over to others who waited for him anxiously.

The bearded man jumped up the stairs in leaps and bounds, the Thorwalian, the elf, and the dwarf close at his heels. "She's alive," Shafir told the duke. Then he turned to his friends and said with a big grin, "Didn't I tell you? I'm the best!"

Background

Most mountebanks come from families with long traditions in the trade, but sometimes the traveling troupes take in young runaways who have fled from strict elders or vengeful teachers. Regardless of their origin, all children must work for a living, meaning they take part in the performances, being trained from early on in fire-eating, tightrope-dancing, and other artistic tricks.

The lands of the Tulamides are the cradle of the mountebank profession. The people living there are cheerful and joyous and are very fond of entertainment—fond enough to pay for it in hard coin. On the other hand, since many Tulamide clans have woodsman's blood in their veins, they are of small and athletic build, making them ideally suited for acrobatic feats.

Many troupes of mountebanks have known each other for a long time. They meet on the streets, happen to stay in the same village, or refresh their bonds of friendship while attending the annual convention at Kunchom. News is exchanged freely on such occasions: who has married whom, who has died, who has been graced with offspring. The mountebanks also tell of the lands they have visited, and mountebanks are actually much better informed about current events in Aventuria than are most other people on the continent.

Mountebanks are of sharp tongue and quick wit, and they delight in telling jokes at other people's expense—which is quite usual among their own, but is often regarded with ill humor by others. Mountebanks are notoriously superstitious, and reliability is certainly not their strongest trait.



Clothing, Weapons, and Equipment

An inconspicuous, gray woolen cloak? Brown wool trousers? Not for the mountebank! Mountebanks like to stand out, for the more vivid the colors they wear, the more spectators they will attract. Thus, the wandering performers favor shocking colors and striking patterns. All garments are tight-fitting, though, so as not to impede agility.

Mountebanks are usually armed with daggers and throwing knives that can easily be hidden in their boots or beneath their clothing.

Mountebanks never wear armor heavier than leather (and even then, only in times of dire need), since armor counteracts their greatest assets: agility and speed.

Quotes

"... the people there are *so* stingy, you wouldn't believe it! Even if Rahja herself were dancing stark naked, they wouldn't offer her more than two kreutzers!"

"Let's have a big hand for Hamud, the strongest man in the world! And now to something even more astonishing, much more so, something you've never seen before: Mirhiban's Miraculous Wonder Drops, only here, and for only 1 silver per bottle . . ."

"I have performed in front of emperors and kings!"

A Tulamidyan Mountebank Begins Play

Game Data: 27 VP, 28 EP; RM 3, CO 12, CL 10, IN 13, CH 14, DE 14, AG 13, CN 11, ST 11, SO 4

Advantages and Disadvantages: Danger Sense +3, Superstition 7

Talent Listing: Brawling +5, Axes & Maces +0, Daggers +3, Sabers +6, Staves +1, Throwing Knives +4, Wrestling +2; Acrobatics +3, Athletics +3, Body Control +5, Carouse +1, Climb +5, Dance +1, Hide +1, Juggling +8, Perception +3, Pick Pockets +1, Ride +1, Sing +0, Sneak +0, Swim +0, Voice Mimicry +3, Willpower +0; Etiquette +1, Fast Talk +6, Human Nature +6, Masquerade +2, Seduce +5, Streetwise +4; Orientation +0, Survival +0, Track +0; Animal Lore +2, Appraise +3, Board Games +1, Calculate +1, Geography +1, Legend Lore +5, Religious Lore +1; Read/Write (Tulamidya) +2, Tongues (Tulamidya) +8, Tongues (Garethi) +6, Tongues (Thorwalian) +4; Cheat +7, Cook +1, Drive +3, Farming +1, Leathercraft +0, Paint/Draw +0, Play Instrument +2, Tailor +2, Treat Wounds +3, Woodcraft +0

Combat Statistics: Brawling 10/9, Axes & Maces 7/7, Daggers 10/7, Sabers 11/9, Staves 8/7, Throwing Knives 12, Wrestling 8/8

Equipment: Loose-fitting red shirt with yellow collar, light blue trousers, belt with many pouches, three juggling balls, three juggling clubs, two colorful pieces of cloth for magic tricks, three throwing knives, dagger, linen bag, wineskin with plain wine, three amulets, 10 farthings



Lea Elf Ranger

"Every animal chooses its hunter all by itself. It looks to me that this hart has not chosen you."

"And yet I say it's cruel," insisted Rondrian.

"Cruel? Because I sacrifice a fawn to save all of us? You shoot the largest and strongest harts without sense or purpose, just for the trophy, and thus you weaken the entire species. Your rulers order pillage and murder and you don't even stop at your own young. You are a human, so don't lecture me on what is cruel!"

The young human had nothing else to say. The fawn, which only seconds ago had lain still on the ground paralyzed with fear, cried out in pain as Ranari severed the sinews of it hind legs with two quick cuts.

"And, while we're on the subject of being cruel: What would you call the blood bath created by the beast we're hunting? It tore three of my brothers and sisters apart. When do you think I should try to end this if not now? The beast is cunning and experienced, because it has lived long. Now, it has grown old and cannot run as fast as it once did. This makes it mad. It is hungry, it must be—for it can no longer hunt healthy animals. And so it will come for this bait. The cries and the smell of blood will draw him quickly."

The elf released the fawn, which immediately tried to get up to run to safety, but its hind legs were useless. From safe cover, Ranari watched the animal's struggle without emotion, while Rondrian, ever the tough warrior, averted his face.

Soon, the enemy sought by the elf showed itself: an old saber-tooth tiger. Its maw white with age, the tiger pushed his mighty, scarred head through the bushes and eyed the fawn greedily. Saliva dripping from its chops, the powerful yet bony body twitched for the

jump—but a moment later, Ranari's arrow hit it square in the eye, penetrating directly into its brain.

Background

Most lea elves live in villages built on pilings in the river plains north of the Salamander Stones; you may, however, find some at hidden places along the Yaquir or the Great River. They trade with neighboring humans and plant fruit, but they mainly subsist on hunting. In this, they do not differ significantly from animal predators: They never kill more animals than the clan needs at the moment—an indication of both pragmatism and respect for all forms of life, which is ingrained in all elves.

Elves do not share the human lust for wealth and power. Quite the contrary is true; it fills them with loathing. Elves also eye human attempts to systematically master magic with grave suspicion. If you ask the elves, the humans are merely toying with powers, the effects of which they have not even begun to comprehend. Humans can never master the forces of magic, being humans and thus limited in wisdom and understanding.

Of all the elven races, the lea elves are closest to humans. Sometimes friendships even arise between elves and humans, in rare cases enticing elves to leave their home and their clan in favor of their human companions, but realizing full well that they will miss both as long as they live.

Clothing, Weapons, and Equipment

Elves wear tight-fitting, body-hugging clothes of soft cloth or suede, usually a shirt and trousers that are decorated with fringes, feathers, colorful embroidery, and sometimes even animal teeth. Top boots, their folded edges cut like calyxes, and a sleeveless cotton cloak complete their dress.

While hunting, no elf is ever without a short bow, perhaps supplemented with a foil bartered from a human. Elves always wear their blades on their backs to keep from impeding their movement through the bushes. No elf will ever carry bulky equipment—why should they? They are accustomed to living in nature, and nature gives them everything they need. You will never find an elf without an instrument, however—usually a flute worn around the neck on a thong. Elves often carry a cloth or hide bag full of healing herbs.

Quotes

"Every animal chooses its hunter all by itself. It looks to me that this hart has not chosen you."

"The wolves were hunting you? Then they must have had a reason for it."

"It is extremely valuable and enables you to do whatever you want with it, you say? Well, then you eat the gold, and I'll be content with the rabbit."

A Lea Elf Ranger Begins Play

Game Data: 22 VP, 30 EP, 31 ASP; RM 4, CO 11, CL 9, IN 14, CH 12, DE 11, AG 13, CN 12, ST 8, SO 5

Advantages and Disadvantages: Bardic Voice, Curiosity 5, Elven Worldview, Fear of the Sea 5, Good-Looking, Inaptitude with Religious Lore, Low-Light Vision, Resistance to Disease, Resistant to Age, Spell-Caster

Talent Listing: Bows +10, Brawling +0, Axes & Maces +0, Daggers +3, Sabers +0, Spears +7, Throwing Knives +0, Wrestling +2; Athletics +4, Body Control +8, Carouse –2, Climb +5, Dance +3, Hide +8, Perception +8, Ride +3, Sing +5, Sneak +8, Swim +2, Willpower +0; Fast Talk +0, Human Nature +0, Seduce +3, Streetwise –2; Bind/Escape +3, Fish +1, Orientation +5, Survival +10, Track +8, Traps +3, Weather Sense +3; Animal Lore +7, Arcane Lore +3, Calculate +0, Law –2, Legend Lore +2, Plant Lore +6, Religious Lore +0, Starcraft +1; Read/Write (Isdira) +5, Tongues (Isdira) +7, Tongues (Garethi) +5; Boats +2, Bowyer +5, Cook +0, Leathercraft +2, Paint/Draw +1, Play Instrument +5, Tailor +0, Tanner/Furrier +3, Treat Poison +1, Treat Wounds +1, Woodcraft +2

Spell Listing: *Balm of healing* +5, *eye of eagle ear of lynx* +5, *fog flow far* +5, *light in the darkness* +3, *move as the lightning* +5, *sleep of a thousand sheep* +5, *thunderbolt* +5, *unseen* +3

Combat Statistics: Bows 17, Brawling 6/7, Axes & Maces 6/7, Daggers 9/7, Sabers 6/7, Spears 10/10, Throwing Knives 7, Wrestling 7/8

Special Abilities: Marksman

Equipment: Trousers of light green cotton, vest of brown leather, light leather boots, cloak of dark gray wool, elven bow, quiver with 20 arrows, dagger, shoulder bag, belt with small pouches, bag full of colorful stones (including semi-precious jewels of 120 farthings value)

Dwarf Mercenary

"Very well then, I'll go alone."

Never had anyone from his clan retreated from anything. These humans, though, were different. They turned rabbits the moment they saw someone wearing a strange robe with the enemy army. A demon, they called him, but Angrax could only laugh at his companions' fear. Typical for humans—a dragon would have been an enemy worthy of his attentions. Even dragons could be beaten, as his great-grandfather Ungrosh and his three brothers had so aptly proven, even if it had killed two of them. Angrax had come here to earn his pay, which involved fighting—not running. While it still could take hours before the enemy came within crossbow range, he would remain here. And after the first shot, he would grab his ax and engage, as he had always done.

Background

Dwarfs love to fight. Thus, it comes naturally for them to combine business and pleasure. Many an anvil dwarf has taken up soldiering; for "a few dozen years," they travel around the world and hope to one day return to their underground halls covered in scars as well as glory. Dwarfs are highly sought after as mercenaries; they are regarded as tough, enduring, and reliable. Sometimes, merely the rumor of the opposing side employing dwarfs has been enough to prevent an entire force from attacking.

Clothing, Weapons, and Equipment

The single most important piece of clothing in a dwarf's wardrobe is the chain mail shirt. Over this, dwarfs often wear a tabard with the coat-of-arms of the mercenary unit they currently serve. They also use ornaments on helmets and boots,

usually colored ribbons, to indicate their allegiance on the battlefield. Their standard weapon is the ax. Dwarf mercenaries carry leather packs with provisions, utensils for maintaining arms and equipment, flint, steel, and tinder, a bottle of spirits, cutlery, and a woolen blanket.

Quotes

"This is no 'underground tunnel,' Miss Elf, but a slanting adit hewn with a gentle slope, if you get my meaning."

"You call this a sword? By Angrosh! In our halls, even the children forge knifes that are sharper than this piece of scrap!"

"Very well then, I'll go alone."

A Dwarf Mercenary Begins Play

Game Data: 37 VP, 42 EP; RM 4, CO 12, CL 10, IN 11, CH 8, DE 13, AG 11, CN 16, ST 15, SO 5

Advantages and Disadvantages: Dwarfnose +3, Fear of Spiders 8, Fear of the Sea 5, Greed 5, Hard to Enspell, Ineptitude with Swim, Low-Light Vision, Resistance to Disease, Resistance to Mineral Poisons, Toughness, Violent Temper 6

Talent Listing: Brawling +4, Crossbow +6, Axes & Maces +4, Daggers +3, Infantry Weapons +3, Sabers +0, Throwing Knives +0, Two-Handed Axes & Maces +10, Wrestling +6; Acrobatics –3, Athletics +3, Body Control +2, Carouse +7, Climb +2, Dance +0, Hide +1, Perception +0, Ride +3, Sing +0, Sneak +2, Swim –3, Willpower +6; Fast Talk +0, Human Nature +2, Streetwise –1; Bind/Escape +1, Fish +1, Orientation +2, Survival +2, Track +2, Traps +2, Weather Sense –1; Animal Lore +2, Appraise +5, Calculate +0, Engineering +5, Heraldry +2, Law +1, Legend Lore +2, Religious Lore +1, Stone Lore +4, Warcraft +7; Read/Write (Dwarf runes) +0, Tongues (Rogolan) +8, Tongues (Garethi) +6, Tongues (Oloarkh) +4; Blacksmith +5, Cheat +2, Cook +0, Drive +2, Leathercraft +4, Light Engineering +2, Mining +4, Paint/Draw +0, Tailor +1, Treat Wounds +5, Woodcraft +5

Combat Statistics: Crossbow 14, Brawling 10/10, Axes & Maces 12/8, Daggers 10/9, Infantry Weapons 11/8, Sabers 8/8, Throwing Knives 8, Two-Handed Axes & Maces 15/11, Wrestling 12/10

Special Abilities: Armor Use II, Off-Handed Weapon I, Shield Fighting I

Equipment: Trousers and doublet of thick wool, padded underclothes, chain mail shirt (AR 4), rock cleaver, dagger, light crossbow with 10 bolts, set of cutlery, dish, linen bag, dice, bottle of liquor, working knife, canteen, sleeping bag, 12 farthings

Tulamidyan Magicienne

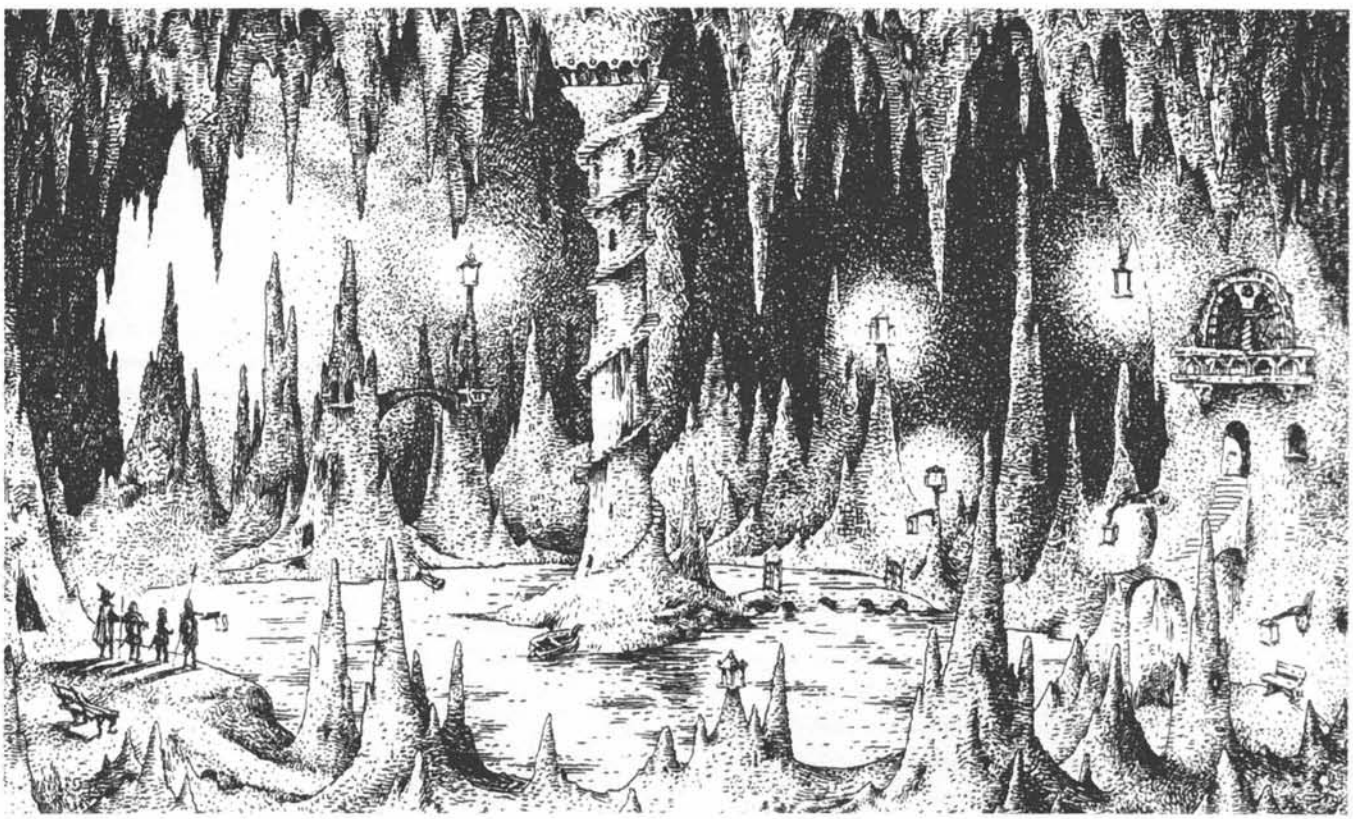
"Don't look at me like that! Why, of course the guard didn't just decide to take a nap right now!"

"And here I thought your help in combat would be restricted to spells alone," Rondrian the warrior said to Mirhiban.

"Well … this was magic," the magicienne replied, caressing her long, thin staff, which she had just used to knock out the man intending to attack Rondrian from behind. "Or do you think any ordinary staff would have survived such a blow without breaking? Either way, this one's out cold."

The two continued across the corridor, not exactly sneaking and yet in silence. Mirhiban had cast a silencing spell upon them that blocked the sounds they were making, including the clinking of Rondrian's chain mail shirt.

Presently, they reached a junction. The end of the right-hand tunnel could not be seen in the dark, but weak light could be perceived down the tunnel to the left. Rondrian pointed in



this direction and Mirhiban nodded—they couldn't even talk to each other while in the zone of silence.

The light emanated from a large hall, in the midst of which they saw a dark altar, flanked by two robed persons. Mirhiban pointed to the one on the left and then to herself, and Rondrian nodded, understanding. Both sat down near the entrance and waited for the spell's effect to pass, for they had no use for silence in their further plans.

Finally, Mirhiban heard the faint sounds of Rondrian breathing. Time to act. Still silent, she finger-counted to three, and both of them jumped up.

"For Rondra!" Rondrian cried, advancing on the cultist to the right with sword drawn.

"Thunderbolt!" the magicienne yelled, and the magical discharge knocked the other enemy to the ground.

Background

There are a few—very few—children, maybe one out of 150, who have strange things happen to them in their early years: Perhaps their father, about to scold them for breaking a jug, suddenly sings like a Khoram swallow, or maybe the notoriously stingy confectioner unexpectedly steps out of his shop and gives them a stick of that very candy that they had always wanted but could never pay for. Whenever such things happen, magic is involved, and the child involved may be in for a glamorous career as a magician.

The path to becoming a powerful magic-user, however, is long and arduous. It involves years and years of intense study—no other profession is as intensive in its training. Nor is any as expensive, considering magic school and tuition fees that need to be paid. Many magicians' academies feel so thoroughly attached to the idea of advancing the cause of magic that they willingly dole out stipends to talented but poor children. Some students are discovered by accident, but some academies hold regular "testing days" in which parents can have their children checked for magical aptitude.

Besides learning how to cast spells, the curriculum includes reading and writing, calculating, the basic workings of alchemy, history, philosophy, and plant lore. The course of study is concluded by taking several tests, which the young adepts must pass in order to have the academy's seal tattooed into their palms—the mark that they have graduated and are now ready to face the world as young magicians.

No people in Aventuria have a longer tradition in magic than the Tulamides. The most powerful jinni masters and artifact magicians of the entire continent were and still are Tulamides—as were the feared Mage-Moguls of ancient times and many infamous present-day chimerologists.

Clothing Weapons, and Equipment

Magicians are proud of what they are and dress the part. Their traditional garb includes a pointed hat or at least a horned cap, a long robe stitched with arcane symbols, and, of course, the rune-covered Wand, the insignia of a qualified magician.

Magicians prefer spell prowess over force of arms, which explains why they use neither sword nor shield. If combat is unavoidable, their favored weapons are dagger or staff, for magicians are well trained in stick-fighting. As for armor, a padded tunic is the absolute limit.

No magician will ever be found without writing equipment and sufficient paper for taking notes on anything of interest, in addition to the usual essentials (flint and tinder, food, and so on).

Quotes

"I do agree, my dear colleague, I absolutely do. However, if you take into account the direct correlation of the harmonic transmutational frequencies to the homogenous astral field structure, one cannot help but notice that the super positions' potencies ...."

"Don't look at me like that! Why, of course the guard didn't just decide to take a nap right now!"

A Tulamidyan Magicienne Begins Play

Game Data: 24 VP, 27 EP, 39 ASP; RM 5, CO 12, CL 14, IN 12, CH 14, DE 11, AG 11, CN 10, ST 8, SO 13

Advantages and Disadvantages: Academic Training (magicians' academy), Astral Power (ASP +2), Fear of Rodents 6, Good-Looking, Inaptitude with Artisan Talents, Prejudice (elves) 8, Spellcaster

Talent Listing: Brawling +1, Axes & Maces +0, Daggers +1, Sabers +1, Staves +3, Throwing Knives +0, Wrestling +1; Body Control +0, Carouse +0, Climb +0, Dance +1, Hide +0, Perception +2, Ride +4, Sing +0, Sneak +0, Swim +0, Willpower +5; Etiquette +6, Fast Talk +5, Human Nature +5, Persuade +5, Seduce +8, Streetwise +1; Orientation +0, Survival +0, Track +0; Animal Lore +1, Appraise +1, Arcane Lore +7, Board Games +4, Calculate +7, Engineering +1, Geography +2, Heraldry +3, History +3, Language Lore +1, Law +6, Legend Lore +5, Plant Lore +3, Religious Lore +6, Starcraft +3; Read/Write (Tulamidya) +6, Read/Write (Glyphs of Unau) +4, Read/Write (Kuslik Script) +4, Tongues (Tulamidya) +14, Tongues (Garethi) +14, Tongues (Bosparano) +6, Tongues (Proto-Tulamidyan) +4; Alchemy +4, Cook +0, Farming +1, Leathercraft +0, Paint/Draw +2, Tailor +0, Treat Wounds +0, Woodcraft +0

Spell Listing: *analytica arcana* +4, *auris nasis oculis* +5, *balm of healing* +7, *be my friend* +10, *breath of magic* +5, *clarum purum* +3, *fastness of body* +3, *foramen foraminor* +3, *move as the lightning* +3, *see true and pure* +7, *sleep of a thousand sheep* +3, *thunderbolt* +5

Combat Statistics: Brawling 6/7, Axes & Maces 6/6, Daggers 7/6, Sabers 6/7, Staves 6/9, Throwing Knives 6, Wrestling 6/7

Equipment: Robe covered in arcane symbols, horned cap, cloak of fine wool, Magician's Wand, ceremonial dagger, ink bottle, quill, 10 sheets of parchment wrapped in waxed leather, dagger in richly-ornamented sheathing, leather shoulder bag, 8 ducats, 12 silver thalers, 6 farthings

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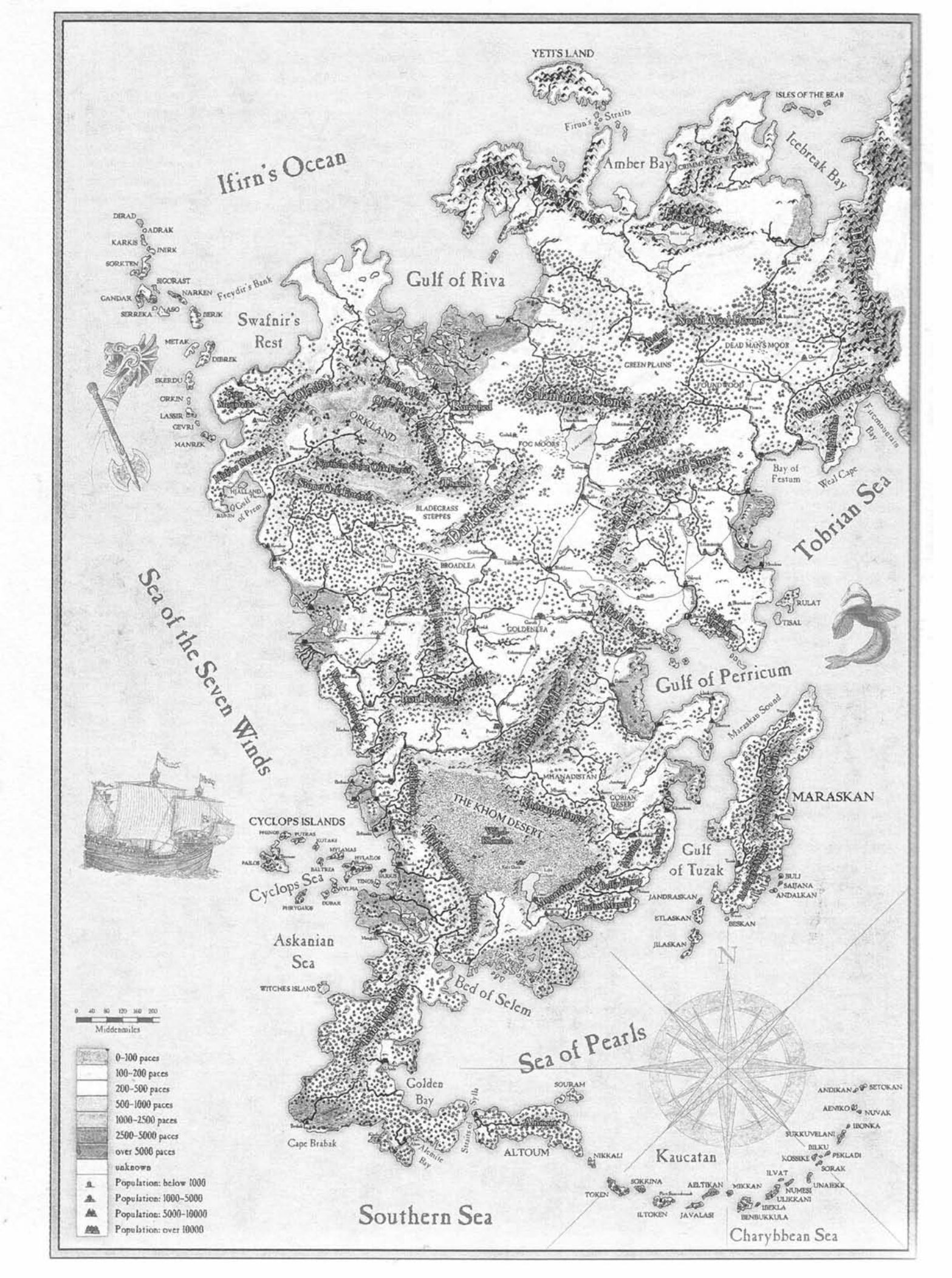
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Ifirn's Ocean
Amber Bay
Icebreak Bay
Gulf of Riva
Swafnir's Rest
DIRAD
OADRAK
KARKIS
INIRK
SORKTEN
SIGORAST
NARKEN
Freydir's Bank
GANDAR
SERREKA
ASO
BERUK
METAK
DIBREK
SKERDU
ORKIN
LASSIR
CEVRI
MANREK
ORKLAND
Gulf of Prem
Sea of the Seven Winds
BLADEGRASS STEPPES
DEAD MAN'S MOOR
GREEN PLAINS
FOG MOORS
Tobrian Sea
Bay of Festum
Weal Cape
RULAT
TISAL
BROADLEA
GOLDENLEA
Gulf of Perricum
MHANADISTAN
THE KHOM DESERT
CORIAN DESERT
MARASKAN
Maraskan Sound
Gulf of Tuzak
BULI
SAIJANA
ANDALKAN
BESKAN
JANDRASKAN
ETLASKAN
JILASKAN
CYCLOPS ISLANDS
PHINOS
PUTRAS
KUTAKI
MYLANAS
HYLAIOS
PAROS
BALTREA
TENOS
MYLPHA
PHERYGAIOS
DURAK
Cyclops Sea
Askanian Sea
WITCHES ISLAND
Bed of Selem
Sea of Pearls
Golden Bay
Cape Brabak
Alcantic Bay
Straits of Sylla
SOURAM
ALTOUM
NIKKALI
Kaucatan
ANDIKAN
SETOKAN
AEVIKO
NUVAK
IRONKA
SURKUVELANI
BILKU
KOSSIKE
PEKLADI
SORAK
ILVAT
UNAIEKK
NUMESI
ULIKKANI
IBEKLA
BENBUKKULA
TOKEN
SOKKINA
AELTIKAN
MIKKAN
ILTOKEN
JAVALASI
Southern Sea
Charybdean Sea
N
0 40 80 120 160 200
Middenmiles
0–100 paces
100–200 paces
200–500 paces
500–1000 paces
1000–2500 paces
2500–5000 paces
over 5000 paces
unknown
Population: below 1000
Population: 1000–5000
Population: 5000–10000
Population: over 10000

The Dark Eye

Character Sheet

Name		Sex	
Race		Age	
Culture		Height	
Profession		Weight	
Rank		Appearance	
Siblings			

Attributes

Courage					Vitality				
Cleverness					Endurance				
Intuition					Resistance to Magic				
Charisma					Astral Energy				
Dexterity					Adventure Points				
Agility					AP-Credit				
Constitution					Level				
Strength					Social Standing				

Advantages

Disadvantages

Base Attack Value:	Base Parry Value:	Base Ranged Value:	Base Initiative Value:

Vitality									
Endurance									
Initiative									
Astral Energy									
Wounds									

Special Combat Skills / Special Moves

Weapons

Weapon	Type/aEC	DC	HP	HP/St	Ini	WM	AV	PV	HP	Break Point

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Type/aEC	HP	Range Bands	HP/Range	AV	Number of Missiles

Armor

Armor	AR	EC / (-Ini)
Totals		

Shield / Parrying Weapon

Shield	Type	Ini	WM	Break Point

CO:	CL:	IN:	CH:	DE:	AG:	CN:	ST:

Talents, Languages, Gifts & Spells

Combat Talents (variable)		AT • PA	TP
Axes & Maces	EC-4	•	
Brawling	EC	•	
Daggers	EC-1	•	
Sabers	EC-2	•	
Thrown Daggers	EC-3	•	
		•	
		•	
		•	
		•	
		•	
		•	
		•	
		•	
		•	
		•	

Physical Talents (D)		TP
Body Control (CO•IN•AG)	ECx2	
Carouse (IN•CN•ST)	–	
Climb (CO•AG•ST)	ECx2	
Dance (CH•AG•AG)	ECx2	
Hide (CO•IN•AG)	EC-2	
Perception (CL•IN•IN)	EC	
Sing (IN•CH•CN)	EC-3	
Sneak (CO•IN•AG)	EC	
Swim (AG•CN•ST)	ECx2	
Willpower (CO•CN•ST)	–	

Social Talents (B)		TP
Fast Talk (CO•IN•CH)	EC-4	
Human Nature (CL•IN•CH)	–	

Nature talents (B)		TP
Orientation (CL•IN•IN)	–	
Survival (IN•AG•CN)	EC-4	
Track (CL•IN•CN)	EC-2	

Lore talents (B)	TP
Calculate (CL•CL•IN)	
Folk Lore (CL•IN•CH)	
Religious Lore (CL•CL•IN)	

Languages & Alphabets (A)	TP
Mother Tongue:	

Artisan Talents (B)	TP
Cook (CL•IN•DE)	
Leathercraft (CL•DE•DE)	
Paint/Draw (CL•IN•DE)	
Tailor (CL•DE•DE)	
Treat Wounds (CL•CH•DE)	
Woodcraft (CL•DE•ST)	

Gifts (G)	TP

Spells (variable)	SP

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The Dark Eye

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