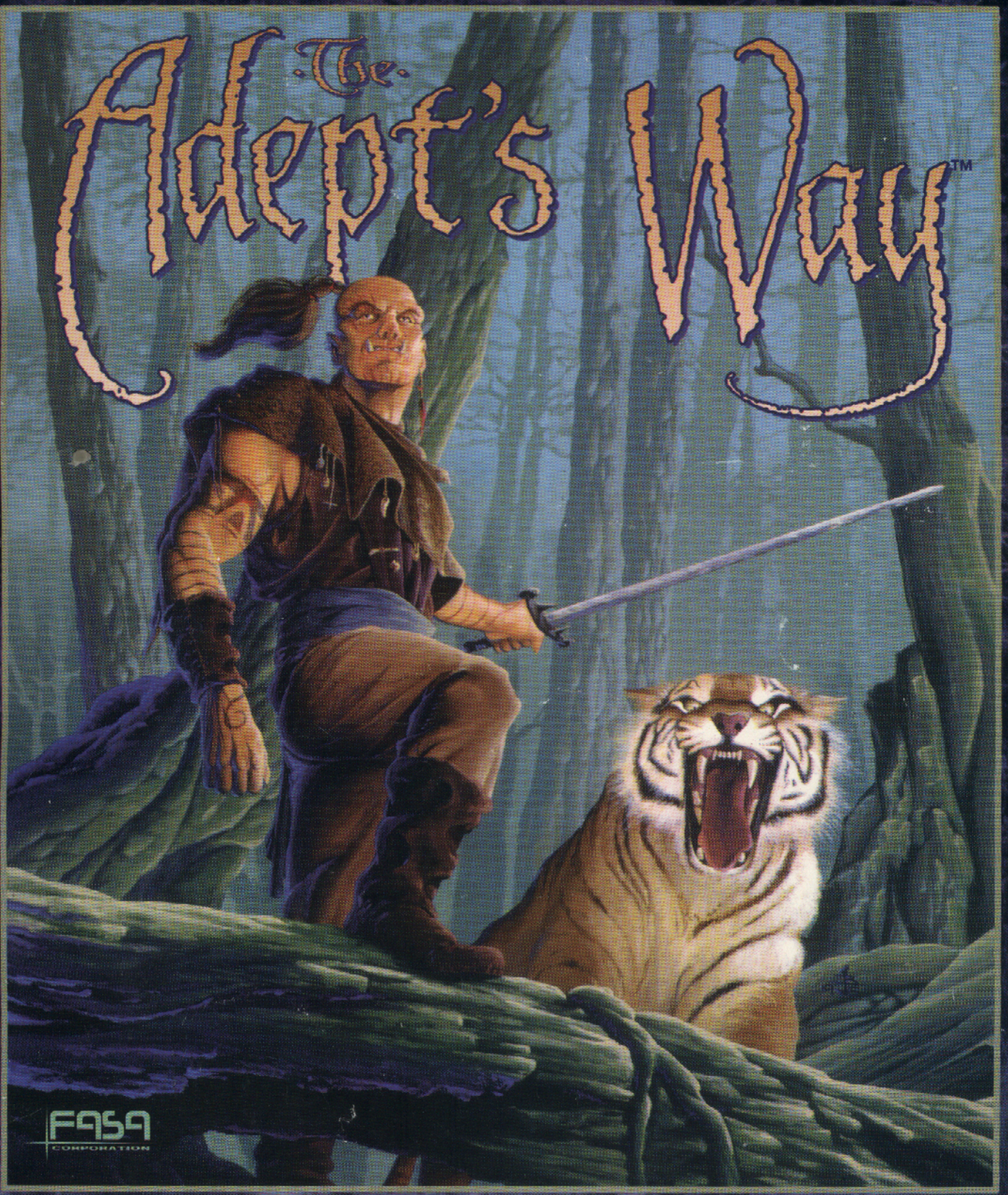


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The Adept's Way[™]



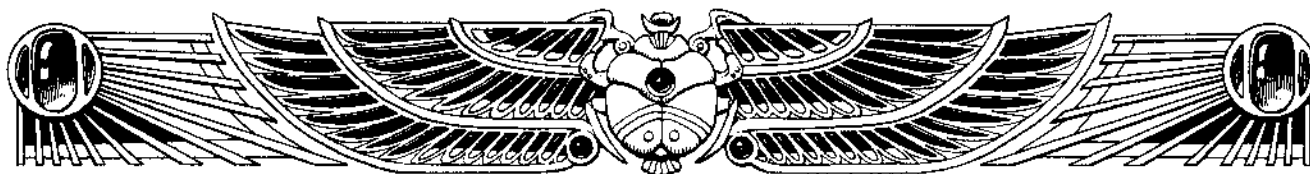
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THE DISCIPLINES SOURCEBOOK FOR EARTHDAWN



The Adept's Way

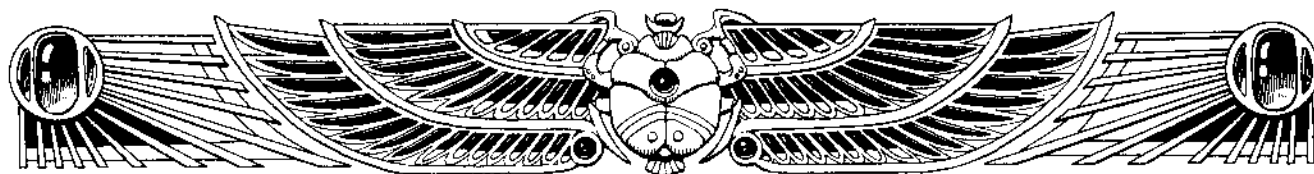
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Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by

FASA Corporation

1100 W. Cermak, Suite B305

Chicago, IL 60608

FASA Corporation can be reached on the GEnie computer network (E-Mail -

FASA.SUPPORT) on SCORPIA'S Roundtable (page 805) and on America OnLine (E-

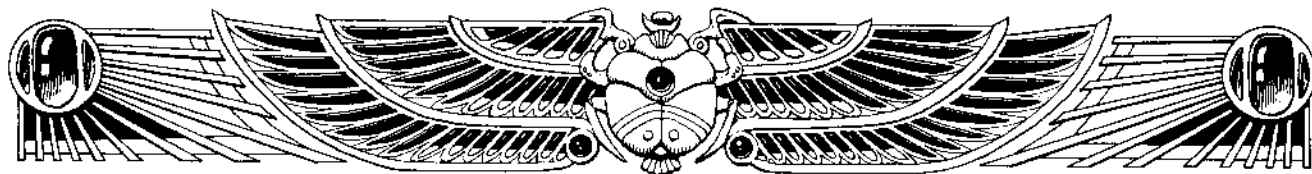
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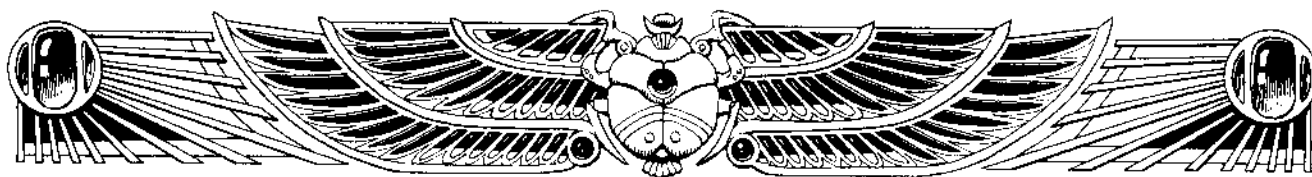
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ON THE COMPILATION OF THE ADEPT'S WAY

This text, *The Adept's Way*, is the latest offering from the Great Library of Throal in our continuing series exploring the nature of Barsaive through the eyes and voices of its people. This volume attempts to answer the vital question, What is the nature of the adept's way?, through personal testimonies of adepts who follow the most common Disciplines practiced in Barsaive. Indeed, we can only answer that question through personal accounts, for the true meaning of following a Discipline in present-day Barsaive is different for every adept.

The Adept's Way is a collection of essays written or dictated by adepts of each of the fifteen Disciplines most commonly practiced in Barsaive, in which the author describes how he sees his Discipline: its meaning, its demands, its symbols and rituals, and so on. Because we recognize that this book offers only one point of view for each Discipline, we encourage other adepts to read these passages and offer their own comments and insights. The Master of the Hall of Records and the staff of the Great Library have also added comments where appropriate.

CONCERNING DISCIPLINES EXCLUDED FROM THIS VOLUME

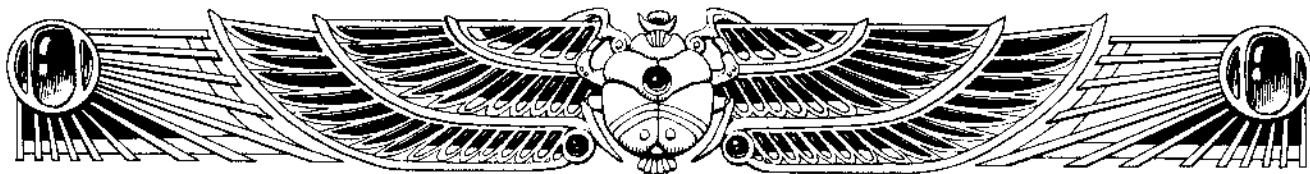
When Barsaivians speak of adepts, they usually mean a person who follows the most common Disciplines: the air sailor, archer, beastmaster, cavalryman, and all the others in this book. Other adepts practice other Disciplines in our land with equal devotion, however. One's practice of the adept's way is tied tightly to one's view of the world, and so there may be as many Disciplines as there are ways of seeing. Indeed, our assiduous research here at the library shows that each of the Name-giver races except for humans has developed Disciplines peculiar to adepts of that race: the traveled scholar among dwarfs, the woodsman among elves, the purifier among obsidimen, the liberator among orks, the outcast warrior among trolls, the boatman among t'skrang, and the wind-dancer, windmaster, and windscout among windlings. Many adepts view these racially oriented Disciplines as less significant than others, but no justification for that opinion can be found. All of these—and an infinite number that we have yet to discover—are true Disciplines whose practitioners adhere to the same ideals as do followers of the core Disciplines discussed in this volume. Unfortunately, a discussion of racially specific and less common Disciplines lies beyond the scope of this volume.

THE LEGEND OF THE FIRST HEROES

As a conclusion to this introduction, I leave the reader with one version of the legend of The First Heroes, which tells of the origins of the adept's way. Much as each race has a distinct version of the origins of life, each Discipline tells a traditional version of the origins of the adept's way.

For this story we must travel back to the beginning of time. The world had not yet been Named, for it had just been formed, created of Upandal's forge. In fact, it was still cooling, making it a hot and uncomfortable place for the races we now call the Name-givers. I phrase it so, for at this time our ancestors had not learned the secrets of Name-giving. They had not learned magic. They had not learned to make clothing, or grow food, or produce weapons for the hunt, or even to speak to one another. These poor folk had been created by an accident of some sort: some say our ancestors were born of Lochost's tears or the blood of Thystonius. At any rate, they suffered terribly. Their unclothed feet burned when they walked on the still-fiery ground. Their bellies ached with hunger. Their mouths cracked with thirst. Garlen wished with all of her being to nurture these new and pathetic creatures, but the other Passions refused her wishes. The other Passions were divided and had argued themselves to a standstill. Some felt that these new creatures marred the perfection of Upandal's creation. Others found the sufferings of these new beings interesting, and proposed that their condition merited further study. The Passions debated long and hard and came to no conclusion.





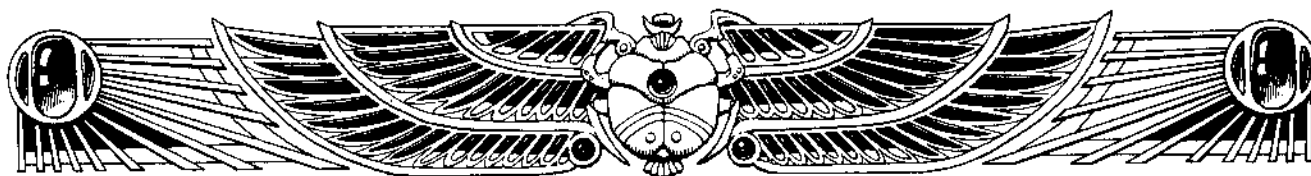
But among each of the eight races there was a brave hero. Each hero had tried to make life better for his or her race, but none had succeeded. Then these eight heroes gathered together and swore an oath to cooperate until, as a group, they discovered the secrets of living. Because they had tried to find the secrets of living in their world and had failed, the eight heroes knew they must try elsewhere. The eight heroes hatched a plan; they would sneak into the hall of the Passions in the sky and steal from their treasure vaults the secrets of living.

The eight heroes began by stealing the stars from the sky. From these they built a ladder, which they used to climb to the Passions' hall. Now the Passions knew that the eight heroes planned to invade their hall, so they prepared eleven ingenious trap rooms, one designed by each Passion. Garlen did not prepare a trap, for she was on the side of the Name-givers-to-be. As soon as the heroes passed safely through the traps (for which Garlen rejoiced), they divided their group to accomplish separate tasks. The human, elf, dwarf and windling heroes made their way to the vault where the secrets of living were stored. The others traveled to the debating room where the Passions still argued. The obsidiman, troll, ork and t'skrang heroes distracted the Passions while the first group gathered up the secrets of living. As the eight attempted to flee the hall, they were seized by the Passion who has now become Dis. As the Passions debated how to slay the eight heroes for their effrontery, Garlen interceded and freed the heroes to return to their races with their stolen prize. The eight gave the secrets of living to all the races: the secret of the bow, of the plough, of the corn seed, of working metal, of defense against monsters, of taming beasts, of Name-giving and many more secrets besides. The people on Upandal's world now knew how to live and how to survive in order to pass these secrets onto their sons and daughters.

When the Passions beheld the actions of the eight heroes and saw that they acted out of generosity rather than treachery, they were greatly moved. They summoned the eight heroes back to their hall, this time as honored guests. They announced that they were so impressed by the heroes' abilities, virtue and courage that they would reward the heroes with the Passions' final secret, that of the Adept's Way. They revealed to the eight heroes the secret of plucking fantastic abilities from the air, of performing great deeds of heroism, and of teaching these things to others. The eight heroes who stole the secrets of living from the Passions became the first adepts.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, 1507TH





TO LIVE LIFE AS AN ADEPT

This introductory essay by Ilkith Fandor, human troubadour and weaponsmith, speaks of matters pertaining to all Disciplines. As an adept of multiple Disciplines, and having used his versatility to learn talents of still other Disciplines, Fandor (in the Library's judgement) possesses unique qualifications to address the common elements of all adepts' lives. At my request, his essay also includes a brief discussion of multiple and minor Disciplines, which seemed logically to belong in this opening document.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistain

I embark upon the writing of this manuscript with a heart full of awe, at the honor of my commission from the Great Library of Throal and the grave responsibility that honor places squarely on my shoulders. To increase the store of knowledge available to us all is an act of virtue, particularly now that we must struggle to piece together knowledge lost during the Scourge. And yet, if my part in this endeavor is to be worth the ink and parchment spent on it, I must address fully and accurately a truth that for centuries has resisted being defined in general terms. A common perspective and philosophy does exist for all adepts in Barsaive, and yet the key to understanding our common experience is the intimate, individual bond between each Name-giver and the magical fabric of the world. Each adept's experience is unique; there is no single way of practicing any Discipline. The adept becomes inextricably interwoven with his Discipline, so that no clear boundary remains between his inner nature and the outer world. To be an adept is the profoundest possible expression of identity, yet it also demands submission to tradition and the most basic patterns of our existence. Like anything truly magical, the heart of the adept's way is paradox.

ILKITH'S VIEW
OF THE ADEPT'S WAY,
THOUGH LEARNED
FROM EXPERIENCE,
IS STILL ONLY ONE
PERSON'S VIEW.
THE CAREFUL
READER SHOULD
THINK ON ILKITH'S
WORDS, NOT MERELY
ACCEPT THEM AS
ESTABLISHED FACT.

—MERROX.

MASTER OF THE
HALL OF RECORDS

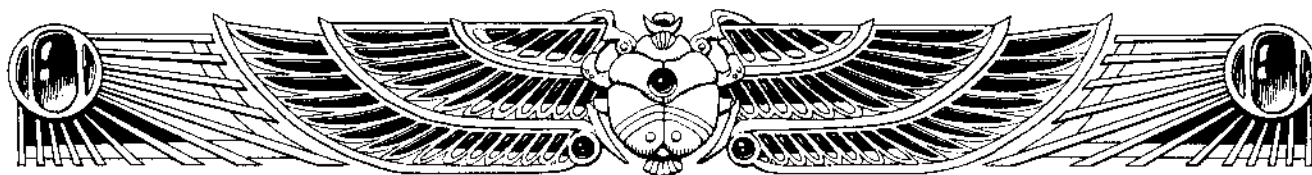
My qualifications for this task are as follows. Though my home now lies in Throal, I have lived in many places. I am an adept, and that identity is as much a part of me as my heart or my lungs. I practice two Disciplines, the troubadour and the weaponsmith, and so know first-hand the peculiar challenges of fully embracing seemingly disparate ways of magical thought. I have also used my race's unique ability to learn the talents of other Disciplines, and so understand at least the rudiments of many other adepts' ways. In all these many ways, I know the shared experiences of all adepts as well as I know my own mind and soul. I believe I can say some truth of what makes an adept, how we balance our separate selves with the established traditions of our Disciplines, and what happens when we bend those traditions too far.

ON DISCIPLINE AND IDENTITY

When a Name-giver becomes an adept, he steps onto a path that will change him forever. The adept acquires new and wondrous abilities that make ordinary folk gasp with amazement or quail in fear, but this external change is the least part of the adept's transformation. Many young adepts embark upon a Discipline thinking simply to learn these abilities, but they soon find they cannot wield these talents without first changing their hearts and minds. The adept's way is much more than a collection of mysterious powers. It is a way of thinking, of seeing, of connecting to others and to the world. The powers that the uninitiated so admire and envy are a mere incidental benefit of the Disciplines we follow. Using our talents connects us in the deepest way with our inner patterns—and it is the connection, not the talent, that is the heart of life as an adept. To a practitioner of the warrior Discipline, striking an opponent with a weapon is more than a way to bring that opponent to heel. It is the ultimate declaration of his deepest magical self. In successfully using a talent of his Discipline, he briefly becomes one with the eternal truths of creation.

An outside observer may see followers of different Disciplines using what appears to be the same talent; rest assured that each adept experiences those talents in utterly different ways. When a warrior strikes an opponent with a weapon, he is infused with a primal understanding of force as a means of triumph over others. If I strike an opponent through my weaponsmith Discipline, I experience a revelation about the nature of the sword I am wielding and all swords in general. My opponent may see no meaningful distinction between my hitting him and a warrior hitting him, but the warrior and the weaponsmith experience the act in vastly different ways.





ON INDIVIDUALITY AND THE ADEPT'S WAY

Being an adept involves more than simply adhering to a clear and obvious list of rules. There is no one way to be a weaponsmith, a troubadour, or any other kind of adept. Instead, the adept must be true to a personal vision of his

Discipline. The legends of the great weaponsmiths and troubadours inspire me, but I am not bound to mimic their behavior. I must forge my own path, or I am no true adept. I must find my path within myself, remaking my chosen Discipline to fit my own heart and soul.



Of course, this vision of one's Discipline does not come from nothing, nor is it infinitely mutable. No sane person can believe it is possible to be a pacifist warrior, or a beastmaster who loathes animals. Indeed, no pacifist or animal-hater would ever seek out those Disciplines. Nor can the adept change his vision of his Discipline on a whim, or for expediency. How we see our Disciplines shapes who we are, and determines how we act. If a cavalryman has always thought of his Discipline as a union between himself and his mount, he cannot easily abandon his horse in the heat of combat. But a cavalryman who understands his Discipline by dominating his mount and forcing it to do his will might treat any mount as expendable and suffer no penalty. Of course, such a cavalryman will not easily inspire extraordinary loyalty from any mount. One's self-chosen definition of the adept's way always has costs as well as benefits.

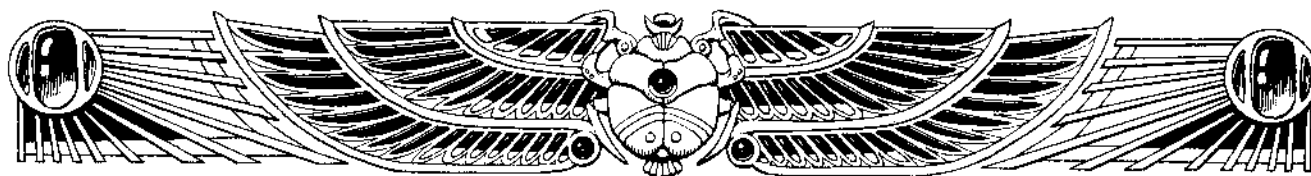
Training a Name-giver to tread the adept's path means teaching the student to think like an adept, and so an adept's teacher has an incalculable influence on the student's vision of his Discipline, especially when the student first begins learning the way. Many of my own deepest beliefs about my place in this world and in my Discipline were given to me by the teachers who initiated me. Like students of any Discipline, I took all of my master's pronouncements as distilled and unquestionable truth for a time; and though I have found my own truths beyond those first lessons, the early principles taught to me form the foundation upon which all my later understanding of both my Disciplines rests to this day. Other pieces of our individual lives are vital as well. Childhood stories about the great adepts of Barsaive's past, seeing or hearing of the deeds performed by an adept in a neighboring village, proverbs and parables about the workings of our magical world all help to form one's ideas of how the followers of a particular Discipline should act. Without those early thoughts and yearnings, I would not have followed the path that brought me to where I am. And as it has been with me, so it is with all the other adepts of Barsaive. We all understand our Disciplines through the frame of what we bring to them, as well as through what they are.

ON BECOMING AN INITIATE

To become a successful initiate requires two qualities that rarely appear together in Name-giver souls: openness to new experience, and the ability to dedicate oneself to a specific way of living. I have tried and failed to teach more than one prospective initiate who simply could not grasp the combination of questioning and acceptance necessary to embark upon the adept's path. A certain degree of physical soundness also seems necessary, possibly because one needs strength to deal with the magical energies of talents. Whatever the reason, those whose True Patterns are marred by serious illness or infirmity cannot become adepts. Taking the physical and mental requirements together, I estimate that only one of every twenty Name-givers has the wherewithal to step onto the path of the adept's way. Even fewer actually succeed in following their chosen Discipline.

Teaching can take time, but initiation is swift. Whether learning a whole new Discipline or learning a new talent within a Discipline, adepts learn through sudden, dazzling flashes of insight as magic floods into their True Patterns. This relative ease of learning is one of the prime advantages adepts enjoy over those who do not walk the adept's way. Many of the abilities an adept displays can be learned through mundane means, but such lessons are learned slowly and painstakingly by comparison. The path of the adept blends practical and magical insight, hastening the learning process by teaching the spirit as well as the mind and body.





In many cases, initiation rituals subject the would-be adept to sudden shocks—physical, mental, or both—in order to stimulate profound insight. I have known adepts who have used such varied ritual devices as intoxicating or noxious substances, dream exploration, the playing of ecstatic music, fasting, meditation, mind-bending riddles and even physical torture. All of these new experiences are intended to open the initiate to new ways of perceiving the world. Through his new perception, the initiate's mind and spirit can connect to the heart of his Discipline, and this connection becomes a permanent part of the new adept's True Pattern.

ON INITIATING OTHER ADEPTS

Each of us leaves his own mark on the Disciplines we practice by initiating other would-be adepts. Though the practitioners of some Disciplines jealously guard their secrets, most adepts see teaching others as a way of perpetuating their own spirits beyond death. I am forever marked by the teachings of my masters, to which I have added the accumulated wisdom of my own experience. When I pass my knowledge on to prospective weaponsmiths and troubadours, I give them a part of myself and a part of my master as well—and also a part of my master's master, my master's master's master, and so on. In this way, the True Pattern of each adept is bound to the True Pattern of the original practitioner of his Discipline, though the name of that ancient worthy may now be lost in the fog of time.

One must choose carefully whom to teach, and whom to initiate. No adept wishes to stain his inner vision by initiating an unsuitable candidate. In these days of adventure and exploration, one rarely ventures into a new place without drawing a crowd of eager young bravos wishing to be taught the adept's way. Most of these I reject after a few moments of conversation because they do not truly wish to learn *my* Disciplines, but rather *any* Discipline. I wish to teach those who are born to be troubadours or weaponsmiths, who truly love the song or the anvil. Those whose heads are filled with dreams of gold or other petty goals must find other masters to train them.

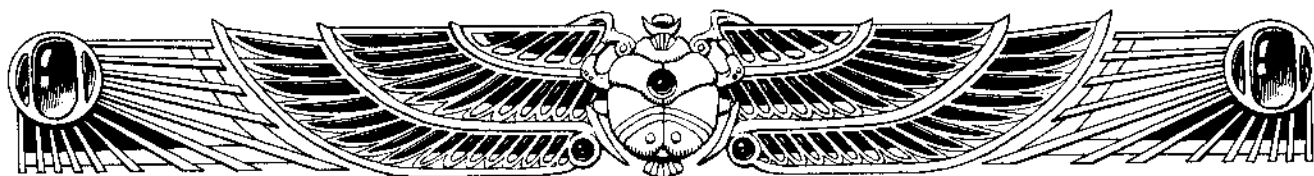
Adepts of other Disciplines who wish to learn mine are often no more suitable initiates than raw village youths. Many think only of a particularly useful talent they wish to acquire, and forget that they must first learn a new vision of the world. For others, the vision of their current Discipline is utterly incompatible with any possible vision of the Discipline they wish to learn. In my own case, I spent many months persuading my second master to teach the methodical, demanding Discipline of the weaponsmith to what she perceived as a callow, carefree troubadour. Only after I proved my dedication through a prolonged, mundane apprenticeship in my master's shop did she permit me the honor of initiation. For a young adventurer already pursuing an exciting and profitable career, such as I was then, this humbling was a high price to pay. But my knowledge of the way of the weaponsmith has been well worth that cost in the decades since.

Experience also has taught me that most adepts are as cautious as was my second master when approached by humans who wish to employ their versatility to learn a talent or two of another Discipline. My race is blessed with a natural affinity for flexible thinking, allowing us to learn enough of the bare rudiments of any vision to wield any talent, but many adepts, especially those of other races, view our adaptability as unseemly. To convince an adept to teach him a single talent or two, a human must often pass a moral test or perform some onerous service.

ON THE PHENOMENON OF THE TALENT CRISIS

An adept who fails an attempt to use a talent because he has somehow violated his own concept of his Discipline is said to be experiencing a talent crisis. To activate his magical talents under normal circumstances, an adept must concentrate fully on his vision of his Discipline, creating a moment of intense concentration during which he channels magical energy through his True Pattern. This energy allows the adept to perform the great feats that distinguish him from ordinary folk. When an adept experiences doubts about his vision of his path, he finds it difficult to achieve the state of mind necessary to successfully connect to his True Pattern. I speak not of a momentary failure of confidence such as any Name-giver may feel, but of profound doubts arising through actions that are clearly at odds with an adept's vision of his Discipline. For example, a warrior who defines her way as courage in the face of adversity may find it impossible to use her talents after fleeing a battlefield. A thief who holds selfishness as the hallmark of his Discipline may fail at thieving after performing an altruistic deed. A talent crisis may strike even when the adept has rationalized a transgression to fit his view of his Discipline, because the heart and spirit, rather than the mind, truly decide the meaning of such actions.





The severity of a talent crisis depends on the degree to which the adept has parted from his vision. Most often, the crisis is minor and manifests as a lack of edge in a tight spot. In rare and extreme cases, however, an adept may lose all of his talents until he somehow makes amends for breaking with his self-chosen code.

ON THE ACQUISITION OF MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES

The adept who wishes to follow multiple paths simultaneously undergoes a continual challenge. In order to pursue more than one Discipline, one must not only persuade a master to perform the necessary second initiation, but must also acquire the knack of seeing the world through multiple prisms of thought. The new Discipline chosen cannot be completely at odds with the vision the adept has already developed for his current Discipline. If the visions are too different, the would-be initiate cannot acquire the new Discipline, no matter how much effort he devotes to the task. I once knew a swordmaster who defined his Discipline as the art of poking holes in high-flown ideals with his wit and the point of his blade. He sought to become a beastmaster, and tried to learn the Discipline from an adept who taught his students to show the deepest respect for all living things. My sardonic friend found himself incapable of this degree of seriousness, and so failed to learn the beastmaster Discipline. Yet I have known other adepts who practiced both those Disciplines simultaneously, succeeding where my friend could not because they learned different visions of these paths. The compatibility of Disciplines has no hard and fast rules; it depends upon the individual.

Nor may the vision of a new Discipline merely imitate one's existing code of conduct. To learn a new Discipline, one must radically readjust one's way of viewing the world. I once tried and failed to learn the Discipline of the elementalist, thinking I could simply adapt my knowledge of metalworking to the crafting of all of the basic elements through magic. This method did not aid me; I was trying to shape the vision for my convenience rather than allowing the vision to change me. One must prepare to be altered by the process of initiation; otherwise, the necessary insight will not come.

ON THE PRACTICE OF MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES

An adept who walks multiple paths does not meld his different visions into one. Rather, he switches back and forth between ways of thinking, as one might don and doff a cloak. Often when I find myself facing a decision, I step back and look at the situation from two points of view. The troubadour side of me may wish to do one thing, while the mind of the weaponsmith reaches a completely different conclusion. These divisions of viewpoint are difficult to reconcile, to say the least. Adepts of multiple Disciplines often seem peculiar or outright crazy to others, for we seem to speak with different voices. This effect can be quite literal and dramatic; I have known individuals who adopt completely different personalities, ways of speaking, and body language from moment to moment, depending on which Discipline they are currently employing. I suspect, however, that most of these persons are intentionally exaggerating the effects of multiple Disciplines in order to confuse their foes or entertain their friends.

ON MINOR, OR HALF-MAGIC, ADEPTS

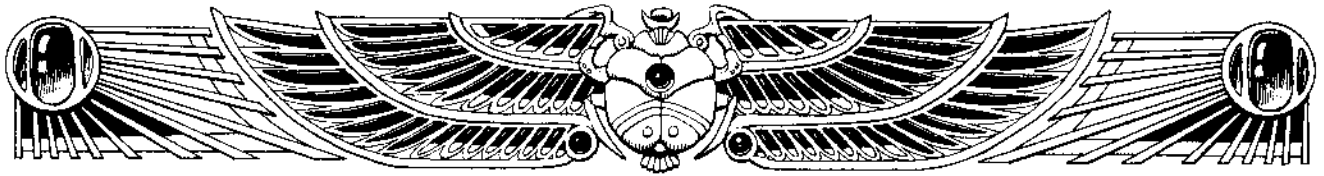
Of this topic, I admittedly know little, but I will share what knowledge I possess. The so-called minor, or half-magic adepts are those people who tap into the magic of the world to perform such everyday tasks as bargaining, navigation, farming, healing and others. Minor adepts exist in many of Barsaive's villages and towns and often play important roles in village life.

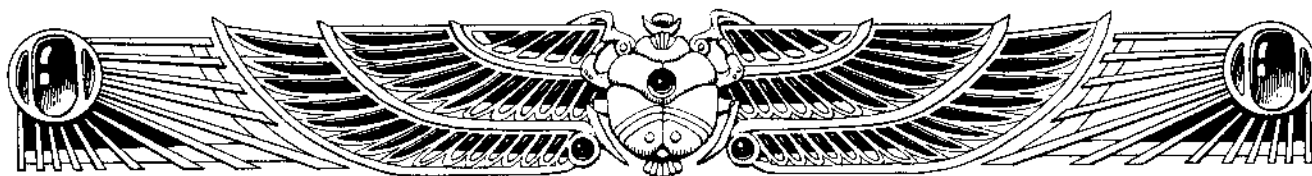
Though similar to true magical talents, half-magic is a different thing. For reasons no one I know can explain, no minor adept can follow a Discipline, though a full adept may learn those half-magic abilities that fit his Discipline. I believe that the mental and emotional intensity and determination required of a full adept simply lie beyond the abilities of a minor adept. While half-magic is learned slowly over time, increasing as an adept advances in Circle, a full adept relies on the flashes of insight that come with learning a Discipline.

A full adept may learn certain half-magic abilities, but he cannot practice his own Discipline and also learn the full range of abilities available to a minor adept—he cannot be both a full and minor adept.

I know this to be true from discussions with other adepts, and from experience. As a young boy, before I began to follow the path of the troubadour, I studied farming magic so that I might one day take my father's place in my village. When I began my troubadour's training in earnest, I found I had lost all skill and facility in farming. That magic had left me. In its place were the roots of my talents in the adept's way. I have never looked back with regret.







THE WAY OF THE NOBLE AIR SAILOR

The following essay comes from Adelo Nock, a human air sailor of the city of Travar. Though born in a town some two days' ride from Jerris, he has lived in Travar most of his life (when not hurtling through the air on ships). Retired from active service for some years, Adelo is best known for his brilliant performance as a novice air sailor during the Theran War.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH



The Name's Adelo Nock, sir. Been an air sailor ever since I first climbed down from my mother's lap. Air sailin's the best Discipline there is, bar none. What other Discipline gives you the freedom of the skies? What other Discipline lets you see the whole world without borders or separations, the way the Universe first made it? What other Discipline lets you sail through the stars at night like a boat through water, or brings you so close to a sunset you'd swear you can reach out and touch it? And don't talk to me about sky raiders, sir. They don't even deserve mention.

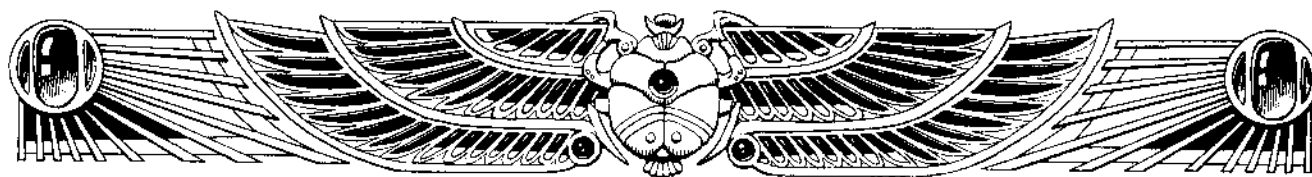
They take from people. We air sailors, we give. We give our expertise, our fighting skill when needed. We give people a way to see the world from above, to see the parts of it outside of their own villages and towns. We give people freedom to travel, faster and farther than they'd ever get in boats or caravans. We help bring people together and help trading folk earn a livelihood. And yet, for all that, too many Barsaivians know nothing of the air sailor. High time to set the record straight!

ON BEING AN AIR SAILOR

This world of ours is a glorious place, and we air sailors get the best view of it. Have you ever stood on the decks of a galley watching the storm clouds gather on the horizon, or seen the sun set beneath your feet as the stars spark to life around your ears? Have you ever looked across the land and seen the whole long length of the Serpent River winding through the plains and lush jungle? I've even stared out into the Wastes once, for as long as I could bear it. An eerie land, the Wastes; compelling somehow, in a way that gets under your skin. You couldn't pay me to set a foot upon that wretched bit of earth, but I'd not trade the sight of it for any amount of gold. I'd never have seen the Wastes if I hadn't become an air sailor.

Of all the adepts in Barsaive, none gets as little attention as the air sailor. I'll tell you the reason, sir—most folk think the air sailor's close kin to the sky raider, one rung up on the rope ladder from thieving ork scorchers. Not a grain of truth to that, sir! You might as well tell a man he's no different from a burden beast. Let me tell you, in all my years of sailing I've





yet to meet a sky raider that I'd trust as I trust any of my mates. Both the air sailor and the sky raider have a freedom not granted to those who can't take to the air; the difference between us is how we use it. A sky raider uses his freedom to plunder; an air sailor uses it to help the earthbound folk below. We share nothing with raiders save the sky itself.

A sky raider, you understand, can sometimes be as clever as an air sailor in planning his raids. He can even be courageous, in a brutal sort of way. But he feels no sense of duty to anything save his own wants. I'll tell you a story, and you'll see what I mean.

Me and a mate of mine sailed with a party of seventeen merchants—years ago, this was—and had the misfortune to meet a terrible, cloud-like Horror that air sailors call Windrider. (Other folk may know this Horror by another name, but that's not my lookout. My concern was only to defeat it.) Me and my mate were the only air sailors aboard, and the few survivors besides ourselves owe us their skins. Windrider appeared suddenlike, out of airy nothing like the poet says, and engulfed our poor ship in its foul smoky self. Any who stayed too long in its billows had the skin stripped from his bones. The rest of the sailors—not followers of the Discipline, mind you, but those we call airmen—started to panic. They saw the blood of their mates flowin' over the decks, heard the screaming, and started screaming themselves as they stabbed at the Horror with swords and belt knives. As if stabbin' a cloud would do any good!

Well, me and my fellow air sailor, Nestran Fryce, soon saw it was up to us to save the ship. Tying a rope around his waist, Nestran Fryce leaped from the deck, using his Wind Catcher talent to guide his fall away from Windrider. Over and over he did this, taunting the Horror until it came after him. While he jumped and swung, I held the wheel, piloting the ship high into the frigid air around the peaks of the Delaris Mountains. When I got close enough, I rammed the airship into the ice-covered stone, trapping the Horror. Then Nestran—who almost didn't survive his final leap—helped me to herd the livin' off the ship and onto the snow. From previous journeys along this route, we knew where a cave was, deep enough to shelter us but too shallow to hold Horrors or fierce beasts. Once there, I lit a signal fire and the next passing airship picked us up. Cunning, courageous, and looking out for others; that's the nature of the air sailor.

I reckon that someday soon, the Name-givers will take back all of our skies from the winged Horrors that still plague us, and I'll be doing my part to help reach that goal. Catch any sky raider doing that, except to save his own miserable hide!

Any one of us who forgets his duty pays a price. An air sailor can't simply ride the currents of the world, taking in whatever happens to pass by. Each of us has a higher duty to his fellow sailors, to his ship, to the grounders who look up toward him. That last—our duty to the people below—is the most important of all. Every air sailor in Barsaive has a wider and truer view of the world than folks with their feet planted on the ground, and with the gift of that view comes a responsibility. We're the first to see the Theran armada on its way to crush free Barsaivians, or the slave caravans swooping down on unsuspecting villages and snatching their unsavory cargo, or the flood or fire heading for the luckless town in its path. An air sailor who wants to use this view of the world to reach down and scoop up profits for himself belongs with the sky raiders, not with us!

LEARNING THE WAYS OF THE SKY

An air sailor is first shaped in childhood, by learning obedience to his wiser elders and the true value of honor. Cleverness and courage are needed as well, but without honor and obedience they're nothing much. Some learn responsibility later in life and make fine air sailors when they do, but for most, as we air sailors say, the keel shapes as it was drawn.

Likewise, an air sailor must learn early on that he owes the world compensation for giving him life's necessities. A child who learns only to take most likely won't grow up to be a giver. Nor will he grow up curious, wanting to know the world for the sake of knowing. Such a one might as well be a sky raider, or else stay out of the skies entirely.

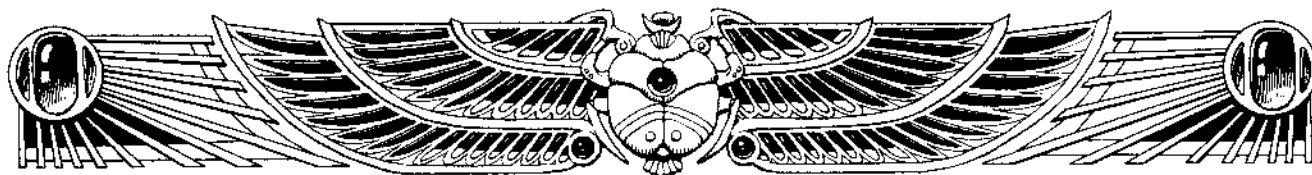
SOME AIR SAILORS ONLY PLY THE SKIES OVER ONE REGION, OR BETWEEN MAJOR TRADING CITIES. IT'S A RARE AIR SAILOR WHO DOESN'T WORK FOR ANOTHER TO EARN HIS PLACE AMONG THE CLOUDS—WHO OWNS HIS OWN SHIPS AND SAILS FREELY WHERE HE WISHES.

—SHAGUISS PLUMM, MERCHANT AND TRADER, BARTERTOWN

MY SAILING CAREER IS AS LONG AND SUCCESSFUL AS ADELO'S AND I WAS NOT GROOMED TO BE ANYTHING MORE THAN A KHAMORRO. A DECK SCRUBBER. NOBODY TAUGHT ME A SENSE OF ADVENTURE AND WONDER—I LEARNED IT ON MY OWN! JIK'HARRA AND FLAIR MADE ME AN AIR SAILOR. NOT BLIND OBEDIENCE. HAD I OBEYED MY "WISER" ELDERS, I'D NEVER HAVE LEARNED TO FLY AT ALL!

—K'TSLADE, K'STU-LAAMI AIR SAILOR OF THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRIT WIND





PROVING YOUR WORTH

Once grown to the age of independence, the air sailor-to-be must find himself an established crew to learn from. We air sailors aren't so clannish as sky raiders, and so grounders with dreams of flying often come to us. Some air sailors I know take most of their recruits from among their own kin, reckoning them more likely to make good, but most of us have open minds about who has what it takes to serve the Discipline. I remember one youngling I took on—her mam was a famous thief adept, her dad she couldn't name—who made a top-rigging air sailor. An unlikely background for a Discipline of such responsibility, but she had the stuff and she wanted to fly. Just goes to show, eh?

As soon as an adept takes a pledge from a recruit, the real testing begins. Recruits live among the airmen, doing all the scutwork and whatever else they're told to prove their desire is true and their will is strong. Plenty of the best recruits have done a stint in a militia or town watch and so they take orders pretty well.

IN MY OWN
TOWN, WE CAN TELL
A YOUNG RECRUIT
BY THE GLAZED
LOOK IN HER EYES
AS SHE CARRIES
BUNDLES, RUNS
ERRANDS, MAKES
SHIP REPAIRS,
CLEANS AND
PERFORMS A
DOZEN OTHER
TASKS AT ALL
HOURS OF THE DAY
AND NIGHT. NO ONE
SPEAKS TO HER
EXCEPT TO BARK
ORDERS, WHICH SHE
MUST FOLLOW
WITHOUT SO MUCH
AS A PAUSE TO
CATCH HER BREATH.
I HAVE HEARD
THAT HARSH
PUNISHMENT
REWARDS THE
SLIGHTEST
DEVIATION. THOUGH
I HAVE NEVER SEEN
IT MYSELF,
I AM GLAD TO
KNOW THAT THE
TEST PERIOD IS
BRIEF; MY
CONSCIENCE RESTS
MORE EASILY.
—JORGE
WERWISLE, MERCHANT OF URUPA

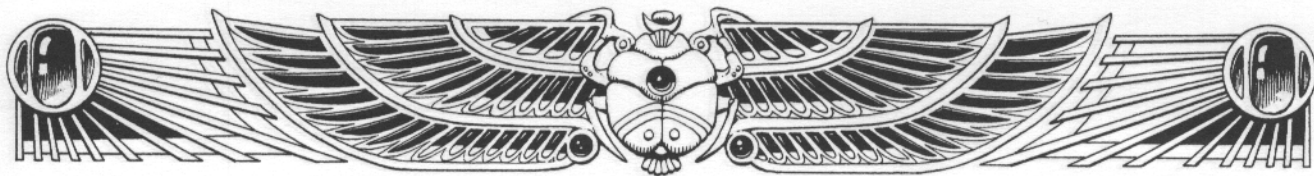
The point of the testing is to drive the new recruit relentlessly for weeks, months, or however long it takes, until he reaches a breaking point. That's where he makes his choice; to uphold the pledge of loyalty he made as a fresh, new recruit, even though it burns in his throat, or to spit it back out laced with venom. The recruit who keeps his pledge for duty's sake alone is the one who'll make a master air sailor. And once the recruit becomes a novice—the first step on the road to true mastery of the Discipline—he draws comfort from knowing that every other air sailor passed through the same stormy air. I'll not talk about the tests themselves, because they vary so much from air sailor to air sailor that it'd only be a waste of your ink and paper. All you need to know is that the testing is as difficult as possible.

Once the recruit becomes a novice, life gets a bit easier—though it's never soft, not by a long stretch! The novice trains every day in the art of handling an airship, defensive fighting, and using weapons designed for the attack, all according to a schedule set by the master sailor. At least, that's how the best air sailors do it. A regular pattern to one's days teaches the importance of order and gives the novice a little much-needed time to himself to absorb what's been thrown at him. I know of some air sailors who train their novices at all hours of the day and night, thinking to teach them to be always ready for dangers that may approach from any side. These air sailors are the mad folk who actually enjoyed their time as a recruit. They believe that living in a constant frenzy is the best way to handle the sudden storms and squalls of the sailor's life. Truly, though, that brand of air sailor burns twice as brightly for only half as long. Foolish, if you ask me.

After a novice reaches a certain level of competence at the basic skills, he becomes a journeyman. Just as the novice learned quickness, dexterity, and steadiness of body, so the journeyman hones those skills of the wit. As a journeyman, I held responsibility for whole groups of other sailors; I had to see what needed doing and tell them to do it, and I also planned strategies for any necessary attacks and the ship's defense. Among my other duties, it was also my task to see that those in my charge followed the wind of their strengths and to keep them from the tempests of their weaknesses. Young, inexperienced air sailors began seeking me out and asking to train with me. I took them on, and judged where fair weather and foul lay for each of them. All these things taught me to use the talents of my Discipline that rely more on wit than raw power. A mind as quick and graceful as a changeable spring gale is a journeyman's best tool—and weapon, if need be.

It was also as a journeyman that I truly learned to appreciate my mates. A journeyman looks out over the deck of the ship and sees what needs doing, but he knows he can't meet all the needs of the ship himself. Instead, he does his own bit and makes sure others do theirs. An air sailor that reaches the journeyman Circles of his Discipline finally sees past his own immediate tasks. The look on the face of a fellow who sees himself as part of a larger whole for the first time is the same expression he had the first time he saw his hometown from the air. Instead of feeling small and insignificant like some folk might think, he feels more important and more useful than he ever has in his life because he can see the rigging ropes tying himself to his mates. You see a little bit of yourself in those who train with you, and a bit of your own teachers in yourself. And once you see that, you truly understand that to leave your mates means abandoning a piece of your own spirit.





An air sailor joins the ranks of the wardens when he successfully defeats a superior enemy using both agile wit and physical skill. Let me tell you, a warden is one of the slyest opponents you'll ever face. He'll use your own wits against you, tie you up in the ropes of your own cleverness. I once faced a ship whose crew served a Theran warden! The scoundrel used my own plan against me, and I didn't know a thing was amiss until he sprung my own trap around my ears. Lucky to get out alive, I was—but that's a tale for another time. Most wardens work with trading companies, and if you ask me, the best of them come out of Travar.

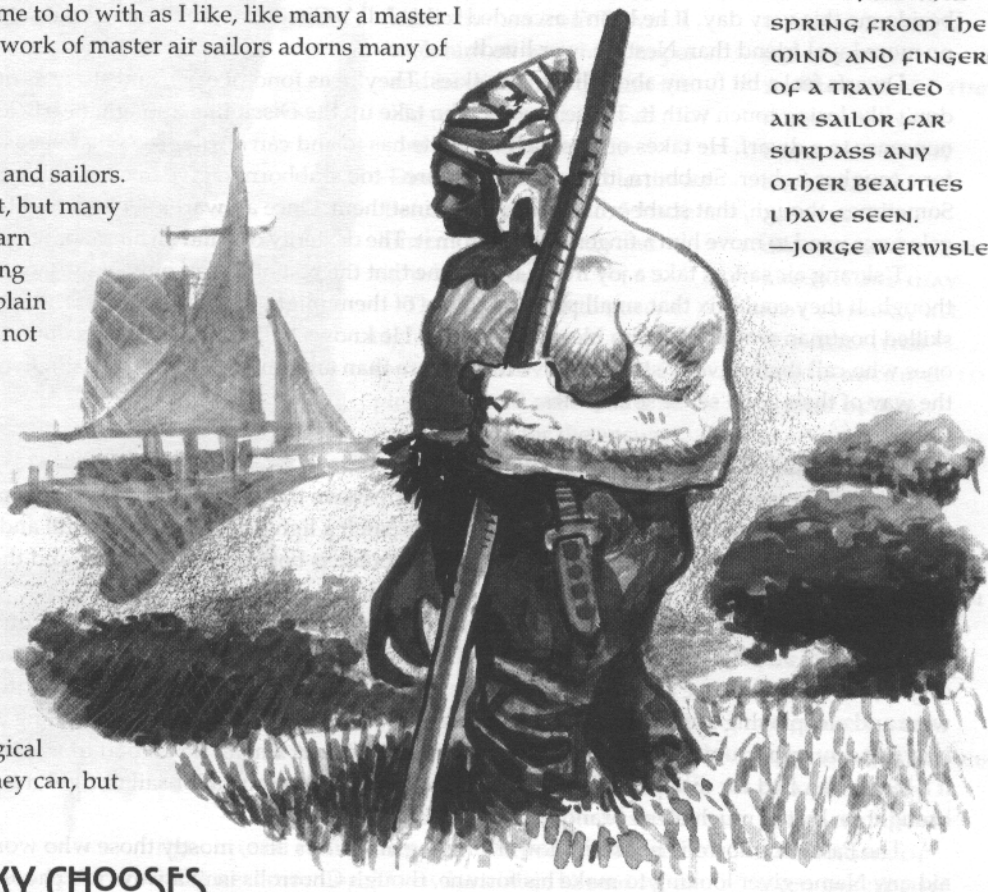
A true master air sailor like myself deserves the deepest respect. There are only a few of us still around, what with time and age taking their toll, and so many dying in the Theran War. There's a few wardens I know who'd make fit masters, though good candidates seem fewer these days than when I was young. A master has a different life than any other air sailor; he serves only during the greatest of conflicts, and spends most of his time training young upstarts who pass the recruit's tests. Many master air sailors own ships or even shipbuilding companies like my own Dawn Flier shipyards. To keep my mind sharp and my body swift, I still accompany my share of airships on journeys across Barsaive. With my experience, there's many a hazard I can help the young ones avoid. As my age grants me a bit more time to do with as I like, like many a master I embroider airship sails. The handiwork of master air sailors adorns many of the greatest ships in the skies.

I HAVE HAD THE
GOOD FORTUNE
TO ACQUIRE
EMBROIDERED
SAILS FROM
ADELO NOCK.
THE PATTERNS
AND STYLES THAT
SPRING FROM THE
MIND AND FINGERS
OF A TRAVELED
AIR SAILOR FAR
SURPASS ANY
OTHER BEAUTIES
I HAVE SEEN.
—JORGE WERWISLE

NON-ADEPTS AS AIR SAILORS

Now of course, there's sailors and sailors. A true air sailor is always an adept, but many sailors among an airship's crew learn the craft of sailing without following the Discipline. These, we call just plain sailors, more often airmen. Sailors not of the Discipline rarely serve their ships in the top ranks.

Not that those who learn the craft of air sailing aren't good folk, because they certainly are—some of them are amazingly skilled. Most of them can sail a ship, jump the rigging, and decipher the moldiest, most illegible maps I have ever laid eyes on just as well as their adept fellows. What they can't do is use the Discipline's magical talents. They serve well as far as they can, but they simply can't go far enough.

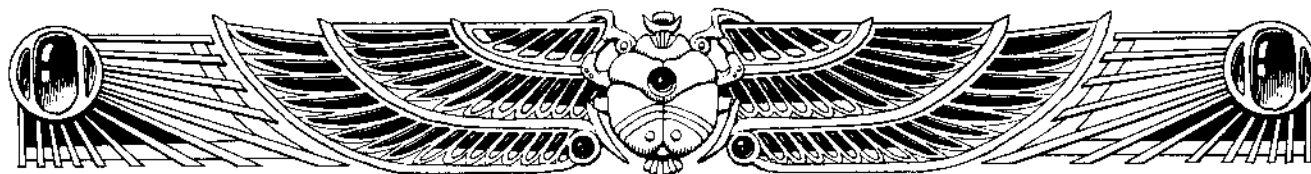


ON THE RACES THE SKY CHOOSES

The only Name-givers who never become air sailors—as far as I know, that is—are obsidimen. The rock-men are too tied to the earth to find sailing amid the clouds comfortable—at least, that's my thinking. Just as well, if you ask me—building a ship sturdy enough to safely carry them might be far easier charted than sailed. One of those fellows falling on the deck would likely break right through to the hull!

Windlings make some of the best air sailors around. They fly as easily as other Name-givers breathe and have an affinity for the skies that no other Name-givers share. And in a world full of hulking brutes like myself (at least, we must look that way to our small brothers and sisters) windlings must rely on their wits from the moment of birth. Good training





for an air sailor, sir! The famous Pihgram Tor is one of the best windling air sailors I know, though I've never been fortunate enough to serve with her. That woman can survive any danger, and her ships are second to none in Barsaive.

Elves with a longing to fly often find their calling as air sailors. Sky raiders won't take them—probably think they're too delicate for the life. I think elves just aren't thickheaded enough for sky raiding. They see the grace and beauty of the natural world so clearly that they've got to be air sailors if they want to tread the decks. I don't understand much of what the elves call the Wheel of Life, though my good friend Nestran tried many a time to explain it, but I do know that elves who follow the Path of Warriors are the least likely to take up air sailing. From what Nestran told me, that Path is somehow bound to the element of Earth, so I'd guess none of them want to stray too far from it. Followers of the Path of Scholars, who live to sharpen their wits, far more often find homes among us, as do the followers of the Path of Travelers, whose guiding element is Air.

Just to make sure the record's kept straight about elves being air sailors, you must understand that I learned all I know on the subject from Nestran Fryee. But I may have gotten my facts mixed, seeing as I rarely understood even half of what Nestran used to natter on about. If you want to know the absolute truth, you'd best ask one who knows about elves and their Paths firsthand. The important thing to be said is that I'd not hesitate to have Nestran or another elf like him serving beside me this very day. If he hasn't ascended to his folk's Citadel of the Shining Ones, then the place is surely empty, for no more loyal friend than Nestran ever lived!

Dwarfs feel a bit funny about life in the skies. They're as fond of earth and stone as of their own kin, and lots of them don't like losing touch with it. Those dwarfs who take up the Discipline, though, nearly always make a go of it. Not a lot of nonsense to a dwarf. He takes orders well when he has to and can always see what needs to be done. And you couldn't ask for a tougher fighter. Stubborn, that's what they are—too stubborn to give in even when they're bleeding half to death. Sometimes, though, that stubbornness works against them. Once a dwarf's set his mind to a plan of action, it takes a gale-force wind to move him a finger's-width from it. The dexterity of mind an air sailor needs isn't always a dwarf's strong suit.

T'skrang air sailors take a joy in the Discipline that the rest of us can only envy. Got a bit of a trouble with vertigo, though. If they could fix that small problem, more of them might become air sailors. And a good thing too, say I, sir; a skilled boatman would be a rare pleasure to teach. He knows half the skills of air sailing already! The winged t'skrang, the ones who call themselves *k'stulaami*, love to fly more than anything else, but their single-minded devotion to flight gets in the way of their good sense sometimes.

OF AIR SAILORS AND THE PASSIONS

Air sailors are a devout lot. You try hanging high above the ground in a raging storm, bound to your airship only by a safety rope tied beneath your arms while you try to patch a lightning burn in the hull and see if the Passions don't seem like good things to have watching over you! An air sailor's life is both beauty and fear, and the Passions do a lot toward giving that life some order.

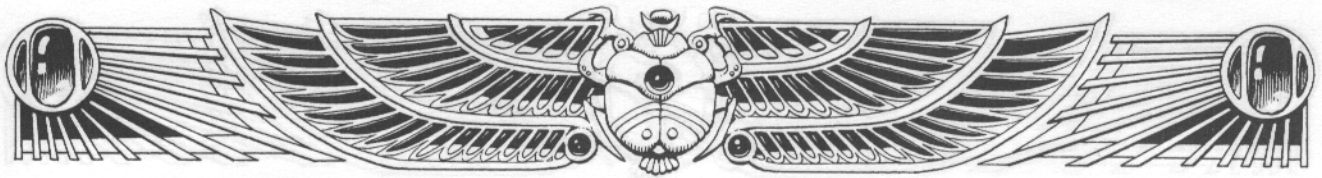
Most air sailors give the largest share of their devotion to Floranuus, Passion of swift ships and good cheer. I know some crews of air sailors who all follow Floranuus together; they believe that kind of devotion most appeals to the Passion of good fellowship. Some air sailors show their love of Floranuus by throwing wild parties every chance they get, drinking wine and ale, playing knife games, hull jumping and such. I've known many a windling air sailor to pull out her bottle of *keesris* at any opportunity to "make Floranuus merry." Myself, I'm all for a good time, but some followers of Floranuus take it a bit too far. Bad for discipline, it is. After all, how well can an air sailor sail or fight if he's reeling from a pounding head brought on by too much elven brandy?

The Passion Chorrolis has his followers among air sailors also, mostly those who work for traders. That Passion will aid any Name-giver looking to make his fortune, though Chorrolis isn't always too choosy about how they do it. Were the Passion more inclined to favor honest work over all else I might have followed him myself—though Chorrolis has watched well over my shipbuilding company, and I thank him for that. Some followers of Chorrolis, sad to say, are a bit too concerned with their own welfare and not enough with the good of those around them. If you ask me, air sailors who follow Chorrolis need to guard against greed especially well, lest it tempt them from their duty.

OF THOSE WHO SERVE THERA

Much as I regret to say it, some air sailors throw in their lot with Theran scum. Most of us have more honor than to serve Theran masters, but a few get sucked in by Theran grandeur and Imperial authority. They forget their duty to others,





preferring to trade with Thera and get rich. They want to float to the top any way they can, even on the backs of others.

Then there are the poor fools who fall in love with the Theran airships. I've heard tales of young air sailors setting off for Sky Point in hopes of working in the Theran armada just because they want to fly a stone ship. Once they get to Sky Point, the poor idiots mostly find themselves bought or brutalized. Some folk tell me that Theran sympathizers approach young recruits to our Discipline who hail from poor villages and city slums, spinning tales of the Theran riches they'll get in return for good service.

I knew such a poor young fool once. Joeb Geden was his Name—a young, idealistic human from Travar. I took him on with high hopes and he didn't disappoint me. He worked hard, obeyed orders, and took to the Discipline like a bird to the air. Before the year's end, I made him my personal aide and right-hand man.

Then Joeb came to me one night seeming nerved up about something. He offered me a pint of ale and asked, as if he cared nothing for the answer, what I thought of the Therans. "Not much," I said, and spat.

He turned a bit red but held his ground, telling me he'd heard Theran airships were a wonder to behold. "Really?" I asked. "Where might you have heard that?"

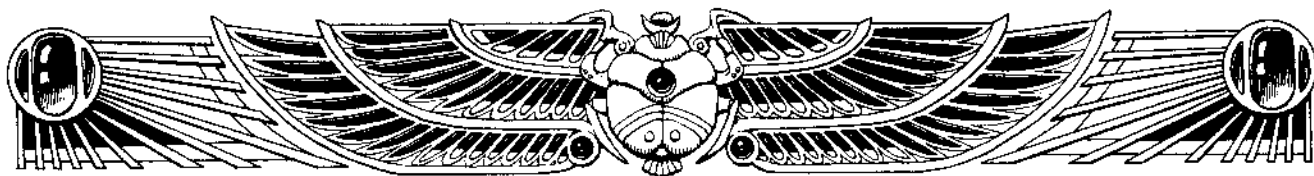
Well, that question ran all the sails straight up the masts. He started talking a blue streak, telling me all about the amazing Theran airships. Suddenly, as if he knew he'd said too much, he hushed

DESPITE ADELO'S STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY, THE THERAN NAVY INCLUDES MANY AIR SAILORS AMONG ITS MEMBERS. THERAN AIR SAILORS MAY NOT EMBODY ALL THE QUALITIES ADELO ASCRIBES TO THOSE OF HIS DISCIPLINE, YET ONE MUST AGREE THAT THEY ARE TRUE AIR SAILORS. THIS FACT SHOULD SERVE AS A LESSON TO THOSE WHO ACCEPT ANY NARROWLY DEFINED VISION OF THE DISCIPLINES PRACTICED IN BARSAIVE. MANY VARIATIONS OF EACH DISCIPLINE EXIST IN THIS WORLD, AND NO SINGLE ADEPT'S VISION IS THE ONLY TRUE ONE.
—MERROX, MASTER OF THE HALL OF RECORDS

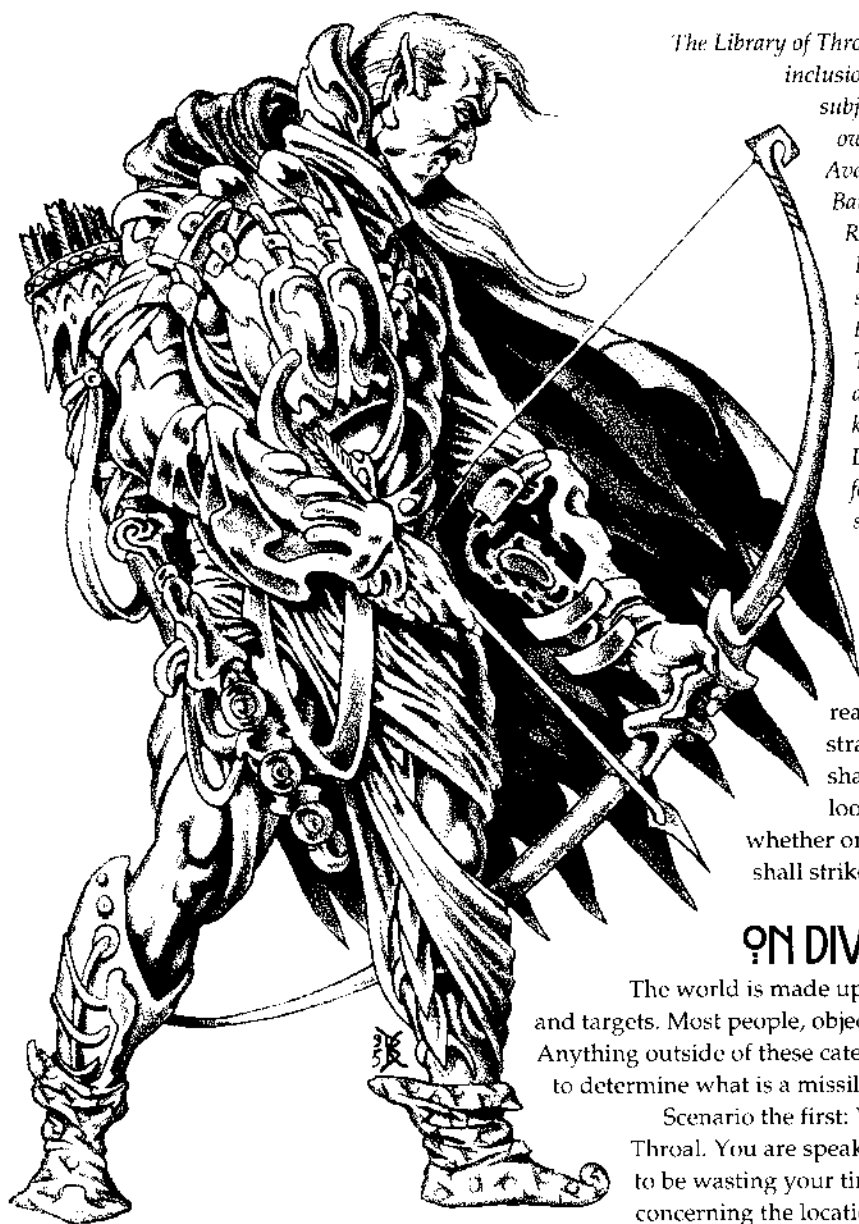
right up and said he was going to bed. He never turned up for work the next morning. Three days later, I heard word he'd been sighted heading for Sky Point on foot. I've heard nothing of him since.

That's why I don't believe all the stories of prosperous Theran air sailors. The Therans are known to be a close-fisted lot, and Barsaivian air sailors who serve them most likely end up little better than the slaves they help to capture. Not that their wretchedness helps excuse the choice they made. Any air sailor who follows Theran ways, whether Theran or Barsaivian-born, is no true air sailor. I confess to a grudging admiration for their tenacity and cleverness in a battle, and the Passions know Theran ships are marvels, but none of that makes a difference. Theran air sailors are corrupt, and we have nothing to do with them.





ON THE PATH OF THE ARCHER



The Library of Throal commissioned the following document for inclusion in this volume. In his zeal to deal directly with his subject, the author has neglected a salient point—his own identity. The writer of this essay is Oaken Aveldel, an elfen archer of great repute throughout Barsaive. He is best known for hitting the Impossible Rope at the Chasm of Sar-Fane, and for slaying the Horror known as Plan Crumbler with only two shots from his bow. The first shot put an arrow into the bony armor surrounding the creature's skull. The second shot hit the end of the first arrow, driving it home deep into the monster's brain. I know of no one better fitted to discuss the archer's Discipline than he. I assiduously pursued Aveldel for this project, and am honored to introduce his submission here.

—Presented by for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

The aim of this document: to allow the reader to understand the Way of the Archer. The strategy: to hit the heart of the matter. Therefore, I shall immediately aim for the central point. After loosing this first volley of words, I shall determine whether or not secondary targets remain to be hit. If so, I shall strike them in the order of their importance.

ON DIVIDING THE WORLD

The world is made up of two things, and two things only: missiles and targets. Most people, objects, and ideas belong in one of these categories. Anything outside of these categories does not matter. The archer's challenge: to determine what is a missile and what is a target.

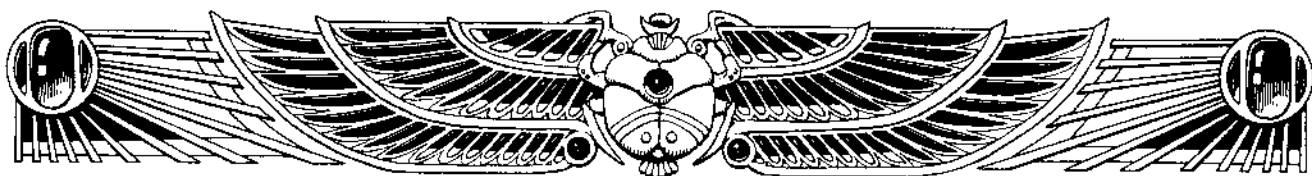
Scenario the first: You are in the Hall of Records at the Library of Throal. You are speaking to a shuffler of papers. The shuffler appears to be wasting your time. You wish to obtain a certain document concerning the location of a certain item; the details are unimportant.

The shuffler repeatedly refuses to tell you where the document is or whether he will give it to you. Instead, he continually veers away from the direct path to your target. He describes, among other things, a book he is preparing. He asks you to contribute to the book, a point he circles around and then weaves back to again and again.

Question: Can the way of the archer win you victory in this scenario?

If you say no, you are no archer. True, the literal drawing of a bow and firing of an arrow would serve no purpose here. Throalic authorities react poorly to one shooting their officials. But the physical motion of firing an arrow is merely one of





many actions that defines the archer's way. All other actions an archer takes should be inspired by the process of aiming and firing missiles. This way of seeing the world is the key to success in all matters, whether of business, art, love or war.

Let us divide the actors of this scenario into missiles and targets. Note the plural; in most matters there is not a single target, but several. And it goes without saying that no archer worthy of the name equips himself with less than the sufficient number of missiles.

We shall find the targets first. In identifying targets, one must also determine their order of importance. It does little good to attack a cadaver man when you may shoot at the Horror controlling the thing. In the scenario heretofore described, our primary target is the document. An archer must always remember the identity of the primary target. Do not be distracted when a new target appears, nor forget the primary target if it drops out of sight. Our document may not be visible, but it is nonetheless our primary target because victory demands that we obtain it.

Secondary target: the paper shuffler. Often, an archer must knock down a secondary target in order to reach the primary target. This condition applies in our scenario: the paper shuffler has access to the document and we do not. Therefore, we must hit the secondary target in order to draw a bead on the primary target.

Now let us consider our missiles. Every possible way in which we may hit the target—getting the desired document from the paper shuffler—is a potential missile. We must determine what missiles are in our quiver and which of them is the ideal one with which to hit the target.

Consider the missile of threat: we might offer to hurt the shuffler should he not swiftly comply with our request. But the shuffler is not stupid, nor as prone to mental wandering as he might seem. He knows we are not prepared to back up our threat and shoot him down. Therefore, if we employ this missile, he will call our bluff. The paper shuffler will then have the upper hand, and our primary target will be further away. Clearly, threat is not the proper missile for this task.

Consider the missile of bribery: we might present the shuffler with silver in exchange for the document. In order to be certain that this missile will strike home, we must use the art of seeing. We must carefully observe the shuffler, to see whether coin has any luster for him. In this case, however, we realize that what he lusts for is not money. Therefore, bribery will not serve.

Consider the missile of acquiescence: the paper shuffler most desires a piece of us. He wants us to write a document for him that he may put in his book. His meandering words contain a hidden determination: he too has a target firmly in mind, and his possession of what we want is his missile. Using the art of seeing, we can determine that cooperation with his aims is the most effective missile for us—the superior means of striking our target. Therefore, we agree to write what the paper shuffler wants in exchange for what we desire. We have perhaps lost some dignity, and definitely some time. But we have hit both our targets, and that is all that matters in the end. Let others seek public honor, glamour, reputation. The archer does not need such things. His legend rests on hitting the target. Nothing matters save for the bull's-eye.

Note that I have spoken in a single, concrete example rather than describing the way of the archer in general terms. For the archer, generalities do not exist. Only specifics matter—singular objects and beings at whom the archer must fire.

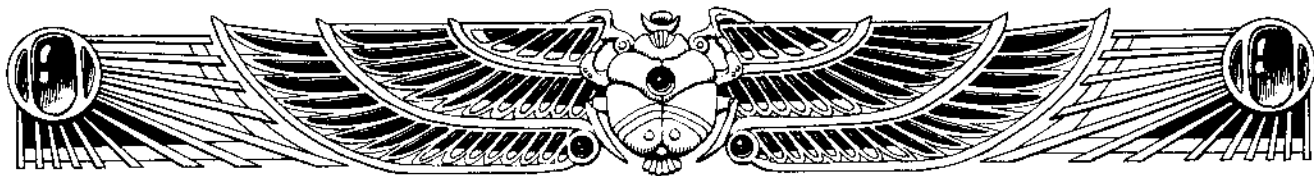
ON THE ART OF SEEING

The way of the archer is the art of seeing through the fog in order to spot the simple facts hidden within complexity. The archer sees from a distance. He scans the landscape for hidden details: flashes of light, movement, colors out of place, anything that may signal the presence of an enemy. He is distant, dispassionate, calculating. This state of mind is as true when the missile is actual as when it is metaphorical.

The art of seeing is best experienced through the True Shot talent. Scenario the second: You, the archer, have selected your target. Said target is charging toward you riding a massive thundra beast and carrying an enormous battle-axe. If the target reaches you, either the beast's trampling feet or the metal blade of the axe will claim your life. The target is charging over a dusty plain, and the hooves of the thundra are raising a cloud of dust that obscures your view. It is also moving in a pattern dictated by slight undulations in the ground. Your task: to swiftly strike a partly obscured, unpredictably moving target.

You attempt to draw a bead, but the shot is too difficult. So you pour karma into your pattern. It whirls through your pattern from one part of your identity to the other until it hits the place where your inmost self is woven inextricably to the idea of truth. Karma fires through this connection into your eyes, enhancing your vision. Your eyes can now pierce the dust cloud. Even so, you can see that your shot will not hit home before the target reaches you. So you pour more energy





through your pattern. Beast and rider seem to slow, though your ears tell you their advance is as rapid as ever. You increase the flow of magical energy into your pattern until your eye freezes the target. Before you can think to issue the command to your arms, they have loosed your shot. Your arrow hits the thundra beast—for hitting the rider would remove but one threat of the two—directly between the eyes. The beast rolls, pitching its rider off. Dismounted and badly jarred by his fall, he is an easy target for your next shot.

At the moment your arrow hits home, you are most fully alive. You feel this way because you are truly seeing. This kind of sight, that reveals life-and-death truth, is a thing most Name-givers never experience. It is sad for them that they cannot share or even understand such stunning moments of insight. The archer reveres truth, because the archer has felt truth course through his very being.

CONCERNING THE ENEMY

The archer's foe is whatever obscures sight. Darkness is a foe. Camouflage is a foe. Fog, glaring sunlight, heavy rains: all these are our enemies.

The archer's greatest enemy is illusions and those who wield them. I have heard tales of adepts who are both illusionists and archers, but thankfully, they seem rare. I have never met such a person and would not care to. I cannot imagine what corruption of the way of the archer is required to allow an illusionist to follow that way. It is simply wrong to alter the truth of any situation with deceptive magics. Barsaive requires more honesty, more things that truly are as they seem. An illusion is nothing more than a lie writ large, given form by magic. I have never met an illusionist I liked. Many of them have tried to win my regard, but I cannot stomach what they do. Most other archers I know share my feelings in this matter.

Ultimately, the art of seeing allows us to tell truth from untruth. I am proud to belong to a tradition of Name-givers who speak plainly and always strike the heart of the matter. I do not dissemble, misdirect, or misinform, no matter what price I may pay for my candor.

UNDERSTANDING THE ARC

The arc is woven into the thought of every archer. The arc is the path the arrow follows on its way to the target. Whenever an archer looks at a person, thing or place—the target—he measures with his eye, judging the arc. The archer thinks in straight lines. Because we have little patience for circuitous discussion, courtly manners, or meaningless pleasantries, we have earned a reputation for bluntness and impatience. Some choose to dislike us for this, but that is no matter.

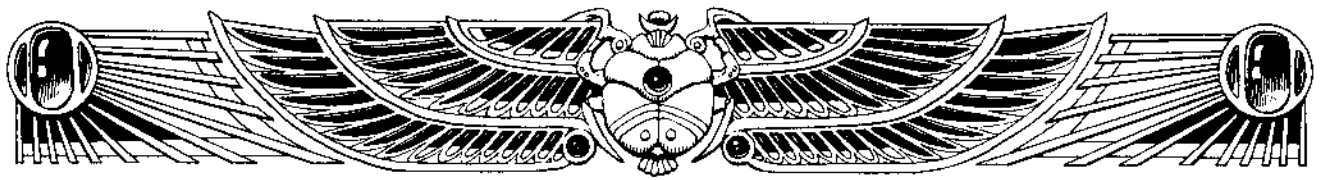
Thinking in arcs is most useful, both in combat and otherwise. Scenario the third: You are one of a group of adepts hired to find the murderer of a Bartertown merchant. Your fellows are a wizard, a thief and a troubadour. You meet for the first time to plan your attack on the problem you are being paid to solve. The wizard wishes to expound extensively on the symbolic meaning of murder, then walk randomly through the town sensing the auras of passersby in hopes of spying an aura that he feels might belong to a killer. The thief wishes to investigate the victim rather than the murderer, in order to discover the killer's reasons for his act. Reasoning—predictably—that profit is the likeliest motive, she wishes to begin with the victim's treasure vault. The troubadour proposes to wander through the town singing the mournful tale of the dead man in hopes of saddening or shaming the killer into confessing his terrible deed. What do you do?

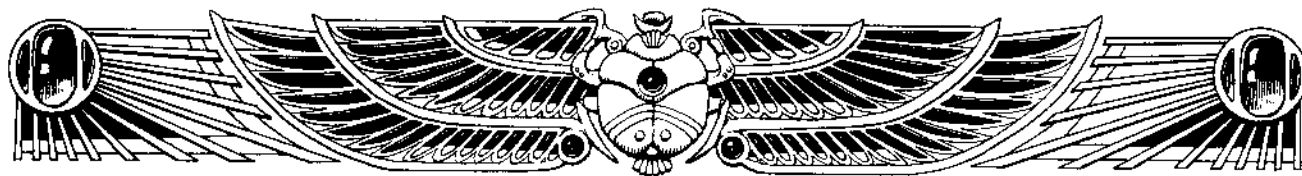
You point out that each idea proposes a wandering and winding—and therefore foolish—strategy. You attempt to explain the importance of arcs and connections. You propose starting at one end of the line and finding where the line leads. You draw arcs from one thing to another until the killer appears as your target. You begin at the beginning; the body. You see what connections it shows you. You find threads of gold silk clenched in the dead merchant's hand, so you follow the arc of the silk and see where it leads. The directed mind is the archer's greatest weapon. Finding the path of the archer means seeing the straight lines hidden in the tangles and following them.

The secrets of the arc lie in the talent of Arrow Weaving. To practice it, you must know how to find the shortest magical connections between you and the thing to which you weave your thread.

Scenario the fourth: You have acquired a magical treasure, a great bow recovered from the Western Catacombs of Parlainth. You have learned its Name: Death Spiral. Now you seek to weave a thread to it—to connect yourself to Death Spiral. To do this you must find the arc—the straightest line—that ties your own identity to the idea of death and of a spiral.







The first is elementary: your arrows mete out death to the enemy. The second requires more thought. How do you best connect to the idea of a spiral? After some time, you hit upon the connection. You realize that others witless enough to cross you are embarking on a downward spiral to defeat, as surely as you have them in your aim. By finding the arc between yourself and this idea, you have woven the thread to Death Spiral.

The idea of the arc is the center of an archer's target when he learns new talents. Though learning any new talent or advancing to any new Circle also requires a skillful teacher, the primary burden lies on the student. He must understand the talent as it relates to his own experience. Only that way will he find the arc, the straightest line, connecting his own pattern and the new talent he seeks to add to that pattern.

Scenario the fifth: You seek to learn the Flame Arrow talent. Your teacher lays out its rudiments for you. Then, as is customary, the teacher bids you farewell, collecting her fee for her service. The teacher does not linger to discover whether you pick up the talent. Doing so is your problem now, not hers. You must rely on your eye, your ability to see the arc between you and Flame Arrow. You retreat to a secluded glen to think and to see. You empty yourself of all extraneous thoughts, concentrating only on the matter at hand. Slowly, a vision appears in your mind's eye. Not an illusion, mind you, but an acutely detailed and accurate memory.

In this memory, you are a child back in your home village: a village in the hinterland, a peaceful and quiet place. In this place, elves, humans, orks and dwarfs live together in harmony. You associate this place with your earliest, most golden memories. It also carries a cruel and shadowed memory of the black day when the raiders came. You remember the tears obscuring your vision. You remember the flaming arrows hitting the roofs of the thatched huts. You remember the running, the chaos, the destruction of your home.

You remember the anger that filled your small, childish body. That anger now returns to fill your adult body—the body of an archer. You shoot the anger through your true pattern like an arrow snapping from your bow. Your anger flies toward its mark, hitting all of what your teacher told you of Flame Arrow.

Your head reels with new knowledge. Flame Arrow is now a part of you, connected to your ancient anger. You will use that anger to direct the talent at your foes. From this day forward, whenever you strike out with Flame Arrow, you fire not only at your foe of the moment, but at the raiders who destroyed your first home and robbed you of your innocence.

This is the way to find the arc between your talent and your essential self. The archer is often accused of being an unfeeling adept, one who sees things only from a remove and reduces other Name-givers to no more than targets. This belief could not be further from the mark. To find an archer's deepest emotions, look to his pattern, to the lines between his memories and his talents.

OF THE BOW AND THE CROSSBOW

Question: Are all archers alike?

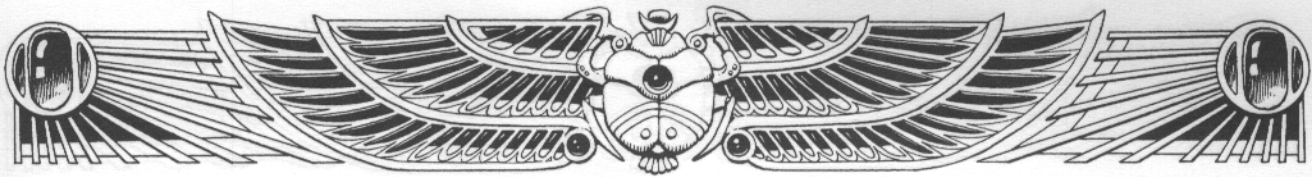
To answer this question, follow the arcs. Does it make sense that all archers should resemble one another? I have you not met laughing warriors and mournful warriors, reckless sky raiders and cautious sky raiders, thieves who hoard and thieves who spend? So it is with archers. Though we are all tied to the same pattern, we are as individual as the followers of any other Discipline. Only those blind and ignorant fools who accuse of us being without emotion also believe we are all the same. Just as one who knows how to look can see the differences between every arrow, even those produced by the same fletcher, so every archer has his own ways of seeing the arc between himself and his Discipline.

Certain common divisions, however, do exist between archers. The central difference lies between devotees of the bow and adherents of the crossbow. When an archer fires a missile at a target, the archer sees the arc between weapon and foe, thus forging a mystical connection between the archer and his chosen weapon. In a sense, we see through our weapons as other Name-givers see through their eyes. An archer's choice of weapon reveals something about him, and throughout his life that choice continues to shape and mold him.

I wield the longbow, and have had the honor of fighting beside many practitioners of the crossbow. This is what I have seen: crossbow men tend to be earthy and practical. We of the bow possess a mystical bent, a taste for metaphor. The crossbow man works by pragmatic logic, the bow man by intuition.

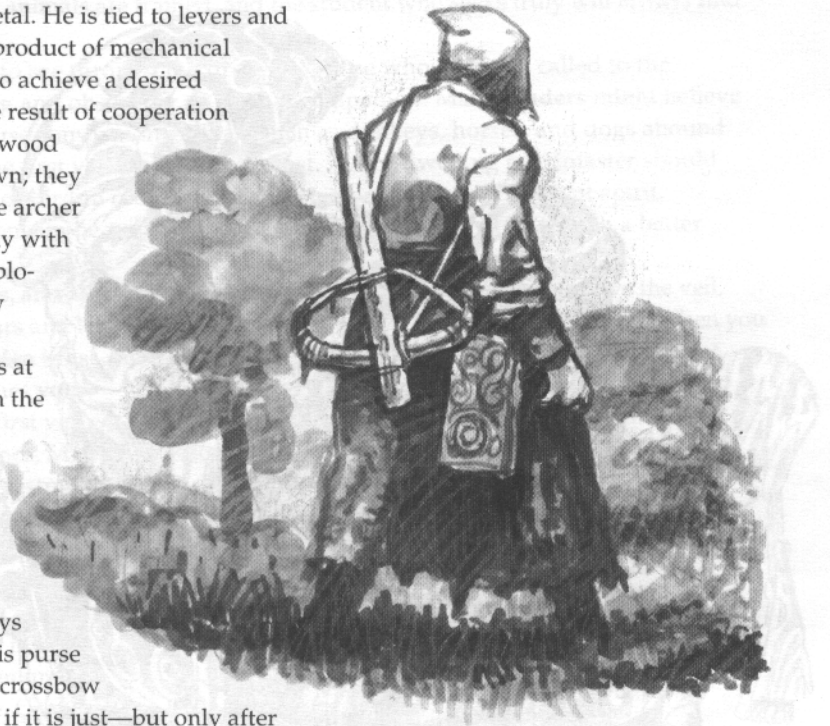
As a man of the bow, I am tied to the wood of my bow and to the individual craftsmanship needed to make it. Through the eyes of my bow I feel a bond to nature, the world of the forest and jungle. I am connected to the tree from which the wood of my bow was born, and so am at home in the woodlands. Among trees and vines and creepers, I can pick out





furtive movements and see hidden dangers. I am connected to the skilled, solitary artisan who carved my bow. Many, like me, carve their bows themselves. Therefore, I am self-reliant, accustomed to solving problems by my own instincts. Within my bow, as within my chest, beats the heart of a loner. We bow men are serious by nature, and when we act heroically it is often for such abstract motives as a desire for justice or the dictates of personal honor.

The crossbow man is tied to both wood and metal. He is tied to levers and cranks. Because the weapon he sees through is the product of mechanical ingenuity, he sees the world as pieces interlocking to achieve a desired effect. Moreover, the crossbow man's weapon is the result of cooperation between woodworker and metalsmith. Neither the wood nor metal in his weapon is worth anything on its own; they must smoothly combine to form a useful whole. The archer therefore sees the ideal man as one who works easily with others for the achievement of a mutual goal. His diplomatic instincts are more acute than those of the bow man; he often acts as the steady head in a party of squabbling adventurers. The man of the crossbow is at home in the cities, where his weapon was forged. In the blackness of night in a maze of buildings, he can pick friend from foe. Neither rooftop sniper nor alley brigand can hide from his penetrating sight. A crossbow man is likelier than a bow man to have laugh lines around his eyes, is easier in his demeanor and quicker to tell a joke. Tied to metal and through it earth, the crossbow man pays more attention to his next meal and the weight of his purse than airy bow men such as myself. Some say that a crossbow man, when called upon to support a cause, will ask if it is just—but only after asking if it pays well.



Of course, these statements are generalities on which no archer would wholly base his actions or judgment. One who truly knows how to see always scans the horizon for exceptions.

REGARDING THE SNIPER

Every archer possesses the capacity for sudden, decisive violence. He always searches for targets for his hungry arrows. In the mind of the archer, the arrows in his quiver are like peeping baby birds, anxious to be loosed at the foe and drink of his blood.

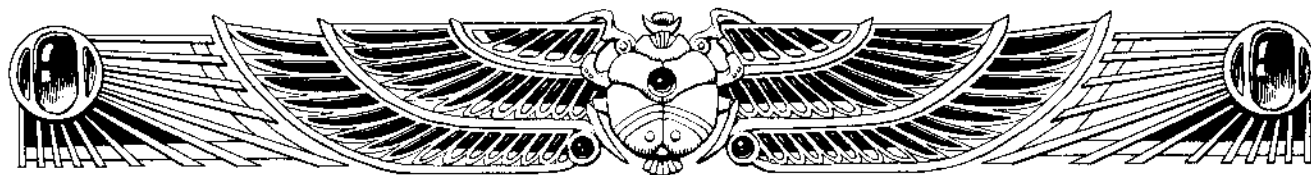
A true archer keeps the violence within him in check. He only fires at the right moment for the scenario in which he finds himself. In our true patterns, this savage part of our natures is connected to our eyes, and so they must maintain this restraint. Our eyes, always alert to discern target from missile or foe from friend, serve us as our consciences. Without our capacity to see and judge truly, we become less than beasts.

Sadly, the gift of judgment does not always accompany the art of sight. As with any Discipline, the way of the archer is cursed with its share of villains. We refuse to honor such scoundrels with the name of our way, and so we call them snipers.

A bow man bad at heart is cutting and cold, driven by lust for reputation or power. Truth compels me to admit that even I feel a chilling thrill whenever I draw a bead on a living, breathing foe. It is a moment of true power over an unknown opponent, knowing that with a mere flick of the wrist I can cast him into oblivion. This power offers a mighty temptation. More than one fresh-faced young Name-giver whom I trained in the archer's way has become intoxicated by this temptation. To these cruel individuals, all others become potential targets and nothing more. Their ability to slay their targets from a distance is all that matters to them.

For any reader of this document who is a sniper or feels the temptation to become one, I have but one message: the sniper can also become a target.





KEEPER OF THE BEASTS



We are fortunate to have received the following treatise on the Discipline of the beastmaster from an elven follower of that Discipline Named Esteyria. Other essays on this subject, delivered to us over the years, tended to deal only with the superiority of wild creatures as companions and teachers without revealing anything of the deeper motivations of the adepts who follow this path. Non-elven readers should take note that, because Esteyria sees her Discipline in the context of the elves' unique spiritual paths, her description of the beastmaster Discipline is somewhat unusual. The exact date of this manuscript is unknown, but many of the references in it indicate that it was transcribed within the past ten years.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

ON BECOMING A BEASTMASTER

As a Follower of *Mes ti' Meraerthsa*, the Path of Warriors, I might easily have chosen to become a swordmaster or a thief. Many of my kind do.

Thankfully, I am *Dae'mistishsa* and so do not see the choices of life as rigidly as some. I became a beastmaster because that Discipline allows me to know intimately the truest and greatest conflict, that between Name-givers and our own spirits. I speak not of war, nor of combat where one is victorious and the other either dead or nursing her wounds. I speak of the mastery of self that commands others as forcefully as and to better

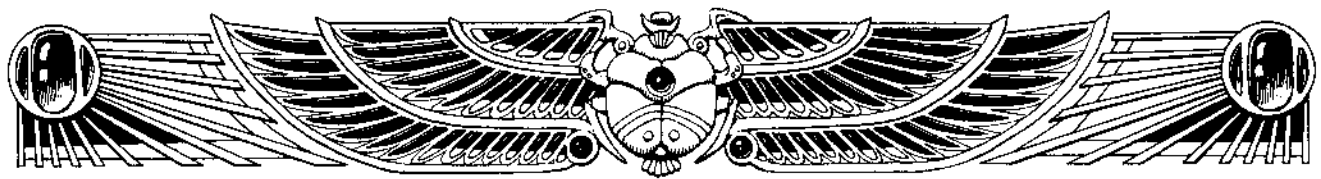
effect than prowess with a weapon. Such mastery is no easy

thing to accomplish; we must fight our own poor judgment and impatience every step of the way to attain it.

The beasts of our world teach us the first lesson of self-mastery: that our strength of will avails us nothing if we use it only to force our wishes upon others. If a carter whips his horse to make it go, the horse will buck and strain against its harness but will not move forward so much as a handspan. The carter must master his annoyance, speak gently to the animal, and remind it that it wants to do as he commands.

Beasts do not disobey us for the pleasure of it; only Name-givers are such willful beings. The beasts, having no such flaw, survived the Scourge much better than we. The Name-giver races fell prey to the Horrors because they could so easily tempt us into a battle of wills, and our fruitless struggles fed their evil. The Horrors have no need to torture animals who neither resist, bargain, nor plead for their own desires to be met. But we Name-givers, intent on getting our own way, can be tricked. We enter into impious bargains to achieve our desires at any cost. In the end, however, we cannot master the world. We can only master ourselves. This is the first lesson of the beastmaster.





ON LEARNING MASTERY FROM BEASTS

When a beastmaster takes the first steps on her path, she may feel little more than a fondness for beasts and a desire to spend time with them. The true teaching comes from the beasts themselves and is interpreted for the student by a beastmaster adept. Such a teacher can be found wherever animals are trained, and the student who seeks truly will always find someone to set him on the correct path.

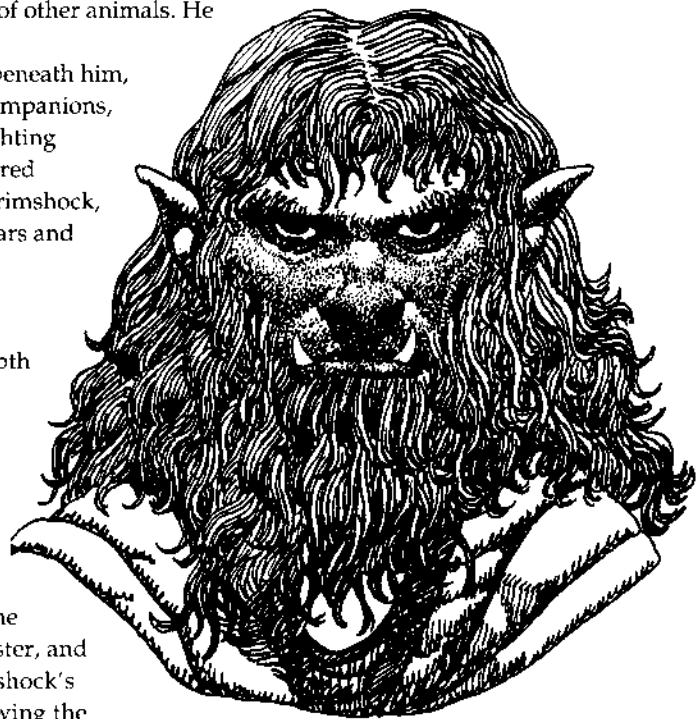
The beastmaster must first discover and learn to see through the first veil. Those who are truly called to the Discipline will discover the veil simply by adopting and observing an animal companion. Many readers might believe that city life gives them an advantage in this, because companion animals such as donkeys, horses, and dogs abound there. In truth, however, it is difficult to learn of the first veil from a tame beast. A city-dwelling beastmaster should choose as her companion an untamed city cat, rat, or bird in order to learn the lessons of its independent spirit. Would-be adepts who find wild-spirited companions in the untamed lands of Barsaive usually travel with a better guide through the first veil.

The first veil separates Name-givers from beasts, and all living things from the Horrors. Once you perceive the veil, and then see through it, the mist over the world clears and lets you see your surroundings truly for the first time. When you gaze at your faithful steed and see not merely a burden beast, but a spirit shining at you from its eyes with the clarity of starlight—when a beast's soul reaches out and touches yours—you have achieved your first glimpse through the veil.

Some beastmasters find their way through the first veil without a teacher's guidance, though only under unusual circumstances. An ork beastmaster of my acquaintance, M'rok Grimshock, followed the cavalryman Discipline before undergoing the transformation that led him to the beastmaster's path. Though a true friend to his mount, he knew nothing of the ways of other animals. He did not even like them much; they made him uneasy.

During one brutal battle, Grimshock's mount fell beneath him, sending them both tumbling into a steep ravine. His companions, unaware of his fate, gave him up for dead when the fighting ended. All night, Grimshock sat beside his gravely injured mount, until at dawn the steed passed from this life. Grimshock, overcome with grief, stormed the deaf heavens with tears and cries in memory of his slain companion.

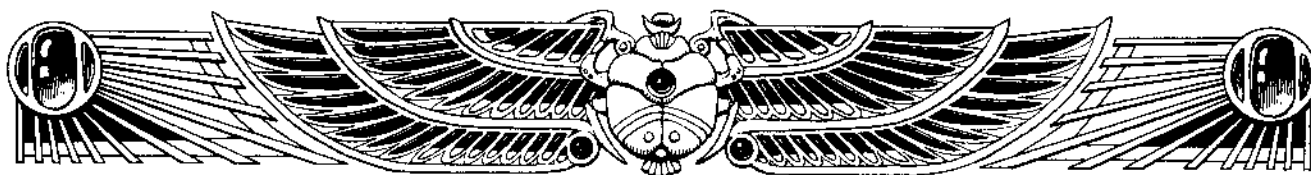
When the beasts in the ravine heard his heartfelt mourning, they gathered around the stricken ork. Perhaps it was Grimshock's strength of will or the depth of the bond he still felt for his dead mount, but the beasts responded to something in Grimshock—rather than slay him and devour both bodies, the beasts mourned with the cavalryman. In the dawn of that sad day, Grimshock broke through the veil. He saw the animals' hearts, and they comforted him. Later that day, Grimshock returned to his fellows on the back of a huge, brown bear. From that time forward, Grimshock studied the ways of the beastmaster, and has become legendary throughout Barsaive. (In Grimshock's version of the tale, he tamed and rode a brithan. Knowing the nature of those beasts, even I cannot believe that story!)



ON THE VIRTUES OF STRENGTH AND PATIENCE

Once the beastmaster sees through the first veil, she can begin reaching the minds of the beasts. Many people believe that training an animal means forcing your will upon it, but this is not so. A beastmaster must possess a strong will, but only because no animal will bond with a weakling. Weakness is dangerous, for a weak animal swiftly succumbs to peril. A beastmaster must prove to the creatures she trains that she is strong and knows what needs doing. She does this not by





forcing the beast to follow her, but by clearly showing the creature the direction she intends to go. All creatures know when to follow a leader. Show them that you are such, and the beasts cannot help but fall in line.

Consider the wolf and the cougar. One hunts alone, the other follows the leader of its pack. Yet both recognize the weakness of their prey, and that is why they attack. And both will come at the call of a strong beastmaster; a weak and undisciplined beastmaster, they abandon. They can see strength and weakness at a glance, and know the difference between them.

A beastmaster must also have patience, for it takes time to build the trust that truly commands an animal. You cannot simply flash them an empty smile full of charm and hope to win them over. Animals know nothing of flattery. They see what is before them and respond to it. A beastmaster must therefore also know her own flaws and how best to overcome or hide them. If you stink, beasts do not politely hold their breath and stay near you. If you speak loudly and foolishly, they do not listen patiently while you babble. If you are drunk, they do not carry you back to your pallet to sleep it off. The beasts of the world will not bear your flaws; they react to those they see and ignore what you do not flaunt at them.

Patience lets a beastmaster bond with many creatures by learning how each expects to be treated. Patience builds trust and shows a beast your worth. Patience is the soul of self-mastery. Only if you prove your worthiness to a creature can you teach that creature. After all, a trained beast gives us far more than we give it. We train them to work for our needs, not for theirs. If we want the beast we train to give of its best for a far lesser return, we must be worthy of such a gift. Therefore, after we have taught the horse the way in which we need it to carry us, we must then recognize what it needs in return, and fill that need as best we can. A beastmaster who does this receives the willing service of a companion who will never betray her.

One who has acquired an animal companion and pierced the first veil is a novice, known to other beastmasters as a tyro. A tyro does whatever is needed to deepen her understanding of many beasts' ways, often earning her daily bread taming and training work-beasts for others. In addition to animal ways, this work teaches the tyro more of the ways of her fellow Name-givers by requiring her to discover whether they are deserving of a beast's labor or not. Turning a trained beast over to a neglectful or abusive master violates the trust between beast and tyro; it is the worst deceit of which a novice beastmaster can be guilty. Such a betrayal, whether knowing or unknowing, can only serve to impede the beastmaster's growth in her Discipline.

When a tyro has learned to understand many different creatures, she tests herself by forging a bond between creatures that are natural enemies, using their mutual trust of her to bring them together. If she succeeds in this, she becomes a journeyman, or par. I achieved that station by calling upon creatures of land and sea to save a troll child stranded on a friend's raft from floating away. I persuaded several giant salmon to push the raft downriver to a ford, where a family of bears waded into the shoulder-high waters and stopped the raft's descent. None of the bears so much as glanced at the salmon, though great salmon are a bear's favorite delicacy.

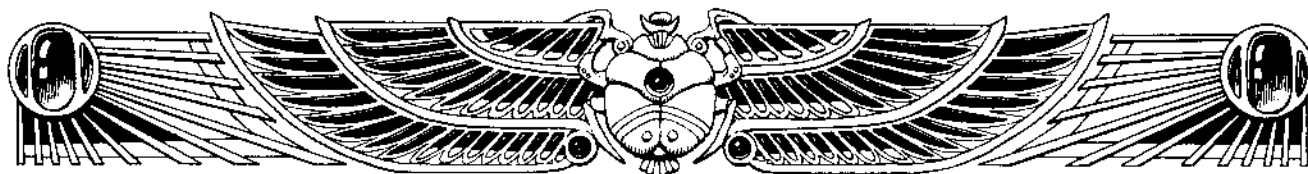
Once a beastmaster becomes a par, she tests her own skills against the strength of the beasts of the land. Such tests are often solitary, including such acts as attending the birth of wild animals, or joining a pack of animals and being accepted as one of them. Some pars begin working with only magical beasts. A par must set herself the most exacting tests possible, and repeat them until she can meet their challenges. A beastmaster who does this may rightly claim the status of warden. Though it is the par herself who determines when she has become a warden, rather than a teacher, she may only claim this status when inner truth tells her that she merits it. A beastmaster who deceives herself or others about her true standing may as well renounce her Discipline, for she will never progress any further.

OF THE MANY KINDS OF BEASTMASTERS

Some beastmasters feel drawn to all types of beasts, desiring to work with and learn from them all. Such a one loves nothing more than learning the ways of an unfamiliar animal, and often travels across the land in search of more and more different creatures with whom to bond. I have known such many-minded beastmasters to spend years wandering through wild lands, seeking fantastical animals who exist only in rumor or legend. Barsaive owes these devoted beastmasters a debt beyond price, for it is they who bring back tales of the unusual creatures they have encountered and share with their fellow Name-givers the secrets they have uncovered.

Still other beastmasters are drawn to magical beasts. I have known pars and wardens who so thrive on challenge that they work only with magically endowed creatures, finding all others too biddable for their liking. It is indeed a much greater challenge to prove oneself a worthy leader to an animal capable of wielding magic! Some magical beastmasters





believe that the secret to all beasts' survival of the Scourge lies in the creatures with magical skills. Indeed, some claim that certain beasts developed magical abilities because of the Scourge!

I have also met certain beastmasters who call themselves scouts. These, more than any, wish to learn from the beasts in order to help themselves, rather than to learn self-mastery. More than one young scout has come to me for training, seeking the gift of knowledge so that they may borrow the sharp nose of the wolf or walk the silent tread of the cat. Too often, regrettably, their interest stops there. They are quick to pick up certain talents, and if they had the proper devotion to their Discipline, they could become able beastmasters.

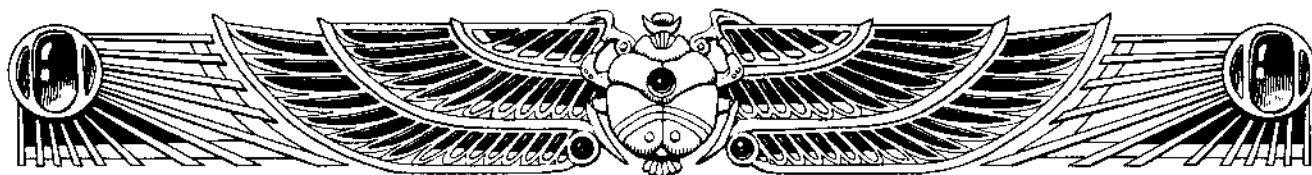
To the everlasting sorrow of every true beastmaster, some of our number enslave the beasts who trust them. Such folk most often work only for profit and know nothing of self-mastery. Because the bonds formed between these beastmasters and their animals are flawed and weak, such enslaved beasts often break free from their captivity or perish in the attempt. Such tragedies only serve to hide the secrets of the beasts deeper from us, because they teach the beasts to run from the Name-giver races. The beastmaster who forsakes her duty to treat the creatures of the land with respect in return for power or coin can scarcely be called a beastmaster, save that she has certain talents of our Discipline. Those of us who live by higher ideals know it is a sin to abuse our Discipline's magic and so dishonor the noble creatures who survived the Scourge. We who follow the true path shun the lesser beastmaster, and no honorable teacher will train one. Just as stronger animals leave the weak and sickly to heal or die alone, so we leave the beastmaster who exploits her animals to suffer the pangs of her own conscience.

I have often heard the tale of such a lesser beastmaster, Named Kreg Shuerslan, who lived in Bartertown. Each year he paid others to capture animals from the wilds and bring them to his stable. There he whittled away at their hearts and minds, forcing his will upon them with lash and stick, preparing them for service in the mines or on farms or as pack animals for adventurers. Drunk with his own power, he enslaved all creatures on whom he could lay his brutal hands: even those creatures who should never have felt the hands of a Name-giver master.

One day, a mysterious stranger offered Kreg unheard-of wealth to tame a fleet of espagras as battle mounts. The espagra is a dangerous creature, able to wield magic in its wrath. But Kreg, sure that he could break any creature's will, gathered many hearty souls together for his espagra-hunting expedition. One of their number was a windling troubadour, brought along to commemorate the event with a song. As Kreg strode out of town with much fanfare, he bragged that all of Bartertown would fall at his feet when he returned with his tame espagras.

A year and a day later, the windling troubadour returned to Bartertown alone. She landed atop a statue in an open square, unslinging her harp from her back, and began to sing the song of Kreg's expedition. She called it the Song of the Great





Espagra. It told of a foolish beastmaster battered to death by the great espagra, who then carried the beastmaster's broken body straight toward the sun and dropped it in the path of his fleeing retainers.

I have always liked that story.

OF THOSE RACES UNSUITED TO THE DISCIPLINE

ANYONE
WHO BELIEVES THAT
T'SKRANG LACK
PATIENCE HAS
NEVER SAILED A
RIVERBOAT, NOR
TRIED TO SELL
SPICES TO ORKS
(WHO LACK ANY
DECENT PALATE).
—SYLVIRIL,
CAPTAIN OF THE
NEMORTH

Though it might seem that any Name-giver race should be able to learn from beasts, two have marked difficulty doing so. Neither the obsidiman nor the t'skrang are well suited to the beastmaster Discipline, and I believe I can guess why.

The obsidiman, though patient enough to prove himself a worthy leader and heart-strong enough to learn self-mastery, is most often so devoted to the earth itself that its mere creatures cannot hold his attention. He is so busy caring for the land that he cannot care for the beasts of Barsaive as a beastmaster must. I once met an obsidiman merchant who had learned the skill of training animals, but he was no adept, nor did he care to become one.

The t'skrang sit on the other side of the donkey. For them, impatience is the great failing; no t'skrang I have met is willing to take the time to slowly teach an animal that he is its master. Also, the t'skrang love showmanship, and there is little dazzle or flair in what a beastmaster does. I have met many t'skrang scouts who have adopted practical applications of beastmaster talents, but they care little for the underlying truths of our path. The beastmaster's way requires a steady mind and a contemplative soul, and most t'skrang prefer to live their lives too swiftly.

ON THE BEASTMASTER'S FAITH IN JASPREE

Though a beastmaster certainly may follow other Passions, all those I have met give the first loyalty of their hearts to Jaspree. No other Passion is closer to the spirit of the beastmaster. Half beast and half Name-giver, Jaspree watches over her beast-children, aiding them and speaking directly to their hearts. This last is what all true beastmasters strive to do, and Jaspree shows us the way. Someday, when we Name-givers are ready, the Passion will impart this knowledge to us so that all may know what we who master the beasts seek to discover.

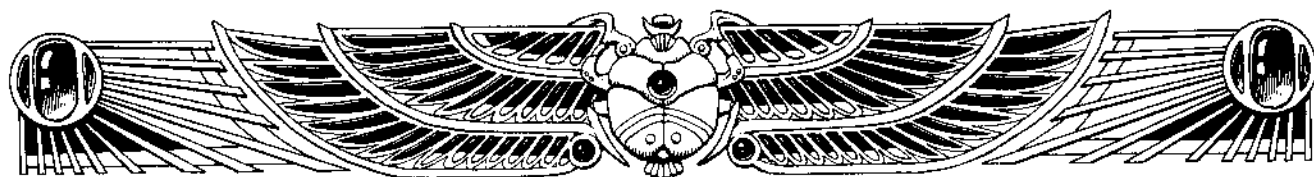
We beastmasters know that Jaspree loves all living things, but some followers of this Passion sadly believe otherwise. Certain questors of Jaspree value plants over animals, and of these misguided folk the beastmaster must be wary. I once encountered such a solitary questor in a peaceful forest glen, wherein I had settled to carry out my karma ritual. The questor happened upon me, realized what I was doing, and cursed me for drawing in beasts to destroy her forest. As she raved, she flung herself at me and began beating me about the head and shoulders. As soon as I recovered from the shock of her attack, I fled. Since then, I have avoided places where I can see no beasts, rather than run across such a questor again and perhaps be forced to hurt her in my defense.

ON AVOIDING THE TAIN OF THE HORRORS

The beastmaster, by nature, spends a great deal of time with the beasts of the wilds. Traveling the untamed lands in search of new creatures is exciting, but also full of hazards. A beastmaster must not allow her interest in strange animals to overshadow caution when approaching such beasts, lest she be entrapped by a Horror using some animal-like construct as a lure. A beastmaster is a great prize for a Horror; if these abominations from other-where can pervert our Discipline's magic, they may use the beastmaster's talents to create bestial servants. Such tainted animals can be the Horror's eyes and ears to far-off villages and towns; they may run mad under the Horror's touch and maim or kill all in their path. If a Horror uses the beastmaster's bond to taint a magical beast, the beast's powers are turned to the Horror's will, causing untold destruction.

Worse than this, however, is the corruption of the very fabric of nature by a Horror-tainted beastmaster. Through a beastmaster's mind and heart, a Horror can manipulate the first veil, warping it so that the beastmaster sees only the brutality that that Horror wants the beastmaster to absorb. The beastmaster's tainted sight in turn taints the veil, so that the darkness of it forever destroys the possibility of trust between beast and Name-giver. Sometimes, though less often, the Horror will cloud the veil, showing the beasts in a dimmed light so that the beastmaster will overestimate her power over them. Many beastmasters die under this foul influence, however, and few Horrors will slay quickly if they can torment a soul for years.





Those town and village folk who dwell in safer lands often fear the "touch of the wild" that the beastmaster brings, and so we often must prove ourselves untainted by the Horrors. Simply working harmoniously with our creature companions does not always allay these fears, as many folk are unaccustomed to beastmasters and our ways. Art is a better way to prove one's purity, and gives the artist much joy besides. Some beastmasters engage in body painting, and a true master of this art can achieve a masterpiece that rivals even the loveliest embroidered creations. Others of us practice sculpture of stone or wood. I am a woodcarver, and know no greater joy than to vividly render the form of a living beast in unliving wood. I was once asked to carve a statuette of a gazelle for King Varulus III, as much to test my purity as to enrich His Majesty with the beauty of my work.

ON THE BEASTMASTER'S DUTY SINCE THE SCOURGE

Some who call themselves scholars tell us that the ferocity we see so often in the beasts of Barsaive nowadays is a permanent change, wrought by the ravages of the Horrors. These same bookish folk would have us believe we can do nothing to reverse the change. Such convictions are an appalling display of misguided ignorance. If the Scourge had so greatly changed the beasts of Barsaive from friend to enemy, no adepts could follow the way of the beastmaster, nor could we still learn from our animal companions. Jaspree would never so utterly forsake her children, both beast and Name-giver, as to leave a permanent gulf of fear between us. If the mistrust between beast and Name-giver truly cannot be bridged, there is greater reason than ever to lament the Scourge and fear the lingering presence of the Horrors.

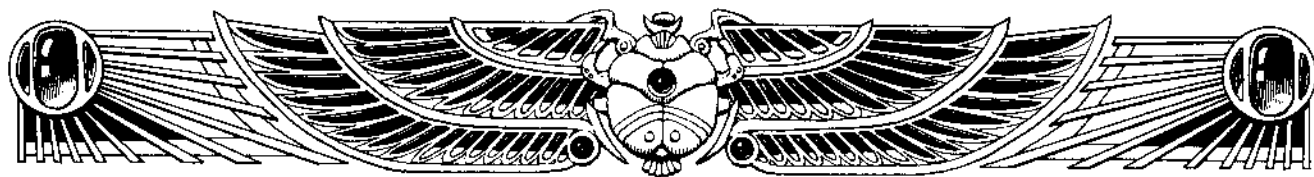
Indeed, the presence of so many generations of beastmasters in Barsaive only reaffirms my belief that Jaspree has called us to bridge the gap created by the Scourge and strengthen the too-often weakened bond between the Name-giving races and the creatures of the land.

I URGE THE READER TO KEEP IN MIND THE OFTEN MAUDLIN TEMPERAMENT OF BEASTMASTERS WHEN CONSIDERING THIS FINAL PARAGRAPH.

MANY OF BARSATIVE'S BEASTS ARE DANGEROUS, AND BEASTMASTER SENTIMENTALITY SHOULD NOT LULL ANYONE INTO THINKING OTHERWISE.

—MELIOM,
ASSISTANT SCRIBE
AND COPYIST
OF THE HALL
OF RECORDS





THE DARING AND DAUNTLESS CAVALRYMAN

This treatise on the cavalryman Discipline I transcribed from the words of Jenna Kinkeeper, a human from the hinterlands. For all the hours we spoke together, she leaned against and petted her fine black horse, Caliph—whom she insisted on introducing at the start, as one might introduce a fellow Name-giver. This more than anything else gave me insight as to how cavalrymen regard their animals.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

A cavalryman lives for her mount, and her mount lives for her. We ride in the teeth of the wind; we eat, sleep, and wake part of another's existence. We are closer than mother and daughter, wife and husband; our fates are entwined in a way no one else can truly understand. Only when a mount chooses you and you accept can you truly understand what it is to live joyously in this world.

I have been a cavalryman since the moment I drew breath, though it took me my first fifteen years to realize it.

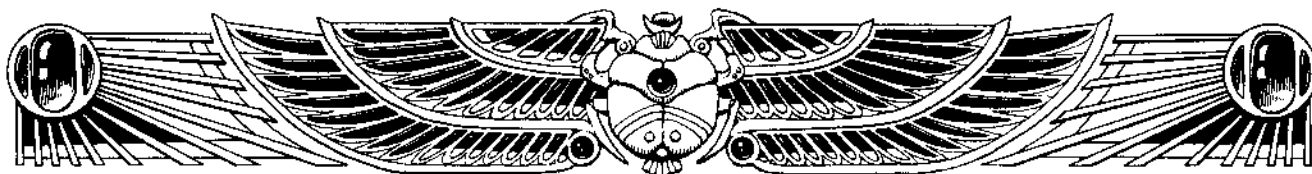
Throughout my life I have ridden with cavalrymen of all races and know we are among the bravest and most loyal souls roaming this battered land. Were we not, our mounts would not love us so—nor would we know the unequaled joy of their friendship.

THE WORLD OF THE CAVALRYMAN

An ancient saying among cavalrymen goes, "every foal is born of a mare, and every mare was once a foal." Aged cavalrymen often speak thus to their young charges about what it is to be an adept. Though such sayings do little to ease the joyous bewilderment of a youth who has just

experienced her first Ceremony of Joining, the truth of these pearls of wisdom cannot be denied. No one can become a cavalryman unless she possesses a natural empathy with animals and a need for motion that goes gut-deep. But the bond between rider and mount grows with learning, and as it grows it colors the cavalryman's view of the world. Caliph and I have known our bonding for eleven turns of the seasons now, ever since she was a spindly-legged foal who chose me as her rider, and I see the world as much through her eyes as through my own.





ON THE BOND BETWEEN MOUNT AND RIDER

We cavalrymen see the world the Scourge has left us in a way few others can. The air sailor in her flying ship, perhaps, might understand what we mean when we say that the world is meant to be traveled. Life is meant for movement, for discovery, for the rhythm of hooves fading into the distance as a rider and her horse canter over the horizon. Floating a-horseback across the land, your senses sharp and alive, you touch the world with eye and ear and nose and skin, yet feel gloriously apart. Time has stopped for you and your mount, and it seems your ride will never end.

Why stay in one place for any length of time, when you can feel the wind tugging at your hair like a playful child as you bend over your mount's neck? Why stand still, when your horse's heart and yours blend together like your hair with her mane, together in perfect agreement as the world flows by around you? Even now, I can feel the tugging at my heart. Caliph and I would go and race the wind, had I not so much more yet to tell. But Caliph knows my mind, and will wait for me.

Though I cannot scent the wind as Caliph can, and she cannot grasp a pen in her hoof, we each understand something of the world as each of us experiences it. Scent, sound, and sight combine in our experience of the world, making it far more brilliant and vivid ... we sense the world from two different and sometimes confusing perspectives at once. Experienced cavalrymen learn to deal with this, and find it as easy as riding and shooting a bow at the same time. Our mount's perceptions join with our own just below the surface of our thoughts; we need only open our hearts to see through different eyes.

ON THE LIMITS OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

Our universe is a wild and uncertain place, like a hurricane surrounding an island of perfect trust and understanding. This island is the partnership between horse and rider. Outside stands the rest of the chaotic, chancy, often dangerous world; within, all is peace and pure intimacy. Though a cavalryman can make friends and take lovers like any other Name-givers, no tie ever becomes as important to us as the bond between rider and mount. Now you know, scholar-scribe, why so few cavalrymen marry; very few husbands or wives are willing to play second-best saddle to a horse! Only another cavalryman truly understands how we feel, and so many of us seek companionship in the arms of others of our kind. That way, we need not feel torn between the affection of lover for lover and our overriding loyalty to our mounts. Both adepts know and accept the limits of their lover's bond.

A cavalryman makes close and true friends, others by whose side we can rid our battle-scarred world of Horrors and other unimaginable evils. Though we can fight and laugh and sleep side by side with others of our own, two-legged kind, no one can touch our inmost souls save our mounts.

Most of us find the prospect of going through life without a partner whose heart and mind are as open to us as our own souls a terrifying—even horrifying—thought. The constant flow of affection between horse and rider simply outshines all other attachments, and cavalrymen would have it no other way. So the next time a cavalryman suddenly loses interest in your latest Theran joke, don't believe him contemptuous or arrogant. He feels no such thing toward you; you are simply less interesting to him than his horse.

ON LIFE IN A CAVALRY

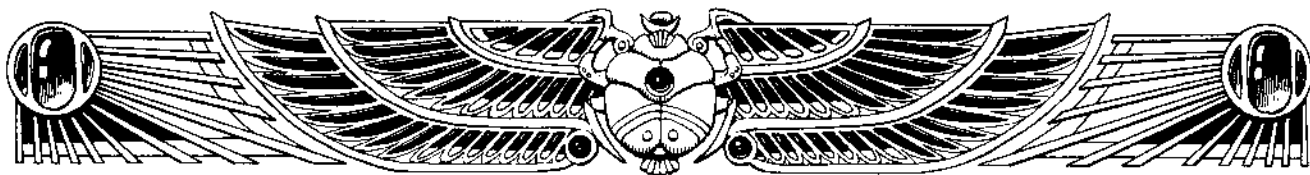
Though the love between each horse and her rider sustains a cavalryman throughout her life, few of us live only in the company of our steeds. Almost all cavalrymen join regiments, troops or other cavalry bands. The ork scorcherers are particularly well known for their crack cavalries whose diverse members can act as one better than any other group in Barsaive. Certainly no Theran whip elicits such unity among them.

We join our fellow cavalrymen because we and our horses wish to. Horses are herd animals, and enjoy each other's company as much as do Barsaive's Name-giver races.

Most cavalry troops are led by a "captain's pair," the rider and mount who command the greatest respect from the greatest number. The captain's pair chooses aides, who each command a number of cavalry pairs beneath them.

THOUGH JENNA
BARELY MAKES
MENTION OF IT, THE
READER SHOULD BE
AWARE THAT MANY
CAVALRYMEN
CHOOSE MOUNTS
OTHER THAN HORSES.
IT IS TRUE THAT
MOST HUMANS,
ELVES, T'SKRANG,
AND ORKS CHOOSE
HORSES AS THEIR
PARTNERS, BUT
FEW HORSES CAN
COMFORTABLY
CARRY A TROLL
RIDER, WHILE
WINDLINGS RIDE
MOUNTS BETTER
SUITED TO THEIR
TINY SIZE. ALSO,
MANY ORKS,
ESPECIALLY AMONG
THE SCORCHER
TRIBES, CHOOSE
MASSIVE THUNDER
BEASTS AS
PARTNERS.
IT IS A MINOR POINT
TO BE SURE, BUT
ONE WORTHY OF
MAKING IF THIS
TREATISE IS TO BE
CONSIDERED
ANY FORM OF
AUTHORITATIVE
INFORMATION
ABOUT THE
CAVALRYMAN
DISCIPLINE.
—MERROX,
MASTER OF THE
HALL OF RECORDS





The manner of choosing leadership and position within the ranks varies greatly from band to band, but both horses and riders have a say in such decisions, and the abilities of each pair when working together are given great weight. Often, cavalymen advance through individual challenges, in which two pairs compete in races, battles and other tests of skill.

Most battles are fought with blunted weapons, though I have heard that ork scorchers prefer challenges to the death.

Though cavalymen rarely practice a second Discipline, many devote themselves to a specific aspect of our Discipline. Many cavalries are made up almost solely of those we call soldiers, who devote themselves to the arts of war. Certain bands, most notably the windling Aisling Cavalry, so justly famed for their amazing speed and endurance, serve as messengers and couriers.

Messenger cavalries tend to be much smaller than soldiering troops and usually include a number of what we call horsemen, cavalymen who pursue riding skills and talents to the near exclusion of all else. A few cavalymen also become beast-master adepts. Such pairs have an unmatched ability to work together, and so can make their way safely through almost any territory.

ON DAILY PRACTICES

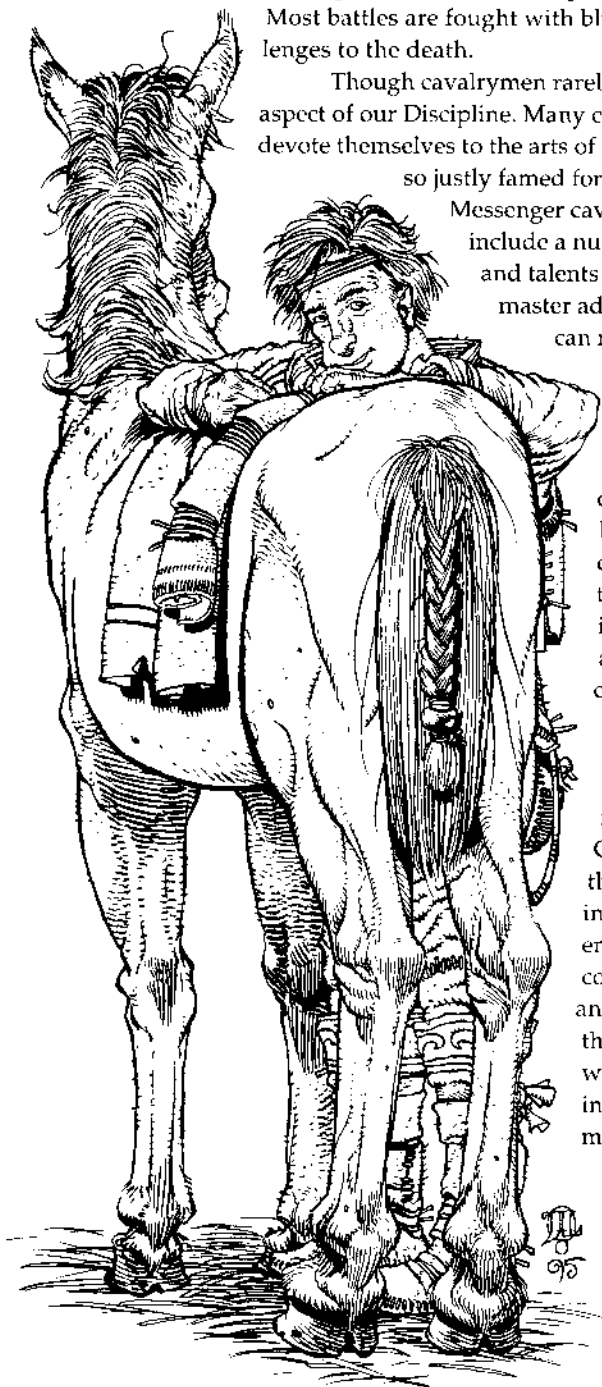
A cavalryman's life revolves around her horse, and the horse's around the cavalryman. Nothing is as important to a cavalryman as caring for her mount, and she will see to her mount's comfort even before breaking her fast. The cavalryman feeds her horse, brushes and curries it, then checks its legs for splints and its hooves for signs of thrush, stone bruises or other problems. A cavalryman can often sense if her mount is in pain or gravely ill; some troubles can be insidious, and so it pays to be cautious. A mount's legs and hooves must be well cared for, because a horse whose leg or hoof is seriously injured may never recover. To lose a mount is the worst nightmare a cavalryman can imagine. I know; I have lived through that agony.

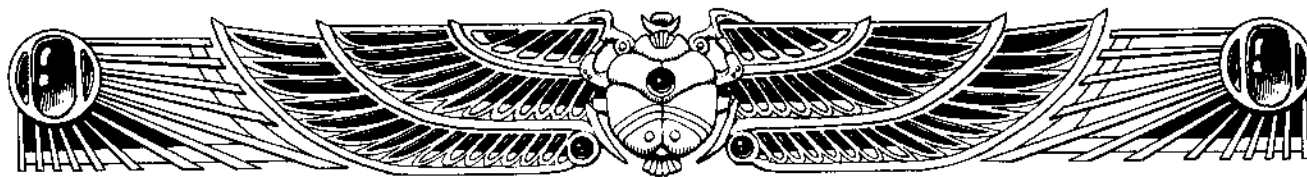
Unless a cavalry band is on active service, each pair spends the day rehearsing battle moves, riding maneuvers and other important skills. Cavalymen on active duty do whatever is required of them; patrolling the outskirts of cities or towns, watching for trouble in city streets, carrying messages, or even fighting—though battle has become rarer since the end of the Theran War. In all such activities, the cavalryman must give constant attention to strengthening the link between the spirits of rider and horse. At the end of the day, when mount and rider retire to rest, they often sleep together. All cavalymen sleep beside their mounts when traveling, and many cavalymen prefer to sleep in the stables of an inn rather than leave their mount alone in a strange place. Sleeping with my horse comforts both my body and my mind; my steed's warmth and strength enfold me, and the musky scent of horse lulls me to sleep in my soft hay-nest as surely as any lullaby.

ON BECOMING A CAVALRYMAN

With every new foal born, a new Joining can begin. As they travel, cavalymen keep a constant watch for riding animals near to giving birth. When they spot a likely mount, they often arrange to stay near the pregnant animal until the birth of the offspring, and spend

much of the time while they wait searching for cavalymen candidates. When the foal is born, the cavalryman spends a day with the newborn animal, stroking its rough coat and whispering tales of glory and valor in its ears, all the while concentrating her thoughts on the potential adepts she identified earlier. If no one responds to this call, we accept that this





youngling was not meant to be a mount and move on. If someone responds to the miracle of this birth, they will approach the foal before another sun sets. If the foal seems as drawn to the adept candidate as the candidate to the foal, and even if the potential adept does not realize why she has come, the cavalryman then offers to train the foal as a mount for the candidate. If the candidate accepts this offer, she immediately becomes an apprentice cavalryman, or else pledges to return in two or three years when the mount has matured. The dispute as to which method produces the better adept goes on as fiercely among us as ever, though never so bitterly as disputes among adherents of some other Disciplines.

Most cavalrymen I know believe that any new bond that is truly forged will be strong enough to bring horse and rider together at the proper time, regardless of how many months or years they spend apart. Riders of this gait see separation as good and necessary, so that each member of the pair-to-be can know himself better before becoming so intimately bound up with another. Other cavalrymen believe just as strongly that the apprentice rider and foal should not be parted once they have bonded, however tentatively. They say that continuous company and shared experiences strengthen the bond between horse and rider, and make them truly one as no other kind of training can.

Regardless of the method, the official Rite of Joining cannot be performed until the foal has lived thirty months. Though every cavalry has its own ways of performing this sacred ritual, its core remains the same from band to band. From the pair's teacher and mount, the newly bonded horse and rider each receive a mark of joining. Though derived by custom from the mark worn by the teaching pair, it is always different enough so that each mark is as unique as the pair it binds. The mark may be branded on the new pair with fire, or tattooed, or the teacher may cut the flesh and rub dirt into the cut to form a raised scar. I have heard that ork scorchers favor the last method. Once adorned with this symbol of the cavalryman's bond, the rider leaps onto his mount's back for the first time. As the two gallop together in joy, the rider silently Names their partnership. This Naming cements the budding heart-bond between the two of them. No cavalryman tells another this Name, and to ask it is a deadly insult.

ON BONDING MORE THAN ONCE

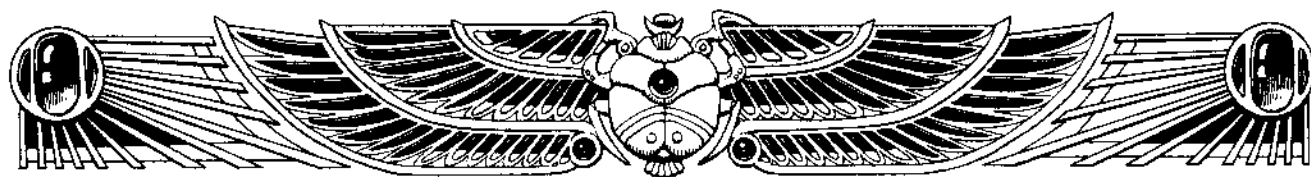
Death is part of life in Barsaive, more so now than in the times before the Scourge came to trouble us. Often, the dangers of our world leave one member of a bonded pair—most often the cavalryman—to grieve for her slain companion. The survivor of a pair sundered by death, whether horse or rider, may bond again, though no cavalryman can bond with more than one mount at a time. Such a thing would be a travesty; it would be like a king owing his whole loyalty to more than one realm, or a husband giving all his heart to more than one wife. None among us has discovered precisely why, but it is far rarer for a horse to bond again than for a rider to do so. All too often, a horse whose rider dies simply refuses to eat or drink, disappearing into the wilderness to die rather than going on without his bondmate.

Of all the Name-giver races, humans like myself recover most swiftly from the worst depths of our grief to form another bond. Some claim this is so because humans are more versatile than others; I believe we are simply stronger of mind. Trolls are the least likely to find another mount, partly because their notions of honor are tangled with the pair-bond and partly because it is no easy task to find a mount suitable to their size. Regardless, no cavalryman of any race ever completely sets aside her sense of loss. We always remember our mounts, and miss them as a mother misses her departed children. Some cavalrymen never recover from the shock of losing a mount, particularly if they feel somehow to blame for the horse's death. Such unending despair is a hazard of our Discipline. Because a cavalryman's horse lives at most to the age of twenty-two years or so, and other mounts often less, all cavalrymen know they will face a mount's death at least once in their lives. To know this and still enter the Discipline is a true feat of courage.

OF THE RITE OF THE HERO

The end that cavalrymen dread more than a mount's clean death in battle or the gentle passing that comes with age is a broken leg. Not even magical healing can make the bone as strong as it once was, and no horse cares to live on three legs. A horse that can never gallop again knows only a life of agony. We cavalrymen have a duty to our mounts if they are injured so grievously that life will become unbearable for them. If in battle or accident a horse suffers a crippling, but not fatal wound, the cavalryman must perform the Rite of the Hero. To leave your mount alive and suffering rather than face this awful and solemn responsibility is the single greatest shame that can befall a cavalryman. Horses can sense such shame, and an adept who so disgraces herself will never find another horse willing to accept her after such a betrayal. I have heard the few scattered stories of Zena of Throal, a dwarf cavalryman who redeemed herself in the eyes of the mountain ponies through a series of heroic trials, but this ancient tale cannot possibly have any truth in it.





The rite is simple and stark, as befits such a somber occasion. The adept cradles her wounded mount's head in her lap, and they meditate together on their bond-Name and all that it has grown to encompass. When both feel ready, the cavalryman slices her mount's neck, then touches her dying mount's blood to the marks of their joining. As the mount dies, the joining brand fades (though it never fades entirely). I performed this rite for my first mount, Dancer, who gave his life fighting shadowmants in the Thunder Mountains. I felt the bond between us slip slowly, tortuously, out of my grasp, as a life-line slips out of the weakening grip of a drowning sailor. The quick shock of death in battle is as nothing by comparison. Yet it was my duty to face this pain, and I dispatched my mount to the comfort of death as I had sworn to do. Any true cavalryman would do as much, no matter what it cost her.

OF HONOR BRAIDS

This braid I wear honors the memory of my departed mount. Pay special respect to any cavalryman you see wearing such an honor braid, for he has suffered a trial beyond any that you have ever experienced. Three sections of hair taken from the mount's tail are intertwined with three sections of the rider's hair to make an honor braid, and no rider will ever unbraid it. Sometimes, but only in the most dire circumstances, a cavalryman will sacrifice her honor braid by cutting it off and casting it into a fire. By doing this before or during a great quest or battle, the cavalryman may gain extra strength to face the challenge. Yet this act causes the adept such anguish that it is only done as a sign that a cavalryman will give more than her life for the cause at hand. A dishonored adept may not wear an honor braid, and as a symbol of her disgrace it is shorn from her head.

NO FIGHTING
CAVALRYMAN
SHOULD DISCOUNT
STIRRUPS. HAVING
A LEATHER STRAP
AGAINST WHICH TO
BRACE YOUR FEET
HELPS A RIDER STAY
ON HIS MOUNT'S
BACK IN THE THICK
OF BATTLE, WHERE A
SHARP PLUNGE OR
A QUICK TURN AT
THE WRONG
MOMENT CAN TOSS
YOU RIGHT ONTO
SOMEONE'S SWORD.

I TIE A SIMPLE
GIRTH-BAND
AROUND MY
MOUNT'S BELLY.
AND THE STIRRUPS
DANGLE FROM
THAT. PELOQUIN
FIGHTS BETTER,
TOO—HE DOESN'T
WORRY SO MUCH
ABOUT THROWING
ME TO MY DEATH.
—GETHER OF THE
RED PLAINS RIDERS

ON THE TRAINING OF A CAVALRYMAN

Every teacher of young cavalymen has her own way of training, but all teachers I know of teach the fledgling adept to ride first without bridle and saddle. Those things come later. Even after training, most cavalymen I know eschew such ungainly items as saddles and bridles; all the straps and reins and such that other riders find so indispensable only interfere with the bond between rider and horse. There is no need for a guiding rein when you need only open your heart to tell the horse where to go; the subtle pressure of thigh or knee to withers or flank is all we need to direct our mount. No cavalryman's mount will ever suffer a bit between her teeth—and woe to the fingers of whoever attempts to put one in her mouth!

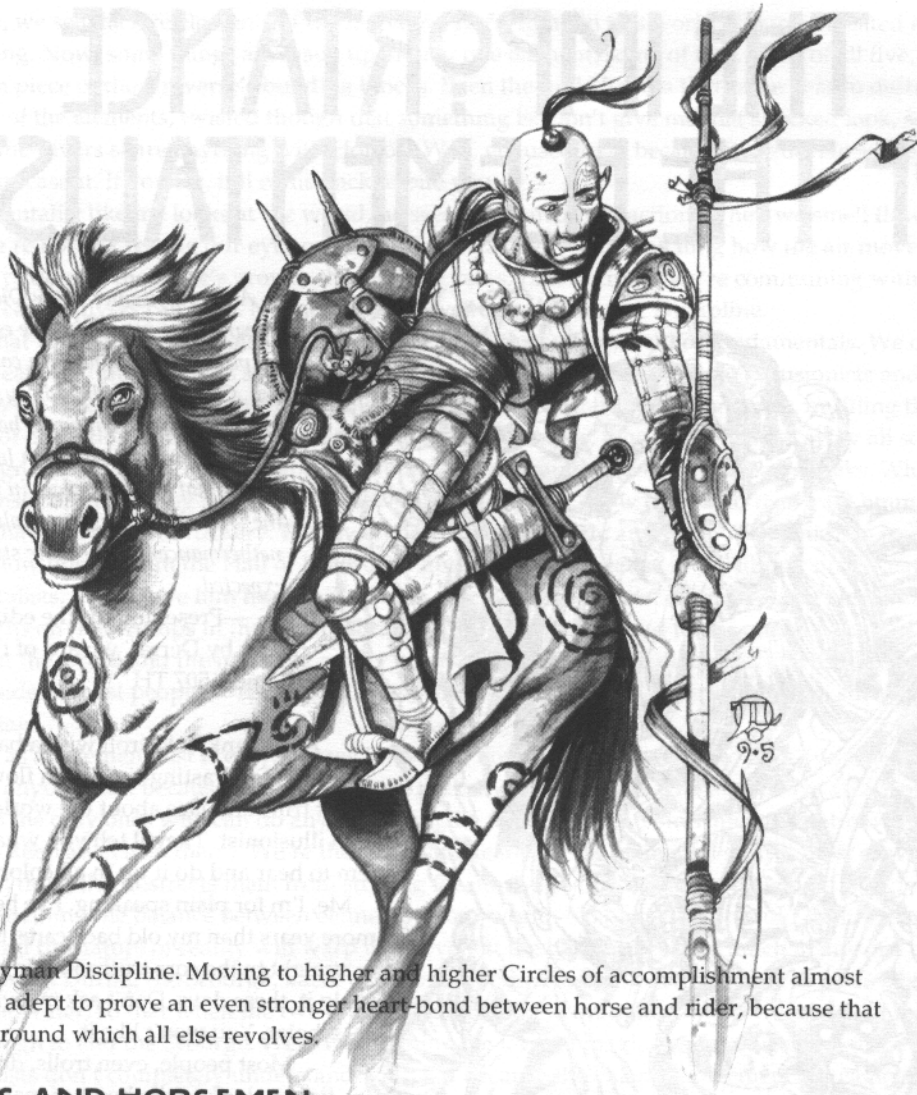
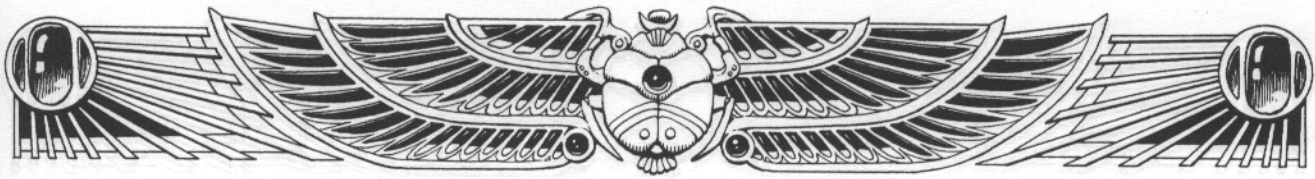
In the beginning, training exercises increase the heart-bond between horse and rider. Games of hide and seek, in which the rider must sense where her horse has gone, are a favorite method of mine. In teaching the two younglings to work together as a team, many teachers blindfold rider and then horse in turn, so that each learns to rely on the senses of the other while in motion. Beginning with simple circles on lead ropes, the young adept learns to use legs, seat, and hands in conjunction with her mind to guide her mount, while the mount learns to send her own thoughts back to the adept. It is a delicate and wondrous time of learning for both!

Most cavalymen and their mounts benefit from the bond partly because we complement each other. Both Caliph and my lost Dancer are high-spirited and almost reckless, whereas I am serious-minded and calculating. Our differences cause disagreements at times—as Caliph's snorts testify—but we balance each other's weaknesses admirably.

Once the bond between them is firm, the pair learns more difficult riding and fighting techniques. Fighting skills vary from region to region, race to race, and regiment to regiment. Both horse and rider are always taught to fight; the adept with any one of a number of weapons, and the horse with hooves, teeth, and body. If fierceness can be lyrical, it is so when a cavalryman and his mount engage in battle. They move together as one, using their weapons in a dance of deadly grace.

After a time, the novice adept can truly enter the ranks of our Discipline by performing a certain karma ritual. She plants a target in the earth, then gallops away from it in random patterns for several minutes. Then she blindfolds herself and must return to the target, seeing her way solely through her mount's eyes. A new pair who completes this ritual is welcomed by their fellows into the proud First





WELL-LOVED TALES TOLD AROUND MANY A CAVALRY'S CAMPFIRES CONCERN THE ORK YANOCK THE CALLOUSED AND HIS GREAT HORSE, THE WIND. IN ALL VERSIONS I HAVE HEARD, YANOCK AND THE WIND WERE TWO OF THE FIRST BEINGS TO EMERGE FROM THE EARTH TOWARD THE END OF THE SCOURGE. TIRED OF LIVING TRAPPED WITHIN THEIR KAER'S WALLS, THE TWO AGREED TO JOURNEY FOR NINE DAYS TOWARD EACH OF THE FOUR WINDS. IF THEY SURVIVED, THEY WOULD REPORT TO THE KAER THAT THE END OF THE SCOURGE HAD COME. THE ADVENTURES OF YANOCK AND THE WIND DURING THEIR JOURNEYS HAVE SPAWNED LEGENDS MORE NUMEROUS THAN THE HAIRS OF A HORSE'S MANE, BUT IN THE END THEY RETURN TRIUMPHANT TO THEIR KAER.

—MERROX

Circle of the cavalrystriker Discipline. Moving to higher and higher Circles of accomplishment almost always requires an adept to prove an even stronger heart-bond between horse and rider, because that tie is the linchpin around which all else revolves.

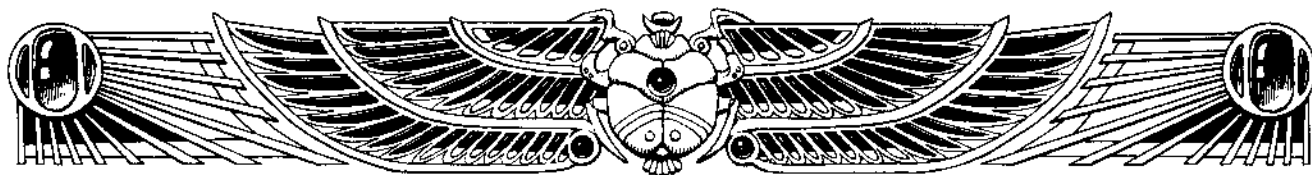
OF SOLDIERS AND HORSEMEN

Certain cavalrymen choose to set aside certain facets of the Discipline in order to hone other skills to the finest possible point. Many cavalrymen feel such limited focus is unwise, but plenty take up the most common specialties of soldier and horseman.

The soldier and his mount study the arts of warfare to the exclusion of all else. A well-trained soldier pair is one of the most deadly foes an enemy will ever face. Because battle fills their souls and leaves no time for other learning, the soldier pair may fall short in riding skills not used in battle. The partners also risk succumbing to battle lust, each feeding off the other's frenzy. Such berserkers can endanger friend and foe alike until the battle fever fades.

As the soldier eschews certain particularly tricky riding skills, so the horseman forgoes the arts of war in order to ride with the greatest skill possible. A horseman and her mount can certainly defend themselves, but the consummate skill with which they move almost as one being sets these pairs apart from other cavalrymen. Horsemen often take on a second Discipline, almost always that of scout. These horsemen pairs love to travel and explore; more than to all other heroes, Barsaivians owe to horsemen-scouts our ever-growing knowledge of our land. They have been where others both long and fear to go, and have brought their knowledge back as a gift.





THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ELEMENTALIST



As a practitioner of the Discipline of wizardry, I took particular interest in the essays of those whose Disciplines have the most in common with my own. Or perhaps I should say, those I believed to have the most in common. I have since learned, as the following essay from Jedran the troll will attest, that the differences in world-view between the wizard and the elemental, illusionist and nethermancer are far more striking than I had expected.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

As a cranky old troll with a bad back, I've little patience for wasting time with flowery words. You want frills and lace about the world, about magic, go to an illusionist. They'll tell you whatever you want them to hear and do it up in all colors of the rainbow.

Me, I'm for plain speaking. I've been an elemental for more years than my old back cares to remember, and I see straight to the core truths in things. Almost can't help it, these days. Don't ask me what I see in you, scholar. You won't like it.

Most people, even trolls, don't take enough time to look to the heart of matters. When you boil all the world down to what's what, every single thing in it is made up of the five elements.

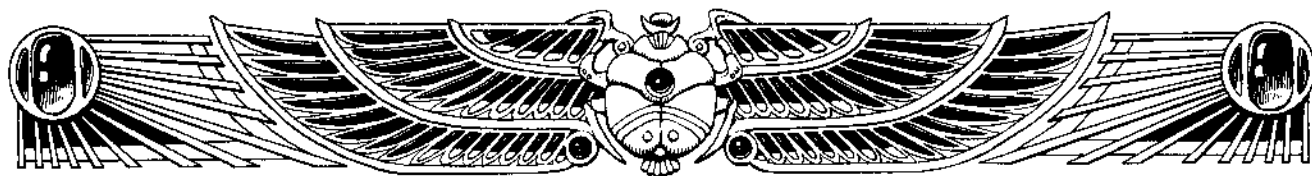
Oh, but I'm flesh and blood, you're thinking—or stone, for any obsidimen feeling left out of this lecture—and what in Scarrin's Horns does wood, air, fire, water and earth have to do with flesh and blood? Plenty. You have water in your blood, earth in

your bones, air in your lungs, fire in your heart, and wood in your spine. Not literally, of course, but it's there just the same. If you were an elemental, you'd understand that. But you're not. So bend your ears my way, scholar, because old Jedran's going to tell you what it's like to know the elements in your heart and mind as well as your bones.

HOW THE ELEMENTALIST SEES THE WORLD

Most folk see the world as a blurred jumble of sights and sounds, tastes and smells. They sense a hundred thousand things in a hundred thousand ways and label them all "different," without understanding that there really isn't all that much difference between any of them. Elementalists see the world much more clearly. When we look at plants and people,





stones and flowers, we see the five elements of the Universe. Everything in this world of ours is created from the five elements. Everything. Now, some things are made up of only one element, some of two, some of all five, but every blessed thing holds its own piece of the Universe's building blocks. Even the foul Horrors that came near to destroying our world contain something of the elements, twisted though that something is! Don't give me that shocked look, scholar. Don't like the notion that Name-givers share anything with Horror? Well, get used to it, because it's true. No sense hiding from truth just because it's unpleasant. If you try, it'll come back to bite you.

When an elementalist like me looks at the world, he sees the elements in action. When we smell flowers or gaze at a rock formation, we're not just resting our eyes on something pleasing. We're watching how the air moves the pollen, or contemplating the pattern of the stone's growth through the years. Lots of times, we're communing with an elemental spirit, which most Name-givers can't see. No matter what, we're practicing our Discipline.

Do you see what I'm getting at, scholar? Elementalists move through a world of fundamentals. We can't escape the truths of life and death that the elements spell out, and we don't care to try. Leave that to illusionists and other ostrich-headed folk. If they want to cover their world and their senses in layer after layer of pretense, muffling themselves and others in blankets of deception, they're welcome to it. But to elementalists, who strive to strip away all sorts of eyewash, the whole idea is repugnant. We won't drown ourselves in drink or get caught up in a magician's tricks. Where's the pleasure in tricking your senses or in shutting them down? How can you see and know the world that way, hmmm?

Elementalists have no need for trickery. Reality is complicated enough, and we love the puzzles it sets us. Go ahead—ask one of your fellow librarians in the Hall of Records to give you every treatise in the library on the nature of reality written by elementalists. You'll give him heart failure with a demand like that! Certain aspiring elementalists I know have spent several months on their rumps in the Great Library poring over scrolls and tomes on the nature of a single element. Our curiosity about the world and the nature of reality colors our dealings with elemental spirits, those peculiar beings that live just the other side of most people's "reality." I'll speak more of them later—but not until I'm sure you've got at least some of the essentials.

I can't say life as an elementalist is easy. But we know just how important we are to Barsaive and we won't leave our task to be done by anyone else. Because elementalists are the only Name-givers who are always aware of reality's true nature, we are also the only ones who can do anything with the five elements from which the entire world is built (and the only ones who can keep an eye on them). We're the ones who deal with the elemental spirits, most of whom care little for Name-givers or anything that distracts them from striving for more power for their own element. We do these things for a vital purpose: maintaining the balance between elements in our world. No Name-giver could exist without the presence of all five elements, and the nature of reality will warp if we ever let the balance veer too much in any one direction.

And another thing. During the Scourge, kaers with copies of the *Book of Tomorrow* knew to place a ball of True Earth over a bowl of True Water, so that when the two touched and turned to mud they'd know the level of magic in the world had fallen low enough to end the Scourge. Well, we all know the level of magic has held steady at just above that mark, and even we elementalists don't completely understand why. But because the balance of elements must hold the key to answering this question, every elementalist takes it as his duty to learn more about elemental balance and its meaning for Barsaive.

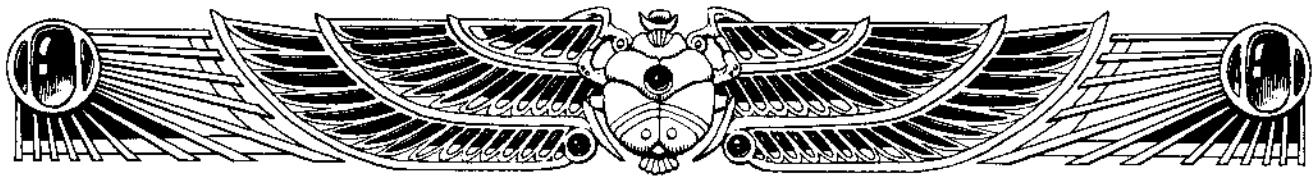
We practice our Discipline nearly every waking moment, and we must regularly speak with the elemental spirits. Not an easy thing, scholar, to switch from communicating with spirits to talking with other Name-givers. I'm telling you now why elementalists seem so odd to ignorant folk. When we talk to the air, stick our hands in the fire, or blurt out bits of what sounds like nonsense, our actions make perfect sense to us in our dual awareness of spirit and flesh. Just as orichalcum is the inanimate manifestation of the elements in balance, so are we its living manifestation.

We use the symbol of the five-pointed star, which represents a perfect balance among the five elements, to remind ourselves to honor all the elements to keep our world safe. So that we are consciously aware of the importance of balance (it is always prominent in our hearts), we use the five-pointed star in many of our rituals, speak of it in our proverbs, even embroider it on our robes. Watch for elementalists wearing and using distorted or misshapen stars, though. They may signal a Horror's taint.

ON THE NEED FOR BALANCE

Our world requires the elements to remain in balance, lest the nature of reality change. Some of my fellows tell me that the balance of the five elements somehow affects the ebb and flow of magic. If so, the key to lessening or even preventing another Scourge may well belong to a lock within the elementalists' grasp. Now there's a notion, eh, scholar? Keeping a





balance among the five elements sometimes gets difficult. In order to work our magic best, we need the aid of different elemental spirits, and each of them wants us to favor its element in exchange for its help! I've lost count of how many times an air elemental has demanded that I not cast any earth spells for a year and a day, or a wood elemental insisted that I cease casting fire spells. But if I agree to these demands, I stop balancing my use of elemental magics. And then I'm in sore trouble.

Whenever an elemental adept favors weaving the spells of any one element, or stops weaving one element's spells, the balance within his own spirit tips out of whack. If the imbalance becomes critical enough, the adept may even lose the knack of using certain elements in his spells! An adept who favors or ignores one element too much will suffer the consequences. I knew a young windling adept who favored air spells above all others, and rarely honored fire magic. Soon, the poor little wisp of a thing could only think clearly while in flight, and he lost all the energy and passion that fire brings to life. He was constantly exhausted and depressed, and ceased to care much about anything. Lucky for him, he managed to re-balance himself over a period of several months, but the effort cost him most of his remaining strength.

Now that you bring it to mind, there is one curious exception to all that. Elementalists who openly acknowledge favoritism toward a certain element don't suffer for it as others of us do, though they have their own peculiarities. I'll speak more of that later.

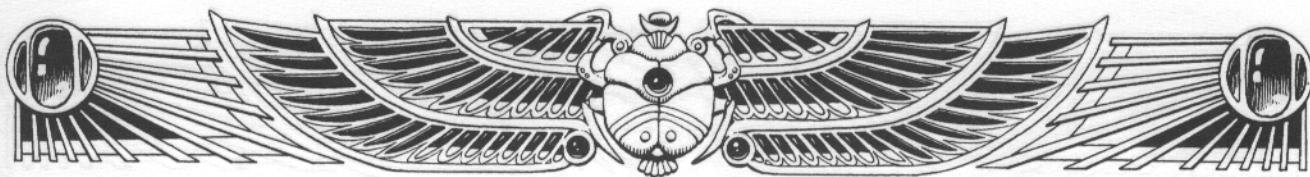
I can tell by your face that you don't understand why an unbalanced elemental is so bad for anyone except the poor fool himself. Well, I'll tell you. We have a saying: "As the elemental goes, so goes the world." Ever hear of the Great Mountain, or the Great Tree? Those are symbols we commonly use to describe and represent the world. As a troll, I prefer the Great Mountain, though elves and humans and the lizard-men prefer the Tree symbol. I'll give you both, as I can't guess what ragtag assortment of folk will end up reading this. Don't want anyone to feel left out, after all, though I doubt most of you bookish types and paper shufflers will understand half of what I've said. The Great Mountain has its stony roots in the earth, its slopes bear wood and the water of a thousand cold streams, its peak is air, and its heart is fire. The Great Tree also has roots of earth, a trunk of wood, branches of fire, and leaves of smoke—that's air, for the ignorant—and the water of life runs through every vein of it. All the elements are there, scholar—all of them, in perfect balance, make up the fabric of reality. Throw off that balance and you've got trouble worse than a Horror breathing its foul stench on the back of your neck! And because we elementalists live so close to the heart of reality, and strengthen or weaken the elements by our actions, an unbalanced elemental means an unbalanced part of the Great Mountain.

I've seen it happen myself. Some silly fool of a novice elemental came close to washing Urupa into the Aras Sea because he didn't know enough about what he was doing. An elf, he was, who loved water best of all the elements. He also loved greenery, and thought it a crying shame that all Barsaive wasn't covered in trees and underbrush and what-not. He happened to be traveling in the arid lands between Urupa and the Thunder Mountains, the part just before you run into the lush delta country, and he decided to grow an oak forest for some local villagers because it would be pretty. Pretty, of all things! So he cast water spell after water spell, drawing on the water of the Serpent River and far-away Lake Ban. He got armies of delighted water elementals to make rainstorm after rainstorm for him, until the land near the village was awash in water. The oak seedlings sprouted, sure enough—but he'd thrown the balance of elements in the region so far off kilter that the storms wouldn't stop. The river and lake waters grew higher and higher, and the terrible floods all but drowned the delta near Urupa. There was water up to my waist in most of the city's streets that year. Silly fool drowned most of the village's crops, too, which consisted of local plants that thrived on the meager water they customarily received. And what did he leave them with? A fine stand of completely inedible young oak trees! You see the trouble caused by imbalance?

OF ELEMENTAL SPIRITS

Contrary to the belief of any number of ignoramuses wandering around Barsaive, elemental spirits are not simple-minded, easily bullied serfs who come running at the beck and call of any wet-behind-the-ears novice elemental. Elemental spirits are extraordinarily independent beings, and I've never met a single one who thought itself inferior to Name-givers. Truth be told, I've had more than a few arguments with spirits who claim that we Name-givers are confused and pathetic creatures whose patterns are all mucked up in a wild mishmash of elements we don't understand. The antics of certain of my children lend weight to such assertions, but I see both viewpoints as mistaken. We Name-givers are not superior to elemental spirits just because we're complicated beings, nor are they superior to us by virtue of their simplicity.





The second mistake most often made about elemental spirits is the variety in existence. There are a lot more than the five or six everyone may think they know—hundreds of them share our world with us. The most common are spirits of earth, air, fire, water and wood, but I've also met flower spirits, mud spirits and hearth spirits, to name just a few. And I've read or heard of hundreds more.

Elementalists treat with these spirits, even making friends of them on occasion. Dealing with them successfully, though, is much more difficult than most of you ignorant folk realize. We can see straight to the heart of reality, but we don't live there. Elemental spirits do. The reality they understand and the one we understand are two different places, and sometimes that gets in the way. Many a time, a simple misunderstanding by an elementalist or a spirit sends the spirit off in a snit before we've even finished talking to it.

Each type of element, and each spirit, has its own peculiarities. An elementalist needs to keep firmly in mind that most elemental spirits *want* to aid us in our magical workings, because our efforts often extend the spirit's influence in the world. Even a hint of arrogance in our behavior, however, makes these proud beings angry. They've a sense of personal honor touchier than a troll's and that's saying something! So we hammer it into every apprentice's brain that he must respect the spirits, no matter how they act in return! "He did it first" is no excuse for making an elemental spirit your enemy, and possibly upsetting the balance into the bargain.

Elemental spirits want us to increase their particular element because the amount of a given element in existence gives the spirits of that element more power. Fortunately, some powerful spirits with a larger view of things act as a counterweight to the narrower-sighted ones, striving to keep the elements in balance as the others strive to dominate through their own element. You're looking confused, scholar, but that's my best explanation. Seems perfectly clear to me. And because you said you didn't want this becoming a magical-theory tome, I suggest you ferret out *Of Elemental Balance*. Nice piece of work, that.

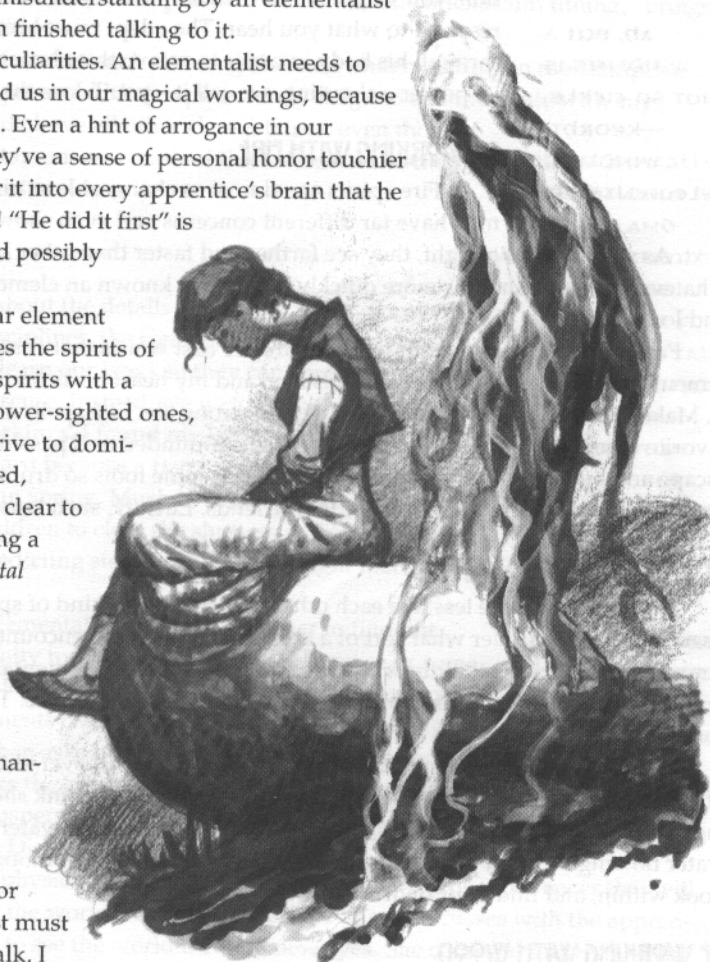
No elementalist worth his salt, sweat, breath, or passion goes long without weaving the power of the elements into spells. Each element has its own nature, which the elementalist must know in his bones if he's to use the magic at all. We learn to know each element by channeling its energy through our own bodies, because the body remembers better than the mind! (And my apprentices wonder why my old back hurts so much! Humph.)

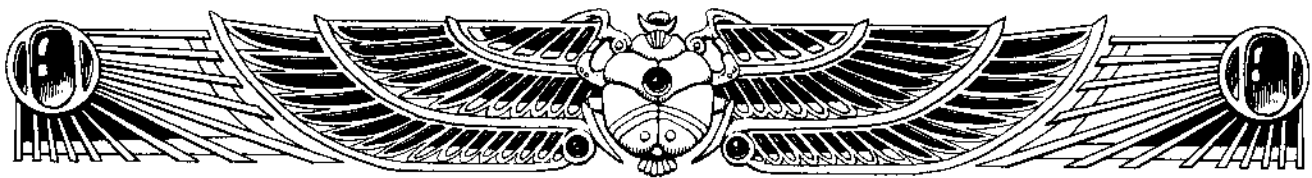
Remember too, that many spells are woven of two or more elements. To wield them properly, the elementalist must understand each element involved. When I cast Plant Talk, I know that the element of wood is present in the plant's strength, and that the element of air is present in the plant's and my own speech. Both send their energies through my old bones. Youngsters are too likely to forget such things.

OF WORKING WITH EARTH

Catching the attention of earth spirits requires deep meditation, because these beings communicate at the roots of our own awareness. They also think slowly, compared to most Name-givers save obsidimen. Achieving that slowness of mind is a difficult trick for young adepts especially, because they're so easily distracted. Urgent needs are hardest to convey to the earth spirit, because urgency and slowness just don't mix. In truth, many Name-givers find it difficult to think at all while in deep trance, though obsidimen have a real knack for it.

When casting with earth, the elementalist must draw upon heart and bone. Your mind must be as implacable and unchanging as earth while you weave the element through your body. If you falter or change your intent while wielding earth spells, the threads of your spell may well shift away from you like dust in the wind.





OF WORKING WITH AIR

Air spirits are light-minded, intelligent, and as changeable as spring breezes. One minute they love you like a brother, the next they're convinced you mean to betray them. Patience and clear speaking are needed when dealing with these spirits, as is a sense of humor. Air spirits also enjoy strange jokes, and often practice them on their elemental friends. Windlings have what might be considered an affinity for air spirits, being of like temperament.

Funny enough, air is the element of communication when used in spells. Casting an air spell is like holding a conversation; you've got to know exactly what you want to say, but you've also got to listen sharp and respond to what you hear. The adept must hearken to his own senses and the movements of air through his body in order to weave this element in magic. If you try to grab hold of the air and force its power—shouting, we call it—you'll lose the threads of the spell.

AB, BUT A
WINDLING IS
NOT SO FICKLE.
—KEORHT,
WINDLING
ELEMENTALIST

OF WORKING WITH FIRE

Fire spirits are almost as changeable as air spirits, though less suspicious. The same fire spirit may have far different concerns and even show a far different temperament from one meeting to the next. As spirits made of light, they see farther and faster than other kinds of spirits, and often allow or deny the elemental whatever aid he wishes far more quickly. I've never known an elemental who successfully lied to or tricked a fire spirit, and I wouldn't care to try.

Passion, hunger, and truth revealed are the first words that come to my mind when I think of the element of fire. I remember what fire's wild energy feels like, and my heart beats harder and faster in anticipation. Intoxicating, that's what it is. Makes you feel warm all over, like a good strong ale. Fire spells are not for the weak-willed, which is why they're a favorite of mine. To wield this element, be single-minded and passionate about what you want. Otherwise, the fire will escape and burn whoever is in its path. I've seen some fools so drunk by the power of fire at their fingertips that they lose control of it and harm themselves or their friends. Luckily, such lapses are rare.

OF WORKING WITH WATER

Spirits of water are less like each other than any other kind of spirit. I've dealt with no small number of them over the years, and I still wonder what sort of a creature I'm going to encounter every time. The only constant I've ever noticed among water spirits is their unwavering confidence. Other elementals of my acquaintance tell me that water elementals hold back more and bargain more shrewdly than other elementals. They seem to particularly love t'skrang, for obvious reasons.

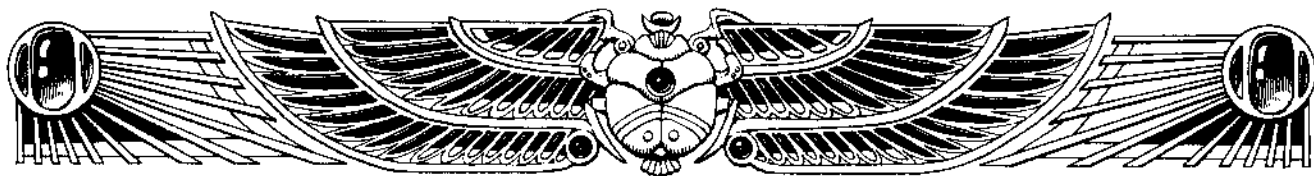
Every elemental must find his own way to wield this ever-shifting element. An old t'skrang colleague of mine speaks of the "everchanging-changelessness" of water spells, and I think she's got the right of it. Water is a paradox, always changing but always the same. The best advice I can give for casting water spells is to work from your heart, open yourself to the water flowing through your veins, and to flow with whatever emotions or thoughts fill your empty self with each casting. Look within, and find your own answer.

OF WORKING WITH WOOD

Wood spirits vary from tree to tree. I prefer oak spirits because their solid strength reminds me of my own people, but that's my bias. Wood elementals are the most bound to the world of we Name-givers, and so bespeaking one isn't all that different from talking to an elf or a t'skrang or a human. Wood spirits drive the hardest bargains, though. They're as unyielding as their element can be. Unless an elemental can prove that his actions will somehow aid the wood elemental, it is almost impossible to get help from the pesky thing without promising to do it a service. I know one young elemental, desperate for a wood spirit's aid, who spent the next year and a day planting acorns and other nuts! And yes, wood spirits do seem to prefer working with elves. As to blood elves and wood elementals, some claim the wood spirits prefer these twisted excuses for Name-givers. Others say most wood and other elementals refuse to deal with the thorn-pierced ones.

Wood is the stuff of growth and life. When an elemental stands near young saplings in the spring, he should feel their exuberant growth as surely as he feels his heartbeat. When casting spells with wood, remember growth and the goodness of change. An adept who has grown too comfortable with unchanging patterns of thought or action soon loses his touch for casting spells relying on this element.





OF THE PLACE OF ORICHALCUM IN THE BALANCE

Orichalcum holds special significance for we elementalists. This magical substance symbolizes the world in perfect balance. Not for us the worry of you other folk over how much coin a piece of orichalcum or a True element can bring you—we see such things as objects for study, not gain. My children roll their eyes and argue with me every time I bury pieces of orichalcum in the earth or within the bole of a tree, or otherwise “lose” them. I pay them no heed. By such acts, I am honoring one of the elements without which orichalcum could not exist. This practice, which we call “orichalcum tithing,” brings us goodwill from the spirits of the element to which we tithe.

Though I have never met one, some adepts are said to attain such amazing skill and understanding in the Discipline that they can bespeak orichalcum spirits. Tremendously powerful, these spirits rarely deign to communicate with any Name-giver. The so-called “orichalcum adept” is honored above all other elementalists, even those of a higher Circle. They are said to wear an orichalcum pentagram as a mark of their status. As to their specific abilities, none save the orichalcum adepts know what they are.

ON TRAINING AN ELEMENTALIST

Though we elementalists tend to be close-mouthed about the details of our Discipline, we always keep an eye out for new recruits. Unlike certain other Disciplines, the elementalist Discipline doesn't tend to attract hordes of would-be practitioners eager to learn our ways so they can accomplish feats of daring. The Discipline is too subtle for that sort of nonsense. Instead, we watch non-adepts for signs that they respect the elements or are sensitive to their workings. I found my latest apprentice, a young innkeeper's daughter, when she insisted I not travel onward because a fierce storm was coming. She said this even though the skies were as clear as a mountain spring. Much to my surprise, the innkeeper actually heeded his daughter's warning, setting his children to close the shutters and lock the animals in the barn. He told me the child had a knack for predicting storms, and I knew right then she was an elementalist born.

Having set his sights on a potential apprentice, the elementalist talks to him or her to find out how the apprentice-to-be sees the world and his own affinity for the elements. Weather-sense or some such isn't enough by itself; an apprentice must be able to learn the Discipline. Often, an adept places the would-be apprentice where one or another of the elements clearly holds sway; they go walking in a rainstorm together, or stand near a bonfire. The adept then asks his companion what he sees and feels. If the answers are promising, the adept formally asks the candidate if he wishes to become an apprentice. My young apprentice heard unintelligible whispers and felt a cold breeze in her hair when a storm was coming, so I knew she was well-suited to the Discipline.

The apprentice starts learning at once, thrown into a physically and mentally exhausting array of experiences that will help her sense and understand how the elements work in the world. Along with this, the adept discusses with the apprentice the nature of reality. Gradually, the apprentice learns to see the world through new eyes. She comes to understand the balance between the elements, and how to manipulate them to her advantage without doing the world harm. She also learns about the elemental spirits and the grave consequences of “twisting the pentagram,” or purposely working to pull the elements permanently out of line.

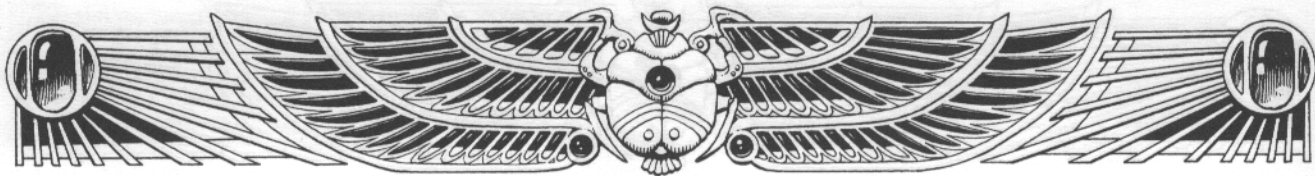
Once an apprentice demonstrates sufficient knowledge and ability to reach the First Circle, her most difficult training begins. As we say, “True learning comes by doing.” Elementalist adepts learn a number of techniques and spells that are theirs alone, and so I cannot discuss such things in this essay. Not my secrets to reveal, are they? I can tell you that rituals play a particularly important part in the elementalist Discipline.

ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RITUAL

Ritual is a private, personal, and very important aspect of any elementalists' existence. Only ritual can truly open our eyes and minds, and only continued practice of rituals lets us maintain our unique ability to touch both our own world and the realm of the spirits. Rituals are the lenses that allow us to shift our vision from one world to another.

THESE SO-CALLED
ORICHALCUM
SPIRITS AND
ORICHALCUM
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IS WRITTEN.
—MERROX

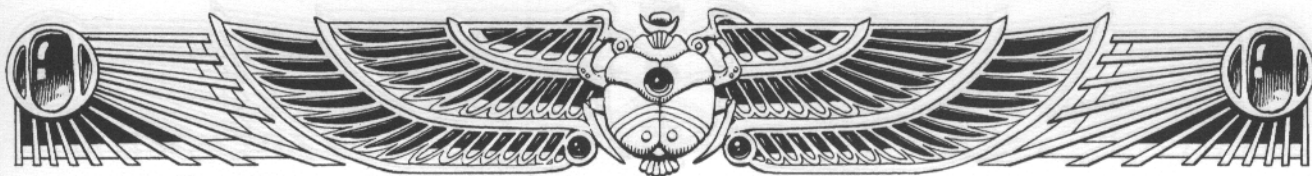




In his karma ritual, each adept brings each of the elements into his heart and sinews. Boiling water on a fire, mixing the water and earth to make mud, painting the mud on our faces with a wooden stick, and letting the wind dry the mud in patterns, allows us to experience each element in turn. Often, the patterns made by the wind in the drying mud show us patterns of power to embroider on our robes. I have also heard of adepts whose karma ritual warned them of a temporary but grave imbalance in the local elements, which they were able to keep from becoming permanent. If ever the breeze blows out my fire, or the water in my pot boils over and burns my hand, I will know trouble is nigh.

Elementalists conduct numerous rituals. The simplest to perform (but often the most difficult to set up) are the rituals of Circle advancement. Adepts attempting to reach Fifth Circle and beyond have the greatest trouble, because of the sheer complexity of the task they must accomplish. These elementalists must demonstrate their power in front of an elder adept and a number of spirits equal to the desired Circle. But the more elemental spirits are present, the more chances there are for disputes among them that can keep the ritual from happening. Innumerable elementalists have been stymied by feuding elemental spirits, or their own short-sighted treatment of one. Other difficulties include convincing enough spirits to attend the ritual without too much fuss, and inevitably at least one of them will demand that the elemental perform a service for them in exchange. Most elementalists consider these services part of the Discipline, of course. As long as the elemental does not demand something that might throw off the balance of the elements, these services are of as much value to the adept as to the spirit.





OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW ONE ELEMENT

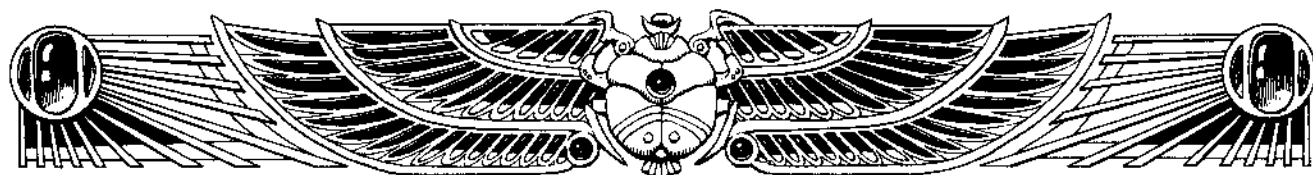
Given what I've said about the importance of elemental balance, it may surprise readers to learn that some elementalists adepts confine their studies and workings to only one of the five elements. Granted, most of us frown on such a choice as possibly irresponsible, but it seems that elementalists who narrow their paths in this way *follow*, rather than cause, shifts in elemental power. For example, water elementalists seem to crop up by the dozens when water becomes scant. Some of us wonder how long it will be before these single-element practitioners pull the balance awry, but even I have to admit we've discovered no evidence that they'll cause that kind of harm. Why not, I can't imagine—but then, the world has a few secrets from us all.

One who chooses a single element can still cast spells using other elements and can still bespeak the spirits of those elements. However, they lose a certain amount of ability in working with elements other than their chosen preference. In that one, they excel. Though an elementalist of any race can choose any element, obsidimen tend to prefer earth, windlings air, elves wood and t'skrang water. Orks, humans, and trolls rarely favor one element over another, though certain sky raider clans are thick with air elementalists. Troll stories say these air elementalists helped several kaers of sky raiders to keep their skills sharp during the Scourge, when the raiders were forced underground along with the rest of us.

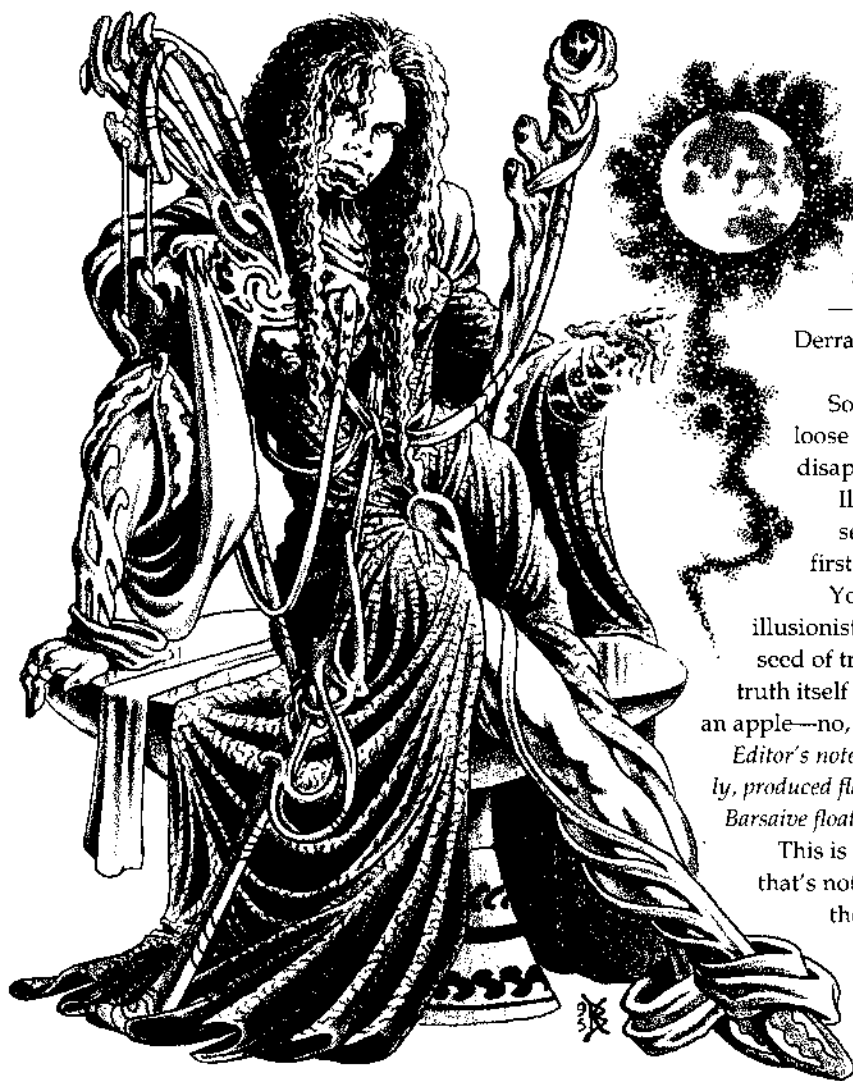
ON THOSE ADEPTS KNOWN AS ENCHANTERS

Certain elementalists follow the path of the enchanter, focusing on manipulating elements physically and magically. Enchanters create magical items whose power and beauty are second to none. They have unsurpassed skill at creating items from one or more True elements, infusing such objects with elemental energies. A number of the magical items in Barsaive were made by enchanters, a fair lot of them humans. Every Name-giver race has its enchanters, but humans seem to like this path best of all. They love things, humans do, especially adornments. Perhaps that explains their enchantment with enchanters! (You're not laughing, scholar. Didn't you like my joke?) Many enchanters also learn the weaponsmith Discipline, and can create amazingly powerful weapons. Almost all the most famous magical weapons are the work of such adepts.





AN ILLUSIONIST REVEALS THE TRUTH



The following are the words of Illianstra, illusionist from the city of Urupa. Her first explanations of her Discipline troubled me, but as she spoke further I realized that her heart is as sound and true as any wizard's. Many of my fellows who believe otherwise—as many do, for prejudice between magicians is shockingly common—would do well to read this text and revise their opinions a little.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by
Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

So you've come to see what secrets you can pry loose from my wagging tongue. Well, you won't be disappointed!

Illusionists know the greatest secret of all: the secret of truth. To know what illusion is, you must first know what's real. Understand?

Your eyes tell me you believe the lies told about illusionists. That's no matter. Remember, every lie has its seed of truth—though more in some than others—and the truth itself often lies. Puzzled? Consider an onion—or no, an apple—no, a—oh, here, look.

Editor's note: At this point Illianstra waved her hands dramatically, produced flashes of light from her palms, and created a vision of Barsaive floating in the air before us.

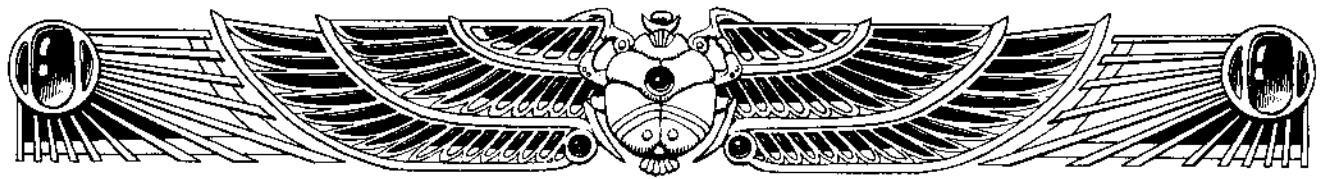
This is our world as we see it. Well, as you see it. But that's not the point. Look closer. See, there and there and there? That darkness lurking in the hills, those shadows washing out of forgotten kaers? Those are the Horrors. You don't think about them; most Barsaivians don't. They'd not know a Horror if it walked up and pinched them on the cheeks. Why? Because they've gotten too

used to trusting their senses to tell them the "truth" of what they see. And that, my friend, is utter nonsense. In fact, it's dangerous nonsense.

When we lived in the kaers, no one dared trust something as faulty as their own senses. No kaer allowed any one person to decide what was true, and therefore how to live, because the Horrors can so easily fool our senses. Illusionists reminded the people of Barsaive how easily they could be gulled, and kept them vigilant.

Some say our Discipline began in the kaers—maybe so. I've read ancient tales of illusionists entertaining the people in the kaers, creating great plays for them with magic. Men and women alike fainted at the sight of phantasmal dragons rushing toward them, jaws dripping with flame, or cheered at the spectacle of the hero slaying the Horror and saving the kaer





from destruction. But the tales also say that the people picked apart the illusionist's work for days afterward, uncovering its inner workings through consensus about what was real and what was not. That is the true purpose of my Discipline: not merely to entertain, but to instruct.

We still teach what is real and what is fantasy, though we often receive scant thanks for it. Our illusions and glammers surround us wherever we go, casting bold images before us. Some fools call us charlatans, and claim we do nothing more than use our magic to make a quick bit of silver off the gullible and feeble-minded. Not so! Oh, we do earn something for our "performances," but not nearly as much as some would have you believe. Most of us do what we do because it must be done. We will not cease trying to teach you people how to see, though you despise us for it.

I suppose our methods do paint a picture of deception. It's true we often use illusion to hide our faces and pass ourselves off as something we are not. But we are not common thieves! If coin changes hands because of our illusions, or if others are foolish enough to pay far too much money for spells in which they put far too much stock, is that our fault? Are we to blame? No! We do these things so that others will learn to look closely at all things magical. Magic can be beneficial, but can also pose grave danger. We left the kaers, but we have not left behind all the dangers from which they sheltered us. Horrors still roam the land at will, and we illusionists fear that our fellow Name-givers may have forgotten how subtle these monsters truly are. So when we work illusions that may cause pain or cost someone money, we do so for the greater benefit of all. Through our actions we try to teach others to see as we do, to realize that all of our world is but a thin veil hiding reality in the illusory folds of Truth.

You hear my words with skepticism, as well you should. Questioning face value is a sign of a healthy mind. Also, I admit that some of my kind are more than a little self-serving. There is the seed of truth in your doubting! But I challenge you to find even one illusionist who has ever deliberately used his craft to harm another Name-giver. You won't find one. If our magic causes harm, it is only the harm that other people allow to fall on themselves! If you believe harm should befall you from an illusionist's spells, then it certainly will. If not, our magical workings will not disturb even a hair on your head.

I know that to most people this attitude makes it look as if we illusionists shift responsibility for our own actions to others, but I don't intend it so. I have spoken the truth as I know it. But then, the heart of illusionist teaching tells us that truth isn't always what it seems. ...

THE TALE OF ODU FRATAN

For your better understanding of the worth and power of illusion, I offer this tale. When I was much younger, having just reached the Fourth Circle of my Discipline, I came to live for a time in a small village at the western edge of the Liaj Jungle. The little town was always on the verge of collapse, and I used my talents constantly to keep the people from despair. I learned that the town had begun as a way-station for the caravans that folk were sure would soon begin to pass through with the re-opening of the high roads, but no one came when it became common knowledge that travel through the Liaj was nothing short of suicide. Without the coin and goods that the caravans would bring, the town withered. The villagers scraped a livelihood however they could, and the going had been much harder than they had expected.

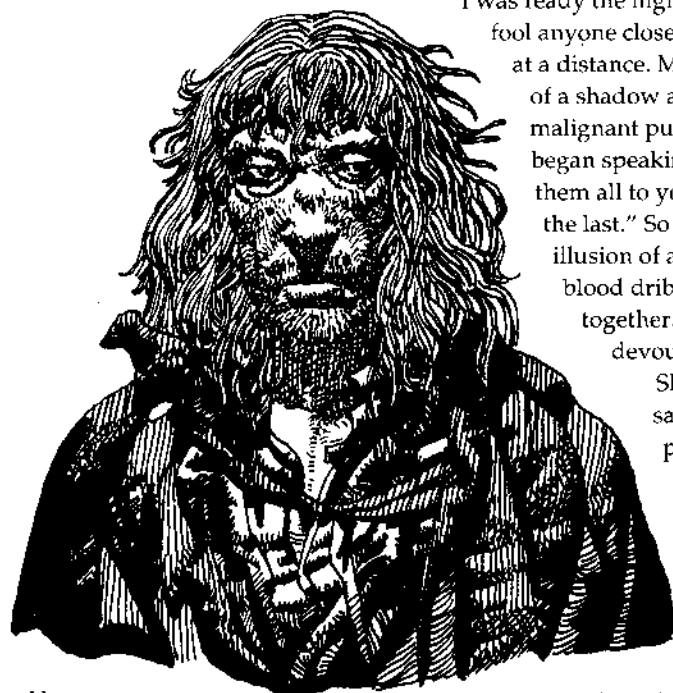
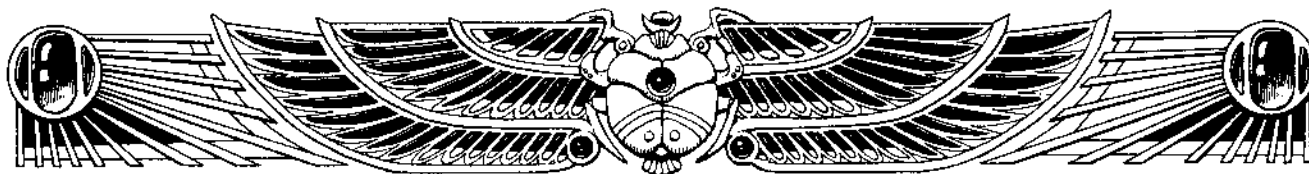
Not long after I arrived, Odu Fratan pulled his wagon into town. A tall, strapping human with scraggly hair and a livid scar down his right arm, Fratan doled out food and other sorely needed supplies from the covered back of the wagon. He asked for nothing in return, save that the people listen to his counsel and abide by his advice while he stayed in the town. He claimed his stay would be brief, as he had business in the jungle. No one bothered to ask him the nature of his business.

I didn't much care for Fratan. Most of the townspeople thought me wary of him because he had done what I couldn't: brought them food and other necessities of life. But I knew he was an evil man, for I could practically smell the mark on him. I also knew no one would believe me if I simply said, "Don't listen to this evil man, he'll harm you." So I watched his comings and goings, and waited for a chance to show them the truth.

Odu Fratan made a trip into the jungle once every month, and each time was gone for a week or more. During one of those weeks, I convinced my neighbors to at least give me a chance to show them that Odu was up to no good. If I was wrong, I said, I'd move on and never bother them again.

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—MERROX,
MASTER OF THE
HALL OF RECORDS





ILLIANSTRA'S
PRACTICE OF
EATING NEW FOODS
IN ORDER TO
MASTER ILLUSIONS
OF TASTE, SMELL,
AND TOUCH IS
AN EXCELLENT
EXAMPLE OF
SOMETHING FEW
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THE IDEA THAT
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—MERROX

I was ready the night Odu returned. I made a simple glamour that wouldn't fool anyone close up, but would do the trick perfectly in the moonlight at a distance. My illusion was a handspan larger than a human, rising out of a shadow at the edge of the town. Covered with spikes, it oozed a malignant purple glow. As I sensed Odu Fratan cresting the rise, I began speaking to the shadowy form. "Yes, master, I have delivered them all to you," I said, in the shiveriest voice I could manage. "This is the last." So saying, out of the shadow I worked another, more lifelike illusion of a young girl. Sweat beaded my brow, and I felt a trickle of blood dribbling from my nose as I strained to hold both illusions together. Then I made the shadowy form grab the little girl and devour her in a gulp.

Shaking with fatigue, I bowed to the thing I'd made and said, "The town is yours, master. Give me the power you promised me."

Suddenly Odu charged at me, screaming and howling for blood. "They were mine," he screeched. "My master promised that if I delivered them to him, my power would reign eternal!"

The town archer shot Odu Fratan through the eye before he reached me. Our "benefactor" was the tool of a Horror, and I alone had sniffed out its taint. With the

help of my illusions, he was unmasked before he could harm anyone.

Only my illusions could have done it.

That is the power of my Discipline.

ON THE LIFE OF AN ILLUSIONIST

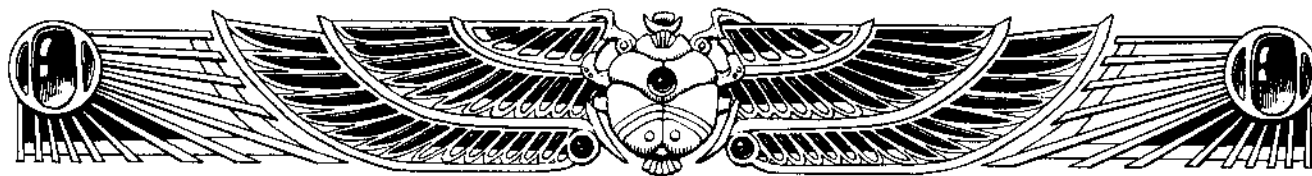
How do I spend my time? Studying, traveling and performing, and having the occasional adventure. Adventures usually prove quite enlightening, and so I go wherever they take me. I pity those magicians who spend all their time with their beaky noses shoved into the spines of moldering texts. Oh, they may understand the theory right enough, but how can anyone truly know what magic is who hasn't hastily whipped off a spell to save herself from certain doom? You can't know the truth without living in the wide world, as the saying goes. And that's as near to an absolute truth as you'll ever hear, so take heed.

I suppose I'm as much a "typical" illusionist as any, which is to say I'm about as much like another illusionist as a windling is like a troll. So in that sense, it's nonsense to speak of "the life of an illusionist." But if it will help people to understand the truth of my Discipline, I'll gladly describe a day in my life to you.

Mornings come early for followers of my Discipline, just as they do for most magically minded individuals I know. Before I even rise from my bed, I spend a few minutes looking around for illusions or changes; after all, you never know what this lovely, changeable world will throw at you next. If I'm satisfied that nothing much has changed, I perform my morning ablutions. Never you mind the details; let's just say I like to be clean and to wear my hair knotted above my head, as it is now. I can see you admire it, and I thank you.

My morning meal varies, depending on where I am. I'll try just about anything once, adding new flavors, smells, and textures to my repertoire in case I want to use them for illusions. Those three things are the hardest to create, you know. Sight and sound are incredibly simple; most people believe anything that comes through their eyes or ears. But the tongue, nose and skin are touchier, likely to pick up even the smallest mistakes. So I like to eat a lot of different things to see how they feel to these three senses. While I'm eating, I try to puzzle out a little more of the truth of the world. Not easy to





do, but I have my training to fall back on. I'll describe that later on, when it will make a little more sense to readers. I spend an hour or so every morning taking in the world around me and seeing if it all makes sense according to the rules I understand.

If I plan to travel, I spend a little time packing up and plotting a trail that won't involve hiking over mountains or through swamps (two geographical nightmares that seem to exist solely to confound travelers). If I plan to stay in one place for awhile, I poke around and find someone to talk to. Oftener than not, I discover someone who needs to look a little harder at the world around him. I can't explain how I know them when I see them—we illusionists simply sense these things. My Discipline demands that I help such people, and so I begin by working a few uncomplicated spells on him to see how he reacts. Sometimes I take a little coin from him if he seems to need an extra effort on my part. As soon as he realizes that I may be gulling him, or that something unusual is happening, I know I've succeeded in opening his eyes to the truth. Off I go, casting a few illusion spells to cover my tracks. After all, I'm no help to others if I'm running from an angry mob of good-hearted but simple-minded citizens eager to avenge a harmless bit of foolery!

If I don't run across someone who needs a truth lesson—a rare occurrence—I practice my spells somewhere out of sight, usually in my room. This practice-time allows me to perfect the little spells I use every day, and to work on the more difficult ones I use more rarely. It also allows me to study the difference between the "real" spells I know how to cast and the illusory ones. It's fascinating how these two types of spells work together, and the differences between them. That very distinction probably holds more than a few clues about the nature of the world we inhabit. That's also part of my training, so it seems like a good time to tackle that subject.

ON TRAINING AND TEACHING

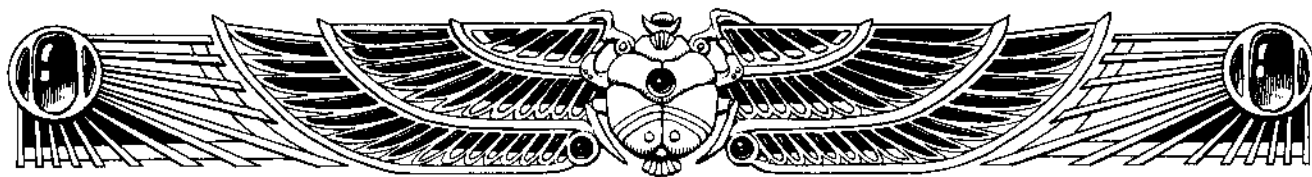
Some people, especially other magicians, seem to go out of their way to claim that illusionists have no formal training. That is simply not true, and represents one of the many falsehoods often repeated about the Discipline by those who ought to know better.

The School of Illusion—a fancy Name for our Discipline, isn't it? Quite imposing—includes three kinds of illusionists: students, teachers, and phantasms. I am a student, and so spend much time traveling across Barsaive to discover the truth for myself. I and my fellow students return home from time to time lest our travels lead us too far from the path, and during these respites from travel we spend most of our time with our teachers.

Our teachers do not lead us by the hand, as they do in some other Disciplines. They rarely tell a student anything as fact, instead confronting us with problems and questions that can guide us to a new level of awareness. All teachers encourage free thinking and a ready exchange of all ideas, no matter how strange or radical. Teachers are often called guides, because they guide the flow of our thoughts where they are naturally inclined, gently prompting us to recognize the truth of our lessons within the frame of our individual world-view rather than forcing us to see our lessons in a specific light as do many teachers of other Disciplines.

Teachers choose their illusionist apprentices long before the candidates themselves realize they have been singled out. Illusionists seek out would-be adepts who naturally possess a keener eye for what is real than most, and then test the chosen apprentice with illusions designed to distract or terrify her. My teacher chose several particularly horrifying waking nightmares with which to plague me, and I spent several days in numbed terror before I understood what I was seeing. My friends and family all became terrifying monsters; I still see them leering in my dreams from time to time if I have been badly upset. After three days, I began to notice small clues that hinted at the falseness of what I saw, and at last I managed to track down the illusions' source. When I confronted the woman who wished to be my teacher, she congratulated me. Then my training began in earnest. I believe that this is a common way for teacher and student to meet.





Training is a never-ending series of tests and illusions that can drive many a student to complete distraction. In fact, they are meant to do precisely that. The best metal requires the hottest fire, and only stringent training will make a worthwhile illusionist. Teachers often place their students in the middle of incredibly vivid, lifelike illusions, then giggle hysterically as the student blunders around in search of a way out. This is the essence of training with an illusionist. You no longer accept things as real simply because you see or hear or smell them. Instead, you test and test and test again absolutely everything before you accept its reality. Of course, one must also become very thorough and very fast at testing reality. Most illusionists excel at making accurate judgments based on small details. Without swift and accurate analysis, an illusionist's life would become a never-ending series of tiny, cautious steps in the face of possible peril. What can you possibly hope to accomplish by living that way?

Teaching our Discipline is every bit as demanding as learning it. The teacher must be several steps ahead of the pupil in order to create illusions and cast spells that the student will find nearly impossible to disbelieve. Most illusionist teachers are far more advanced than their pupils. A Third Circle swordmaster may very well be able to instruct one of First or Second Circle, but not so an illusionist. A student rarely learns anything of value from a teacher of a Circle less than three above her own level of ability; most of the time, the difference is five Circles or more. As you might guess, good teachers are in great demand. The best ones often have lists a year and a day long of students waiting for their attention. An illusionist who finds a good teacher should do everything possible to stay in his or her good graces. If you find a ghost master, so much the better; they can teach some truly extraordinary things!

Teaching is time-consuming, and a teacher rarely has time for much adventuring while instructing a pupil. Most teachers take long breaks between students in order to accomplish deeds by which they can advance in the Discipline themselves. Some illusionists prefer to give up adventuring for a few years while they teach, and then travel for a full year or more.

The beings we call phantasms are mysterious, so much so that some illusionists do not believe they exist. I am not one of these. I know phantasms exist—I have seen one. According to illusionist tradition, phantasms are members of our

Discipline who have passed beyond the constraints of bodily perception and can see the truth in everything around them. They wander throughout our world, far beyond the borders of Barsaive and even the once-mighty Theran Empire to the south. They offer perhaps the only real hope we have of ever discovering the true nature of the Horrors. I know they are real because one of them, a woman all shimmering and silvery, rescued me from the clutches of a particularly vile Horror last year. People keep telling me she was an avatar of Garlen, but I know the truth. I could see the tell-tale play of illusion magic in her silvery hair and the hem of her dress.

I know the truth.

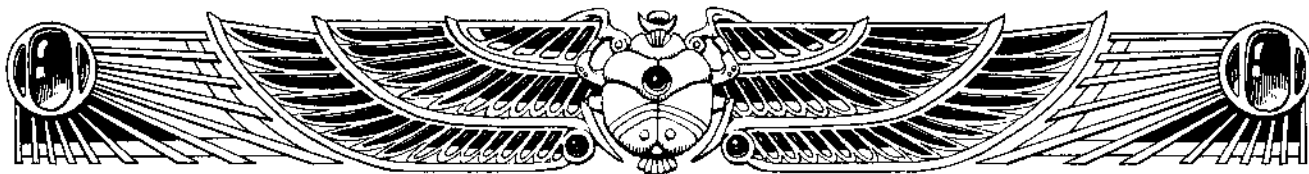
ON THE RITUALS OF ADVANCEMENT

All Disciplines have unique methods for determining when an adept is ready to proceed to the next Circle, and we illusionists are no different. The way in which we mark advancement, however, is different indeed. In most other Disciplines, an adept is given some kind of test to determine his readiness to learn more, and these tests are the same (or nearly so) for all. Staggering under the weight of tradition, these tests admit no changes, great or slight, to better suit them to the individual practitioner. Illusionists see the folly in this way of testing. Why test different students the same way? We tailor our rituals for Circle advancement to each teacher and student, and so more truly measure progress. More than one teacher may use the same form of ritual but each student learns from that ritual in a different way. So for me to speak of this ritual or that ritual would do your book no good, and certainly won't serve truth. The most I can give you is a few hints and loose patterns.

Most advancement rituals test the student's perception, requiring her to discern reality and truth from illusion and falsehood. In one of my earliest rituals, advancing from First to Second Circle, I faced two threats—one real, one illusory—and had to choose which to defend against. (I passed that test with my usual flair, of course.) Magical duels to the first blood sometimes serve as advancement rites, with elegant illusions cloaking the damaging real spells as they fly toward their target. In truth, the only limit to an illusionist's advancement ritual is the inventiveness of the teacher—and those of my Discipline are nothing if not inventive! Prospective illusionists, take heed; expect everything and nothing, and you won't be surprised.

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THE END OF THIS
VOLUME.
—DERRAT





I personally know no one who has advanced beyond the Ninth Circle, though such people certainly exist. What manner of ritual they undergo to advance so far, I can't guess, but I imagine it must be quite hazardous. It would have to be, wouldn't it, to test the discerning eye of so powerful a mage? Rumor has it that the highest levels of advancement require rituals that can only be performed by a phantasm or even a dragon. A seed of truth doubtless lives in these tales, but how much of the plant is an outright lie I cannot tell.

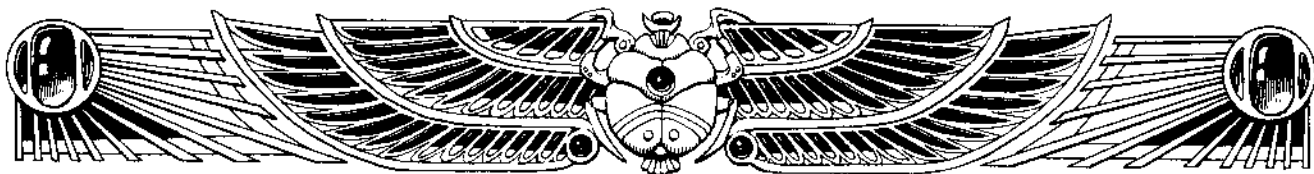
CONCERNING CHARLATANS

The charlatan is the illusionist everyone despises, especially those of us who care about our Discipline. Any real illusionist will warn you away from these despicable liars. Shortly after Barsaive's people left the kaers, certain illusionists allowed the acquisition of silver to concern them more than teaching the world to see the truth. These adepts and their dishonorable descendants continue to travel across Barsaive, bilking the gullible out of their fortunes and working "miracles" for fantastic sums of money. I am not speaking of a harmless play-illusion for which one might charge a few copper or a couple of silver coins. I speak of frauds that reduce good folk to beggars, at the very least parting them from their coin without teaching them a thing.

A charlatan possesses little or no knowledge of real magic. All his spells and talents are illusory, save those that affect himself alone. Charlatans show exceptional skill at creating illusions, but once those illusions are dispelled or disbelieved he cannot defend himself or do any harm to his angry audience.

Some charlatans have good hearts and do what they do out of simple laziness. They feel little desire to understand the truth, and prefer enrichment to enlightenment. The ignorant tend to tar all illusionists with the charlatan's brush, but as much as I protest that injustice, I urge readers of this discourse to remember that charlatans exist. Not all of them have rotted wood for hearts, though—many are much like any other Name-giver trying to keep herself in food and shelter by any means she can. So judge them with charity, and the Passion of Justice will smile on you for it.





WALKERS IN SHADOW

The following treatise is the work of the noted I'skrang nethermancer T'shan V'ruda, until recently a resident of Throal. Sadly, V'ruda had not completed the document at the time of his banishment from our kingdom, thus leaving several tantalizing hints unexplored. I have noted such omissions as they occur in the text. Though the Hall of Records adopts no official position on the veracity of the charges against V'ruda, I will permit myself to observe that future scholars will bemoan the incompleteness of this account long after all have forgotten the complicated web of accusations and counter-accusations that occasioned his departure from our kingdom.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH



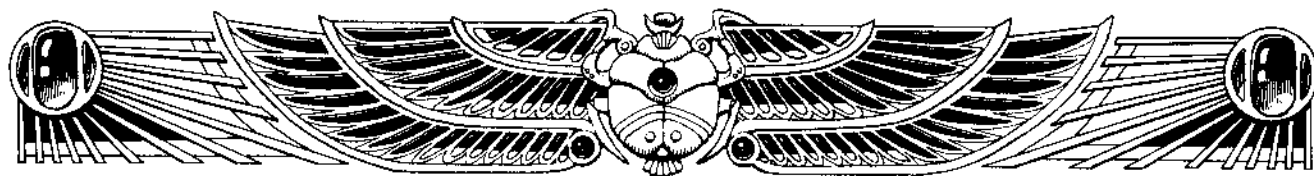
Many speak ill of the path I walk, the path of the nethermancer. My colleagues and I are regarded with distaste, unease, even violent prejudice. As is the case in any such discrimination, its roots lie in ignorance. Simply because we inquire into the worlds beyond our own, we are suspected of consorting with Horrors and treated as pariahs. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Our explorations serve only to protect our fellow Name-givers from the ravages of the Horrors and their constructs, including the undead. Do the spells and talents we wield carry a dark tang to them, a stench of the grave? Perhaps to the clouded mind, to the Name-giver who gives credence only to his untutored feelings and flees from the blandishments of reason. But any who care to think carefully on the matter recognize the nethermancer as a bulwark, the last line of defense between this fragile world of life and the encroaching worlds of horror and death.

I consider the invitation to contribute to this esteemed anthology an opportunity to correct many of the misapprehensions and downright calumnies that surround the way of the nethermancer. I am confident that, should you read this with an mind even half open, any misgivings you might have toward my Discipline shall be allayed utterly.

ON THE CONTINUUM THAT IS LIFE AND DEATH

People fear nethermancers because they fear death, and nethermancers are symbolically bound to the concept of death. But nethermancers do not fear death, for we know it intimately. We know that it is not an impassable barrier, a wall between something that is good and something that is bad. Death is but a doorway, a threshold into another way of being. Life is not superior to death, nor is death superior to life. Both have their struggles, their pleasures, and their terrors. Only a





fool looks upon death as anything more than another phase in the building of one's legend. Sadly, the land of the living is awash in fools who forever dread their mortality. But mortality is as much a part of us as our eyes or our toes. Those who fear death fear themselves. And if we nethermancers are thought of as harshly mocking or haughty, it is only because others have not accepted the inevitable fact of death as we have. For with acceptance, we give up our fears.

Fear is not an emotion worthy of a nethermancer. The true follower of the path learns discretion, certainly—we are not known as a foolhardy group. But every day we contemplate the worst that can happen to us and accept its possibility. To conquer fear is to gain power. Fear is something that is useful to us, when found in others. The nethermancer learns to foster fear, to manipulate it. If your heart contains fear, we will grab hold of it and use it to lead you about like a dog on a rope. And you shall deserve such treatment, for fear is the hallmark of the inferior mind. You need not be a nethermancer to conquer your fears. But in my experience, you must be able to see that life and death are not separate things. They are different ends of the same path, separated by no more than a gentle stream. Learn this lesson and gain power.

ON THE NATURE OF THE SPIRIT

As I have mentioned, the superstitious and willfully ignorant associate my learned craft with death and the undead. However, the nethermancer concerns himself not so much with life and with death, as with the spirit, or soul. All nethermancer talents emanate from an understanding of the spirit. And the majority of nethermancer spells work through the spirit, either the spirit of the spellcaster or of his target. Granted, sometimes the spiritual aspect of a nethermantic spell like Shift Skin may not be immediately apparent to the uninitiated. But it is my fervent hope that by the end of your perusal of this document, you will at least begin to understand the subtle spiritual resonances that accompany this and other gruesome-seeming effects in the nethermancer's arsenal. Soon you will be able to look upon the spontaneous wrenching and tearing of the epidermal surface occasioned by the Shift Skin spell and think not, "How thoroughly appalling!" but, "Ah, what a profound lesson in the metaphysics of the soul!"

The metaphysics of the soul—this is the nethermancer's field of expertise. You might then ask, what is the soul? This, dear reader, is the question all nethermancers spend their lives seeking to answer. For the spirit is an elusive thing, one that forever evades precise definition and explication. We grope tentatively toward knowledge of it. This in itself should tell you something very important about nethermancers. Unlike other Disciplines I could name, nethermancers do not claim to possess definitive answers to the questions posed by existence. The nethermancer learns that all certainty is but self-delusion, for the most important single element of any Name-giver's being—his spirit—remains an enigma. It is not knowing the correct answers that really matters, for there is no single truth. Rather, the superior being knows the correct questions and strives to answer them, and that is more than enough.

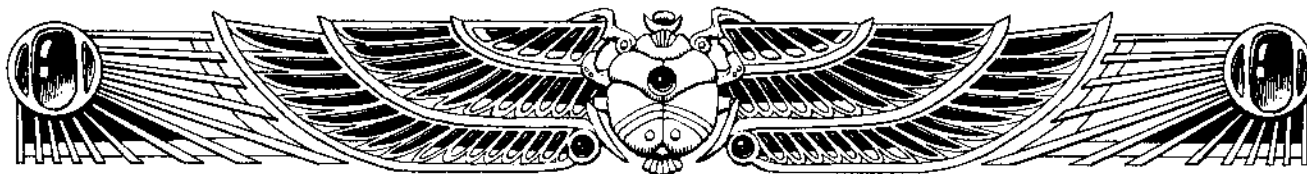
This is not to say that we are entirely ignorant about the spirit. Generation upon generation of nethermancers has examined its nature. Though many of the conclusions we have reached are altogether too subtle for a general audience to grasp, I will attempt to elucidate a few of the general principles for you.

The spirit can be defined as the essential essence of a being. The spirit is connected to the body, and provides its basic impetus, much as a fire engine provides the impetus for the riverboats of my people. Without an engine, the boat does not run. Without a spirit, thought and emotion end, and the body eventually dies. The spirit is the vessel that contains a being's identity, its Name, which gives birth to all thoughts, memories, emotions. Though the body cannot truly live on without a spirit (I'll touch upon apparent exceptions in due course), the spirit almost always persists after the decease of the body, for the true pattern of any Name-giver is connected more to the spirit than the physical body. When the body dies, a severance occurs in the pattern, and a vestigial fragment of the pattern remains connected to the corpse. However, the remainder of the true pattern persists with the spirit—or, as some claim, *is* the spirit. (The question of whether the true pattern and spirit are in fact one and the same has raged among nethermancers since legendary times. It is essentially a matter of semantics.)

BRavo for Brother
VRUDA! If only
more of the
ignorant masses
would read these
words, they
would realize how
wrong-headed
and groundless
are their
fears of us.
—ELRON,
Nethermancer
of RHEGION

THE T'SKRANG
EXPRESSES THE
TRUE HEART OF THE
NETHERMANTIC
WAY HERE.
UNDERSTAND THE
NEVER-ENDING
QUEST, AND YOU
UNDERSTAND THE
NETHERMANCER.
—YLLON,
Nethermancer
of THROAL





At any rate, it is knowledge of spirits that enables us to understand and influence spirits—both of the living and the unliving—the ability that most strongly characterizes the nethermancer. We must first of all understand our own spirits before we can learn to engage in dealings, consensual or otherwise, with other spirits, disincorporate or otherwise. A nethermancer is therefore a contemplative individual, one given to great introspection. Solitude is the nethermancer's friend. Though I have met talkative and loquacious colleagues in my day, most of us are quiet and restrained. Indeed, our fearsome reputation is quite at odds with our sedate behavior, a fact which occasions many delightfully droll comments at nethermancer gatherings. The fact that we are considered sinister embitters some of us, but most of my colleagues are acute connoisseurs of irony, and treat the absurd general dislike of our Discipline with sardonic humor. I remember one interesting occasion when a windling spy was found secreted in an empty ale barrel at a symposium of nethermancers I attended in Iopos. We were able to wring much amusement from a series of experiments designed to acquaint the irritating interloper with—but I digress.

ON THE MIGRATION OF THE SPIRIT AFTER DEATH

The relationship between true pattern and spirit brings us naturally to the question of the fate of the spirit after death. Where does it go? This is another of the profound questions that guides the nethermancer. Simply put, the spirit goes to many places, some unknown, for there appears to be no single destination for a spirit that has passed over the life/death threshold.

Some have proposed that an orderly determination of the migration of spirits after death once existed. These individuals believe that the fate of a spirit can be predicted based on certain observable factors concerning the being's life. They believe that the souls of those who live virtuous lives travel to a variety of different paradisaical realms on the other side of astral space. Such realms are described in great detail in early legends, though the accounts differ greatly from one another. Needless to say, the definitions of virtue required for admittance vary just as widely from tale to tale. Some of my brethren take these tales literally, claiming that all of these blissful afterlives truly existed, in harmony with one another. The assignment of particular souls to particular paradises depended upon the culture of a Name-giver's birth, or on the Passion with whom the Name-giver chose to identify. Other nethermancers argue that these legends are unreliable as factual accounts and contend that they refer to a single afterlife realm capable of altering itself to fit the desires of each soul it contained. I have personally encountered evidence that would, frustratingly enough, seem to confirm *both* theories simultaneously!

[Here T'shan includes a marginal note which, if I decipher his hand correctly, reads: Include story of the Seven Stairways? It is a great loss to scholarship that this must remain but a tantalizing hint.]

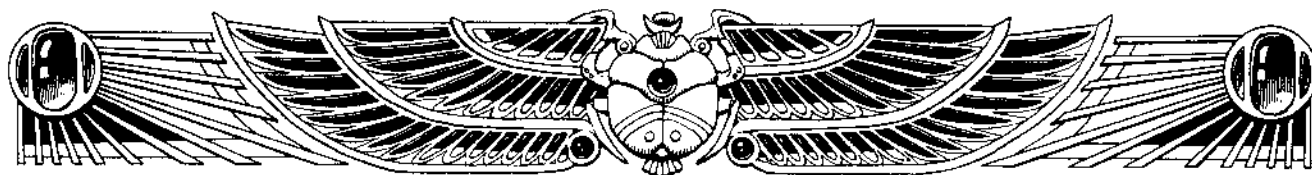
—Derrat

The same legends also describe a similarly elaborate web of hells that awaited the souls of those who had committed misdeeds in life. Again, nethermancers differ as to whether these actually existed in a vast jumble of separate realities, or if the truth must be considered lost, transmuted to legend by the drift of memory and fantasy. Yet a third theory may also explain the variety of hells in old legends: this theory holds that these references describe the home realm of the Horrors themselves. This seems convincing to me. Perhaps those whose true patterns became twisted by their own foul deeds came to mystically resemble the Horrors and were drawn to their realm after death.

At any rate, these explanations now are of mere historical interest. At some point in history, the orderly transmission of souls to proper destinations was permanently disrupted and remains so to this day. This may have happened during an earlier Scourge, or it may have happened when Death itself was buried beneath the volcanic fury of the sea that now bears his name. We can no longer predict where a Name-giver's soul will go when his body dies. Some spirits continue to wander Barsaive (and presumably other earthly regions) after the deaths of their bodies. (Though they maintain only insubstantial forms, it is possible to interact with them via the use of certain of our spells and talents.) These souls may remain here for various reasons. Some wish to finish some task uncompleted in life, from the building of a bridge to the guarding of an ancient manuscript. Others may be unreconciled to the manner and timing of their deaths and wish to exact vengeance on the living being they deem responsible. Still others may simply be unaware of the fact that they're dead; not surprisingly, death can interfere with correct perception of one's circumstances. (Are you sure *you* didn't meet with a fatal accident today?) There also exist those unfortunate souls shackled to this plane by the foul magics of Horrors and their allies. Here I speak of the ranks of the undead.

Still other spirits migrate into astral space, where the metaphysical pollution found there transforms some into quite fearsome entities. Other astral spirits, particularly those that once belonged to strong and worthy adepts in life, may in fact





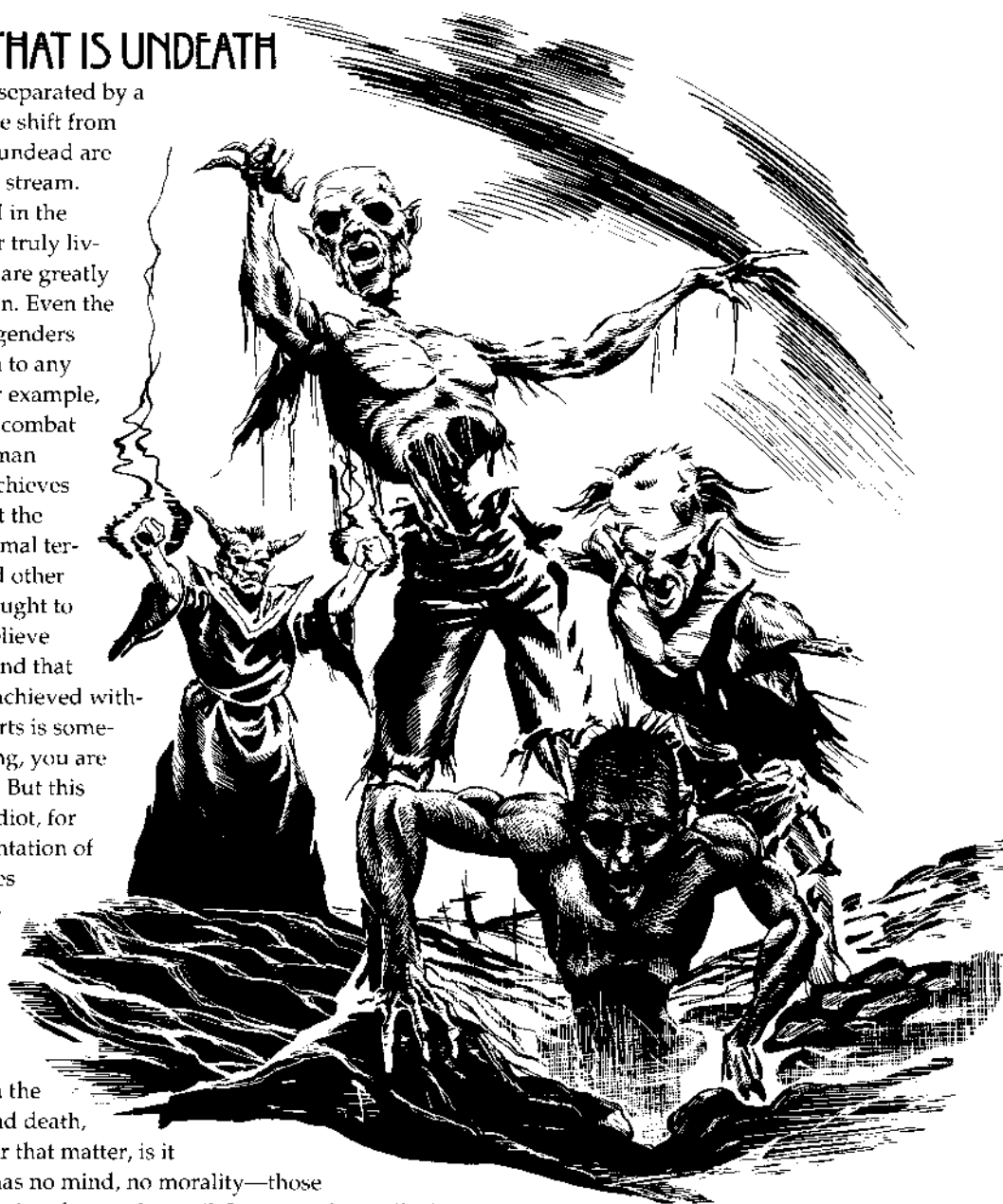
continue their battles against the Horrors in their ghostly forms. Both twisted and heroic spirits can be contacted by nethermancers, particularly by those powerful and courageous enough to enter astral space.

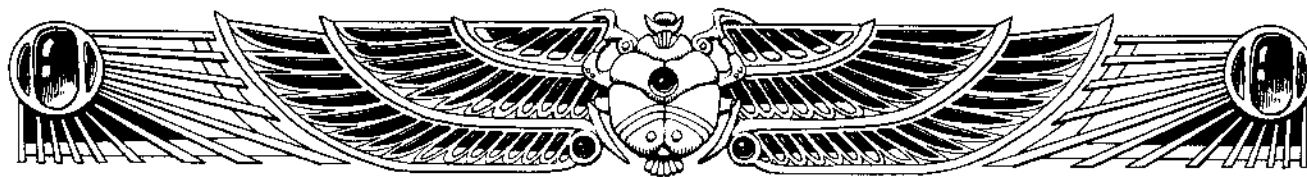
However, this still leaves many spirits unaccounted for. There are vast numbers of dead individuals—particularly those long dead—who can no longer be contacted. The fate of this majority of dead remains one of the ultimate mysteries. Perhaps, somehow, they have entered the forgotten paradises of legend. Or perhaps they have been swallowed by the home of the Horrors.

ON THE STATE THAT IS UNDEATH

If life and death are separated by a stream that represents the shift from one state to another, the undead are beings who straddle that stream. They are forever arrested in the moment of death, neither truly living nor truly dead. They are greatly feared for this very reason. Even the lowliest cadaver man engenders fear far out of proportion to any actual threat it poses. For example, to anyone with a whit of combat experience, the cadaver man poses a threat only if it achieves a great stroke of luck. Yet the cadaver man inspires primal terror. This is because it and other undead creatures are thought to be "unnatural." If you believe that magic is unnatural and that any state that cannot be achieved without resort to the arcane arts is somehow sinister and terrifying, you are likely to fear the undead. But this makes you a benighted idiot, for magic is the best representation of what is natural. It suffuses the world and permeates all of us. It is as much a part of us as the air we breathe. No magic, even the magic we nethermancers use, even that which exists on the threshold between life and death, is inherently evil. Nor, for that matter, is it inherently good. Magic has no mind, no morality—those who wield it make the choices for good or evil. I can use the spells that disturb you so much and yet protect you and your kin from the Horrors. If you are alive and well because of my efforts, how can you call the mere tools I used evil? Is a sword evil in and of itself? A vial can be used to hold healing potions or poison—if it is filled with poison, is it the vial or the poisoner who does wrong?

I have created undead beings myself. Does this shock you? No doubt it does. But wait, do you know what I did with my undead servants? I sent them to fight the Horror called Shezkseti, and saved more than a dozen villagers it had penned





up for future torture. My creations were victims it had already slain, relatives and loved ones of those I rescued. They fought against that Horror with passion and fury. Though they were torn to bloody shreds by the Horror's claws, I am confident that they suffered their second, more infinitely painful deaths with equanimity. For they knew that their sacrifice fulfilled a vital goal. And their sacrifice gave meaning to their lives. Yes, I used the same tactic favored by the Horrors themselves. I threw that tactic in their faces, cut them with their own blades. If you call me a monster because of this, I can only laugh at your contemptible stupidity.

Perhaps those of you still reading are interested in the technical aspects of undeath. The zombie offers an interesting example. When the spirit departs the body, it takes most of a Name-giver's true pattern with it. But it leaves a small part of the pattern behind, the part that connects the subject's soul and mental faculties to its body and physical abilities. Various spells, Horror abilities, and magical treasures can attach a spiritual pattern to this part to reanimate the dead. Most often, the worker of the magic will be reattaching the being's original spiritual pattern. It is often the case that the crude force of the required arcane energies warps and degrades the spiritual pattern. This is why most cadaver men are but drooling engines of destruction; the fine details of their mortal existence have been melted into a clump of vague intelligence and malice. It is possible, however, to restore a relatively intact personality to a cadaver man. A prime example of this would be the subjects of the legendary Twiceborn, Queen of Parlainth's dead.

ON THE WORKINGS OF NETHERMAGIC

I describe the manufacture of cadaver men in detail not simply out of arrogant pedantry. It is also a prime example of the practical application of our craft. The nethermancer consciously manipulates patterns, reaching out and shaping the patterns of others to achieve our effects. If you find the nethermancer's gaze unpleasantly penetrating, it is because we know the magical materials of which you are made.

Here I do not speak of pattern magic, of finding the pattern items which relate to you and thereby gaining power over you. This area is not specifically the province of the nethermancer. I speak instead of abilities which affect the things held in common by all patterns. We can manipulate your pattern not because we have access to knowledge of its unique characteristics, but because we know of the parts that comprise all patterns. All of us have a consciousness, which is partly generated by the body (by the brain, to be precise) and partly by the spirit. All intelligent beings have a point in their pattern where the body and spirit connect to form the mind. All of us have other common connections in our patterns, fusing together all of the separate things that make up a whole being. Many of our magical spells operate by subverting the magical energy of patterns, moving it around to achieve desired effects.

Further examples will illuminate my point.

[The examples exist here only in point form. V'ruda evidently intended to flesh these out later in the process.]

—Derrat

Spirit Grip: taps into pattern of spirits, leaking from severed junction: death/life pattern break—question of malevolence?

Undead Struggle: tendril fires from own TP to TP of undead, hitting warped spirit/body juncture

Bone Dance: access through spirit/body juncture, disconnects subject's spirit to body flow, repl. by nethmr's willpower

Experience Death: in through severed s/b juncture, momentary connection of nethmr's memory sense juncture to brain/pattern juncture

ON COSMOLOGY AND OTHER DIMENSIONS

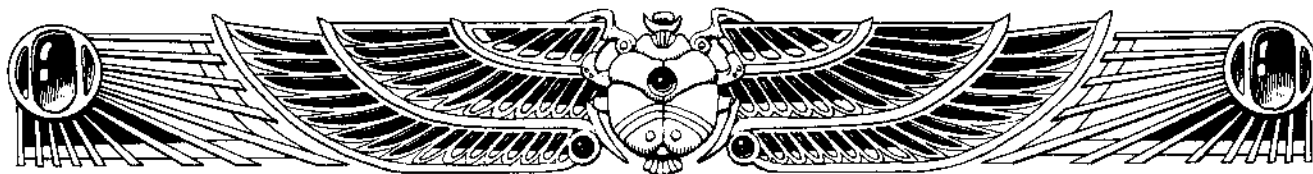
[To our great frustration, this aspect of the nethermancer's way exists only as a title with no body of text.]

—Derrat

ON UNDERSTANDING THE HORRORS

As I have described in the preceding passage, finally sealing off our dimension from the Horrors will only be possible once we have answered the Eight Questions of Jsona Var. Until that time, we must rely instead on countermeasures to fight the Horrors after they have crossed the threshold to our world. And if these measures are to be effective, they must be based on knowledge. Nethermancers are oft accused of all manner of vile acts because we dare to investigate the very nature of the Horrors. Though such investigations bring temptations that have felled more than one nethermancer, on the





whole our efforts have been a boon to all Name-givers. We have learned advanced techniques for dampening the karma abilities of Horrors, for mimicking their forms and actions, for restraining them where they stand. Yet we have received little credit for this from the mindless wad of Barsaivian citizenry. I am told that the residents of Thera are more advanced in this regard, that they understand the true importance of the nethermancer to the survival of our races. But here we receive only abuse for our efforts. It should be little wonder that we regard the uninformed masses as essentially moronic.

Here is one final secret many may not wish to hear: just as the line between life and death is largely illusory, no real line exists between the behavior of Name-givers and the behavior of Horrors. To understand them, you must realize that the emotions we often consider evil—fear, jealousy, rage, hatred, confusion, despair—are their food. They need these things to survive, as we need meat and bread. (The question of how they survive in their own realm during times of low magic is one that has puzzled nethermancers for centuries.) They elicit these emotions in us in order to live, just as we grow crops or hunt for game. We feel no guilt when we slaughter a thundra for its meat. Likewise, the Horror feels nothing but appetite and anticipation when

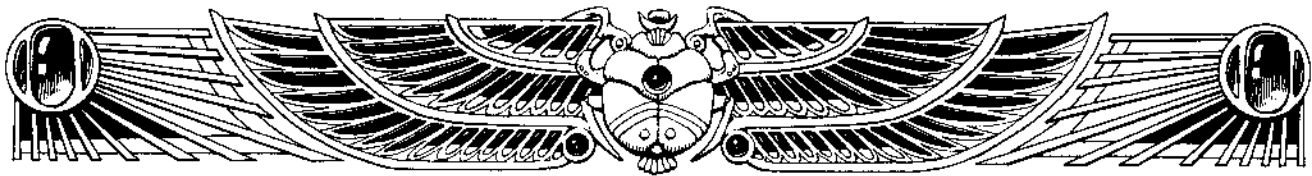
I HAVE REFRAINED FROM COMMENT IN THIS DOCUMENT, THINKING THAT MY UNEASINESS ABOUT IT WAS A RESULT OF MY OWN PREJUDICES AND NOT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED WITHIN. AFTER CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT AND MULTIPLE READINGS, I HAVE CONCLUDED THAT MY UNEASE IS ENTIRELY JUSTIFIED. THE VIEW OF THE NETHERMANCER DISCIPLINE AS PORTRAYED IN THIS DOCUMENT IS FRIGHTENING. THE AUTHOR HAS NOT DONE AS HE PROMISED IN THE INTRODUCTION AND HAS PERHAPS WORSENERD MY OWN BELIEFS ABOUT ADEPTS WHO FOLLOW THIS MOST DANGEROUS AND SUSPICIOUS DISCIPLINE.
—MERROX, MASTER OF THE HALL OF RECORDS

it marks a Name-giver and begins to elicit in him the dark and delicious emotions it so craves.

Take the worst thing you have every heard of a Horror doing, and I will show you a Name-giver who did the same. These bizarre beasts from beyond have no monopoly on acts of atrocity. We Name-givers have been slaughtering one another since the days of legend. The Horrors do what they do in order to feed. Yet when we strike out at one another, we do not necessarily need to do so to survive. We have killed one another in the name of kings, in the name of Passions, in the name of racial hatreds, in the name of stupid and petty ancestral squabbles. We continue to believe that we are fundamentally better than the Horrors, when, if anything, we are worse.

This is why, when you proclaim that the struggle against the Horrors is a fundamental fight between good and evil, the nethermancer laughs. The laugh of the nethermancer is long and loud, and inside that laugh is the rattle of bones. The rattle of a mountain of bones, bones of the innocent, a mountain built by Name-givers as well as Horrors. It is true that we must fight them and we must slay them. They might need us for food, but we have no need to be eaten. But this is no battle of ultimate morality. It is simply another jungle struggle between predator and prey, a battle the nethermancers will help win. And after the Name-givers win, we will go back to slaying one another as if nothing had happened. And beneath the clatter of sword against shield shall be the laughter of the nethermancer. You shall shiver, wonder briefly what it is all about, then shrug and return to your killing.





ON THE WAY OF THE SCOUT

The following account was drawn from a conversation between the windling scout Teelan Jupray and my fellow scholar Jerriv Forrim, scribe and scholar of the Library of Throat. Though I might have preferred otherwise, Jerriv had already edited this work when he presented it to me. Such is the way of the archivist.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

ONE WITH THE WORLD

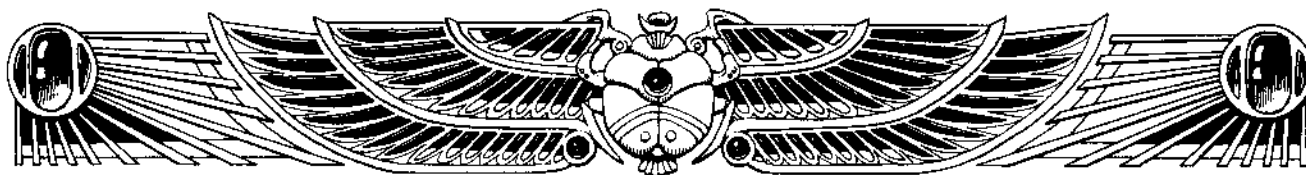
No one understands us—sad, but true. How many times have I heard people describe scouts as “half-warrior, half-thief,” and leave it at that? Such a simplistic analysis. There is so much more to my Discipline than that. However frustrating it may be, I have no choice but to accept the fact that an amazing number of misconceptions surround the Discipline of the scout.

What misconceptions? Well, let me name some. First and foremost, that we are little more than glorified trackers. What nonsense! Anyone can learn to track; there is no magic in it. Hunters of all sorts learn the basic skills. But does the ability to follow tracks, spoor, and broken branches make one a scout? It does not. Other misconceptions? That because we share certain talents with warriors and thieves, we practice those talents in the same way as those other Disciplines. Again, a sad mistake, I assure you. In truth, all of our abilities—those that lead to us being labeled “trackers,” “warriors” and “thieves”—spring from one, well, I hesitate to class it as a “skill,” a “talent” or an “ability.” It is all of these and so much more. Let me explain.

To be a scout means to be one with the world. We—I and my fellows—open our senses to the world around us. All of our senses, and all of the world. That is the part of our Discipline that non-scouts never seem to understand.

Think of a tracker for a moment. The tracker follows his quarry through the woods and forests using his eyes and, to a lesser degree, his ears. He sees broken branches, disturbed foliage, footprints, and maybe the spoor of his quarry. Sometimes he can hear the passage of that quarry through the woods—the cracking of a twig, even the creature’s breathing. This proud woodsman believes he has “opened his senses” to the world around him.





Nonsense! From a scout's point of view, his perceptions are as limited as those of a child peeking through a keyhole. Think on it: the tracker selects the senses and the clues that he believes are important. He may notice broken branches, because those clues are "appropriate" for the task of tracking. Anything "inappropriate" is ignored or discarded. (Please appreciate that I am not demeaning the tracker. Not seriously, at least. By opening two senses, he is more in tune with his world than most people, who stumble through the world guided by one sense only ... and even that is used imperfectly.)

But I digress. How does a true scout react in the same situation? The scout opens all his senses, not simply those he has selected as "appropriate" to the situation, and expands his awareness to include everything around him. How can you know in advance what will and will not be important in a given situation, I ask you? The scout sees the same things as the tracker, but he sees more. He sees the broken branch ahead, but he also sees, beyond that, the change in coloration of the undergrowth that indicates the ground is growing softer. He hears what might be stealthy movement to his right, but he also hears—again, to his right—the soft murmur of the wind and the twittering of songbirds. He feels the stirring of the air around him, and the faintest of vibrations through the springy ground beneath his feet. He smells the sweet scent of flaxflower fruit on the breeze, mixed with the sharp tang of human sweat. He chews a blade of grass he picks from the ground at his feet, and tastes the bitterness of peat. The scout opens himself up to the forest around him, and he becomes the forest.

How are these perceptions relevant? Think on it a moment. A broken branch implies his quarry is ahead of him, yet he knows that the ground softens ahead and to the right—in fact, it becomes a peat bog, the grass stem tells him that. Will his quarry risk becoming stuck in a bog? No—it will almost certainly turn to the left. What of the noise to the right, then, the sound the tracker interpreted as stealthy movement? The wind, no doubt, for the songbirds to his right would surely have fallen silent with the passage of a large beast. The scout also knows that a human is in the vicinity—possibly tracking the same quarry—and hence will be careful to identify his target before letting fly with his weapon. Do you understand now? That is the difference between a scout and a simple tracker.

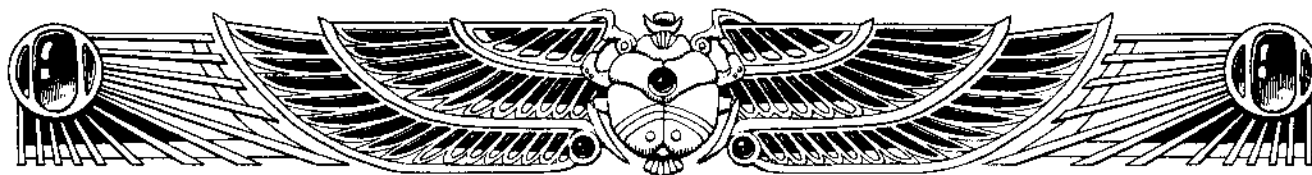
Can you imagine the sheer joy a scout finds in this oneness with his surroundings? Only another scout can understand the joy—the transcendence—of running or flying through a dappled woodland, passing as silently as a ghost, leaving no trace behind of your passage. Practicing the Discipline of the scout allows the adept to grasp the halcyon days of legend, when peace and tranquillity lay upon the world. When we walk in the forest, we are a part of it—as much as the trees that shelter us, and the birds that sing for us, and the animals that watch us without fear. So too are we a part of the rolling plains, or the harsh and rugged uplands, or even the arid deserts. Wherever there is life, there we are at home.

By opening our senses to our environment, we scouts accept the world around us. We do not try to change it. We view it as it is and we work within the constraints this places on us. The environment "accepts" a scout, just as the scout "accepts" the environment. Why? I know not why. Perhaps a sage or wizard could tell you. I only know that it is true. Because we are as one, the environment around us reacts as though we belong wherever we are. Think on it. How else could a scout move silently through the wilderness, or through the alleys of a city, come to that? A woodsman or tracker might learn the art of parting branches so leaves do not rustle, of treading lightly so no twigs break underfoot. But there is more to moving silently than that. What good does it do to stir no twig if all the birds and animals of the forest around you proclaim your presence—either with their cries or with their silence? The best tracker or woodsman is still an interloper in the environment through which he passes, and the world knows this. When a scout moves silently, he is one with the world around him. He senses the lay of the land, the interconnections between branches, the direction of the wind. But more importantly, the world around him senses him and accepts him as part of itself.

ADEPTS FROM
OTHER DISCIPLINES
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NEVER WILL THEY
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—JOL DENNEQUEN,
WIZARD OF TOPOS

I HAVE HEARD TELL
THAT SOME SCOUTS
GO TO GREAT
LENGTHS TO AVOID
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BECOMING
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BE A PAINFUL AND
DISCONCERTING
EXPERIENCE.
—MERROX.





A DISCOURSE ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTS

Do not allow yourself to accept the common misconception that a scout is at home only in the wilderness, far from the works of Name-givers. We are as much at home and at ease in the heart of a teeming city as we are in the midst of an unexplored forest. Think on it a moment. We become one with our environment by opening our senses to it. Will the same technique not work as well in an environment constructed by Name-givers? Of course it will!

The clues in a city are very different from those of the wilderness—the tone of voice and the unspoken communications of passers-by, the patterns of traffic on streets, the condition of the buildings and roads in different neighborhoods, and the like. Yet the technique of opening oneself to those clues is exactly the same. If one can be aware of the scent of ripening goldenrod on the rolling plains, one can also be aware of the cookfires and braziers of a town and extract from them their meaning.

The scout's unique ability to "belong" is as strong in a city or town as it is in the wilderness, as well. (In fact, thinking on how "belonging" occurs in a town will go some distance toward explaining how it happens in the countryside as well.)

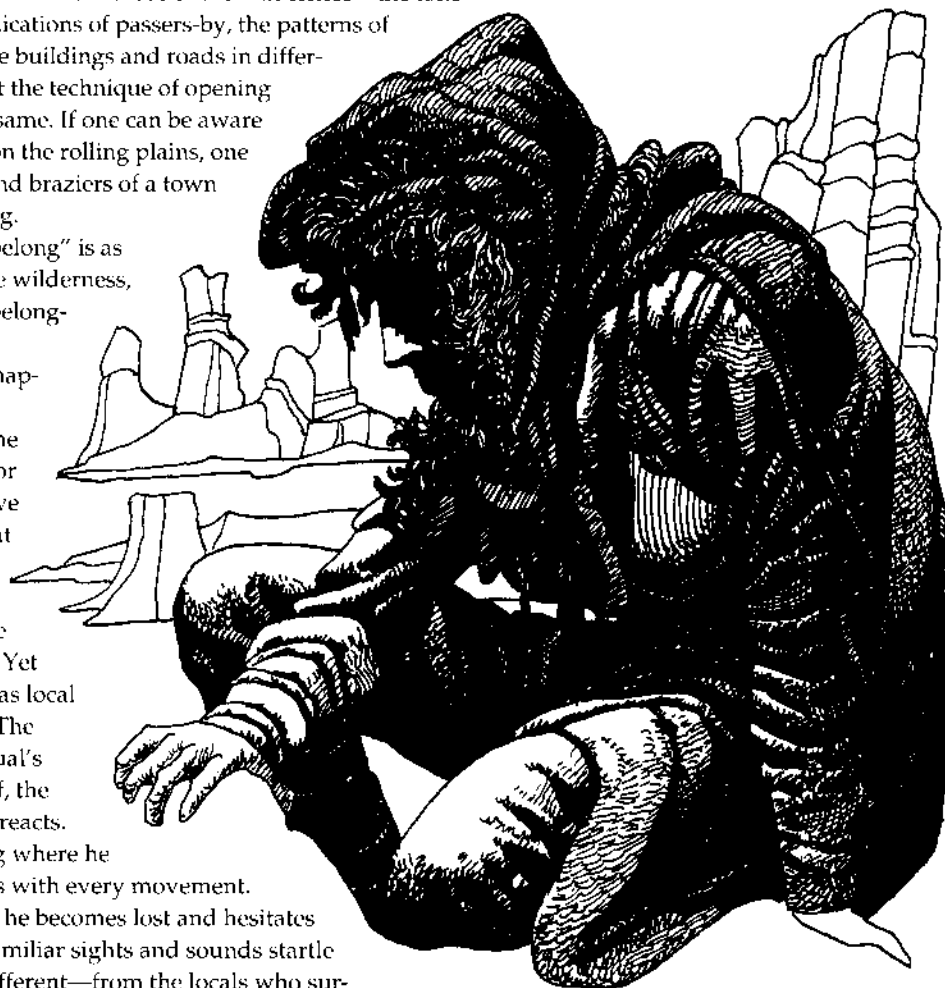
How do you recognize someone as a stranger to your village, town or city? Perhaps you note that you have never seen their face before, but that is rarely a sufficient clue. In all but the smallest of villages, residents encounter "strangers"—those whom they have never met before. Yet they still recognize these strangers as local residents, rather than "outsiders." The major clues come from the individual's actions—the way he carries himself, the way he communicates, the way he reacts. An individual who does not belong where he is communicates his outsider status with every movement. Making his way through the town, he becomes lost and hesitates while he regains his bearings. Unfamiliar sights and sounds startle him. He senses that he is apart—different—from the locals who surround him, and he communicates that feeling to those with eyes to see the clues in the very lines of his body. It is these clues that identify strangers among us.

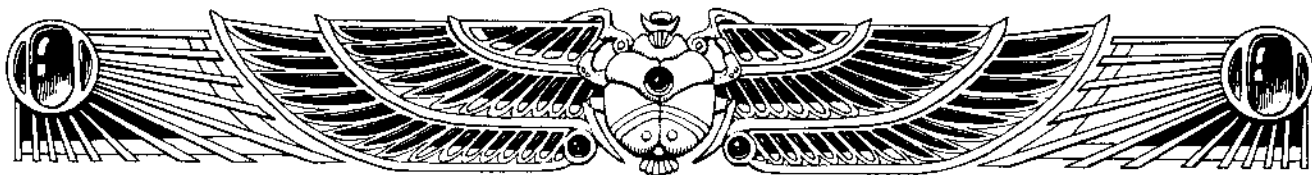
Do we notice someone who is totally at home in the environment of our town or village? Of course not—he does not give off any such clues.

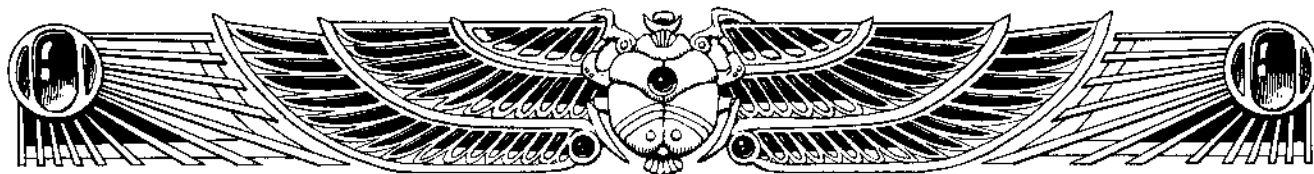
In this way, scouts fit into the masses of Name-givers in a city or a town. If the birds of the forest believe that we belong, how difficult would it be to convince the people of an unfamiliar town of the same thing?

I once had reason to hire a scout to serve me as an infiltrator. Through intermediaries, I made arrangements for the best candidate—an ork, as it turned out—to meet with me at the noon bell in my audience chamber. The noon bell rang, and the candidate failed to appear. I waited, as the time-candle burned away. Beside me, my three hand servants stood, shifting from foot to foot as they sensed my growing anger. Finally, just as I was about to give up, one of my "hand servants" stepped forward and introduced himself as the scout I was to meet! Needless to say, I hired him on the spot.

—Tammis Denairastas of Iopos







IT IS POSSIBLE TO
SUBDIVIDE SCOUT
ADEPTS FURTHER
BASED ON THE TYPE
OF WILDERNESS
WHERE THEY
OPERATE. IN OTHER
WORDS, THOSE WHO
HONE THEIR ARTS
IN THE FOREST, OR
IN THE DESERT, OR
IN THE RUGGED
FOOTHILLS FORM
SUBGROUPS.
TO ME, THIS
DISTINCTION SEEMS
UNIMPORTANT,
THOUGH THERE ARE
THOSE WHO STRONGLY
DISAGREE WITH
THIS OPINION.
—MERROX,
MASTER OF THE
HALL OF RECORDS

ON SPECIALISTS

There are two main specialties within the Discipline of the scout, quite naturally based on the environments in which the scout operates. Those who develop to a fine edge their ability to work in the wilderness are called explorers. Those who focus on locales where Name-givers dwell are called infiltrators.

The difference between the two "specialties" lies only in the concrete, tangible skills each type of adept learns. The underlying aptitude for opening the senses to the world around them remains the same.

Adepts of one specialty often look with some degree of scorn on those who follow the other. Infiltrators, for example, consider the environment chosen by explorers to be woefully simplistic and infinitely less challenging than that in which they themselves excel. (After all, these specialists would argue, Name-givers have much the same instincts as the beasts of the wild—but they also have intellect, and no small degree of suspicion and paranoia! To move unnoticed among Name-givers, to them, offers a much greater challenge.)

In contrast, explorers hold themselves as more worthy because they deal with nature, with the "true world." Infiltrators, these scouts contend, deal with a false and arbitrary model of nature, and so are closing themselves off from the broadness and richness of the greater world around them.

Those scouts such as I, who have chosen no specialty within our Discipline, typically stay out of such arguments!

ON COMBAT AND OTHER SKILLS

Many scouts are as skilled in the use of melee weapons as a warrior adept, while others can pick a lock or disarm a trap as proficiently as a thief adept. How then, do scouts excel at certain skills usually viewed as skills of other Disciplines?

Though the outcomes of the use of these skills may appear the same as for other Disciplines, the way a scout uses them is very different, for the use of these skills stems from the scout's world view. As I understand it—and any warriors reading my words must forgive my ignorance—warrior adepts excel at combat by learning forms and styles of attack and honing their reactions and their instincts, until they can react to a foe's move instinctively. Thief adepts learn to pick locks or disarm traps by studying the mechanisms by which locks and traps function and practicing specific techniques for defeating those mechanisms.

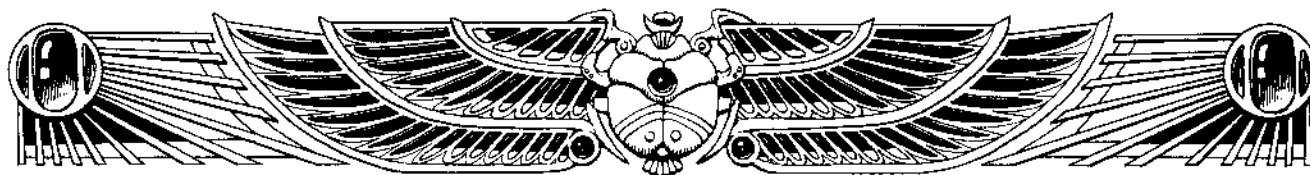
When a scout is faced with such tasks—single combat, for example, or opening a locked door—we approach it with a different mental outlook. As when we are moving silently through the wilderness, we open our senses—all our senses—to the clues presented to us. From these clues, we can build up a mental picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the obstacle before us, whether it be a swordsman or a lock. When it comes time to act, we focus all our attention and energy on the weaknesses we have detected.

ON TRAINING

Scouts learn much of their chosen Discipline by simply living the precepts of the path. Though this method of learning is quite natural and effective, many outside the path fail to understand it. They imagine that our instruction involves specific skills and techniques—"stealth," for example, or perhaps "spoor identification." Well, a scout's training may contain some of that. But the most important facet of training is helping the initiate develop the scout's world view, the ability to perceive unhampered by his unconscious limitations. In other words, to help the initiate strip away his preconceived ideas of the world and "see" it as it truly is. All else springs from this.

Most Name-giver races emphasize sight over all other senses. The first thing that a would-be scout must learn is to eliminate this unnecessary reliance on a single sense. All senses are of equal importance in the grand scheme. Certainly, on specific occasions, one sense may offer the most vital information, but to focus exclusively and invariably on one sense is to limit yourself severely. One of the most important lessons I teach to initiates involves temporarily removing their sense of sight. So many students I have led through the woods blindfolded, forcing them to reach out with their other senses to avoid a painful collision or a jarring tumble!





The vast majority of the training I provide has the same goal—extending and broadening perception. Unlike the training of a swordmaster, for example, I often simply walk with a student through a new environment—through the forest, or in the mountains, or in the midst of a bustling city—and help direct his attention and sharpen his focus with questions. Quite a contrast to the way most people envision a scout's training, I am sure!

Certainly, sometimes I help a student work on specific, tangible skills. But such task-oriented training can come only after the student has sufficiently extended his perceptions. For teaching a student how to exploit the weakness in a swordsman's style before the student can accurately identify that weakness—well, there are less complicated forms of suicide, but few less sure.

SCOUTS AND THE PASSIONS

Individual scouts can revere any and all Passions. Among those members of my Discipline I number as friends, however, Lochost, Mynbruje, and, to a certain degree, Jaspree enjoy especial regard.

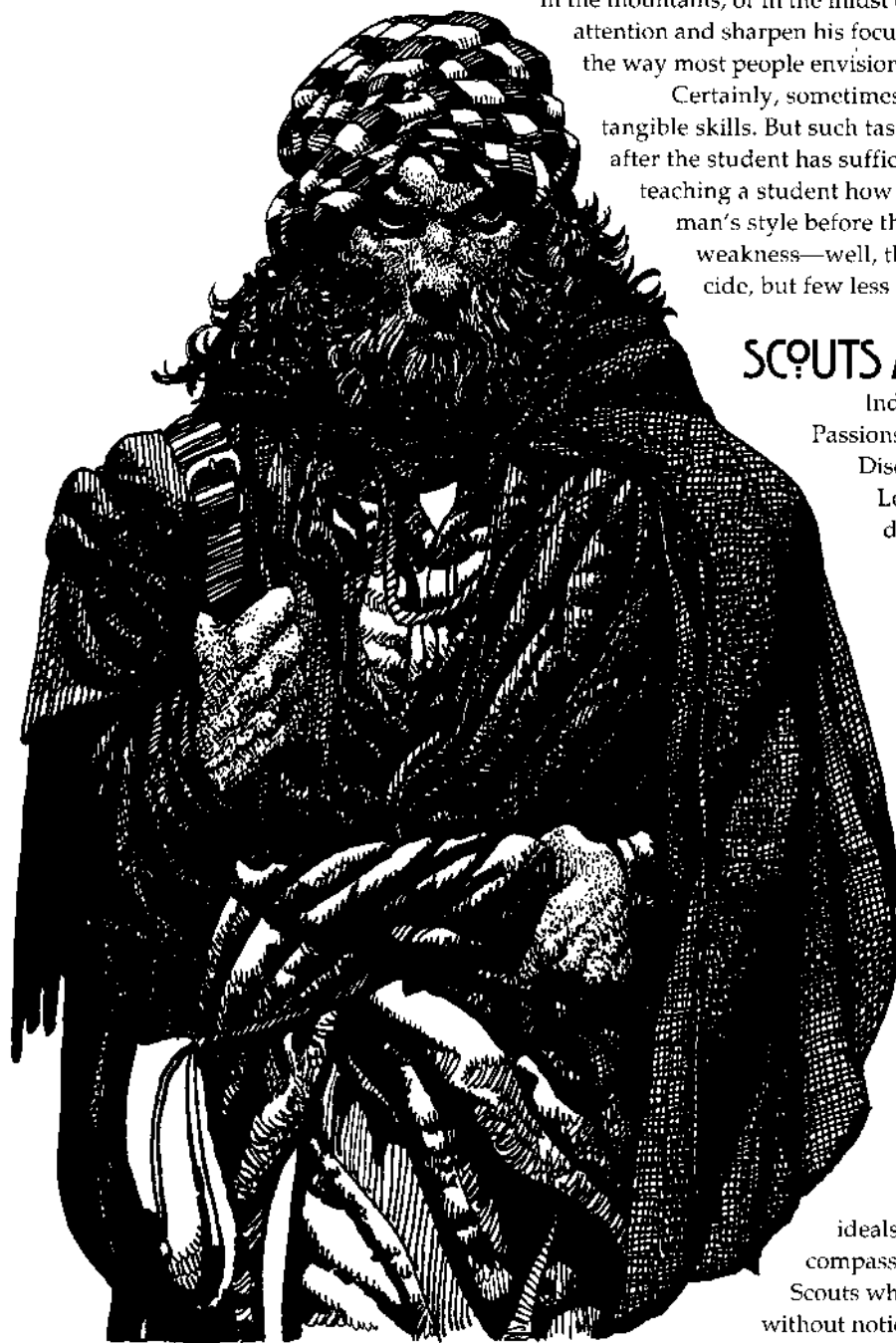
Lochost may, at first glance, seem an odd choice for a scout, but think on it a moment. Lochost's primary ideal is freedom, and "freedom" can mean freedom from past beliefs and prejudices as easily as physical freedom. The very nature of the scout Discipline requires this kind of mental and spiritual freedom. A would-be scout constrained by old ways of thought cannot truly open himself to the world around him.

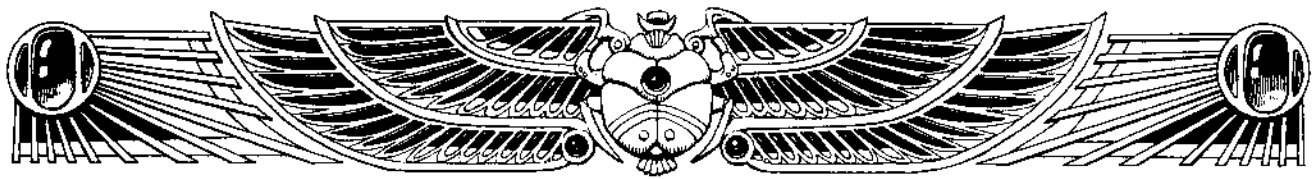
Two of the ideals of Mynbruje are compassion and empathy. Scouts who seek to move without notice through towns and villages must demonstrate

great compassion and empathy, making this Passion a logical choice for reverence. Still other scouts seem to follow Jaspree almost as a consequence of their work in the wilderness, for one cannot become one with the wilderness without coming to love the wilderness to some degree.

MANY SCOUTS I HAVE ENCOUNTERED TAKE THE PHYSICAL ASPECT OF FREEDOM VERY SERIOUSLY AS WELL.
—JOL DENNEQUEN

A SCOUT WHO WORKED PREDOMINATELY AS A INFILTRATOR PRESENTED THE SAME ARGUMENT TO ME, BUT HE WAS EXPLAINING WHY HE FOLLOWED THE PRECEPTS OF GARLEN.
—JOL DENNEQUEN





THE FIERCE AND HONORABLE WAY OF THE SKY RAIDER

The following text was transcribed from a conversation with the human sky raider known as Merienne Blays.

Readers will note a predominance of words from the troll language used throughout this text. This tradition has its

SAY WHAT YOU WILL,
ONLY A TROLL CAN
TRULY UNDER-
STAND THE PATH OF
THE SKY RAIDER.
ONLY A TROLL
KNOWS THE TRUE
MEANING OF
GALAN'KAHARR,
AND ONLY A TROLL
CAN TRULY LIVE IT.
—ZURC OF THE
STONECLAWS

*indebted to Thom Edrull, whose work on the
Denizens of Barsaive series granted him such a*

*roots in the origins of the sky raider
Discipline, which was first prac-
ticed by trolls. Over time, the trolls
shared their Discipline with those of
other Name-giver races. With the
knowledge of the sky raider Discipline
came many terms and ideas so
integral to the troll race that
no adequate translation was
possible. Where appropriate
in this text, I and my fellow
scholars have attempted to
explain, or at least describe,
such words. In this
endeavor I am especially
vast expertise in such mat-
ters.*

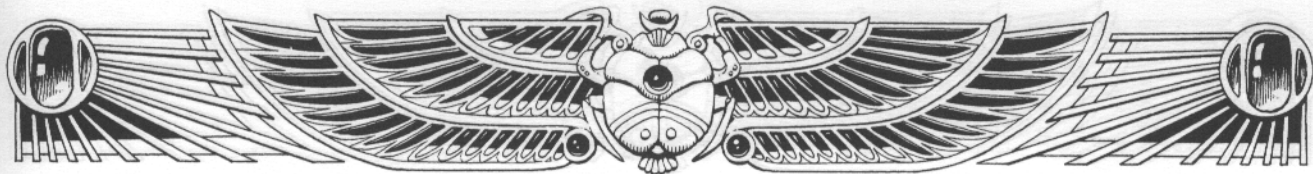
—Presented for the
edification of the reader by
Derrat, wizard of the City of
Yistaine, 1507 TH

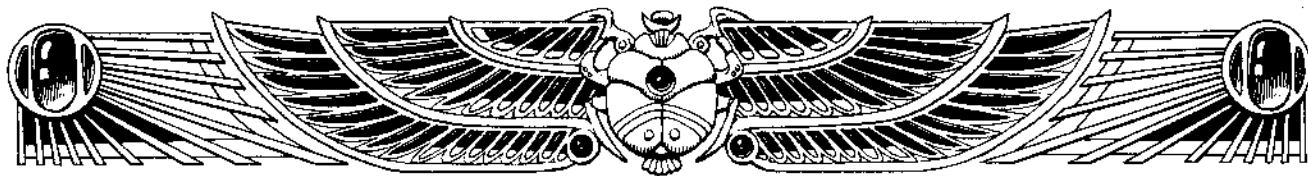
A PARTIAL
TRANSLATION
FOR GALAN'KAHARR
MIGHT BE
"AGENT"—ONE
WHO ACTS, RATHER
THAN ONE WHO IS
ACTED UPON. THIS
TRANSLATION
CAPTURES THE CORE
MEANING BUT DOES
NO JUSTICE TO THE
FAR-REACHING
EMOTIONAL
RESONANCE OF
THE ORIGINAL
TROLL WORD.
—MERROX,
MASTER OF THE
HALL OF RECORDS

OF A LIFE IN THE SKIES

You look
askance at me, my
dwarf friend. Why?
Because I, a human and a
female, claim to be a sky raider? I admit, the
term sky raider brings the image of a large, burly male troll to the minds of most Name-givers.
But there is more to being a sky raider than race or gender, much more. The true sky raider is
marked by his attitude—a zest for life and for challenge and for adventure. To be a sky raider is
to be, well, the trollish word my instructor used is *galan'kaharr*; I can think of no direct transla-
tion in the dwarf tongue.







THIS IS WORTHY OF
EMPHASIS. *KAT'RAL*
IS GENERALLY
DEFINED AS CLAN
OR FAMILY HONOR.
SKY RAIDERS OFTEN
REDEFINE THEIR
CLAN OR FAMILY
BASED ON SHARED
INTENT OR GOALS
RATHER THAN
SIMPLE BLOOD
TIES. THUS, A SKY
RAIDER CONSIDERS
THE CREWMATES
WHO SAIL WITH HER
ON A DRAKKAR TO
BE HER FAMILY.
—THOM EDULL

ACTUALLY, THAT
FREEDOM CAN BE
TAKEN AWAY—BY
VARIOUS MAGICS
THAT CONTROL THE
MIND AND THE WILL.
TO BE TREATED AS
A PUPPET IS THE
ULTIMATE INSULT
AGAINST *KATORR*
AND *KAT'RAL*—AN
INSULT MOST
COMMONLY
ANSWERED WITH
DOMICIDAL RAGE.
—MERROX

To be a sky raider is to be free—to be completely independent, to follow one's own desires wherever they may lead, to be responsible to oneself and oneself alone. It is that freedom we seek when we take to the skies in our ships. It is that freedom we pursue when we wander abroad with the earth far below our feet.

That freedom is an integral part of troll culture—of highland troll culture, at least. It is the troll way to fling oneself wholeheartedly into life, to leave moderation for the races with weaker blood running sluggishly through their veins. This is why so many trolls become sky raiders, and why so many sky raiders are trolls. Members of other races who turn to the sky raider Discipline share this attitude. It is this world view that attracts them.

It should come as no surprise, then, that many who follow the way of the sky raider also embrace other aspects of troll culture and incorporate them into our personal vision. Honor is of great importance—of overwhelming importance, in fact—to sky raiders of any race, as it is to highland trolls. Personal honor—that which the trolls call *katorr*—is predominant, though a modified version of *kat'ral* is also important. While a highland troll will defend the *kat'ral* of his clan or family, a sky raider of any race will defend the “group honor” of her crew, her colleagues, or the adventuring group to which she belongs.

Honor, for a sky raider, is inextricably linked with the idea of remaining *galan'kaharr*. Anyone who constrains a sky raider's freedom to act is slighting her honor—both *katorr* and *kat'ral*. There is nothing so demeaning to a sky raider as surrendering her freedom of action. We must remain free to follow our own judgment and to take complete and total responsibility for our own lives. Otherwise, where is the value of continued breath? One might as well lie down in one's grave, even before breath has finally stilled. To forsake responsibility is to turn away from life itself.

A DISCOURSE ON RESPONSIBILITY

The central tenet of a sky raider's life is individual responsibility. I am responsible for all that befalls me during my life—I and I alone. Certainly, circumstances beyond my control may seem to put restrictions on my freedom; an unforeseen storm might ground my ship, for example. Yet, even in the midst of the storm, I have the freedom to respond as I choose. Do I vainly curse the storm and despair? Or do I embrace the challenge and the danger, and pit my skills against the forces of Nature? It is my choice as to how I respond, and that freedom can never be taken from me.

People outside my Discipline often seem to believe that sky raiders are chaos incarnate, walking examples of anarchy. How can anyone trust an individual who puts personal freedom above all else, these people ask. Think it through, my dwarf friend, please. Individual freedom and personal responsibility do not preclude enlightened self-interest. Quite the opposite, in fact. As I see it, we—sky raiders such as myself—are less motivated by broad ideologies and belief systems than members of other Disciplines. We approach all decisions on the basis of individual responsibility.

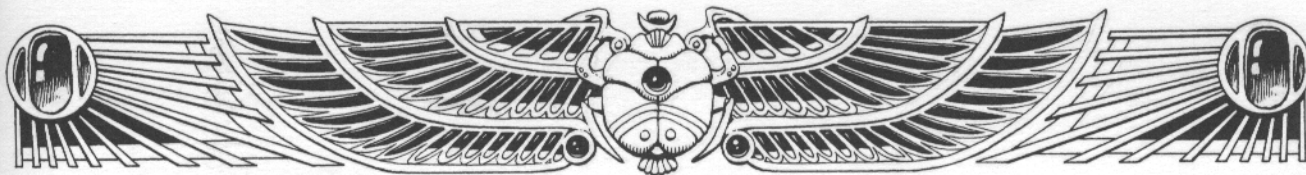
Many people seem to believe that sky raiders possess an almost instinctive rejection of restrictions and guidelines and flout the laws of civilized societies at every turn. Not true! People who break all laws without thinking are as shortsighted as those who blindly follow all laws and restrictions. Sky raiders

typically examine each case on its own merits. If we believe a law or constraint is worthwhile, we will abide by it. If we believe it to be foolish or inappropriate, we will ignore it. In both cases, we take complete and personal responsibility for our decision. If I break a law, I am ready to take responsibility for that action. When I made my decision, I took into account the possible consequences, and I will face those consequences undismayed. That is one of the characteristics of individual responsibility. The central touchstone of my actions is my personal judgment. Do you understand me a little better now?

ON WORKING WITH OTHERS

It has been said—and is widely believed, in some circles—that sky raiders are incapable of cooperating with other Name-givers. How foolish that would be if it were true! Enlightened self-interest frequently makes cooperation necessary—no, essential. I recognize and respect my talents and abilities. But I also recognize that my individual talents are sometimes insufficient to achieve a goal I have deemed worthy. To achieve that goal, I must work alongside others, whose talents and skills complement mine.





I personally choose to believe that all those around me share my own views on individual responsibility and choice. Perhaps I am wrong to make this assumption, but so far the course I have set through life has proven to be a good one. Always I assume that those with whom I deal are honorable and responsible for their own actions—unless they prove otherwise. I deal in good faith with anyone, until the time I learn they are dealing in bad faith. Then I will re-examine the situation. Sometimes I just walk away from the honorless toad. Other times I may decide that retribution or—education—is in order. To use more colloquial terms, I will give a storm wolf one bite—but only one!

Honor—both *katorr* and *kat'ral*—require that a sky raider be true to her word. Her oath, once given, is binding. Honor is all that we have when we enter this world, and all we take with us when we leave it. To lessen that honor—by forswearing ourselves, for example—is to diminish who we are. Of course, most sky raiders are wise enough to know that the best way of keeping our word is not to give it lightly.

ON LOYALTY TO SHIP AND CREW

Not all sky raiders have ships or belong to a drakkar crew. After all, there are many more sky raiders than there are berths aboard the airships of Barsaive. Thus, a sky raider must earn his position on a drakkar crew.

Once a sky raider is granted a berth, her definition of *kat'ral* changes. She defines her crewmates as members of her "clan," whether or not they are related to her by blood. But she also defines the ship itself as part of her clan. A slight against a sky raider's ship is a slight against her own honor, both *katorr* and *kat'ral*. She will—she must—redress any such insult! This is why sky raiders feel such seemingly inordinate pride in the appearance and skyworthiness of their ship. Their drakkar is a visible manifestation of their own honor. A dirty, ill-maintained ship reflects a crew that lacks personal honor.

Once a sky raider has become part of a drakkar's crew, she will give her life to protect her ship. For losing that ship—

whether or not through fault of her own—is the greatest of all dishonors. A sky raider who has joined a ship's company and then loses that ship is dispossessed and disgraced.

[Many sky raiders who travel with adventuring groups view their fellow adventurers as crewmates for the purposes of *kat'ral*. The Name and the pattern of the adventuring group take the place of the ship in the sky raider's world view. Slight against the group are taken as personal insults. Once a sky raider has joined a group, to lose that group—for whatever reason—leaves her "dispossessed and disgraced," as Blays describes above.

—Thom Edrull]

THE READER MUST BE AWARE THAT THIS IS MERIENNE BLAYS'S PERSONAL APPROACH. SOME SKY RAIDERS MAY SHARE HER COURSE; OTHERS MAY CHART A DIFFERENT ROUTE.

—MERROX

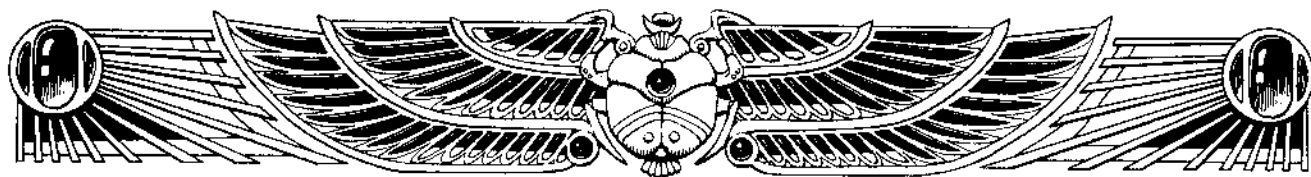
AN INTERESTING CONTRAST, IS IT NOT? A CONTRAST AND A CONTRADICTION. CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HOLDS THAT SKY RAIDERS ARE CAPRICIOUSNESS PERSONIFIED. YET IT ALSO HOLDS THAT A SKY RAIDER'S WORD, ONCE GIVEN, IS BINDING. ...

—THOM EDRULL

THIS IS TRUE EVEN WHEN THE DRAKKAR IS OWNED BY A TROLL SKY RAIDER'S HOME MOOT. TO RECEIVE A BERTH AS A CREW MEMBER IS A GREAT HONOR, AND ONE THAT IS NOT BESTOWED LIGHTLY.

—CHAG SKAT





A TYPICALLY TROLL
VIEW OF THE
WORLD. I MUST
REMARK.
SOMETHING ABOUT
THE DISCIPLINE OF
THE SKY RAIDER
CARRIES WITH IT A
TROLL APPROACH
TO LIFE. HUMANS,
EVEN DWARFS WHO
FOLLOW THIS
DISCIPLINE SEEM,
IN MANY WAYS, TO
BECOME LIKE
SMALLER VERSIONS
OF TROLLS.
—THOM EDRIILL

ON RAIDING

Why do sky raiders raid? A common question. Some claim that sky raiders are heartless, soulless raptors who will kill and destroy to take from another. But we do not view ourselves this way. (I, at least, do not view myself this way.) As we are responsible for our own fortunes, so too are our foes responsible for theirs. In essence, we believe that others are worthy of possessing something—land, food, wealth, even life itself—only if they can defend that possession. Our raids grant our foes the opportunity to prove they are worthy. If our foes fight well but fall, we respect them. If they defeat us and drive us off, we respect them. Only if they fail to fight do we fail to respect them. Our foes do us honor when they fight to repel our raids. To simply surrender—to give up without a fight—is to abdicate their own honor and do us a mortal insult in the process!

That is why we do not hate other moots or clans who raid ours. We defend what we have to the death; we kill those who assail us. But we do not hate them, even as we slay them. If we go down to defeat, it is our responsibility. Our failure—our death—weighs on us, not on those who attacked us.

OF SKY RAIDERS AND THE PASSIONS

Ask one outside our Discipline which Passion sky raiders revere above all others, and the answer will almost universally be Thystonius. This Passion receives due reverence from many sky raiders because personal honor and valor—ideals of Thystonius—are closely held in many of our hearts. Our zest for living, our love of the opportunity to prove ourselves against threats and

challenges—these things echo the precepts of Thystonius.

Yet think on it. From what I have told you, what other Passion would find a place in our hearts?

If you ventured Lochost, you are right. For Lochost is the patron of rebellion, change and freedom. Lochost strives ever against enslavement—whether physical enslavement as practiced by the hated Therans, or mental and emotional enslavement represented by the restrictive societies of the lowlands. To be enslaved—physically or otherwise—is, for a sky raider, a fate worse than death. There is no more heinous crime against us than to deny us the ability to be *galan'kaharr*. Do you understand that, my friend? Better to kill us than to enslave our bodies or our souls.

ON TRAINING

Trolls generally enter the sky raider Discipline through their trollmoot. Many highland moots have their own drakkars, and young trolls who wish to follow the Discipline of the sky raider will dedicate themselves early on to earning a berth aboard these vessels. Trolls from outside a moot are sometimes invited to join the Discipline, though only those who have already proven themselves in combat and shown the honor and sense of responsibility that distinguish sky raiders. Such *newots*, even once they have been accepted into the Discipline, must still prove themselves worthy of a berth aboard the moot's vessel, of course.

And what of *no'a'ul* such as myself? The usual avenues for joining the sky raider Discipline are denied to us. We are part of no trollmoot, and no troll sky raider would deign to seek out *no'a'ul* candidates for membership in the Discipline. In all but the most exceptional of cases, we must seek out an instructor and convince him or her to accept us as student and would-be adept.

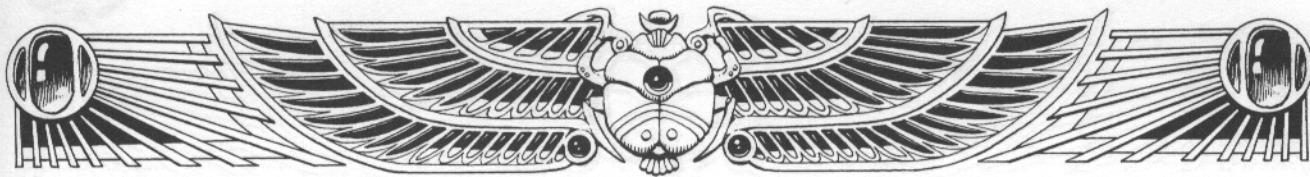
It is true, my friend, that few *no'a'ul* become sky raiders. How could it be otherwise? So few outside the troll race understand what it is to be a sky raider. Why would someone seek to follow a Discipline that he cannot fully understand?

Yet there are those—I among them—who feel the stirrings of personal honor and responsibility in their souls when they are children, who understood—imperfectly, it is true, and without knowing the correct word—the concept of *galan'kaharr*. These few sometimes learn enough of the Discipline to understand that only within its ways can they find true soul-mates, fellows who share their view of the world. These would-be sky raiders usually have little choice but to trek to the highlands and locate a trollmoot where sky raiders are trained. Then they must find an instructor and impress him with their desire to join the Discipline.

How? Almost invariably by combat, of course.

THE WORD *NO'A'UL*
IS A TROLL
DESIGNATION—NOT
NECESSARILY
INSULTING, BUT
NOT OVERLY
RESPECTFUL
EITHER—FOR
MEMBERS OF
OTHER NAME-GIVER
RACES (EXCEPT FOR
OBSIDIEN, OF
COURSE, WHO ARE
REFERRED TO AS
AGO'AL (ROCK
BROTHERS).
—THOM EDRIILL





I myself located my mentor among the members of a moot in the Twilight Peaks. A large and grizzled troll, he was, renowned for his ferocity in combat and his unshakable sense of honor. I told him what I wished from him—indoctrination in the sky raider Discipline—and he laughed in my face. So I challenged him to single combat then and there.

He refused my challenge! (This was the most insulting action he could possibly have taken, of course.) So I hurled myself at his throat, disdaining the weapons that hung on my belt, and I tried my level best to slay him.

The outcome was preordained, of course. It took me a fortnight to recover from the drubbing I received. Throughout my convalescence, however, I bore my wounds with a stoicism that must have impressed him. When I could walk and wield a weapon again, he came to me and asked me if I would undertake a challenge. I accepted immediately, without asking the nature of that challenge. (I understand now that this was the turning point in our relationship. Had I asked to know the challenge before I accepted, I do not believe he would have offered me training.)

My challenge was to stage a raid—alone!—against a neighboring earthbound clan. I was to assault their moothome and return with a trophy: a weapon taken from the hand of one of the moothome's guards! Only when I returned with that trophy—and return I did, my friend, bloody and scarred but triumphant—did my mentor agree to undertake my training.

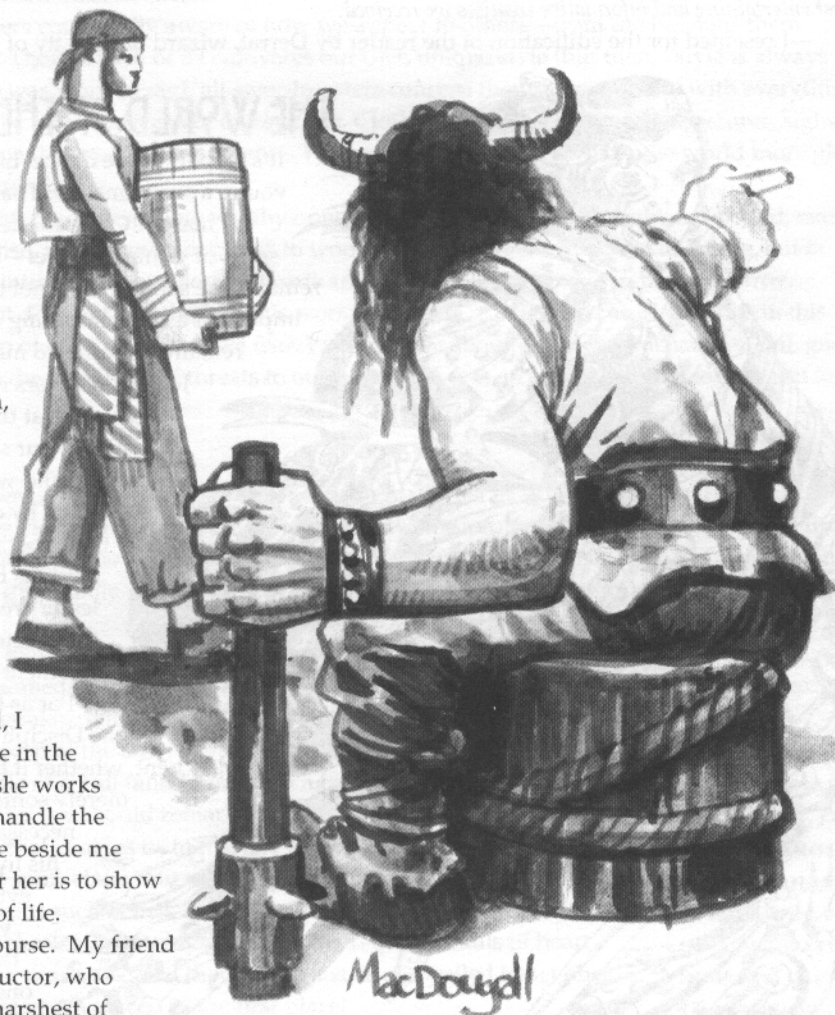
CONCERNING ONGOING TRAINING

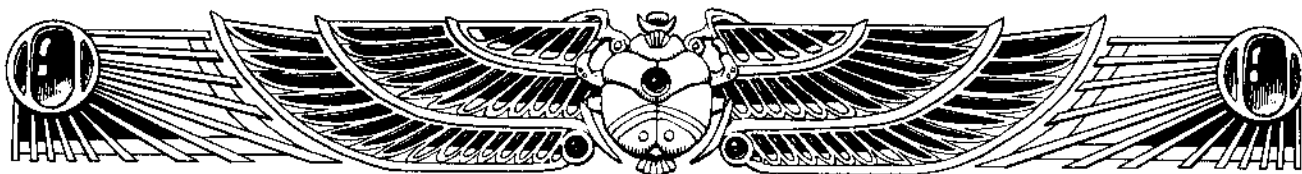
In the years since, I have enjoyed the honor of training sky raiders of lower Circles than myself. (The greatest honor has come when trolls—not fellow *no'a'ul* like myself—have come to me requesting instruction!) The principle that I have followed—which I learned from my first instructor—is that the responsibility for learning lies with the student, not with the instructor. The student must decide what specific skills and talents she needs to learn, and then the student petitions her instructor for the training she requires. While I may provide guidance if specifically asked, it is not my place to decide how a student's training is to proceed.

I believe wholeheartedly that the greatest service I can provide to a student is to teach by example. When the drakkar on which I serve undertakes a raid, I will invite my student to fight alongside me in the fray. When we labor to maintain the ship, she works alongside me. When my duty leads me to handle the rigging or take the tiller, my student will be beside me there as well. The greatest lesson I can offer her is to show how a true sky raider faces the challenges of life.

Not all elders follow this scheme, of course. My friend E'Tal Goldeneye tells me that his first instructor, who recruited him into the Discipline, was the harshest of taskmasters, ordering E'Tal around as though he was a hand servant.

This elder constantly set him to undertake menial tasks and exhausting exercises and punished him for even the slightest flaw in his performance. For months E'Tal labored under his harsh discipline, striving to prove himself worthy to be declared a member of First Circle. On the day that E'Tal finally refused his teacher's orders and declared that this servitude was unacceptable, the elder smiled and said, "You have passed the test. Now you are a true sky raider!"





THE DANCE OF THE SWORDMASTER

The following entry was supplied by the swordmaster Elizabetta of Kaer Adelaide, who won the bragging rights at the most recent swordmaster Grand Tourney for her inspired and impeccably timed double thrust against Kevor the Unimpressed. Her brilliant riposte in response to his cleverly worded attack against her wit actually threw off Kevor's timing and allowed Elizabetta to cut away the fasteners of his shirt in one clean stroke. The Royal Library was honored by the swordmaster's cooperation with our project, for she supplied one of the most entertaining and informative treatises we received.

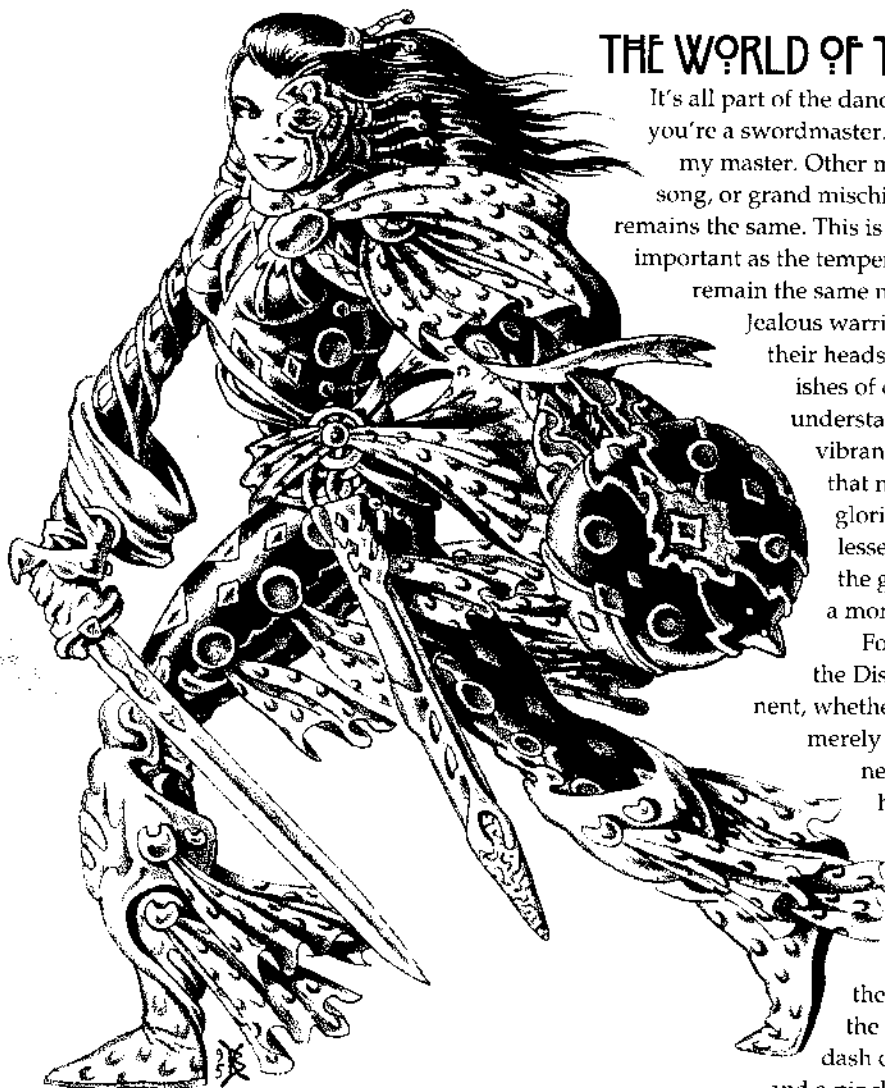
—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

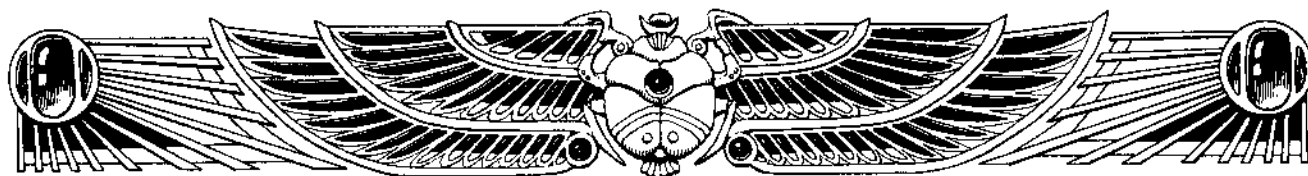
THE WORLD OF THE SWORDMASTER

It's all part of the dance! Live or die, it's all part of the dance when you're a swordmaster. That is the first lesson I learned at the knee of my master. Other masters may claim it is all part of the tale, or song, or grand mischief—but no matter the wording, the meaning remains the same. This is not to say that the crafting of words is not as important as the tempering of your blade—far from it! Yet, basic truths remain the same no matter what frippery decorates them.

Jealous warriors may scoff at our witty repartee and shake their heads at the elaborate spins of our bodies and flourishes of our swords. The besotted miscreants will never understand what it is to live in a world made more vibrant by one's very presence in it! It is no wonder that most warriors dismiss us as overblown, vain-glorious blowhards. What the rheumy eyes of these lesser creatures perceive as flaws, we know to be the greatest merits of all. Allow me to elaborate for a moment on our philosophy.

For as long as I have danced in the footsteps of the Discipline, I have known that slaying an opponent, whether it be the foulest gore-spattered Horror or merely some backstabbing rogue in a dark alley, is a necessary evil. You wonder how one who makes his living by the sword can view its results as evil? Ah, but should you ask that question you have missed the point entirely. For though the act of killing may be as base as a one-course meal of birch broth, the act can be elevated to an art by a swordmaster. We are the chefs of the sword, the iron-wielding elite of the blade! We carefully add our ingredients: a dash of acrobatics, a dollop of wit, a trace of timing, and a pinch of élan, until we have transformed that lowly birch broth into a nine-course feast!





Our swords are extensions of our bodies and our souls, but by themselves they mean little. For competing bravely in a tournament, exchanging witty repartee and pirouetting leaps with one's opponents, is pointless if one hunches silently in the meanest corner of the inn that evening. Battles, as with life itself, only hold meaning when shared with others. Even mean competition can be elevated in the sharing, but what about when the battle itself is glorious? Well, then, such an encounter—whether it was won or lost—adds to the world's glory. Just as all Name-givers create art to ward off Horror-taint, so too does creating glory from a tainted act serve to ward off the evil surrounding us. The swordmaster's craft is a golden shield we hold forth to protect our world, and what could be more heroic than that? Merely to think on it sets my t'skrang heart to singing!

You can see that our swords are more truly weapons of wit than of war. The troubadour practices an honorable profession, but those adepts only tell the tale, whereas we swordmasters create the tales we tell. And so every situation in the swordmaster's life is a tableau fraught with possibilities for swashbuckling adventure, torrid romance, and great acts of heroism. Even such a mundane act as entering an inn can be made grand if one possesses style, and no Name-giver in water, earth, or air knows more of style than the swordmasters.

This love of style makes us swordmasters continually aware of how we appear to others—from the Passions themselves to the cows chewing cud by the trail. Though each of us cultivates our own unique style (but then, "style is always singular, never plural!" as Liltling Phineous was wont to say), all swordmasters concern themselves equally with everything from the smallest details of appearance to the largest sweeps of our swords. Clothing, stance, walk, words, gestures, sighs—all are necessary accouterments to draw to us the eyes of our audience. We must always strive to make the world more glorious, more virtuous, more true, by our presence in it.

This belief also explains why swordmasters so often allow worthy opponents whom they have fought and bested, even many times over, to live to see another sunrise, to hear another poem, to woo another lover. We trade not in killing, but in theater! We are artists sworn to craft our paintings with our bodies, hearts and minds. We live to create, not to destroy. Though our art may begin with the sword, it does not end there. If this world of ours is to grow ever more glorious in this new time, then we must not fall into the trap of becoming what we fear. We must rise above our own penchant for evil, great and small, while we remain ever-vigilant to the multitude of threats to our fair world. It is an existence to be envied, is it not?

LIFE AS A SWORDMASTER

If life is a dance, then the swordmaster is most certainly the belle of the ball. Just as our opulent finery and actions draw the attention of others to us, so does the world continually draw our attention to opportunities for saving a life or puncturing the so-called wit of a bore lacking his fair share of manners. Likewise, when faced with a dramatic situation in which our presence might prove invaluable in some way, most swordmasters find it impossible to keep from interceding.

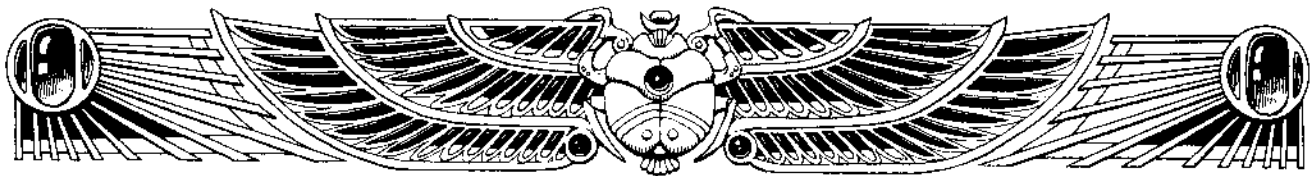
Many times this need to speak against injustices, to berate the morally bankrupt or leap to the aid of the weak, ends in our employing the skills for which we are named. Yet, on other occasions, we are drawn to less military solutions. I recall the time I first set eyes on young Captain Fettalan, with his dark cloak and iridescent green scales ... what adventures can begin with a single sweep of the tail!

But before I get carried away in that Tale of a Tail (and I must that admit Captain Fettalan, who is an excellent troubadour, tells it far better than I), I should remark that it is a measure of the swordmaster's perspicacity, our keen perception, that enables us to identify injustices that others might not so easily recognize. True, some disgruntled souls claim that we create dramatic situations from thin air, but they would not—and could not—claim such beliefs if those unfortunate ones could even briefly see the world through our eyes. For those of you who sadly lack the required skills of heart, mind and body to become swordmasters, let me assure you that we are just as compelled to act once we witness an injustice as we are to recognize such a need in the first place!

Thus, life for a swordmaster is a series of daring escapades. When we are not throwing ourselves into the midst of adventure, we are girding for our next such encounter, or exchanging stories of previous exploits. Yet throughout all of this, we spend time learning and rehearsing the dance. The physical, mental, and emotional skills required of a swordmaster are such that daily practice is a necessity we cannot long forego, lest the skills we have fought so long and hard to attain begin to dull.

ELIZABETTA SPEAKS
AN IMPORTANT
TRUTH HERE, FOR THE
SKILLED ARM OF
A SWORDMASTER
IS LIKE A POT OF
BOILING WATER.
REMOVE IT FROM
THE FIRE OF
PRACTICE AND IT
BECOMES COLD.
—JONTAR,
SWORDMASTER OF
OPAR





ON FINDING ONE'S PATH

Swordmasters throughout the ages have woven their threads to many of the legendary swords in our world. Though all magic interests a swordmaster, most of us wend our ways through life keeping at least half an eye on the quest to find and then bind our patterns to our perfect sword.

I know that many non-swordmasters find this idea hard to fathom, but most swordmasters believe that somewhere in the world there exists a magical sword that he alone (at least in this era) was meant to wield. Finding a soul sword and learning all its most intimate secrets—and then working with the weapon to create an even greater legend—is the most important quest of all swordmasters. You may ask how we can tell that we have found *the* sword. I have not found mine yet, but I have been told many times that I will recognize it the moment I see it—perhaps even the moment I first hear its Name. It is undeniable that the most famous swordmasters have been known as much for their swords as for themselves, and that both sword and master together weave themselves into legend.

THE IMPORTANCE OF
A SWORDMASTER'S
BLADE CAN BE STATED
IN THE SIMPLE
WORDS OF THE
ANCIENT MAXIM,
"THE SWORD
MAKES THE MAN."
—RULDO OF URUPA

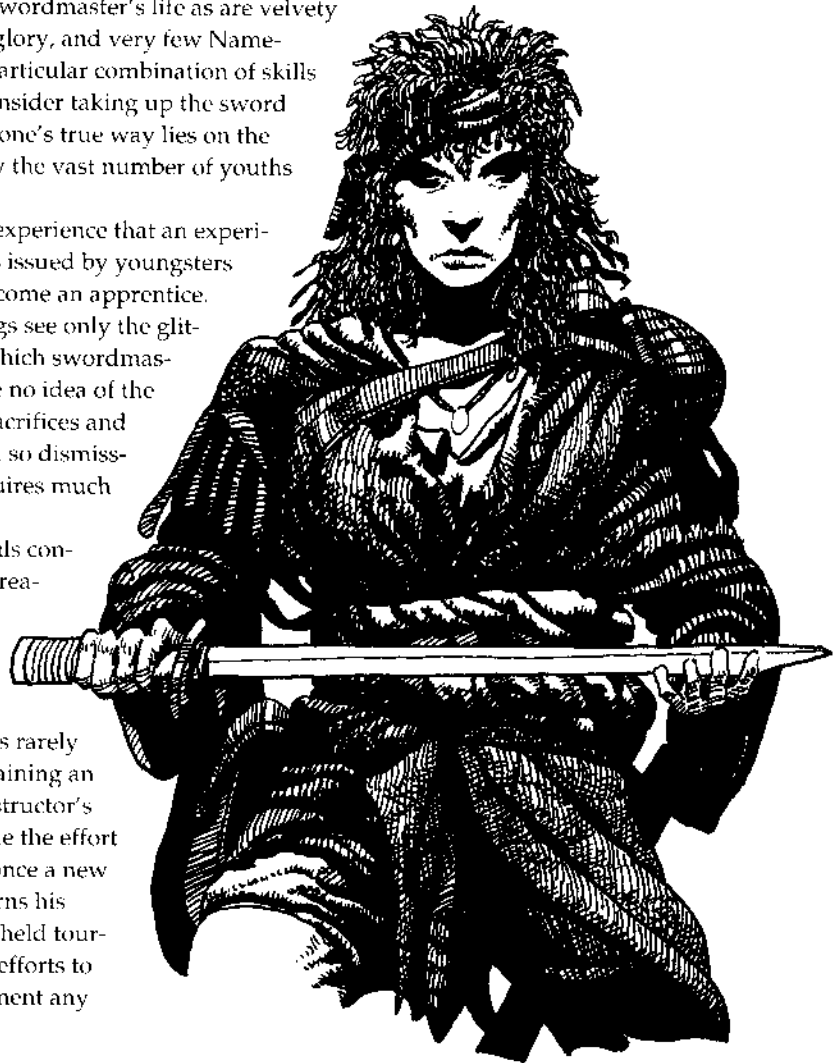
ON THE ART OF TRAINING

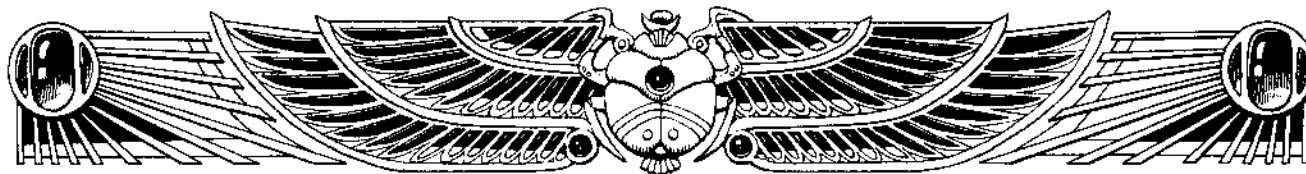
Long, hard, dusty, sweaty hours of labor are just as much a part of the swordmaster's life as are velvety words and leaping glory, and very few Name-givers possess the particular combination of skills

that makes it possible for them to even consider taking up the sword and following our Discipline. Learning if one's true way lies on the Glorious Road is made doubly difficult by the vast number of youths who dream of joining our ranks.

I can tell you from copious personal experience that an experienced swordmaster often faces challenges issued by youngsters who believe they have what it takes to become an apprentice. Of course, all too many of these younglings see only the glittering, glib ease and effortlessness with which swordmasters seem to move through life. They have no idea of the grime behind the glitter, of the constant sacrifices and effort needed to achieve such results. And so dismissing the most callow aspirants seldom requires much effort.

Even the masses of promising hopefuls contain few swordmasters. This is one of the reasons most swordmasters require that their apprentices promise to teach at least as many pupils during their lifetimes as years the apprentice spends under his master's training. Swordmasters rarely train more than one pupil at a time, for training an apprentice requires far too much of an instructor's energy and attention to successfully divide the effort between multiple students. Fortunately, once a new swordmaster reaches the First Circle ("earns his sword," in the vernacular) the frequently held tournaments and contests, as well as his own efforts to train new apprentices, admirably supplement any additional training his master provides.





TAKING UP THE GAUNTLET

What is it that prompts a swordmaster to take on a particular pupil? It varies from adept to adept, but most aspirants to the Discipline would undoubtedly be surprised to learn that quick wit and a certain feistiness of spirit might be considered of greater importance than raw physical skill. This is not to say that swordmasters will accept candidates who lack dexterity. Far from it! It is rather to say that the physical skills required in a potential apprentice are more common—and easier to teach—than the vigor, the innate sense of style and imagination that attracts a master's attention.

Such élan is nigh impossible to fake, and it shows itself in different ways with different candidates. This may be why some masters instruct a would-be apprentice to seek out a particular swordmaster to challenge. We all favor a particular style, and most of us can recognize the true gift even if it runs counter to our own preferences. Thus, though I willingly teach particularly acrobatic youths who are equally eager to enter into a duel of wits as one of many weapons, another master may favor the youth with brilliant sword strokes who continually plays to the audience. Of course, the recruit need not best the swordmaster in a duel to be accepted as an apprentice, else we would soon have no more swordmasters!

If the would-be apprentice manages to impress the swordmaster with his potential, the swordmaster may "throw down his gauntlet" (a glove or other token) and offer his services as a trainer. By "taking up the gauntlet," the apprentice begins his new life as a swordman. Older adepts often ask each other when they "took up the gauntlet," and a certain kinship often springs up among those who began their training in the same year. (It is tradition that when an adept discovers a compatriot of the same gauntlet year, he buys him a drink in honor of their brotherhood.)

THE TRIPLED BLADES

Once accepted as an apprentice swordmaster, the recruit begins training. Most achieve First Circle after three years, though this basic training time varies widely. More talented or experienced recruits may reach First Circle after a few months, while others train for up to six years, which for us is the maximum length of apprenticeship.

Different masters favor different training styles. And though every swordmaster uses unique variations in training his apprentices, almost all fall under one of the following three training philosophies, known as the Tripled Blades.

Flattery

It is often said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and swordmasters who favor this style of training take this saying to heart. An adept trained in this manner learns his Discipline by imitating the verbal and physical stylings of his master. The recruit must learn to successfully imitate everything about his teacher, from how to dress and turn a phrase, to the type of sword and the parry-thrust combinations his master favors. Adepts trained in this manner are often among the most avid tournament goers, as they usually build their own styles by combining skills and ideas learned directly from other swordmasters.

The Foil

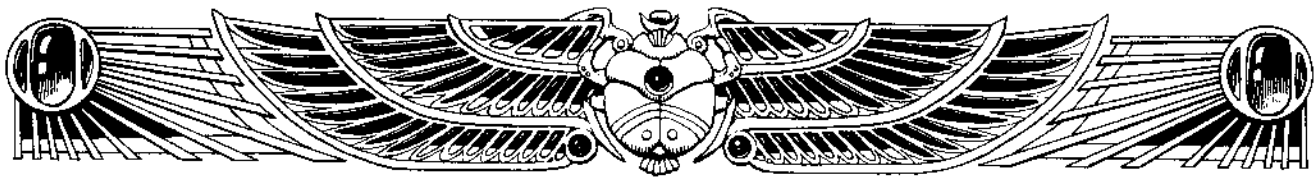
The foil style of training may well be the most common of all forms. Here, recruits are taught to use their budding skills as a foil on which their master can build. The apprentice becomes the master's constant companion and uses his master's verbal cues and physical ripostes as pegs on which to hang his own skills of word and weapon. Likewise, he learns to provide openings that allow his teacher to wield his own skills more admirably. The foil style of training often produces adepts with skills and habits reminiscent of, but still distinct from, their masters'.

Contention

The final approach of the basic training styles is undoubtedly the least common. Swordmasters who favor the contention training style tend to be stern teachers, punishing students who make errors with harsh behavior. Though this style is frowned on by some swordmasters as stunting the vigor of recruits, it has been known to produce some very impressive young swordmasters.

In the contention style of training, the master continually challenges his pupil. The swordmaster goes over a skill a few times or, in some instances, simply tells the recruit to learn it. Just when the apprentice believes he is getting a handle on the skill or idea, the master challenges him in the most brutal way possible. Has the recruit just learned a new leap and parry combination? Why then, the master leaps at the pupil, sword in hand, just as the poor apprentice is finishing supper. Has the recruit recently begun to show a more biting wit? If so, he will undoubtedly soon be recovering from a blazing string of





scathing insults. Though this method may seem harsh, certain apprentices thrive on the constant challenge, their anger and fear only tempering their resolve to become full-fledged swordmasters.

Regardless of specific training styles, the apprentice learns much of philosophy, style and etiquette during the course of training—even while slaving away at the exacting dances, thrusts, and parries that are the more blatant tools of the

Discipline. Apprentices must learn to wield each of the three blades (“eyes to pierce, tongue to lash and sword to slash”) with equal facility. Such skills are practiced everywhere once the recruit begins his apprenticeship, but it is at the tournaments and contests that swordmasters can truly stretch their budding skills and hone those they have begun to master.

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—ELVORKA OF
TERRIS

OF TOURNAMENTS AND TALES

On hills and in dales, along riverbanks and in town commons, swordmasters regularly hold loosely organized tournaments. (A tournament must have at least nine competitors to qualify as a tournament, and not merely a challenge.) At least a dozen specific tournaments take place each year in Barsaive, the largest and most famous being the Grand Tourney, held at midsummer just outside of Bartertown. Swordmasters from across the continent travel to Bartertown each summer to compete in the various contests held at this most prestigious event.

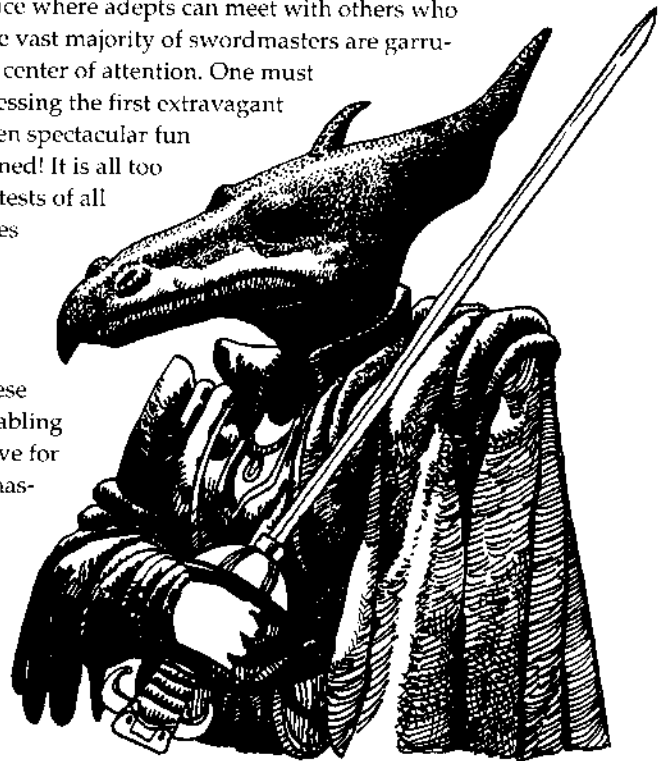
Tournaments offer swordmasters a number of different opportunities. Perhaps most importantly, tournaments provide a place where adepts can meet with others who share our unique view of the world. The vast majority of swordmasters are garrulous, social beings who adore being the center of attention. One must

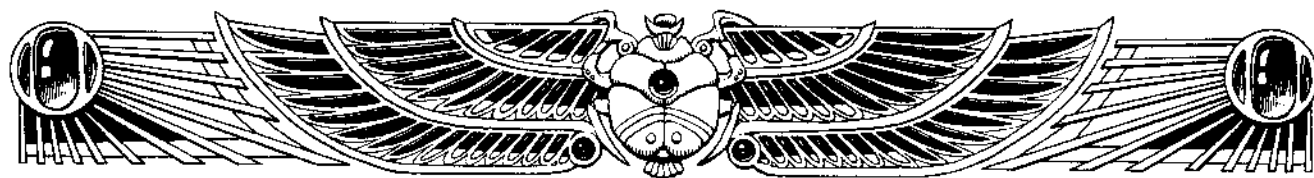
rarely wait more than an hour into a tournament before witnessing the first extravagant stories and daring leaps from balconies. Tournaments are often spectacular fun for other Name-givers observing the competition, but be warned! It is all too easy to be caught up in any one of a number of unofficial contests of all types which we swordmasters use to continually test ourselves and each other.

Official events at tournaments usually include a few swordless competitions testing agility (long and high jumps) and wit (challenges of repartee), but most events revolve around sword fights that test all the swordmasters' skills. These events fulfill the second major purpose of tournaments by enabling swordmasters to rise through the Circles of the Discipline. Save for those lucky enough to find a ghost master, almost all swordmaster adepts rise in Circles in this manner.

Rising through the lower ranks of Circles merely requires that the adept display proficiency in the proper skills over the course of the tournament. Reaching the upper Circles requires the adept to overcome far greater difficulties. In these cases, the swordmaster must prove himself capable of defeating multiple opponents of his current Circle in dramatic combat. Often, the adept begins the contest at some sort of a disadvantage (for example, having one hand tied behind his back) or with an additional task (rescuing a “captive”) he must accomplish during the fight. When attempting to attain the very highest Circles, the odds against a single candidate can be truly overwhelming. I had the great good fortune to witness the troll swordmaster, Aldaric the Unbowed, successfully defeat eighty opponents in the course of a single battle to reach the Ninth Circle. And Aldaric began the competition at the bottom of a well!

Unfortunately for our Discipline, favoritism sometimes creeps into tournaments to give unfair advantage to swordmasters attempting to reach the higher Circles. Ideally, a swordmaster of Fifth Circle or higher should be truly brilliant with his weapon, regardless of the other skills he possesses. Still, the more influential masters who decide close matches occasionally allow less physically adept, but more popular, swordsmen to advance to higher Circles without obtaining the proper level





of skill. Ah, well, I suppose it is not surprising that such favoritism occurs in a Discipline so full of vainglorious sods as ours.

BRAGGING RIGHTS

Each tournament has its own peculiar traditions and customs. However, I have never heard of a tournament that does not bestow bragging rights on one of its contestants. Quite simply, whomever the tournament judges deem to have performed the single most memorable accomplishment at the tournament that year wins the tournament's bragging rights. The action need not occur during the course of an official contest, though it most often does. For example, the right witticism delivered with impeccable timing at the inn has been known to win bragging rights for the swordsman who spoke it. A swordmaster with bragging rights gains a certain amount of esteem from any adepts who participated in the tournament. Additionally, etiquette demands that an adept who holds bragging rights be allowed first stab at a quest or task or in the event that a dispute occurs between two adepts. Bragging rights last until the next time that tournament is held. Of course, the larger and more prestigious the tournament, the greater the honor of possessing its bragging rights. (I might humbly remind the reader that the Grand Tourney is *the* most prestigious!)

ON SPECIALISTS

Certain swordmasters emphasize one or two aspects of the Discipline over all others. These adepts are known as specialists. Though a number of different swordmaster specialists roam the length of Barsaive, the two most common are undoubtedly the gallant and the bladesman.

ON THE GALLANT

Swordmasters who use our Discipline's particular talents to build romantic, dashing reputations are called gallants. They focus their energies almost exclusively on aiding members of the opposite sex. Such aid might take the form of a quest or defense of another's honor, but some gallants seem even more interested in being admired than admiring. These particular adepts tend toward handsomeness of form and feature, but a surprising number are actually quite plain. In fact, their tremendous charisma serves these adepts far better than their physical appearances.

Even in the thick of the deadliest of battles, the gallant swordmaster remains acutely aware of his image. When it comes to wit, most gallants excel at flirtatious or amorous banter. I knew one such adept who flattered and cajoled his way straight into the Theran headquarters in Vivane to challenge the current military leader to a duel. In fact, fewer than eight Theran and several Throalic women are said to have fainted away when the handsome elven gallant, Named Julian, received a scratch on his shoulder.

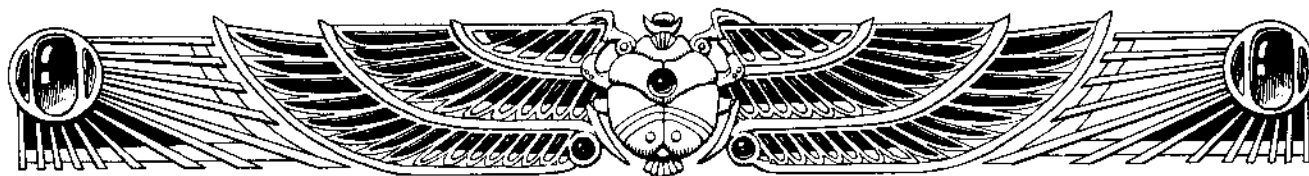
ON THE BLADESMAN

The bladesman specialist is less concerned with words and wit than most swordmasters. Indeed, some bladesmen can actually be characterized as rather quiet, both in battle and in repose. Bladesmen swordmasters communicate their intentions with their swords, and the results can be truly breathtaking—even to other swordmasters. Hour after hour, day after day, the bladesman practices a dizzying array of acrobatic and swashbuckling skills. These swordmasters are true masters of the dance and devote themselves utterly to it, often at the expense of their relationships with others of their Discipline. Undoubtedly, this explains the difficulties bladesmen sometimes encounter when attempting to rise to higher Circles. They simply lack the usual political contacts, thus they receive no favors. As a result, most bladesmen swordmasters must rely exclusively on their fighting skills to reach the higher Circles of the Discipline.

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GALLANTS.
—DEVERCAUX
OF THROAL.

SUCH CHAUVINISM
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FOR THIS REASON,
HE WILL ALWAYS BE
MORE IMPORTANT
THAN HIS VERBOSE
COUSIN, THE
GALLANT
SWORDMASTER.
—B'NAR OF BELLAN





THE GIFT OF THEFT



The following document is a distillation of several interviews held with Kosooti, noted windling thief. As windlings are unwilling to commit any important thoughts to paper—a most misguided belief, I must say—the interviews were conducted by Obon Awles, an apprentice librarian under my tutelage here at the Hall of Records. Our scribe has endeavored to preserve the distinctive stylings of Kosooti's speech.

Incidentally, if any readers happen to have a means of contacting Kosooti, Obon would like it known that he greatly desires the return of a certain medallion, a family heirloom of great sentimental value.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derratt, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

To steal! This is the greatest thrill in all of existence! To take something that is not meant to be taken, to laugh in the face of foolish rules and laws!—all else pales in comparison. Do not let silly sayings about the virtue of hard work and honesty confuse you. Pilfered fruit tastes the sweetest, and the gem stolen from the turban of an enraged troll merchant shines brighter than one gained through toil and sweat!

The way of the thief is the original way of the adept. All Disciplines have stolen their ways from the way of the thief. For is not the way of the adept the way of magically taking from the world abilities that would otherwise be learned only through years of perspiration and effort? We merely pluck these talents from the air, with the swiftness and ease of a stealthy child plucking peaches from the trees of a

neighboring village. All of us who tread the adept's way are thieves.

Though some of the others would hotly deny this, they have lost touch with their origins and think they are better than we. Let them believe what they will. Their self-delusion is one property I have no interest in taking from them. But listen up, scribe, and I will give you a gift; the gift of insight.

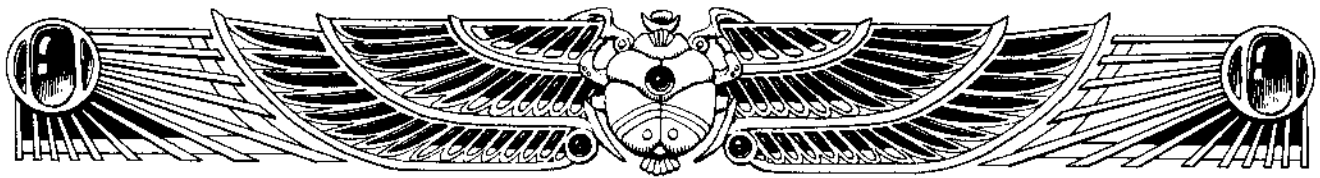
You look at me with suspicion, stuffy dwarfling. I pick your thoughts as I might pick your pocket. You believe that thieves do not give, they only take. What you do not understand is that the act of taking is the greatest gift of all.

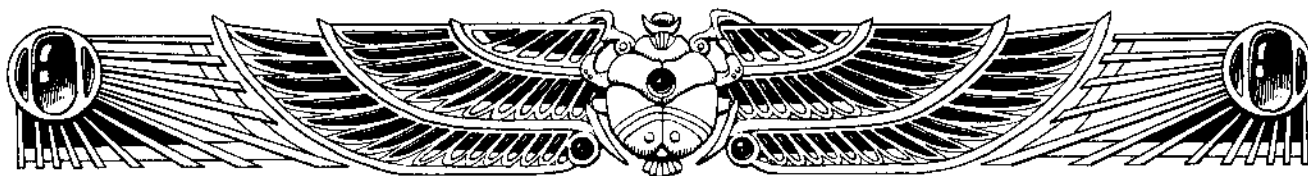
Allow me to explain.

ON THE TYRANNY OF POSSESSION

Look at you, stuffy dwarfling. You sit before me, decked out in what passes for gaudy finery among your dowdy kind—a colorful hat, with dyed peacock feather; a modest yet no doubt expensive tunic of velvet, one that cries out,







"Quality"; fine leggings, exquisite leather boots; a medallion of rubies and gold that would choke a dragon. Even the pen you write with is of the finest ivory, intricately carved by a master artisan of my people.

Well, mark my words, stuffy one: your finery is not armor—it is a cage. Your possessions trap you, weigh you down, stunt the growth of your soul. You have become your possessions, for every one of your hopes has become wrapped up in what you own.

No! Do not attempt to deny it. There is no shame in this attitude—well, perhaps there is, but it is a shame shared by many denizens of Barsaive. Many Name-givers must claim this common failing; they believe that they are what they own. Fine goods and possessions are thought to attract lovers, win friends, and prove one's value in the world. What lamentable folly! It is your thoughts, your actions, your dreams, your memories that define you and create true worth.

So when the thief steals your money, she takes not only your possessions or your coin. She takes your delusion and so gives you truth. Those who do not understand this gift brand us as scoundrels, it is true. Why, some poor benighted souls actually believe that stealing is *evil*! We who follow the Discipline of the thief simply shrug at such quaint notions, for a true thief does not expect gratitude for her gifts. She gives for the joy of it.

ON FORGING ALLIANCES

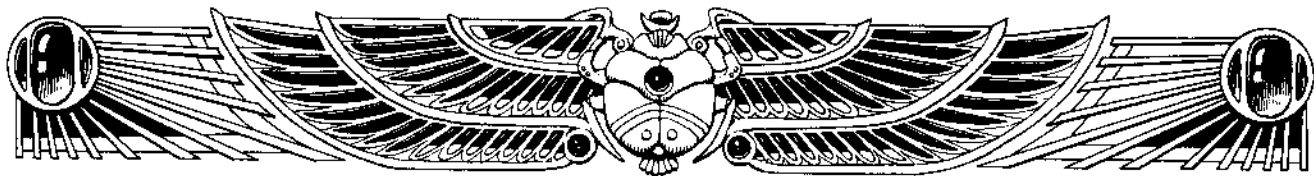
Because we are misunderstood by so many, false beliefs about thieves abound in Barsaive. But perhaps the most absurd untruth contends that thieves lead sad and lonely lives, deprived by their Discipline of the companionship of others. What foolishness! Why, I could stack my friends and allies up against those of any other Name-giver and not come up wanting, I assure you. Yes, it is true that those thieves who follow the path of selfishness—of which I shall speak more—shield themselves from the love of others and draw strength from their solitude. But many more of us are as gregarious as a whushah fly in blooming season—and most delightful company, as you surely must agree! We are fully capable of sustaining profitable alliances with others, of keeping our word, and of tying our vital threads to Name-givers we love and esteem. I myself have ritually bound myself to the destiny of an adventuring band known as The Seven Equals. Our number contains exemplars of many different races and Disciplines, and they all trust me with their lives, as I trust them with mine.

Just because a thief lives to steal, does not mean she must steal from everyone. Myself, I prefer to steal from the too-haughty Therans, from drooling Horrors and their corrupt servants, and from the long dead, who shall scarcely miss their coins and jewels. And, of course, from those in great spiritual need of the gift of theft. Still, many wrong-thinking Name-givers continue to believe that we thieves have less self-control than others who walk magical pathways. But I can as easily resist the urge to steal the hard-won silver of my comrades as can a warrior resist the urge to stab his brother, or a wizard refrain from casting a mind-ripping hex on his mother. Like other adepts, we choose our targets with care. It would be stupid to betray my fellows through petty theft: together we have done many great deeds and built a legend greater than any of us could have done alone. Thieves are not stupid. Not the live ones, anyway.

It is true that some adventuring bands are reluctant to recruit thieves as companions. This is their great loss. For the way of the thief provides many abilities beyond the mere lifting of purses and pilfering of coppers, abilities that have proved vital to many a legendary endeavor. Think on it. What good is finding a chest inside a deep and musty kaer if there is no one to seduce its lock, to steal into the heart of the mechanism and coax it open? And what adventuring band has never needed someone to stalk soundlessly into an enemy camp for an unnoted reconnoiter? What crime is it to steal from a hidden, ancient blade the secret of its location and spare one's comrades from its thirst for blood? And how often do activities of adventurers lead them into intrigue and the machinations of the powerful? In such situations, can one begrudge the thief her ability to don the garb of others and rob the foe of treasured confidences? And the usefulness of an unexpected dagger thrust between the shoulder blades of a vengeful nethermancer should be beyond question to any thinking adventurer. Yes, the thief is to be coveted as an ally: better to draw us to your bosom than cast us out. Unless, of course, you wish us to feel justified in liberating your goods from you.

Likewise, the wise thief values the abilities of trusted associates more than any purloined bauble. I can swing a scabbard with more than passable facility, but prefer to leave such matters up to the true experts, warriors and swordmasters. Likewise, I am glad to have spellcasters to rely upon when magical obstacles obscure my path. This is mere common sense, which all assume any adventurer—save the thief—possesses as a matter of course. Mere prejudice prevents every Name-giver from seeing that the thief's sense of reason is no more clouded than that of any other adept.





And so, despite the fact that our actions alone keep this world from sinking into a mire of greed, where only the rich have money and the poor have nothing, Name-givers in many quarters think ill of us. This is inconvenient at times, but it also becomes part of the challenge. And thievery would contain no thrill were it an easy pursuit.

FINDING A MASTER

How does the young Name-giver who wishes to pursue the path of the thief find a mentor? Unlike a weaponsmith or troubadour, a thief is not wise to announce her Discipline to all who approach, for outside of Kratas few villages welcome thieves. And so finding a mentor becomes the first test of the would-be thief. He must be

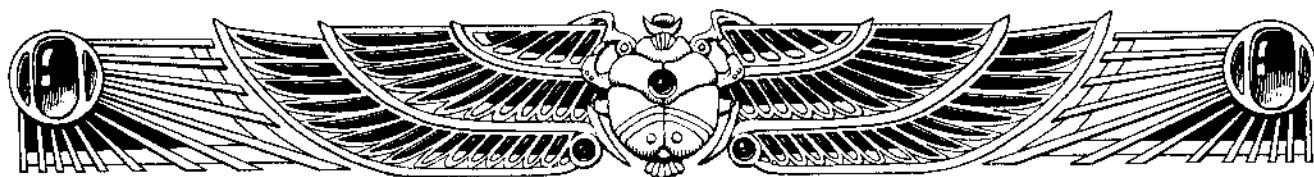
perceptive enough to spot a true thief when she passes through his field of vision. He must be stealthy enough to approach her and charming enough to "steal her heart," to convince her that he deserves the ultimate gift. He must show that he is free of greed, that the larceny in his heart is as pure as a Throalic silver ingot.

When a thief tutors a student, she does not simply reveal the truth. She forces the student to "steal" it from her. She speaks in riddles, offers puzzles, deliberately misleads. Only the novice clever enough to see through the deceptions and discern the secrets of thieflly talents wins initiation. But the Discipline of the thief is not a mere intellectual matter, a series of puzzles to be solved in the comfort of one's kitchen. Thievery is a practical craft, one best practiced in the field. And the true initiation of a thief takes place in the course of a crime: the master sends the student to steal something from a target greatly in need of the gift of theft. If the student is truly thief material, the vaunted talents of our way manifest themselves as the need for them arises. If the student is not—well, capture is one of the hazards that failed thieves face.

Many initiates in other Disciplines would quail at the thought of a master who is not reliable. But our masters deceive us so that we may learn to see what is hidden and to reveal to us a higher truth: that we can rely upon no others save ourselves in this world. Our magic does

THRILL OR NO THRILL, THE SUSPICION WITH WHICH OTHER NAME-GIVERS GREET US CAN BE VERY SADDENING AT TIMES. STILL, THEIR REACTION SEEMS NATURAL CONSIDERING THE SECRECY AND CAUTION WE MUST OBSERVE—AND SO I CANNOT REALLY FAULT THEM FOR IT.
—KLERKONIUS OF URUPA





not work without a daring heart and a solitary mind. Picking a pocket is not a team effort, for one cat walks more quietly than many. Though alliances with others are not forbidden to our Discipline, ultimately the thief is alone, an outsider. There are those, lamentably, who take this concept too far, as I shall explain in a moment. But all thieves must take this idea to their bosoms in one way or another.

ON STEALING MAGIC FROM THE WORLD

When the student thief finds the pathway of the thief, she is stealing the directions to its entrance from her master. Likewise, when she learns a new talent or ascends to a higher Circle, she steals magic from the world. Magic is everywhere around us, but many are blind to it. They cannot see that it is there for the taking. Others see the magic, but lack the boldness to reach out and grab it for themselves. And the act requires boldness, as well as a keen mind. For like any hoarder of goods, the world holds tightly to its magic. The thief must seduce, trick, and swindle the world into surrendering its glories.

When a thief wishes to advance to a higher Circle, she must first find another thief of a higher Circle than herself. This second thief serves as the tester and sets a task to test the thief's readiness for advancement. My last advancement was quite an ordeal, yes indeed. My difficulties began as I sought a thief of greater capability than my own, for few exist. Then I had to persuade that thief, one Ventioner, not to split me in two with an axe. (This desire of hers stemmed from a minor misunderstanding involving her young husband, a scarf of silk, and a pair of piglets—I won't go into the details here.) At any rate, she assigned me to steal the left upper canine tooth of a Horror known only as the Pulse. This scar that runs down my side, from my neck to below my knee, is the result of that assignment. I understand that a number of Horror-marked cavalymen seek the tooth even as we speak. But that is none of my affair, for tradition demands that the material fruit of the Circle advancement ritual goes to the master who created the assignment. Therefore, the Pulse must deal with Ventioner if it wants its rotting tooth back.

When an adept learns a new talent, the magic of the world becomes the wronged party. One talent of the thief's way enables us to spot traps. When I wished to learn this talent, I sought out a master familiar with its secret. He told me many contradictory things about the practice of the talent, leaving me to puzzle through the thicket of his words. Then he sent me to the old Festival of Wonders tower outside Bartertown, a structure known for the fiendish traps hidden throughout it. I penetrated the tower and, concentrating on the riddles the master had told me, soon found my mind flooded with new understanding. I stood before a section of wall and suddenly knew it to be a trap. I sent magic swirling through my pattern and snatched that moment in time, permanently stealing it. Now whenever I am near a trap, that magic I have stolen from the world does my bidding and warns me of the danger that I face. Many times before and since I have stolen such insights from the world and added them to my pattern.

ON OTHER THIEVES

The path of the thief I have laid out for you is not the only one. True, most thieves seek out material treasures—gems, gold coins, rare finery and such. But other types of thieves seek other booty. The thief of knowledge, also known as the spy, believes that information is worth more than gold. Curiosity, and the need to throw light on secrets and spread the truth of a situation throughout the world—or at least to well-heeled clients—drives the thief of knowledge.

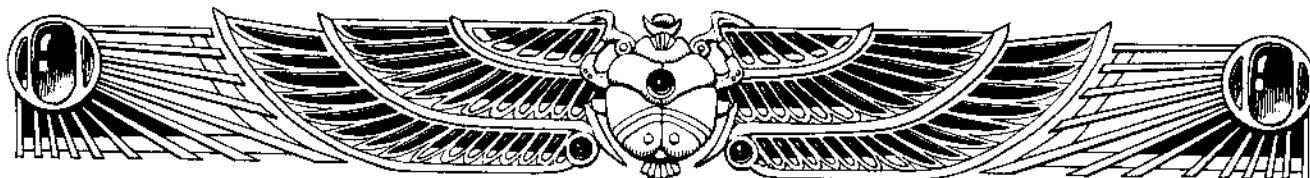
The thief of love, the romancer, uses her talents of disguise and deception to seduce her targets. Instead of a trail of empty vaults, she leaves behind a legion of broken hearts.

ON THE WAY OF SELFISHNESS

Still other thieves follow a dark path, the path of selfishness. They have forgotten the legacy of the first heroes and the true heritage of our path. These thieves connect their patterns to the tradition of thievery by devoting themselves to pure selfishness. They believe that a thief can only prosper

THOUGH THE
SPY AND THE
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THE SPY STEALS
SECRETS, THEREBY
FREEING HER
TARGET FROM THE
SUSPICIONS AND
FEARS THAT
SECRETS BREED.
THE ROMANCER,
MEANWHILE,
STEALS SENTIMENT
RATHER THAN LOVE,
GIVING HER VICTIM
NEW, CLEARER
INSIGHT INTO HIS
OR HER OWN HEART
AND THE HEARTS OF
OTHERS, AND
TEACHES THE
RECIPIENT OF HER
GIFT TO PROTECT
THAT MOST PRE-
CIOUS POSSESSION
OF ALL—LOVE.
—VALENCIAS OF
LOPOS





through suspicion of others and that cooperation and compassion weakens their talents and renders them vulnerable. To me, stealing something the owner values too much is an act of charity, a service not only to its possessor but to the community. But to thieves who walk the path of selfishness, any care at all for the fate of the victim is a destructive distraction. They can maintain no allies and pledge to truly love none but themselves. Needless to say, thieves traveling this path are quick to betray one another.

I have met numerous thieves set upon the path of selfishness in my travels, and though I have no way of knowing for certain, I fear their ranks increase each season. I have attempted to understand these thieves who shun society, but it is a thankless task. They are reticent in the extreme, unwilling to speak at any length about themselves or their journey in the Discipline. But I spent many coins plying these types with strong drink and eventually gleaned from them their stories.

The things I heard made my hair stand on end! Their masters taught them not through riddles, but through pain! Their initiations were literally by fire, as their masters thrust their arms and legs into open flames. By this, their masters intended to teach them not to trust anyone. Myself, I would have taken this as a lesson in the importance of carefully choosing one's master. A revealing lie is much more appropriate than—but you know my prejudices already, do you not, stuffy dwarf?

I believe that the thief who walks the selfishness way robs herself most of all. For she can never feel camaraderie with others. She can never relax; she must always fear a knock at the door or a knife in

the back. She can never join with others for mutual benefit. I, who walk the way of the gift of theft, form

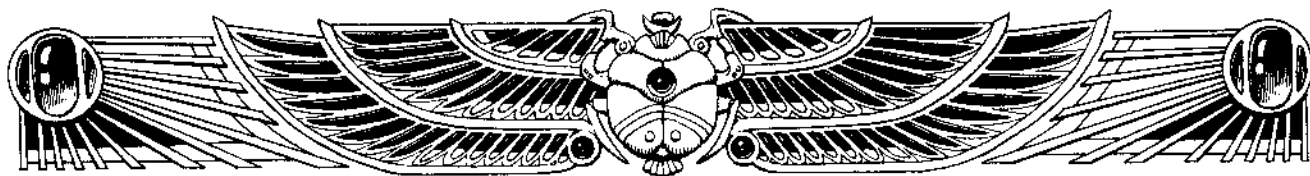
alliances easily. I have been a valued member of many an adventuring troupe in my day. And though I stole a few baubles from them from time to time, these thefts were mere pranks. I would never dream of taking anything truly worthwhile from a companion, such as a magical treasure to which a friend had woven a thread. But the thief of the selfishness way would do so without hesitation—would fear losing her edge, in fact, if she failed to betray her supposed friends.

The selfishness thief also feels no need to return her winnings to the world. She loves her loot as fervently as any merchant and keeps it close to her chest. When she loses her treasure or has it stolen from her—and I must confess a particular joy in stealing from my misguided brethren—she mourns for it as anyone else would mourn for a slain comrade. Without true friends, the selfishness thief pours her love into gold and gemstones. Though booty cannot keep one warm at night or rescue one in times of trouble, these thieves still prefer booty to the friendship of others—for being a true friend means admitting you need others. And that is the last thing a selfishness thief can afford to do.

In my opinion, the thief on the path of selfishness lives a poor life, but these thieves with tangled hearts continue to spread their rough and unforgiving vision throughout Bařsaive, burning it into the flesh of their initiates. If I could steal from them their confusion, their selfish ways, I would do so. That would truly be a gift: to them and to our land.

THE TRUE THIEF HAS NO SPACE IN HIS HEART FOR COMPASSION, SENTIMENT, OR BEAUTIFUL-SOUNDING IDEALS. SUCH THINGS ONLY BLIND THE MIND'S EYE AND SLOW THE HAND. THIS MAY SOUND "ROUGH AND UNFORGIVING," BUT SUCH IS OUR WORLD.
—BLAGSTERN OF KRATAS





WHY THE TROUBADOUR SINGS

This manuscript was written by one Vaerin Morningstar, an elven troubadour who hails from Jerris. How it found a home in our library remains a puzzle to me, but that small concern is not sufficient to prevent me from including the essay in this book, as it captures the essence of the troubadour Discipline in a way few other works do.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

OF OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD

Storytellers, singers, joyfellows, entertainers, dispellers of gloom, dispensers of glee, members of the "liar's trade," quick with a quip and yarn; song-spinners, always distracted from the serious aspects of life by an unfinished rhyme or a recalcitrant melody—this is how many view our Discipline. How little they know! But listen to my tale, that you might see the truth.

A troubadour was singing in the common room of an inn when a dusty warrior entered. Exhausted from an adventure, the warrior held his peace while he quaffed an ale or five, listening to the light and joyful ditties of the troubadour. Finally, emboldened by drink, he strode up to the storyteller and laughed in her face.

"You think yourself so grand and important, don't you, my pretty?" he slurred. "You put on such airs. Yet what do you do that has import in the grand scheme of things? You sing."

The troubadour set aside her lute, and nodded agreement.

"Yes, my large-thewed friend, that I do. I sing. And you?"

The warrior puffed out his chest. "I fight for a cause I believe in," he boasted. "I fight for the greater glory of Barsaive. I fight to rebuild her to her past glory, to eradicate the stain of the Scourge. And what do you do? You sing."

"That I do," the troubadour agreed, her smile unfaded. "And you—you have sworn to clear the whole

of Barsaive of the Scourge's taint single-handedly? A mighty task you've set yourself."





Artwork by Jeff Laubenstein

NETHERMANCER



Artwork by Jeff Laubenstein

ELEMENTALIST & BEASTMASTER

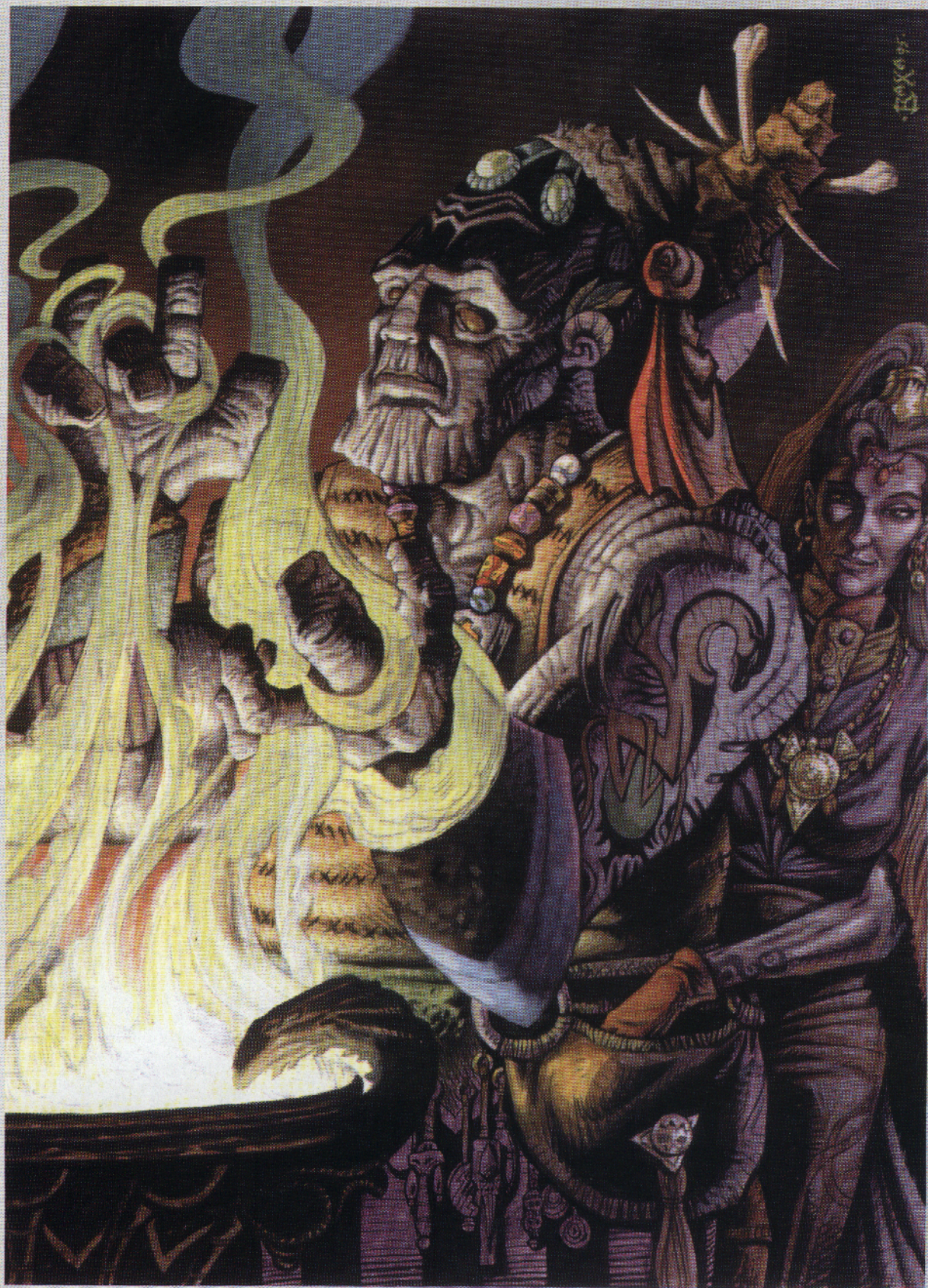


Artwork by Jeff Laubenstein



Artwork by Jeff Laubenstein

WEAPONSMITH & SWORDMASTER



Artwork by Tom Baxa



Artwork by Tom Baxa

WARRIOR & ILLUSIONIST



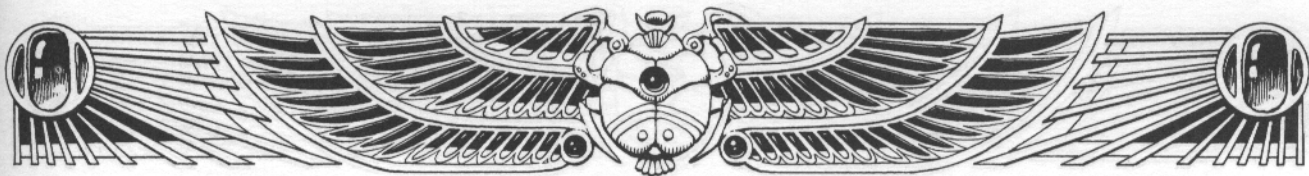
Artwork by Tom Baxa

AIR SAILOR & SKY RAIDER



Artwork by Tom Baxa

ARCHER & CAVALRYMAN



"Not single-handedly," the warrior corrected scornfully. "I am a hero. I will inspire others to follow in my footsteps, and the Passions will render the actions of those who follow me to my account as well. And what do you do? You sing. How can there be anything of less account than that?"

"Let me weave you a tale," the troubadour said, her smile unfaded. She picked up her lute and began to sing. And such a tale she told, of bravery and valor and sacrifice and honor. And it was only as she drew to a close that the warrior realized she told his tale.

And then the troubadour cocked her head to one side, and her smile faded. And she said to the warrior, "On reflection, I see you are right. My words are of no account."

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF TALES

Do you take my meaning, my friends? We of the word and the melody are an integral part of the rebuilding of Barsaive—and, for that matter, a part of anything that is considered noteworthy in our world. The warrior in my little tale was right to some degree, of course. The value of a hero is not measured solely by his own feats and achievements. Important though they may be, they are perforce limited, for even the greatest hero can be in only one place at a time. So how else do we mark the measure of a hero? By his effect on others—on those who follow him and strive to mimic the ideal he represents. Some of those who follow in the hero's footsteps may become heroes in their own right, and others will follow them in turn. And so the effects of the hero's deeds spread, like the branching boughs of a great tree. And from the seed of the hero's deeds, an entire forest may spring.

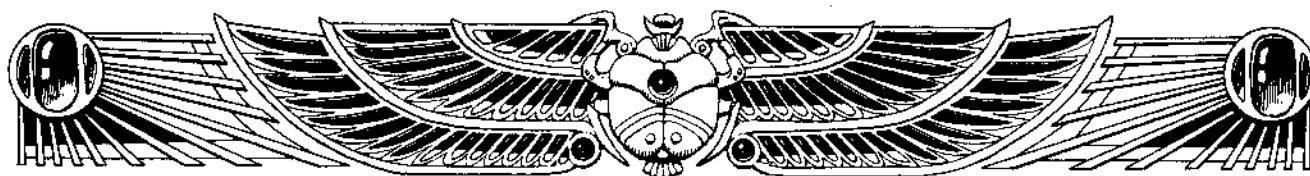
And where is our place in this, we of the word and the melody? Why, we are the means by which a hero's name becomes known throughout the world. Our songs and our tales expand a hero's fame. We nurture and spread his legend, just as the wind carries the seeds of the thundra flower.

A hero on his own may perform great deeds. But unless his legend is told and retold, those deeds will die with him. If troubadours tell and retell that legend, those deeds will live forever. Is that of no account? I leave it for you to decide.

ON ENTERTAINMENT

There are two facets to the Discipline of the troubadour—apparently distinct, yet interconnected. The first facet is the face we most often show to the world—the face of the entertainer. In this guise, we offer diversion. We help people forget their troubles and bring joy, relief and release. Living in our world is hard, both on the body and on the soul. And just as the body needs rest after a day of work, so does the soul need relief.





THIS KNOWLEDGE—
THAT THOUGHTS OF
BETTER TIMES TO
COME EASE DAYS
OF SORROW—IS
NOT THE SOLE
PROVINCE OF THE
TROUBADOURS.
HOW OFTEN DO WE
HEAR ORDINARY
FARMERS AND
HERDSMEN
SINGING SONGS
OF SPRING AND
SUMMER AROUND
THE FIRE WHILE THE
STORMS OF WINTER
BATTER AT THE
DOOR?
—MERROX,
MASTER OF THE
HALL OF RECORDS

DEAR MERROX, YOU
MISS THE TRUE
IMPORTANCE OF THE
SOUL-SOOTHING
BALM CALLED
ENTERTAINMENT.
STORIES AND
SONGS MAY HELP
US TO FORGET OUR
TROUBLES, FORGET
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PAINFUL FOR US TO
ACKNOWLEDGE
OTHERWISE.
—VINSLO OF
ARADEN

That relief can be found in a light tale, a bawdy song, a ditty of nonsense words that brings a smile and a laugh to those who hear it. Many ordinary folk consider this relief the greatest gift that those of my Discipline can bestow. My fellow troubadours and I know differently, for entertainment is more than laughter. Relief and release for the soul can be found in emotions other than joy and lightheartedness. That is why we of the word and the melody recall dark tales as well, tales that evoke sadness, fear, anger. These other emotions we deliver, as we deliver joy. There is heart-ease in laughter, but also in tears. And heart-ease is the goal of entertainment, whether that entertainment be tragedy or comedy.

I have heard it argued that, when the world turns dark and doom stalks our footsteps, entertainment is valueless, frivolous. Only those actions that contribute directly to survival are important. But can anyone argue thus who has actually faced disaster? In such situations, despair is the greatest enemy of all—and the enemy that the troubadour fights the hardest. We provide hope, we of the word and the melody. Or, more correctly, with our tales and songs we remind those around us of the value of hope. We inspire them with tales of past victories. We give them courage with tales of people who, beset by gloom, remained defiant and undismayed. We sing of sun on the grass, the laughter of children, the whispering of the winds through the forests, the dance of a stream that flows down from the mountains, the touch of parent or child or lover. Why? To remind people that life is worth living, a truth that is easily forgotten under the shadow of danger.

This facet of our art underwent its greatest trial during the Scourge, before the kaers were opened once more to the sun and the sky. How easy it would have been for the Name-giver races to have abandoned hope! Whole generations were born within the wombs of stone, knowing they would live and die without walking free under the endless sky. Whole generations knew that they, and their children, and even their children's children, would be confined—imprisoned!—within cells of rock.

With our songs and tales and quips and jests, we kept alive the knowledge that an entire world existed beyond the walls and wards of the kaer. We kept alive the knowledge that this outside world was good. Children who had never seen a tree—and never would!—still sang old songs like *The Bough and the Leaf*. Through songs and tales, they knew the brilliant green of ironbough leaves, they knew the heart-stopping gold of the flaxflower, they heard in their souls the song of nesting warblers and skywings. They knew they would have only those songs and tales, and knew the same was true for their children. Yet they knew that someday, children of their blood would walk again beneath the skies and among the trees. And that knowledge filled them with hope and enabled them to endure. Such is the value of entertainment!

ON THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY

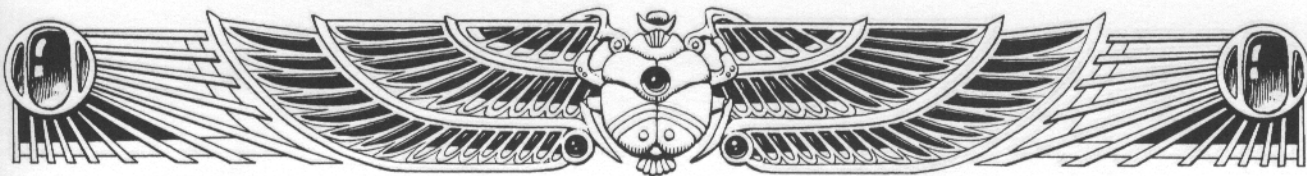
In the second facet of our Discipline, we troubadours serve as the memory and the conscience of our kaers, towns, villages—our society. We are repositories of wisdom. We recall the twists and turns of the past, from which the course of the future may sometimes be plotted. To a certain degree, troubadours become the soul of our society, its very identity.

How can I make this claim? Think on it, my friends. Whence does your sense of self spring, your sense of identity? It arises from the pattern of your days, does it not? You remember your thoughts and actions, your hopes and fears of yesterday, and you feel confident that tomorrow you will recall your thoughts and actions of today. If each day were distinct in and of itself, with no connection to the past or the future, if you could not remember your actions of yesterday and knew that tomorrow you would not recall your actions of today—what of your sense of self? Would you have a sense of identity? Would you know who you are? I think not.

And thus with a society. We troubadours recall the thoughts and actions of yesteryear. We are society's memory, we ensure that the pattern of its days continues.

Let us approach this another way. Adepts of other Disciplines—weaponsmiths, as an example—conserve the knowledge and skills needed to create weapons by remembering and passing on the traditions and talents of their Discipline. We





troubadours conserve the knowledge of a society's identity. We preserve self-knowledge for a society, as memory does for an individual. We are a society's memory, my fellows and I.

Be aware that this arrangement contains weaknesses as well as strengths, for whoever controls the troubadours controls the memory of society. Whoever controls the troubadours controls the truth and holds in his hands the very identity and soul of that society. This is why those of the word and the melody so often seem aloof from the societies we serve. We must remain independent of petty political concerns, just as an individual's conscience must remain untainted by his will and his fears.

THE JOY OF THE TROUBADOUR

Heavy is our responsibility, and great our importance in society. Yet do not think that this weight of import makes our day-to-day life joyless and burdensome. Quite the contrary, my friend! For magic flows through us. It lifts us above the petty concerns of the world and ennobles us.

Consider, if you would, the expression "weaving a tale."

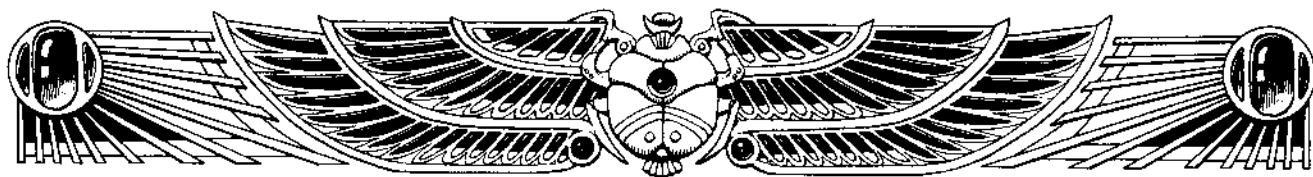
This is more than a figure of speech. For a troubadour feels the magic that surrounds him as threads, as the warp and the weft in woven fabric. Those threads connect her to the people who hear her songs and tales. As we work our art, those threads are woven together into the great tapestry that

is society. We feel our part in this great tapestry. We feel our influence spreading out from us, as the threads of our words connect more and more people to each other. When we weave a tale, we are greater than ourselves. We are limited not by our physical dimensions, but only by the bounds of the tapestry itself. How can I convey the wonder to one who has not experienced it?

Perhaps this example will serve. Have you, esteemed reader, ever been in a crowd—a crowd that suddenly became a mob, inflamed with a single intent? Did you not feel that you were part of something larger than yourself, something greater than the sum of the individuals who made up the mob? If so, then you have felt a dark reflection of what a troubadour experiences when she tells a tale or sings a song. (Intoxicating, was it not? Intoxicating and, to a degree, addictive. A troubadour often must struggle to maintain her sense of self in the tapestry she weaves.)

VÆRIN
MORNINGSTAR
DOES NOT STRESS
THIS POINT ENOUGH.
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YET, THANKS TO
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THESE ILLITERATES
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AND WHO, WERE
IT NOT FOR THE
TROUBADOURS,
WOULD BE
TRUSTEES OF THAT
KNOWLEDGE?
—MERROX





TROUBADOURS AND THE PASSIONS

Troubadours revere two Passions above all: Astendar and Mynbrujc. We honor Astendar in her guise as the Passion of Music. We believe that inspiration for new songs and melodies springs from the heart and soul of Astendar. Our ability to create and channel emotions with our music is but a pale reflection of Astendar's powers. As we honor Astendar for her patronage of entertainment, so we revere Mynbrujc as patron of Knowledge and Truth. We serve as the repositories of wisdom among the Name-givers, as Mynbrujc serves among the Passions.

ON TRAINING

IN THE REGIONS
WHERE VAERIN WAS
TRAINED, PERHAPS,
AMONG MORE
CIVILIZED PEOPLES,
ONLY THE BASEST
OF JOYFELLOWS
WOULD WASTE TIME
MEMORIZING
DOGGEREL LIKE
BELLAE, THE MINSTREL'S
DAUGHTER.
—GELTERAINE
OF THROAL

THOUGH IT IS A
GREAT ADVANTAGE,
ONE MAY LACK THE
ABILITY TO READ
AND WRITE AND
STILL BECOME A
TROUBADOUR.
BECAUSE THE
ART OF THE
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BY AND LARGE, AN
ORAL TRADITION,
LEARNING
MATERIAL FROM
THE WRITTEN PAGE
PROVIDES LITTLE
BENEFIT—OTHER
THAN FREEING THE
INSTRUCTOR FOR
OTHER ACTIVITIES!
—BELDEAUX OF AR
KHAD

Troubadours must master two distinct skills that form the center of our Discipline. In only one of these does magic play a significant role. (I understand that this is true for other Disciplines as well, now that I think on it.) Consider the last time you saw a troubadour perform, esteemed reader. No doubt she recited tales and performed songs, some of which you remembered as traditional stories of your childhood, and some of which were completely new to you. Even when she was reciting a poem you knew word for word as a child, did she not infuse it with a fresh spirit, with the energy and enthusiasm that mark the work of a good troubadour? Of course! And when she retold one of the ancient odes—*Jaron and the Sphinx*, perhaps, or the *Ballad of Nioku*—did she not match word for word every other performance you have heard of the piece, reciting every line of the one hundred score written? Again, of course!

And therein are reflected the two types of skill required of a troubadour: the talent for performance, and the aptitude for simple learning. Both are essential for a true troubadour. Anyone with tenacity and keenness of memory could learn *Jaron and the Sphinx*, but if told without the talent for performance, who would listen? Similarly, someone who does not follow the way of the troubadour could conceivably entertain and amuse with his performance, but without the knowledge of the ancient odes and songs he could never be more than a clever tale-spinner.

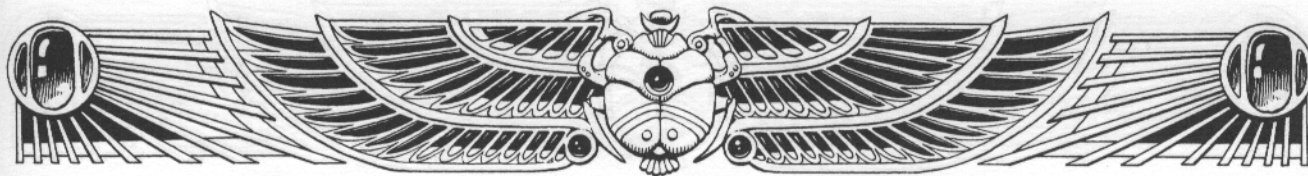
Simple learning must be practiced and perfected alone (or, at the very most, in the presence of a single instructor), but performing can only be practiced in the presence of others outside the Discipline (in other words, an audience). My training, by way of example, began with the former. I had the fortune of being able to read and write, so my instructor began my indoctrination by banishing me to a room with a written copy of the ballad called *Bellae, the Minstrel's Daughter*. He told me that he would undertake my training as a troubadour only if I proved my dedication to my supposed calling by memorizing the entire ballad—its entire twenty score and eight lines—word for word. Only when I could recite it to him without a single error would he consider beginning my training.

I did not realize it at the time, but memorizing the ballad constituted the beginning of my training. *Bellae, the Minstrel's Daughter* is a staple of the repertoire of any true troubadour.

Only after I had memorized the ballad to my instructor's satisfaction did he deign to teach me the techniques of performance. For that, of course, we needed an audience, which we found at a nearby wine house. My instructor began the evening by reciting in their entirety *Follow the Plow* and *The Farmer's Wife is Milking*, much to the amusement of the wine-house patrons. He had instructed me to pay close attention to the techniques he used—the vocal stylings, the rhythmic patterns, the emphasis applied to the verse meter. When it came time for me to perform *Bellae*, I was to experiment with those techniques myself, while staying ever mindful of the audience's reaction to my offering. It was then, at that simple wine house, that I first truly felt the magic that is the way of the troubadour.

All my subsequent training has followed the same pattern. When my instructor decided that I was ready to advance to the next Circle of the Discipline, he would send me away with another staple of the troubadour's art: the *Ballad of Nioku*, perhaps, or the epic *Battle of Sky Point*. Once I had learned the material, he would have me recite it for others under his watchful eye.





ON SPECIALISTS

I have limited my discourse to what I consider the true art of the troubadour. But there are some who claim membership in the Discipline who practice what I judge to be a degraded form of the art. Though I consider them less worthy than my true fellows, any discussion of the Discipline would be incomplete without at least a mention of these adepts.

To my mind—and those of my instructor and mentors in the art, of course—the Discipline of the troubadour contains two facets: knowledge and performance. The true art of the troubadour involves both. How, then, is one to view the sage? Some among those considered wise classify sages as a kind of “specialty” within the Discipline of troubadour. Granted, a sage has the same factual knowledge as a true troubadour. A sage knows the correct wording of epics such as the *Battle of Sky Point*, and she understands the historical subtext and poetic allusions it contains. Thus, one could argue that sages serve as repositories of knowledge. Yet to my mind, the fact that they do not perform the odes they know places them outside the definition of the troubadour. Sages are scholars, after all, and the art of the troubadour encompasses more than simple scholarship.

Map makers represent an even more doubtful case. Again, they are scholars first and foremost, concentrating on the physical landscape as I and my fellows concentrate on the landscape of the mind and the

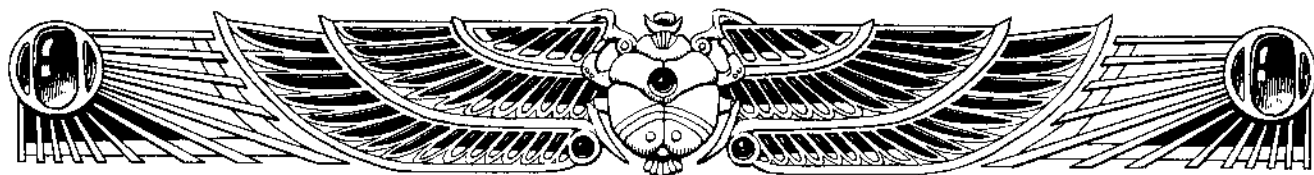
heart. Though the map maker exhibits skill beyond simple scholarship, he exercises his practice in solitude in the same way as does the weaponsmith. This also sets the map maker apart from the true troubadour.

Therein, in essence, lies the distinction between the true troubadour and the Discipline’s lesser reflections. A troubadour without an audience is not a true troubadour.

AN INTERESTINGLY SELF-CENTERED AND LIMITING INTERPRETATION. THE READER IS ADVISED TO KEEP VAERIN’S PREJUDICES IN MIND WHEN READING THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES. MOST PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE DISCIPLINE—AND MANY WITHIN IT, FOR THAT MATTER—CONSIDER SAGES AND MAP-MAKERS “TRUE” TROUBADOURS—AND RIGHTLY SO! —MERROX

I FEEL OBLIGED TO MAKE REFERENCE TO THE LEGENDARY TROUBADOUR SHANTAYA NIGHTSTAR AT THIS POINT. SHANTAYA FOLLOWED THE MAP MAKER SPECIALTY AND WAS AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF WHAT I WOULD CALL A TRUE TROUBADOUR. AS FOR HER AUDIENCE, I WOULD ARGUE THAT ALL OF BARSAIVE WAS HERS TO ENTERTAIN AND INSPIRE. —MERROX, MASTER OF THE HALL OF RECORDS





THE BATTLEFIELD PATH

The author of the following document is Bola, the obsidian warrior who recently led a successful mission against the Howling Scarf slaver band on behalf of the kingdom of Throal. Bola's late arrival delayed the completion of this compendium—obsidimen rush for no one—but the account provides valuable insight into the way of the warrior. To truly understand this account, you must also note what Bola chooses not to say.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

Words. You ask me to explain the way of the warrior in words. I say this is not possible, for the way of the warrior is the way of action. It is bringing your sword down on the enemy's shield. It is raising your own shield to meet the enemy's thrust. The way of the warrior is not a way of thinking. It is not a way of talking. It is a way of action.



THE BATTLEFIELD

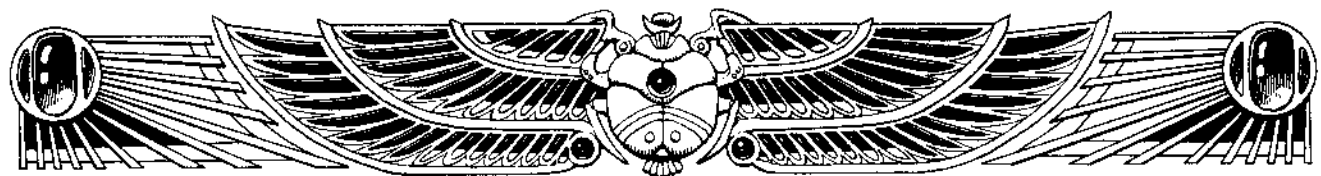
Life is a battlefield. At any moment, countless wars are waged. Some of these wars have yet to come to physical blows. All of them will. For today's Barsaive is a place where the sword and the battle-axe eventually solve all arguments. And so I shall speak of actions. I shall tell you of the great warrior of my people: Berahnt, of the age of legends.

Berahnt had won renown for his deeds. But one day Berahnt grew weary. He had seen too much blood spilled. He no longer thirsted for victory. He wanted only rest. And so Berahnt left his old comrades, left the battlefields and journeyed to a place known as the Land of Green in search of peace.

Now the Land of Green was inhabited by tribes of humans. Unknown to Berahnt, these humans were at war with one another, struggling for control of a watering hole known as Garlen's Bounty. The watering hole was large and provided more than enough water for both tribes. But each fought to possess it entirely, for neither could bear to see the other prosper. However, Garlen's Bounty was easy to overrun and nearly impossible to defend. And so neither side could hold the site.

Berahnt sought only to while away his final days in solitude and contemplation, and so he built himself a hut far from the watering hole. But soon humans of the first tribe, the Sadar, came upon his hut. Though he did them no harm, they attacked him. He easily defeated them, severely injuring their soldiers and driving them off. The wounded Sadar returned to their





elders and told their tale. The Sadar elders were clever. Instead of seeking vengeance, they decided to win Berahnt to their side. For the Land of Green was so isolated that the way of the warrior had not yet reached them, and they wished Berahnt to initiate their soldiers into the Discipline and lead them to victory against their foes, the Radas.

Meanwhile, the Radas too stumbled upon Berahnt's hut and set upon the warrior without cause. And like their enemies, they learned a painful lesson and were driven off. Then they reported to their elders, who came to the same conclusion as those of the Sadar village.

As the Passions would have it, ambassadors from both the Sadar and Radas appeared before Berahnt at the same time. Both petitioned for the knowledge that would enable them to destroy their foes forever. Berahnt refused both requests. Instead, he attempted to broker a peace between the two tribes, but they would have none of it. Both ambassadors left, swearing vengeance upon Berahnt.

In the months that followed, Radas and Sadar raiding parties came to bring Berahnt to heel, destroying his peace again and again. Each time Berahnt drove them off, and each time he hoped that they would cease their pointless assaults against him. But finally he realized they would never yield.

So Berahnt went to Garlen's Bounty, which was then possessed by the Radas. He killed each and every Radas there. The Sadar then rejoiced and attacked Berahnt, believing they would finally win their goal. But Berahnt slew each and every Sadar as well, and Garlen's Bounty ran red with the blood of the slain. Sickened, Berahnt returned to his hut, where he whiled away the rest of his days in peace.

The lesson of this story should be obvious. But for those who are not warriors, it is this. No one despises battle more than the warrior, who has done his share of fighting and smelled the stink of death in his nose too many times. But too many times the only solution to a problem is war, for too often Name-givers thirst for violence instead of reason. And when those times come, it is the warrior who prevails.

THE STORY ALSO
CONTAINS ANOTHER
IMPORTANT LESSON.
THE WARRIOR
NEVER PROVOKES A
BATTLE. BUT THE
WARRIOR ALWAYS
ENDS A BATTLE.
—MOT OF HAVEN

THE SHIELD

Two tools are of paramount importance to any warrior. These are the shield and the sword. All warriors must know how to use them and must respect their importance. The following story, from the Age of Dragons, teaches this.

Once there lived two comrades-in-arms—a cavalier of a rich dwarf kingdom and her squire, an ork warrior. The dwarf, a swordmaster called Avani, had once held the ork, Kodan, as a slave. But the dwarf had freed him many years before, for Kodan had saved his mistress's life on more than one occasion. Together they walked the way of the hero.

As their legend reached its greatest height, their path took them, bound and shackled as prisoners, to the court of the dragon known as All-Wings. For it was a time when dragons ruled the land, and other Name-givers built legends at their peril. The mighty All-Wings reared up above the two prisoners and announced that they must die for their crimes against dragonkind. The swordmaster attempted to mollify All-Wings with silky words. The warrior remained silent. The dragon let the swordmaster talk until she was exhausted and could speak no more. Then All-Wings smiled. It is not good when a dragon smiles.

"I have decided, in my unquestioned mercy, to make a gesture to the unscaled peoples," All-Wings said. "I shall slay only one of you. I shall permit the other to return to your lands to warn of the dangers of such effrontery as you have shown."

Avani and Kodan looked at one another with dismay. They had pledged their loyalty to one another, and neither wished to live at the other's expense.

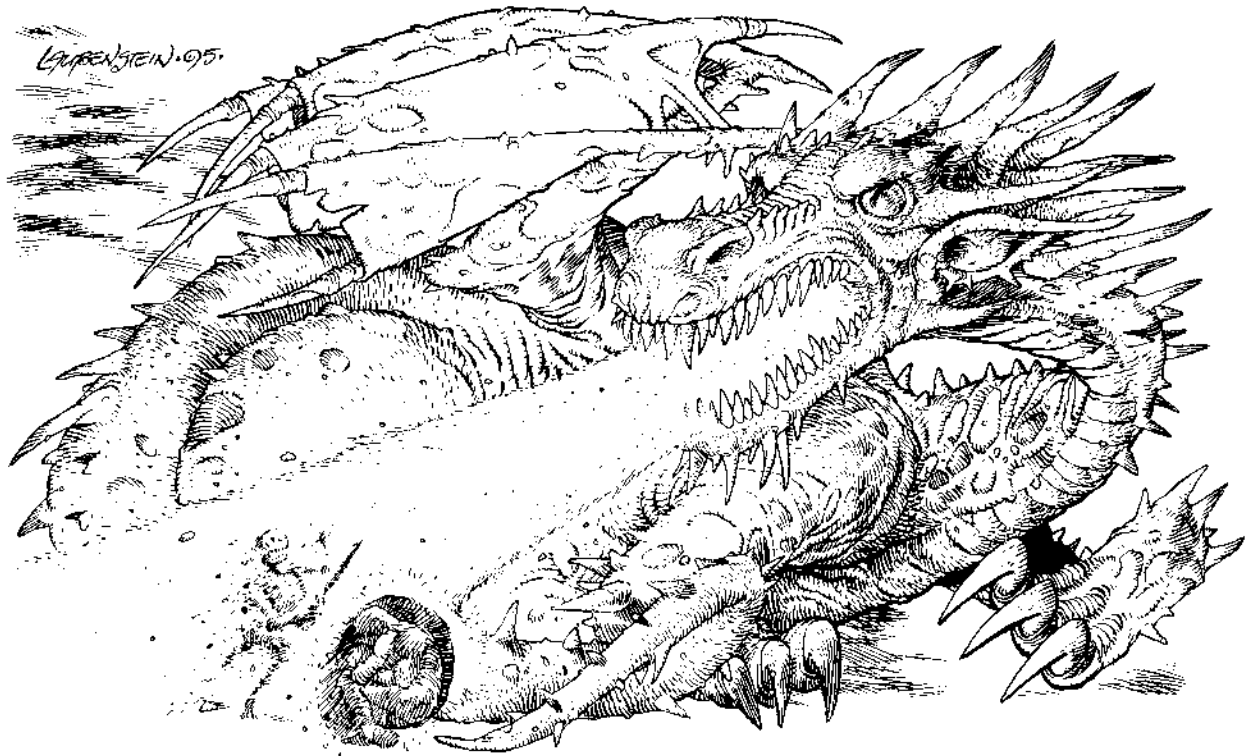
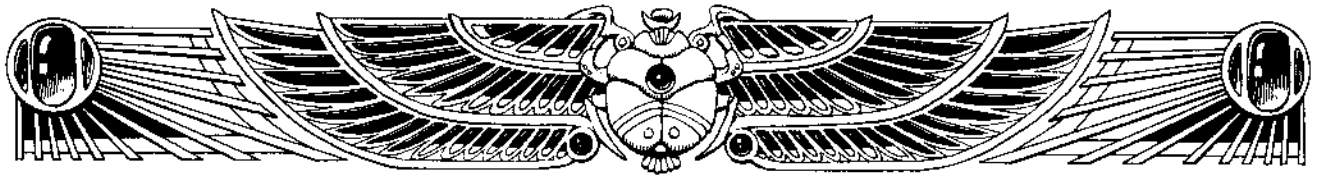
The dragon observed this and said, "You seem disappointed. To further show my beneficence, I shall award the survivor a great treasure. In fact, your choice of treasure shall determine who shall live and who shall die. Which of you will make the correct choice?"

"I offer to one of you a shield—a shield I shall peel from my own back," the dragon said. "It shall be called All-Protector."

And All-Wings pulled a gigantic scale from his shoulder and tossed it on the ground in front of the swordmaster and the warrior, where it lay dripping with ichor.

"And I offer the other a mighty sword, plucked from my own mouth," All-Wings said. "It shall be called All-Biter. Which of you wishes which prize? Whoever chooses wisely shall live."





And All-Wings drew from her mouth one of her vast and rotting incisors, which pulsed with a great magical aura. Kodan nodded to Avani. He would allow her to make the choice, for he felt he owed her his life.

"As a swordmaster, the choice is obvious," Avani said. "I shall take All-Biter."

"It is foolish to take a sword when you can take a shield," the dragon said. "If one lunges and misses, one is not harmed. But if one is struck and has no shield, one is doomed."

And with that, All-Wings blew her gross and corrupt breath upon Avani, and the breath tore the meat from the dwarf's bones. Then All-Wings ordered Kodan's bonds removed so he could step forward and claim his prize, the shield All-Protector.

"As we agreed, you shall now go forth and warn the world of my wrath," the dragon said.

"I made no such agreement," the warrior replied. And Kodan stepped forward, seizing both All-Protector and All-Biter.

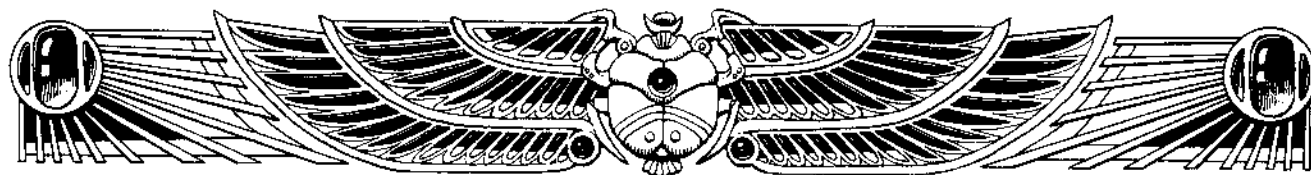
The dragon blew its foul breath upon Kodan, but All-Protector absorbed and deflected it. Kodan plunged All-Biter deep into All-Wings' left eye, and the great dragon was slain. Kodan himself was killed as well, crushed beneath the foul lizard's horrendous bulk.

This story teaches wisdom and honor. It teaches wisdom because, indeed, it is better to avoid a strike than to strike. The sword takes life, but the shield preserves it. Thus the shield is of greater importance than the sword. It teaches honor because Kodan's pledge of loyalty was worth more to him than his own life. No warrior wishes to die. But if one has a choice between losing life and losing honor, the warrior chooses to keep his honor. For the time all of us have upon this world, even we obsidimen, is short compared to the length of legend. It is better to be remembered as honorable than to be forgotten as a coward.

But do not mistake foolishness for bravery. A warrior must know which battles his honor depends on, and which it does not. Most battles are foolish and without meaning. These include battles over coin, battles that arise from hot tempers, and battles fueled by a desire to prove prowess. Those who die in foolish battles die foolishly and are remembered as fools. But when a battle holds true meaning, when the stakes are heroic—retreat is not a choice. The true warrior knows this and is prepared always to face the consequences.

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A HERO WHO DIES
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A FOOL WHO DIES
FOR A HEROIC
CAUSE DIES A HERO.
—ELGOR OF THROAL





THE SWORD

When a warrior speaks of the shield and the sword, he speaks of symbols. In this case, the word "sword" is a symbol for all weapons, be they spear, axe, dagger, spear, club or hammer. Here is a story of the importance of the sword, or the weapon, to the warrior.

On the deck of the sky ship Darting Moon, the elven warrior Uvenia faced Haracha, the brigand queen. Uvenia had been hired by the merchants of the kingdom of Cara Fahd to harass and bedevil the unruly sky raiders whenever they raided the kingdom. Uvenia's forces had done much harm to the sky raiders, and now the brigands reveled in their opportunity for vengeance. The warrior stood on the ship's deck, disarmed, stripped of her armor, shackled at the ankles. Blood ran down her forehead and into her eyes. Haracha laughed and unsheathed her cutlass.

"You do not laugh at us now, do you, elf?" the massive troll sneered.

"I do not laugh at my enemies, for laughter implies overconfidence," Uvenia replied.

"You certainly have no need to be confident now," laughed Haracha, "for I have a blade, and you have none."

Uvenia readied herself for death. For while sky raiders may show loyalty to their own kind, they do not love honor as we do. But Haracha surprised her.

"But I will show you my queenly mercy and give you a weapon," Haracha said. "Which weapon do you choose?"

Uvenia replied that she would have the same weapon that Haracha intended to use.

"Ah, but a cutlass is a weapon for a real fighter, for a sky raider," scoffed Haracha. "I am afraid that a mere warrior would cut herself on it. No, it would not be safe for you."

Uvenia looked about the deck at the brigands. She spotted a cudgel and asked for that. Haracha refused. She asked for a dagger. Haracha refused. She asked for a staff. Haracha refused. Uvenia realized the pirate was merely toying with her, seeking to draw out her humiliation.

Finally Uvenia said, "I request as my weapon the pearled pin that holds your hair in place."

The brigands laughed. Haracha, laughing, pulled the hairpin from her hair. "Yes, this puny weapon is the most that a mere warrior can handle."

In that moment, as Haracha's unbraided hair obscured her vision, Uvenia threw herself forward and knocked the brigand queen to the deck. She seized the hairpin and held it over Haracha's right eye.

"Unlock these shackles," Uvenia commanded.

In the end, with Haracha's life still in her hands, she forced the sky raiders to agree to never again set foot within the bounds of Cara Fahd.

This story teaches us that the warrior must not forget that she, herself, is her best weapon. This is why the warrior attaches no special significance to any single sword or axe or spear. For we warriors cannot depend on objects for our victories. We must depend on ourselves. If a sword is dropped on the battlefield, pick up another and go on. If an axe is shattered, mourn it not. If no proper weapon is available, use a chair or a flagon or a rock. The warrior assesses the situation and adapts to it. The warrior needs no flying ship, no charging mount, no particular blade. For weapons do not make the warrior. The warrior makes a weapon of whatever is at hand.

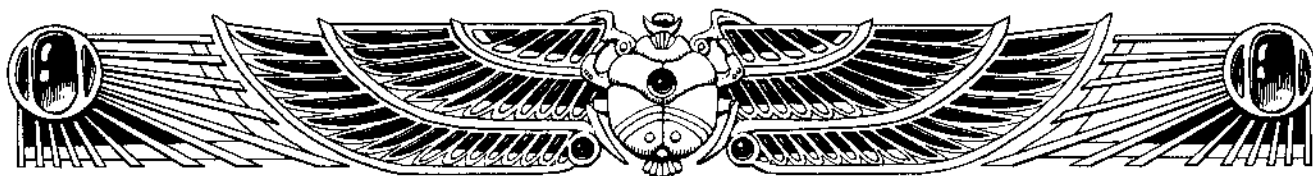
THIS IS THE FIRST
LESSON I LEARNED.
AND THE FIRST THAT
I TEACH TO ALL WHO
WOULD SEEK TO
BECOME A WARRIOR.
THE WARRIOR'S
WITS ARE HIS
GREATEST WEAPON.
LEARN THIS LESSON.
AND NONE WILL
EVER DEFEAT YOU.
—VAL OF THE
SERPENT

THE ENEMY

The warrior's path commands him to battle others and defeat them. Many times this means slaying the enemy. But the warrior has no love of bloodshed. If the warrior can win without killing, he will do so. But victory without death is often difficult. For in battle, the warrior must put the enemy down and defeat him. And many enemies will not surrender as long as life flows through them. And so the warrior must not hesitate to kill when victory demands it. Anyone foolish enough to oppose a warrior assumes the risks of battle. They may well die beneath our blades. But the warrior does not slay unless forced to. A warrior will not stoop to deliver a killing blow to an unconscious foe, especially when other enemies remain standing. We warriors are fighters, not butchers. Generals may order the slaughter of the fallen, but they are unwise if they expect warriors to take part.

The warrior does not harbor hate in his heart. The warrior has honor in his heart. Hate may propel the inferior Name-giver into battle against the foe. But hate is a dangerous distraction to the warrior. When we strike, we do so with efficiency and caution. Our minds must remain clear.





When we are paid to battle an enemy, we do so—and we prevail. But the warrior bears no grudges. The enemy of the moment is the warrior's only concern. Last week's enemy is a diversion; next week's enemy is a diversion. Only the enemy of the moment matters. I shall tell a tale to drive home my point.

In the aftermath of the Orichalcum Wars, a great force of mounted raiders known as the Green Horse Riders roamed the land. Made up of remnants of the many armies shattered by the Thera Navy in the last days of that conflict, the Riders had gathered together under the leadership of the dwarf Chesero and resorted to brigandage. The kingdom of Throal hired the mercenary order known as the Down-Striped Band to break the Green Horse Riders and end their unlawful actions against traveling caravans. The warrior Burnica led the Down-Striped Band.

Now, Burnica happened to be the younger half-brother of Chesero. Chesero had left home many years before, soon after the mysterious death of his stepfather—Burnica's father. Therefore, many suspected Chesero of the crime. As a young dwarf, Burnica had sworn cruel vengeance upon his half-brother. But his initiation into the way of the warrior required him to surrender all of his old hatreds. These went into the fire to make way for the clarity of mind and purpose of the true warrior. Many years passed, and Burnica distinguished himself as a leader and a true traveler upon our battlefield path.

But now fate, acting through the kingdom of Throal, made Chesero his foe once more. And so Burnica undertook his karma rituals with renewed purpose, hoping to prevent his old feelings from clouding his mind. For Chesero was not the traitorous kin, not the slayer of Burnica's father. He was simply the enemy.

Three battles the Down-Striped Band fought with the Green Horse Raiders. The Down-Striped Band tasted defeat in the first two engagements, for the maneuverability and speed of the cavalrymen proved decisive. Finally, during the third battle, the warriors boxed the Raiders inside a canyon. After the warriors decimated the front ranks of the riders, the Green Horse Raiders began to surrender. Soon Chesero replaced his banner with the white flag of surrender.

Chesero rode forth, humbled. Burnica prepared for his half-brother to lay his spear at his feet in a gesture of submission. Instead, Chesero threw an axe at Burnica and broke through the ranks of the Down-Striped Band to escape through the canyon mouth. His threats against Burnica hung in the air behind him as he vanished in the distance.

Seven years later, Burnica found himself leading a small band of fighters in the place now called the Badlands. He was charged with the task of finding and destroying a nest of Horrors. As the fighters drew nearer to the nest, they spotted another small group beset by the creatures. Most of these fighters had been slain already. And so Burnica and his band moved into to relieve them, even after he saw that their leader was Chesero.

Finally, the Horrors were slain, and Chesero, weary and wounded, collapsed against a rocky cliff face.

"Ah, my half-brother, you have come to slay me at last," Chesero said when he recognized Burnica. "Perhaps it is fitting. For I did indeed slay your father, for what now seems to have been a trivial slight. I have no wish to die, but I have no breath left and cannot defend myself. Stab me square in the heart, so I shall expire quickly."

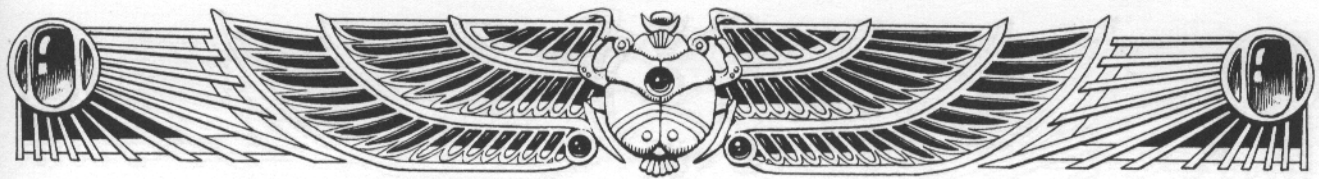
To this Burnica replied, "I shall not slay you, for you are not my enemy. Fate may once again will that you be my enemy. If that day comes, I shall slay you without hesitation. But today, Chesero, you are not my foe."

LOYALTY

To a warrior, loyalty is as valuable as honor. Indeed, loyalty and honor cannot be separated. Some warriors serve as soldiers in standing armies, such as those of Throal and Thera. Such warriors pledge their loyalties to the monarch they serve. They believe in the aims and ideals of the kingdoms they protect. To betray those ideals is to betray themselves and the warrior's way.

Many more warriors serve in mercenary companies, traveling throughout Barsaive in search of work. Others wait for employers to seek them out. The mercenary warrior pledges his loyalty to the employer who pays him best. Once purchased, the mercenary warrior's loyalty is as unswerving as that of any other warrior. The mercenary warrior will never break a signed contract, for he views the contract as a sacred trust. However, the mercenary warrior knows the pitfalls of the poorly drafted contract. He relies on the well-crafted contract, which enables a warrior to refuse orders that force him to act dishonorably. And should the employer fail to uphold his side of the bargain, the loyalty he purchased is no longer due. Only a fool would breach a contract with a mercenary warrior, for a





mercenary quickly will turn all of his attention to the recovery of moneys owed to him. History is full of petty rulers deposed by mercenary warriors they sought to cheat.

Still other warriors join small adventuring bands. Whether fighting or searching for treasure, the warrior can prove a valuable comrade. The warrior is adaptable; his abilities serve him as well in a ruined kaer as on the battlefield.

Whatever version of the path the warrior treads, his loyalty to his comrades in arms must be unquestioned. The debt of obligation to them overrides any other duty. But if betrayed, the warrior must avenge his honor. The warrior does not hate the traitor, for no crime justifies poisoning the heart with rancor. Nevertheless, the warrior must hunt down the traitor and end his life. For a traitor continues to betray others until brought to heel. When betrayed, a warrior has a duty to the world to remove the transgressor from its bosom.

TRAINING

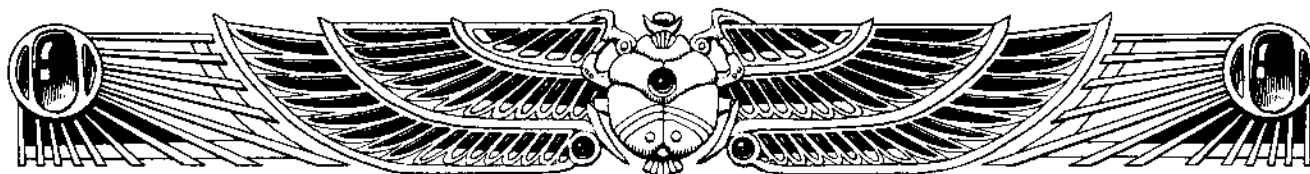
Advancement on the battlefield path is not a matter of books or libraries. It is learned through action. It is learned in the sinews and marrow of the body. The aptitude of the true warrior reveals itself only through the rehearsal of the arts of war. Few youngsters in our violent world do not learn to play with toy shields and swords. The potential warrior soon feels the pull of the weapon and shield in her

hands, even when they are but playthings. One day, the youngster simply knows that she is a warrior. Then it is only a matter of time.

Typically the warrior-to-be seeks out an "order" of warriors, whether it be a mercenary order or a standing army. She applies as a squire. Masters of the order, instructed in the rudiments of each beginning talent, test the squire. Those who truly have the aptitude are sent out to drill in these procedures. And drill, and drill. Typically, the student drills for many months before achieving her goal: an abrupt flash of understanding that is the soldier's initiation. For some, this point never comes; they are not cut out for the warrior path. Others progress and continue to learn new talents as they build their legends. Each time, they must seek a master of the talent, who explains the talent's fundamentals. Then the warrior goes to the drilling ground and attempts to put these fundamentals into practice. Training becomes simply a matter of doing, and doing, and doing, until the warrior's pattern connects to the pattern of the talent. Then the warrior has mastered it, and that is that.

IT IS AS THE GREAT
WARRIOR KWAI THE
PATIENT ONCE SAID,
"ONLY AFTER ONE
HAS SWUNG A
SWORD A THOUSAND
TIMES DOES ONE
BEGIN TO LEARN
HOW TO SWING
A SWORD."
—TREBOR OF
THE DRAGON
MOUNTAINS





THE VALUE OF STRONG ARMS AND STRONGER MINDS

The following text was prepared by Dermatt of Haven, a well-known and highly respected weaponsmith. His account is one of the most straightforward, informative pieces I received for the book and provides an excellent introduction to the way of the weaponsmith. Dermatt also requested I extend an invitation to all readers to stop by his Forge when in Haven.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH



So, Merrox is putting together another one of his books, is he? All about adepts this time. Well, I'm glad to see you've decided to give a weaponsmith a chance to speak up. Of all the adepts, we're probably the least understood.

"Weaponsmiths? Oh, those fellows that pound steel and make weapons and armor, right?" Well, we do make weapons and armor, the best you'll find. But we do so much more. Weaponsmiths live in the world, not just on it. During our travels we speak with the people of Barsaive. We learn of their hopes, dreams and disappointments.

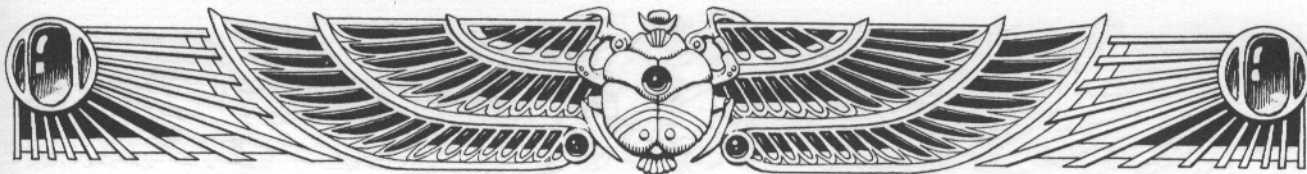
We weaponsmiths stick together like adepts of no other Discipline, for the bonds of our Forges are as strong as those of any family. Weaponsmiths are a tightly knit group, able to rely on each other for damn near anything. If a weaponsmith shows up at his Forge in need, his fellow adepts will do whatever they can to help him out. Much of our camaraderie and closeness stems from our shared dedication to our work. Just look around—I'll wager a week's work you can't find a group of adepts who, as a whole, are as dedicated as we. A weaponsmith says something is going to get done, it gets done. Take my word for it.

You seek proof? Look at this. It's called a heartblade.

I've been working on mine for near to six years now and haven't come close to finishing it. Everything I am—heart, soul and mind—has gone into making this. At some point in his life, just about every weaponsmith gets the desire to make a heartblade. It represents the ultimate

combination of art and technique, for a heartblade is as individual as its maker and as important to the weaponsmith as his eyes or hands. Heartblades are proof of what we are, of the strength of our Discipline.





The same dedication that makes us single-minded enough to create heartblades also provided us with the strength to resist the bane of our time. Horrors hate weaponsmiths, because we know better than any other adepts how to strengthen our resolve against them. So if you go after Horrors, you best bring a few of us along with you.

But dedication is only one of the unique characteristics of weaponsmiths. We're also close to the people. Our Forges serve as meeting places, schools for apprentices, and common areas for people of all types. They come in, talk to us while we work, watch us shape metal into objects both lethal and beautiful. They tell us things, sometimes ask us to deliver messages to other people, for some of us travel quite a bit.

In these ways, weaponsmiths become the ties that bind people together. Perhaps this is why ours has become the most enduring Discipline. Some even claim the way of the weaponsmith was the first Discipline, and that all the other Disciplines grew from it. That may be—seems like every Discipline comes back to us, at any rate.

So remember that. Any group of adepts that heads off looking for legend better bring a weaponsmith along just in case you need a weapon identified, or a blade fixed, or something remembered, or a Horror faced down—because nobody's better at any of that than a weaponsmith.

ON BECOMING A WEAPONSMTIH

We weaponsmiths form guilds known as Forges. Our Forges provide us with places to meet and work and also a steady supply of new recruits. Unlike the Disciplines of the swordmaster or warrior, you won't find too many young ones that want to

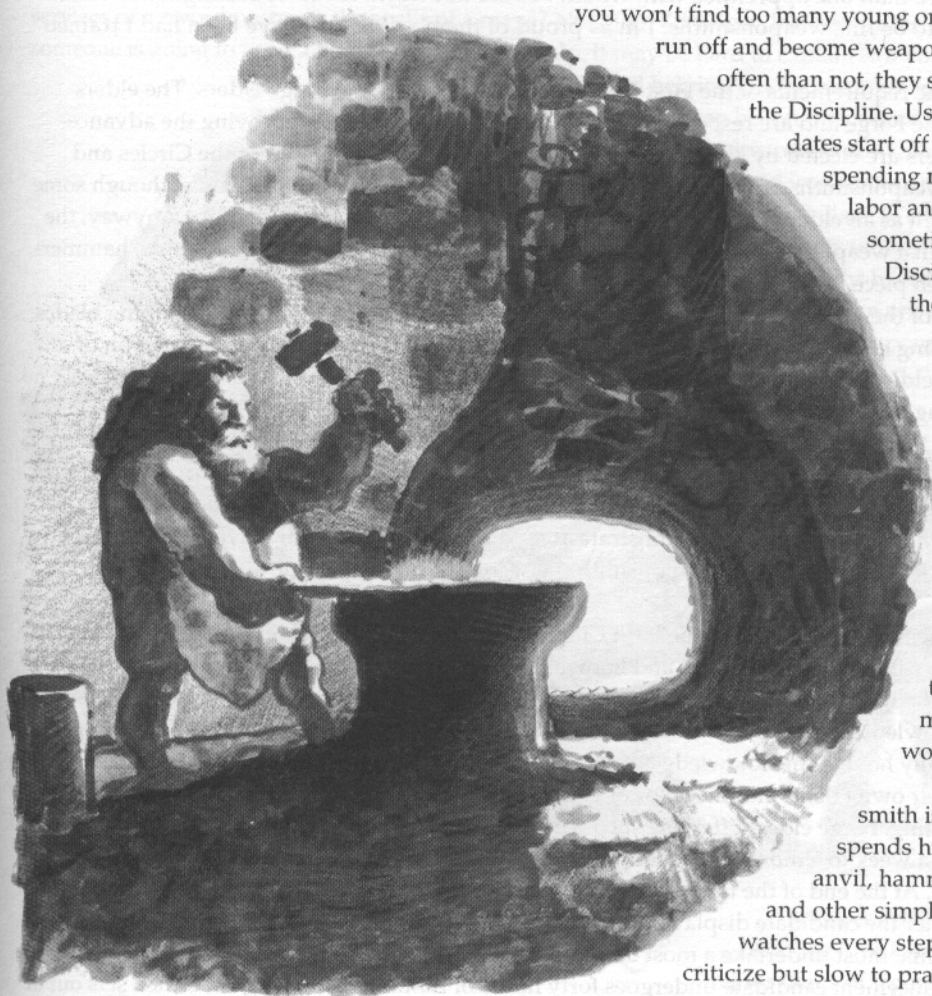
run off and become weaponsmiths. More often than not, they sort of slide into the Discipline. Usually, candi-

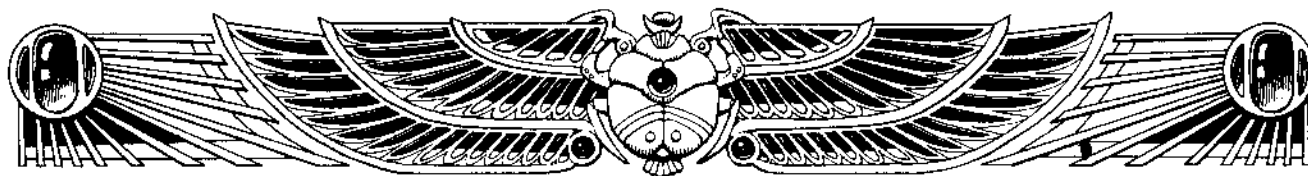
dates start off working for us to make a little spending money. Some discover they enjoy the labor and stay for a while. Those who don't sometimes go off to become adepts of other Disciplines or find work more suited to them—work a little easier on the back and arms, usually.

Those who stay at the Forge, though, are rewarded handsomely. For weaponsmiths watch over all who work for them, and anyone who stays at the Forge for more than a few months is recognized as adept material. These we introduce to more advanced forms of metalworking, watching as they work the iron to see whether or not they fall in tune with the metal. If they do, some member of the forge "adopts" the worker and begins his apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship to a weaponsmith is long and hard. The apprentice spends his days laboring at the bellows and anvil, hammering out horseshoes, shovel blades and other simple pieces of ironwork. The mentor watches every step of the apprentice's work, quick to criticize but slow to praise. An apprentice may spend a

THOUGH I DO NOT WISH TO CONTRADICT THE ESTEEMED AUTHOR OF THIS TEXT, I FEEL I MUST IMPLY THAT WEAPONSMTIH ALONE BEAR THE DEDICATION NEEDED TO FIGHT OFF THE HORRORS IS SIMPLY ABSURD.
—MERROX, MASTER OF THE HALL OF RECORDS





SUCH PRACTICE
SPEAKS WELL OF
THE PRAGMATISM
AND SELFLESSNESS
THE WAY OF THE
WEAPONSMITH
INSTILLS IN ITS
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PROBLEM OF AN
ILL-MATCHED
STUDENT AND
TEACHER IS RARELY
OVERCOME SO
EASILY IN OTHER
DISCIPLINES.
—DORBULIUS OF
THROAL

week learning how to form nails, constantly banging on tiny pieces of metal until they all come out just the right shape and size, with as little metal wasted as possible. Such tiring and tedious chores strengthen the resolve and attentiveness of the would-be adept, forging the dedication and iron will for which weaponsmiths are known. Such training may seem harsh, but it is our way. The working of metal is a learned gift, not a birthright, and poorly done work insults both the metal itself and the mentor who trains the apprentice.

While the apprentice spends his days laboring over the forge and anvil, he spends his nights in deep study. The weaponsmith must be well versed in all aspects of metalwork, including the history of the art. Apprentices study weaponsmiths of the distant past, as well as the weapons those adepts created and the methods they used. This study forms the seed from which the weaponsmith's well of knowledge will one day spring, the index of a mental encyclopedia. This is why I can say, without fear of boasting, that weaponsmiths know more about weapon history than anyone else. If it can be known, a weaponsmith somewhere knows it. Mark my words on this.

A weaponsmith's apprenticeship lasts from six to eight months, depending on the aptitude of the apprentice and that of his master. In cases where apprentice and mentor are ill-suited to one another, the training can take much longer. If such an ill match forms, other members of the Forge may step in and assign the mentor a new apprentice and the apprentice a new mentor. There is no shame in this: talent has little to do with personality, which can play a major role in the instruction

of apprentices. I myself have had more than one apprentice with whom I could not work. All were reassigned to different mentors, and all have turned out to be fine weaponsmiths. I'm as proud of them as I would have been had I trained them myself.

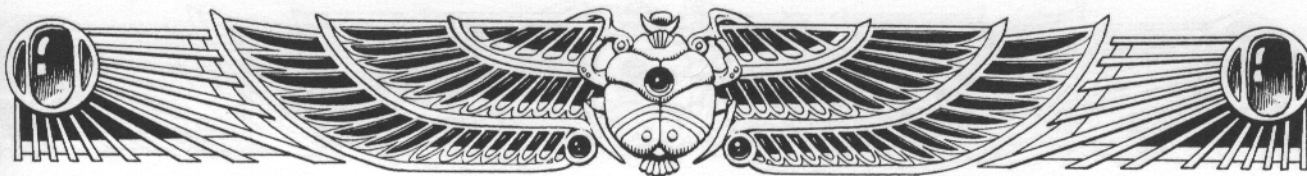
After an apprentice has learned the requirements of the First Circle, he appears before the Forge elders. The elders make all major decisions concerning the Forge and are responsible for judging new recruits and approving the advancement of the Forge's members. The elders are elected by all at the Forge, who usually base their votes on the Circles and level-headedness of the elders. Most weaponsmiths are considered elder material after reaching Tenth Circle, though some are chosen sooner or later. (I was chosen as an elder at Eighth Circle, which has earned me no end of honor.) Anyway, the apprentice must present the elders with a weapon he has forged himself. Typically, apprentices keep this simple, hammering out a nice little dagger or some such piece.

As I said before, though, the way of the weaponsmith involves much more than pounding on iron and shaping blades. Apprentices also must display something else they've learned, perhaps by reciting the history of an ancient weapon or demonstrating some proficiency in wielding the weapon the apprentice has forged. Smiths need to be well-rounded, and no one becomes an adept without showing he can make his way in the world if he must.

Advancing through the Circles of the weaponsmith Discipline can be a grueling task, even for those with iron wills. Every time one of our Discipline wishes to advance to the next Circle, he must first travel to a Forge and prove that he is worthy. Those wishing to advance spend a week at the Forge, studying under the more experienced weaponsmiths. At the end of their study, they go before the Forge elders and demonstrate at least three talents of their current Circle. If the candidate's proficiency satisfies the elders, they teach the weaponsmith the secrets of the next Circle and send him back out into the world.

When an adept comes to a Forge seeking admittance to the Fifth Circle of our Discipline, the elders test the adept's mental acuity and grasp of history as much as his physical abilities and knowledge of metalworking. Beginning with the Fifth Circle, the focus of testing shifts from the working of metal to the knowledge that must accompany that ability. For example, the elders begin testing the adept's knowledge of weapon history, often basing the test on one of the weapons each Forge keeps in its safe house. The Forge usually holds some knowledge of these weapons, having catalogued and documented a few of their pertinent facts through their own talents and the labor of various adepts testing for Fifth Circle, but all still keep some secrets. During advancement testing, Forge elders offer one such weapon to candidates and instruct them to study the weapon for a specific period—usually a week to a month, depending on the Circle the adept wishes to achieve and the complexity of the weapon being examined. At the end of the time allotted, the candidate must return to the elders and relate his findings. The elders then decide whether the candidate displays sufficient knowledge for advancement. Adepts attempting to attain the Ninth Circle of the Discipline must undertake a most daunting task. Each Forge keeps a list of weapons lost before or during the Scourge. The advancement candidate undergoes forty hours of training at the Forge and then sets out to





rediscover one of these weapons. Often, the weapon is related to a weapon that the adept has studied before, providing the weaponsmith a good idea of where to start his search. Once the adept finds the weapon, he must restore it to its former glory and present the weapon to the Forge elders.

Weaponsmiths rarely search out ghost masters to continue their training, for most of us feel uneasy seeking from the dead the knowledge those who have passed on gained during life. But in times of need, weaponsmiths will summon ghost masters. Generally, the ritual of the ghost master is only available to adepts of Fifth Circle and higher, and then only to those in genuine need of such extreme measures. Those weaponsmiths who may be traveling far from a Forge will often be taught the ritual as well, so that they may continue to advance in Circles despite their distance from their Forge. In all instances, ghost masters train adepts using the methods and trials of advancement of living weaponsmith mentors.

BEING A WEAPONSMITH

Few things in life provide more gratification than helping others. And helping others is one of the things that weaponsmiths do best. No, we don't heal wounds or cure infection or ease the pain of childbirth and death for our fellow Name-givers, but we do make their daily lives simpler and more comfortable by employing our talents. Oh, other Disciplines might claim that they do the same, but I can't say as they'd be telling the whole truth. When was the last time that the average man in a village needed the services of a swordmaster or the spells of a mage? Not often I'd wager, but every time I go into a village I can be sure that someone is going to need a little of my time and help. It may be hard to explain to a young would-be archer or sky raider, but sometimes digging in and helping out the common folk scrabbling to make a living on the

surface of Barsaive can be infinitely more important than running off to kill Horrors. This desire to help our fellow Name-givers inspires many of our Discipline to wander far and wide. We go where we are needed, traveling from village to city to village again, always looking to bring our talents where they can do the most good.

Weaponsmiths have stood in front of barred city gates, staring down ork scorchers thinking to plunder the shops within. Weaponsmiths have traveled to isolated towns

to destroy Horrors that nested among the helpless. And still other smiths have spent days riding just to fix a wheel of a wagon that provides one family's livelihood.

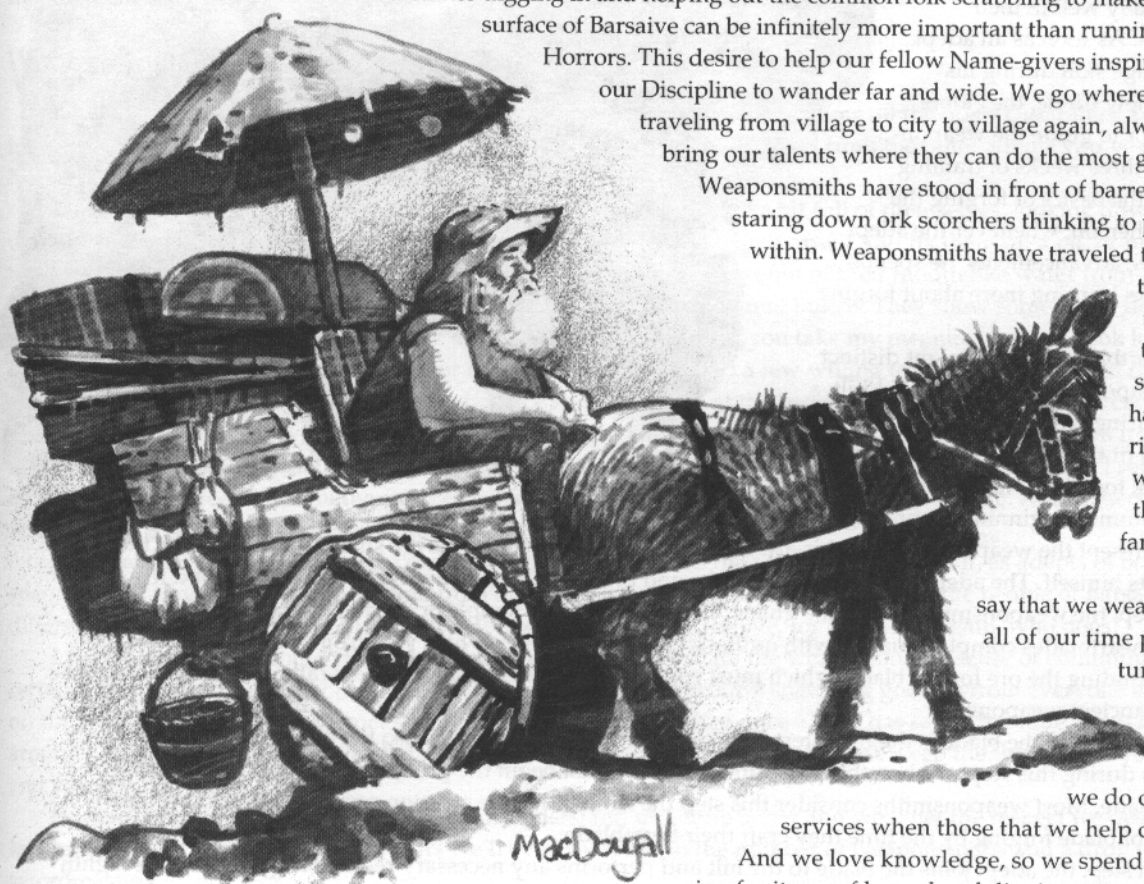
This is not to say that we weaponsmiths spend all of our time pursuing opportunities to practice charity. We must earn a living, and so

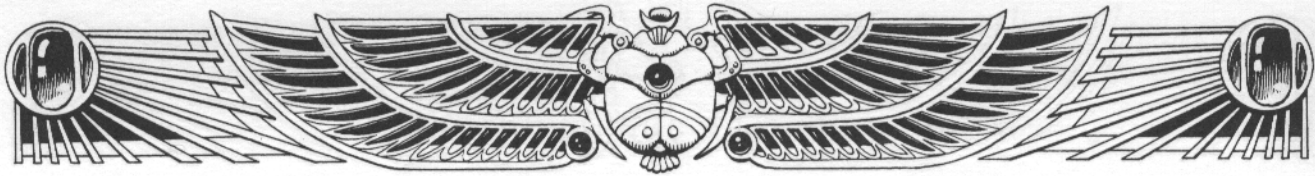
we do charge for our

services when those that we help can afford to pay. And we love knowledge, so we spend some time looking for items of legend and digging around for secret writings that might shed light on the nature of our world.

THE WEAPONSMITH
DERMATT'S
CONCEIVED
AVERSION TO
DEALING WITH
THE DEAD STEMS
FROM IGNORANCE.
THANK THE
PASSIONS NOT
ALL MEMBERS
OF THE DISCIPLINE
SUFFER FROM
SUCH SHORTSIGHT-
EDNESS.

—D'ELKO,
NETHERMANCER
OF KRATAS





DERMATT'S WORDS
RING TRUE. IF ONLY
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PERFORMING
GLORIOUS DEEDS,
OUR WORLD WOULD
BE A MUCH
BETTER PLACE.
—STOKILA OF
VIVANE

So you can say that weaponsmiths combine in perfect balance the common decency of the people of Barsaive and the iron determination that saved us from the Scourge. We're the backbone of the world, and we travel far and wide spreading our strength.

THE HEARTBLADE

Crafting a heartblade is arguably the single most important task any weaponsmith ever sets for himself. The heartblade represents the fusion of a weaponsmith with his Discipline, the culmination of his learning. In the heartblade, the weaponsmith creates a powerful pattern item of his own.

Weaponsmiths
spend many, many

years working on their heartblades, striving to make them as perfect as possible. A weaponsmith may begin crafting his heartblade only when given permission to do so by his elders. This permission is only granted to those who perform exceptionally well in their advancement trials. As soon as an adept shows above-average skill during his testing to attain a new Circle, the elders choose an instructor to guide the weaponsmith through the three weeks of training necessary to learn the basics of forging the heartblade. From then on, whenever the adept trains for successive advancements, he spends another three weeks learning more about forging the heartblade.

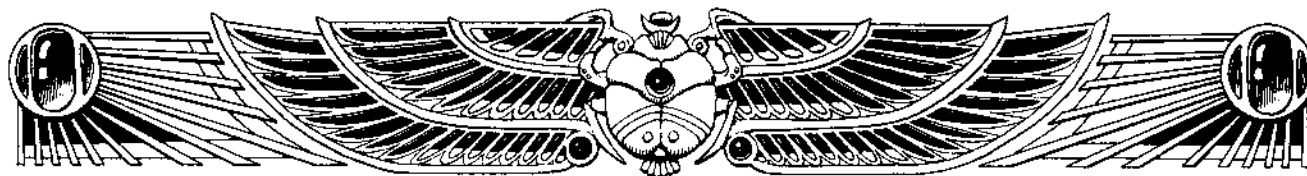
Creating a heartblade involves eight distinct steps. First, the weaponsmith must craft the hilt, a lengthy process during which the adept must imagine how the blade will fit the grip and how all the pieces of the blade will work together. Next, the weaponsmith embellishes the pommel, beginning by finding just the right item to install in the pommel. The item must represent the weaponsmith and his art. Gems are a common choice, as are small iron ornaments the weaponsmith crafts himself. The adept affixes the item to the end of the hilt and fashions the pommel around it.

In the third step, the weaponsmith creates the guard. The guard may be simple or ornate, though weaponsmiths usually give their heartblades complex guards, with quillons curving out every which way from the hilt of the weapon. The fourth step is finding the ore for the blade, which must come from within a lost kaer. Generally, weaponmasters take the material from ancient weapons.

Purifying the metal for the blade is the fifth step. This time-consuming process is also the most crucial, for if the weaponsmith fails during this step, the heartblade is ruined and he must begin the process anew. For the sixth step, the adept forges the blade. Most weaponsmiths consider this step the simplest in the creation process, as they have nearly achieved mastery of blade forging by the time they craft their heartblade.

In the seventh step, the adept joins the blade to the hilt and performs any necessary re-balancing. During the eighth and final step, the weaponsmith sharpens the blade and adds any final decorations. Then he performs a blood magic ritual





to tie the item's pattern to his own. The weaponmaster must repeat this ritual every year in order to keep the weapon attached to his pattern.

As soon as the heartblade is completed, the weaponsmith achieves a deeper understanding of his art and himself. It is said that weaponsmiths carrying heartblades are among the greatest adepts to walk the earth.

THE FORGE

Every major city of Barsaive contains at least one Forge, and all but the most minor or distant villages count weaponsmiths among their number. Forges consist of no fewer than five weaponsmiths, with two elders for every five members. Thus, a Forge of ten members would include six adepts and four elders. An elder must have reached at least the Eighth Circle of his Discipline and is responsible for training adepts, recruiting new apprentices and managing the daily operations of the Forge. Unlike most adepts, weaponsmiths understand the business applications of their skills; most Forges make a profit from the talents of their members.

Forges generally try not to compete with each other, though in the larger cities with more than a single Forge, this can be a difficult task. To avoid fighting for patrons, Forges near other Forges specialize in the creation, repair and enhancement of specific weapon types or other items.

Any weaponsmith can expect to receive free room and board at a Forge for as long as he chooses to stay, but is expected to work for at least a few hours each day to help offset the cost of his keep.

Weaponsmiths need not belong to a Forge, but most are members of the Forge where they served their apprenticeships. Joining a Forge has its benefits, most notably a 30 percent discount on any goods purchased from the Forge, but it also demands a price. Members are expected to deposit no less than 5 percent of their yearly earnings into the Forge's coffers. Though a Forge does not offer discounted training costs for members of the Forge, members do receive priority treatment and will receive training ahead of those who are not members of the Forge.

WEAPONSMTHS AND OTHER ADEPTS

I'll not waste your time here. No prattling gossip or mudslinging about how all the other Disciplines are pale imitations of my own—I'm sure you've heard more than enough such drivel from the other adepts you've talked to. No, I get on all right with most other adepts.

Warriors are generally civil enough, though they sometimes seem a bit full of themselves, looking down their noses at us and such. At least until we start pointing out all the little flaws in their armor and fix them up a bit, or until a sword is broken. Then they show up all smiles and flowers and praise just flows out of their mouth like water from a spring.

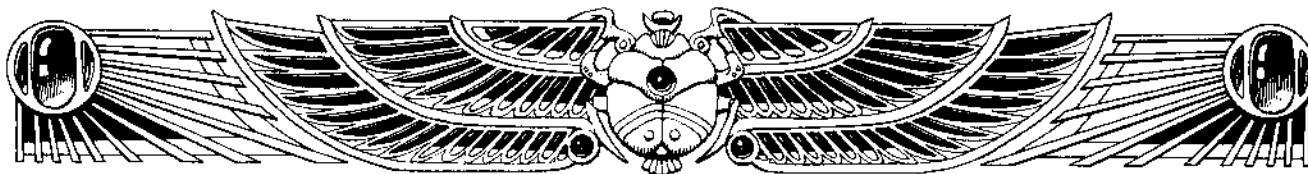
Wizards, elementalists, illusionists and nethermancers are a different bunch. They show some of the dedication of the weaponsmith, but at the same time they're a bit in the clouds if you take my meaning. Lots of book learning, but most of them lack what I'd call "dirt under the nails." Oh, you'll find a few willing to get into the thick of things, but most spellslingers would just as soon stand at a distance and toss spells at the baddies, safely out of sword's reach. Not a bad way to handle things, really, but it lacks a personal touch. The nethermancers are a pretty good lot, even if they've gotten a bit of a bad reputation from all the time they spend mucking about with dead things. In fact, the way I see it, one must be damned dedicated to be a nethermancer, what with all the persecution they have to endure. And if there's one thing weaponsmiths respect, it's determination.

Troubadours have a lot more in common with weaponsmiths than they'd like to admit, as adepts of both Disciplines spend a lot of time carrying information from one place to another and telling stories to the people of Barsaive. Still, many differences separate us as well. Most troubadours don't have our resolve, for one. Then again, who does?

I find thieves a hard lot to stomach, sometimes. They don't share the weaponsmith's sense of community, and they certainly don't respect good honest labor. No, they'd rather run around snatching goodies from everyone else and feeding off the work of others. Still, I've met some good ones, and more than once a thief has saved my hide when I couldn't get around a trap or out of a fix. Quick hands, but no real strength—moral or physical. Keep the thief where you can see him, and you should be fine.

So that's about it. Now maybe people will understand us a little better and we'll get the respect we deserve. Who knows, maybe in the next couple of years we'll even see a rise in the number of weaponsmiths and a drop in the number of swordmasters.





THE WAY OF MIND AND SYMBOL



In its original form, the following document was an address to the Thronlic Court, delivered in 1504 by the ork wizard Ajmar the Admirable as part of his application for the post of Court Spellcaster. For this anthology, I asked Ajmar to expand his presentation wherever he felt additional text would clarify his comments.

—Presented for the edification of the reader by Derrat, wizard of the City of Yistaine, 1507 TH

The way of the wizard is not only the most advanced of the spellcasting Disciplines, it is by far the most complex and subtle of all the adept's ways. The wise monarch seeking the counsel of a practitioner of the arcane arts should therefore listen first and longest to a walker of the wizard's path. In order to master the Discipline of wizardry, an adept must develop a superior intellect and acute powers of analysis. Clearly, these faculties also make a wizard—such as my humble self—eminently suitable for the post of adviser. Indeed, a wizard's mental acuity makes him a fit purveyor of advice on every topic imaginable. For it is the wizard's task to understand all things in the world, to fit them into categories, and rank them in a system of correspondences. From these correspondences flow not only the magical powers on which the wizard draws, but a complete vision of the Universe by which to comprehend people, creatures and objects of all sorts.

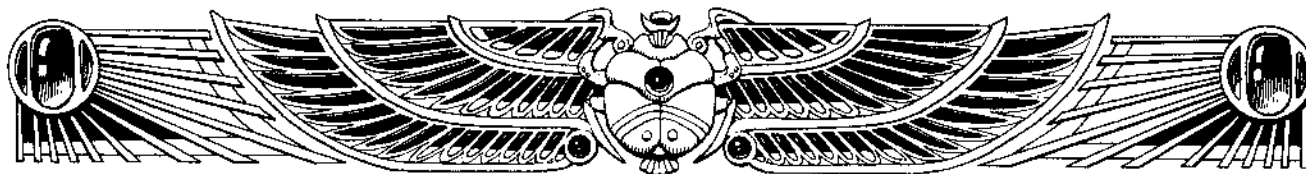
If I may beg the Court's indulgence, I shall now develop my argument to support what I have said, providing evidence to establish the truth of my claims.

ON SYMBOLS AND SPELLCASTING

The wizard-in-training must first understand that things in this world are more than they seem. Every word, every action, everything that can be observed with the Name-giver's eye, these things all have higher meanings. The wizard learns to perform wondrous supernatural acts by discerning these higher meanings. Acquiring this understanding is known among teachers and students of the wizardly way as the process of symbolization.

Let us use as an example the chair you sit upon, Your Majesty. "Chair" seems utterly the wrong word for that object, even as the word leaves my lips. The word "chair" drops to the floor, flopping about like a fish out of water, refusing to





enter your ears. That is because the proper word for the thing upon which you sit is "throne." A "throne" is no mere chair; it is a symbol. It represents kingship. Your throne is an example of an object that carries a Great Meaning. A chair means nothing; a throne means something. Likewise, Your Serene Majesty is also a symbol. The name "Varulus" does not refer merely to a dwarf. It refers to one who symbolizes kingship, and also symbolizes all dwarfs.

Symbols have power because they are connected to the Realm of Ideas, upon which I shall expound further in a moment. Because it is a symbol, Your Majesty's throne has more magical power than a mere chair. You have more magical power than an ordinary dwarf. The wizard's art lies in tapping these powers; a wizard gains power by learning to mystically manipulate these symbols. Any thing important enough to stand as a symbol holds power that can be reached and used by the talents and spells of the wizard.

Unlike other Disciplines, whose adherents feel the tenets of their crafts in their bones, the Discipline of the wizard requires the adept to clearly understand the principles of his way in his mind. He must be a thinker, with a brain as sharp and cutting as a knife. He must learn to separate truth from falsehood, importance from triviality. The mind is the most important gift given to we Name-givers by the Passions; the wizard takes this extraordinarily valuable tool and uses it to its fullest. With his mind, he remakes the world.

Most Name-givers use a mere fraction of the mind's abilities. To become a wizard, a student must awaken his sleeping intellect until it is afire with the stunning possibilities of thought, the limitless vistas of the imagination. For practitioners of the lesser Disciplines, the first moments of initiation may come in a sudden flash of mystical awareness. Our way is not so easy. Only the trained mind is prepared for the ultimate insights of the wizardly path. The prospective wizard must build a mental foundation for the profound perceptions to come. Achieving this requires extensive study. The wizard therefore spends the early years of his life wrestling with dusty tome after dusty tome, immersing himself in the works of the great wizards of Barsaive's past.

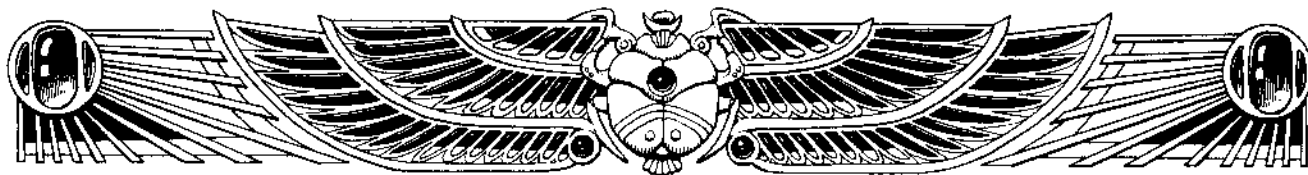
[Author's note: I used the word "tomes" here as a symbol for all transmitted learning. Many young wizards, particularly in Barsaive's misbegotten hinterlands, are nowadays forced to learn the great works as part of an oral tradition. Books require the painstaking labor of large numbers of scribes. Because they are expensive and time-consuming to produce, they are rare at the best of times. The Scourge has made them even harder to find, and so many small villages cannot lay hands on anything close to the entire corpus of texts necessary for the wizard-in-training. To compensate for this dreadful lack, tutors of the wizardly arts have taken to memorizing vast portions of the books missing from their own collections and then reciting them to their students. Though this way of teaching is unfortunately necessary, I fear that many subtle but essential points are lost by its practice. The hinterlands of Barsaive continue to produce large numbers of half-taught, bumpkin mages who learn by hearsay rather than by reading the eminent works of the past for themselves. While this kind of slow erosion is perhaps acceptable for nethermancers, elementalists and illusionists, it is most regrettable that the noble tradition of the wizard should be degraded in this manner.]

I shall not tire the Court with the complete list of these basic texts, particularly since wizards often disagree as to which are truly essential. I would say a dozen plus one books are essential to the learning of the wizard, including Thystrio's *Elucidations of Metaphor and Meaning*, Comborian's *Pathways to Profundity*, Clessio and Tornovir's *Categories of Ritual and Thinking*, and *The Substance of Desire* by the Countess of Nevermore.

ON THE IDEA AND ITS MEANING

Though these profound manuscripts teach their lessons from different perspectives, all speak of the importance of the Idea. In order to understand how the wizard remakes reality according to his desires, one must understand this concept. All things in this world are connected to an Idea. Your walking stick, Your Majesty, shares the *Idea* of the walking stick in common with all other walking sticks. Your throne shares the *Idea* of the throne with all the thrones of all the monarchs that have ever existed or will exist. But where do these Ideas come from? The wizard knows that the Idea of the throne, the Idea of the walking stick, was not created by Name-givers. There is a place, a real place deep in the heart of astral space, a place that even the Horrors cannot reach, in which all Ideas exist. Were it possible to travel to this Realm of Ideas, one would find there The Walking Stick—the original, mystical emanation upon which all walking sticks in our own reality are modeled. Anything you can think of has such a model in the Realm of Ideas. If it did not, you would not be able to think of it. Whenever a new object or being is created in this world, that creation merely reflects events in the Realm of Ideas, which on occasion spontaneously generates new things. (I have chosen the term "thing" specifically for its vagueness; an Idea might





be a type of being, an object, or even an abstract concept.) When the t'skrang race developed—with the Passion Upandal's aid—the peculiar engine that propels their riverboats, their actions reflected the appearance of a new thing called The Engine in the Realm of Ideas. If The Engine had not appeared there, the t'skrang would not have thought to try to make such objects here in this world. The Idea must exist first.

Are the Passions subservient to the Realm of Ideas? This question has puzzled wizards for centuries. I conclude that the Passions are themselves Ideas, the exemplars of our primal emotions. They are special examples of—

[Author's Note: At this point in my discourse, it became evident that my untutored audience was no longer devoting their full attention to me. To attract their wandering gazes, I was forced to resort to a visually spectacular parlor trick. That particular and satisfying combination of spells will illustrate for the reader what may seem to be an abstract point.

His majesty's court jester, a prancing and drooling ork of the type that brings discredit to our race, had begun capering about the hall, distracting those I sought to address. Not unprepared for such an eventuality, I reached into one of my matrices and cast a Wall Walker spell on the idiot. He looked at me questioningly; no obvious effect had occurred. I then fired a Flame Flash at his feet. Startled and fearful, he did what I had hoped he would; he instinctively jumped for the wall, which he climbed with the bug-like scabble of a long-legged spider. Further startled, he then pushed himself off of the wall he had climbed, landing on his generous posterior with a wail of protest.

I then extemporized in the following vein:]

What you have just seen, Your Majesty and notables of the Court, serves as a practical example of the manipulation of Ideas. In this instance, I used my intellect and the talents of spellcasting to draw upon the power of the Idea of the Spider. According to chapter seven of Alloron's *Correspondence and Continuum*, one of the primary things the spider symbolizes is the act of climbing. I used magic to bring that manifestation of the Idea of the Spider into this world, loaning to our dear jester an essential characteristic of the spider.

Then I drew power from the Idea of the Flame, specifically the destruction it symbolizes. By weaving threads to it, I turned a symbol in my thoughts into physical reality, producing the jet of fiery matter that impelled our jester to participate in my humble demonstration.

This incident affords me an excellent opportunity to distinguish between the symbol and the Idea. The Idea is perfect, ultimate, untouchable. We cannot directly perceive an Idea, for we cannot travel to the Realm of Ideas. The best we can do is to think of an Idea. The thought that thereby appears in our minds is the symbol. The symbol is the connection between our lowly, imperfect selves, and the primacy of the Idea. The symbol is what the Idea means to us. In this case, the spider meant climbing to me, and therefore served as a symbol of climbing. Flame meant destruction for my purposes, and therefore became destruction's symbol. I cannot master the Idea, but I can use the symbol to borrow a fraction of its power. Through the symbol, I can conjure up the ability to climb, or foster destruction.

Such spells as I have just cast are but minor manifestations of the wizard's capabilities. He conquers reality by understanding it, and then gives his desires form and solidity. It is our world he changes, not the Realm of Ideas.

Of course, I realize that the vaunted post of Court Spellcaster to the Royal Family of Throal is not to be won by the mere vulgar display of magical power. Incidentally, I shall be more than happy to repay the treasury for the cost of replacing that scorched tile.

UNDERSTANDING THROUGH IDEAS AND SYMBOLS

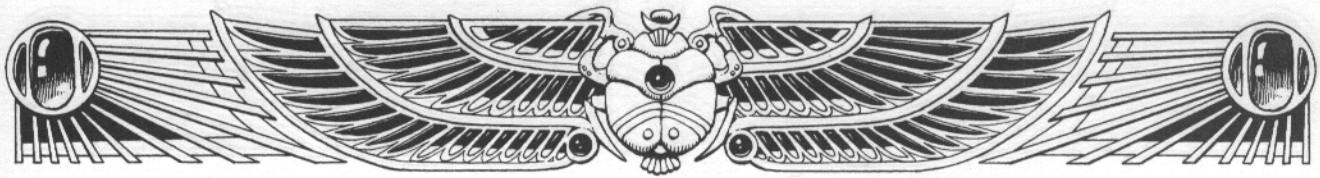
[Author's Note: Having gained their attention once more, I returned to the matter of my prepared speech.]

The adviser you seek, Your Majesty, must be able to do more than cast simple spells. He must be able to look at a complex matter and divine from it its core elements. As a wizard, my training prepares me eminently for such reasoning. Once the wizard learns that any situation can be reduced to the connection between symbols and Ideas, he can look beyond the surface confusion to detect the order beneath.

The wizard builds his perceptions on the wise words of his predecessors in the Discipline. He looks to history, to precedent. This is why a wizard must never stop learning, must never tire in his

I FEEL IT NECESSARY
TO REMIND THE
READER THAT THE
THEORY OF THE
REALM OF IDEAS
HAS, IN THE PAST,
BEEN SUBJECT TO
MUCH CONJECTURE.
MANY MAGICIANS,
MY FELLOW WIZARDS
AMONG THEM,
HAVE CRITICIZED
THE THEORY AS
NOTHING MORE
THAN A SIMPLE WAY
OF EXPLAINING THE
TRUE NATURE
OF MAGIC, WHICH
NO ONE TRULY
UNDERSTANDS.
—DERRAT





quest to unearth the buried knowledge of the past. With the correct background knowledge and a solid grasp of the catalogue of symbols, the wizard can look at any event or potential event and choose the correct course of—

[Author's Note: At this point, His Most Benevolent Highness interrupted me and asked me to address my powers of critical reflection to a particular practical matter. I dare not paraphrase my liege's most incisive words, but in short he demanded that I advise him on the status of Bartertown. He said that there was great debate among his chamberlains as to the fate of this scruffy urchin of a city, huddled impertinently outside the gates of his great kingdom. He said that he had already taken a decision on it, but wished me to express my views in order to determine if they were congruent with his.

After several moments of intense rumination, this is what I said:]

Let us look at Bartertown, Your Highness, and divine which symbols and Ideas are involved in this matter. Only when we know these things can we make an informed decision.

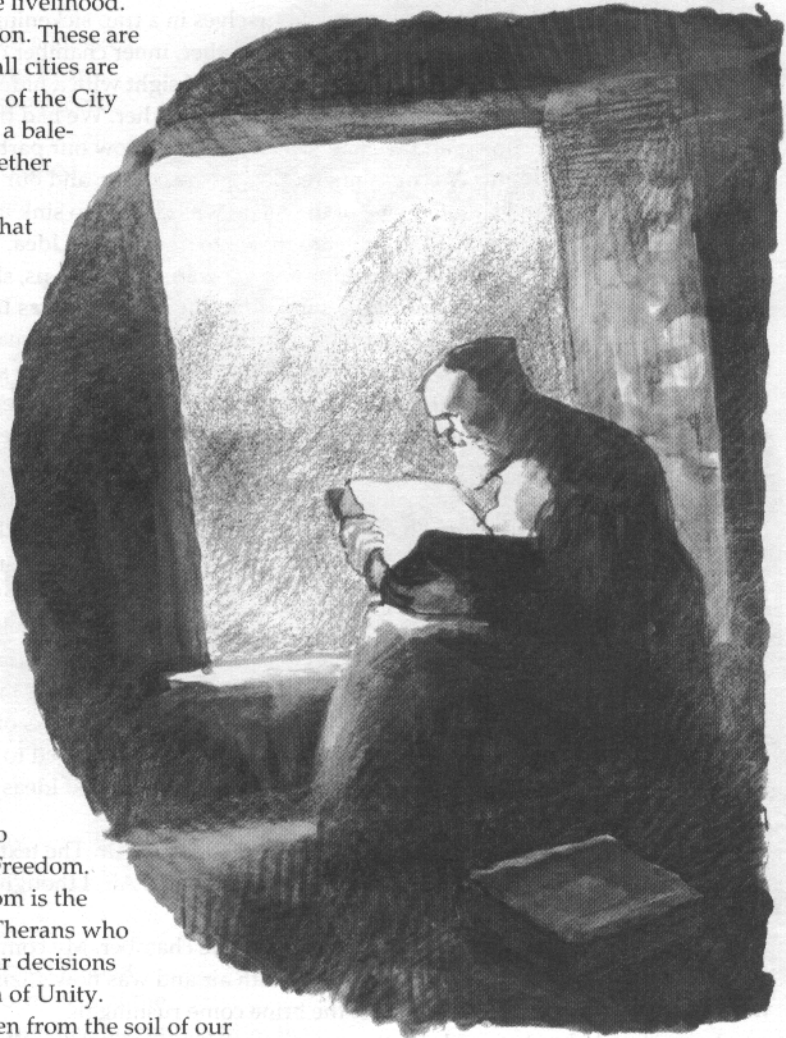
First of all, Bartertown is a manifestation of the Idea of the City. What is a city? First of all, it is a coming together of Name-givers for a common purpose and a collective livelihood. Therefore, the City symbolizes Unity and Cooperation. These are positive symbols, I am sure you will agree. But not all cities are good places. Kratas, for example, combines the Idea of the City with the Idea of the Thief, and this latter Idea exerts a baleful influence over the first. Kratas is a gathering-together like any city, but for the purposes of conspiracy. If Kratas was on your doorstep, I would recommend that you attempt to extinguish it.

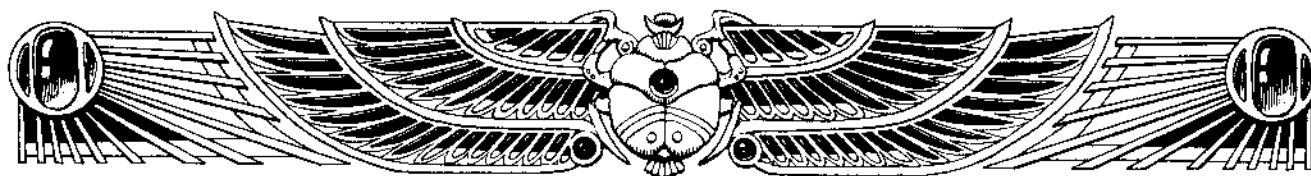
But Bartertown bears its second symbol in its name: barter. Bartertown is therefore connected to the Idea of Trade. What is trade? It is exchange, the free transfer of goods from one willing partner to the next. Trade is another form of cooperation, and thus Bartertown is doubly woven to the Idea of Cooperation.

This symbol augurs extremely well for your own aims, Your Majesty. For is not the Kingdom of Throal also a symbol of Unity and Cooperation? You seek to bring our province together, to unite it under the rule of justice and compassion. Bartertown may seem untidy and unruly; it may offend the sense of order that your dwarf heritage leads you to value; but in truth, Bartertown is a manifestation of the highest order. It can be a tool by which you may bind our land in your benevolent compact. Bartertown can aid you in this by adding to Unity and Cooperation a third and most vital Idea: Freedom.

Know this, Your Majesty: Unity without Freedom is the yoke of oppression. To avoid the tragic folly of the Therans who once ruled here, you must always take care that your decisions connect to the Idea of Freedom as well as to the Idea of Unity. Bartertown means freedom. It has sprouted unbidden from the soil of our new Barsaive, but it is a wildflower rather than a weed. To limit its growth is to doom your own noble vision—the very vision that brought me to this Court to offer you my service. As long as you are connected to the Ideas of Freedom, Cooperation, and Unity, I shall bind myself to you should you have me.

[Author's Note: At this point King Varulus announced that I might consider myself the official Court Spellcaster of Throal. His words seemed to take many of his courtiers by surprise; one of them began to choke and required the attention of the Court Healer. In the ensuing confusion, the rest of my discourse was forgotten. I present the remainder of it here, for the first time.]





ON CORRESPONDENCES AND ANTIPATHIES

Few wizards travel without at least an abridged copy of Vomon's *Concordance of Correspondences* or M'chuda's *Cyclopedia of Symbology*. These basic texts contain lists of the most commonly encountered Ideas and the symbols that relate to them. Most wizards have committed many of these to memory, but there are always moments when the ability to connect with an obscure Idea is a matter of life and death. My own well-thumbed copy of Vomon's text has helped me make decisions time after time that have saved not only my own life, but the lives of others.

The following tale will serve as an example of how Correspondences and Antipathies work in the world. Some years ago, I was trapped with my adventuring companions in a small village kaer in the lowlands south of Lake Vors. Moments after we entered the kaer, I saw that Idea of the Kaer had been connected to another, very strange Idea. The kaer's walls were of worked and polished metal. The design of the place was maze-like. And when the last of our party had stepped inside the kaer, a mammoth door of stone slammed down behind us, blocking our exit. With no choice but to go further into this oddly altered place, we soon found ourselves in a trap sickening in its depravity.

First, another stone door sealed all of us in another, inner chamber of worked and polished metal. Then a trap door opened beneath our beastmaster and sucked her out of sight with a hideous whooshing sound. We pounded furiously on the floor in an attempt to reopen the trap door and follow her. We had threaded ourselves together in a group pattern in order to symbolize our unity, and we had sworn never to allow our party to become separated. But this terrible trap-kaer set all our efforts at naught. We could not reopen the trap door, and our beastmaster seemed lost to us.

As we pounded and shouted, one of the metal walls began to sink into the floor. Behind it was yet another wall, of a mysterious clear substance that I have yet to match to a governing Idea. Through that clear wall we could see our comrade, sitting in a daze in a chamber much like the one we were in. Seeing us, she rushed over to the wall. We hammered at it from both sides, to no avail. Clearly one of the symbols of the clear wall was Invulnerability.

Portions of the walls in the beastmaster's room then shifted, revealing an array of spouts that gushed forth streams of water. The second chamber was a drowning trap, fiendishly made so that we could only look on helplessly as our comrade met a slow and awful death. Our archer made a quick mathematical determination, and told us that it would take but three minutes for the chamber to fill entirely with water. After that, our beastmaster had only as much life as she had lung power.

I immediately went to work, rifling through my sack for the notes I had taken some weeks earlier in the course of a rare opportunity to consult the dread book titled *Horrors*, a volume reluctantly compiled and jealously guarded by the librarians of the Great Library of Throal. Something about the nature of this place rang a faint bell in my memory. Lo and behold, I found—after much page-shuffling—my notes on an entry regarding the Great Horror named Artificer. Reading quickly, I learned that Artificer travels throughout Barsaive, searching out places likely to attract adventurers. It then remakes these places, filling them with deadly traps of devious construction. I knew that this trap-kaer was connected not only to the Idea of the Kaer, but to the Idea of the Horror, and through it to the Idea of the Machine.

I concentrated fully on my task, blocking out the horrified shrieks of my companions as the water rose higher and higher in the other chamber. I grabbed my copy of Vomon and riffled to the entry on the Idea of the Machine. Vomon lists symbols that relate to an Idea—called Correspondences—and also Ideas and Symbols that are the opposites of these Correspondences. The latter are called Antipathies.

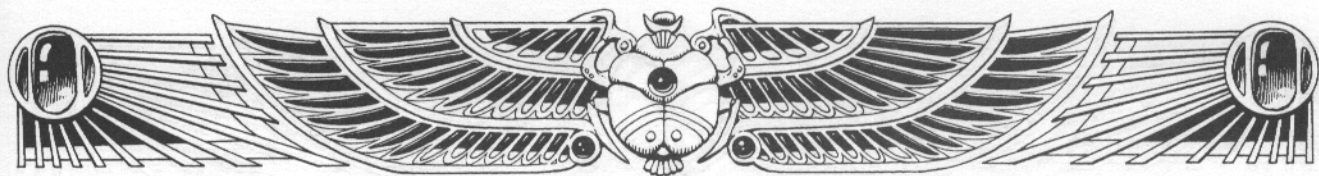
One of the Antipathies for the Machine was the Idea of Air. The text explained that one of the symbols of Air is Rust, which is the enemy of Metal, and therefore of the Machine. Air, I thought frantically, Air! How can I connect to this symbol for Air?

By this time, the water had reached the top of the chamber. My companions were either weeping or screaming in despair. The beastmaster had filled her lungs with air and was now gazing sadly at us, waiting for the inevitable moment when her lips would burst open and let the brine come rushing in.

I was already hard at work, reattuning my matrix to insert the spell I needed. With no time to spare as the moments slipped past, I wove the threads and cast a Compression Bubble spell around my dear companion. (Compression Bubble usually harms the target, but I knew that any damage to my durable colleague would be minor compared to drowning.) A large bubble of air appeared around her, allowing her to breathe.

My companions exulted, shouting in delight at this victory. And as their tears turned from sorrowful drops to joyous ones, the waters began to recede—as I knew they would.





The text on Artificer revealed that it derived its mystical power from the suffering caused by its traps. From this, I deduced that the traps themselves were triggered by negative emotions, such as trepidation and despair. My Compression Bubble spell bought our dying beastmaster a momentary respite, which boosted my companions' flagging morale. Their sudden, intense joy canceled out the emotional energy powering the trap, thus saving our partner.

The rest of our escape from Artificer's kaer is a tale for another day. You can see from my story, though, how the wizard solves problems. First, he consults all of his texts at hand. Then he seeks Correspondences and Antipathies. Finally, he uses his powers of deduction to arrive at the correct conclusion, and takes the appropriate action.

Like many of my kind, I also use these means for petty matters, such as deciding which type of rope to purchase or what kind of breakfast to order at a tavern. From the simple to the dramatic, symbols and Ideas govern every aspect of a wizard's life.

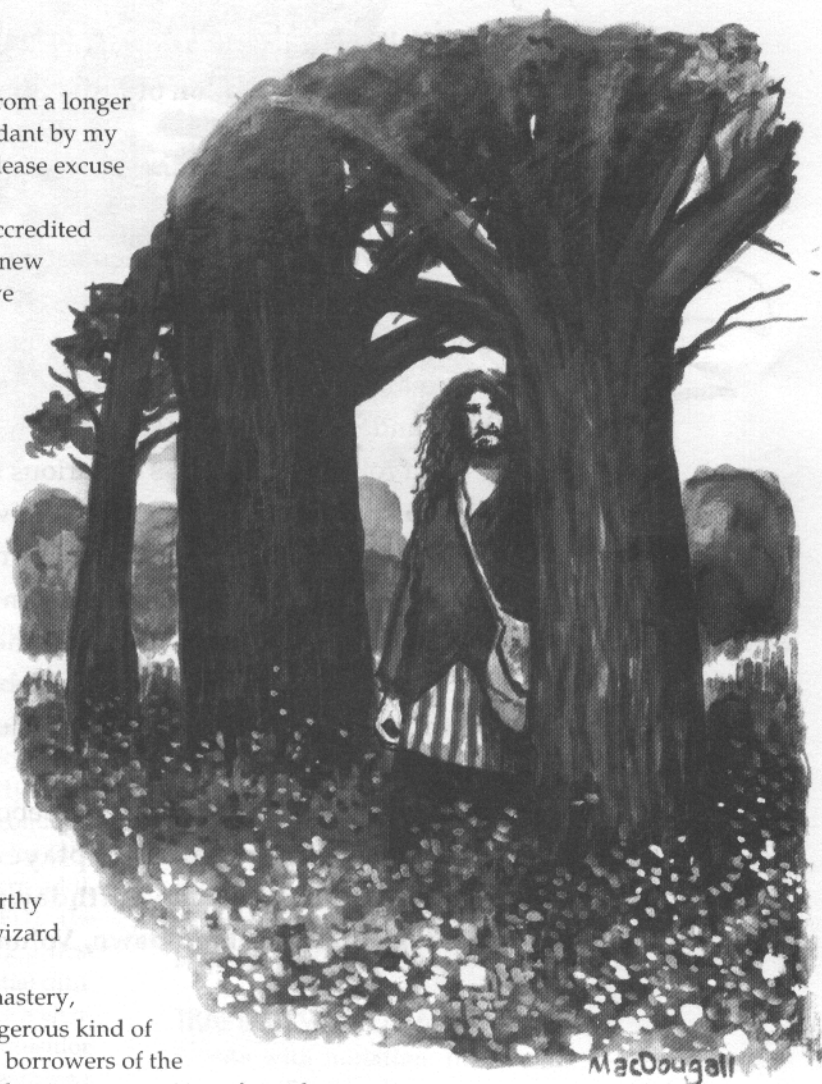
ON BRANCHES FROM THE PATH

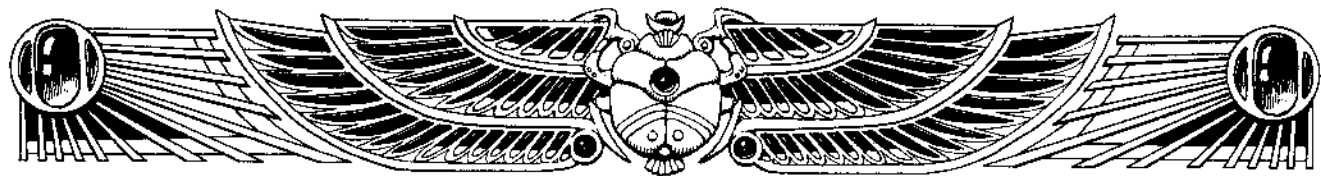
[Author's Note: The following is condensed from a longer closing address, which of course was made redundant by my liege's immediate acceptance of my application. Please excuse its sudden ending.]

I assure you that I follow the approved and accredited wizard's way. In the wake of the Scourge, several new and questionable approaches to the Discipline have unfortunately arisen out of a deplorable drop in standards.

Of late, I have encountered many who claim to be so-called instinctive wizards. These scruffy excuses for spellcasters would not be caught dead with a collection of books on hand. They learned their talents and spells by word of mouth, from other hedge wizards. Though they carry in their heads badly jumbled memories of the system of Ideas and symbols, and a wholly inadequate list of Correspondences and Antipathies, they claim they can nonetheless achieve true mastery of the wizard's Discipline through experience. They simply invent their own Correspondences and Antipathies based on the skimpy evidence of their own lives! It is a wonder to me that any of them survive past the First Circle, but somehow they do. These "instinctive" wizards often display a frank and earthy sensibility that lacks in the dignity with which a wizard should carry himself.

There are also those who follow the path of mastery, which in my view goes beyond dignity into a dangerous kind of pride. These wizards see themselves as more than borrowers of the power of Ideas; they believe they can control and dominate emanations from the Realm of Ideas. They believe the world is theirs to manipulate as they will, and see wizardry as no more than a route to power. Thera wizards often choose this path; in the days before the Scourge, they planted this lamentable tradition in our own fair province, and it plagues us to this day. The wizard who desires mastery holds himself above all persons and all things. He uses his overweening confidence to force symbols to do his will. This path is a hazardous one, for Ideas are more powerful than individuals. The so-called mastery wizard should fear the day when Ideas will have the last laugh.





GAME INFORMATION

Before you can accomplish anything, you must know the principles behind it.

Otherwise, you might as well attempt to forge a blade from cheese.

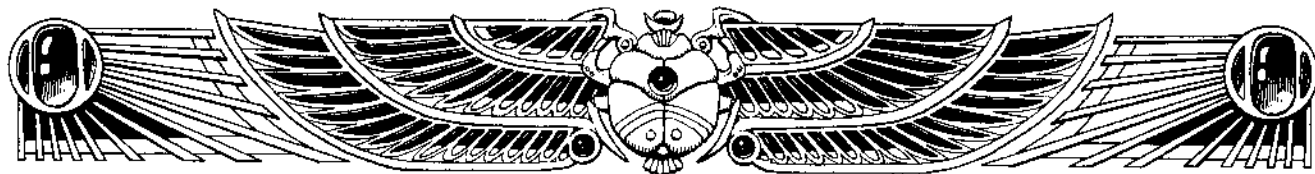
Rafkallon of Elliv Skralc

The **Adept's Way** provides gamemasters and players with a wealth of detail regarding the primary Disciplines followed by adepts in Barsaive. The fictional section of this book illustrates how adepts of **Earthdawn** interact with their world, where and how they live, their traditions and biases, their relationships with others, and so on. Players and gamemasters alike can use this information to help them roleplay characters of various Disciplines.

The **Game Information** section provides new general and specific game rules for Disciplines, including suggestions for roleplaying adept characters, combining Disciplines, and judging the effects in game play of certain talents and/or characteristics specific to each Discipline. In some cases, these rules expand on those provided in the **Earthdawn** rulebook (ED) and the **Earthdawn Companion** (Companion). This section also includes optional rules for adept characters.

Gamemasters will need the **Earthdawn** rulebook to use **The Adept's Way**; other books that gamemasters and/or players may find useful are the **Earthdawn Gamemaster's Pack**, the **Earthdawn Companion**, the **Barsaive Campaign Set**, and **Denizens of Earthdawn, Volumes I and II**.





GENERAL RULES

The following guidelines for initiation, training, Attribute improvement and acquiring multiple Disciplines apply to all adepts of all Disciplines.

INITIATION

The time it takes for potential adepts to undergo initiation in their first Disciplines varies widely from Discipline to Discipline and master to master. Becoming a wizard can take years; becoming a thief can take as little as a few days. The amount of time needed to learn additional Disciplines is more standard (see p. 226, ED). The difference in initiation time between acquiring a first Discipline and additional ones stems from the initial difficulty of learning to see the world magically. Once a character achieves this breakthrough moment, the acquisition of additional Disciplines becomes a matter of unlearning a few old habits and picking up a few new ones. Acquiring a second or third or fourth Discipline is more akin to Circle advancement than to initiation into a first Discipline, unless the gamemaster adopts the guidelines given under **Acquiring Multiple Disciplines**, p. 106 of this section.

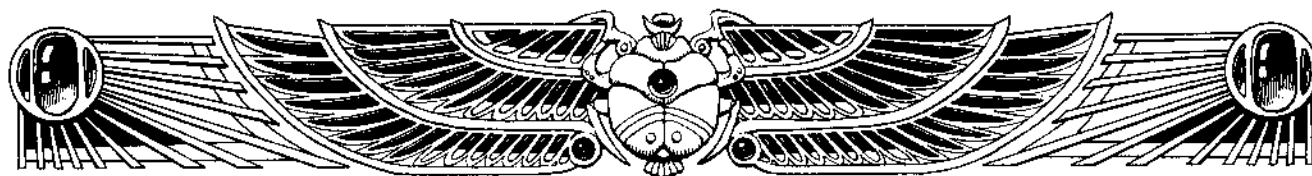
Initiation into a Discipline creates a mystical link between the initiate's True Pattern and the path of that Discipline. Each Discipline has various means of initiation, often (though not always) linked to particular ways of looking at that Discipline. For example, the initiation of a selfish thief is much more brutal than that of a trickster thief (see **Roleplaying Hints** for the thief Discipline, p. 131).

Masters do not charge for initiating students into their first Disciplines. Initiating a student often requires a substantial investment of time, and so few masters undertake it lightly. All adepts screen potential adepts carefully to make sure they will perform admirably in the Discipline. Only an adept who has attained Fifth Circle or higher in a Discipline may initiate others into it.

TRAINING FOR CIRCLE ADVANCEMENT

As with initiation, the amount of time needed to train for Circle advancement varies widely between Disciplines. Most training consists of practice in the talents available at the new Circle, balanced with some degree of theoretical discussion. The weight given to each, however, may be very different. For example, the fighting Disciplines tend to downplay theory, while the spellcasting Disciplines concentrate on theory far more





than practice. Specific training times for new Circles appear on p. 223, **ED**.

Adepts advancing to a new Circle learn the rudiments of all talents available at that Circle, whether or not they immediately learn how to use the talents. With meditation, adepts can recall their training sessions and pick up talents they may have originally skipped. At higher Circles, adepts gain new abilities such as increased Defenses and more flexible Karma use through particular rituals taught to the advancing character. The character may later perform these rituals on others when acting as an instructor.

Adepts advancing in spellcasting Disciplines usually learn one new spell from the Circle in question as part of the overall training procedure. This spell is considered to have been learned automatically, and so the character need not make a test to acquire it. Generous gamemasters may allow players to choose the spell they wish to learn; otherwise determine the spell learned randomly.

Any adept may train a character of his or her Discipline for Circle advancement, provided the adept is of a higher Circle than the student. Many instructors are retired adventurers who earn their living by passing on the benefits of their experience. Also, adepts frequently earn money by training lower-Circle colleagues and then pay their earnings to an instructor for training in their own advancement. Customary fees for training appear on p. 223, **ED**.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENT

Players who wish to improve their characters' Attributes (p. 220, **ED**) may only do so when advancing to a new Circle in their first Disciplines. Advancing to higher Circles in additional Disciplines does not provide opportunities for Attribute improvement.

ACQUIRING MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES

The **Earthdawn** rules make the acquisition of multiple Disciplines easy and cost-effective, and so many player characters may eventually seek to acquire more than one Discipline. Because all player characters in **Earthdawn** are adepts, the game assumes that they have already gone through the difficult process of initiation in their first Discipline. Keep in mind, however, that becoming an adept in the world of **Earthdawn** is not easy or automatic.

Within the fiction of the game universe, being an adept is a way of life. Following a Discipline consumes all of a character's waking hours, and they should find it difficult to even consider making the tremendous effort needed to learn a second Discipline. This alone should be

enough to discourage players from adding second or even third Disciplines to their characters. The gamemaster must also consider, however, that a multi-Disciplined character will quickly become very powerful. The gamemaster may choose to limit the acquisition of multiple Disciplines simply to maintain game balance. Therefore, characters who seek additional Disciplines in the course of a campaign should not be assured of success. Gamemasters who wish to limit the acquisition of multiple Disciplines may adopt some of the following guidelines.

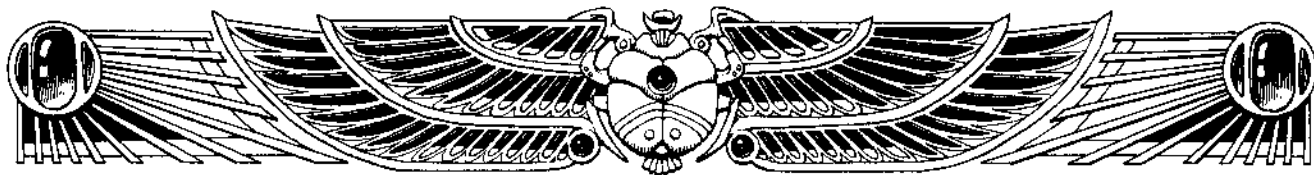
Finding a master willing to perform an initiation is the first step, and can present some difficulties. Many masters are reluctant to initiate characters who are already adepts of another Discipline because such students tend to be more independent, self-assured, and harder to teach than green recruits. Also, masters are particularly reluctant to initiate characters who practice Disciplines they consider unsympathetic or in opposition to their own. They may refuse to teach applicants they do not like, or may require them to embark on a risky venture to prove their worthiness. Each individual Discipline described in this section includes a listing of other Disciplines thought to be complementary, neutral, or hostile to the path in question. Gamemasters may use these lists as guidelines for the attitudes of gamemaster-character masters. Individual masters may also have their own preferences and prejudices when it comes to other Disciplines. If the gamemaster does not want to allow a character to learn a particular combination of Disciplines, he can make it very tough for a character to find a teacher.

The custom of charging adepts money for initiation into new Disciplines can be another hurdle. The standard fee is 100 silver pieces for each Circle in each Discipline the student already knows; individual masters may charge more or less for teaching new Disciplines, depending on circumstances.

If player characters want to initiate one another into their various Disciplines, the gamemaster can impose other kinds of limits. A character who embarks on training in a new Discipline must devote considerable time to the effort (see p. 226, **ED**). Gamemasters can make it difficult for experienced characters, who have already accumulated obligations and enemies, to find the time to train. As characters cannot initiate others until they reach Fifth Circle in a Discipline, all player characters capable of initiating others will most likely have burdens of this kind.

Gamemasters can also require a test at the end of the training period to see if the character learned to think like a practitioner of the new Discipline. The difficulty number





for this test should be equal to twice the character's highest Circle in his or her previous Discipline. This level of difficulty reflects the fact that as a character becomes more experienced in a particular way of thinking, he or she finds it that much harder to adopt a new one. If the character fails the test, the training time and any fees paid are wasted, and the teacher may or may not be willing to give the character a second chance.

The character may make the new Discipline test using his or her Perception, which offers a distinct advantage to characters whose first Disciplines give them high Perception Attributes (p. 49, ED). Alternatively, the character may make the test using any Attribute listed as important for the new Discipline in the *Earthdawn* rulebook. Gamemasters should determine appropriate Attributes for those Disciplines described in other *Earthdawn* products.

Bonuses

Characters who follow multiple Disciplines may not combine the effects of the characteristics bonuses of those Disciplines. If a character would normally gain a characteristics bonus from more than one Discipline, the character gains only the more advantageous of the bonuses, not both.

In the same way, a character who would receive a bonus to a Defense Rating from both Disciplines may only gain the benefit of the more advantageous bonus.

Karma

Characters who follow multiple Disciplines may spend more than 1 Karma Point for Attribute Tests if each of their Disciplines allow it. For example, both swordmasters and archers may spend Karma on actions using Dexterity only when they reach Fourth Circle. A Fourth circle archer who is also a Fourth Circle swordmaster could spend up to 2 Karma Points on actions using Dexterity only.

This rule also applies to any actions on which Karma may be spent.

Karma Rituals

According to the *Earthdawn* rulebook, a character acquiring an additional Discipline must purchase all the First Circle talents that differ from his or her current Discipline, but need not relearn talents for the new Discipline that he already knows. In theory, this rule applies to the Karma Ritual talent. In fact, however, Karma rituals for each Discipline are different talents. Because the use of Karma for Discipline talents is based on that Discipline's world view, characters should not

be able to use Karma gained from one Discipline's Karma ritual with talents of another Discipline. To reflect these limits, gamemasters may require characters to purchase the Karma Ritual talent for each new Discipline the characters acquire. The cost for Rank 1 in the new Karma Ritual talent is determined as normal.

A character who follows more than one Discipline must perform Karma rituals for all of his Disciplines separately. Ideally, the player should keep separate Karma Point totals for each Discipline, but the gamemaster may allow a character to maintain a single Karma point total to avoid extraneous bookkeeping.

Humans, Versatility, and Disciplines

The human racial talent of Versatility enables human characters to learn talents from outside their Disciplines, but does not make it easier for human characters to learn additional Disciplines. When a human character learns a new Discipline of which he already knows some talents through his Versatility, he must relearn those talents and purchase Rank 1 in each of them. The cost is determined as normal. He must also relearn talents as necessary in order to qualify for Circle advancement, because he is now learning how the talent fits with his new Discipline.

Over time, the character will repurchase all talent ranks up to his current rank that he acquired through Versatility. Once he has done so, he may learn an additional talent via Versatility. Until that point, the character essentially has the same talent at two different ranks, and players should differentiate between the two on their character sheets. A character who has the same talent at two different ranks may use either the Versatility or the Discipline rank. If he uses the Versatility rank, however, he suffers a Mild talent crisis (see **Talent Crises**, p. 109) that affects all the talents of his new Discipline.

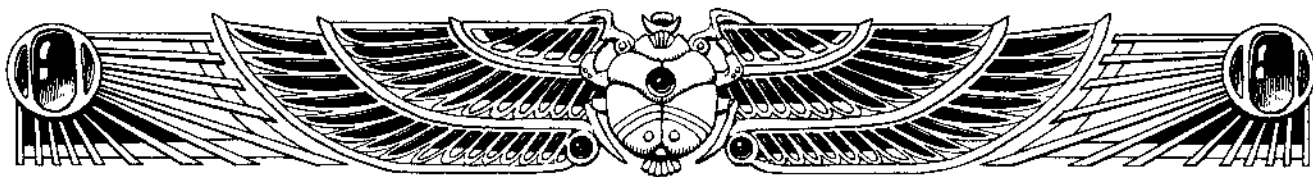
OPTIONAL RULES

The following optional rules flesh out ideas previously established in the *Earthdawn* game. Using these rules will change the style of a campaign somewhat, and so gamemasters should carefully consider whether these rules will appeal to their players before adopting them.

PERSONAL VISIONS

The firsthand accounts of the various Disciplines presented in *The Adept's Way* are, in a sense, long, elaborate personal visions. The narrators of these passages are biased in favor of their own way of doing things, and





though they often touch on the most common ways of following a particular Discipline, they are not laying down hard and fast rules that player characters of those Disciplines must follow. Adepts wield power by finding a connection between their own personalities and experiences on one hand, and the great traditions of their Disciplines on the other. No two adepts relate to their Discipline in exactly the same way, nor can a character become an adept simply by swallowing someone else's view of the world. The adept must bring something of him- or herself to the Discipline; he must build something new instead of simply copying the patterns of the past.

When building a new character, therefore, players should give some thought to their character's personal vision of his Discipline. This statement of the character's viewpoint may be anything from a brief paragraph to a detailed essay, and should include the character's general creed plus a few specific examples of actions the character regards as taboo. A personal vision lends depth and focus to characters, providing a foundation for future roleplaying.

Somok Nightsails believes that the way of the sky raider is to take without apology and to avoid backing down at all costs. He never shows regret for his actions, and hates to retreat from even the direst peril. He does not plunder by stealth because he considers sneaking to be a coward's way; he believes the brute frontal attack serves as the hallmark of a true sky raider.

If players wish to use a specific vision of a Discipline as described in this book for their player characters, they may accept the version presented or tweak it to better fit their characters. If the player chooses a completely unique direction, the gamemaster should approve each character's personal vision before that player's character enters the story line. As long as a personal vision makes some kind of sense, the gamemaster should okay it. A beastmaster who hates animals or a swordmaster who hates drawing attention to herself is obviously unsuitable, but Barsaive is home to many strange things. Somewhere in **Earthdawn** there may be warriors without a sense of honor or nethermancers who are afraid of the dark. If a player doesn't like the vision presented in this book but cannot come up with an individual vision, the sample dialogue that appears with the archetype characters on pages 67-91, **ED**, offers another choice on which to base a character's personal vision.

If a gamemaster and players wish to use the Talent Crisis rule, each character must have a personal vision.

Personal Visions and Multiple Disciplines

Each time a character acquires a new Discipline, the player should create a personal vision for that Discipline. These multiple personal visions may or may not be consistent with one another. Many adepts who practice more than one Discipline have developed the knack of switching back and forth between very different points of view so that they can juggle the different mental demands of their various Disciplines.

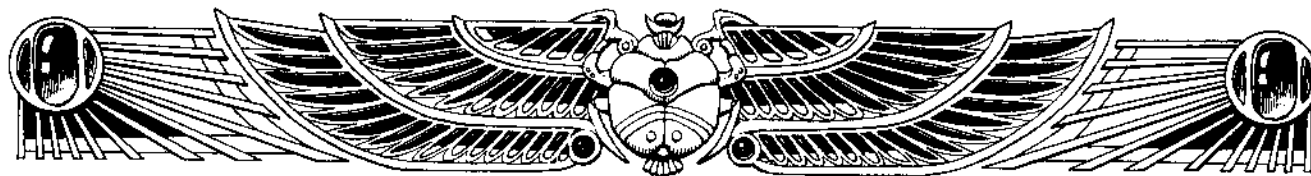
Somok becomes a weaponsmith as well as a sky raider. When making weapons, he thinks like a weaponsmith; when engaging in aerial piracy, he thinks like a sky raider. When doing neither, he chooses the most appropriate viewpoint to fit his situation.

TALENT CRISES

Because an adept's power depends upon him acting in accordance with his mystical world view, mentally straying too far from that world view causes the adept to lose his usual complete control of his talents. This phenomenon, known as a talent crisis, usually occurs when an adept knowingly and freely behaves in a manner contrary to his personal vision of his Discipline. In the wake of such actions, adepts often feel that their talents are slipping away. Sometimes they simply feel as if they have lost their edge; on occasion, any attempt to use their talents fails outright. Gamemasters using the talent crisis rules should make sure that characters' personal visions include prohibitions that will make a difference in play. Keep in mind that a personal vision is an adept's core belief, not just a list of minor habits. A warrior who vows never to harm a helpless foe is taking on a real restriction; a wizard who has sworn never to eat carrots is obviously the creation of a player seeking to avoid any serious limitations.

When the gamemaster feels that a player character has violated his or her personal vision or the basic tenets of his Discipline, the gamemaster may apply a step penalty to all talents bestowed by the Discipline in question. The gamemaster must determine the severity of the violation, and should tell the player that the penalty is in force; adepts always recognize a talent crisis. A talent crisis does not begin immediately after the violation, but manifests the next time the character tries to use a talent of the violated Discipline. However, because adepts instinctively know when they have violated their personal visions, they immediately become anxious, feel guilty, suffer slight nausea, and so on. If players do not acknowledge that their characters have violated their personal visions, the gamemaster





should take the initiative and state that the characters are experiencing feelings of this kind.

The duration and step reduction of the talent crisis depend on the severity of the violation. If the gamemaster wishes, he or she may

randomly add or subtract time from the duration of a talent crisis to keep such an event unpredictable.

Use the Talent Crisis table as a guideline.

The intent of the talent crisis rule is to add depth to the world of **Earthdawn**, not to serve as a mechanism for gamemasters to impose their idea of roleplaying on players. In keeping with the spirit of the rule, gamemasters should not penalize player characters for Trivial violations such as making a statement contrary to the character's personal vision. Also, if a character has little or no choice but to violate his or her vision, the gamemaster should reduce the step penalty accordingly.

Somok Nightsails mumbles an apology to someone he bumps into on the street, thus committing a Trivial violation of his personal vision. Later, he bumps into a known enemy while wearing a disguise; he again mutters an apology, committing a Mild violation. The memory of the incident rankles for a while, dulling his overall performance. Some days later, he steals something by stealth, seriously violating his personal vision of his Discipline. Nightsails now begins to feel a gnawing sensation of guilt, dulling his performance further.

Months afterward, Nightsails backs down in the face of a challenge from a known enemy. This act is a Severe violation; he has betrayed his beliefs, and finds it hard to concentrate. For a full day, he can hardly function as a sky raider. The next day he refuses a challenge from his most despised foe, committing a Heinous violation. This incident comes to dominate his every thought and keeps him from sleeping at night.

Deeds of Atonement

If a character commits a Heinous violation of a personal vision, the resulting talent crisis remains in

TALENT CRISIS TABLE

Severity	Step Reduction	Duration of Crisis
Trivial	None	Not applicable
Mild	1	10 rounds
Serious	2	1 hour
Severe	3	1 day
Heinous	4	Until Deed of Atonement is accomplished

effect until the adept makes a successful attempt to redeem his or her mistake through a Deed of Atonement. The Deed should involve inconvenience, embarrassment, and risk appropriate to the violation. The player should create an appropriate

Deed of Atonement for his character's violation, and the gamemaster must decide if the chosen Deed is sufficient to end the talent crisis.

To make up for backing down from his sworn foe, Somok Nightsails' Deed of Atonement requires him to seek out his enemy and confront him in a fight to the death.

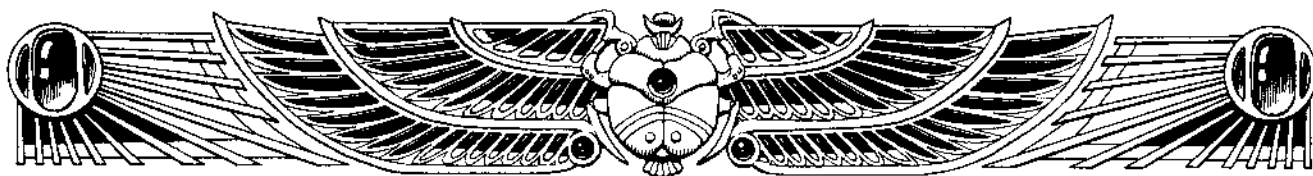
When characters with multiple Disciplines violate one of their personal visions, the step penalty only applies to the talents of the Discipline pertaining to that vision, and to talents learned as part of an unaffected Discipline that also count toward advancement in the violated Discipline.

HALF-MAGIC

Though the **Earthdawn** rulebook offers the skill system to account for knowledge a character might possess that would not require the full power of an adept's magic, that system fails to accommodate the different levels of knowledge two characters of the same Discipline but different Circles might possess. The optional half-magic rule covers areas of knowledge such as the principles of weapon making, wilderness survival, and legends and lore of a Discipline. (For example, adepts of all Disciplines learn of the lives and deeds of other adepts who have followed their Disciplines, such as the heroes Nioku the archer, Venna the warrior and any other heroes the gamemaster chooses to add to his **Earthdawn** world.)

The half-magic system also offers a yardstick by which to determine an adept's success or failure in performing tasks requiring more practical skills. For example, an elemental character may possess the knowledge skills of Horror Lore and Pre-Scourge History, but





a follower of that Discipline would also know a great deal about plants, weather, rock formations, tides, and other subjects related to the five elements. Further, his knowledge of these topics would increase with time and experience. Because this knowledge is closely related to the elementalists' Discipline but not specifically covered by the Discipline talents, it falls into the realm of half-magic. If the elementalists attempt to identify a plant, the gamemaster may ask the player to make a Half-Magic Test.

Making Half-Magic Tests

When a player makes a Half-Magic Test, the gamemaster first determines the Half-Magic step, which is equal to the character's Circle divided by 2, rounded up. For example, First and Second Circle characters have a Half-Magic Step of 1, Third and Fourth Circle characters have a Half-Magic Step of 2, and so on. Then the gamemaster determines the Attribute most appropriate for the action the character wishes to accomplish. The player may suggest what he considers to be an appropriate Attribute, but the gamemaster has the final say. The sum of the Half-Magic step and the Attribute step is the step number for the Half-Magic Test.

Half-Magic Tests are intended to fill the gaps between the talents and abilities an adept learns as part of his or her Discipline; they should **not** replace any previously learned talents or abilities. Therefore, a character can **never** use a Half-Magic Test in place of a talent test. Also, characters may spend only 1 Karma Point when making Half-Magic Tests. Ranks in half-magic are based on an adept character's Circle, which allows players to increase their characters' half-magic powers in a way similar to how characters advance in the skills and knowledge appropriate to each Discipline.

This section provides specific suggestions for possible uses of Half-Magic Tests for each Discipline included in this book.

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC RULES

The following section offers rules specific to each of the fifteen Disciplines described in this book. Each description includes roleplaying hints, guidelines for handling Discipline violations and talent crises, multiple Discipline combinations, suggested uses of Half-Magic Tests, and special rules for circumstances appropriate to the Discipline.

• AIR SAILOR •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

One important aspect of roleplaying the air sailor is the difference these adepts see between themselves and sky raiders. No matter what an air sailor's race, he believes his Discipline requires him to somehow better himself and others. This concern for the greater good of Barsaive, or at least the people around him, separates the air sailor character from the sky raider he despises. The air sailor sees himself as more refined, craftier, smarter, and serving a higher purpose.

Many air sailors have elaborate long-term plans: to own a ship, free the lands around Sky Point from Theran domination, and so on. That plan becomes that character's driving goal. Because the notion of duty is drummed into air sailors during their testing period, the fulfillment of one's duty becomes one of the would-be air sailor's deepest desires. Once an air sailor recognizes the duty he wants to fulfill and realizes that he is part of an organization that encourages him to achieve his goal, the air sailor never stops planning how to do his duty and meet his goal.

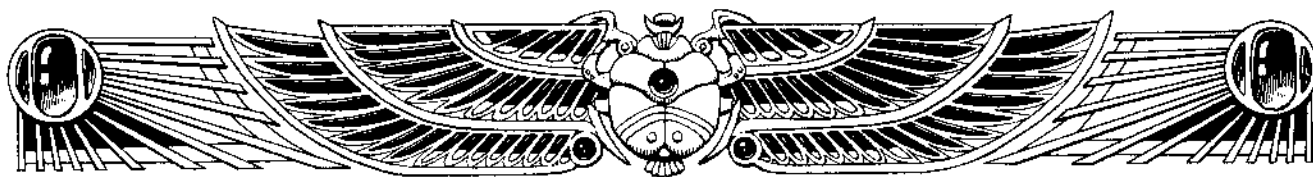
All characters in this Discipline adhere to an unspoken code of conduct. No air sailor disparages another air sailor in public, though they may criticize other air sailors as much as they like when talking among themselves. An air sailor is expected to behave in a manner beyond reproach in front of outsiders. A sailor speaking in an unacceptable manner might be drowned out by his peers as they try to hide his indiscretion, or he might hear his own voice ringing uncomfortably loud as his companions fall silent to shame him.

The offending party's mates might even loudly defend him in public and then deal out appropriate punishment after the crew returns to the ship.

Air sailors have a strong sense of obligation to their shipmates, whether current or former. Air sailors often use the expression "never leave your mates," but none of them are ever told this outright; rather, all air sailors are subtly encouraged to embrace the idea of togetherness. Fellow air sailors may remind them to wait for a mate before leaving for a bar, or tell them to be aware of where their mates are aboard ship during maneuvers. Part of this camaraderie is a general feeling of obligation toward any other sailor who needs aid on a mission or personal quest.

Finally, the air sailor should never resort to brute force when cunning will win the day. An air sailor is expected to out-think his opponents, not just overpower





them. "Good thinking!" is a common form of praise, and adjectives such as sly, cunning and shrewd are high compliments coming from an air sailor.

Discipline Violations

The informal code of the air sailor forms the basis for his or her actions, depending on the character's personal vision. An air sailor who fails to follow the Discipline's unspoken code risks suffering a talent crisis because the code is integral to the world view of almost all air sailor adepts. An air sailor who chooses to flout the expectations of his fellow air sailors does not grasp his talents as firmly as they do, and can even threaten the cohesion of his entire crew.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

Of the Disciplines complementary to the air sailor, the thief, scout, swordmaster, and warrior are the easiest to learn. Each of these Disciplines can be seen as requiring a similar focus on wit and cleverness, skill as opposed to brute force, or affinity for the air. Disciplines such as archer, beastmaster, elemental, illusionist and troubadour are neutral; their nature neither helps nor hinders the air adept. Disciplines opposed to the way of the air sailor include the nethermancer, sky raider, weaponsmith, and wizard. The sky raider Discipline is inimical to the air sailor in principle; the others require so much energy and time spent away from the airship that potential teachers find no practical reason to take on an adept who wishes to pursue both paths.

SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for the air sailor include rituals of advancement similar to those on pages 120–125 of the *Earthdawn Companion*, and tactics for shipboard fighting.

Rituals of Advancement

Air sailor rituals and tests for advancement resemble those used by sky raiders, except that they focus equally on physical and mental prowess. Often the air sailor must bring back a trophy to prove that he successfully completed the ritual.

Recruitment: To be accepted as a recruit, the would-be adept hones his sense of duty and discovers his deepest desires through a grueling test of servitude. Most air

sailors are recruited through trading companies or local militias. Sometimes a would-be air sailor seeks out a crew to join. Air sailors accept recruits from most Name-giver races, but few units actively recruit outside of the militias in larger cities.

Novice (Circles 2–4): The adept helps to repel an assault by planning a successful defense strategy, or by coming to the aid of a higher-Circle adept and using trickery to gain the upper hand.

Journeyman (Circles 5–8): The adept must somehow rescue his ship from obstacles or danger. For example, he may have to untangle a ship from clinging vines without severing the plants, or single-handedly pilot a small vessel through a raging storm.

Warden (Circles 9–12): The adept must defeat a more powerful opponent in ship-to-ship combat through trickery or superior planning.

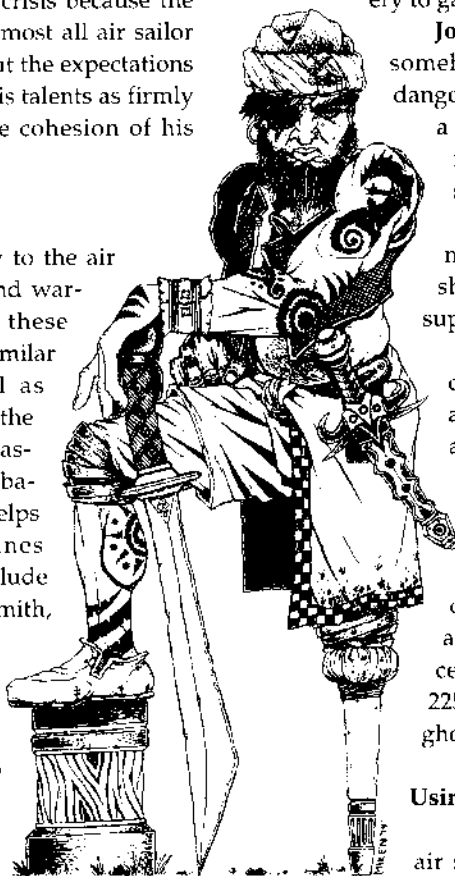
Ghost Master Ritual: The air sailor draws a circle on the deck of an airship and sits at the center of the circle. The adept then envisions flying the ship through a complex series of maneuvers. After an hour of imaginary flying, the adept visualizes docking the ship and meeting the ghost master at the dock. The ghost master boards the ship and joins the adept. The ritual then proceeds as normal. (See *Ghost Masters*, p. 225, ED, for a complete explanation of the ghost master ritual.)

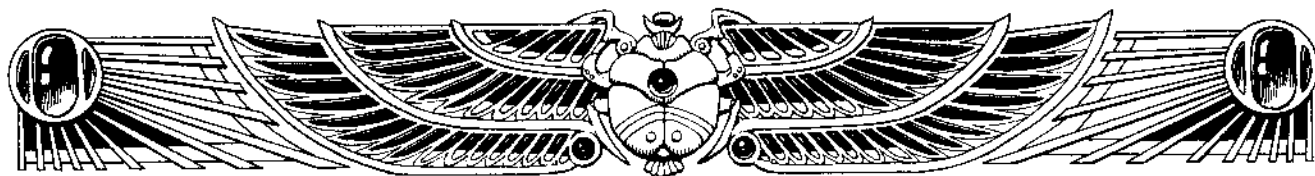
Using Half-Magic

Potential uses of Half-Magic Tests for air sailors include maintenance, repair and building of airships, knowledge of airship designs, and recognition of the following: different types of airships, commonly followed flight paths, and crew complements of different sizes. Because working on an airship requires a certain amount of athletic ability, air sailors can make Half-Magic Tests in place of Climbing Tests.

Swinging on Rigging

Air sailors often swing from the rigging to move around a ship or from ship to ship. To do this, the character makes a test using Dexterity or a related talent or skill or half-magic against a Difficulty Number of 8, modified at the gamemaster's discretion by weather





conditions (gusting winds, rain, and so on) and obstacles. On an Average success, the character barely controls his swing and must make a second test against the same difficulty number in order to land safely. On a Good success or better, the character can control the swing and land where he wishes. A Poor success requires the character to make a Strength Test against a Difficulty Number of 10 to hold on. If that test fails, he falls from the rope and takes appropriate Falling Damage.

A character can make a melee attack at the end of a swing from the rigging, but must use the Swing Attack talent described below in place of the Melee Weapons talent. A character with the Swing Attack talent can also substitute that talent step for Dexterity when attempting other swinging actions.

SWING ATTACK

Step Number: Rank + Dexterity

Action: Yes **Skill Use:** No

Requires Karma: No **Strain:** 1

Discipline Talent Use: None

Many air sailors learn the swing attack as a tactic for dropping into the thick of trouble from a position of advantage. They can also use it to swiftly drop to the ground when up in the rigging or climbing trees. Air sailors can learn this talent at Ninth Circle in place of the Critical Hit talent.

The Swing Attack talent allows characters to swing down from an elevated position using sturdy ropes, rigging, or even vines. A character using this talent to attack an opponent by swinging into him makes a Swing Attack Test against the target's Physical Defense (when appropriate, modify the target's Physical Defense by -2 steps for Surprise). If the test is successful, the attacking character makes a Damage Test, adding his rank in Swing Attack to the Damage step number.

After a successful swing attack, the air sailor makes a Dexterity Test against the target's Toughness step to avoid being knocked off the rope or vine by the impact. If the test fails, the character falls and takes Step 3 falling damage.

An armed character being targeted by Swing Attack who wins Initiative can brace himself against the attack. The target character makes a Melee Weapons Test; if it is successful, the targeted sailor strikes his attacker, who takes damage normally. If the target character achieves a Good success or better on his Melee Weapons Test, the swinging air sailor is knocked from the rope and takes Step 3 falling damage.

• ARCHER •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

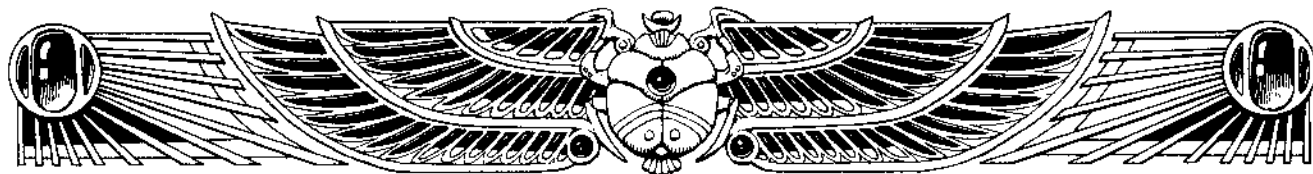
An adept of the archer Discipline has learned the art of seeing; he or she can divide the world into missiles and targets and forge a mystical connection between an arrow or bolt, the target, and the space between them. A character might take this basic outline to extremes, believing that the target-and-missile analogy applies to every situation. Or she might be a no-nonsense type who doesn't let the mystical talk get in the way of picking off enemies. The character's vision is also influenced by the circumstances of her life before she became an adept. An archer raised in an ork cavalry, for example, will likely espouse a fiercer, less refined version of the viewpoint expressed by Oaken Avodel earlier in this book. A t'skrang archer trained to protect riverboats from pirates might take the metaphorical aspect of the Discipline less seriously, while to a blood elf the metaphysics of the Discipline might be the most important thing about it.

Discipline Violations

Archers most often suffer talent crises when they stray from clear thinking and straight lines. An archer who dithers, goes off on tangents too often, somehow over-complicates matters, or forgets her overall goal and heads toward a random dead end in the story line is ripe for a talent crisis. Alternatively, an archer who loses her weapon—especially through negligence—might experience a talent crisis the next time she attempts to use the recovered bow or its replacement. Like followers of most combat-oriented Disciplines, archers place a great deal of metaphorical importance on their weapons. Every archer's training stresses the importance of properly choosing targets; if an archer accidentally hits an ally or innocent noncombatant in battle, she might suffer a talent crisis for the remainder of the fight. In particularly egregious cases, where the archer's carelessness or thoughtlessness allows innocents to die, the archer might need to perform a Deed of Atonement to recover the full use of her talents.

Some gamemasters and players may want to explore the idea that the archer is forever tempted to give in to the siren call of her blood-hungry arrows. Every time such a character cold-bloodedly picks off a Name-giver opponent who cannot defend himself, the character accumulates a Temptation Point. After each such incident, these "sniper" characters must make a Willpower Test against their accumulated Temptation Point totals. Once a character fails this test, she has succumbed to the lure of the sniper's way. Prone to lose control whenever they





have a target in their sights, snipers must make Willpower Tests against their Temptation Point totals in order to keep to a plan. If one of these tests fails, the sniper begins shooting at will, targeting anyone within range until she runs out of missiles. A sniper can reduce her Temptation Point total through Deeds of Atonement, or the exercise of other spells and talents at the gamemaster's discretion. For example, the healing power of questors of Garlen might remove the Temptation Points of a sincerely repentant sniper.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

Archers who wish to acquire multiple Disciplines are most likely to adopt other combat-oriented paths because the shared talents allow for rapid advancement in the second Discipline. Additional Disciplines of this type give the archer much-needed hand-to-hand fighting ability.

Archer/cavalryman combinations are common; an archer who can strike reliably from the back of a mount is extremely effective on the battlefield, blending the deadliness of the archer with the maneuverability of a mounted fighter. Archer/sky raiders and archer/air sailors can be devastating in ship-to-ship combat because they can pepper opponents with arrows and bolts before the rest of the crew attempts a boarding action. The archer/warrior combination also works well, as both ways mix mysticism with practicality.

Despite the useful blend of their respective talents, the flamboyant ethic of the swordmaster meshes awkwardly with the straightforward outlook of the archer. Members of either Discipline are wary about teaching would-be initiates of the other. Though archer/thieves and archer/scouts are relatively common, some high-minded archers are reluctant to train them out of fear that their affinity for stealth will predispose them to become snipers. Most other Disciplines are neutral for the typical archer. Practitioners of these other Disciplines will be expected to justify their desire to follow the archer's path, but will suffer no particular prejudice.

The illusionist Discipline is the only one genuinely opposed to the archer's way. The average archer's contempt for the illusionist is well-known; few archers will serve as masters to illusionists who wish to learn their

way, and vice versa. Archers are often equally unwilling to teach archer talents to human illusionists making use of the Versatility talent.

SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for archers include using half-magic, making weapons, and specialization in the bow or crossbow.

Using Half-Magic

Archers may make Half-Magic Tests when crafting bows, crossbows, arrows, and bolts. They may also use half-magic to identify bows, arrows and bolts as the work of a specific archer or craftsman or to determine the special purpose for which an arrow or bolt was crafted.

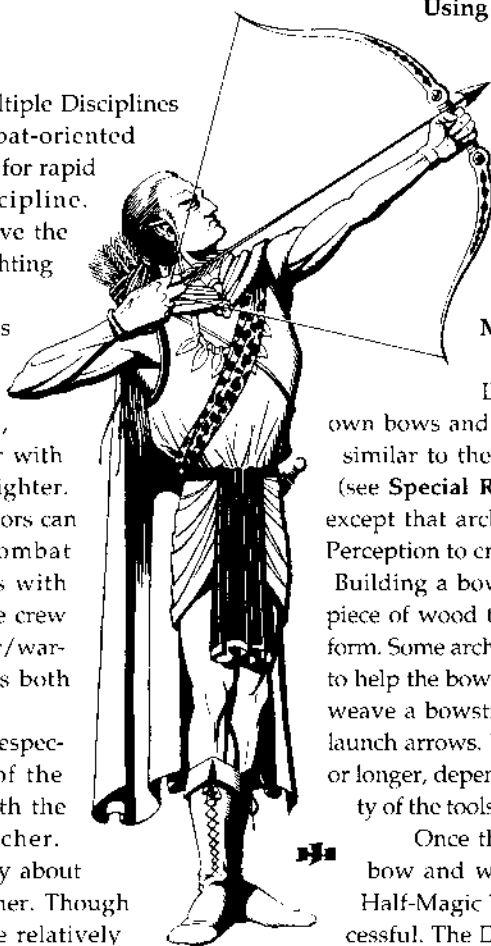
Making Missile Weapons

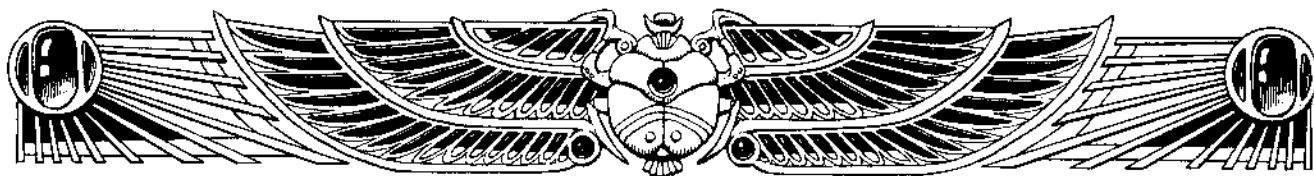
As part of their training in their Discipline, archers learn to craft their own bows and arrows. In game terms, the process is similar to the way a weaponsmith makes weapons (see **Special Rules** for weaponsmiths, pp. 137-138), except that archers make Half-Magic Tests based on Perception to create the tools of their trade.

Building a bow requires the archer to find the right piece of wood to carve, bend, and shape into a usable form. Some archers boil their carved bows in water or oil to help the bow maintain its shape. He or she must also weave a bowstring that can be strung taut enough to launch arrows. The whole process usually takes a week or longer, depending on the type of wood and the quality of the tools and equipment the archer is using.

Once the archer has shaped the wood for his bow and woven the bowstring, he must make a Half-Magic Test to see if his efforts have been successful. The Difficulty Number for this test is 9, plus the Damage step of the type of bow being built. The Difficulty Number for building a short bow (Damage step 3) is 12, and for a longbow (Damage step 4) is 13. Because creating an elven longbow requires a more involved process than does creating a standard bow, the Difficulty Number increases to 16.

Building a crossbow requires the adept to make the bow, mount it onto a stock, weave a bowstring, and make a trigger mechanism. Crossbow strings are much stronger than bowstrings, and therefore take more time to weave. Because crossbows are more complex weapons, the





Difficulty Number for building one is 11 plus the specific crossbow's Damage step. Light crossbows (Damage step 4) have a Difficulty Number of 15; medium crossbows (Damage step 5) have a Difficulty Number of 16.

If the Half-Magic Test is successful, the bow or crossbow is complete and functions as normal. If the test fails, the bow cracks or breaks when strung and the archer must build a new one from scratch.

Fletching Arrows and Bolts

In addition to bows and crossbows, archers often craft their own arrows and bolts. As well as being easier and cheaper than buying them, making his own missiles allows the archer to personalize them. Many archers who have achieved Legendary status craft their own arrows and incorporate distinct elements that make them into a sort of calling card. Unique styles of fletching or runic carving on arrow shafts are two of the ways by which archers distinguish their own arrows from those made by others.

To craft arrows or bolts, the archer first shapes a straight wooden or metal shaft onto which he then mounts an arrowhead and fletching (feathers). Arrows are best made from harder woods such as maple or oak, which hold their shape better. In a single day, an archer can make a number of wooden arrow or bolt shafts equal to his Half-Magic step (see **Making Half-Magic Tests**, p. 110). In some cases, crossbow bolt shafts are made of metal rather than wood, for which the archer must have the proper materials and equipment. Once he obtains these, he can make as many metal shafts as he can wooden ones. Whenever an archer creates an arrow or bolt shaft, he must make a successful Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number of 9 in order to produce a usable missile.

The most important part of crafting missiles is the fletching, which determines how the arrow or bolt will fly. To fletch an arrow or bolt, the archer affixes three feathers to one end of the shaft, in the correct style for the desired mode of flight. Traditional fletching keeps the arrow flying straight; different styles can cause arrows to swerve to one side or another, or to spin as they fly through the air. An archer can fletch a number of arrows or bolts per day equal to his Half-Magic step, but for each one must make a successful Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number of 9. If he is using traditional fletching, any success level is acceptable. If the archer wants to use alternate fletchings, he or she must achieve a Good or better success level as determined by the gamemaster.

The arrowhead is the business end of the arrow or bolt. Arrowheads are usually made of metal, though

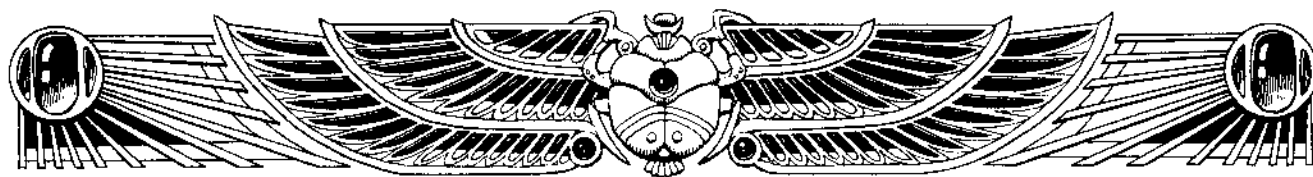
stone and even wooden ones will work, and they can be given barbs or nasty edges to inflict more damage to the target than the standard straight-edged head. An archer can carve or forge a number of arrowheads per day equal to his Half-Magic step. To make a standard arrowhead, the archer must make a Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number of 9. If the archer wants to create arrowheads that inflict more damage than the standard type, the difficulty number for the Half-Magic Test increases by 2 for each additional step of Damage desired, and the archer can create one less arrow per day. For example, a Third Circle archer can create 2 standard arrowheads per day because his Half-Magic step is 2 (3 divided in half equals 1.5, rounded up to 2). If he wants to create arrows that inflict 1 Damage step more than standard arrowheads, he can only create one such arrowhead per day ($2 - 1 = 1$). Archers can add no more than 3 additional steps of Damage per arrow in this manner. The maximum Damage step for an arrow, for example, would be 7 (normal Damage step 4 + 3). To successfully create such an arrowhead, the archer faces a Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number of 15 ($9 + 6 = 15$).

Note that archers can craft all three parts of their arrows or bolts (shafts, fletching and arrowheads) on the same day. Also, an archer who cannot forge his own metal arrowheads may buy them.

Specialists

If a player wishes to play a character who specializes in either the bow or crossbow (as described by Oaken Aveldel), the gamemaster can give bonuses and penalties to the character for appropriate roleplaying in relevant situations. Note that the character must adhere to the stereotype described by Oaken Aveldel to qualify for these benefits; he does not get them solely because of his choice of weapon. The bow specialist subtracts 1 from most difficulty numbers in a forest or jungle environment, and adds 1 to most difficulty numbers in an urban setting. In certain situations, the bow specialist may subtract 1 from the difficulty of actions taken alone, and add 1 to difficulty numbers for activities that require group cooperation. The crossbow specialist receives the opposite of the bowman's bonuses and penalties; difficulty numbers increase in the wilderness and decrease in cities and towns. For purposes of all specialist bonuses and penalties, difficulty numbers include Physical Defense Ratings. If no common-sense reason exists to explain why a difficulty number would be affected by the character's environment, the number should not change.





• BEASTMASTER •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

The beastmaster needs to strike a balance between her appreciation for animals and her own status as a Name-giver. The beastmaster delights in the company of animals, but cannot simply shun her fellow Name-giver races. The player must emphasize the beastmaster's aloofness without making her antisocial.

Beastmasters run quite a gamut of personalities, from those who view animals with sentimental affection to those who see them as enigmas to be deciphered. Beastmasters also express varying views as to the superiority or inferiority of Name-givers versus beasts.

How the beastmaster character behaves toward her animal companions when she is not seeking adventure can offer an opportunity for great insight into her personal vision of her Discipline. What animals does she work with? How does she spend her time? What is she learning from the animals, and what is she teaching them? Though encounters that answer these questions may be brief, playing out a few of these everyday interactions can enrich the character immeasurably.

Gamemasters should look for ways to encourage this kind of roleplaying, even during adventures that might not otherwise focus on the beastmaster and/or his creatures. If a beastmaster character regularly travels with one or more animals, the gamemaster should not conveniently forget these beasts when the character enters an inn or goes into combat. The player may want to control the beasts' actions, but ideally those decisions should come from the gamemaster. After all, animals are independent beings who may often react predictably, but should not be taken for granted. Even the most gifted beastmaster cannot always accurately predict or dictate the actions of her animal companions.

A beastmaster's personal vision should encompass at least some elements of the Discipline's higher ideals. A character who acts like the "lesser beastmaster"

described in the fiction may suffer fewer talent crises, but will also have more difficulty finding a beastmaster willing to train her. She may even have greater difficulty working with her animals, because of the lack of mutual respect and trust between the character and her beasts.

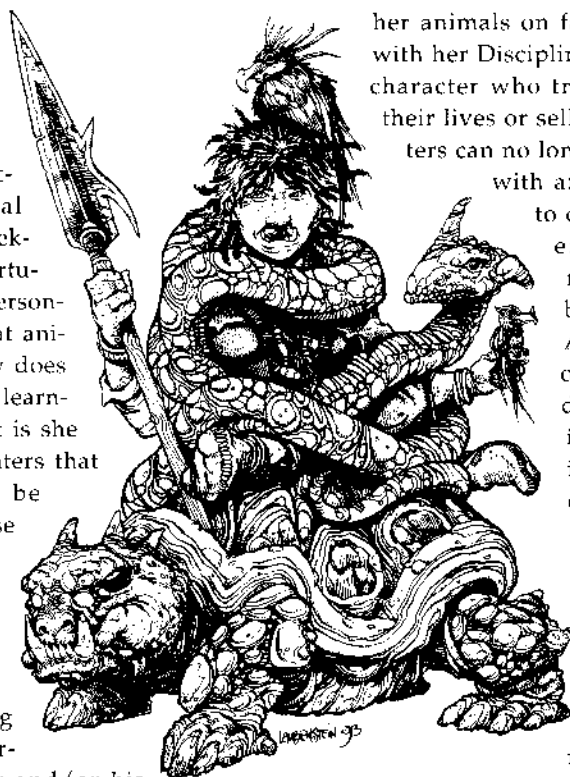
Discipline Violations

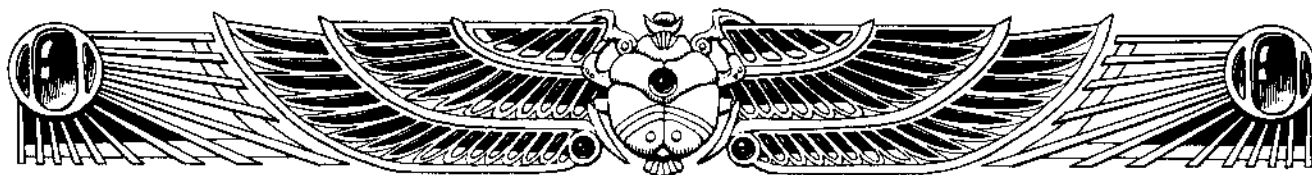
No matter how a beastmaster sees the world or her Discipline, she must honor her commitment to never bring deceit into her relationship with an animal. A beastmaster who bases her relationship with her animals on falsehood has severed a vital link with her Discipline and will suffer a talent crisis. A character who tricks her animals into sacrificing their lives or sells them into slavery for cruel masters can no longer rely on the power of her bond with animals or the strength of her will to draw upon a beastmaster's karmic energy. Such a character might restore the broken bond, however, by performing a Deed of Atonement. She might admit to other beastmasters what she has done, rescue animals she has sold into slavery, or nurse an animal injured on her behalf or as a result of her deceit.

If the gamemaster wishes to penalize a beastmaster character for a particularly horrible transgression, he or she may rule that a Deed of Atonement costs Legend Points equal to the cost of buying a Karma Ritual talent rank for the character's Circle. For example, a Fifth Circle beastmaster who had a Rank 4 Karma Ritual talent before her transgression must perform a Deed of Atonement and spend 800 Legend Points. The more highly ranked the beastmaster, the more serious is the penalty for truly terrible Discipline violations. The Legend Point penalty should only be used against characters who have so thoroughly violated their personal visions that their behavior might affect their Legendary status.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

The Disciplines most likely to appeal to a beastmaster include the air sailor, cavalryman, scout and warrior, each of which shares at least some beastmaster talents. All





other Disciplines require the adept to focus too much energy and attention on a single aspect of their own personality; the beastmaster must be able to attune herself to her beasts, which can only be accomplished through mastering all of one's self, not just one or two aspects. Elementalists, illusionists, nethermancers and wizards rarely become or appeal to beastmasters as a second Discipline because these Disciplines focus so heavily on manipulating magic and on book learning. Disciplines such as the troubadour and weaponsmith demand too much individuality and creativity, and the sky raider, swordmaster and archer Disciplines demand too much determination, to make them likely combinations for the beastmaster.

SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for beastmasters include using half-magic, creating charms with the Enduring Art talent, creating permanent animal companions, and new uses for the Dominate Beast talent.

Using Half-Magic

Beastmasters use half-magic when dealing with animals in ways beyond those described by their talents, including animal breeding, first aid, and confronting or approaching wild beasts. When attempting to calm a wild animal, a beastmaster can make a Half-Magic Test before attempting to use the Animal Bond talent. Other uses of Half-Magic Tests for beastmasters include recognition of different animals, animal tracks, and abnormal behavior among animals and creatures.

Enduring Art Talent

Beastmasters can learn the Enduring Art talent at Fourth Circle in place of the Frighten Animal Servants talent. The Enduring Art talent allows a beastmaster to permanently paint, tattoo or ritually scar someone (including himself) with an animal symbol that acts like a blood charm. By calling on the strength of the animal, the bearer of the charm temporarily raises the Attribute commonly associated with that animal.

A character forced to use Enduring Art on an enemy, or who willingly uses it on someone against whom she bears a grudge, can depict an animal that will negatively affect the subject. A beastmaster might lie about the true significance of the animal, saying something like, "The tortoise will expand your ruggedness as if you had slipped inside its shell." The aspect associated with the animal depicted in the art is determined by the artist during the ritual, and therefore can conflict with commonly

held associations. Some examples of common associations appear below.

Bonuses

Dexterity: Monkey, Jaguar
Strength: Bear, Horse
Toughness: Boar, Thundra Beast
Perception: Eagle, Cheetah
Willpower: Cat, Elephant
Charisma: Tiger, Peacock

Penalties

Dexterity: Tortoise
Strength: Crane
Toughness: Mouse
Perception: Rhinoceros
Willpower: Dog
Charisma: Snake

ENDURING ART

Step Number: Rank + Perception Step

Action: Yes **Skill Use:** Yes

Requires Karma: No **Strain:** None

Discipline Talent Use: Beastmaster

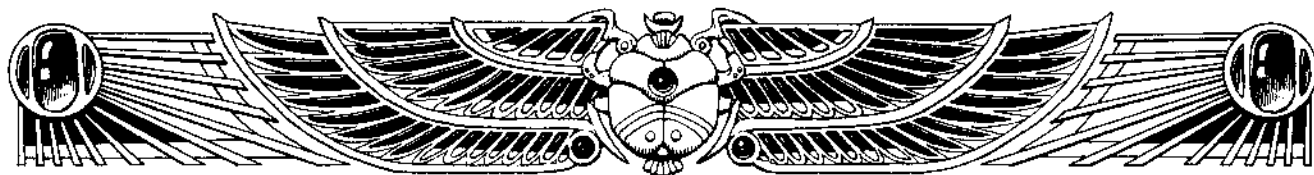
A beastmaster may create Enduring Art on himself or others. He must spend at least 36 hours—not necessarily consecutive—creating the art, during which time the beastmaster and the subject may not engage in other strenuous or distracting activities. At the beginning of the 36 hours, the beastmaster makes an Enduring Art Test against the subject's Spell Defense; the subject cannot voluntarily lower that defense for the procedure. If the test is unsuccessful, the character cannot find a suitable spot upon which to begin the artistic pattern. After a failed attempt, the character may not try again for a week. If the test is successful, the process begins and the subject takes 2 points of permanent damage.

The person decorated by Enduring Art can raise the associated Attribute by 1 step for 1 round. Each time the bearer increases the Attribute, he takes a point of Strain. Note that the charm cannot be used for the first 24 hours after the process is finished.

New Uses for Dominate Beast

The Dominate Beast talent, one of the most useful among the beastmaster's abilities, can be used in the following ways beyond the uses described in the **Earthdawn** rulebook.





Dominating Multiple Beasts: Using this talent to dominate multiple beasts requires the beastmaster to take 1 point of Strain. The beastmaster makes a Dominate Beast Test against the highest Spell Defense of all the creatures she wishes to control, plus 1 for each creature beyond the first. If the test is successful, the beastmaster can dominate all the creatures. If the test fails, the beastmaster can control none of them.

Taking Control of Dominated Beasts: When a beastmaster attempts to use the Dominate Beast talent on a beast already under the influence of that talent, she makes a Talent Test as normal, but must achieve a result better than that achieved in the test previously used to dominate the beast. For example, a group of adventurers are attacked by a crojen under the control of a Horror-tainted beastmaster. The corrupt beastmaster achieved a result of 13 on his Dominate Beast Test to control the crojen. If the beastmaster among the adventurers attempts to use Dominate Beast to stop the crojen from attacking, she must achieve a result of 14 or better on her own Dominate Beast Test.

Creating Animal Companions

At some point in their lives, beastmasters usually take a companion from the animal kingdom. These partnerships resemble those between a cavalryman and his mount, though they are not usually as strong or as lasting.

Beastmaster characters can gain an animal companion through the Animal Bond and Animal Training talents. If a character takes the time to correctly bond with and train an animal, the beastmaster gains an ally that accompanies her on adventures. If the gamemaster permits it, this animal can attack enemies and perform other duties for the beastmaster.

Gamemasters should carefully consider a player's choice when allowing a beastmaster character to choose a potential animal companion. For example, only a few beastmasters throughout all of Barsaive have magical creatures as companions and that percentage should remain low, though high-Circle adepts may manage this difficult feat. The most common companions are mundane animals such as dogs, tigers, monkeys, eagles, or hawks.

• CAVALRYMAN •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

Cavalrymen are a restless lot, driven by the need to move and act. A cavalryman will never walk when he can

gallop; he charges into every situation, faces foes head on, and takes life by the throat.

Unlike most adepts, whose Disciplines require only that they concentrate on their own abilities, the cavalryman is intimately bound to his mount. Even when physically separated, the two of them maintain the empathic bond without which no cavalryman is truly complete. A cavalryman's bond with his mount is central to his life, affecting him mentally, emotionally, and physically. Because his mount is more important to him than any other being, other adepts included, the cavalryman tends to keep a certain emotional distance from other people. For this reason, other Name-givers often see cavalrymen as rude, brusque, or even a little brainless.

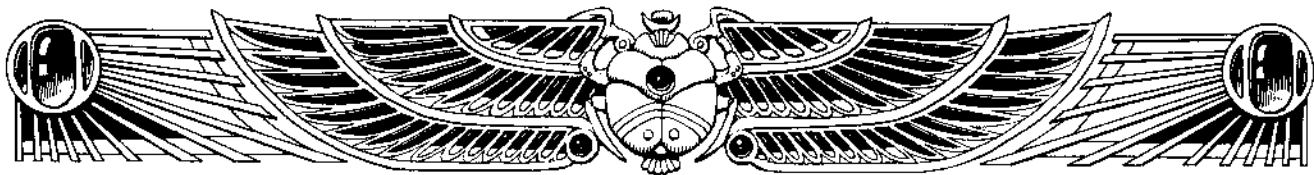
Often, a cavalryman's true brilliance and heroism shines only while working in tandem with his mount. A mounted cavalryman can draw on the strength, will, and senses of two beings; these gifted adepts are known for such feats as leading charges straight into the heart of a Horror's lair, or galloping through a wretched, trackless wilderness full of Theran soldiers to deliver a crucial message. The cavalryman who seems shy and taciturn away from his mount often startles his companions by making a dramatic personality change when working with his riding beast. Though a cavalryman does not find it particularly difficult to work with other Name-givers, he often seems a bit odd to all but the beastmasters, who understand at least a little of these adepts' unique partnership with their mounts.

Discipline Violations

Because the tie between a cavalryman and his mount is so central to the Discipline, anything that diminishes its importance may trigger a talent crisis. A cavalryman who neglects his mount, for example, may be committing a Discipline violation ranging from Mild to Heinous, depending upon the severity of the neglect. An adept who forgets to properly feed and brush down his mount before tending to his own needs might suffer a Mild talent crisis. If he continued such neglect for a week, the Discipline violation would become Severe; more than a week's neglect would constitute a Heinous violation and trigger a talent crisis redeemable only by a Deed of Atonement.

A cavalryman may also trigger a talent crisis by valuing another Name-giver over his mount. An infatuation or other distraction with another Name-giver can weaken or even shatter the adept's empathic bond with his mount





and harmony with his Discipline. When determining the severity of such a lapse, the gamemaster should use his own judgment. For example, a cavalryman who becomes utterly absorbed in a single conversation with another Name-giver has probably committed a Trivial violation. A Mild talent crisis might result if the adept spends a single, impassioned night totally focused on his new amour. Should a relationship with another Name-giver become important enough to the cavalryman that he puts his mount's welfare below it—say, risking his mount's life to save his lover's—he may suffer a Severe talent crisis. If such a relationship takes precedence for a month or more over the adept's bond with his mount, his conduct constitutes a Heinous violation. Such an adept risks the permanent dissolution of his empathic bond and the total loss of his status as a cavalryman, though a Deed of Atonement might still restore him to harmony with his Discipline.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

While few cavalrymen adopt multiple Disciplines, the beastmaster/cavalryman combination is the most common because both Disciplines emphasize empathic abilities and concern for animals. The scout and warrior Disciplines mesh well with the cavalryman's aggressive instincts and desire for motion.

A cavalryman can almost never be a sky raider, nethermancer or elemental. The sky raider is divorced from the land that the cavalryman so loves, while the nethermancer and elemental separate themselves too much from the emotional, living world in order to pursue their Disciplines. These conditions would make it virtually impossible to maintain the cavalryman's empathic bond with his mount.

SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for cavalrymen include rules for mounts, beasts adapted for dwarf, troll and windling cavalrymen, effects of honor braids, and uses of half-magic.

Using Half-Magic

Cavalrymen can use half-magic for knowledge of different types of mounts used by different Name-givers, upkeep of riding gear, animal breeding and first aid, basic riding skills, and knowledge about significant cavalry units in Barsaive.

Death of a Mount

The death of a cavalryman's mount reduces the step numbers of all his talents by 2 steps until the adept successfully bonds with a new mount. This penalty is equivalent to that for a Serious talent crisis.

A cavalryman who does not perform the Rite of the Hero for his mortally wounded mount (described in the fiction) is guilty of a Heinous Discipline violation. Only a Deed of Atonement, such as an epic quest to honor his fallen mount, will make such an adept acceptable to another mount.



Effects of Honor Braids

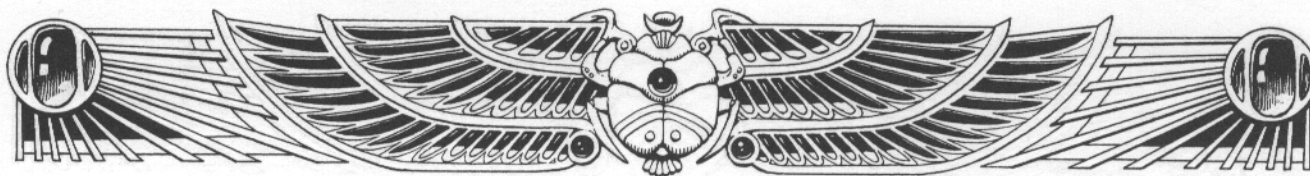
For each honor braid an adept wears, his Social Defense increases by 1 when dealing with other cavalrymen. An adept who cuts off and burns an honor braid to gain power for some heroic purpose (saving a kaer, fighting a Horror, and so on) gains a number of Karma Points equal to his Circle at the time of that mount's death. These Karma Points must be used in the adventure or quest that prompted the cavalryman to burn the honor braid. The adept cannot make another honor braid to replace the one he has sacrificed until and unless his new mount dies honorably.

Race-Specific Mounts

The **Earthdawn** rulebook states that a cavalryman adept begins the game with a riding horse, but troll and windling cavalrymen clearly would find horses unsuitable mounts. Some dwarfs might also find a horse difficult to ride easily. The following guidelines suggest alternative mounts for dwarf, troll and windling cavalryman adepts, including statistics for new mounts.

Dwarfs: Most dwarfs are too short to comfortably ride a normal-sized riding horse. Some dwarf cavalrymen ride smaller horses and ponies; some use other animals as mounts, such as the troajin and the huttawa. Dwarf cavalryman adepts may begin the game with one of these two mounts, or a small horse or pony.





TROAJIN

DEX: 5 STR: 6 TOU: 6
PER: 4 WIL: 5 CHA: 3

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 2 Spell Defense: 6
Attack: 7 Social Defense: 4
 Damage: 8 Armor: 0
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 6
 Effect: NA Recovery Tests per Day: 2

Death Rating: 38 Combat Movement: 29
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Movement: 57
Unconsciousness Rating: 29

Legend Points: 45

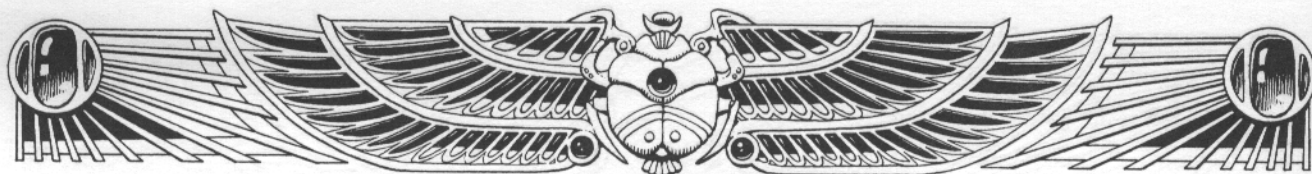
Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Troajins are tiger-like animals native to Barsaive's jungle and mountain country. An average troajin stands approximately four feet at the shoulder and is eight feet long, a combination of a five-foot body and a three-foot tail. Wild troajins are fiercely territorial and defend themselves with sharp claws and teeth. In addition to serving as mounts, tame troajins also often become animal companions of beastmaster adepts. A trained troajin costs 100 silver pieces, and can be purchased in many large cities.





HUTTAWA

DEX: 5
PER: 5

STR: 9
WIL: 4

TOU: 8
CHA: 5

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 7

Damage: 11

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 45

Wound Threshold: 12

Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Physical Defense: 6

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 2

Mystic Armor: 0

Knockdown: 9

Recovery Tests per Day: 2

Combat Movement: 29

Full Movement: 57

Legend Points: 60

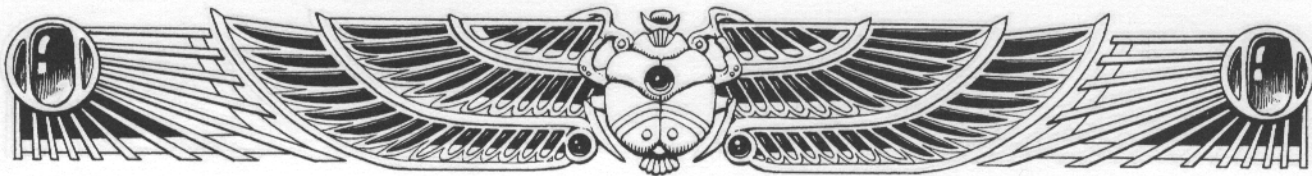
Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A huttawa's body resembles that of a lion or tiger, but it has an eagle-like head with a large beak and bird-like eyes. Four feet tall at the shoulder and six feet long, huttawas are a favored mount of dwarf cavalrymen, and also often help pull caravan wagons belonging to trading companies based in Throal and Bartertown. Though not overly bright, huttawas are easy to train. Trained huttawas are sold in many Barsaivian cities for an average price of 95 silver pieces.





Trolls: Because of their vast size and weight, troll cavalymen can rarely find horses large and strong enough to support them. Some troll cavalymen ride large war horses, but most ride an unusually strong and sturdy breed of horse called a granlain. Troll cavalryman adepts begin the game with this type of mount.

GRANLAIN

DEX: 5 STR: 12 TOU: 8
PER: 4 WIL: 6 CHA: 5

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 6
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 5
Attack: 6 Social Defense: 7
 Damage: 13 Armor: 4
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 12
 Effect: NA Recovery Tests per Day: 4

Death Rating: 46 Combat Movement: 29
Wound Threshold: 13 Full Movement: 57
Unconsciousness Rating: 39

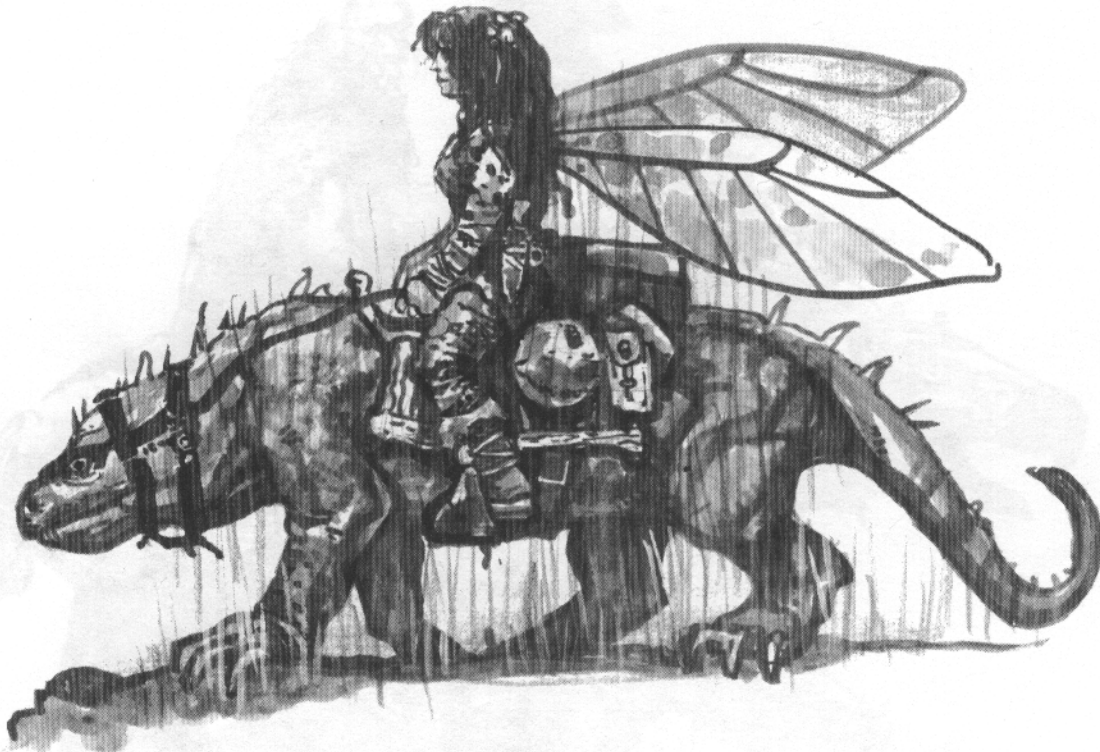
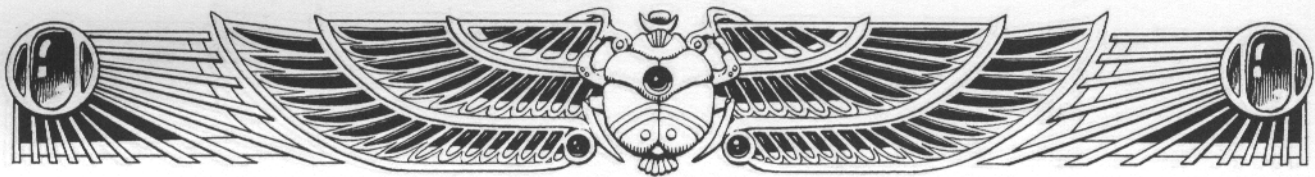
Legend Points: 50
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

Granlains are unusually large, strong horses that often serve as draft animals. They stand seven feet tall at the shoulder and commonly reach ten feet in length. Granlains are stubborn animals, and trolls are often the only Name-givers strong enough to deal with these massive, willful beasts.

Granlains are not common; wild ones live only in the plains and foothills near the Twilight Peaks. Despite their rarity, the difficulty of handling them reduces their sale value. A granlain costs an average of 115 silver pieces.





Windlings: Too small to ride normal horses or thunder beasts, windling cavalryman adepts most often ride small lizard-like mounts known as kues or large birds called zoaks. Some windling cavalrymen may ride dogs or small wolves. Windling cavalryman adepts can begin the game with any of these mounts, but gamemasters should be prepared to adjust circumstances or statistics to maintain game balance if a player character chooses the flight-capable zoak as a mount.

KUE

DEX: 6	STR: 4	TOU: 6
PER: 5	WIL: 5	CHA: 4
Initiative: 7	Physical Defense: 8	
Number of Attacks: 2	Spell Defense: 7	
Attack: 7	Social Defense: 6	
Damage: 7	Armor: 4	
Number of Spells: NA	Mystic Armor: 1	
Spellcasting: NA	Knockdown: 4	
Effect: NA	Recovery Tests per Day: 3	

Death Rating: 36

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Combat Movement: 35

Full Movement: 70

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

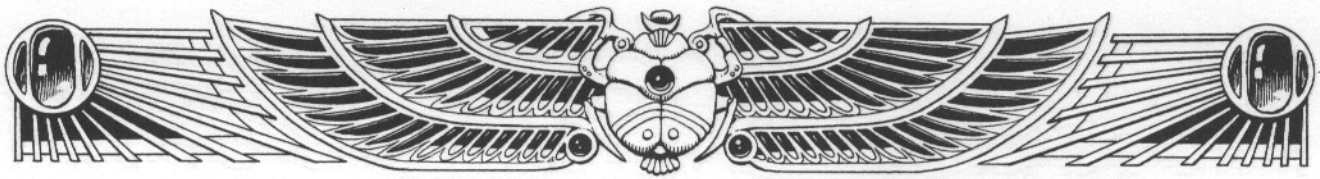
Loot: None

Commentary

The kue resembles a cross between a lizard and cat, with a reptilian body and feline mannerisms and facial features. Like cats, kues possess excellent night vision, and sometimes serve windling communities as watch animals. A kue has long, slender legs rather than the short, squat legs typical of most lizards. They are about two feet tall at the shoulder and three to four feet long, and have horns on their heads and tails.

Kues are native to Barsaive's jungles and forests, and make ideal mounts for *harresa-tis*, the windling cavalryman and warrior adepts who protect windling communities and villages. Kues are sold only in larger cities and those towns lying near the Servos and Liaj jungles. They typically cost anywhere from 90 to 110 silver pieces.





ZOAK

DEX: 6

STR: 7

TOU: 6

PER: 6

WIL: 6

CHA: 5

Initiative: 7

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 8

Damage: 8

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 38

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: 29

Physical Defense: 8

Spell Defense: 8

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 3

Mystic Armor: 2

Knockdown: 7

Recovery Tests per Day: 3

Combat Movement: 35

Full Movement: 70

Flight: 75/150

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

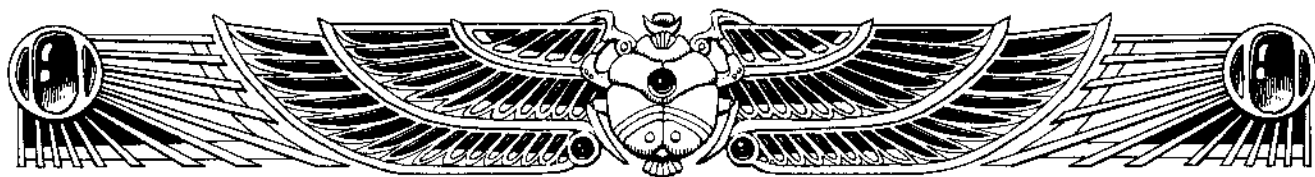
Loot: None

Commentary

The zoak looks like a cross between a large bird and a bat, with feathers on its body and head and a leathery neck, wings, and tail. The creature's feathered legs each end in four eagle-like talons. Zoaks measure roughly four feet from beak to tail-tip. The zoak's neck is long and flexible, similar in appearance to the crackbill's, but with vertebrae instead of pure muscle.

These jungle and forest animals are favored by windling air cavalries, and also often serve as companions for beastmaster adepts. Because they prove difficult to train, zoaks are rarely offered for sale. Merchants in a few large cities, notably Urupa and Travar, trade and sell zoaks for an average price of 115 silver pieces.





• ELEMENTALIST •

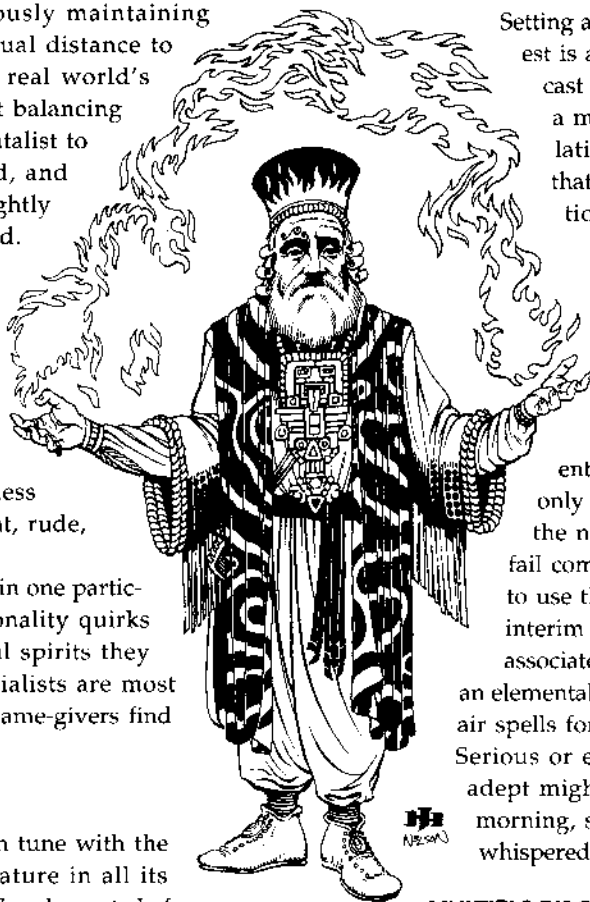
ROLEPLAYING HINTS

An elementalists' most important function is to form a living bridge between the "real" world and the realm of elemental spirits that most Name-givers never see. The elementalists must connect with the denizens of both worlds, while simultaneously maintaining enough emotional and intellectual distance to keep impartial watch over the real world's elemental balance. This difficult balancing act sometimes causes the elementalists to behave in ways others find odd, and he or she always seems to be slightly distracted or perhaps entranced. Also, because elementalists tend to see their Discipline as a way of getting at essential truths, very few of them care to spend time and effort on unnecessary words or flowery phrasing. They often speak and act with a frankness and openness that other people may find blunt, rude, or refreshingly honest.

Elementalists who specialize in one particular element tend to have personality quirks similar to those of the elemental spirits they favor. Of all elementalists, specialists are most likely to behave in ways other Name-givers find inexplicable.

Discipline Violations

Elementalists must remain in tune with the elements. They must respect nature in all its forms, and place the balance of the elements before other considerations when they act. These two constraints apply even to elemental specialists; they may favor one element over the others, but never to the extent that the overall balance is threatened. An elementalists who does not acknowledge the importance of each of the elements in his life (meditating to the rhythms of the rain, adding fuel to a fire and staring into its depths, and so on) or who does not regularly talk to the elemental spirits risks losing touch with elemental balance. To keep in touch with the elements and elemental spirits, elementalists must regularly perform rituals that allow them to make those connections. If an elementalists fails to do this, he suffers a talent crisis.



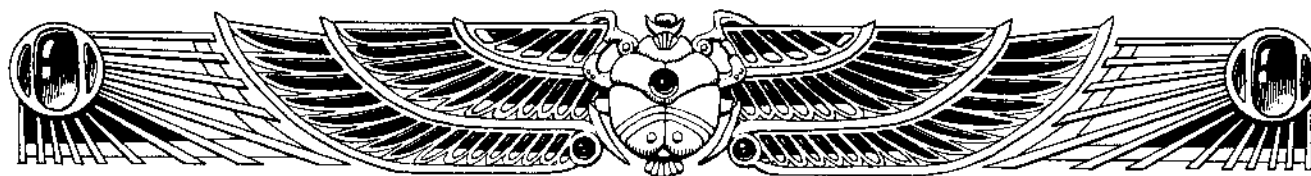
Elementalists may also bring on talent crises by purposely harming the elemental balance, purposely polluting or harming a given element, or overusing or underusing a particular element. The severity of the violation depends on the nature of the specific offense. Neglecting to properly put out a campfire, for example, is a Mild violation; if this same fire burns out of control and destroys a woods, that destruction becomes a Severe violation.

Setting a fire specifically to destroy the forest is a Heinous violation. Neglecting to cast air spells or speak to air spirits for a month might constitute a Mild violation, whereas purposely ignoring that element would be a Severe violation. It would also certainly anger the air spirits, and the elementalists might have to win back their favor with an orichalcum tithe (see **Special Rules**, following). Offending or ignoring an element for a long time may cause either a standard, generalized talent crisis or a specific talent crisis that only affects the adept's ability to wield the neglected element. The adept may fail completely the next time he attempts to use the element in question, and in the interim he may feel a loss of qualities he associates with that element. For example, an elementalists who deliberately stopped using air spells for a month or more might suffer a Serious or even Severe air talent crisis. The adept might wake up short of breath every morning, suffer dizzy spells, or hear curses whispered on the wind.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

Elementalist/weaponsmith combinations are common, especially among those elementalists known as enchanters, because the weaponsmith Discipline focuses on working with the elements in physical form. The elementalists and wizard Disciplines both encourage stern pragmatism in their practitioners, and so they also fit well together. The only Discipline that is almost always impossible to combine with that of the elementalists is the illusionist Discipline, because the two Disciplines require antithetical views of reality. The illusionist finds the truth of things by disguising it; the elementalists strips away all disguise and artifice.





SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for elementalists include uses for half-magic, orichalcum tithes, and bonuses for specialists.

Using Half-Magic

Elementalists may make Half-Magic Tests to recognize different plants, different elements, uses of elemental magic, and other magical rituals. Elementalists may also use Half-Magic Tests when gathering True elements and weaving them into objects, thus performing a type of enchantment.

Sensing Elemental Spirits

Elementalists may also use Half-Magic Tests to sense the presence of elemental spirits. When in or near an area dominated by one element (i.e., a forest or jungle for wood/plant spirits, near Death's Sea or a large fire for fire spirits, on an airship for air spirits), an elementalist may make a Perception-based Half-Magic Test to sense the presence of nearby elemental spirits. The difficulty for sensing an elemental spirit is the spirit's Spell Defense (determined by the gamemaster). If the Half-Magic Test is successful, the elementalist can sense the presence of an elemental spirit within 20 yards of his location and can use his talents or spells, such as Elemental Tongues and Elemental Hold, to communicate and interact with the spirit.

The gamemaster may also choose to make a Half-Magic Test on behalf of an elementalist character at any time. If the test is successful, the gamemaster would inform the player that his character senses an elemental presence of some sort. The player would then determine how his character will react to this information.

Making Orichalcum Tithes

If he wishes, an elementalist can tithe to a particular elemental spirit by placing an orichalcum coin within the element in question (throwing the coin off a cliff, placing it in a lake, burying it in the earth, and so on). If the elementalist is out of favor with the spirit or is suffering a Serious to Severe talent crisis, the tithe may restore the elementalist to the spirit's good graces, serving as a Deed of Atonement. In other cases, the tithe grants the elementalist an additional +1 step to his Spellcasting talent when casting spells involving the element to which he has tithed. This bonus lasts for up to one month for every coin tithed.

Specialist Bonuses

An elementalist who specializes in one element adds 2 steps to both his Spellcasting and Elementalism (Thread

Weaving) talent steps when casting spells based on his element. However, he also suffers a penalty of -2 steps to those talents when casting spells that utilize other elements. For example, a water elementalist gains 2 steps to Spellcasting and Thread Weaving when casting Ice Mace and Chain, but loses 2 steps to Spellcasting and Thread Weaving when casting Path Home.

• ILLUSIONIST •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

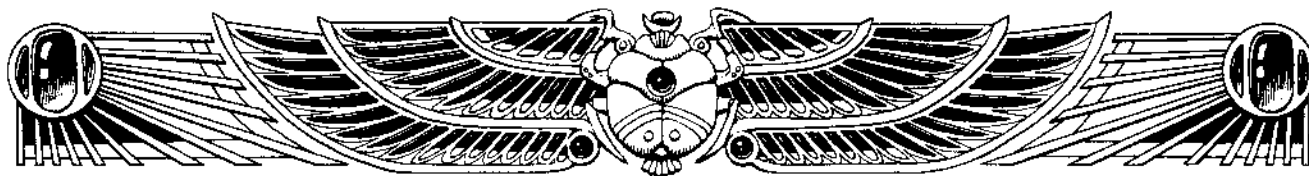
For an illusionist character, nothing is as it appears. An illusionist's talents allow her to alter reality to suit her whims, and she assumes that other powers existing in the world do the same. An illusionist is therefore far less likely than others to take things at face value, and enjoys investigating oddities in order to understand them. Of course, every illusionist knows enough to accept as real those things that present an imminent and obvious threat (say, by eating one of her companions). An illusionist may spend one or two brief moments inspecting the threat for flaws that might indicate its falsity, but she will not simply stand there disbelieving in the thing while it does her grievous injury.

Illusionists are entertainers at heart. They love delighting crowds with their talents and spells, and often perform without being asked. They regard their entertainments as filling two vital needs: providing amusement to lighten Barsaive's dark hours, and giving the common folk a badly needed lesson in how to perceive the truth. Most illusionists, however, see truth as being far more subtle and elusive than the world perceived through the senses. They believe that their illusions demonstrate how to seek the truth by proving how easily the senses can be befuddled. The person who cannot conceive of any truth aside from those things he or she can directly perceive gives many illusionists a reason for living; the illusionist tricks such individuals specifically to teach them that reality is not always what it seems. Illusionists often go out of their way to explain their motives to onlookers; if sufficient silver is not forthcoming or the crowd does not seem suitably impressed by the illusory display, many illusionists resort to sermonizing on this subject in hopes of shaming people into paying up.

Discipline Violations

An illusionist violates her Discipline if she relies too heavily on "real" magic, or abandons the search for





the truth behind the world's facade. With regard to "real" and illusory magic, the illusionist adept should cast approximately two illusions for every real spell. An illusionist who sets aside this stricture for a day has committed a Trivial violation of her Discipline; after three days, she has committed a Mild violation. For every additional three days, casting more "real" than illusion spells increases the severity of the violation by one degree. An illusionist adept who casts more real magic than illusions for nine days commits a Severe violation, and suffers a correspondingly severe talent crisis.

Talent crises also strike the illusionist who begins to take the world around her at face value. An illusionist who accepts everything she sees as truth for a week is guilty of a Trivial Discipline violation; every week in which she continues such behavior increases the violation by one level.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

The illusionist/thief, who uses her spellcasting abilities to mask her thievery activities, is an unparalleled master of larceny. Of course, such characters more often face the temptation to forego the search for truth and so suffer a talent crisis. The troubadour Discipline also blends well with the illusionist's Discipline, as such a character can use illusions to enhance her troubadour talents related to performance, while troubadour abilities such as Item History and Empathic Sense allow the illusionist to more readily perceive truth.

Illusionists rarely work well in tandem with other spellcasting Disciplines because they almost always end up violating the illusionist's Discipline by casting more real than illusory spells. Handled properly, however, such a combination can produce a powerful character capable of mixing illusory effects with real and very powerful spells of different types.

As is true of other spell-casting Disciplines, few illusionists are physically powerful or athletic enough to pursue combat-oriented Disciplines. Adepts who spend years honing their minds often neglect to hone their bodies to the same degree of readiness. Only an exceptional illusionist can carry off the mental and physical requirements of such disparate Disciplines as, say, the illusionist and the warrior.

Of all the adepts' ways related to combat, the swordmaster and weaponsmith Disciplines are the easiest for the illusionist to adopt (though still not truly complementary).

SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for illusionists include uses of half-magic and rituals of advancement in the Discipline.

Using Half-Magic

Illusionists can make Half-Magic Tests to recognize different types of magic use, as well as specific uses of illusion magic. They can also make Half-Magic Tests in place of Perception Tests when attempting to perceive the "truth" of a given situation (see **An Illusionist Reveals the Truth**, p. 44). Illusionists may also make Half-Magic Tests rather than Willpower Tests when attempting to disbelieve illusions cast by others.

Rituals of Advancement

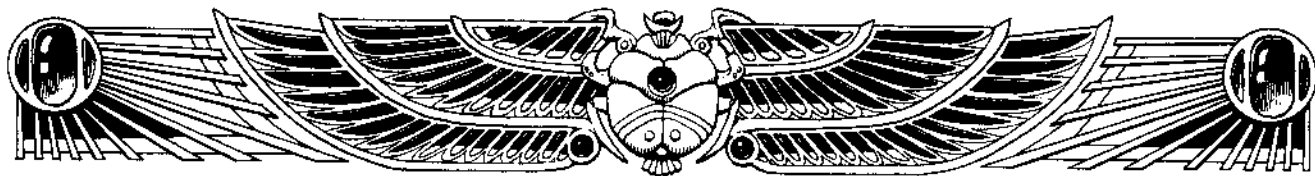
Because teachers of this Discipline use rituals of advancement based on the idiosyncrasies of individual students, few hard and fast game mechanics exist for these rituals. However, the following guidelines will help the gamemaster make the rituals suitably challenging.

Characters advancing in the illusionist Discipline should always face some sort of false threat that appears real. Most illusionist masters take

great delight in confronting their pupils with two real-seeming threats and watching to see which one the adept chooses to defend herself against. Sometimes, though not always, one of the threats presents real danger; the student who chooses to defend against the false threat may end up in real trouble.

No two rituals of advancement should ever be the same. Making such tests and trials fresh and original each time can be very challenging for the gamemaster, but also quite entertaining. Making an adept character work her way through a maze of illusory mirrors can be every bit as enjoyable as hurling hordes of half-real, half-illusory enemies at her.





• NETHERMANCER •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

When creating a nethermancer character, players should bear in mind that they have chosen a Discipline that most other Barsaivians view with suspicion and even outright fear. Because of the nethermancer's fearsome reputation as one who meddles in matters related to Horrors and the undead, many who choose this path already consider themselves outcasts or otherwise alienated from their society. Deciding exactly how your character came to choose this unpopular Discipline should tell you something important about him. A nethermancer may have been singled out for abuse by other youngsters during childhood, or been affected by the misfortunes of parents unfairly suspected of consorting with Horrors. Some nethermancers may be members of racial or cultural minorities within their home villages (for example, an ork child growing up in a village inhabited mostly by humans) and may have suffered prejudice because of it. Still others may simply have been different from their peers for as long as they can remember, always absorbed by death and decay and fascinated by the legends describing the Horrors and the terror they spread from their earliest days.

Of course, not all nethermancers need have been outcasts in their early lives. Some may seek vengeance against the Horrors, and believe that using the Horrors' own tools against them is the swiftest and surest path to victory. Others manage to hide their fascination with the dark matters of the nethermancer's craft until the chance for initiation presents itself.

Few nethermancers live quiet lives in ordinary villages. Though most villages can boast at least one adept of some Discipline to serve as an adviser, few Barsaivians wish to have an expert in death magic act as a mentor to their children. Consequently, most would-be nethermancers leave home in search of masters to perform their initiation. This circumstance adds to most Name-givers' dislike of nethermancers; they fear these adepts will lure their sons and daughters away from them forever with dark promises of forbidden knowledge.

Not surprisingly, most nethermancers disdain the average Name-giver as much as the Name-giver disdains

those who follow this path. Those initiates who do not already show a healthy disrespect for the masses soon learn it from their masters, who often couch their contempt in a sardonic, mocking sense of humor. Nethermancers tend to laugh at things others consider tragic, and display little compassion for any behavior they consider foolish. They save their sharpest scorn for those who fear their abilities and knowledge.

Most nethermancers are masters of moral relativism, holding to few absolute rules of behavior. They spend considerable time examining their own souls, but rarely feel self-doubt. The nethermancer uses his own judgment in any situation to determine the best course of action.

For example, the nethermancer Discipline teaches that knowledge itself is neither good nor evil; it can only be put to good or evil uses. Also, nethermancers define "good" as a long-term result; because they view death as a change of state rather than a permanent end, they give less weight to the possible deaths of Name-givers than others might. For example, if a nethermancer had a chance to seal up an astral passageway between this world and the dimension of the Horrors at the cost of a few dozen lives, he would consider those lives a fair price.

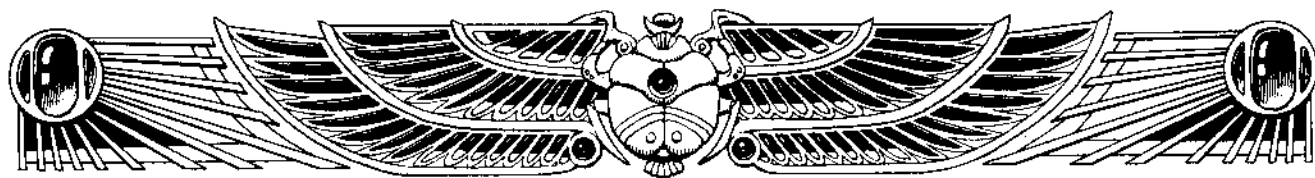


Discipline Violations

Because nethermancers are taught never to regret mistakes, but only to learn from them, a nethermancer who begins to doubt the worthiness of his actions has violated his Discipline and risks suffering a talent crisis. Much of the nethermancer's magic depends on his self-assurance; guilt feelings create a mental block that makes it harder to use his talent successfully. Mourning the dead may also block the nethermancer's ability to concentrate on his arts, because the nethermancer is taught that life and death are merely different ends of the same road. To believe and behave otherwise can also lead to talent crises.

The most important taboo for nethermancers, however, is giving in to fear. The Discipline teaches them to regard fear as a tool, a means to manipulate others; for them to feel it and be swayed by it is a shameful impediment to their own success. Nethermancers overcome by





fear of any sort are likely to suffer Severe or Heinous talent crises until they confront and defeat the source of that fear. Such confrontations serve as Deeds of Atonement.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

Because nethermancers are taught to seek all forms of knowledge, they may be interested in learning any and all of the other Disciplines. Some Disciplines, however, mesh more effectively with the nethermancer's than others. The overlapping of required talents for the other spellcasting Disciplines, for example, offer the nethermancer potentially rapid acquisition of a wide variety of additional abilities. Many nethermancers are also attracted to the way of the weaponsmith because of the metaphorical connection between weapons and death. The beastmaster Discipline also appeals to those nethermancers who believe that beastmasters gain power by dominating other creatures. However, nethermancers often have trouble finding masters willing to tutor them in secondary Disciplines because other adepts are as likely as the average Name-giver to be prejudiced against them.

Nethermancers tend to be just as suspicious of other adepts coming to them for initiation into the nethermancer Discipline. Many applicants are unwilling or unable to abandon their notions about life and death and the use of Horror-related abilities, and so prove unsuitable. Nethermancers are particularly wary of other spellcaster adepts because of a quirk in the nethermancer Discipline that allows them to gain the Willforce talent at a lower circle than wizards, elementalists and illusionists. Some spellcasters in other Disciplines seek to learn nethermancy just to learn this one talent, rather than waiting to learn Willforce through their current Discipline. Understandably, nethermancers take a dim view of such shallow expediency, and refuse to tutor those they believe are applying for this purpose alone.

SPECIAL RULES

Nethermancers may make Half-Magic Tests to recognize uses of nethermantic magic, different types of undead and spirits, and different types of magic rituals, especially blood magic rituals.

Nethermancers may also use Half-Magic Tests to sense the presence of spirits and other entities. To detect the presence of a spirit or entity, a nethermancer makes a Perception-based Half-Magic Test against the spirit's or entity's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the nethermancer can sense the presence of any spirits or entities within 20 yards of his location, and can use talents or

spells such as Spirit Talk and Spirit Hold to communicate and interact with the spirit.

The gamemaster may also choose to make a Half-Magic Test on behalf of a nethermancer character at any time. If the test is successful, the gamemaster should inform the player that his character senses the presence of some type of spirit. The player would then decide how his character will react to this information.

Nethermancers cannot use half-magic in this way to detect the undead, as nethermancers have a specific spell designed for that purpose.

• SCOUT •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

Scouts are a curious lot, always interested in discovering what lies beyond the next hill. They enjoy using their talents to blend in with the world around them. The simple precept "tread lightly" governs most of their actions; the scout who can achieve her goals with the least disruption to the world is truly living in accordance with her Discipline.

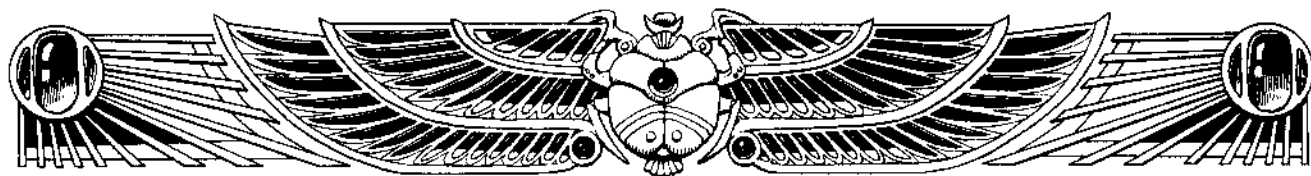
Justly proud of their abilities, most scouts consider themselves innately superior to others who, as they put it, "blunder blindly through the world." In many cases, this sense of superiority prevents scouts from becoming lone wolves; though they rarely acknowledge it to those outside their Discipline, scouts rather enjoy having an audience of people who marvel at their ability to move through city streets or trackless wilds as though they had always lived there.

Though scouts are talented fighters, most of them avoid combat if they can. The saying, "Violence is the last resort of the incompetent," finds a place in many a scout's personal vision. Many scouts join merchant caravans or adventuring parties specifically seeking a chance to lead their charges through danger while avoiding direct conflict.

Discipline Violations

Depending on a scout's individual personal vision, one who fails to "tread lightly" on the world may violate her Discipline and trigger a talent crisis. Scouts who forget their true place in the world and begin acting like warriors or thieves usually find it impossible to open their senses fully to the environment around them, and without this intimate contact they cannot weave their magic effectively.





A talent crisis is a particularly harrowing experience for a scout. She feels cut off from the world around her, as blind and deaf to the subtle cues of the environment as the ordinary "stumblers." This effect is largely psychosomatic; the scout finds the knowledge that she has violated her personal vision so distracting that she can no longer pay attention to the cues of her senses.

As a Deed of Atonement, a scout must usually find a way to set right any harm to the world that she caused. For example, an individual who has somehow damaged the lands through which she is traveling might devote herself to repairing that damage. A scout who used her thief-like skills to steal something might feel driven to return the item. In cases where the scout cannot undo what she has done, she might set herself a particularly challenging version of her Karma ritual: one that requires all the skills of the scout Discipline, and where failure means genuine personal risk.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

Because the scout Discipline requires aptitudes similar to those of warriors and thieves, scout/warriors and scout/thieves are common combinations. Explorers who feel a particularly close kinship with the natural world have much in common with beastmasters or with cavalrymen, and may adopt those Disciplines.

A swordmaster/scout, on the other hand, is unusual because the two Disciplines have very different viewpoints. To a scout's way of thinking, most swordmasters concentrate too much on purity of form and approach combat in far too self-absorbed a way. Many scouts also look askance at those Disciplines that concentrate on altering reality rather than accepting it and embracing it, such as wizards, illusionists, elementalists and nethermancers.

SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for scouts include uses of half-magic, rituals of advancement, and special rules for infiltrators and explorers.

Using Half-Magic

Scouts may make Half-Magic Tests to recognize tracks and trails left by different types of animals and Name-givers, in the wilderness and in cities and towns. Scouts

can also make Half-Magic Tests in place of Perception Tests when looking for traps and/or secret doors, or to find edible food and drinkable water (as with the Wilderness Survival skill).

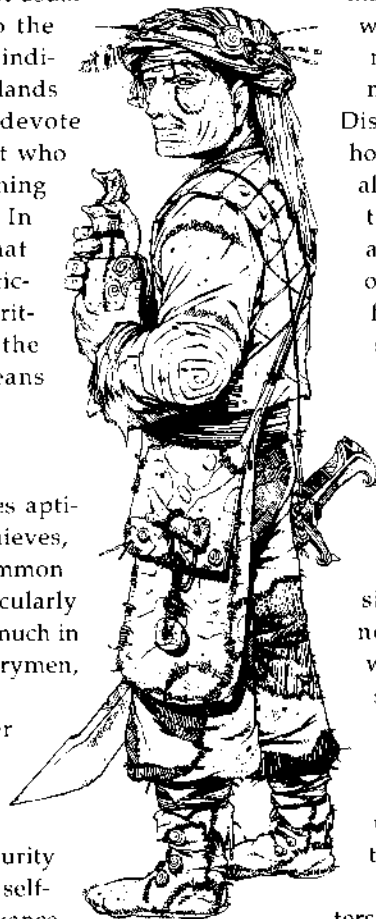
Rituals of Advancement

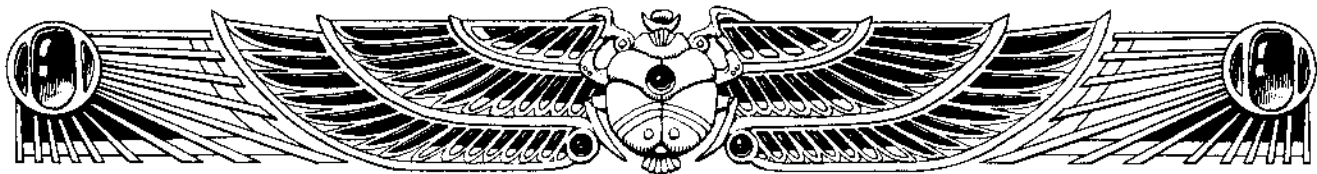
At one point in their lives, many scouts join one of many organized military orders, much as do warriors. These orders offer the scout promotions and appropriate ceremonies to mark his or her advancement in the Discipline. The nature of these ceremonies, however, is quite different from their equivalents in the warrior Discipline, and tends to closely match those performed for adepts by master scouts outside military organizations. The following guidelines for rituals of advancement apply to all scouts, in military orders or independent of them.

Recruitment: In the course of their travels, scouts often encounter or hear of young men and women who have what it takes to enter the Discipline (these candidates may have reputations as "natural woodsmen" or something similar). Scouts interested in recruiting new students organize competitions in which the candidates must follow the scout through the wilderness. Any candidate who succeeds in following the scout's trail can become a recruit, if he or she so wishes. Recruits often work under a master's tutelage for years before they reach First Circle.

Novice (Circles 2-4): When their masters judge that adepts are ready to advance to these Circles, they often invite the recruits to participate in elaborate competitions that resemble a combination of a race and a scavenger hunt. Clues leading from one checkpoint to the next along the course are concealed in various ways, so that only those participants who are intensely aware of their surroundings can reach the end. Higher-Circle scouts observe these competitions and note those adepts who have mastered the talents required for advancement to the next Circle. These competitions take place within towns and cities as often as in the wilderness.

Journeyman (Circles 5-8): The instructor of a scout advancing to this level hides in some safe haven—in the





wilderness, in a town, or in a city—and takes steps to conceal and protect himself that are appropriate to the student adept's level of training (physical traps, obstacles, or even hired guards). The prospective journeyman must find her instructor, infiltrate his defenses, and acquire something (a tangible object, information available only through closely observing the instructor, and so on) before making her escape.

Warden (Circles 9–12): Adepts advancing to these Circles test their own talents to satisfy themselves.

Ghost Master Ritual: The adept meditates on her chosen ghost master. During the meditation, she sees a vision of a certain location, with sketchy details that she perceives using several senses in addition to sight. The adept must travel to this location, overcoming any and all obstacles in the process. When the adept reaches the site, the ghost master appears and the ritual proceeds as normal. (See **Ghost Masters**, p. 225, **ED**, for a complete description of this ritual.)

Infiltrator Scouts

Both the infiltrator and the explorer vary from the basic scout Discipline described in the **Earthdawn Companion**, as they practice slightly different talents, Karma rituals, and advancement rituals.

A First-Circle infiltrator replaces the Tracking talent with the Astral Sight talent; at Third Circle, Lock Sense replaces Astral Sight and Tracking replaces Sprint; and at Fifth Circle, Sprint replaces Lock Sense.

An infiltrator's Karma ritual resembles that of an average scout except that the infiltrator is led blindfolded through the streets and alleys of a town. To complete the ritual, the infiltrator must return to her starting point by precisely the same route along which her colleagues took her. Finally, all of an infiltrator's rituals of advancement take place in populated areas (the back streets and alleys of a town, for example).

Explorer Scouts

For the explorer, the Borrow Sense talent replaces Riposte at Fourth Circle; Riposte replaces Borrow Sense at Sixth Circle.

The explorer's Karma ritual is the same as a standard scout's. All of an explorer's rituals of advancement take place in unpopulated areas and focus on the dangers of the wilderness. When testing his student's abilities, for example, an explorer's instructor might go to ground in a place where wild beasts are known to prowl rather than hiring guards.

• SKY RAIDER •

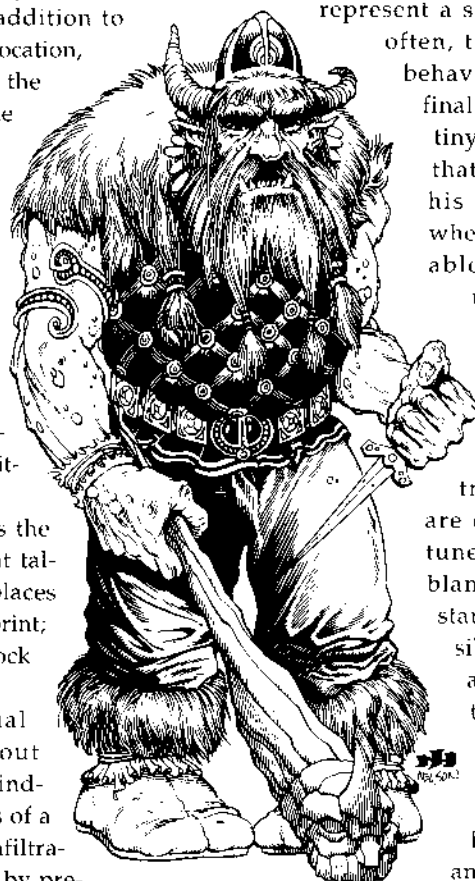
ROLEPLAYING HINTS

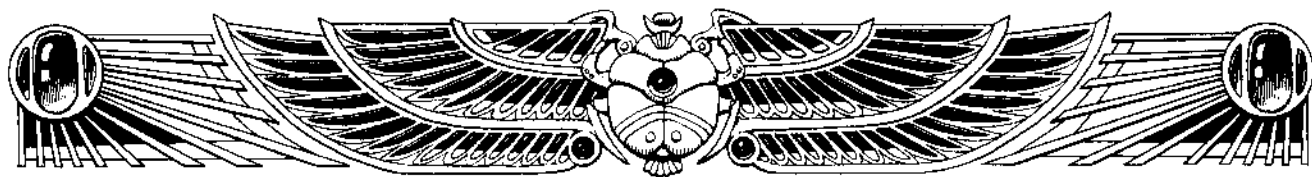
Responsibility and honor, both personal and clan, represent a sky raider's primary motivation. Most often, the two are intertwined; a sky raider behaves honorably by taking complete and final responsibility for his own life and destiny. No sky raider willingly does anything that might tarnish his personal vision of his own honor (though he rarely cares whether others view his actions as honorable or dishonorable). And once a sky raider gives his oath on any matter, he will not break it.

Because a sky raider sees honor and individual responsibility as two sides of the same coin, he rarely shows compassion for the troubles of others unless those others are clearly striving against their misfortunes with all their strength. Those who blame their lot in life on fate or circumstance rather than taking personal responsibility for their condition are dishonorable by definition, and therefore unworthy of sympathy or aid.

Likewise, a sky raider will refrain from interfering if his companion seems about to break his own oath. Responsibility is an individual matter, and the companion must choose for himself whether or not to be an "honorless toad." (Of course, the sky raider will probably never trust that companion again.) On the other hand, a sky raider who sees the "weak" or "underprivileged" fighting to better themselves, or to free themselves from the yoke of an oppressor, may well devote himself wholeheartedly to their cause.

Some sky raiders view adepts of other Disciplines with scorn, because in their opinion they have chosen to





follow a "lesser" path. Other sky raiders offer adepts of other Disciplines an indulgent understanding and sympathy; they may have made a "lesser" choice, but in taking responsibility for their own path they have demonstrated a basic understanding of honor.

Discipline Violations

To place responsibility for his actions or his life in the hands of others or to blame his actions or condition on circumstances is among the worst violations of his Discipline that a sky raider can commit. Relinquishing personal responsibility or doing anything to besmirch his honor will trigger a talent crisis, usually at least a Serious one. For many sky raiders, the worst possible violation of personal honor is to break an oath. To do so often constitutes a Heinous violation of the character's Discipline, depending on the circumstances under which the act took place.

Most sky raiders can easily think up an appropriate Deed of Atonement; very often they simply do something to fix the problem immediately, and damn the consequences. To make up for turning aside from a challenge, for example, the sky raider must track down the challenger and settle the matter. A sky raider who relinquishes his personal responsibility must somehow take the reins of his life back into his own hands, and often chooses to do so in a direct, blatant, and violent way.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

Sky raiders often take on additional combat-oriented Disciplines whose precepts dovetail with their active *do-something-now* view of the world, such as weaponsmith, warrior or swordmaster. They rarely become scouts, as the notion of treading softly is alien to a sky raider's way of thinking. A sky raider *wants* to have an impact on the world around him—the bigger, the better!

Sky raiders will not take up Disciplines that "delegate" their personal responsibility in any way. Thus, only under the rarest of circumstances will they become beastmasters, elementalists, nethermancers or wizards—in the sky raiders' opinion, each of these Disciplines relies too much on an outside force or agent. Neither will they become thieves. The stealth required by the thief Discipline is completely antithetical to the bold daring prized by the sky raider; such "skulking around like rats" is so dishonorable that no sky raider would even contemplate doing it.

SPECIAL RULES

Sky raiders can use Half-Magic Tests for tasks related to the upkeep, repair and building of drakkar-sized airships, knowledge of different airship designs and recognition of different airship types, knowledge of commonly followed flight paths, and identification of crew complements of different sizes according to types of airships. Sky raiders can also make Half-Magic Tests in place of Climbing Tests.

• SWORDMASTER •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

In many ways, swordmasters resemble the glamorous swashbucklers of song and story. Unlike a warrior, a swordmaster does not focus on defeating the enemy (though she would certainly prefer to); instead, the act of fighting is the way in which she embodies her Discipline. Killing is not the main goal of battle, it is merely a possible outcome. The swordmaster need not risk her life foolishly, but must attempt to fight any battle with panache. A swordmaster who deliberately prolongs a battle in order to make it more exciting and beautiful is acting in accordance with her Discipline. Battle is her art, and she practices it with joy.

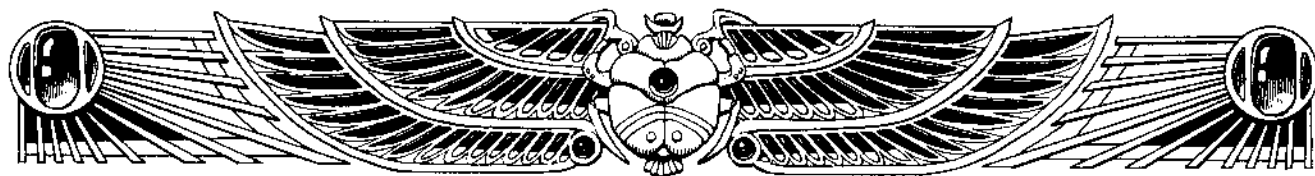
A swordmaster is extraordinarily comfortable with her body and her mind, and almost never sits quietly in the background. Clever catch phrases, witty insults, and humorous asides are as natural to a swordmaster as the elegant embellishments of the art of swordplay. Players who wish to play the glib swashbuckler but cannot always come up with the proper "zinger" on the spur of the moment should come up with or find a few such witticisms and heroic lines before and between game sessions; detective/adventure films from the 1940s and 1950s and any serial/pulp movies offer good sources. Sitting a little straighter and talking a little louder than usual can also help a player get "in character."

Discipline Violations

Many Name-givers believe the simplest way to get from point A to point B is a straight line, but the swordmaster adamantly denies this notion. To the swordmaster, *how an action is accomplished* is at least as important as the result of that action. Simplicity and straightforwardness are alien values to this Discipline; flair, elegance, and verve must accompany the swordmaster's every act.

A swordmaster must even turn the essentially negative and destructive action of killing an opponent in battle





into something glorious. A swordmaster who kills an opponent simply because he opened his guard is not acting in accordance with his Discipline, and such a violation may cause a talent crisis. A swordmaster who fails to take advantage of a slight opening in a difficult battle has most likely committed a Trivial violation, whereas an adept who wins an easy battle against an outmatched foe without making the slightest attempt to embellish the fight with words or deeds has committed a Serious or even Severe violation and will suffer a correspondingly severe talent crisis. A swordmaster who sneaks up behind an unarmed opponent and silently slits his throat with a knife has committed a Heinous violation, and must complete a Deed of Atonement to end her talent crisis.

If a swordmaster player character goes through an entire gaming session during which battles take place and fails to perform at least one or two extraneous but interesting combat maneuvers, the character may suffer a talent crisis ranging from Mild to Serious. If she continues to avoid the proper degree of flamboyance in combat, she may trigger a Severe or even Heinous talent crisis, with all the attendant penalties.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

Swordmasters interested in multiple Disciplines most often become troubadours or illusionists, because both those Disciplines lend themselves to flamboyance and require public performance. Swordmaster troubadours often specialize in dramatizations of important battles, including their own, and other suitably dramatic moments in history. Swordmaster/illusionists often specialize in illusions that aggrandize or highlight their own physical abilities and battle skills.

Swordmasters tend not to be thieves or scouts, because those Disciplines require a stealth that is antithetical to a swordmaster's central beliefs. Some scouts, however, enjoy a bit of an audience on occasion, and so it is possible (though rare) to combine the scout and swordmaster Disciplines. The thief's world is so much a place of back alleys and shadows that the limelight-loving swordmaster simply cannot bear the anonymity.

SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for swordmasters include uses of half-magic, bonuses for bragging rights, rules for soul swords, and bonuses for specialists.

Using Half-Magic

Swordmasters may make Half-Magic Tests to care for their weapons, know the history of legendary weapons, and recognize different types of swords and bladed weapons.

Bragging Rights Bonuses

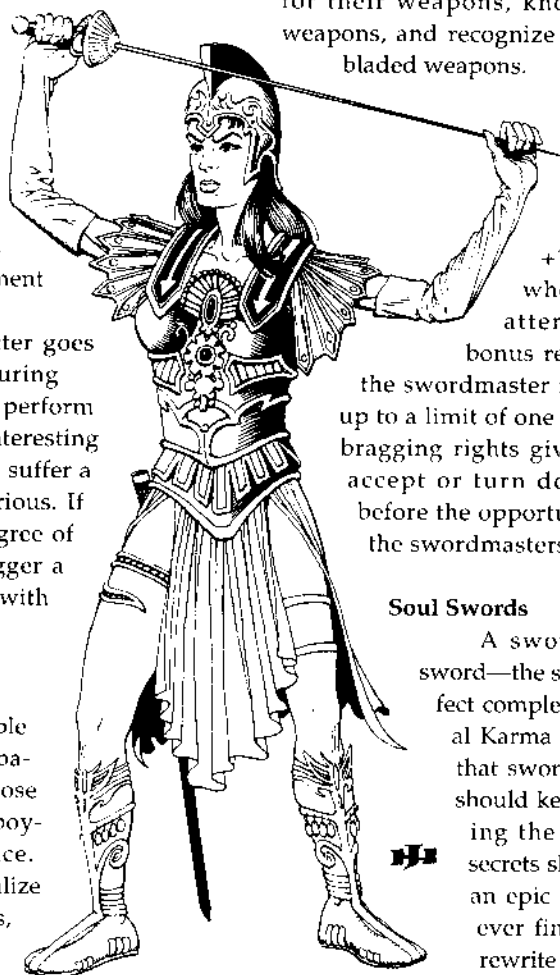
A swordmaster who wins bragging rights for a particular tournament gains a +1 bonus to her Social Defense when dealing with anyone who attended that tournament. This bonus remains in effect for as long as the swordmaster maintains her bragging rights, up to a limit of one year and one day. In addition, bragging rights give a swordmaster the right to accept or turn down quests or heroic deeds before the opportunity is offered to any other of the swordmasters at that tournament.

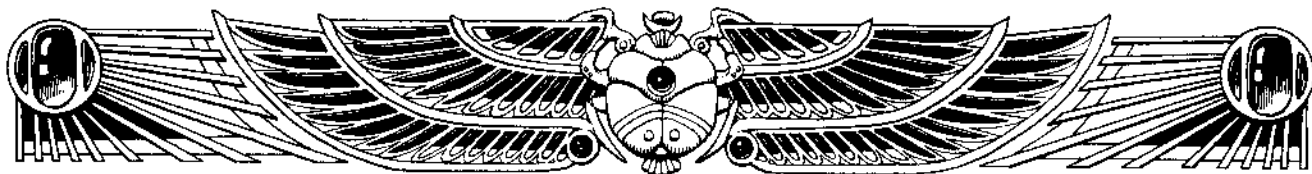
Soul Swords

A swordmaster wielding her soul sword—the sword that is the character's perfect complement—may spend an additional Karma Point on any action taken with that sword. The gamemaster and player should keep in mind, however, that finding the soul sword and learning its secrets should only take place as part of an epic quest. Very few swordmasters ever find their soul swords, let alone rewrite legends with them. Those who do are true heroes.

Specialist Bonuses

The two types of swordmaster specialists—the gallant and the bladesman—receive the following bonuses to the basic swordmaster Discipline (p. 80, ED). A gallant swordmaster adds +1 to her Social Defense at Third Circle and +2 at Sixth Circle, but does not receive a Physical Defense bonus at Seventh Circle. A bladesman receives these same bonuses at the same Circles, but adds them to her Physical Defense rather than her Social Defense.





• THIEF •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

The thief sees the world as a ripe target for robbery, but different types of thieves see their stealing in different lights.

Many see their Discipline as heroic. They remember that the first heroes of the Name-giver races were thieves who taught the Passions a lesson in compassion. Thieves who see their Discipline this way are followers of the spendthrift path, or the trickster's path. Trickster thieves may easily work in groups such as the typical party of player characters. Like all thieves, they rely on their own abilities before depending on other people, but they do not feel that self-reliance precludes cooperation with others.

Trickster thief characters probably had reputations as rebels, pranksters, or charming ne'er-do-wells even in childhood. Though the average trickster thief has gotten into trouble constantly from a very early age, he causes the kind of spectacular but largely harmless trouble that others find forgivable. A trickster thief is usually a charming rogue, envied for his ability to flout the rules most citizens dare not break. Though trickster thieves are as stealthy as any other thief when necessary, they enjoy drawing attention to themselves when not at work.

The solitary thief, by contrast—such as the character Garlthik from the *Earthdawn* novel *The Longing Ring*—cares little for mythology or metaphor. He sees the world in personal terms, as both his mark and his enemy. In order to prosper, the solitary thief must reject even the appearance of dependence on others and draw strength and solace from himself alone. This attitude makes it difficult for a solitary thief to fit in with the average adventuring band. Solitary thieves want loot, and lots of it. They often judge their own value by the amount of money they've stolen; unlike spendthrifts, solitary thieves hold tight to their ill-gotten gains.

Most solitary thieves had troubled childhoods, and may have been shunned from a young age. They probably courted grave trouble as youngsters by getting into serious fights and committing vandalism and serious thefts. Often sullen, distant and disaffected, many a solitary thief has burned his bridges back home and is no longer welcome in the community that raised him. They present a truculent and threatening face to the world, often using body language alone to warn other people off. Others fade into a crowd, appearing nondescript to evade notice.

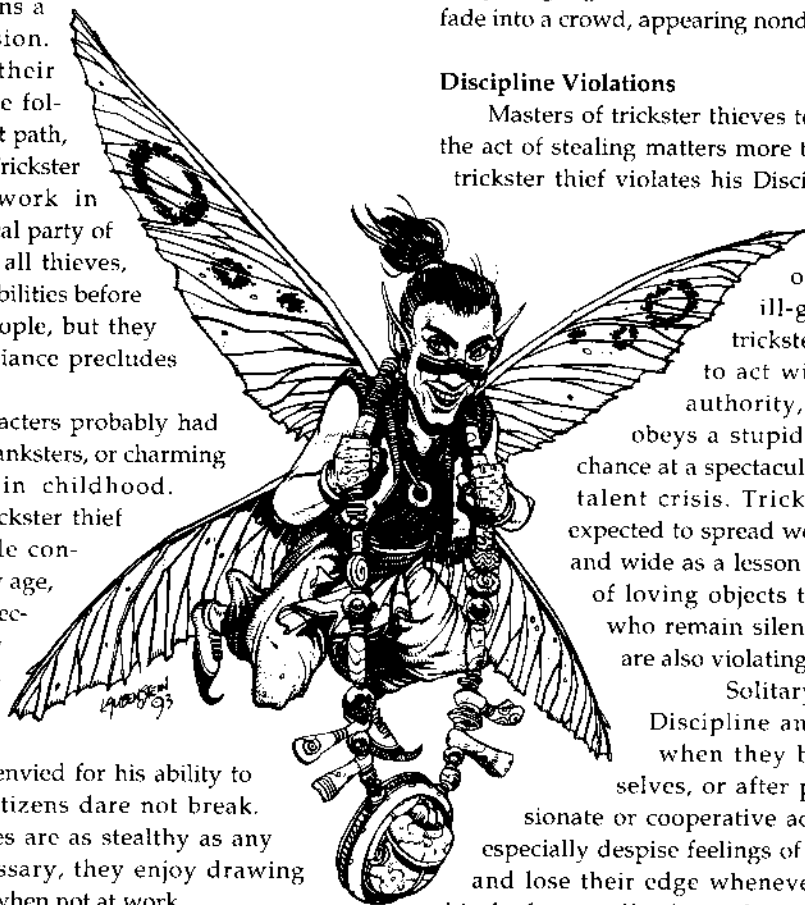
Discipline Violations

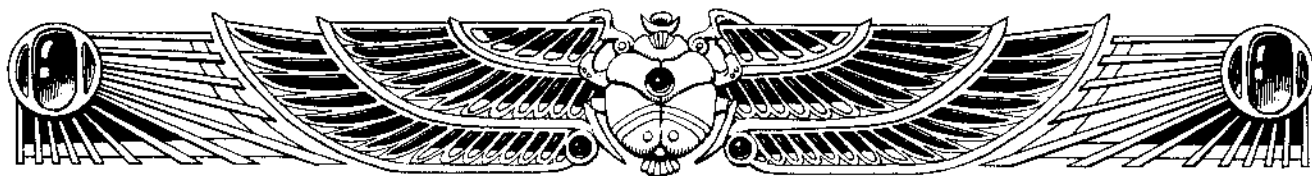
Masters of trickster thieves teach their students that the act of stealing matters more than any stolen item. A trickster thief violates his Discipline and may experience a talent crisis when seized by greed or the desire to hoard ill-gotten gains. Because trickster thieves are expected to act with bravado and defy authority, a trickster thief who obeys a stupid law or turns down a chance at a spectacular heist may undergo a talent crisis. Trickster thieves are also expected to spread word of their exploits far and wide as a lesson to others on the follies of loving objects too well, and so those who remain silent rather than bragging are also violating their Discipline.

Solitary thieves violate their Discipline and suffer talent crises when they begin to doubt themselves, or after performing a compassionate or cooperative act toward others. They especially despise feelings of dependence on others, and lose their edge whenever they engage in any kind of mutually dependent relationship. Solitary thieves may also suffer talent crises if someone loots their hoards of swag; to allow one's possessions to be taken may be a Discipline violation ranging from Mild to Heinous, depending on the loss to the thief. In some cases, these thieves cannot regain full use of their abilities until they pursue the bandits and recover their goods. This act serves as a perverse Deed of Atonement.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

The additional Disciplines attractive to thieves depends on the type of thief in question. Trickster thieves tend to be drawn to the illusionist, swordmaster





and troubadour Disciplines because all three offer skills thieves find useful and emphasize either illusion or performance. Thieves consider illusionists to be the ultimate tricksters by altering the appearance of reality; their spells can add a touch of the outrageous to any high-profile heist. The swordmaster's talents give the thief impressive combat ability with a flamboyance the trickster finds extremely attractive. The troubadour Discipline offers social skills useful for running cons and swindles, and also allows the trickster to spread his own legend in a memorable way.

Solitary thieves most often take up the archer, nethermancer or warrior Disciplines as a second adept's way. The way of the warrior appeals to these thieves as the simplest way to beef up their fighting prowess. The archer Discipline also gives them fighting ability, though solitary thieves who become archers often turn to the sniper's path. Seeing the world as their enemy, they give in to the lure of the sniper's arrow and become the brigands and roadway ambushers who pick off targets from a distance and then loot the corpses. The solitary thief often feels a strong kinship with the nethermancer's way because practitioners of both Disciplines are seen by others (and often themselves) as dark and dangerous outcasts. Also, nethermancers break the taboos surrounding death and the Horrors just as thieves break more ordinary laws.

Thieves of any type rarely become beastmasters or cavalymen because both those Disciplines require a dedication to and an understanding of another being that thieves find hard to achieve.

SPECIAL RULES

Thieves may make Half-Magic Tests to build and/or bypass security measures intended to prevent theft, and to recognize different types of locking mechanisms. Thieves may also make Half-Magic Tests in place of Perception Tests when looking for traps and/or secret doors.

• TROUBADOUR •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

A troubadour feels an irresistible responsibility to entertain, and also to act as a conservator of truth. Therefore, no troubadour worthy of the name will turn aside from a chance to perform. A troubadour loves being the center of attention; her performances delight the audience, stroke her ego (which is often quite healthy!), and let

her feel the exhilarating flow of magic when she "weaves" a song or tale.

At heart, every troubadour feels an insatiable curiosity about the world and an intense desire to share what she has learned with those around her. No troubadour misses a chance to learn a new tale, song or epic. Upon arriving in a new town, a troubadour immediately seeks out the tales and songs native to the area. An ambitious troubadour particularly likes to tell tales no one has heard before, and often seeks out travelers or adventurers to learn the stories of their exploits. Troubadours recognize their own significant role in the spreading of legends and take great pride in that role. As they travel across Barsaive, troubadours carry with them the knowledge of different peoples and places. By spreading such knowledge far afield, they "weave" the scattered peoples of Barsaive together into a single, unified tapestry.

Discipline Violations

A troubadour's duty to conserve knowledge and share it through entertainment lies at the heart of the Discipline, and every troubadour understands her vital role as a weaver of life's tapestry. A troubadour who violates her Discipline by turning aside from that role knows that her entire world will suffer because of it; the guilt she feels in letting down not only herself, but all of Barsaive, erodes the edge of her concentration and triggers a talent crisis.

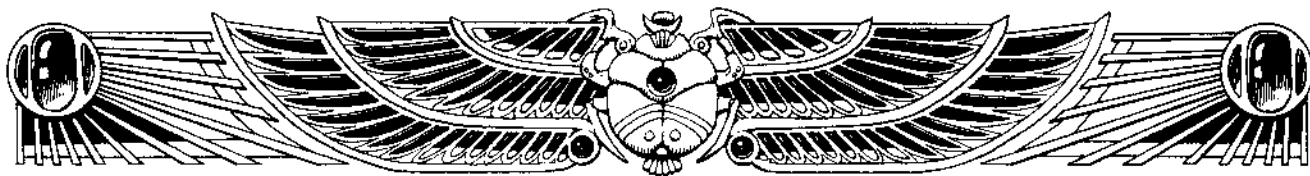
The severity of the talent crisis depends on what the troubadour has actually done (or left undone). The seriousness of the penalty is up to the gamemaster. Appropriate Deeds of Atonement for heinous violations usually involve somehow "mending" the tear in the "tapestry of society" caused by the troubadour's irresponsibility.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

Troubadours are most inclined toward additional Disciplines that revere and preserve knowledge, such as the wizard Discipline. Such solitary Disciplines as the weaponsmith and thief tend not to appeal to most troubadours because they relish an audience too much to enjoy solitary pursuits (though such combinations can work on occasion). The sky raider Discipline, which promotes bold action at the expense of introspection, also rarely appeals to troubadours.

Troubadour/illusionist combinations also work well, as practitioners of both love an audience. In addition, an illusionist's abilities can greatly enhance a troubadour's performance.





SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for troubadours include uses for half-magic and rules for specialists.

Using Half-Magic

Troubadours may make Half-Magic Tests whenever they perform for audiences, and also for knowledge of legends, myths, and folklore of Barsaive's lands and people. Specialist troubadours may use Half-Magic Tests when drawing maps or scribing books.

Rules for Specialists

The two specialists described in the troubadour section, the sage and the map maker, have somewhat different talents, Karma Rituals, and rituals of advancement than the basic troubadour Discipline in the **Earthdawn** rulebook.

At First Circle, the sage acquires the Read and Write Language talent in place of Disguise, and Speak Language in place of Emotion Song. At Second Circle, Emotion Song replaces Speak Language. At Third Circle, Book Memory and Book Recall replace Read and Write Language and Empathic Sense.

Map maker specialists acquire all of the standard troubadour talents at the standard Circles, except that they cannot acquire Emotion Song or Mimic Voice until the Third Circle.

A sage performs her Karma Ritual by writing out or reciting to herself the entire text of a historical ode or saga that has some relevance to where she is at the moment or to events occurring around her. This connection reminds the sage that the present is grounded in the past. The ritual takes half an hour.

A map maker performs her Karma Ritual by drawing a detailed map of the area around their present location, including all major landmarks. This half-hour ritual reminds the map maker that she must know where she is before she can know where she is going.

Recruitment Rituals: Both sages and map makers recruit new adepts privately, identifying likely candidates and either reciting to them long passages from obscure sagas or odes (sages) or asking them to draw from memo-

ry a detailed map of their home and its environs. Those candidates who successfully repeat substantial portions of these passages to the sage, or draw a sufficiently detailed and accurate map, may be invited to join the Discipline. Both types of candidates often undergo years of training before reaching First Circle.

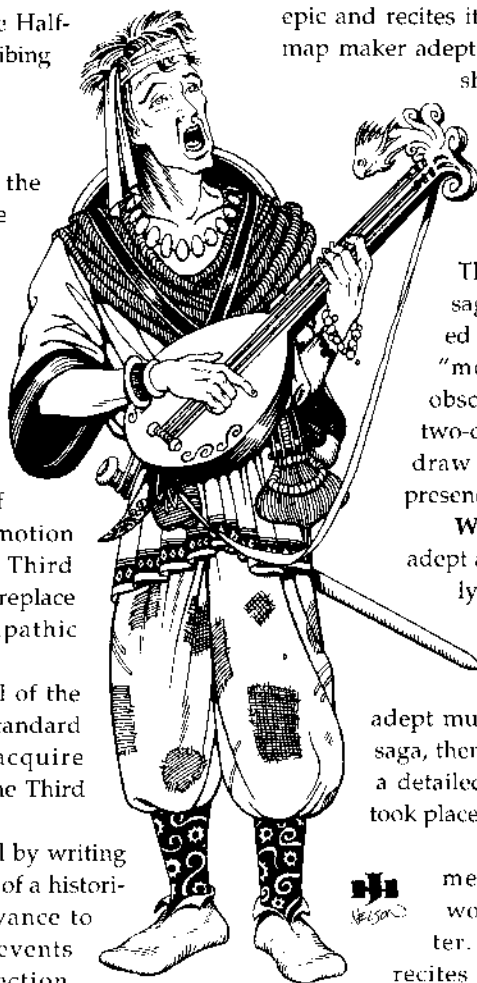
Novice Rituals (Circles 2-4): The sage adept memorizes the entire text of a historically significant song or epic and recites it in the presence of her instructor. The map maker adept studies an existing map for as long as she thinks necessary, then draws it from memory in the presence of her instructor. At higher Circles, the map used for the ritual becomes more and more detailed.

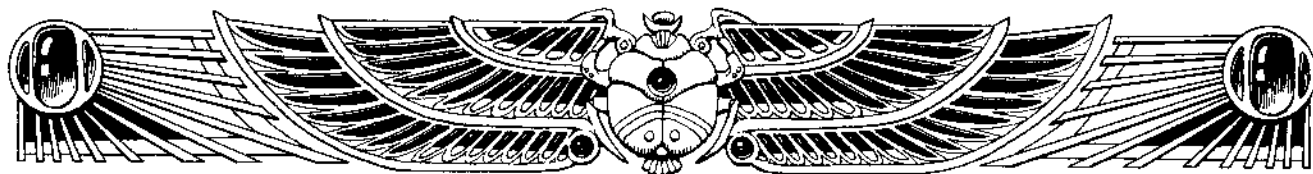
Journeyman Rituals (Circles 5-8):

The sage adept composes a new ode or saga in the style of an existing ode selected by her instructor. At higher Circles, the "model" ode selected becomes more obscure. The map maker adept goes on a two-day journey; when she returns, she must draw a detailed map of the journey in the presence of her instructor.

Warden Rituals (Circles 9-12): The sage adept analyses the composition of a historically significant ode or saga to discover the author's specific influences, then defends her analysis against rigorous peer review. The map maker adept must read or listen to a historical ode or saga, then in the presence of her instructor create a detailed map of the region in which the saga took place.

Ghost Master Ritual: The sage adept meditates over an original copy of a work created by her desired ghost master. She memorizes the entire text and recites it word for word. At the end of the recitation, the ghost master appears and the ritual continues as normal. The map maker adept draws from memory a detailed map of an area that had some significance in the life of her desired ghost master (his place of birth, for example, or the region where he first became famous). At some point in the process, the ghost master guides the adept's hand to include details of which the adept was unaware. The ghost master appears when the map is complete, and the ritual continues as normal. (See **Ghost Masters**, p. 225, **ED**, for a complete description of the ghost master ritual.)





• WARRIOR •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

A warrior tends to be honest, taciturn, and occasionally impatient. He speaks plainly and openly, and expects others to do the same. He admires doers and regards with suspicion those who talk too much. He believes in getting things done in the simplest, most straightforward manner possible. Though an expert in the art of war, the average warrior does not love combat; instead, he sees fighting as a nasty job that needs doing and takes pride in his ability to do it well. Bloodthirsty thoughts or behavior are improper; the true warrior views his enemy dispassionately and fights with his mind unclouded by rage or hatred.

A warrior values loyalty, to both comrades and employers. Unlike many other adepts, who seek out people different from them, many warriors would like nothing more than to spend all their time in the company of other warriors. Some of them live apart from the rest of society in small "soldier" orders composed entirely of adepts and structured like a military unit. Roving mercenary bands also call their groupings "orders," even though they have no permanent settlements. The tight discipline and camaraderie of all these orders makes them feared opponents on the battlefield. Members of mercenary orders are known for undying loyalty to their employers, unless an employer is foolish enough to cheat them of pay or treat them badly. If ill-used, mercenary orders will retaliate. Soldiers value loyalty as much as their mercenary cousins, but tend to give it to the kingdom or empire they serve. They are more likely to put up with poor conditions or pay shortages if they can be convinced that their suffering is temporary and serving a greater cause. A soldier's sense of honor means that he is willing to die defending his nation's interests, but no true warrior will stupidly sacrifice himself to avenge a slight or insult to that nation or kingdom.

Warrior characters who belong to adventuring bands feel intense loyalty toward members of their group, even those members they may personally dislike. To promote the group's interests, the warrior does his best to keep everyone working together by attempting to smooth over differences and settle disputes.

Discipline Violations

Many different actions violate the warrior Discipline and may trigger a talent crisis. A warrior who betrays the interests of his group or creates disunity within it; who acts out of personal vengeance or hatred instead of against the current enemy of his group; who reneges on a promise sworn to on his warrior's honor or on a signed

contract; who becomes paralyzed by indecision; or who cold-bloodedly murders a defenseless opponent will suffer a Mild to Serious talent crisis. A warrior who fails to eliminate a traitor to his group has committed a Heinous Discipline violation; taking down the traitor counts as a Deed of Atonement to end an otherwise permanent talent crisis.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

The weaponsmith is the most natural second Discipline for warriors because their practical minds recognize the opportunity that Discipline gives them to improve the lethality of their weapons. Most warriors find it surprisingly difficult, however, to take up additional fighting Disciplines as a way of enhancing their prowess in combat. The superior attitude most warriors hold toward the other combat Disciplines gets in their way; they tend to see the swordmaster as unnecessarily flashy and prone to take foolish risks, the sky raider and occasionally the cavalryman as a bloodthirsty brigand who enjoys killing for its own sake, and the archer as too inclined toward mysticism.

On the whole, though, the archer and cavalryman Disciplines appeal more to warriors than sky raiders or swordmasters. Some famous mercenary orders include crack cavalry or archery units, and though tensions exist between the warriors and the archers and cavalymen, those tensions usually manifest as a friendly rivalry.

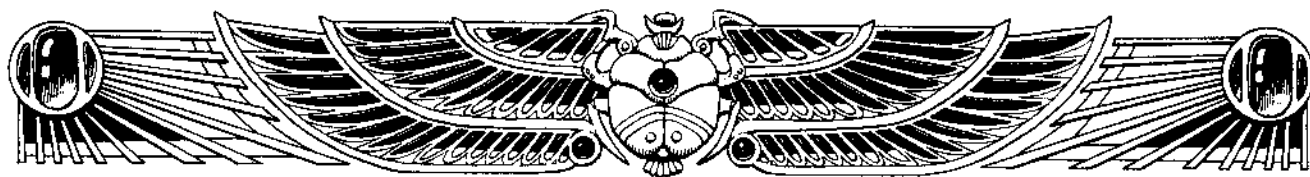
Many warriors turn toward the nethermancer Discipline late in life, after having dispatched great numbers of enemies on the battlefield. The warrior's need to fight without hatred predisposes him to regret the killing that he must do more than followers of the other fighting Disciplines, and may seek the nethermancer's path to find solace in the idea that death is not a final end, but a beginning. Warriors may also be drawn to the elementalists' way; because many warrior rituals ground the warrior in the four elements, the spells of the elementalists' Discipline come naturally to the warrior.

Warriors have a particularly hard time adopting the illusionist, thief and troubadour Disciplines. The illusionist and thief both rely on deception, which the warrior regards as anathema, and the troubadour Discipline requires a love of performance that most warriors do not share.

SPECIAL RULES

Warriors can make Half-Magic Tests when caring for or repairing their weapons and armor, and also for knowledge of military tactics and strategy (recognizing the safest approach to a target when planning a battle, for





example). Warriors may also make Half-Magic Tests to recall events of Barsaive's military history.

• WEAPONSMITH •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

No matter what their individual idiosyncrasies, all weaponsmiths are completely committed to everything they do. From Steel Thought to Weapon History to Show Armor Flaw, a weaponsmith's talents show his determination to improve himself, better understand the world and the people in it, and accomplish the task he has set himself. A weaponsmith does not understand failure; if he says he will do something, he will do it however he can. If he cannot accomplish the task one way, he tries another, and another, and another until he succeeds. A weaponsmith may request aid if he feels he needs it; he will do everything in his power to carry out his intentions.

"The word of a weaponsmith" is proverbial in Barsaive, because a weaponsmith's word is so rarely broken. Weaponsmiths often make their promises in Forges, and such promises are as important to the weaponsmith as a blood promise would be to anyone else in Barsaive. Though a weaponsmith suffers no loss of health and does not earn unhealing Wounds should he break his oath (as with a blood promise), any weaponsmith who betrays his oath risks being turned out of his Forge until he proves himself worthy again.

Discipline Violations

Like members of other Disciplines, weaponsmiths can commit Discipline violations ranging from Trivial to Heinous in order to gain that little extra edge or stay alive. Most Trivial offenses are things that certain weaponsmith characters may feel are wrong, but that do not violate the Discipline as a whole: occasionally lying to an acquaintance, holding back information from a friend or falling short of one's own expectations.

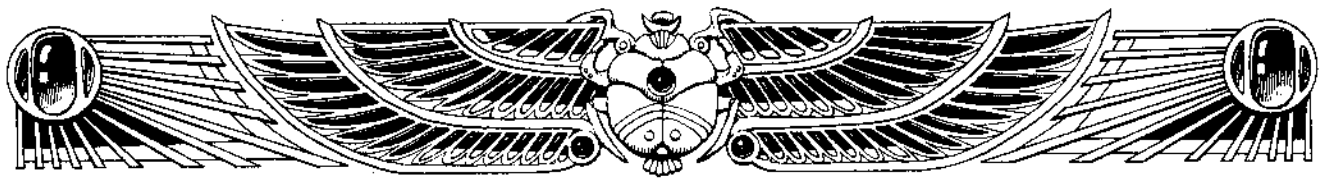
Mild violations include consistent rudeness toward those showing you hospitality, recurring disrespect toward Forge Elders, intentional destruction of another's work, neglecting or improperly using any weapon on a regular basis (poor maintenance, using a sword as a pry-bar), refusing to provide services in exchange for room and board of a week or more or failure to fulfill promises or guarantees more than three times in a week. Insulting a Forge Elder more than once, or in public, intentionally harming another weaponsmith, taking unfair advantage of your position in the community, intentionally destroying a weapon, failing to share knowledge of legendary or pre-Scourge weapons with one's Forge, abandoning companions in need, and displaying cowardice in the face of an enemy are Serious violations, and confer a corresponding talent crisis. Allowing Horrors to wreak havoc unchecked if your character can do something about it may be a Serious violation. If Verjigorm is in the area and the weaponsmith goes for help instead of attacking the Horror himself, he should not incur the penalty.

Severe violations include keeping important knowledge from other weaponsmiths with the intent of causing harm, stealing from a Forge, continually showing cowardice in the face of opposition, and damaging a weapon of legendary importance. Heinous violations include betraying a Forge to enemies, becoming corrupted by a Horror, killing another weaponsmith, or destroying a weapon of legendary quality or pre-Scourge significance.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

The weaponsmith Discipline blends well with the warrior and the archer; warriors often share the weaponsmith's practical and determined approach to the world, and archers share the weaponsmith's devotion to his art. Less common, but still workable, is the weaponsmith/nethermancer combination. Many a weaponsmith admires the nethermancer's determination in the face of persecution by those ignorant of his Discipline, and this admiration has sent more than one weaponsmith in search of a nethermancer master.





The powerful spells of the wizard and illusionist Disciplines may attract the weaponsmith as ways to supplement his spell resistance (primarily through Steel Thought). However, weaponsmiths learn many elemental talents at the higher Circles of their own Discipline, and therefore rarely choose to take on the elementalists' way.

Very few weaponsmiths take up the swordmaster and thief Disciplines, as they dislike what they see as the swordmaster's excessive showiness and the thief's laziness.

SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for weaponsmiths include uses of half-magic, rules for forging a heartblade, and new guidelines for using the Forge Blade and Forge Armor talents.

Using Half-Magic

Weaponsmiths can make Half-Magic Tests when forging, repairing or caring for weapons and armor. They may also make Half-Magic Tests to recognize different types of weapons used by different Name-giver races.

Weaponsmiths in training begin by making small weapons such as knives and daggers, eventually graduating to full-sized weapons such as broadswords. They learn the skills used in creating weapons and armor as part of their training, though these skills are not the same as the Forge Blade or Forge Armor talents. When creating weapons and armor using these more general skills, the weaponsmith makes a Perception-based Half-Magic Test. He may not spend Karma on this test.

New Rules for Forge Blade/Forge Armor Talents

The following rules allow weaponsmiths to craft weapons and armor that are more effective than ordinary items of these types, but accomplishes this enhancement in such a way that their extraordinary nature does not unbalance the game. Note that these rules do not apply to missile weapons, thrown weapons such as the bola or the net, or flasks of oil (which must be bought as is).

Step Number Limits: A weaponsmith may never improve a weapon's Damage step by more than the weapon's original Damage step. For example, a dagger (Damage step 2) cannot be improved by more than 2 steps, giving it a maximum Damage step of 4. The Armor Ratings and Mystic Armor Ratings of armor may never be increased by more than the armor's original ratings. For example, chain mail cannot be improved by more than 7 steps; crystal ringlet armor cannot be improved beyond an Armor and Mystic Armor Rating of 8.

Improving Magical Weapons and Armor: A weaponsmith can use his Forge Blade and Forge Armor talents on magical weapons and armor, though this procedure is risky and difficult because using these talents alters the True Patterns of the objects. The difficulty number for tests using either of these talents is the Spell Defense of the magical item rather than the Damage step or the Armor Rating.

In the case of legendary magical treasure, improving the item requires an Excellent or Extraordinary success on the appropriate talent test. An Average or Good success neither improves nor harms the item. A failed test might weaken or even destroy the item, at the gamemaster's discretion.

Creating Weapons, Armor, and Shields: The following guidelines assume the weaponsmith is working at a Forge with proper materials and equipment.

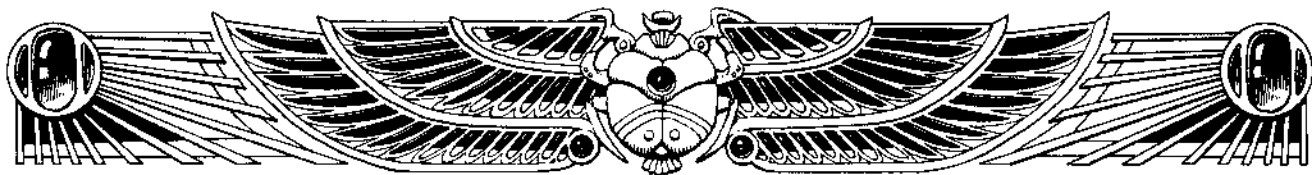
Forging weapons takes considerable time and effort. To make a weapon usually takes a number of days equal to the weapon's size plus 1, though the actual time required can range from days to weeks depending on working conditions and supplies. Forging a dagger while traveling or in a small, badly-equipped forge might take up to two weeks; creating one at a well-stocked forge in Throal would only take two days. The quality of the forge and the time required to forge weapons are determined by the gamemaster. The weaponsmith's Circle determines the maximum size of weapon he can create. Though initiates technically have achieved no Circle, they, as well as First Circle weaponsmiths, can construct weapons up to Size 1; only Sixth Circle weaponsmiths or higher can make large weapons such as pole-axes or polearms.

While he is forging the weapon, the weaponsmith must make a number of tests equal to the weapon's size. A dagger requires only 1 test, while a broadsword requires 3 tests. The Difficulty Number for these tests is 9 plus the Damage step of the weapon being made. For example, creating a dagger (Damage step 2) requires one test against a Difficulty Number of 11. Creating a pole-axe (Damage step 8) requires six tests, each against a Difficulty Number of 17. A Good success or better on one of these tests reduces the number of subsequent tests by 1 for each success level above Average. An Extraordinary success, for example, reduces the number of necessary tests by 3.

If the final test is successful, the finished weapon functions like any other weapon of its type. If the final test fails, the weapon is ruined and the weaponsmith must start over from scratch.

The Difficulty Number for tests made to forge armor is 9 plus the combined Physical and Mystic Armor Ratings of the armor or shield being made. For example, to forge chain mail (Armor Rating 7) requires a test





against a Difficulty Number of 16, while forging crystal plate armor (Armor Rating 8, Mystic Armor Rating 8) requires a test against a Difficulty Number of 23.

The time required to forge a suit of armor or a shield is based on the item's Physical Armor Rating. A weaponsmith must spend a number of weeks forging the armor equal to its Physical Armor Rating, unless conditions are less than ideal. Forging a set of armor while traveling, for example, might take a number of months equal to the armor's rating. The gamemaster determines the quality of the forge and the time required to forge the armor.

Note that weaponsmiths can make many types of armor, including leather, padded cloth, and so on. However, only elementalists can make blood pebble, fern-weave and living crystal armor, and only those nether-mancers and/or elementalists who no longer care to function within the confines of Barsaive's society practice the complexities of creating obsidian-skin armor.

Forging the Heartblade

A heartblade provides numerous advantages when complete, but requires several years of hard work to craft. Each of the eight distinct steps of creating the heartblade must be performed in its proper order, and the weaponsmith may only perform one step per Circle. A character who begins creating his heartblade at Second Circle will not finish it until he has reached Tenth Circle at least, and possibly a good deal longer.

Each time a character who has begun creating his heartblade advances a Circle, he or she can make a Forge Blade test against a Difficulty Number of 10, but only if the character has spent at least 1 hour a day working on the blade while at his current Circle. If the test fails, the character must advance another Circle before trying again. Only after a character has made a successful test for the current step of the heartblade's creation may he begin the next step.

If the adept manages to complete all eight steps, he may perform a blood ritual to tie the blade's pattern to his own for all time. At this time, the weaponsmith may add +1 step to up to eight of his talents, one of which must be Forge Blade. This bonus is permanent, and so for each talent enhanced the character must also suffer 1 point of permanent Damage. If the weaponsmith does not at least enhance Forge Blade, the weapon is not a heartblade and must be destroyed. The character must then begin the entire process again if he wants to create a new heartblade.

Once the blood ritual is complete, the heartblade is a Core Pattern Item for the weaponsmith, with all the

advantages and disadvantages that entails. Weaponsmiths are incredibly careful with their heart-blades, for if they fall into the wrong hands, they can serve as a channel for terrible magic directed at the weaponsmith. Note that the heartblade is one of the few exceptions to the rules for Pattern Items on p. 47, *ED Companion*.

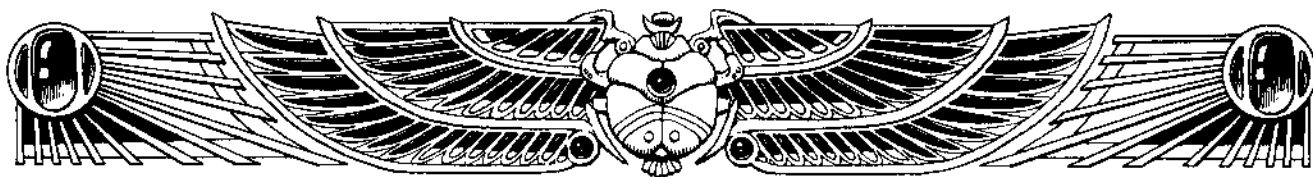
• WIZARD •

ROLEPLAYING HINTS

Ajmar the Astonishing, whose account of the wizard's way begins on p. 98 of this book, exemplifies the aspect of the wizard's Discipline known as the way of the mind. Players wishing to play such wizards can emulate some of Ajmar's character traits: wordiness, pomposity and a tendency to quote inscrutable occult classics. Mind wizards trust the written word over oral tradition, and feel insecure without a couple of books in their backpacks. They take the magical concepts of Idea and symbol literally, and many of them have memorized large chunks of books central to that tradition. Before making decisions, they consult their concordances for references to the Ideas involved, and philosophize about their ultimate meanings. They value thought and reflection over all other things, and believe that the superior intellect always wins in the end. Though humble mind wizards do exist, many of them believe their Discipline is superior to all others and act accordingly. Most mind wizards are smart enough to underplay this belief in the presence of practitioners of other Disciplines, but they often have more trouble concealing their contempt for other types of wizards.

Some wizards, particularly in the hinterlands, learn the wizard Discipline based on the knowledge their masters possess rather than from tomes and texts. Idea and symbol are still central to their way of thinking about magic, but they rely more on their own experiences than on the writings of others. Instinctive wizards learn to work magic by deciding what each Idea and symbol means to them personally. They tend to think and act with less arrogance than mind wizards; many of them have a wry sense of humor and feel humbled in the face of the wonders of the world. They often speak with rustic accents and act with solid rural common sense. Proverbs and other bits of folk wisdom pepper their conversations. They can be quick to dismiss the benefits of book learning, or may display a reverse snobbery toward city folk.





Mastery wizards resemble mind wizards, except that they believe they can dominate the world of Ideas and symbols. This type of wizard is more suitable for gamemaster characters, because mastery wizards make enjoyably loathsome enemies. A mastery wizard's attitude toward the world goes beyond pride into sheer megalomania. They believe that with the right knowledge, they can control any situation. They see everyone they meet as a potential follower or a potential enemy, and show equal contempt for both.

Discipline Violations

A mind wizard violates his Discipline if he does something blatantly stupid and will likely suffer a talent crisis. These wizards believe so strongly in their own intellectual powers that they go into shock when they suffer an outrageous failure while performing a mental task. Attacks on their dignity may also trigger a talent crisis; if seriously insulted, a mind wizard loses his composure and cannot focus as well on using his talents. In fact, any intense and prolonged emotional response may be a Discipline violation because mind wizards think themselves above such intellectual lapses, which they consider the exclusive realm of ordinary people. If a situation occurs in game play that causes a mind wizard to become emotionally unstable, he may have committed a Heinous Discipline violation, and must then embark on a Deed of Atonement to regain his former abilities.

Because the instinctive wizard relies on personal experience to understand his Discipline, he may suffer a talent crisis in any unfamiliar situation. Some may also suffer talent crises in situations that are out of sync with their rural roots: for example, casting spells that target Social Defense in a city or large town.

Mastery wizards may experience talent crises when their careful plans go awry or they land in situations they cannot control. They turn petulant and even hysterical when someone else is in command of their destiny, and these feelings make it impossible for them to concentrate.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE COMBINATIONS

All wizards believe that their knowledge of Idea and symbol makes it easy for them to acquire any other

Discipline. Mind and mastery wizards are especially fond of this mistaken notion. In truth, trying to learn one Discipline using the mental tools of another never works; the initiate must instead set aside past preconceptions and open his mind to a new way of seeing. Of all adepts, wizards are most likely to fail when attempting to learn other Disciplines. They also have the most difficulty finding masters to initiate them into additional Disciplines, because of their reputation as bullheaded and uncooperative students.

This reputation causes wizards the greatest disadvantage in relation to the other spellcasting

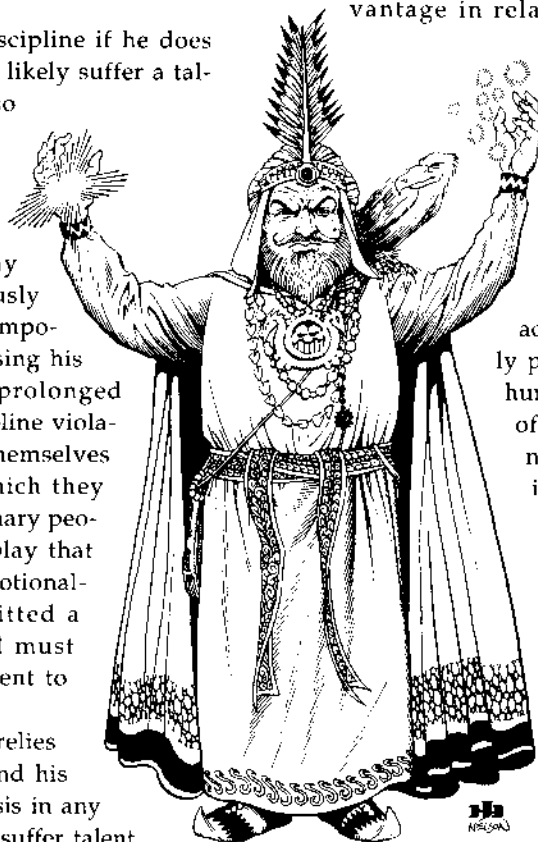
Disciplines. Wizards as a group are infamous for classing those who follow the other paths of sorcery as intellectual inferiors, and so individual wizards may have a tough time convincing a master to take them on regardless of whether or not they personally espouse that belief. If accepted as initiates, wizards usually perform more than their share of humiliating apprentice work as a test of their commitment and willingness to accept a new way of thinking. Despite the inherent difficulties, wizards are most often drawn to take up other spellcasting Disciplines because the talents shared between the spellcasters' paths make their advancement through the Circles of the new Discipline comparatively rapid.

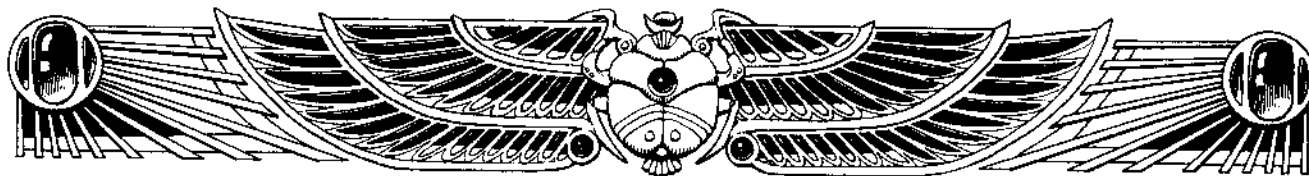
Other Disciplines that best fit the wizard's temperament are those of the archer, troubadour and weaponsmith. The archer's

tendency to abstract the world into missiles and targets meshes well with the wizard's way of looking for symbols everywhere, and troubadours and weaponsmiths are both keepers of lore, an aspect that appeals to the wizard's love of knowledge.

SPECIAL RULES

Wizards can make Half-Magic Tests to recognize different types of magic use, identify specific uses of wizard magic, and for knowledge of magical rituals.





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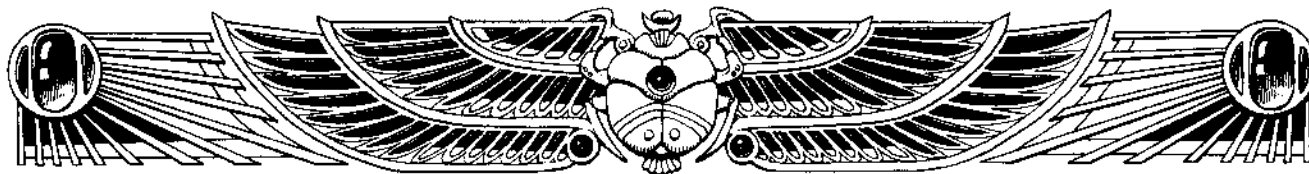
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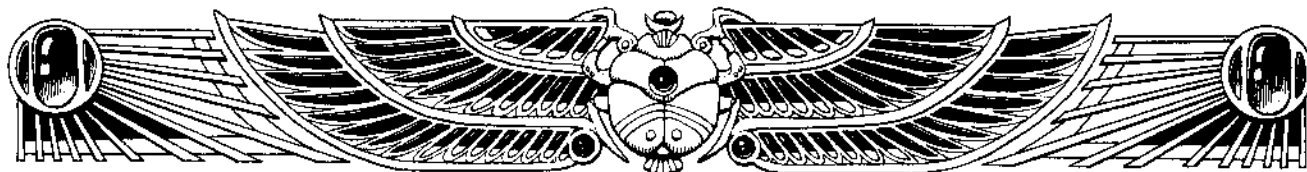
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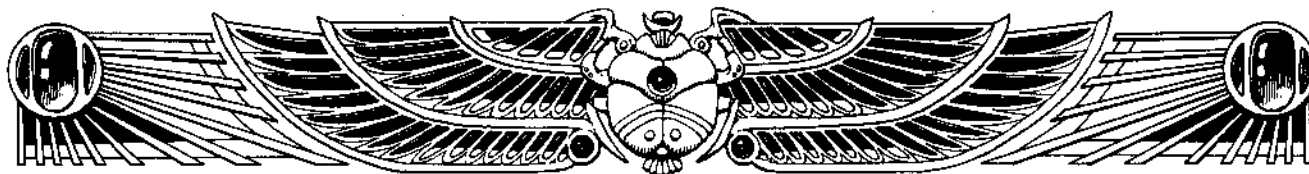
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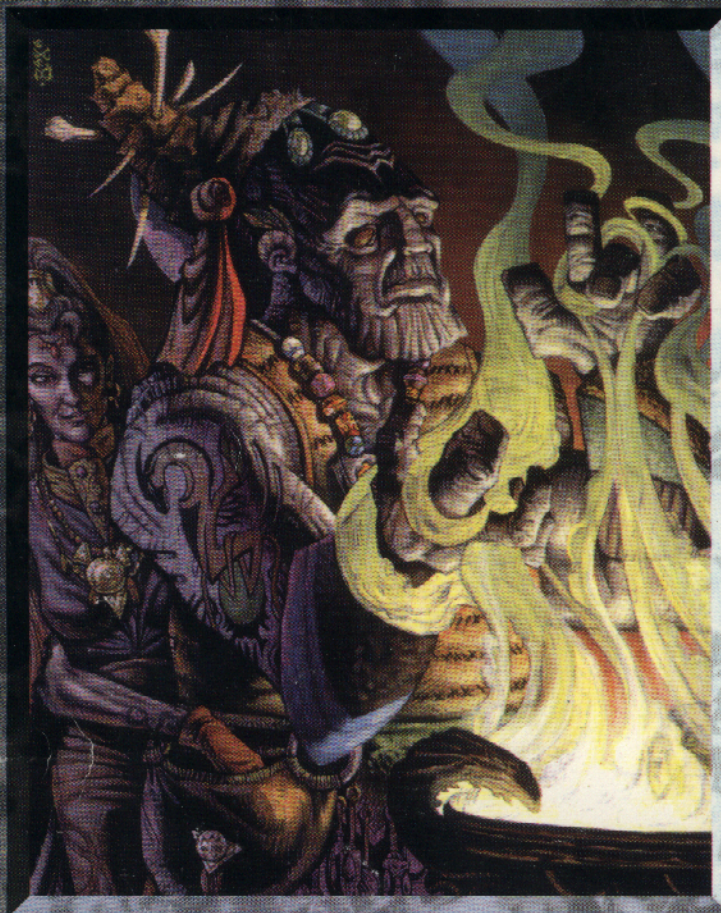
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ADEPTS are the heroes of Barsaive, fighting to reclaim and rebuild their Scourge-ravaged land. The magical Disciplines they follow grant them fantastic powers and shape the way they see the world. A warrior sees life as a battlefield, and wields sword and shield with magical brilliance. A troubadour sees the world as a tapestry of tales, and uses his magic to spin stories and songs that sway the heart. An archer divides the world into missiles and targets, and powers her bow with her Discipline's magic. Through their Disciplines, adepts forge a bond between the world, powerful magic, and their own innermost selves.

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ISBN: 1-55560-260-6 \$18.00

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