



SECRETS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

SECRETS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

George Strayton

EDITING

Fred Jandt & George Strayton

SPECIAL GUEST AUTHORS

Steve Miller ("So You Want To Be A Game Master..."),

Nancy Berman & Noah Dudley ("The Ancient World"),

Paul Sudlow with stats by Matt Staroscik ("Denizens of the Ancient World"),

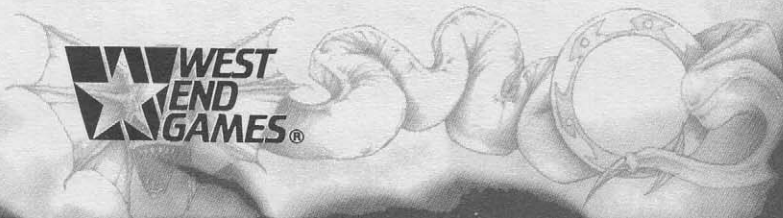
Tim Beach ("Treasures of the Ancient World")

LAYOUT

Tom O'Neill, Richard Hawran

CONTENTS

SCROLL I – So You Want To Be A Gamemaster	2
SCROLL II – Gamemaster Guide To Heroes	10
SCROLL III – Adventures	28
SCROLL IV – Battles	44
SCROLL V – The Ancient World	56
SCROLL VI – Ancient Powers	70
SCROLL VII – Denizens Of The Ancient World	84
SCROLL VIII – Treasures Of The Ancient World	104





SCROLL I

SO YOU WANT TO BE A GAME MASTER...

Ah, yes: *Game Masters*. The men and women behind the scene. The power behind the throne. The position of ultimate power. Even the gods are subject to the will and whims of the *Game Masters*....

Of course the scribes charged with creating this excellent work of roleplaying game design would turn to Salmoneus when it comes to telling you all the secrets about being the one who controls all the secrets. After all, I am the foremost trader in all things valuable in the Known World. From information, to the finest spices, to the best dancing girls, everyone from kings to commoners knows that Salmoneus is the one to see first. Everyone knows that—

You haven't heard of me? Where are you from? Some Philistine backwater? Never mind. Believe me, if you're up to the challenge of being a *Game Master*, I'm the man who can show you the ropes and tell you all those little secrets that'll have the players eating out of your hand, and always asking for seconds.

The first thing to understand about being a *Game Master* is that with great power comes great responsibility. Hey, that's pretty good. I wonder if there's some way I can trade on that pithy statement...perhaps somehow put my mark on it, and charge people for

just using that phrase?

Hmm....

But I digress. While the Game Master has ultimate power in a roleplaying game, a lot of responsibility is also placed on his shoulders. The Game Master is responsible for helping the players create the heroes they are going to portray, for defining the quests the heroes undertake, for providing guidance to them in such a fashion that the players still remain in control of their heroes' destinies, while bringing all the exotic locations and characters that make up the world around the heroes to life in such a brilliant fashion that it causes even the greatest playwrights in Athens to turn green with envy. Oh, and he must also constantly provide opportunities for excitement and entertainment—that's where the great responsibility comes in. While shaping the story and the world, the Game Master must provide all sorts of options for the players to get the heroes into dangerous, interesting, or just plain amusing situations.

Sounds like an overwhelming challenge, doesn't it? For many it is, but you've got the right stuff, don't you? Of course you do! And by following the guidance of Salmoneus you're going to be the greatest Game Master ever! Trust me!

In the next few pages, I'm going to explain each element of the Game Master's role in some detail. Then, as you run your *Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game* sessions, you'll know what to incorporate and what pitfalls to look out for.

BEFORE THE GAME

Even before the players assemble around the table, there are several things the Game Master must do—yes, much like a great merchant planning a new business venture or a great general planning a campaign, the Game Master must spend some time preparing and laying the groundwork. Just like wars have been lost because of poor planning, or brilliant products have failed because of a poor marketing scheme, so have many roleplaying sagas never gotten off the ground or failed because of poor Game Master preparation.

READ THIS COLLECTION OF SCROLLS

If you're a novice Game Master, you need to read this collection from scroll to scroll before trying your first adventure. The Game Master is part storyteller and part referee, and you need to be familiar with the *Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game* rules in order to fairly and consistently make game rulings when questions come up during play or even during hero generation.

This is not to say that you have to *memorize* every rule within these scrolls, but you do need to know what is included here. That way, when questions come up, you at least know where to look for possible answers.

FORMING AN IDEA

This is perhaps the simplest part of all. Basically, this is the point at which you say to yourself, "You know, I'd really like to run a few sessions of the *Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game*." From here, you decide whether you want to run a one-evening game, a mini-saga, or an ongoing saga.

A one-evening game is pretty self-explanatory. That's a game that lasts for a single session, arriving at its conclusion within 3–4 hours of play. This type of game is similar to most individual episodes of *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* and *Xena: Warrior Princess*—each is more-or-less a self-contained story.

A mini-saga is a quest that takes two, three, or perhaps even four game sessions to complete. While

each game session might still be relatively self-contained, the entire quest takes more than a single session to complete. A mini-saga can be likened to the *Xena: Warrior Princess* episodes where Callisto was thought defeated, but then returned for a revenge later, or the three-episode arc featuring Xena's first appearance on *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*.

An ongoing saga is like the entire series of *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* and *Xena: Warrior Princess*. There is an overarching theme that links the game sessions—Hera's vendetta against Hercules, or Xena's efforts to make up for the evil she did earlier in her life are examples of these—and it might consist of a mixture of one-evening quests and mini-sagas, but all the elements add up to one long story. This type of saga is the most challenging for Game Masters. After a while, it might get tough to come up with fresh and exciting challenges for the heroes...or you might just run out of bad guys to throw at them!

Once you know what kind of game you want to run, you need to find players who are willing to get in on the fun.



FINDING PLAYERS

This step is easy or hard depending on your social circle. The best way to go about this one is to approach some of your friends who are fellow *Hercules* and *Xena* fans and invite them to play in the game you want to run. If you have to explain to them what a roleplaying game is, so much the better—they won't be coming to your game with preconceived notions about what a roleplaying game should be...they, like you, know the tone and feel of the television shows, and that's all any of you really need to know, initially.

You might want to be careful about inviting too many players to the game, however. It's important that every hero has the opportunity to shine at some point during each game session. If the group is too large, you might not be able to give each hero his featured moment, and the player might feel left out as a result.

I've found that a good size for a play group is four to six players, including the Game Master. With six players, it's easy for each of their heroes to be the center of attention at least once per game session, and if there's a minimum of four, the rest of the group is still able to play if one or two players have to miss a game session for some reason. (One player and one Game Master is frequently too small a group for the kind of fast-paced, action-filled adventures that form the heart of the *Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game*. It's possible to play the game—each Game Master and each player group is different, and it's virtually impossible for anyone to make accurate statements when it comes to gaming groups. So it's likely that you can play with just one Game Master and one player...it just isn't as fun for me.)

By the way, if you are assembling a new game group—or even if you have convinced your bowling or card-player pals to trade the regular game in for a bit of roleplaying—I suggest you start with a one-evening game. If everyone has fun, you can always create further adventures for the heroes, but if for some reason things don't work out the way you would have liked, you haven't spent a lot of time developing ideas that you may never use.

Once you've gotten the players lined up, and you've all agreed upon an evening or weekend afternoon upon which you're going to meet, you're going to have to decide what kind of quest the heroes are going to undertake.

DEFINING A QUEST

To just say, "It's about heroes having adventures in the Ancient World!" is not good enough. You need to be able to say, "It's about Hercules trying to rescue a village from Dionysus-inspired madness" or "It's about the heroes helping Xena defeat the pirate band they used to belong to."

Defining the quest is essentially a refinement of the idea you formed initially about the story you wanted to tell while running the *Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game*.

The first thing to do is to decide what kind of quest the heroes will be undertaking. There are many, many different kinds of stories you can tell, so there are also many different kinds of quests. Here are some examples that are typical of *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* and *Xena: Warrior Princess*.

- The heroes must journey to the Other Side to retrieve the spirit of a woman wrongfully executed.
- Slavers are kidnapping young men and women from local villages. Someone—the heroes—must raid the compound and free the captives.
- Agents of Caesar have kidnapped Gabrielle, but Xena is unsure what direction the villains have headed. She needs the heroes to go south, while she and Joxer head north.
- Ares' latest plot against Hercules has caused him to place a curse on the heroes; they must either kill Hercules or somehow find away to remove the curse before they cross his path. (And, of course, they are all on a small island during flood season where all the bridges have been washed out.)

Perhaps the best way to define a quest is to invent your villain. Some might tell you that a good story starts with the hero, but they're wrong—a hero needs strong opposition, and a tale of heroic adventure is only as good as its villain is bad.

So, in order to define the quest the heroes are going to undertake, you need to define what the villain is trying to achieve and how he is going to do it. Once you know that, the players will help define the quest for you once they create their heroes.

Suppose you decide to pit your heroes against an agent of Hera, a Blue Priest. Of course, you don't tell the players that information up front. First you tell them about some strange occurrences in a nearby village. The heroes must travel there, find out what's going on and who's behind it, and defeat the Blue Priest before he accomplishes his plot to overthrow a local magistrate who has decided to destroy the Temple to Hera in his village. Since we only have one evening to wrap up the quest, the answers to the

mysteries should probably be relatively easy to uncover, so that the bulk of the game session revolves around the investigation of the bizarre happenings and the ensuing showdown with the Blue Priest and his fierce force of Blue Monks. In other words, our adventure has taken shape completely around our villain, even though he probably doesn't even appear until the climactic moment. (The ingredients of a good adventure session, and more details on how to come up with exciting quests are discussed in more depth in Scroll III. The above method of quest creation works for our purposes here, but it is by no means the only way of doing things.)

As you are defining the quest, try to get an idea from the players what kind of heroes they want to play, and what aspects of fantasy adventure hold the greatest amount of interest for them—do the players want to thwart the plans of the gods while battling their larger-than-life agents, or would they rather protect young lovers from all-too-mortal sets of parents who hate each other's families because of an ancient blood feud? By tailoring the quest to what you perceive as the player's interests, more fun will be had by all. After all, the players need to have an interest in the story you and they will be creating together...and by crafting a story suited to their interests, the heroes they will create and portray will fit right into the plot, assuming the starring roles as they are intended to.

CREATING THE HEROES

This is the part of the pre-game activity during which the Game Master *really* has to listen to what the players want, because this arena belongs almost entirely to them.

Basically, the Game Master's involvement here consists of asking each player, "What kind of hero do you want to play?" and possibly saying "no" to particularly outlandish concepts.

The details of hero creation are dealt with in the *Hero's Guide*, so all I really have to say in this scroll is: pay attention to the players' character concepts while they invent them. The players in your game are one of your greatest resources for story ideas and subplots that you can weave into entire sagas. For example, a player wants to create an Amazon princess. Fair enough. Nobility has its perks, and when the heroes are in Amazon company they'll be treated like, well, like an Amazon princess and her friends. However, nobility also has its drawbacks, particularly if the reigning Amazon queen is on her last legs or otherwise wants to step down, the hero could find herself pursued by assassins hired by dishonorable Amazons wanting to eliminate her before the queen dies, or by challengers jumping the gun. (Such a challenger might even become an ongoing adversary, or a source of comic relief like Joxer.)

You must pay careful attention to how the player conceives his hero during creation because you're going to need to give an answer to the question, "Why is the hero involved in this adventure?" Or, if you're not starting in mid-action, "Why would the character want to get involved with this adventure?" Each hero needs to have a reason to be traveling with the other heroes, as well as a reason for wanting to get involved with the adventure you, the Game Master, has planned. The players don't need to know the particulars of the adventure, but their heroes should nonetheless have motivations built into them that allows this to happen. The heroes and the scenario need not be completely tailored for one another, but you should ensure that there exists a natural reason for the union.

On a similar note, if you have a player who wants his hero to hate all Centaurs because a Centaur killed his parent, and there's another player who has her heart set on playing a Centaur, you might consider talking one or the other player out of his or her choice of hero, particularly if you are an inexperienced Game Master. Character-to-character strife of this kind too easily translates into player-to-player strife, and if players become angry at each other, the game ceases to be fun for anyone. (This is not to say that heroes must all be perfect friends, but they should not be created with hatred against other heroes as one of their central concepts.)

FINAL PRE-GAME CHECK LIST

Before you sit down to play, check the following list to make sure you have everything covered:

- Have you read this collection, scroll to scroll? (Like I said above, that's crucial if you're going to be a Game Master.)
- Do all the players know how to play, and does every player have a hero? (The players don't need to have read the rules, but they do need to have a feel for what the numbers on their Hero Sheets mean...something you should explain to them during hero generation or which they can learn on their own by playing the solitaire adventure included in this box.)
- Do you and/or all the players know why their heroes are working together, and what will cause them to embark on their quest? (It's more important that *you* know why the heroes are going on their quest. All

SO YOU WANT TO BE A GAME MASTER...

they need to know is their heroes' location and the reason they're there, as the game session begins. New sagas can, of course, begin with the heroes meeting each other for the first time.)

Again, if the answer is "Yes!" to all three questions, you're ready to start guiding the exploration of the Ancient World of Hercules and Xena. If the answer is "no" or "maybe" to any of the questions, take the time to take care of them. Everyone will have a better time playing the game if you do.

DURING THE GAME

A session of the *Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game* is basically a series of scenes, during which the heroes interact with characters and creatures of the world as portrayed by the Game Master. Boring stuff, such as overland travel or sleep-time, is handled with a simple, "You reach Athens after a week on the high sea" or "you awaken refreshed" (unless, of course, something exciting happens on the journey). Like the television shows, the roleplaying game doesn't concern itself with everyday, mundane stuff, but instead focuses on the fights and interaction of the main characters with the world around them.

During the game, the players are the "stars" of the game session, and the Game Master takes care of the "supporting cast," "extras," "scene changes," and just about everything else. He does, however, share the responsibility of "directing" the action with the players.

RUNNING THE GAME SESSION

During most *Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game* sessions, the Game Master leaves the decisions to the players. The Game Master presents the setting—describing what the heroes see, offering choices of actions, portraying non-hero reactions to hero activities, and so on. But once the Game Master has set up his basic storyline, the course of the action is determined by the heroes. It is their choice whether they go to Athens or Crete. (And the smart Game Master will have conceived his saga in such a fashion that there is action no matter where the heroes go.) The Game Master can spend most of the time sitting back and watching the heroes lay their plans.





This changes, however, when a specific encounter with a non-hero or monster occurs, either because the heroes seek this character out, or because they arrive at the spot where the Game Master knows the encounter will occur. Here, the Game Master starts to take a more active role, playing the part of the creature or character. Although the motivations and backgrounds of most non-heroes in the game are not as detailed as those of the heroes, you should nonetheless try to have a general idea as to how a character dealing with the heroes might feel or might react. (For example, a palace guard reacts very differently to a hero who is threatening him with a weapon than he might to a hero trying to seduce him.) You should always consider the non-hero's or creature's state of mind. Not every encounter needs to be violent one. In fact, it's a good thing to vary the kinds of encounters the heroes have during game sessions: If every Game Master character attacks the heroes when they attempt to negotiate, eventually they'll start attacking first without asking questions—and then they might well kill the princess they were supposed to rescue!

While creating the action, the Game Master must also play the role of referee. This is particularly important when combat between characters is taking place and when heroes are attempting difficult actions. During these times, you decide how the characters you control react to the actions of the heroes, and sometimes even who does how much damage when and to whom. You also need to be ready to answer player rules questions relatively quickly—nothing bogs a game down faster than a Game Master who is constantly looking up rules for this and that. This is not to say that you must have every rule for the game memorized...all you need is a basic idea of how all the rules work, and a general idea of where to look for answers.

Most of the rulings you will have to make will be backed up by something in this very collection, or in one of the forthcoming accessories for this game, but sometimes, you're going to have to make an arbitrary decision because situations that aren't covered by the rules *will* come up. The *Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game* rules are designed to be flexible and applicable to virtually any situation, and typically no matter what a player is trying to do, it can be considered an "action" and can thus be resolved by assigning a difficulty number to it, but players are an unpredictable bunch and they *will* come up with something that even the gods couldn't have predicted. As Game Master, it is your right—no, your *responsibility*—to adjudicate even the strangest situations. Although you are the ultimate authority during the game session, you should always try to make your rulings fair, and maybe even slanted slightly in

SO YOU WANT TO BE A GAME MASTER...

favor of the heroes—perhaps even asking the players for their opinions on how the situation should be played in terms of game mechanics. Arguing is never fun, especially when it involves friends who are trying to play a game, so cooperation is very important. Always keep in mind that it's just a game, and that it's supposed to be fun for everyone involved.

A NOTE ABOUT VILLAINS, IMPORTANT GAME MASTER CHARACTERS, AND YOU

A very important thing to keep in mind is that although the monsters and villains that you portray during a game session are fighting the heroes, *you* are not fighting the heroes. You are trying to entertain them, and if you entertain them, they will entertain you.

Play the roles of the monsters and other characters, but if they get slain or defeated, forget about them. Keep in mind that the heroes are the stars of the story...they are the heroes, and the heroes always eventually defeat the bad guys. If the players are smart, they should eventually conquer the villain, no matter how formidable he may seem. The heroes should sooner or later find themselves with at least a slight edge over the minions of the bad villains, and there should always at least be one exploitable and very fatal flaw in the villain's master plan for the heroes' to exploit. The villain is not you, and therefore he does not have the complete knowledge of the world and the hero actions that you have, and, for that reason, he is bound to make at least one mistake.

Don't make it easy on the players, but you should let their heroes win *some* battles, and they should always have a sense that eventually the heroes will triumph over evil. (Hercules never defeats Hera, but he does eventually triumph over her minions.) The only purpose of all the characters you control and create, in the long run, is to entertain.

ENDING A GAME SESSION

Before a game begins, the Game Master and the players should decide on a time for the game to end—and stick to it. That way, you avoid the temptation to keep playing into the night...and then sleep through your first class or that meeting with your boss. That's *always* a bad thing to do when you could just as easily have picked up the action of the roleplaying game the following week. At the end of the session, if the quest has been successfully concluded, the Game Master should award Character Points, Fate Points, and Fame following the guidelines suggested in Scroll III.

At the conclusion of the game session, ask the players what they enjoyed most. By knowing what aspects of the saga the players like, you can improve the fun for everyone by focusing on those elements. (Be careful not to overdo it, though...you should never turn every encounter in the game into a fight just because a play group enjoys combat. Too much of anything ceases to be fun after a while.)

Finally, if the game is a saga rather than a one-shot, it's always wise for the Game Master to ask the players what they think their heroes will want to do next week. If the Game Master knows the players are interested in one plot thread rather than another, it will help him prepare better for the next session. (Rather than putting time and effort into determining what's going to happen in Thebes *and* Troy, he can focus his attention on Thebes and really get a good feeling for the encounters that will take place there.)

ONWARD TO OTHER THINGS!

Okay, now that you know all the basics of the Game Master's job, it's time to move onto another topic, a subject just as important and one that I likewise am an expert in. It's—

What? Who? No, you must have misunderstood. He can't possibly be angry with *me*. I *told* him that particular virility compound had a slight chance of causing Centaurs to lose all their hair. It's not my fault that he—

He's coming *here*? And he's *armed*? Well, um, I'd love to stay and chat with him, but I just remembered that Jason wanted me to help plan the twentieth annual reunion of the Argonauts. I'd love to stay and chat, but I really don't have the time! Sorry!





SCROLL II GAME MASTER'S GUIDE TO HEROES

In the Hero's Guide, we talked about hero creation and skills. But we left out the secret parts—information for the Game Master's eyes only.

Within this scroll, we'll review the skills and discuss the design of new Specialties, Special Moves, Special Powers, Vulnerabilities, and so forth, so that you can customize your game and keep up the players' interest with new and exciting elements!

You'll see plenty of charts and tables in this scroll, but don't get anxious—they are provided to help you get a feel for the game mechanics, not for memorization. And remember, in your role as Game Master, you have final say over all rules. If you decide to leave something out, alter a mechanic, or develop your own options, the players will never have to know (which is why we let them purchase the Hero's Guide separately...well, that and the money).

HERO TYPES & TEMPLATES

Over time, you may become bored with the pre-created heroes. To develop your own, you can create a new type using the format presented in Scroll II of the Hero's Guide (type name, important attributes, typical skills, role). Or, you can design a new Hero Template using the blank Hero Sheet. Just fill in the basic information (type, background, personality, goal, attribute die codes, Speed, Character and Fate Points, and so forth). Then photocopy it and hand it to your players.

STARTING WITH EXPERIENCED HEROES

If you would prefer to begin playing with established heroes more along the lines of Hercules and Xena, make the following changes to the hero creation process:

Skill Dice: 30D

Character Points: 28

Fate Points: 4

Fame: 30

Dinars: 1,000 (to purchase equipment)

You may also wish to allow the players to create a list of Deeds performed by their heroes (subject to your approval, of course) as well as a mystical item or two they have acquired throughout their journeys.

If you want even more experienced heroes, use your discretion on setting the starting values listed above.

THE HERO'S CHALLENGE

To complete the Hero's Challenge and become a demigod (not a true god, or even a half-god like Hercules, but a mortal given the respect normally reserved for the gods—and the first step in achieving immortality...unless, of course, you have some Ambrosia...but that's a whole other story), a hero must have at least five skills with die codes of 10D or greater (not counting Specialties). She must then face a god or goddess in combat and live to tell about it (she doesn't have to win—if that were the case, there'd be even fewer demigods than there are now).

SPECIAL POWERS

Some heroes (and Game Master characters, as well) possess strange superhuman powers that may have been bestowed by the gods, inherited, or developed through training or mystical processes incomprehensible by mortals. Below you'll find the rules required to incorporate these abilities into the game. Feel free to develop your own using the ones listed as a basis (plus, you'll find plenty more Special Powers in upcoming supplements).

So, how do you assign Special Powers? In a nutshell, it's completely up to you. You may wish to give Special Powers to no one or to everyone, depending on what feel you want for your games.

Enhanced Speed: This power raises a character's Speed value by 10 (or more).

Great Strength: The hero gains a bonus (+1 to +7—Hercules has a +8) to all *Strength* and *Strength*-related skills. The hero generates a *Strength* roll and then adds eight to the total.

Invisibility: With this ability, the hero can vanish into thin air. He still exists in the location and must use normal means to move from one locale to another, but no one can see him (conferring on him a Defense Total bonus of +4). The power does not, however, mask his sounds, smell, or other emanations.

Resistance to Physical Attack: A hero with this power has a natural resistance to physical harm. In game mechanics, she gains a +3 bonus to his Protection Value when determining the amount of Body Points lost from *physical attacks only* (not including fire, energy, or mental attacks).

Resistance to Fire: A hero with this power is naturally flame retardant. In game mechanics, he gains a +3 bonus to his Protection Value when determining the amount of Body Points lost from *fire attacks only*.

VULNERABILITIES

Some heroes and Game Master characters have weaknesses that could lead to their demise (talk to Achilles...if you ever go to the Other Side). Below you'll find a few abilities you can assign at your discretion. Feel free to create your own using these as a basis.

Bloodlust: Each time this character attacks during battle, he must make a fast-react *willpower* check against his total attack roll. Failure indicates that he loses control of his battle rage and assaults the closest living target (whether friend or foe) each exchange thereafter. To escape the effects of bloodlust, he must beat an attack roll by at least two (2) or else remove himself from the presence of others. Once alone, he may make *willpower* rolls every five seconds against a base difficulty of three (3) to shake off the bloodlust.

Environment Deprivation: When a character with this Vulnerability spends more than two weeks outside of her normal environment (forest, sea, arctic region, etc.), she loses a portion of her connection to the world. For each week beyond the second, she loses 1D from a random attribute (roll 8D to determine which attribute, rerolling if you generate a total of zero). If any of her attributes falls to zero, she immediately falls into a coma, staying that way until brought back into her sphere. Healing occurs at a rate of 1D per attribute per day spent in her native environment (all attributes heal at the same time).

Extreme Exposure: This character can only be destroyed by exposure to an energy source, object, or event that breaks down his base components. It takes 2_6 exchanges of exposure to destroy him. If he isn't totally obliterated, he permanently loses those Body Points.

Sensitivity to Flame: Fire causes an extra two Body Points of damage per attack to this character.

Soft Spot: Attacks that successfully hit this character in the specified anatomical area cause an extra four Body Points of damage.

ATTRIBUTE & SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

I've chosen to give you the full skill entries here (incorporating all of the information from the *Hero's Guide*), so that you can have your very own copy (while you let the players use the *Hero's Guide* for reference).

Below you'll find descriptions of the eight attributes and their accompanying skills including sample difficulty values and Specialties (if applicable). The charts are provided to help you establish an intuitive understanding of the levels of difficulty associated with each skill. They are not intended as reference tables that must be consulted every time a hero (or Game Master character, for that matter) attempts an action.

COORDINATION

The *Coordination* attribute measures a hero's fine motor skills, aim, and hand-eye cooperation.

HURLED WEAPONS

Sample Specialties: Chakram, dart, discus, javelin, knife, rock, spear, throwing star

This skill represents a hero's accuracy throwing ranged weapons.

Difficulty Feat

- 1
- 2 Hit a target at point-blank range
- 3 Hit a target at short range
- 4 Hit a target at medium range
- 5 Hit a target at long range
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

INSTRUMENTS

Sample Specialties: Flute, harp, hydraulis (water organ), kera (horn), lyre, percussion, salpinx (trumpet), syrinx (pan flute)

This skill gauges a hero's ability to create music with the specified *instruments*. Higher levels of expertise indicate increased prowess in tonal quality, rhythm, and improvisation.

Difficulty Feat

- 1 Play individual notes or a simple rhythm
- 2 Play simple song
- 3 Play simple song with accompaniment
- 4 Play complex song with several modulations
- 5 Create simple song for a single *instruments*
- 6 Create simple song for multiple *instruments*
- 7 Create score
- 8
- 9
- 10

LOCKPICK

Sample Specialties: Athenian locks, Egyptian locks, Thracian locks

This skill indicates a hero's proficiency at bypassing or disabling mechanical devices used to secure enclosed spaces. The difficulty is based on the complexity of the lock.

Difficulty Feat

- 1 Simple padlock
- 2
- 3 Simple door lock
- 4
- 5 Complex door lock
- 6
- 7 Treasure room lock system
- 8
- 9
- 10

MARKSMANSHIP

Sample Specialties: Bow, crossbow, siege engine, sling

The *marksmanship* skill covers all mechanical devices used to project missiles across a distance. The wielder of the weapon relies more on aim than gross motor ability to successfully hit the intended target. (See the Scroll IV, "Battles" of *Secrets of the Ancient World* for more modifiers.)

Difficulty Feat

- 1 At point-blank range
- 2 At short range
- 3 At medium range
- 4 At long range
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10



PICK POCKET

This skill represents a hero's prowess at surreptitiously removing an item from the confines of another character's pockets.

The hero's mark may make an opposed *Awareness* roll (or *perception* roll if actively watching for would-be pick-pockets) to notice the attempted pilferage.

ENDURANCE

The *Endurance* attribute covers a hero's ability to withstand bodily injury, to maintain high levels of activity for long durations, and to resist the effects of toxic elements.

RESIST DISEASE

Hero's subjected to the conditions necessary to contract a disease must make a *resist disease* skill roll. Through various training regimens and dietary plans, a hero can increase his immunity to disease.

Difficulty	Type of Disease
1	Athlete's foot
2	
3	
4	
5	Malaria
6	
7	Naxos Red Fever
8	
9	
10	Thracian Tongue Rot

RESIST POISON

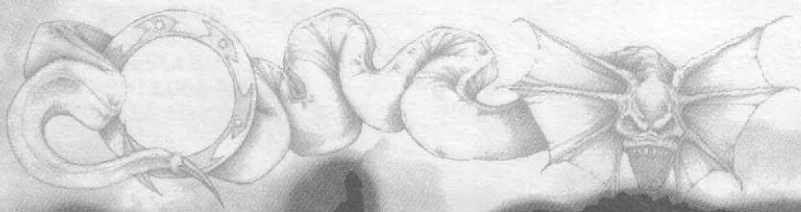
Toxic substances come in many forms: gaseous, fluidic, solid. Hero's who come in contact with such substances must make a *resist poison* roll to avoid succumbing to the effects of the toxicant in question.

Difficulty	Potency of Poison
1	Very low
2	
3	Low
4	
5	Moderate
6	
7	High
8	Very High
9	
10	Instantly lethal

RUN .

Sometimes you need to get somewhere fast. I heartily recommend the *run* skill for just that purpose (especially for you merchants out there).

Difficulty	Move At
1	Twice normal speed
2	
3	Three times normal speed
4	
5	
6	Four times normal speed
7	
8	
9	Five times normal speed
10	



SWIM

The *swim* skill measures a hero's ability to stay afloat and move through water.

Difficulty Condition of Water

- 1 Calm
- 2
- 3 Choppy
- 4
- 5 High swells
- 6
- 7 Stormy
- 8
- 9 Maelstrom
- 10

REFLEXES

The *Reflexes* attribute gauges gross motor coordination, reaction time, and nimbleness.

ACROBATICS

Sample Specialties: Tight-rope walking, tumbling, trapeze

Acrobatics covers balance, tumbling, walking on one's hands, and other actions involving flexibility and precise control of body weight.

Difficulty Feat

- 1 Simple tumble
- 2 Simple tumble
- 3 Complex tumble
- 4 Trapeze trick
- 5 Tightrope walk
- 6
- 7 Tightrope walk in windy conditions
- 8
- 9
- 10

CHARIOTEERING

Sample Specialties: Racing chariot, war chariot

This skill measures a hero's ability to accelerate, steer, and decelerate a chariot. Stunts like sharp turns, driving over treacherous terrain, and ramming require higher levels of expertise. Difficulty increases with additional speed.

Difficulty Stunt

- 1 Normal acceleration
- 2 45° turn at slow speed
- 3 45° turn at dangerous speed
- 4 90° turn at slow speed
- 5 Ram
- 6 90° turn at dangerous speed
- 7
- 8 180° turn
- 9
- 10

DANCE

Come on, who can't dance? All right, well, not counting the Spartans.

This skill represents a hero's ability to contract and expand various muscles in rhythm to (usually) syncopated music in an aesthetically



pleasing way. The effect value indicates the gracefulness, precision, and artistic flair of the dancer.

Difficulty	Type of Dance
1	Simple box pattern
2	Two-step
3	
4	Complex pattern
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

DODGE

This skill can play an important part in combat, especially if your hero has a propensity to be hit by opponents. *Dodge* measures the ability to guess where an opponent will target an attack and to adjust the positioning of the body to evade the strike.

Dodge acts as an opposed roll against attacks.

FIGHTING

Sample Specialties: Brawling, club, flail, knife, mace, martial arts, morning star, spear, staff, sword

This skill covers all up-close-and-personal melee-weapon attacks, from brawling (punches, kicks, clothes lines, and so forth) to swords, knives, and staves. Higher levels of expertise indicate increased prowess in striking vital areas, evading parries, and causing damage. (The complete game mechanics for this and all battle skills appear in the "Battles" scroll of *Secrets of the Ancient World*.) Note that *fighting* may only be used at point-blank range.

JUGGLING

The *juggling* skill gauges a hero's ability to keep multiple objects traveling through the air in a circuit or between himself and another juggler.

Difficulty	Feat
1	two small spheres
2	
3	three spheres
4	three uniform objects
5	four objects
6	three objects of different sizes and weights
7	five objects
8	seven objects
9	twelve objects
10	twenty objects

RIDE

Sample Specialties: Ass, camel, horse, mule, pegasus

The Ancient World covers a vast amount of land. To travel from one location to another becomes quicker and easier with the aid of some sort of mount: horse, mule, camel (depending on the climate and locale). The *ride* skill governs a hero's handling of his mount, from simple movement and steering to complex stunts.

Ride is opposed by an animal's orneriness roll (see "Transport" under the "Gear" section of Scroll III for orneriness codes of various animals).

SNEAK

A hero wishing to move surreptitiously relies on her *sneak* skill. Note that *sneak* only covers the ability to eliminate sound (the *hide* skill allows a hero to evade sight).

Perception opposes *sneak*.



STRENGTH

Strength represents a hero's physical power and athletic ability. Heroes gain + 1 to damage totals per 2D of *Strength* when wielding muscle-powered weapons (those requiring the *hurled weapons* or *fighting* skills, plus bows and slings). For example, a hero with a *Strength* of 2D-3D gains a + 1 bonus, a hero with a *Strength* of 4D-5D gains a + 2 bonus, and a hero with a *Strength* of 6D gains a + 3 bonus, and so forth).

CLIMB

This skill covers all climbing media, from rocky outcroppings to city walls.

Difficulty	Surface
1	Craggy cliff at 45° angle
2	Building with many windows
3	
4	Building with few foot- or hand-holds
5	
6	Sheer surface
7	
8	Slippery, sheer surface
9	
10	

LEAP

The *leap* skill determines the distance and height a hero can jump. The chart below indicates the difficulties for leaps of given distances. A hero may choose to jump the total distance horizontally or some combination of horizontal and vertical distance. The vertical distance (up to the maximum listed) is subtracted from the horizontal. For example, a hero who wants to jump three feet vertically may only move two feet horizontally ($5 - 3 = 2$) on a difficulty of 1. On a difficulty of 2, however, he could jump vertically three feet and horizontally five feet ($8 - 3 = 5$).

Difficulty	Maximum Distance
1	5 feet horizontally; 3 feet vertically
2	8 feet horizontally; 4 feet vertically
3	12 feet horizontally; 5 feet vertically
4	15 feet horizontally; 6 feet vertically
5	18 feet horizontally; 7 feet vertically
6	20 feet horizontally; 8 feet vertically
7	22 feet horizontally; 9 feet vertically
8	25 feet horizontally; 10 feet vertically
9	30 feet horizontally; 11 feet vertically
10	35 feet horizontally; 12 feet vertically

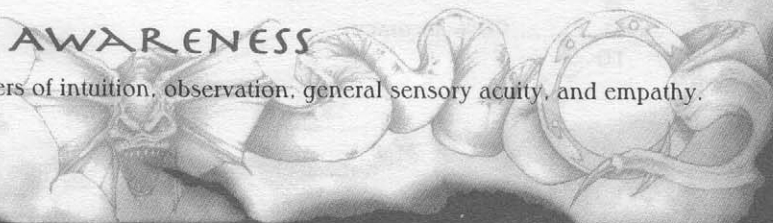
LIFT

This skill represents a hero's hefting capability, i.e., how much weight she can lift and how long she can carry it.

Difficulty	Weight
1	50 lbs.
2	100 lbs.
3	200 lbs.
4	300 lbs.
5	500 lbs.
6	700 lbs.
7	800 lbs.
8	1,000 lbs.
9	1,500 lbs.
10	2,000 lbs.

AWARENESS

Awareness represents a hero's powers of intuition, observation, general sensory acuity, and empathy.



ANIMAL HANDLING

Sample Specialties: Ass, camel, cat, dog, horse, lizard, mule

The *animal handling* skill measures a hero's ability to calm, coax, and otherwise coerce animals into various actions and to intuit meaning from an animal's stance, expressions, pheromones, and other physical conditions.

Animal handling is opposed by an animal's orneriness code.

CONCEAL

Expertise in this skill enables a hero to hide an object from view, whether on their persons or in the surrounding environment.

Conceal is opposed by the *search* skill.

HIDE

This skill comes in to play when a hero wishes to hide himself from the view of others. Note that this applies only to sight-based perception—sound, smell, vibrations, air movement, and the like are not covered by the skill.

Hide is opposed by the *search* skill.

INVENT

Through this skill a hero may devise a new technique, device, or method to accomplish a given task. A successful roll indicates that the hero has come up with the idea, but she must still gather the materials, create, and develop the system (with the time required to ready it for use determined by the Game Master).

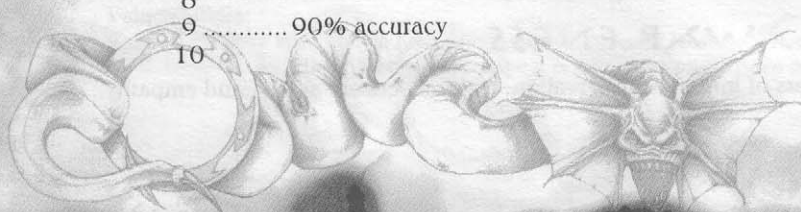
Difficulty	Complexity of Invention
1	Very simple
2	Simple
3	Moderate
4	Intricate
5	Very intricate
6	Multi-part system
7	Intricate multi-part system
8	Completely new paradigm
9	
10	

OMEN INTERPRETATION

The Ancient World is filled with omens, and a hero able to correctly interpret such signs has a chance to avoid future calamities. Note that this hero cannot foretell the future, he can merely infer possible upcoming events based on signs and portents he has witnessed. Use this skill to help steer the players in the right direction if they have gone in the wrong direction or completely strayed away from the adventure.

For example, a hero sees a gaggle of geese flying in a 'V' formation directly toward the sun. The player makes an omen interpretation roll and generates a total of five. As Game Master, you decide that his hero knows that this sign definitely has to do with Apollo, God of the Sun, and that it perhaps has to do with an upcoming divination at the Oracle of Delphi. From this information, the players may decide to head to the Oracle to discover what events are about to unfold—which is exactly what you wanted, since your adventure begins there.

Difficulty	Accuracy of Interpretation
1	Wild guess
2	
3	Guess
4	
5	Educated guess
6	
7	75% accuracy
8	
9	90% accuracy
10	



PERCEPTION

Think of the *perception* skill as a heightened version of the general *Awareness* attribute with regard to a hero's ability to sense changes or notice specific elements in her environment. Unlike *Awareness*, however, a hero must be actively attempting to perceive such changes, i.e., with *Awareness*, the Game Master requests the skill attempt, whereas with *perception* the player determines when he would like to make a skill roll.

Heroes may use *perception* to oppose *sneak* rolls.

Difficulty	Sensory Input
1	large-scale movement
2	strong scent; obvious element
3	small-scale movement
4	
5	
6	faint scent
7	
8	
9	
10	

READ LIPS

The *read lips* skill indicates how well a hero can perceive another character's words by watching the movements of that character's mouth.

Difficulty	Information Gained
1	one word
2	several words
3	
4	basic gist
5	several sentences
6	tone
7	
8	inflection
9	
10	every word

REMEMBER

Details often escape the mind's retentive powers. The *remember* skill allows a hero to recall data he previously saw, heard, felt, smelled, or otherwise sensed. Note that players are not required to make a *remember* roll every time they want their heroes to recall something. Only use this skill if the player herself forgets the information. On a successful total, the Game Master fills in the forgotten data.

Difficulty	Information Was Originally Perceived
1	within the last 5 minutes
2	within the hour
3	within the day
4	within the week
5	within the month
6	within the three months
7	within the six months
8	within the year
9	within the decade
10	within the hero's life time



SEARCH

Heroes employ the *search* skill to locate objects or persons within a given area. *Search* acts as an opposed roll against *conceal* and *hide* rolls.

Difficulty Searching For

- 1 An elephant in broad daylight
- 2
- 3 A camouflaged individual
- 4
- 5 A particular individual in a massive crowd
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 Needle in a haystack

TRACK

The *track* skill measures a hero's ability to follow a particular quarry by locating signs of that quarry's passage (footprints, wheel prints, broken twigs, etc.).

Difficulty Tracks Are

- 1 5 minutes old
- 2 1 hour old
- 3 6 hours old
- 4 1 day old
- 5
- 6 1 week old
- 7
- 8 1 month old
- 9
- 10 1 year old

CHARISMA

Charisma encompasses a hero's natural charm, presence, manner, and speaking ability. Note that these skills are intended to be used against Game Master characters, not other players' heroes.

BARGAIN

This skill represents a hero's ability to negotiate, whether for a better price, a better trade, or a better agreement.

The hero's opponent may oppose the hero's skill with a *bargain* roll of his own. The Game Master may give the opponent a bonus to his skill roll to account for unfair or outrageous demands made by the hero.

BEG

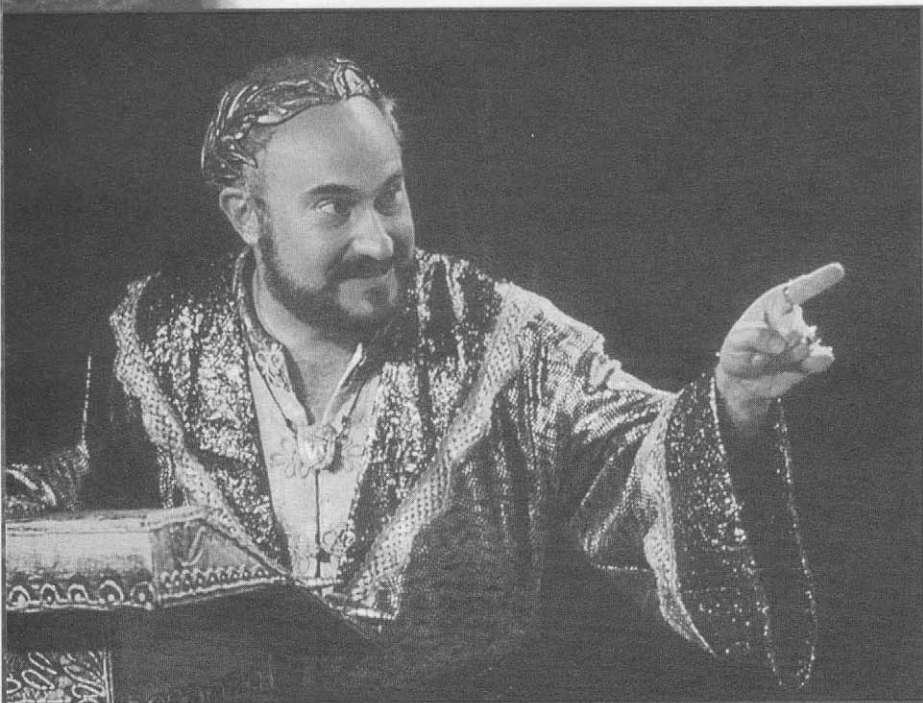
At times a hero must plead for what he wants, whether it be money, objects, affections, and so forth.

Beg may be opposed by a *willpower* roll.

BLUFF

This skill gauges a hero's proficiency at convincing his audience that a falsehood is true.

Bluff may be opposed by *perception*.



COMMAND

The *command* skill governs the act of forcing individuals to comply to specific directions as well as maintaining morale and unified action during multiple-person undertakings (like combat). The difficulty increases as the commander's side finds itself in an inferior position (losing a battle, for example) and decreases as the commander's side finds itself in a superior position (winning a battle, for example).

Difficulty	Situation
1	A few subordinates in non-combat situation
2	Few subordinates in combat
3	Many subordinates in non-combat situation
4	Many subordinates in combat
5	Hundreds of subordinates
6	
7	Hundreds of subordinates in combat
8	Thousands of subordinates
9	
10	Thousands of subordinates in combat

FLIRT

The ability to charm an individual can save a hero's life. Using the *flirt* skill, a hero may coerce a mark through flattery, innuendo, and other flirtatious behavior.

Flirt may be opposed by *willpower*.

INTIMIDATE

The *intimidate* skill represents a hero's ability to force an individual into taking an action under threat of severe penalty (embarrassment, property damage, injury, etc.).

Intimidate may be opposed by *willpower*.

PERSUADE

Persuade represents a hero's ability to alter his audience's beliefs by illustrating logical or emotional arguments that support his position.

Persuade may be opposed by *willpower*.

SINGING

This skill measures a hero's natural singing voice—its range, quality, and tambre—as well as the ability to perform difficult vocal maneuvers including improvisation.

Difficulty	Feat
1	Simple melody, not much range
2	Simple melody, wide range
3	Complex melody, not much range
4	Complex melody, wide range
5	Simple harmony (2 parts)
6	More advance harmony (4 parts)
7	Complex harmony (8 parts)
8	Able to compose simple songs
9	Able to compose more complex songs
10	Able to compose complex songs spontaneously

STORYTELLING

The *storytelling* skill attests to the hero's ability to sway an audience from one emotion to the next by means of a tale, whether true or fictional. A storyteller must constantly read her listeners so that she may alter her pacing, volume, or even change the course of the story to elicit the greatest response. A hero may employ storytelling in an effort to bring her audience to a particular emotional state that in some way benefits herself and her companions (preventing her from being jailed or hanged or securing the aid of the locals in a fight against a warlord's vicious and formidable army).

Storytelling may be resisted by *willpower*.

KNOWLEDGE

The *Knowledge* attribute covers general learning, whether from books, tutoring, or direct experience. Skill rolls allow heroes to recall information about a particular topic and, in some cases, to put that data to use (smithing, for example).

ASTROLOGY

Heroes may use *astrology* to predict future events based on the phases and relative positions of various celestial bodies (sun, moon, stars, planets). The skill also enables heroes to determine their geographic position in the Ancient World by the positioning of stars in the night sky.

Difficulty	Feat
1	Wild prediction
2	
3	Determine position within hundreds of miles
4	Educated prediction
5	Determine position within tens of miles
6	50% prediction accuracy
7	Determine position within miles
8	75% prediction accuracy
9	Determine exact position
10	

CULTURES

Sample Specialties: Amazonian, Athenian, Babylonian, Centaurian, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Phoenician, Spartan

This skill indicates a hero's knowledge of the customs and traditions of the indicated region or group.

Difficulty	Feat
1	Common custom
2	
3	Uncommon custom
4	
5	
6	Rare custom
7	
8	
9	Secret custom
10	

DISGUISE

The *disguise* skill is used when a hero attempts to pass herself off as another individual. The skill applies only to visual inspection; for a complete masquerade, the hero may also be required to make a *bluff*, *persuade*, or *intimidate* roll.

Disguise may be opposed by *perception*.

FIRST AID

Using the *first aid* skill, a hero may attempt to heal an individual (who may be himself) by dressing wounds, applying splints, and disinfecting injuries. Note that a single individual may use this skill only once on a particular individual following the battle during which the injuries were sustained (multiple people, however, may make separate attempts on the same individual).

A *first aid* skill attempt restores a number of Body Points equal to the roll (not to exceed the target character's total Body Points). For example, a healer who generates a *first aid* total of three, restores three lost Body Points to his patient.

GAMING

The *gaming* skill represents a hero's knowledge of games of chance, strategy, or physical prowess.

Difficulty	Feat
1	Knowledge of simple games/can learn new simple games
2	Knowledge of intermediate games/can learn new intermediate games
3	Knowledge of advanced games/can learn new advanced games
4	Knowledge of complex games/can learn new complex games
5	Knowledge of esoteric games/can learn new complex games
6	Knowledge of very rare games/can learn new very rare games
7	Can create new simple games
8	Can create new intermediate games
9	Can create new advanced games
10	Can create new complex games

GEOGRAPHY

A hero's *geography* skill indicates her knowledge of the lay of the land, including major geographical and topological features, terrain type, bodies of water, trade routes, roads, locations of temples, towns, city-states, and regions, and the like. The difficulty is modified based on the particular area's proximity to the hero's base of operations (lower difficulties for regions with which the hero is familiar).

Difficulty	Feat
1	Major feature (region, ocean, river)
2	
3	Minor feature (stream, road)
4	Nearby cities
5	Nearby towns
6	
7	Nearby villages
8	
9	
10	

HISTORY

The *history* skill reflects the hero's recollection of historical events, from natural catastrophes and wars to lines of succession and Olympic game statistics.

Difficulty	Type of Event
1	
2	Major
3	
4	Minor
5	Lesser known
6	
7	Obscure
8	
9	Secret
10	

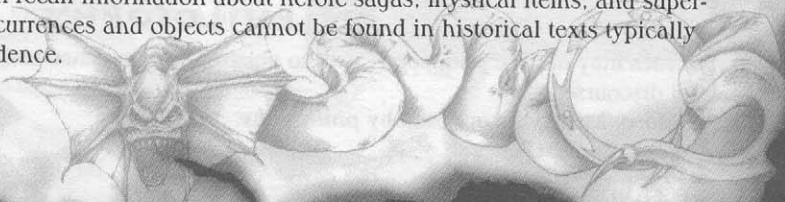
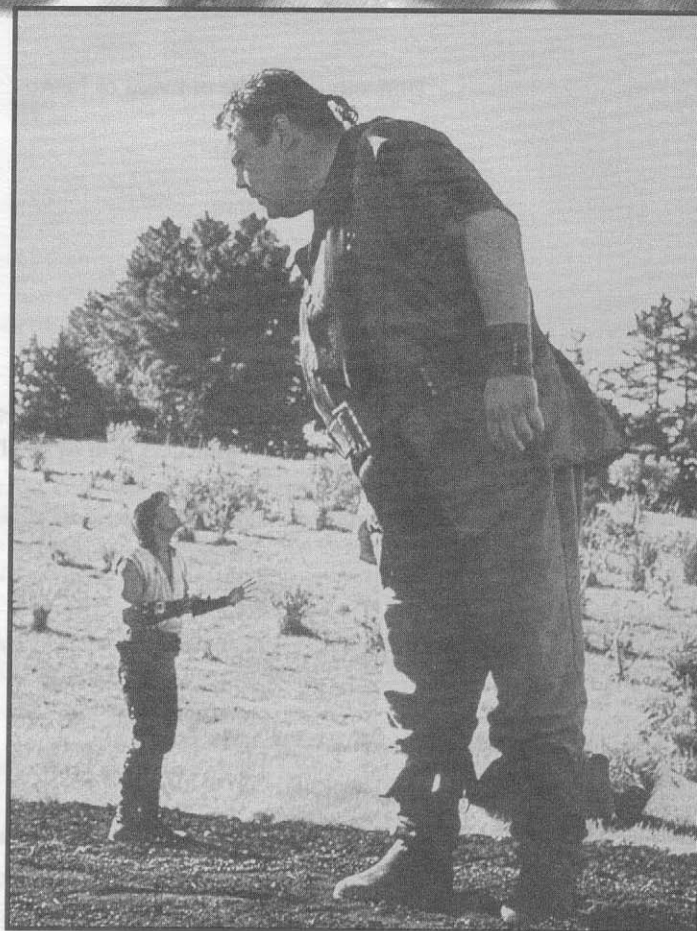
LEATHERWORK

Leatherwork enables a hero to create, inspect, and repair items composed partly or entirely of leather. When mending armor, the *leatherwork* roll determines the number of lost Body Points that are restored (only one attempt may be made per battle).

Difficulty	Item
1	Pouch
2	Sling
3	Jerkin
4	
5	Pants
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

LEGENDS

Using the *legends* skill, a hero can recall information about heroic sagas, mystical items, and supernatural events. Often times, these occurrences and objects cannot be found in historical texts typically because they have no supporting evidence.



Difficulty Type of Event or Item

- 1
- 2major
- 3
- 4minor
- 5lesser known
- 6
- 7obscure
- 8
- 9secret
- 10

MONSTERS

Heroes may use the *monsters* skill to recollect various types of information regarding creatures spawned by the gods.

Difficulty Type of Information

- 1existence of creature
- 2habitat
- 3diet
- 4special abilities
- 5
- 6origin
- 7vulnerabilities
- 8
- 9
- 10

NAVIGATION

The *navigation* skill reflects a hero's ability to locate the position of a ship and plot a course to reach a given destination.

Difficulty Feat

- 1Locate position within hundreds of miles
- 2Plot standard trade route course
- 3Locate position within tens of miles
- 4Plot complex course
- 5Plot dangerous course
- 6Pinpoint exact position
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

PANTHEON

Heroes employ the *pantheon* skill to recall information regarding immortal beings.

Difficulty Type of Information

- 1existence
- 2spheres of influence
- 3major accomplishments, holidays, major rituals
- 4major temple locations
- 5minor accomplishments, minor rituals
- 6origin
- 7special abilities
- 8
- 9
- 10vulnerabilities

PHILOSOPHY

Heroes may use the *philosophy* skill to persuade an audience to accept a position through transcendental discourse.

Philosophy may be opposed by *philosophy*.

READING/WRITING

Sample Specialties: Babylonian, Cypriot (used on Cyprus), Egyptian, Linear A, Linear B, Phoenician

This skill determines a hero's ability to comprehend and compose written language.

Difficulty Complexity

- 1 very simple
- 2 simple
- 3 moderate
- 4 difficult
- 5 very difficult
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

SCHOLAR

Sample Specialties: Agriculture, biology, Crete, etiquette, Mesopotamia, olives, physics, politics, weaponry

Scholar acts as a catch-all for areas of knowledge not already listed as skills. A die roll indicates the amount and detail of the information the hero knows about the concentration. Note that the broader the Specialty (especially when relying on the general *scholar* skill), the higher the roll needed to recall specific data.

Difficulty Level of Knowledge

- 1 basic
- 2
- 3 moderate
- 4
- 5 advanced
- 6
- 7 obscure
- 8
- 9 secret
- 10

SMITHING

Sample Specialties: Bronze, iron, steel

The *smithing* skill covers the creation, inspection, and repair of metal objects. When mending armor, the *smithing* roll determines the number of lost Body Points that are restored to the armor (only one attempt may be made per battle). See the "Armor" section of the Ancient World scroll. For example, on one *smithing* roll a hero may inspect a suit of armor to determine whether it requires repair, and on the second he may attempt to actually fix it.

Difficulty Item

- 1 Arrowhead
- 2 Spearhead
- 3 Knife
- 4 Helm
- 5 Sword
- 6 Chain armor
- 7 Plate armor
- 8 Siege engine
- 9
- 10

SPEAKING

Sample Specialties: Babylonian, Cypriot (used on Cyprus), Egyptian, Linear A, Linear B, Phoenician

This skill determines a hero's ability to comprehend and speak languages.

Difficulty Complexity

- 1 very simple
- 2 simple
- 3 moderate
- 4 difficult
- 5 very difficult
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

STREETWISE

The *streetwise* skill reflects a hero's experience out in the "real" world of the common individual, including the ability to tap into the grapevine and to establish contacts with street informants and other underworld (not *Underworld* for gods' sakes!) figures.

Difficulty Contact

- 1 street urchin
- 2 minor criminal
- 3 gang member
- 4
- 5 gang leader
- 6 major criminal
- 7
- 8 criminal organization head
- 9
- 10

SURVIVAL

Sample Specialties: Arctic, desert, jungle, temperate forest, sea

A hero may use the *survival* skill to locate sources of nourishment, water, and shelter in the specified environment. The difficulty of the skill attempt depends on the scarcity of the particular commodity in the given environment as determined by the Game Master—for example, it's harder to find water in a desert than in an arctic region.

TRADING

This skill measures a hero's knowledge of trade routes, commodity prices, exchange rates, major imports and exports of given regions, and other information regarding barter and sales. The Game Master may adjust the difficulty based on the hero's familiarity with the area in question.

Difficulty Feat

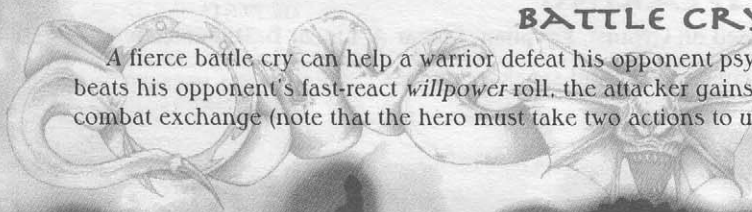
- 1 major trade routes
- 2 exchange rates
- 3 minor trade routes
- 4 major imports and exports
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

METTLE

The *Mettle* attribute gauges a hero's mental and psychological strength and fortitude and his resistance to high levels of stress and mental fatigue.

BATTLE CRY

A fierce battle cry can help a warrior defeat his opponent psychologically. If the hero's *battle cry* roll beats his opponent's fast-react *willpower* roll, the attacker gains a +2 bonus to her attack total for that combat exchange (note that the hero must take two actions to use *battle cry* effectively: *battle cry* and an



attack of her choice, incurring normal multi-action penalties). Opponents may choose not to resist, in which case the effect of the *battle cry* is automatic.

Battle cry may only be used against opponents at point-blank range.

STAY UP

As noted in the "Body Points" section below, a hero falls unconscious once her Body Points fall to zero. Using the *stay up* skill, however, a hero may continue to stand and fight through sheer willpower. The hero must make a *stay up* skill roll during each combat exchange following the one during which he dropped to zero Body Points. The difficulty of the attempt is equal to the number of exchanges since the one during which he would have lapsed into unconsciousness. The difficulty increases by one if the hero suffered additional damage during the previous exchange (note: Body Points cannot drop below zero; all additional damage is disregarded). The *stay up* roll counts as an extra action when determining multi-action penalties.

For example, during the first exchange after dropping to zero Body Points, the hero must beat a difficulty of two (one for the first exchange plus one for having suffered damage in the previous exchange). During the second exchange, the difficulty is two (or three, if he sustained damage during the previous exchange). During the third, it increases to three (or four if he suffered damage on the previous exchange), and so on.

WILLPOWER

Willpower gauges a hero's ability to withstand stressful situations and acts as an opposed roll to resist intimidation, persuasion, and similar mental "attacks."

SPECIAL MOVES

Over time, you'll find that you want to develop your own Special Moves for your Game Master characters as well as the heroes. For the most part, the particular game mechanics are up to you—most of the Special Moves employed by Herc, Xena, their allies and their enemies defy normal physical reality. There's no scientific way to deduce the proper stat values.

So you have to wing it. Use your imagination and sense of game balance to develop Special Moves, using the entries in Scroll II of the *Hero's Guide* as a basis.

As stated in that scroll, you can think of a Special Move as a Specialty with a few extra aspects. Each Special Move has the following defining elements:

Base Skill: The skill to which the Special Move bonus applies.

Difficulty: The value or opposed roll that must be overcome to successfully accomplish the Special Move. Note that opponents may choose to not resist the action (i.e., they do not make an opposed roll), in which case the Move succeeds automatically.

Effect: The description of the Special Move's results if successfully performed (the action roll beats the difficulty).

DEEDS

While players record their Deeds to keep an account of their adventuring career (and to impress potential dates), you will find them extremely helpful when determining the reaction of the gods to the actions of the heroes.

You'll have to use your judgment, but the listings for each hero will give you a starting point. For example, if a hero has a +Colossal Deed for Aphrodite and no negative Deeds for her, the Goddess of Love will at least act pleasantly toward him if not bestow some gift upon him or doing him a favor.

On the other hand, a hero with a few -Major Deeds against Hades, will find himself in deep trouble when he gets to the Other Side. Even if the hero's companions figure out a way to restore him to life, they'll have to do a lot of convincing to get Hades to allow him to return to the world of the living.

Since the gods play such an important role in the Ancient World (as you'll discover in Scroll VI, "Ancient Powers"), Deeds will enable you to more quickly and easily play the role of these deities during any adventure.



SCROLL III

ADVENTURES

So, at this point you should know a lot about heroes. But you may be starting to wonder, "Where's the game part of the game?"

Good question, because that's exactly what this scroll discusses. Here's where you'll learn how to play the game and what duties you, as Game Master, must perform to keep your players entertained. While this may sound like a boring responsibility, it's actually the most exciting aspect of roleplaying! Think about it: you're in charge, you set the scene, you come up with the dangerous plots, dastardly villains, deadly traps, and hideous monsters that challenge the players and their heroes! You're like the god of your own universe, yet, like your fellows among the Pantheon, you cannot control the heroes who exist within that universe—of course, that doesn't mean you can't trick, manipulate, or otherwise confound them. On the other hand, you'll find that you also enjoy rewarding them for a job well done and basking in their sense of accomplishment as they navigate through the challenges you've presented as they strive to accomplish their objective.

Trust me, it's a lot of fun (and you can usually convince your players to supply the munchies—not a bad deal if you ask me).

So put on your imagination cap and let's get to it!

In an adventure, heroes confront a series of obstacles as they attempt to reach an ultimate goal. Adventures, then, are the heart of roleplaying games. Here is where you'll find the story—the evil adversaries, the exotic locales, and the mystical elements of the Ancient World, all threaded together to form an engaging plot for the main characters (the players).

This scroll covers everything you need to know about preparing and running adventures. Right now it may seem like a lot to assimilate; but don't worry, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Actually, there's only one rule you need to remember: make sure everyone has fun!

Certain groups of players will prefer a certain style of play, so not all of what follows applies in every situation. As you run your adventures you'll develop a feel for what excites and enthralls your players, and then you'll be able to structure your subsequent scenarios to incorporate those elements.

One recommendation to start: Do your best to mirror the same dynamics of the tales of Hercules and Xena. Action, suspense, humor, emotion—all of these should be present in your games. And always remember, if you're not playing over the top, you're not playing right!

The scroll is divided into four main sections: *Creating Adventures*, *Preparing Adventures*, *Running Adventures*, and *Ending Adventures*. You may want to reread these sections once in a while as you advance in your career as a Game Master, but there's nothing here to memorize or to reference during a game session. Instead you'll find tips and suggestions intended to help you create hours of entertainment for your friends—and yourself!

CREATING ADVENTURES

Like most games, you must overcome challenges to reach a final goal. But in roleplaying, those hindrances can take a variety of forms, from monsters to evil warlords to trouble-making deities, depending on the particular circumstances of the adventure your heroes are working through. Sometimes the heroes might have to convince someone to give up information they possess, or to sneak into a fortress without alerting its guards. Or they might even have to lower themselves into the heart of a volcano to retrieve a hidden treasure.

The hurdles the heroes must deal with are dictated by the Game Master. She provides a goal and then presents the heroes with a series of problems that prevents them from reaching that objective. For example, the heroes must cross into enemy territory and steal information about an enemy's army. Immediately, several possible problems leap out: bypassing the perimeter patrols, infiltrating the enemy's stronghold, breaking into the war room, locating the needed information, escaping the stronghold, and returning to safe territory.

Each of these obstacles has several possible solutions and even more possible outcomes. To get around the patrols, for example, the heroes may attempt to slip through undetected. Or they may instead attempt to bluff the lookouts into believing that they are warriors seeking employment in the army. Or the players may come up with another alternative based on the particular proficiencies their heroes possess. The results of this encounter affect all the others that come after it. If the enemy spots them and alerts the stronghold, it's going to be a lot harder getting into the war room, and therefore, completing the goal.

An adventure is a series of scenes or encounters, each of which has a specific purpose in the context of the goal presented by the Game Master. When you design your own adventures, think about the plots of epic poems, plays, tragedies, and comedies. The characters begin at Point A and must struggle through the story to get to Point B. They may face anything from a group of thugs to a cryptic riddle, from mystical phenomena to whimsical gods and goddesses. There's no limit to the types of challenges they could encounter.

Roleplaying games work in a similar manner, except that the players get to decide how their heroes react to a given obstacle. Let's look at an outline of a sample scenario.

Adventure: War Stories

Goal: Retrieve information about the army of the vicious warlord Naemius.

A. Encounter One: Bypassing the Patrol

B. Encounter Two: Infiltrating the Stronghold

C. Encounter Three: Stealing the Information

D. Encounter Four: Returning Home

In the first encounter, the players must devise some method for penetrating the enemy perimeter without giving themselves away. Since the players have unlimited options (one of the main differences between roleplaying games and other types of games), the Game Master must know as much information as necessary to be able to cover all the possibilities. How many enemy soldiers patrol the area? Do they have orders to attack on sight and ask questions later?

As Game Master, you must try to predict what the players will do—of course, they'll often surprise you, so you'll have to be able to extrapolate from the information you have decided upon. Let's return to our example adventure and come up with everything we might need to know for the first encounter.

A. Encounter One: Bypassing the Patrol

Goal: Slip across enemy lines undetected.

- The enemy maintains a force of twenty-one soldiers along the border between its territory and the heroes'.
- Because all-out war is imminent, the patrols' leaders have orders to apprehend all intruders, but not to kill them.
- Three patrols of seven soldiers each circulate the perimeter with a three-minute gap between one another.

In this case, you'll probably want to create game statistics for patrol leaders and the soldiers (see "Adversaries" below). With luck, you'll be ready to handle any situation that comes up when your players' heroes try to cross the border.

TYPES OF ADVENTURES

Below you'll find a non-exhaustive list of adventure types. You can use these sample ideas as outlines for adventures you create or you can develop your own "schematics" from scratch. For more adventure outlines, just pay attention to the stories told by bards and performed by actors. They provide a wealth of potential scenario structures that you might never think of on your own.

Following that you'll find a sample list of scene types. Using these two sections you should be able to design an adventure quickly and easily, so get a scroll and a writing instrument for notes and read on.

THE QUEST

Goal: Locate and retrieve an object or person at the behest of another.

In the quest adventure, the heroes must hunt down and capture an errant individual, recover a kidnapped prince, or steal a particular object.

The easiest way to flesh out the scenario is to decide how you would go about accomplishing the objective. In this case, the first logical steps seems to be the gathering of information: What does the object of the search look like? What were the circumstances of his, hers, or its disappearance? Where would the individual or object most likely go? and so forth. You have to create the answers to these questions by expanding the back-story (the part of the tale that has occurred before the arrival of the heroes). You have to decide the motivations, resources, and overall plans of those responsible for the adventure (the kidnapper, the thief, or whoever).

Now that you have the goal and basic plot, you can select a series of encounters (from the list below or on your own) to create the adventure.

CAUGHT IN A TIGHT SPOT

Goal: Escape from a situation that could cause some type of harm to the heroes or their allies.

In this type of adventure, the heroes find themselves up against a wall, whether it be a literal barrier or a more metaphysical constraint like a deadline.

For example, the heroes have one week to find the Gem of the Helios and toss it into the volcano near their home city. Should they fail in this endeavor, the volcano will erupt and destroy everyone and everything in the city.

Or, one of the heroes finds himself accused of a murder he's pretty sure he didn't commit. The Council of Elders gives the adventurers one day to prove his innocence or he dies at the stake.

Or, the daughter of a local monarch falls prey to a strange disease that will kill her within forty-eight hours if the heroes don't find some Ambrosia to heal her.

FAVOR

Goal: A friend or benefactor requests a favor in return for gratitude or other type of remuneration.

The heroes agree to perform some service, whether it be to slay a Cyclops that has been attacking a village or to smuggle weapons into a city-state where such armament is banned.

Upon completion of their mission, the heroes receive (usually) the agreed upon compensation—unless,



of course, the gods have something to do with the adventure (then, who knows—the gods like to have fun at the expense of mortals).

CONTESTS

Goal: The heroes must accomplish a predetermined goal more quickly or more efficiently than everyone else involved in the competition.

Heroes may become involved in a contest in a variety of ways. They might learn of it in advance and travel scores of miles to reach the appointed location of the competition. They might happen upon a village just before the contest begins. Or they might even try to win as a favor for a friend who needs the monetary award (turning the adventure into a combination of contest and favor).

MYSTERIES

Goal: The heroes must discover the truth about a person, thing, or event.

In this type of adventure, some event occurs to bring the mystery to the heroes' attention—a murder, a death threat, the arrest of an innocent party, and so forth. The players then spend the rest of the adventure trying to find out what really happened (or what lies behind the veil of secrecy) and then trying to prove that truth to the powers that be.

A mystery does not have to center around a crime. For example, the heroes begin to suffer strange hallucinations and they must figure out what's going on before they go completely crazy.

TYPES OF SCENES

Once you've determined the type of adventure you want to create, you must divide it up into smaller chunks called scenes. Often a scene is triggered by the heroes' arrival at a given location. For example, when they reach the dragon pit they must confront the terrible beast that lives therein. Other times, however, a scene could be set off based on a time element (e.g. a hero will be executed at dawn). For the sake of clarity, we'll call location-based scenes *encounters*, and time-based scenes *events*.

Below you'll find several types of scenes, each of which could be set up either as an encounter or an event. When you first start playing with a new group you might want to create an adventure that includes one of each type so that you can quickly determine which kinds of scenes capture their attention.

THE SETUP

Often you'll begin an adventure with a setup scene. The heroes receive a missive that tells them about their mission (if they choose to accept it). Or the king calls in his greatest heroes and begs their help in finding his lost son. Or a warlord offers the heroes a smuggling deal, explaining the terms and conditions of payment.

The setup scene allows you to convey several pieces of information to the players right away: what the adventure is about, where it will take place, who will be involved, and what constitutes success. The characters often (but not always) have the opportunity to ask questions of the person who is directing them to the adventure (the king or the warlord, from the above examples).

DEDUCTION/LOGIC PUZZLES

Scenes of this nature can include anything from a secret door to a riddle. Often the characters receive clues to solve the puzzle, but must make some sort of deductive leap to discover the answer. Once they bypass the obstacle, they move one step closer to the goal of the adventure.

ROLEPLAYING

A roleplaying scene can be anything from a parley with a group of bandits to a face-to-face non-violent confrontation with a traitor. In such scenes the heroes converse with characters controlled by the Game Master in an attempt to persuade them to do something. For example, the characters might have to bluff their way past some guards. Or, they might have to play a game of chance against an adversary to win the key to the Vault of the Sumerians. Or, they might have to convince an old hermit to reveal the location of a lost city.

Roleplaying scenes can cover almost any kind of non-combat encounter involving Game Master characters.

INFORMATION GATHERING

The heroes' goal in this type of scene is to discover some important piece of information, whether it be evidence, the answer to a riddle, or a piece of a map that will lead them to an ancient treasure. To find this knowledge, the heroes might have to visit a library, search through a murder victim's home, or tear

apart the ancient temple of an evil goddess.

Just make sure that the information the heroes seek is attainable and in some way helps them toward the ultimate goal of the adventure. That doesn't mean you shouldn't throw in a red herring once in a while. Just be careful not to force the heroes to go through an enormous amount of trouble based on clues and hints you've given them only to find that their efforts were wasted.

THRILL SCENES

Thrill scenes involve a tense moment in which the characters worry about an imminent occurrence. For example, a carriage containing the king's daughter races out of control toward a cliff's edge, or the heroes are attempting to run through a corridor while darts whip across all around them.

To help simulate a dramatic moment—like when one hero slips over the edge of a rooftop and another hero attempts to catch him before he plummets to his death—you can employ the following technique, the goal of which is to get the players' (the actual persons playing the game) hearts racing.

Tell the players they have a certain number of seconds (somewhere between ten and fifteen seems to work best). During that time they have to roll a certain number (usually between five and fifteen) of Thunderbolts on the Wild Die. Each player begins with a base number equal to the number of dice his hero possesses in the relevant skill or attribute. For example, a hero with a skill of 3D would start with a base of three, adding one to that base each time she rolls a Thunderbolt within the allotted time.

The players roll the Wild Die as many times as possible during that short period until either they roll enough Thunderbolts to reach the appointed total needed to accomplish the task or time runs out.

Example: The warrior Gnatius races across a battlefield with the intention of leaping in front of his sister, who has just become the target of an archer. The Game Master instructs the player controlling Gnatius that he has just entered a thrill scene during which he has ten seconds to reach a total of nine, using his run skill. Gnatius has run at 4D, so he starts with a base of four and must roll at least five Thunderbolts in the allotted fifteen seconds to reach the total of nine he needs to make himself a human shield for his sister.

As a guideline, a player can roll about four or five Thunderbolts in fifteen seconds fairly consistently (depending upon how fast the player can roll the die). You may want to increase the number of Thunderbolts needed as the heroes advance in their skills and therefore start with a higher base value.

CHASES

In a chase scene, the heroes either pursue or flee from a Game Master character (like Callisto), a creature (like a hydra), or an object (like a huge, rolling boulder). Above all, make sure these encounters play out dramatically by loading them with near misses and exciting events.

The simplest way to set up a chase scene is to create a list of the various obstacles the heroes must overcome, especially if you can couple it with a map of the area. Just like scenes, you can have location-based and time-based events. List each occurrence by either when or where it occurs.

Let's look at an example in which the heroes must pursue a group of thieves through a Temple of Aphrodite that is currently under construction (exchanges refer to five-second periods used to simplify battles).

Exchange One: Both groups begin in the central chamber of the temple, where sacrifices are offered to the Goddess of Love. The thieves immediately clamber up the scaffolding along the walls, intending to reach a catwalk high above the floor. All characters (heroes and thieves) must make *climb* rolls against a difficulty of two to avoid falling from the scaffolding. Anyone who fails the roll falls to the ground, suffering 2D damage.

On the Catwalk: When the two groups reach catwalk, their combined weight causes it to start to collapse. Everyone must make *Reflexes* checks against a difficulty of three to avoid slipping from the walkway, which has partly ripped away from the wall. Those who fail the roll plummet to the floor and take 4D damage upon slamming into the ground.

Exchange Four: Wherever the heroes are at this point (twenty seconds into the chase—four exchanges of five seconds each), one of the thieves' suddenly turns and throws a vial of flaming oil at them. All players must make *Reflexes* or *acrobatics* rolls against a difficulty of four. Failure means they are hit by fiery shrapnel and suffer 8D damage.

The only other element to incorporate into a chase is the distance between the characters involved so that you can determine range (see Scroll IV, "Battles"). See the Movement section of that scroll for information on how far characters can move in a given time period. You may want to use a one-inch square sheet of graph paper and 25mm miniatures (available from me at an excellent price, of course) to

keep track of the distances between the various characters taking part in the chase.

COMBAT

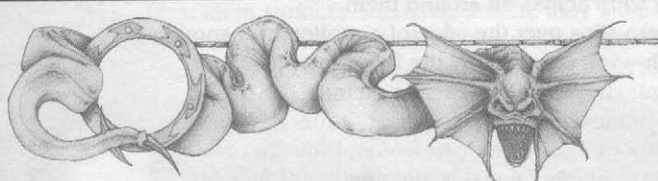
Sometimes the heroes will become involved in a situation that erupts into violence. The game mechanics needed to run battles appear in the scroll entitled—appropriately enough—“Battles.”

ADVERSARIES

During their adventures, heroes encounter various allies, enemies, and neutrals who serve to shape the story, establishing the setting or helping or hindering the heroes at critical moments. Without these individuals (called Game Master characters), nothing much would happen.

As the Game Master, you create the game world's population, designing friends, foes, and casual acquaintances for the heroes to meet. Game Master characters include everyone from major villains to annoying gods, from stalwart companions to mysterious recluses. And don't forget the less-spectacular characters—the shop owners, bartenders, tavern patrons, villagers, government officials, and so forth. They're just as important to the story as everyone else.

Don't panic! You don't have to create enough characters to fill the entire universe. You should carefully choose which Game Master characters play the most pivotal role in your adventure and design them in detail. Then select the less important characters and determine most of their background and personality, and so on until you come down to the nameless characters who need nothing more than a brief mention. You can categorize these characters into lead, supporting, and extra characters.



MISDIRECTING THE PLAYERS

Don't be afraid to “disguise” your villains every once in a while—when your players are experienced this is especially important. Instead of putting your major villain right out there where everyone can see (and perhaps attack) him, make him more mysterious.

For example, through an entire series of adventures the heroes might think that the villain causing all their problems is a warlord named Morias, but, when they finally confront him, they find out he was actually being manipulated by someone else even more powerful—like the king of a nearby land, a god, or someone else whose identity remains a mystery!

LEAD CHARACTERS

Without lead characters, an adventure would meander across the Ancient World with no real focus. Lead characters make things happen, but they don't necessarily have to be adversaries of the heroes—they could be allies or even casual acquaintances who can greatly affect the heroes' lives.

Since these characters play such an important role in your adventure or saga (a series of linked adventures—more on sagas later), you should fill out a hero template or sheet, listing skills, assigning die codes, and recording background and personality notes. When you're done you should have a definite grasp of this character's strengths, weaknesses, and ambitions.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

Supporting characters usually play a role as seconds to lead characters, assisting them in their efforts to achieve their goal. You don't have to spend as much time creating supporting characters as you do with lead characters. You may want to record their attributes and skills in paragraph statistics (see below) and append a few sentences about their backgrounds and personalities, but you don't have to go into as much detail. Just make sure you have enough information to run the character during the adventure.

EXTRAS

Extras are the nameless, and sometimes faceless, characters who live in villages, tend bar at local taverns, or battle against enemies in large-scale confrontations. The motives, backgrounds, and personalities of these characters matter little (if at all) in the context of the adventure. They have a specific role, and may serve to help or hinder the heroes, but otherwise they have no bearing on the overall conflict.

You can easily sum up these characters in paragraph statistics like this (replace the words and symbols in brackets with the appropriate information):

[Name or Description]. All statistics are 2D except: [attributes and skills separated by commas]. Special Moves: Name (base skill: difficulty: : effect). Special Powers/Vulnerabilities: Name (description). Body Points [#]. Character Points [#]. Fate Points [#]. Fame [#]. Speed [#]. [Equipment/Natural Weapons & Defenses].

Sometimes, however, you may wish to give these otherwise non-descript characters some particular quirk or unique ability to set them apart from the potentially billions of other beings wandering your game world. Such flourishes make an extra memorable, even if the players didn't catch his name.

ASSIGNING SKILLS AND SPECIAL ABILITIES

Once you've come up with the overall concept for the character, you should decide on his game statistics. Most of the time, you need only determine a character's attributes and major skills, although major characters often require additional work.

When it comes to assigning skills and attributes, use these guidelines below:

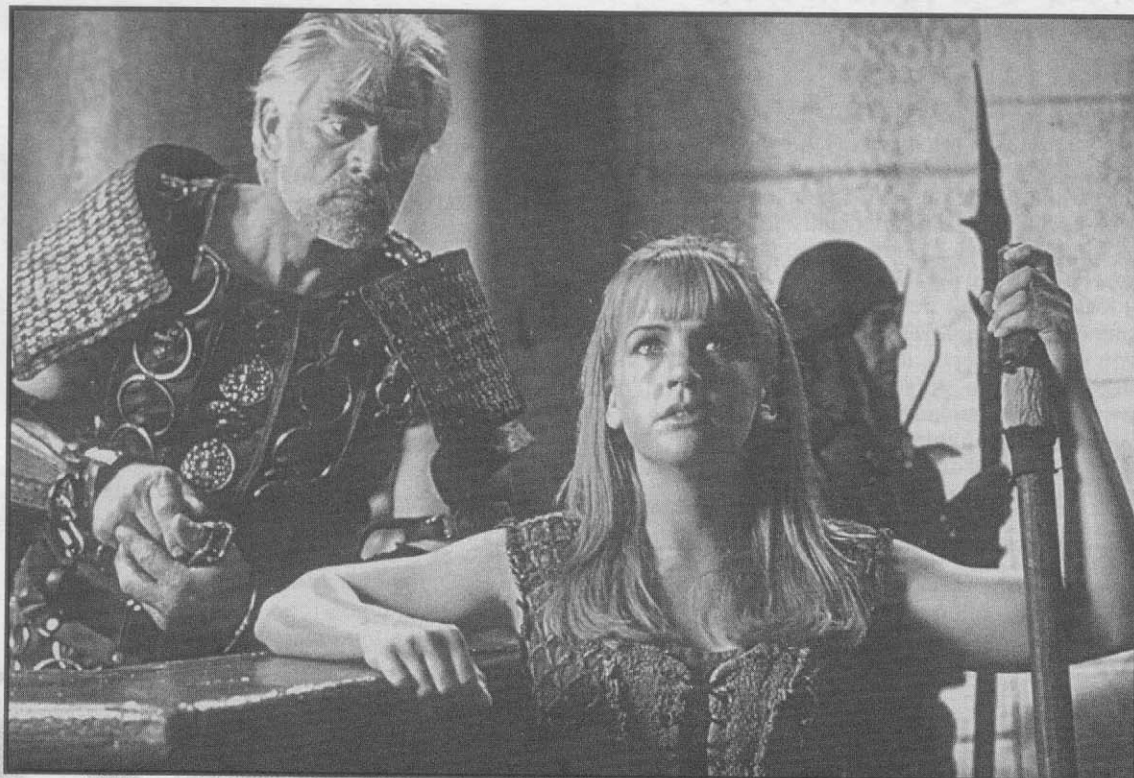
Description	Die Code
Below average for an attribute	1D
Untrained average for an attribute and many skills	2D
Average level of training	3D
Professional level of training	4D
Above average expertise	5D
Considered about the best in a town	6D
Among the best in a city	7D
Among the best in a region	8D
One of the best in a country	9D
One of the best on a continent	10D
One of the best in the world	11D
Among the best in the universe	12D

SPECIAL POWERS

Many characters have Special Powers. Assign these as seem reasonable for a character. See Scroll II in this collection for more information on Special Powers.

VULNERABILITIES

A Vulnerability may give the heroes a chance to defeat an otherwise unbeatable opponent. Discovering that Vulnerability may even be the basis for an entire adventure leading up to a confrontation with the villain. See Scroll II for more on Vulnerabilities.



CHARACTER POINTS, FATE POINTS & FAME

Cannon-fodder villains, such as army troops, henchmen, and merchants typically have no Character Points, Fate Points, or Fame. Minor villains, whose survival isn't dependent upon the adventure's plot may have 1-3 Character Points and (usually) no Fate Points and a Fame of 1-3. Continuing villains, such as those who may be used for several adventures or who are subordinate to the main villain may have 4-10 Character Points, one or two Fate Points, and a Fame of 5-20.

Major villains who might be used over the course of a campaign and are integral to an adventure should have at least eleven Character Points (some characters may have well over fifty Character Points) and many will have at least three Fate Points and Fame scores over twenty.

CREATURES

Creatures can either be non-thinking animals (like sharks) or sentient beasts in some way immeasurably different from heroes (like dragons). See Scroll VII, "Denizens," for more information on monsters.

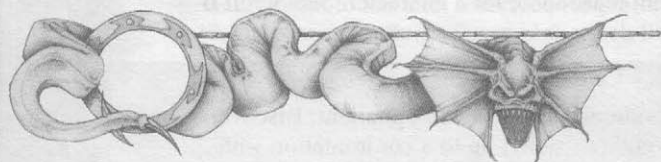
PREPARING ADVENTURES

First, you're going to need an adventure. You can buy one (which I highly recommend), create one yourself, or make one up as you go along.

READING THE ADVENTURE

Make sure you're thoroughly familiar with the adventure before you start playing. The players may not proceed through the encounters in the order they appear, so if you read only the first half of the scenario, you could find yourself vigorously flipping through pages trying to figure out what happens next.

You don't have to memorize every detail either, just know the basic plotline and structure of the story. If the players do something unexpected, like killing a major villain who's supposed to participate in the finale of the adventure, you'll need to know what you can do to alter the remainder of the story so that it still comes to a satisfying conclusion.



PLAYING QUICK AND LOOSE

The *Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game* relies on fast-paced, cinematic adventures where action takes center stage. Your job as Game Master is to fluctuate the pace of the scenario—speeding up during the exciting parts and slowing down afterward to give the heroes (and the players!) some time to breathe. Don't get bogged down in details (unless you and your group want to, of course); sacrificing some realism allows you to keep the game moving (and thereby, keep your players' interest focused on their heroes' situation).

If during an adventure, the players do something unexpected (which you should expect!), don't let them know it. Just make up the part of the story that you haven't yet created. You have to rely on your judgment and imagination to continue the game without ruining the players' "suspension of disbelief." It may sound difficult, but you'll soon find it a fun exercise of your imaginative abilities.

CHARACTER CARDS

One way to quicken game play is to create Game Master character cards. You can either photocopy the section detailing each character or you can write their game information on index cards. As the heroes encounter various Game Master characters, you can pull out their character cards so that you have all of their important information at your fingertips. In this way, you won't have to flip through pages of the adventure looking for a particular character's statistics, especially if that character participates in more than one encounter.

This technique works especially well for sagas in which many characters play a recurring role. Also, if you wind up creating new characters on the fly (when the heroes momentarily wander away from the scripted adventure), you can quickly jot down their information on an index card so that you have it for later. You never

know when the players may decide to return to speak with a particular character. If you haven't kept a record of his game information, you may have to guess—and you could be wrong, thereby shattering the players' suspension of disbelief ("Wasn't this guy seven feet tall with a long scar across his face the last time we talked with him?").

STOCK ENCOUNTERS

Another way to save time during an adventure—and to save you from looking ill-prepared—is to create several "stock" encounters. These short scenes could be anything from a bar brawl to a chance meeting

with Falafel. When your players decide to go somewhere or do something that you hadn't foreseen—and therefore hadn't written out beforehand—you can use one of your stock encounters to fill in the space while you figure out a way to get the heroes back on track with the adventure.

Try to develop ten or more stock encounters that cover a variety of environments. The more you create, the less likely you'll be to get stuck in an adventure because the heroes did something or went somewhere unexpected.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The best way to throw heroes into the midst of the action—and the method most appropriate for the world of Hercules and Xena—is to start the game *in media res*. The heroes literally begin play in the middle of an explosive or suspenseful event. Such an adventure could start thusly:

Game Master: "Okay, everyone ready to play?"

The Group: "Sure."

Game Master: "All right. You're finishing up another ale in a tavern in Epidauras when you find yourself surrounded by a group of smelly, unshaven thugs dressed completely in black. Before you can even put your mugs down, they all pull out wicked-looking weapons: knives, swords, morning stars—you name it. What do you do?"

Such fast starts put the players immediately on their toes, thrusting them into the middle of the game before they even know it. Once they've dealt with their immediate problem, they're thoroughly enmeshed in the story.

RUNNING ADVENTURES

You've successfully brought the heroes into the adventure. Now you have to keep them focused and enthralled with the plot. If you see their eyes start to wander, or they fall into a conversation about the last game (or worse, what they did today), you know something's gone wrong. This section should help you maintain an involving story and a sense of "really being there."

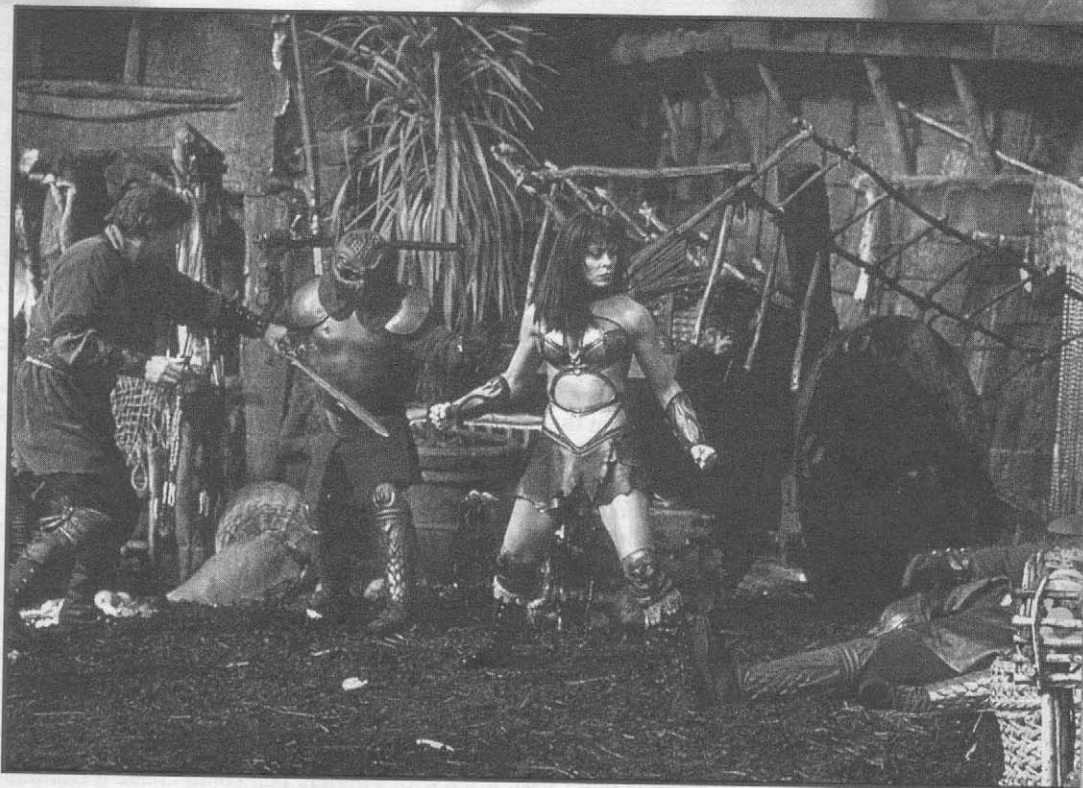
SETTING THE SCENE

Your first job is to vividly depict the scene unfolding around the heroes. Where are they? Who else is there? What's happening? These are the questions you must answer immediately.

DESCRIPTION

Most published adventures contain "read aloud sections" at the beginning of each encounter. To set up the scene you just read out loud or paraphrase the text. At that point, the players usually either ask you questions about their surroundings ("How many dragons do we see?") or tell you their reaction to the situation ("I run the hell away!").

The key here is to engage the players' senses, just like a good storyteller or stage play. Try to use evocative words to give the players a clear and vivid view of their heroes' environment. The best way to learn how to provide such lifelike descriptions is to picture the scene in your mind and do whatever you



can to convey that same scene to your players. You may incorporate maps and diagrams you copied out of library scrolls or even illustrations you've drawn yourself. (Transcriber's Note: The *Hercules* and *Xena* soundtracks or various sound effects CDs can help you subtly set the stage for the characters.)

Just remember that your players have five senses. Don't rely solely on the sense of sight. Describe what their heroes hear, smell, touch, and (sometimes) taste. The following example engages several senses.

Game Master: "You finally wake up on soggy ground, the thick, musty smell of the swamp filling the air. You can hear the screeching chirps of various creatures as well as a strange, slow slurping noise. The humidity has settled against your skin like a blanket of moisture. All around you, the gangly gray trees reach upward into the mist, and you get the distinct feeling that something up there is looking down on you."

BELIEVABLE CHARACTERS

Other than the setting, the heroes will also encounter other people who live in the game world. Your job is to make sure that these Game Master characters appear real to the players. Their words and actions must seem appropriate in the context of their histories, personalities, and ambitions. If a stoic warrior suddenly took off his helmet and started joking around, the players would probably just stare at you for a minute as the game came crashing to a halt.

Play each character to the best of his ability. Make sure he does everything in his power to achieve his goals, whether he's trying to thwart the heroes or earn a load of dinars. This does not mean that every Game Master character should act overtly. Part of his goal may be to achieve his objective undetected, or to make it look like someone else was responsible. Rather, the idea is that the Game Master character should use all of his resources—his skills, allies, finances, etc.—to accomplish his immediate as well as his long-term goals.

EXCITING LOCALES

Use settings that evoke a sense of wonder. You could create a community situated amid dozens of cascades and waterfalls, or a fortress on a small island surrounded by roaring rapids, or an ancient complex built into the cliffs of a series of canyons.

Try to make each place the heroes visit seem different from the others. By doing this, you can make these sights engaging and memorable for the players.



DEADLINES

Another way to keep the players enraptured in the story is to give them a deadline. They have only four hours to rescue slaves headed for an unknown location in Aetolia. Or maybe the heroes must warn a remote outpost before a warlord's army arrives to destroy it. Or one of the heroes has contracted a fatal disease that can only be cured by Asclepius, the God of Medicine, whose major temple is located in Epidaurus, two days away.

When the players know they have only a limited time to accomplish their objective, they don't waste time meandering about the world, which is usually when they get bored with the adventure. You can even enforce a real-time deadline. You give the players four hours of real (as opposed to game) time to achieve their goal. Then, throughout the adventure, you keep reminding them about the time constraint (or you could even put a big clock in the middle of the table so they can see it themselves). When you get down to the last hour, just watch them do everything in their power to help you move the story along!

PERSONAL STAKE

One of the best ways to engage the players is to provide them with a personal stake in the outcome of the adventure. Maybe one of their heroes' siblings has been captured by a goddess, or a warlord has sent bounty hunters after them, or their homeland's government mistakenly believes they have become traitors.

The heroes need to deal with these situations, although the whole adventure need not focus on that storyline. While the heroes perform a service for a friend, for example, they could receive word that one of their fathers has been taken in for questioning in a nearby town. Between accomplishing their mission and returning home, the heroes could travel to the town to find out what's going on and to extricate the hero's father from the (apparently) unwarranted incarceration.

Every once in while you should ask to see the players' Hero Sheets. Look for background information and personality traits that might lend themselves to a personal stake. If a player has written that his hero is extremely competitive, for example, you could create a rival group that seeks to outdo the heroes at every turn. The players will do everything in their power to make sure their heroes succeed more often and more quickly than the newcomers.

GIVING OPTIONS

Don't constantly force your players to follow along the prescribed path of the adventure. They may have devised an alternate scheme for success not covered by the scenario, and you shouldn't penalize them for their creativity. Instead you'll have to use your judgment to run the remainder of the adventure.

If the players feel that they never have a choice, that you have predetermined what their heroes will do and say—and therefore, how the adventure will turn out—they're not going to have any interest in playing. Part of the fun in a roleplaying game is the almost unlimited number of possible reactions to any given situation. Take that away and you've lost much of the reason for participating in this type of game.

Sometimes the players will have only a few choices—or at least, a few obvious choices—and that's fine if it makes logical sense in the context of the scenario and doesn't seem like an attempt by you as the Game Master to dictate their heroes' paths.

Reward creativity. Give the players a reason to exercise their brains. The more freedom they believe they have, the more they'll enjoy the adventure. When their heroes make a mistake, they have no one else to blame it on, and when their heroes succeed, they feel a genuine sense of accomplishment.

THE SUBTLE ART OF MISDIRECTION

If the players can correctly guess the conclusion of an adventure while they're progressing through the first encounter, the ensuing encounters won't provide as much excitement as they should.

This is where the subtle art of misdirection comes in. The goal here is to keep the players (and their heroes) guessing and revising those guesses throughout the adventure. You can do this in small ways: make hidden die rolls, smile for a moment, and then don't say anything about it; have the characters roll Awareness checks, ask for their totals, and then just continue with the encounter; ask a player for detailed information on how her character is going to close a door ("Which hand are you using?" "Are you wearing anything metal?"), but then have the portal close uneventfully.

You also have the option of throwing in major red herrings. If a Game Master character starts tracking the heroes, the players will immediately attempt to mesh this new person's presence with the rest of the adventure. In reality, however, he's just a common thief looking for an easy mark, or he thinks that one of the heroes looks familiar but doesn't want to say anything until he's sure he's not mistaking that hero for someone else.

A hero could receive a death threat from a warlord or temple. But it turns out that the message was delivered to the wrong person, and the group has no interest in the hero or his companions. Of course, you won't let the players know that. (See how much fun this is?)

LOADING THE DICE

The most important part of a roleplaying game is the story. Don't let the rules get in the way. If a flubbed die roll would normally indicate that the main villain dies a few minutes into the adventure, fudge the roll. Say he just barely escaped. For this reason you should try to make all of your rolls behind the Game Master screen.

If the players make a roll that would destroy the scenario or make it less exciting, you can fudge the difficulty number.

Don't go overboard with this technique. If the players suspect that you've been altering die rolls and difficulties, they'll start to lose interest because it will seem that their free will has been taken away. You should fudge rules only at critical moments and you should always be fair, giving the benefit sometimes to the Game Master characters and sometimes to the heroes.

JUDGMENT CALLS

During an adventure you're in charge. Don't get into an elaborate discussion about the nuances of the game rules or of one of your decisions. You can always discuss rules questions or arguments with the players after the game (see the "Getting Feedback" section below).

While this general guideline provides you with a great deal of power, it also hefts on you the responsibility of using that power wisely. You have to be fair. If a referee in a ball game started randomly penalizing one team, that team would get extremely frustrated and eventually quit once it becomes obvious that there's no point in continuing.

While you take the role of the villains in the adventures you run, do not think of yourself as the opponent of the players. Your job is to make sure the players have a good time, not to beat them. While you should try to provide the players' characters with a challenge, you shouldn't try to devise an unbeatable adventure.

Then again, if the players do something stupid, you shouldn't coddle them. The first time they make a particular mistake you may want to alert them and reduce the damage it would have caused, but the second time you should adjudicate the error fairly.

Tread carefully on this aspect of running adventures. It's easy to fall one way or the other. Just remember that you're all playing this game to have fun.

KEEPING THE GAME GOING

The heroes will stray from your adventure. Expect it—but don't worry about it. If you've taken time to prepare the scenario as indicated above, you shouldn't have a problem getting things back on track without alerting the players to their roundabout way of proceeding through the adventure.

In fact, some Game Masters come to enjoy the opportunity to run the game on the fly. You need a good imagination and a good understanding of the adventure and the Ancient World to improvise encounters, but the more you do it, the better you'll get.

When the heroes first meander away from the plot, go in the direction the players are heading. Start making up things off the top of your head, throwing as much color and flash around as you can. If you need a couple of minutes to figure out how to get the players back into the story, call for a break.

The ability to improvise is extremely important because it allows you to maintain the players' illusion of free will. They have to believe that they can choose their own path, instead of being forced to do exactly what the Game Master wants them to do—this is a game, and in games players get to make choices about their actions. Players hate being forced to do something!

Of course, you are always free to throw complications at the players. If they have chosen to go in an unexpected direction, you can pull out a character card or a stock encounter (or make one up on the spur of the moment) and let them deal with that situation while you figure out how to bring them back into the plot.

Sometimes, through no fault of the players or your own, the adventure dies. The heroes don't know how to proceed and the players completely lose interest. The best way to handle such a situation is to make something happen. A brawl breaks out, or a nearby Game Master character gets dragged off by a band of ruffians, or a god suddenly appears, and so on. Get the players excited. Put their heroes' lives in danger. Make them worry about how the encounter will turn out.

Above all, stay relaxed. This is a game, not a test of how well you play the role of the Game Master. Everyone is playing to have fun, so just do your best and enjoy yourself.

ALLOWING THE HEROES TO FAIL

Sometimes players need to fail. If they roll poorly, or are simply outclassed, or most importantly, if they play poorly, their heroes will lose.

On the other hand, with each defeat, the characters (and players) should learn something. They may learn a better way to approach a situation, or they may stumble upon information or a tool that will help them in the future. It should take perseverance and dedication, but learning from mistakes will eventually lead to success.

ENDING ADVENTURES

Adventures can last a single night or can span several game sessions. At the end of a scenario (or the end of a night of gaming), you should distribute rewards.

REWARDS

Make sure that what the heroes receive for their actions is consistent with the dangers they faced during the adventure.

Heroes may be awarded dinars, equipment, and weapons for their activities. They may also make contacts with important Game Master characters—individuals who can help them in a future adventure.

Characters also receive Character Points, Fate Points, and Fame at the end of adventures, which can be used during later adventures.

As a general rule, a hero should receive 5–20 Character Points, 1–2 Fate Points, and 2–3 Fame for each adventure. The award depends upon several factors:

- **Did the Player Accomplish the Adventure Goal?** Give characters one Fate Point and two Fame each for succeeding in their mission.
- **Level of Success.** This reward represents how the group did as a whole. If the players solved puzzles, came up with ingenious solutions, and made sure everyone involved had fun, give them six to eight Character Points; if the players did poorly, give them only three or four Character Points.
- **Individual Performance.** If certain players were very clever or went out of their way to make the game fun, give her one extra Fame.
- **Cooperation.** If the players worked well as a team, give each of them two to four extra Character Points.
- **Roleplaying.** If a player roleplayed his character well, give him three or four Character Points.
- **Fun.** If all of you (yes, this includes the Game Master) had a good time, give the players as many as three or four extra Character Points and an extra Fate Point.

Adventures can have greatly varying length. These guidelines are for an average adventure spanning two nights of gaming, or four or five fairly long scenes. If an adventure runs over several sessions, the Game Master may want to give partial awards during the adventure so the players don't go too long without getting anything to show for their efforts.

Final Character Point, Fate Point, and Fame awards should be correspondingly increased to reflect the length of the adventure. On the other hand, if playing one- or two-episode quick adventures, you should decrease the numbers of Character Points the heroes receive.



Other rewards, such as money, mystical items, or other material objects, are given at your discretion. Again, try not to be too lavish in giving out "stuff"—your heroes need something to work for later. Rewards of friendship, honor, and camaraderie are more important than money or equipment. Of course, a cash advance now and then doesn't hurt....

CLIFFHANGERS

If an adventure continues over a few game sessions, you may want to end each night on a cliffhanger so that the players will look forward to the next part of the scenario. At first they may resist such a tactic, but after a few cliffhangers, they'll come to enjoy and expect it. Think of it as throwing up a "to be continued" line at the end of the night's episode.

For example, the heroes race across the countryside to stop a traitor from betraying a kingdom. Just as they rush into the tavern where the traitor is supposed to make the exchange, a dozen enemy soldiers appear from hidden alcoves and point crossbows at the heroes. The misguided traitor turns and says, "What took you so long?" and the session ends. Don't even let the players ask any questions about the scene—tell them they'll have to wait until next time.

GETTING FEEDBACK

Sometimes an adventure doesn't thrill the players like you expected it to when you were first reading or creating it. As you run a scenario, you should pay attention to the players' reactions to the various scenes. Did they stand up and all try to talk at once during the chase? Did they go comatose when they reached the puzzle-solving encounter? The players' words and actions can convey a great deal of information about which parts of the adventure they enjoyed and which parts put them to sleep.

You also have to gauge their reactions to your judgment calls and improvisation. Don't take any negative responses as criticism. It takes a lot of work to plan and run a game, and you can't always please everyone no matter what you do. Instead, view player reactions and comments as hints as to what you can do in the next adventure to keep them on the edges of their seats.

The best way to confront such a problem is to ask the players what they did and didn't like. You could



even have them write you an anonymous note with a list of their favorite and least favorite scenes. Just don't forget to listen to what your players have to say. They may want to take the game in a different direction than you do. Compromise. Make sure you and your players have fun. If not, either you or your players will eventually give up and find something else to do during those precious spare moments, and then how am I going to make any money off future products for the game line? Don't be selfish—play, have fun, and buy more stuff!

SAGAS

You may wish to string together a series of adventures to form a long story arch. For example, Strife may be planning to destroy Cupid in retaliation for not forcing the woman Strife loves to fall in love with him. Based on this back-story, you can create several scenarios that slowly bring the heroes into the plot.

Perhaps the people of the world stop falling in love with each other. When the heroes go to the Temple of Aphrodite to find out what's going on, they learn that the Goddess of Love has forsaken her normal duties to deal with a "personal problem." In the meantime, the King asks the heroes to help him hunt down a Minotaur that has recently begun to harass the region.

During the adventure, the heroes discover that the Minotaurs only started raiding the kingdom's settlements after their mates refused to...well...get together with them. The heroes' quick wit should immediately point them in the direction of Aphrodite.

The next adventure may lead the heroes on a quest given by the Goddess of Love herself, who asks that they take some sacred objects kept in a locked golden box to her major temple in Corinth. On their journey, the heroes must fight off common bandits and a group of thugs working for the God of War. Once the heroes drop off the box, they find out that mercenaries had knocked out and replaced Aphrodite's priests and are now making off with the sacred treasure—which the Goddess of Love reveals is a new set of bow and arrows for her son, Cupid.

The third scenario involves the heroes' hunt for the mercenaries, during which they discover that they have wandered into a plot concocted not by Ares, but by Strife, who intends to take over Cupid's duties—simply to meet his own ends.

As you can see, the saga can continue until the heroes either foil Strife's plans or allow him to succeed. However the story arc ends, a new one can immediately begin, either spawned from the previous events (Strife seeks revenge for the mortals who dared to interfere with his plot) or in a complete new direction (King Iphicles disappears and the heroes must find out what happened to him).

Sagas work well with groups who enjoy playing the same hero over a long period of time. In this setting, heroes can change and grow, developing their personalities, skills, and fame until they become powerful enough to challenge the gods themselves. Such a framework can make for emotionally satisfying adventures during which the heroes must fight for what they believe and for those they love. Recurring allies, rivals, and enemies flesh out the game world, giving it verisimilitude and thereby adding to the experience.

Even if the idea of a saga sounds daunting at first, try it. I'm sure you'll quickly decide you love it! And you can always believe me!†

† As long as you read the fine print.





SCROLL IV BATTLES

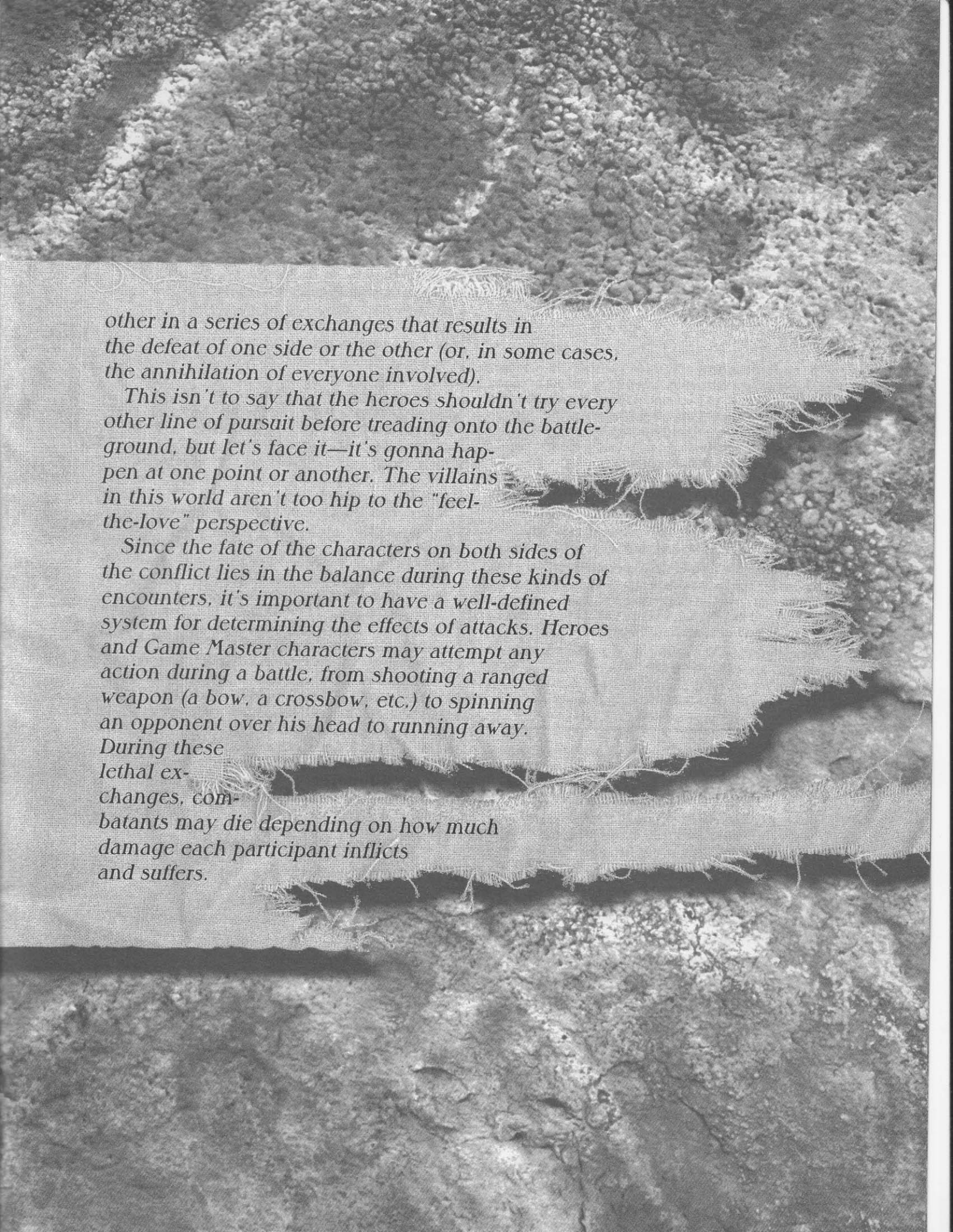
Okay, okay—I know I'm not an expert when it comes to fighting, but hey, I've hung out with Herc (he lets me call him "Herc"...sometimes) and Xena enough to have some experience at least observing, if not helping.

You'd be amazed at some of the moves these heroes display! Jumping on people's heads, fighting on ladders, spinning around with arms outstretched to knock out anyone who gets too close. Anyone who wants to be a hero, will have to learn some of these moves and, to add even extra flair, make up their own.

Within the game, we have a special set of rules that helps you simulate battles—

Whoa! Where're you going? Look, this is going to be fun! Okay, there is some math involved—but it's very simple to learn, and once you have it down, you won't even think about it. From that point on you'll be throwing opponents across the battlefield and catching arrows scant inches from your face with wild abandon. Trust me!

One of the most fun and exciting parts of the Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game centers around combat. Two or more opposed forces battle each



other in a series of exchanges that results in the defeat of one side or the other (or, in some cases, the annihilation of everyone involved).

This isn't to say that the heroes shouldn't try every other line of pursuit before treading onto the battleground, but let's face it—it's gonna happen at one point or another. The villains in this world aren't too hip to the "feel-the-love" perspective.

Since the fate of the characters on both sides of the conflict lies in the balance during these kinds of encounters, it's important to have a well-defined system for determining the effects of attacks. Heroes and Game Master characters may attempt any action during a battle, from shooting a ranged weapon (a bow, a crossbow, etc.) to spinning an opponent over his head to running away. During these lethal exchanges, combatants may die depending on how much damage each participant inflicts and suffers.

THE GAME MECHANICS

Running a combat scene may be hectic, but it's not very difficult. The whole system operates on a simple set of rules:

1. Determine the order of attacks in the exchange.
2. Roll dice for attacks and defense.
3. Go to step 1.

While the majority of the *Hercules & Xena Role-playing Game* treats time as free flowing (no one is paying precise attention to the amount of game time that passes—about ten minutes, about an hour, about a day, etc.), battle scenes, as a result of their dependence on specific timing, demand a more exacting account of the passage of moments.

Each battle is divided into segments of five seconds called *exchanges*. During an exchange, all individuals involved in the combat may perform actions. Once everyone has had an *opportunity* to act (note that for some reason a character may not have been able to succeed in accomplishing his action), the exchange ends and a new one begins.

Let's look at each of the three steps above in depth.

STEP 1: WHO ACTS FIRST?

The order of attacks in battle has a major impact on the outcome. If a hero kills a dragon who was about to breath lethal gas on her and her companions, that single blow has prevented the death of her adventuring band. If the dragon had acted first, no party members would have been left to oppose it.

Essentially we are gauging a character's reaction time. How fast can he respond to the quickly changing events around him? Since the *Reflexes* attribute represents this ability in heroes, we will use it to determine the order of attacks.

To accomplish step 1, each player and the Game Master roll *Reflexes* dice for their characters (note that the Game Master may wind up rolling several times, once for each type of character under his control, i.e., one roll for all the skeletons, one roll for all the thugs, and one roll for the High Priests of Hades.) Then start counting down. Begin somewhere around six, depending on the die codes of the characters involved. Players may take an action when you announce the *Reflexes* total they generated. (Some games refer to this mechanic as "rolling for initiative.")

Let's look at an example:

Game Master: Ooh, the Gorgon doesn't look too happy about your sudden appearance. And neither does her snake collection. It's clobberin' time. Everyone make *Reflexes* rolls.

[All players and the Game Master roll dice.]

Game Master: Okay, anyone roll six or higher? [No response.] Five?

Noah: Me! I'm going to use my Special Move to pin the Gorgon to the cave wall.

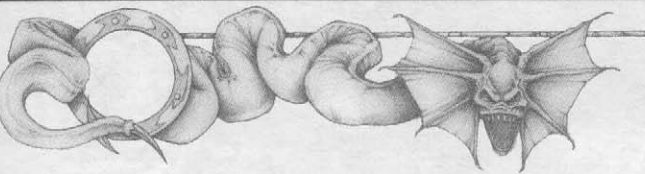
Game Master: Sounds like a plan. Make your roll.

[Noah rolls his attack dice.]

Noah: Four!

Game Master: The arrow slices through the air...[the Game Master adds some sound effects]...and thunks right into the wall...next to her. You missed by a fraction of an inch.

Noah: Argh!



TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

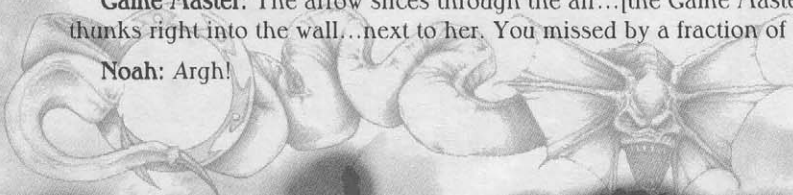
You've seen the series. You can't possibly have missed the combat scenes. As Game Master, it's your job to engender the same sense of excitement, danger, suspense, and humor into the battles that occur in the adventures you run. Your description of events determines how the players will react. You could simply do the math and announce when a Game Master character dies. Boring.

Or, you could give a running blow-by-blow commentary, using your tone and word choice as a means to evoke fear, enthusiasm, or laughter in your players. Here's an example:

Boring: Okay, you rolled a two, so let's see. What's the damage? Six? Right. The first skeleton goes down. Next.

Fun: Okay, your club bashes in three of the skeleton's ribs. Its empty eye sockets stare at you for a moment as if to say, "I hope you enjoyed that, 'cause I am going to take your ass down!" and then it comes at you with a wicked-looking, rusty sword! You've had your tetanus shot, right?

You get the idea. The point is to create battle scenes that are reminiscent of those in both series. It may take some time to develop this skill, but you can do it. And your players will appreciate it—over time, they'll follow suit.



Game Master: Anybody with a *Reflexes* roll of four?

Steve: Right here!

Nancy: Me, too!

Game Master: Okay, tell me your intentions and then make your rolls. The snakes are moving toward you at the same time.

[Steve, Nancy, and the Game Master roll dice to determine their attack values.]

And so on until all characters involved in the melee take an action (including those under the Game Master's control). At that point, the five seconds are up and a new exchange begins.

GAME MASTER OPTION: WEAPON SPEED

If you want a more realistic version of combat (as realistic as you can get, considering the basis of this game), you may want to use Weapon Speed. This mechanic takes into account the amount of time it takes to wield a particular weapon—the more clumsy the weapon, the slower it moves.

You'll find Weapon Speed values in Scroll III of the *Hero's Guide*. Simply add that value to the hero's *Reflexes* roll when determining the order of attacks. Faster weapons have higher values, while slower weapons have lower values.

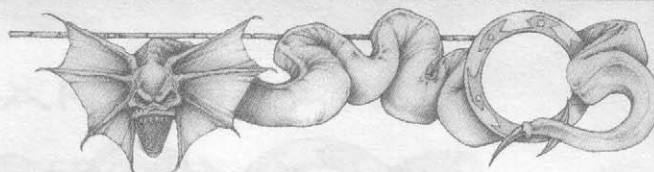
For example, a hero swinging a war hammer at a Gorgon makes his *Reflexes* roll and then adds two (the Weapon Speed of a war hammer) to that value to determine his final total.

STEP 2: RESOLVING ACTIONS

On her turn, a player (or the Game Master) makes an action roll to determine whether or not her hero succeeds at the intended maneuver. If the action does not involve attack or defense, treat it as you normally would. For example, if a hero wanted to pick up a sack of dinars, compare her *lift* roll to the weight of the sack (see the *lift* skill entry) to find out if she accomplished the task.

For attacks, the player generates a skill roll for his hero (as per usual) and you (in your role as Game Master) compare that value to the secret Defense Total of the character the hero is attacking (the difficulty to successfully strike him). So what's the Defense Total?

The Defense Total of any character starts at a base of one (1) at point-blank range, which means that, usually, an attacker must roll a one or better on his attack roll to succeed in hitting his adversary (if you've followed Hercules' and Xena's exploits, you know that combatants tend to get hit...a lot). However, the Defense Total may be modified by the situation. See the Defense Total Modifiers table below.



COOL STUFF YOU CAN DO ON YOUR TURN

Bash: Hit an opponent with a blunt weapon.

Block: Stop an opponent's blow with a similar weapon (flesh vs. flesh, sword vs. sword, et cetera).

Dodge: Evade an attack.

Grab: Latch onto an opponent.

Grapple: Overcome your opponent by attacking him with your body. Once grappled, the opponent can do nothing other than attempt to break the attacker's grip. (Both make *Strength* rolls, which count as actions. If the defender wins, he escapes the hold.)

Headbutt: Slam your forehead into your opponent.

Kick: Thrust your leg forward and...well, this one should be self-explanatory.

Leap: Jump over an opponent or onto a table, or any such maneuver.

Lunge: Stab forward with a pointed weapon, like a sword or a knife.

Move: Maneuver around the area up to the hero's Speed value.

Punch: This is another self-explanatory one.

Push: Forcibly move an opponent. The opponent loses 2D from his next *Reflexes* (or *Reflexes*-based skill) roll, but takes no damage.

Ready a Weapon: Unsheathe a sword, load a crossbow, et cetera.

Shoot: Fire a weapon like a bow, a crossbow, a sling, et cetera.

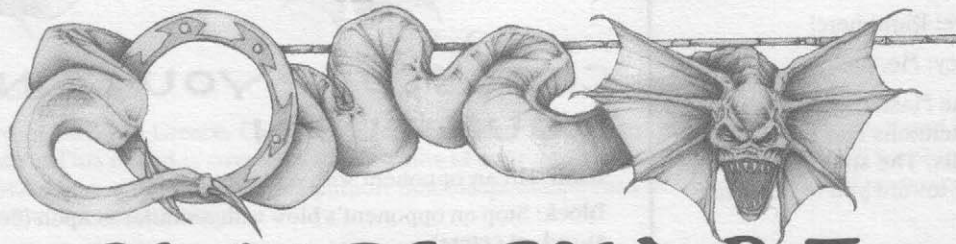
Slash: Swing an edged weapon (like a sword or a knife).

Trip: Send an opponent head over heels by quickly forcing one or both legs upward. This action is treated as a called shot. The opponent loses 2D from his next *Reflexes* (or *Reflexes*-based skill) roll and must spend one action to stand up again.

Use a Skill: Perform an action related to a skill your hero possesses, like starting a fire, picking a lock, climbing a rope, et cetera.

Vehicle/Mount Maneuver: Perform a stunt in a moving vehicle or on a mount.

Note: Each entry (other than movement) counts as one action.



RANGE CHART



Point-Blank: Base Defense Total = 1



Short: Base Defense Total = 2



Medium: Base Defense Total = 3



Long: Base Defense Total = 4



DODGING

In addition, any hero may opt to use his action for that exchange to *dodge*. The player generates a *dodge* total, which becomes his hero's new base Defense Total (replacing the normal total determined by range) for the remainder of the exchange (once he takes his *dodge* action; all attacks previous to that point are made against the normal base plus modifiers).

BLOCKING

A massive sword comes slicing down toward your head. What's your first reaction? Block the blow: you bring your own sword up to ward off (parry) the strike.

In game mechanics, you can block using any weapon skill. The number you generate becomes your new Defense Total.

I know, I know. I can hear you thinking, "So you're saying I could block a sword with my fist?" Well, yes and no. Trying to stop a swinging sword with your hand would prove a horrible mistake (just ask Stumpius), but stopping a swinging *arm* that is wielding a sword would have the potential to accomplish the desired effect.

You can even block a weapon strike with a ranged weapon. Throw a net on someone's staff and see what happens. Watch Xena use her chakram a few times, and you'll get even more ideas on how to use this tactic to your great benefit.

Remember, however, that blocking counts as an action and can be used only against a single attack. If you want to attack and block or to block multiple strikes, you incur multi-action penalties (see below).

DETERMINING DAMAGE

When a character successfully hits his target, that target suffers damage (in the form of lost Body Points) from the attack. Use the following equation to determine damage:

$$\text{Body Points Lost} = \text{Base Weapon Damage} + \text{Attack Effect Value} - \text{Armor Protection}$$

Base weapon damages and armor protection values are listed in Scroll III of the *Hero's Guide* (bodily attacks—punches, kicks, etc.—have a base damage of one). The attack *effect value* is the difference between the attack roll and the Defense Total.

Essentially, each weapon has a standard minimum amount of damage it can inflict (the base damage), which can be increased by a well-placed strike (the attack effect value) and diminished by any protection worn by the target (armor protection value).

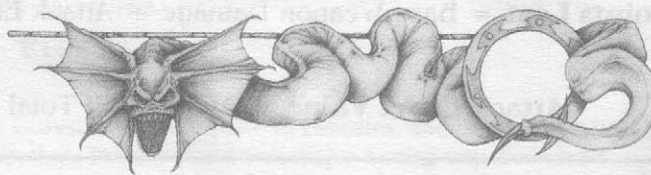
Don't forget about *Strength* bonus: characters gain +1 to damage totals per 2D of *Strength* when wielding muscle-powered weapons (those requiring the *hurled weapons* or *fighting* skills, plus bows and slings). For example, a hero with a *Strength* of 2D–3D gains a +1 bonus, a hero with a *Strength* of 4D–5D gains a +2 bonus, and a hero with a *Strength* of 6D gains a +3 bonus, and so forth).

GAME MASTER OPTION: KILLING BLOW

If a character so desires, he may attempt to kill (rather than merely knock out) his opponent. In game mechanics, the opponent gains a +2 to his Defense Total on the attack. If the blow causes enough damage to reduce the defender's Body Points to zero (or below), he is immediately killed (no amount of normal healing—aside from godly intervention—can restore him to life).

STEP 3: DONE?

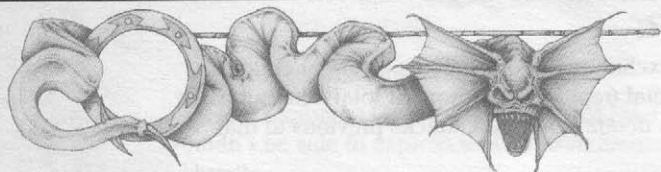
When all the characters participating in the battle have taken their turn (including those controlled by the Game Master), return to step one. Continue this process until the combat ends.



DEFENSE TOTAL MODIFIERS

Situation	Defense Total Modifier
25% Cover	+1
50% Cover	+2
75% Cover	+3
Moonlight	+1
Full Darkness	+3
Called Shot	+2
Immobile/Paralyzed	-1
Blinded	-2

Note: See the Range Chart to determine the base Defense Total.



Body Points Lost = Base Weapon Damage + Attack Effect Value – Armor Protection

Attack Effect Value = Attack Skill Total – Defense Total

MOVEMENT

Characters may walk up to their Speed value in feet every exchange. For example, a hero with a Speed of 30 can walk thirty feet in any direction during a five-second combat exchange. Characters may, however, opt to spend an action to make a *run* roll, thereby increasing the distance he travels in that exchange (see the *run* skill description in Scroll II of this collection).

You may also wish to increase movement difficulty depending on the type of terrain. A hero running through a warehouse crowded with stacks of crates would have more trouble than if he were running across an open plain.

TAKING MULTIPLE SIMULTANEOUS ACTIONS

What happens when a hero wants to fire two arrows in rapid succession, get to his feet and attack, or remember an important fact while leaping across a chasm and throwing a rope to his companions? In any other type of game, you couldn't even attempt it. But the great flexibility of roleplaying allows you to easily account for multiple actions.

On your turn (as player or Game Master) you may choose to take more than one action. The more you attempt to do, however, the less care and concentration you can apply to each action, making it harder for you to succeed at all of them.

When a character attempts more than one action in any given exchange, he suffers multi-action penalties. For each action beyond the first, he loses one die from each and every skill roll. For example, a hero who takes three actions during one exchange loses 2D from all three skill rolls (i.e., he rolls two fewer dice for each).

SEEING IT IN ACTION

Read through the following transcript of a typical game session where the heroes have come into town to capture some thugs before they can alert their warlord boss of the heroes' plans to foil his plot to overthrow the king:

Game Master: Okay, we're shifting into combat exchanges now. Everyone make a *Reflexes* roll to see who goes first. (All players and the Game Master roll their dice.) Anyone roll higher than six?

Steve: Yeah, I rolled a seven!

Game Master: All right, what do you want to do?

Steve: Ah, that depends. What're the goons doing?

Game Master: Two of them are running down the street toward you and the other two are trying to hitch a pair of horses to a war chariot.

Steve: Hmmm...I'll shoot an arrow at one of the two with at the chariot. (checks his *marksmanship* skill die code and then rolls the appropriate number of dice.) Let's see, I rolled a three.

Game Master: That's a hit (since the goon is a medium range, a base defense value of three)! Okay, how much base damage does the arrow cause?

Steve: (Checks his bow's damage value.) Three.

Game Master: (Figures out that total damage is three, since the effect value of the attack is zero.) The arrow slams into the goon's shoulder, but he manages to stay standing. Okay, anyone make a *Reflexes* roll of five?

Noah: Me! I'm going to take two shots with my sling, one at each of the goons running toward us.

Game Master: You're going to lose 1D from each shot since you're taking more than one action.

Noah: No problem. I've got 6D in *marksmanship* and a +1D Specialty in *sling*, anyway. (Rolls six dice.) Hmm...well, I only rolled a two on my first shot.

Game Master: That's a miss (the goon's Defense Total is three—notice that the Game Master doesn't inform his players of this specific information since it keeps them guessing and therefore emphasizes the uncertainty of battle).

Noah: I figured. (Rolls six dice again.) Okay, on my second shot I rolled a five.

Game Master: Hit! How much damage?

Noah: The sling has a base damage of three.

Game Master: (Figures out the total damage: base of three plus effect value of two.) You nail him square in the chest and he goes flying backward about five feet. Doesn't look like he's going to be getting back up any time soon. Anyone have a *Reflexes* roll of four? (no response) Three?

Nancy: Right here! Have they hitched up the horses to the chariot yet?

Game Master: Yeah, and it looks like they're about to escape.

Nancy: Okay, then I'm going to take two actions. First I'm going to shoot my crossbow at one of the goons at the chariot, and then I'm going to dodge out of the way of the ones running straight at us.

Game Master: Okay, you lose 1D from each action since you're taking two.

Nancy: (Rolls her *marksmanship* dice.) I rolled the Thunderbolt of Zeus on the Wild Die! (Rolls the wild die again.) All right, that's a total of four!

Game Master: You nailed him! Damage?

Nancy: Five.

Game Master: (Figures out the total damage: base of five plus effect value of two equals seven.) Wow! Your crossbow bolt catches him right in the helmet and he's knocked right off the chariot. Okay, now make your *dodge* roll.

Nancy: (Rolls her hero's *dodge* dice.) Well, I rolled a two, but something tells me that's not going to be high enough, so I'm going to spend a Character Point.

Game Master: Okay, roll another die and add it.

Nancy: (Rolls the Wild Die again.) I rolled another chakram, so that gives me a total of three. I'll stick with that.

Game Master: You don't want to spend another Character Point?

Nancy: Why? Do you think I should?

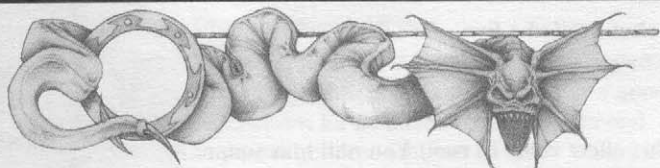
Game Master: (laughing) No, no. I was just making sure. Okay, the goons rolled a two for *Reflexes*, so they get to go now. The one rushing toward you swings his wicked-looking sword at Avicus (Noah's



hero.) (After rolling attack dice) Ooh! The goon managed to sneak in a nice slash across your forearm! Avicus takes three Body Points of damage.

Noah: Oh, man! That's twelve points of damage I've taken so far! I'm not going to last much longer.

Game Master: Okay, the second running goon swings a massive war hammer at Ixion (Nancy's hero). I rolled a two.



SHORT STAT TEMPLATE

Use the following template when recording necessary information about your Goons (replace the words and symbols in brackets with the appropriate information):

[Name or Description]. All stats are 2D except: [attributes and skills separated by commas]. Special Moves: Name (base skill; difficulty; ; effect). Special Powers/Vulnerabilities: Name (description). Body Points [#]. Character Points [#]. Fate Points [#]. Fame [#]. Speed [#]. [Gear].

Nancy: Ha! I rolled a three for my *dodge* this round. Good thing I spent that Character Point!

Game Master: That's right, so the goon's hammer comes straight toward you and you just barely manage to duck out of the way. Okay, so everyone has taken their actions for this exchange. Exchange two begins now. Everyone make *Reflexes* rolls...

GENERIC ADVERSARIES

Most of the time, the heroes will face your standard thug, ruffian, bandit, pirate, mercenary, whatever. Goons, if you will. These are the guys who can't fight very well, but have the advantage in sheer numbers. Most experienced heroes can kick their butts over the course of a few exchanges—which serves a few purposes: delaying the heroes, draining their equipment and scores (Body Points and Character Points), and ticking off the thugs' master.

Name villains (warlords, high priestesses, monsters, and other important characters) usually have full backgrounds and statistics just like a hero, but the Goons only need short stats. Use the following entry as a basis for creating hordes of inept mongrels:

10 Thugs. All stats are 2D except: *Reflexes* 3D, *fighting* 4D. Special Moves: Swarm (*fighting*; difficulty: opponent's Defense Total; attackers attack as a single entity, causing a base damage of 1 per participating thug). Body Points 10. Character Points 1. Fame 0. Speed 30. Sword (5).

You should vary the weapons and Body Points of each group to keep your players guessing. As the heroes become more adept at disposing of these groups, you may wish to increase the stat values, the number of thugs in the group, or both. While the heroes should be able to handle this type of adversary without too much difficulty, it shouldn't be a cake walk either.

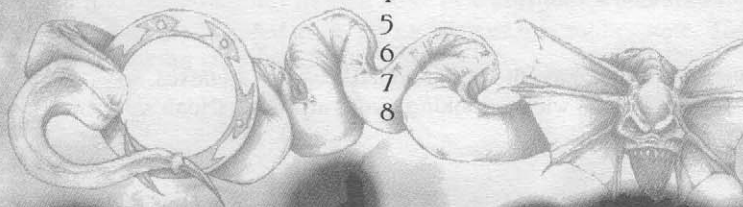
MORE FUN WITH DAMAGE

Below you'll find a couple of options you may wish to use in your games. Note that you can add these mechanics at any time, even after playing for a few months. Inserting them into your normal set of rules in no way alters anything you've done before.

GAME MASTER OPTION: HIT LOCATION

To determine the location where a character was hit, roll 8D and consult the following chart. Generating a value higher than eight means you as Game Master get to choose.

Roll	Body Location
0	Right Hand
1	Left Hand
2	Right Leg
3	Left Leg
4	Right Foot
5	Left Foot
6	Abdomen
7	Chest
8	Head



GAME MASTER OPTION: DAMAGE TYPE

For each wound a character suffers, roll 7D and consult the chart below to determine what type of injury he suffers. Generating a value higher than seven means you as Game Master get to choose.

Roll	Damage Type
0	Laceration
1	Gash
2	Deep Bruise
3	Scrape
4	Puncture
5	Internal Wound
6	Broken Bone
7	Concussion

OTHER INJURIES

You never know what kind of trouble the heroes are going to get into, so you'll have to use your judgment and imagination to come up with ways to deal with their antics. Below you'll find rules governing fire and falling damage, since these are two of the most common non-combat types of injury you'll experience within the game.

FIRE

Fire has a standard damage code of two (2) Body Points per round. Reduce or increase the damage based on the volume of fire surrounding the character.

FALLING

Characters take no damage from falling. They do, however, take damage from slamming into the ground. Standard damage is three (3) Body Points for every ten feet fallen.

Example: The thief Demoanius falls 30 feet after losing his grip while scaling the outside of a temple, suffering a total of nine Body Points in damage (three for each ten feet).

CHARACTER DEATH

Characters who reach zero Body Points immediately fall unconscious. All damage beyond that point inflicted on the character is disregarded (i.e., Body Points can never fall below zero). An individual may, however, walk up to an unconscious character and slay him immediately.

If medical aid cannot be offered immediately (within five minutes), the character leaves his body at the behest of Celesta (Hades' sister, who is also known as Death) to journey to the Other Side and can never be revived (well, I'm sure there may be ways to restore the individual in question to life, but I'm not going there). It generally takes twenty-four hours for the spirit to cross the River Styx and find out whether he's going to the Elysian Fields or to Tartarus. Of course, on high volume days—especially during large-scale battles, not to



mention wars—Hades can become overwhelmed, forcing countless spirits to remain in the Asphodel Meadows awaiting their sentence.

HEALING

At some point during a hero's adventure career, a character will find herself in need of bodily repair. Characters may be healed in a variety of ways, from natural to skill-based to mystical methods.

NATURAL

Characters heal naturally at the following rates:

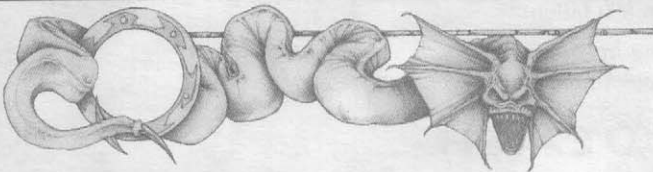
Level of Activity	Body Points Restored
Full rest	5 per day
Light (walking)	3 per day
Heavy (running, fighting)	1 per day

SKILL

As noted in the *first aid* skill description, a character can restore to his patient a number of Body Points equal to his action total. Remember that a character may only attempt to heal a patient once (although this does not preclude another character from healing the same patient).

MYSTICAL POWERS

The gods and certain objects they've created can help heal, revive, or resurrect injured or dead characters (heroes or Game Master characters). The game mechanics involved vary depending on the god and the item in question.



ENCOURAGING COMBAT FUN

One way to quickly and easily liven up a battle is to place the combatants into special circumstances or populate the arena with various objects. For example, the participants must fight while standing on ladders (sound familiar?). Or the battle takes place on a crumbling bridge. Or on a cliff. Or above a pit of lava.

Give the characters items to incorporate and thereby distinguish this particular combat from every other one. Here's a quick list of objects you can throw in: mugs, barrels, poultry, carts, wagons, bails of hay, merchants, boats, boulders, paintings, sculptures, torches, hot tubs, bookcases, chairs, tables, musical instruments, crates, pots, and so forth.

Reward players who invent ingenious ways to use their environment to their benefit. They'll take pleasure both in their accomplishment and in the reward, and will therefore engage their gray matter more often and in increasingly creative ways.

DOING IT THE HERC & XENA WAY

People, people, stop it. Come on. How many times do I have to tell you? Get your minds out of the gutter! You're reading too much into these titles.

Warning: I'm going to get a little philosophical on you. I hope you don't mind. (That reminds me, I'm sure you're aware that there is no refund policy, but I just wanted to mention it.)

Okay, we've gone through rule upon rule of how to run a battle. But you know what? Forget them.

You heard me. You don't need them. Well, they do serve as a guideline and should assist you in administering the game mechanics part of combat, but rules ain't the heart and soul of this game.

Look, Herc and Xena—and the allies and adversaries they encounter—have a knack for doing the unexpected, and let's face it, the outrageous. Xena battled Draco on the heads of Amphipolis's villagers and Draco's warriors, for crying out loud!

Your job, then, is to encourage your players to attempt this same type of action-packed, exciting behavior with their own heroes. You can do this in two major ways: First, have your Game Master characters, especially the experienced ones, accomplish amazing feats during battles. The players will immediately want to get in on the fun.

Second, allow your players to try things. Sounds simple, doesn't it? But it goes a long way. I don't ever want to stop by your table and hear you telling players, "No, you can't do that." I'm not saying a player's hero can do everything. I'm saying that any hero can *attempt* anything. They may have a stack of odds as tall as Mount Olympus against them, but hey, you never know.



I am, however, putting some pressure on you, since you're the one who has to adjudicate these crazy moves. Well, take a look at the Special Moves described in the *Hero's Guide* and read the section on designing your own in Scroll II of this collection. These two sections should give you a good starting point.

The difference here, however, is that you have to come up with a ruling on the fly. Let's say one of the players wants her hero to jump up onto a tavern table to cause a see-saw effect that throws a thug standing on the other side up into the air. Well, you should obviously stop the game and look up the rule on "jumping on an inanimate object with the intent of vaulting an adversary into the air." Wrong!

Don't interrupt the flow. Just pick a difficulty number and move on. How about...two? The hero must generate an *acrobatics* total of two to accomplish her intended feat. That's it. Let her make the roll and then keep the fight going.

The more often you do it, the better you'll get and the more fun you and your players will have. Always remember those fight scenes Xena and Hercules involve themselves in. Nothing ever happens in a straightforward manner. Be inventive. Be humorous. Be fair (or at least try). And do your best to surprise your players with something new. Every battle should be memorable in one way or another. You don't want to overhear players saying, "And then I rolled a six! And then I rolled a two!" You want them to say, "And then I leaped over all over their heads, did a somersault in mid-air, came down behind them, and yanked the rug out from under them. They all went down!"





SCROLL V THE ANCIENT WORLD

Within this scroll you'll find a wealth of information about the world your heroes will travel. As I've encountered a snag in the distribution network for this game (something about losing their shirts with my great crab-apple doll franchise—obviously some kind of miscommunication on their part), I'm going to turn you over for a few moments to an expert on our present subject, the learned scholar Hypatia, Chief Librarian at Alexandria (plus, she said she'd do it for free).

Hold on tight and get ready for a whirlwind tour of the Ancient World!

GREECE

When speaking of "Greece," it is important to understand that we are not talking about a single, unified country. Greece is an immense patchwork of cultures, regions, independent towns, kingdoms, and city-states. Many of the kingdoms and city-states have founded colonies in distant lands, furthering the spread of "Greek" civilization. In this scroll we present information on the most important regions within this vast loosely joined empire.

May Hermes, god of travelers, guide your steps as you travel these lands!

AETOLIA

Pronunciation: ee-TOLL-ee-ah

Aetolia is regarded by the more southerly city-dwellers as a region of barbarians. However, worship of Apollo dominates this area, as evidenced by the vast number of temples raised in his honor. Aetolian warriors are quite a force to be reckoned with and well-known for their fierceness in battle. The cities here have banded together to form the Aetolian League, whose influence extends over the entire area, including the Oracle at Delphi.

CIRRHA

Pronunciation: SEAR-ah

A harbor-town leading to Delphi, this is the birthplace of Callisto, Xena's arch-enemy. Most pilgrims heading to Delphi pass through here, so Cirrha has grown quite prosperous from the tourist trade. Currently, the city is involved in a bitter dispute with Delphi over the issue of whether it (Cirrha) can levy taxes on pilgrims heading to the Oracle. This dispute threatens to break out into actual war, and an adventurer who could mediate this crisis would be doing both sides a favor.

DELPHI

Pronunciation: DEL-fie

Located almost in the center of mainland Greece, by Mt. Parnassus, Delphi is considered to be the *omphalos* or "navel" of the world. Even before temples were erected to the Olympian gods, the Great Mother had a religious site here. Each year, thousands of supplicants come to the Oracle at Delphi, where the Pythia, a veiled virgin of undetermined age, sits on a tripod stool over a steaming crack in the earth that belches forth sulfurous fumes and vapors. Whether she is in a trance-like state from breathing toxins or from a divine madness visited upon her by Apollo himself, she always delivers her predictions as a convoluted, mystical pronouncement, requiring much study and thought to interpret. This can be a wonderful way to provide clues and warnings to players.

MT. PARNASSUS

Pronunciation: par-NASS-us

The 8,062-foot mountain dominates the landscape around the Gulf of Corinth, and provides a dramatic backdrop for the Oracle at Delphi. This is one of the homes of the Muses (the other being Mt. Helicon). Going from the sublime to the frenetic, the Bacchae claim the area around the Corycian Cave, located in the mountain, as one of their main sites for their worship of Dionysus. (See "Phrygia" for more information on the Bacchae.)

THERMOPYLAE

Pronunciation: ther-MOP-ah-lic

The pass here is perhaps the most important strategic point in

Greece, for invaders from the North need to travel through it to invade the rich southern lands. Of course, that means that battle is a fairly regular state of affairs here. May the gods help any band of heroes who must defend the pass, for it requires more than a passing skill in guerrilla warfare as well as the ability to navigate the narrow goat-paths that wind through the mountainous region.

ATTICA

Pronunciation: at-UH-ka

This 1,100-square mile area is home to the greatest city in Greece and several mountain peaks, include Mt. Hymettus, whose aromatic vegetation encourages bees to produce what is considered the finest honey in all of Greece.



ATHENS

Pronunciation: If you don't know how to pronounce this, you're in trouble...

The history of Athens is so long and glorious that we are hard-pressed to condense it into a few words. It is the largest, most impressive city in Greece and the center of Greek culture. Its streets are crowded with artisans and merchants from all over the world, who rub shoulders (at the very least) with soldiers and government officials. Many country bumpkins have started their adventuring careers by attempting to reach the city of Athens. Temples to all of the major gods can be found here, and of special note to players is the famous Athens City Academy of the Performing Bards.

The Athenians regard people from other parts of Greece, especially Thrace, as being uncultured and uncivilized. Like many of her sister city-states, Athens is more and more often finding herself in confrontation with Sparta. Pericles, elected to rule Athens and something of an adven-

turer himself in his younger years, is always on the lookout for brave men and women who can assist the Athenian cause. Many diplomatic, military and intelligence-gathering expeditions can have their start in this, the most important of the Greek city-states.

ELEUSIS

Pronunciation: ell-OO-sis

One of the most sacred places in Greece, Eleusis is located approximately twelve miles west of Athens and is the home of the Eleusinian mysteries, whose origins are shrouded in the mists of time. Ceremonies are held twice a year, in spring and autumn, and initiation is open to all on the condition that they have never committed murder and they know enough Greek to pronounce the sacred formulae. Although no initiate is permitted to speak of the rituals, it appears to be a cult that worships Demeter and believes in life after death.

MEGARA

Pronunciation: meh-GUER-ah

This ancient city has recently become a colonizing force in its own right, ranging as far as Sicily and into the Bosphorus, where it is said they have founded a new city they are calling "Byzantium." One of Megara's most famous sons is Euclid, who has founded a school there.

Megarians are known as skillful debaters who love to argue about the finer points of philosophy. The

other famous Megaran is Zeno, founder of the school of Stoicism, developed no doubt while waiting in the rain for one of those long-winded debates to end.

PIRAEUS

Pronunciation: pie-RAY-us

This well-designed port city is the home of the Athenian navy, complete with arsenals, warehouses, and commercial buildings, as one would expect in a bustling harbor town. All manner of business is conducted here by bankers, money-changers, ship outfitters, entrepreneurs, sea-faring adventurers, and those who would take advantage of dark alleys and too much carousing.

Given the amount of sea traffic, it is not surprising that one can find almost any sort of item, or exotic entertainment. Heroes looking to travel across any of the major waterways or to find information or merchandise from beyond those seas, might very well wish to begin their journey in Piraeus. Sadly, it is also not unknown for individuals wake from a drug-induced stupor to find themselves shipped out to distant lands as slaves.

SALAMIS

Pronunciation: SAL-uh-miss

No one paid much heed to this arid little island in the bay of Eleusis until the Athenians decided to annex it to protect themselves from incursions by the Megarians. On a lighter note, you can find a nice shrine to Artemis overlooking the shoreline.

All in all, not a fun place to be stationed, but you go where they send you.

PELOPONNESUS

Pronunciation: pel-ah-pon-KNEE-sus

This area, joined to the rest of Greece by the narrow Isthmus of Corinth, was named after Prince Pelops, its first ruler. The Peloponnesus is divided into four regions: Arcadia, Argolis, Messenia, and Laconia, and the full history of the wide peninsula can only be realized through the histories of its separate regions.

ARCADIA

Pronunciation: ar-KAY-dee-ah

This region consists mostly of fertile farmlands and green pastures. It is a peaceful agrarian land of farmers and shepherds, but how long that will last with Laconia as its neighbor is anyone's guess.

CALYDON

Pronunciation: CAL-ah-don

This city on the edge of the Stymphalian Swamp is protected by Apollo. Travelers from many lands seek this city to rid themselves of various curses, but many are unable to overcome the treacherous quicksand pits and hideous denizens of the surrounding swamp.

They say that the woods around the city provide excellent boar hunting opportunities.

STYMPHALUS

Pronunciation: stim-FAH-lus

Situated in the northern part of the region, the town is dwarfed in reputation by the unpleasant area around the nearby lake (it's really more of a swamp) which contains quicksand, foul-smelling vapors, and enormous birds that eat human flesh.

MEGALOPOLIS

Pronunciation: meg-ah-LOP-ah-lus

Aptly named, it is one of the biggest cities on the peninsula. Within its walls live people who have left the smaller neighboring cities to dwell in safety. The Shrine of Artemis of the Lake here is very lovely. There is also a Shrine of Dionysus, with an ivory and gold statue of the god.

OLYMPIA

Pronunciation: oh-LIM-pee-ah

The populace of this sacred city once worshipped an ancient goddess, but Zeus attained pre-eminence here by "marrying" the goddess. However, the first sacred building was dedicated to his current wife (you remember Hera). Almost deserted between games, shrines to all of the major gods can be found here.





THIS MAP WAS FOUND IN THE SAME VAULT THAT HELD THE XENA SCROLLS

ARGOLIS

Pronunciation: ar-GO-lis

The people of Argolis are justifiably proud of their ancient heritage. Some of the oldest cities in Greece are found here, and the citizens are second only to the Athenians in their disdain for the people of other "lesser" regions. It is still a major power in Greece, and its heavily armed *hoplites* have so far been enough to deter even the Laconians.

ARGOS

Pronunciation: AR-gos

The capital city of King Pheidon is located on the northeastern coast. Argive *hoplite* warriors are the best armored soldiers in Greece, which is a good thing because Argos is continually at war with Sparta (who isn't?). Known for its metal-working in general, Argos also houses a large silver mint. The city claims Hera as its patron goddess (and we all know what that means!)

CORINTH

Pronunciation: KOR-inth

One of the oldest cities in Greece and a major commercial center, Corinth is an active exporter of pottery, bronze, wine, and ivory statuettes. Development of the two-level bireme and the trireme are attributed to the city.

Sisyphus ruled Corinth for many years, making it one of the most progressive cities in Greece. He was succeeded by Jason who gave up the throne to marry Hercules' mother Alcmena, and appointed Iphicles, Herc's brother, to rule in his stead.

EPIDAUROS

Pronunciation: ep-eh-DOR-us

A hospital was built here aeons ago to honor Aesculapius. Patients sleep on the skins of animals they have sacrificed in order to "see" the treatment the god has prescribed for them.

The city also houses a magnificent theater. They say laughter is the best medicine.

MYCENAE

Pronunciation: my-SEE-knee

At its height, which is long past, Mycenae regarded itself as the most important city in the world. Beginning life as a mere village, it rose to power with ruling princes whose vast wealth came from taxes, tolls, and "tribute" often obtained through force from bordering city-states. Perhaps if Agamemnon hadn't gone off to fight in Troy for so long, he might have been able to maintain its glory.

MESSENIA

Pronunciation: mess-SEE-knee-ah

This prosperous region in the southwest Peloponnesus is currently under the control of Sparta. The Messenians are not docile slaves, however, and are continually rebelling against the none-too-gentle rule of the Spartans. A whole series of adventures could revolve around the efforts of a band of heroes to help the Messenians throw off the Spartan yoke.

LACONIA

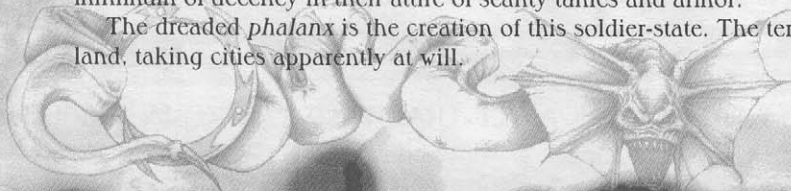
Pronunciation: lah-CONE-ee-ah

The Laconians are a martial people, who worship Ares, the god of war. And nowhere does the spirit of Ares burn brighter than in Laconia's capital, Sparta.

SPARTA

You either hate 'em or you admire 'em, but no one is without an opinion about Spartans. Never a rich place, Sparta isn't a city in the true sense of the word, but more a sprawling town founded centuries ago. Spartan men are forbidden to do manual labor, living in communes and focusing every waking minute on the way of the warrior. Children belong to the community, not to their parents (marriage not being a major activity among these people). The women are just as fierce as the men and hardly meet the bare minimum of decency in their attire of scanty tunics and armor.

The dreaded *phalanx* is the creation of this soldier-state. The terrible army moves like locusts over the land, taking cities apparently at will.



BOEOTIA

Pronunciation: bee-OH-sha

Though located in the center of central Greece, north of the Peloponnesus, Boeotia experiences stifling weather due to a lack of offshore breezes. Then again, the land is extremely fertile.

Lest you believe what the snobbish city-dwellers say about this region, remember that the brilliant poet Pindar hails from Boeotia, so it isn't completely uncivilized.

THEBES

Pronunciation: theebs

This major city in northern Boeotia is best known as the birthplace of Hercules, and as a result it has become a major tourist attraction. Even without that, Thebes would be a major trading city. Founded by the hero Cadmus, this city was ruled by Oedipus before all those awful things happened to him (a pity, really—though I hear they raked in the dinars at the last performance of "True Stories of the Theban Patrol," so I guess it's not all bad).

MT. HELICON

Pronunciation: HELL-uh-kon

This mountain is one of the two major residences of the Muses. Nearby is the beautiful Fountain of Hippocrene, whose waters are alleged to be a source of inspiration to poets.

Every five years the Vale of the Muses—the lovely valley located on the on the eastern slopes of Mt. Helicon—hosts a "Museia," or festival in honor of the Muses, where actors, playwrights, poets, and musicians participate in the competitions.

MT. OLYMPUS

Pronunciation: oh-LIM-pus

This impressive mountain, rising 9,570 feet into the sky, stands at the farthest point of Greece proper. As we all know, its cloud-covered peak is the home of the Olympian Gods (i.e., don't go there).

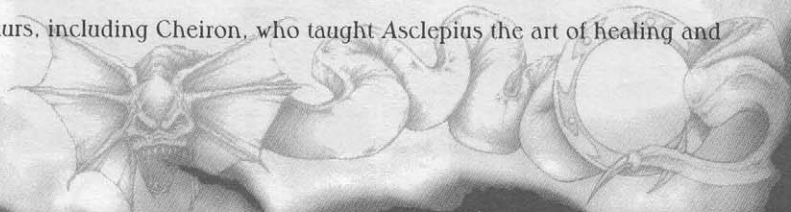


THESSALY

Pronunciation: THESS-ah-lee

The northernmost region in Greece contains dark wild forests and extremely fertile farmland suitable for raising goats, sheep, oxen, and especially horses. The people of Thessaly are hard-working farmers, much more interested in their planting and their horses than in politics, making the region the "breadbasket" of Greece.

Thessaly is the home of the centaurs, including Cheiron, who taught Asclepius the art of healing and tutored the young Hercules.



THRACE

Pronunciation: thrayss

Every region has its "back-water" area, and Thrace appears to be it for Greece, although it probably wouldn't be safe to express that opinion around its two most famous native daughters, Xena and Gabrielle.

Mostly because it is separated from the main body of Greece by the Barbarian Lands, Thrace is considered a backward region, even though it is still part of Greece. City-dwellers from southern Greece claim that a Thracian accent can be detected immediately, marking the speaker as a country bumpkin of the lowest order. This is probably due to the fact that the people of this wild mountainous area originally spoke a language completely different from Greek.

Thracians guard their independence jealously and neither the Athenians nor the Spartans have had much luck in their colonizing efforts here.

AMPHIPOLIS

Pronunciation: am-PHIP-uh-lus

Amphipolis is, of course, best known as being the birthplace of Xena. Her widowed mother Cyrene still lives here and runs a very pleasant tavern.

The people of Amphipolis are renowned warriors and the city is now considered to be a major Thracian stronghold in the region, although it is known to be desired by King Philip of Macedonia, as well as many local warlords. It is rumored that the only thing keeping Philip from invading Thrace is fear of what Xena would do, should he threaten her home town.

Nearby Mt. Pangaeus contains rich veins of gold, and the forests surrounding it provide excellent resources for shipbuilding. The town has a Temple of Ares, and just outside the city limits stands a Temple to the Furies, who can be summoned to pass judgment on those who have failed in their duty to avenge the death of family or friends.

POTEIDAIA

Pronunciation: po-tuh-DEE-ah

This harbor city just west of Amphipolis claims Poseidon as its patron god. The birthplace of Gabrielle, it is here that the young bard met up with Xena and began her remarkable adventure.

Although the entire peninsula of Chalcidice is considered part of Thrace, it has been rumored that King Philip of Macedonia is on the move. Obviously he is not as concerned about angering Gabrielle as he is about angering Xena. Little does he know the strong bond that has developed between these two adventurers—anything that affects Gabrielle will affect Xena just as much.



THE BARBARIAN LANDS

MACEDONIA

Pronunciation: mass-uh-DOUGH-knee-ah

Macedonia is a large and extremely aggressive kingdom on the northwest shores of the Thracian Sea. Ruled by King Philip II, father of Alexander (whom the Pythia has intimated will someday be called "the Great") it is actively expanding its borders under the banner of manifest destiny.

Macedonian culture is generally regarded as more barbaric and crude than that of Greece, but when the invaders are knocking down the gates of one's town with its apparently invincible phalanxes and heavy cavalry, the quality of their culture quickly becomes a non-issue.

PELLA

Pronunciation: PELL-ah

This ancient city was Philip's birthplace, which he honored by making it the strongly-fortified capital of his burgeoning empire. Set among the low hills, the environs of Pella are somewhat swampy, which may explain why he has his eyes set on some lovely beach-front property around Poteidaia.

THESSALONICA

Pronunciation: thess-ah-LAWN-uh-ka

The main harbor of Macedonia, and headquarters for Philip's fleet, it is also very heavily fortified, and visitors are *thoroughly* questioned before being allowed to enter through the strongly-defended gates.

EPIRUS

Pronunciation: EP-uh-russ

Northwest of central Greece, this wild kingdom lies on the Ionian Sea between two parallel mountain ranges. Separated from the rest of Greece by the mountains, the people of Epirus have always been considered backward and primitive, and it is true that the cities rarely rival the Greek city states in splendor. The kingdom of Epirus is ruled by King Pyrrhus, son of the great Trojan War hero Achilles.

DODONA

Pronunciation: dough-DON-ah

Home to the oldest oracle in Greece, which is sacred to Zeus, the city takes its name from the word for "oak," a tree sacred to the king of the gods. Its priests, the Selli, sleep on the ground and go barefoot, so that they never miss any of the emanations from the earth.

The Selli foretell the future by casting dice, watching the flights of birds, and listening the sound of the wind through the branches of oak trees.

ILLYRIS

Pronunciation: ill-LEAR-us

Despite the fact that the Greeks consider *everything* outside of Greece proper to be barbarian lands, in the case of Illyris, they may actually be right. The population of Illyris is made up almost entirely of small clans, most of whom are continually at war with one another. The only reason that King Philip hasn't conquered the land is that the wild clans would be far too difficult to overcome completely.

APOLLONIA

Pronunciation: ap-po-LONE-ee-ah

Not *all* of Illyris is barbaric. Apollonia is an exceedingly well-governed city on the Ionian Sea, and a favorite stop for travelers along the Ionian Coast, as well as a starting point for intrepid souls who take the Egnatian Road into Macedonia, beset as it is with wild beasts and wilder tribes.

Just outside of Apollonia is a place called the Nymphaeum, a rock which seems to magically spout fire. Here the Fire Nymphs can be contacted, and either bribed, cajoled, or compelled to do the destructive will of the bidder.



ISLANDS

CRETE

Pronunciation: kreet

The largest island in Greece, Crete is a place of mystery and danger ruled by King Minos II and his wife Pasiphae. This island is covered with the ruins of a far more ancient civilization which worshipped the Snake-Goddess, and recent rumors purport that blasphemous rites to this deity are still performed in the shadows of the ruined temples.

KNOSSOS

Pronunciation: GNAW-suss

The capital of the Minoan civilization, Knossos contains several magnificent palaces filled with frescoes, statues, and other exquisite art. A very sophisticated people, the Minoans design multi-roomed mansions, villas, and of course, palaces, complete with separate bathing rooms and indoor wells. One of their favorite sports is "bull-dancing," which involves vaulting themselves over the horns of raging bulls.

CHIOS

Pronunciation: KEE-ose

Once part of Anatolia, this lovely island contains fertile plains guarded by strategically-placed mountains, affording it protection and resultant prosperity. Ruled by public assemblies, it is a staunch ally of Athens.

Noted for sculpture and ironwork, it also supports a flourishing ceramic production which enables it to engage in active trade with Egypt. Very much an artists' island, it is content to provide the rest of Greece with lovely items for collecting.

CYCLADES

Pronunciation: SIGH-clah-deeze

This group of islands forms a circle in the waters between Asia Minor and the eastern coast of Greece.

DELOS

Pronunciation: DAY-los

The smallest island in the group, Delos is the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis. Its oracle is second in importance to that at Delphi.

Every four years, the Delian Games are held to honor Apollo, and every year, the Delia festival commemorates the birth of Apollo. Unfortunately, Delos is also a hide-out for the famed Carian pirates who prey on maritime commerce efforts throughout the Aegean.

THERA

Pronunciation: THER-ah

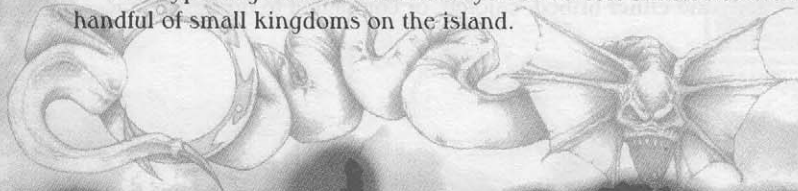
Originally named Calliste, the inhabitants renamed the island after its wise ruler Theras. Well-known for production of beautiful ceramics, Thera has a Temple to Apollo and a Grotto of Hermes. As is common among these islands, there are occasional earthquakes, but nothing to really worry about.

CYPRUS

Pronunciation: SIGH-pruss

Another significant port-of-call in this part of the world, Cyprus lies at the cross-roads of a multitude of empires and civilizations. The Cyprians have the unerring ability to assimilate whatever comes their way, so they have not had to work too hard at developing any art forms of their own beyond the rustic attempts of the early settlers.

The Cyprian government has always been a sort of half-hearted monarchy, which has resulted in a handful of small kingdoms on the island.



DODECADESE

Pronunciation: dough-DECK-ah-deeze

The name Dodecadese refers to a group of twelve islands in the Aegean Sea:

COS

Pronunciation: kose

Heroes from all over Greece come to the island's famous sanctuary of Aesculapius where the doctors, most notably Hippocrates (who emigrated here after the cessation of the Mitoan-Thessalian War), are famed for their medical skills. This is the place of last resort for treatment of wounds that cannot be healed elsewhere.

RHODES

Pronunciation: roads

Rhodes has become island of great natural wealth as a result of its excellent placement between Egypt and Phoenicia on one side and the towns of the Aegean on the other.

The most famous item in Rhodes is, of course, the bronze statue of Apollo called the Colossus that stands about 120 feet high in the harbor and was built in celebration of Rhodes having withstood a year-long siege by the Macedonians.

EUBOEAE

Pronunciation: you-BEE-ah

The second-largest island in Greece, Euboea is an extremely wealthy island under the domination of Athens. It owes its richness to the skillful exploitation of its timber, vines, grains, and mineral resources. Ruled by an oligarchy, the inhabitants are far more interested in assuring their own prosperity through agriculture and commerce than through politics.

ITHACA

Pronunciation: ITH-ah-ka

This otherwise unremarkable island on the west coast of Greece owes its fame to its king Ulysses, whose long journey to reach home after the Trojan War was aided by Xena and Gabrielle. Homer describes Ithaca as having "neither broad tracks nor meadows," and being "impracticable for horses," and "just good for goats," which is probably where Penelope got that wool to for her famous tapestry.

LEMNOS

Pronunciation: LEM-nos

This island, between the Thracian and Aegean Seas, is the favorite resort of Hephaestus, the god of the forge, because of its volcanic nature. When Zeus hurled Hephaestus down from Olympus, the god landed on Lemnos, and built his underground forge here. The history of the people is very ancient, and there is a talk of a roughly-carved *stele* depicting a man with a "strange profile" and words in an indecipherable language.

LESBOS

Pronunciation: LES-bos

A major center for poetry and music, Lesbos houses a lyre belonging to Orpheus in the temple of Apollo. The somewhat controversial Sappho, whose love poems are known throughout the Ancient World, lives here. Young girls from aristocratic (and progressive) families throughout Greece attend a boarding school under Sappho's tutelage.

SAMOS

Pronunciation: SAM-os

The largest Aegean Island, Samos boasts a vast underground aqueduct which may very well be the abode of hideous monsters who are just begging to be slain by a band of heroes.

The magnificent sanctuary of Hera makes Samos quite an attraction for pilgrims and traders, and a

major threat to Hercules. Although tossed about between Athens and Sparta, and currently under Spartan control, Samos continues to be a center for the arts, especially sculpture.

SAMOTHRACE

Pronunciation: SAM-oh-thrace

Isolated by storms and swirling mists, this mysterious and almost unapproachable island is a sanctuary of the Cabiri, gods who protect mariners and whose worshippers participate in a mystery cult. Gods like offerings, and there is a particularly beautiful statue of the winged Nike here.

SCYROS

Pronunciation: SKEER-os

Located between Euboea and Lesbos, little is known about this "lost island," save that Achilles was dressed as a woman and hidden here among the daughters of King Lycomedes in hopes he would escape his destiny at the walls of Troy. Alas, we can never escape the Fates.

SPORADES

Pronunciation: spore-AH-deeze

Yet another collection of islands, the Sporades stretch in rather haphazard manner throughout the Aegean. Their soil is arid and their people are very poor—not a place one would like to be stranded.

ASIA MINOR

ANATOLIA

Pronunciation: anne-ah-TOLL-ee-ah

This eastern realm is regarded by many mainland Greeks as a barbaric place, because the people speak a different language, worship strange non-Olympian gods, and practice customs which the sophisticated mainlanders regard as "shocking." The major kingdoms in this region are Phrygia, Lydia, and Caria.

EPHESUS

Pronunciation: EF-uh-sus

One of the most prestigious cities in Eastern Greece, Ephesus is the richest and busiest port in Asia Minor, and its citizens lead a life of dazzling wealth and luxury. It claims to be the city most beloved by Artemis. Although under the control of Lydia, it has never really made an effort to break free because the Lydian kings treat the people so well.

The city contains a magnificent Temple of Artemis, made entirely of marble and decorated with bas-relief sculptures. It is also home to a magnificent library which may be of great interest to adventurers seeking clues to the mysteries of Asia Minor.

HALICARNASSUS

Pronunciation: hal-ah-car-NAS-us

The capital city of the Carian Empire, Halicarnassus is currently ruled by Queen Artemisia, who is still in mourning over the death of her husband, the great satrap Mausolus, a tyrant who populated his city by the forced depopulation of smaller cities and towns in the area.

Artemisia is forcing the locals to perform grueling labor to complete the enormous tomb which Mausolus began when his death was foretold by an Oracle. Halicarnassus is also the birthplace of the great, if somewhat long-winded, historian Herodotus.

TROY

Pronunciation: troi

Who does not know the tragic story of this kingdom? Sitting at the mouth of the Hellespont, the long natural canal which connects the Thracian Sea to the Sea of Marmora, Troy was once a major power in the East, as well as a magnificent city with fortifications and a large palace. Sadly, it was destroyed by Agamemnon and his Achaean army during the long Trojan War, and is now restored, thanks to Hercules.

ISRAEL

Pronunciation: IZ-ray-el

The people of Israel, a kingdom to the far east of the Greek lands, worship a single god, rather than the Greek Pantheon. Israel is currently the site of a massive civil war between the conservative country folk who want to retain their old ways and the more liberal city-dwellers who want to embrace Greek culture. The leader of the conservative faction is Judas Maccabeus, a renowned guerrilla fighter, who with his brothers, is currently defeating the Greek army under Antiochus I.

CAPPADOCIA

Pronunciation: kap-ah-DOE-see-ah

An ancient country in Asia Minor on the Euxine River, Cappadocia holds an annual athletic competition usually attended by Hercules. The Cappadocians are reportedly worshippers of Artemis.



EGYPT

Pronunciation: EE-gipped

There is entirely too much to say about this land of sand, serpents, and pyramids, given the limited amount of parchment we have, so we shall beseech our noble benefactors that they find this place of sufficient fascination to commission another scroll devoted to the people of the Nile.

LYDIA

Pronunciation: LID-ee-ah

Although separated from the rest of Greece by the Aegean, Lydia is heavily influenced by Greek civilization. Its capital, Sardis, contains many buildings in the Greek style, including, they say, a brothel of remarkably well-endowed women.

The gold from its rivers has poured into the treasury of Lydia's King Croesus, so now you know what is meant by the phrase "rich as Croesus."

PHRYGIA

Pronunciation: FRIDGE-ee-ah

An ancient kingdom far to the east of Troy, Phrygia represents all the mysteries of strange and barbaric "Asia." Ruled by the fabled king Midas, it is the birthplace of the cult of Dionysus, whose followers, the Bacchae, indulge in vampiric rituals and orgiastic dancing to strange and discordant music. Of the Bacchae, Pausanias comments they are "raving mad" for the god, so one best beware.

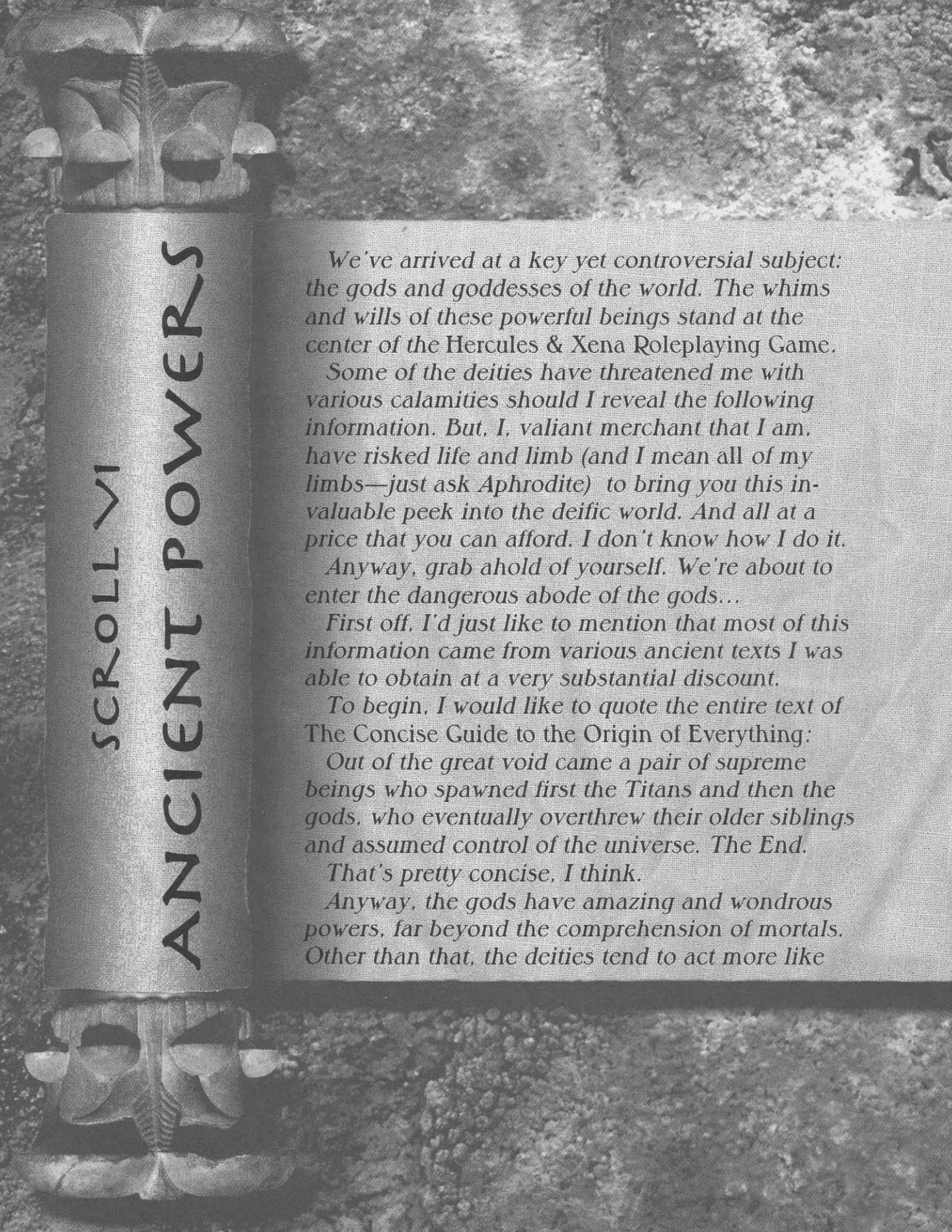
SCYTHIA

Pronunciation: SITH-ee-ah

In this strange land far to the East, Zeus nailed the body of the Titan Prometheus to Mt. Caucasus as punishment for stealing fire and giving it to man, until Hercules and Xena rescued him. Periodically, semi-nomadic barbarians of this region, skilled in shooting arrows from horseback, sweep down on the civilized settlements of the Greeks, but have always been repelled or assimilated successfully. The

bowmen of the Athenian police force are all recruited from Scythia.

Although they completely lack architecture or sculpture, the Scythians produce lovely gold work and are credited with developing pants.



SCROLL VI

ANCIENT POWERS

We've arrived at a key yet controversial subject: the gods and goddesses of the world. The whims and wills of these powerful beings stand at the center of the Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game.

Some of the deities have threatened me with various calamities should I reveal the following information. But, I, valiant merchant that I am, have risked life and limb (and I mean all of my limbs—just ask Aphrodite) to bring you this invaluable peek into the deific world. And all at a price that you can afford. I don't know how I do it.

Anyway, grab ahold of yourself. We're about to enter the dangerous abode of the gods...

First off, I'd just like to mention that most of this information came from various ancient texts I was able to obtain at a very substantial discount.

To begin, I would like to quote the entire text of The Concise Guide to the Origin of Everything:

Out of the great void came a pair of supreme beings who spawned first the Titans and then the gods, who eventually overthrew their older siblings and assumed control of the universe. The End.

That's pretty concise, I think.

Anyway, the gods have amazing and wondrous powers, far beyond the comprehension of mortals. Other than that, the deities tend to act more like

unrestrained children than supreme beings. Just imagine a five-year-old with omnipotent powers—scary, isn't it?

THE PANTHEON

Luckily for mortals, the gods have bound themselves together in a complex relationship called a Pantheon. If one deity begins to increase in power, the others join forces to put her back in her place. It is essentially a system of checks and balances that prevents any single entity from upsetting the fragile equilibrium established at the inception of time.

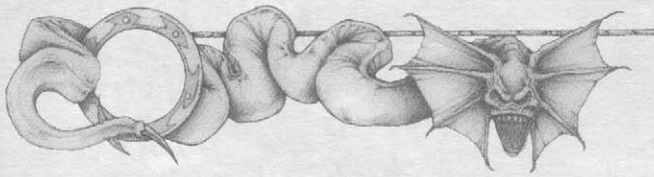
Of course, a true balance never comes into existence. Instead, the gods push too far this way, and then too far that way, never settling in any one arena for very long. And in the meantime, the lives of mortals (and sometimes even deities) are twisted, scarred, and laid to waste, their precious souls sacrificed in the name of politics, jealousy, backstabbing, greed, and the pursuit of ultimate power.

In the *Hercules & Xena Roleplaying Game* you—yes, you—get to control the gods themselves. Bitchin', huh? (Just don't let the gods catch you doing it—especially if you like to perform impressions. They don't really have a sense of humor, as far as I can tell. At least not in the "ha, ha" way. If you want to find out about deific jokes, just ask Orestes, or Echo, or Narcissus, or Tantalus, or Ulysses, or Pandora...we don't have enough scroll to list them all, but you get the picture.)

POWERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Below you'll find a catalog of the various deities currently reigning in the heavens (or the sea, or the forests, or wherever they feel like it). The Pantheon easily forms into two major groups: Olympians and Divinities. We'll cover the first group in some depth, and briefly survey the second. For the complete dirt on all the gods (including those of other cultures), pick up the *Ancient Powers* supplement

OLYMPIANS



DEUS INCOGNITUS

The gods love to play tricks on mortals, and their favorite game—devised by Hermes but most often practiced by Zeus—is to morph into some other form and descend to earth. You never know if that stag you just turned into a pin cushion is a normal animal or an ultrapowerful deity whom you've just royally pissed off. (By the way, if it's the latter, run like hell or at least blame it on someone else!)

Other times, however, the gods like to play "mortal," becoming a human, Centaur, Nymph, Satyr (or the like) for a short period of time as a means to either alter the course of a particular mortal's life or, more often than not, to copulate.

As Game Master, you can decide when the gods deign to dress up and walk the earth—especially if your players continually slaughter your Game Master characters for no reason whatsoever. For example:

Game Master: "Okay, you've just killed another innocent citizen..."

Player: "Woo-hoo!"

Game Master: "And now you notice that the dead body has started to mutate. The old man's face shifts and contorts, until finally the entire corpse forms itself into a completely different person. Why don't you make a *Pantheon* roll..."

Player: Rolls some dice. "I rolled a three."

Game Master: "Great, then you recognize Ares as he sits up and grabs you by the throat."

Player: [Speaking with a constricted throat] "Guys, I think we made a little mistake..."

You get the idea. Consider this another one of the weapons in your Game Master arsenal. (Courtesy of me, Salmoneus, don't forget. Now, in trade for this indispensable information, how about you let me be your agent. There's big money in Game Mastering. We'll do a standard deal, you get a whopping 7%—I know, I know. I'm crazy to give you that much, but I want you to feel like you're in the big time. Ow! You could've just said you weren't interested. There's no need to get rough.)

Thirteen of the most powerful gods live on Mount Olympus, the tallest peak within the regions controlled by the Greeks. For more than two thousand years they have watched over the mortal world from this lofty height, slipping off Olympus for short periods of time to have love affairs, play tricks on humanity, bestow gifts on their champions, and—especially when they get bored—start a war or two.

The Olympians are the most well known of all the supernatural beings—and for good reason. They possess powers far exceeding that of the Lesser Divinities. As far as the Olympians are concerned, they are in charge. They make the rules and they break them whenever the mood strikes them. And to Tartarus with anyone who doesn't like it (no, really, I mean it—straight to Tartarus, no trial, no opportunity to recant; it's goodbye, tata, see you in the Underworld, have a nice day, and that's that).

Most of the political infighting in the heavens involves these thirteen gods. Their family ties bind them together, but they feel the uncontrollable urge to act as they wish—without concern for the effects of their actions on their kindred. In a nutshell: they can't play nice.

Oh, and do they have egos! No god wants to be outdone by any other, and they'll go to great lengths to prevent that from happening or to enact revenge on the offending party. And—I'm sure you figured out by now—mortals usually find themselves pawns in this unending game of oncupmanship.

Sometimes a deity selects a number of heroes to focus on, whether with good or ill intentions. Either way, that hero is screwed. Get on a god's good side, and she'll treat you like a plaything, or worse, like she's your mother. Get on a god's bad side, and he'll take every opportunity to make your life a living hell. No matter what, you'll soon become inextricably embroiled in the family feud and it'll be too late to get out of it without incurring the wrath of at least one deity—not a good way to assure yourself a long, pleasant life.

All the Olympian deities are related to Zeus, whether sibling or child. Each has been assigned at least one sphere of influence (or a few), certain godly duties, and various deific powers. See the entries below for details on each deity (listed in alphabetical order—to avoid having my skin flayed if I tried to organize them by level of power or importance).

Oh, and I prayed to each deity, asking for a quote to use in their respective entries...and, well...I got what I asked for, I guess.

APHRODITE

Pronunciation: af-roh-DY-tee

Realms & Powers: Beauty, fertility, love, sex

Quote: "Listen mortal dude, I don't have time to answer your bogus questions. I've got work to do. Being a matchmaker isn't all it's cracked up to be. Have you seen some of these people? I can't work with this. Oh, and about your *other* request: your mind must be like totally whacked if you think that me and

you..." (I think that was enough to give you the idea. Why don't we move on.)

Everyone worships Aphrodite. I mean, yeah, she's beautiful, but that's secondary. Basically, if you want love (and I mean the weak-in-the-knees, fire-down-below kind of love), you'd better get down on the ground and supplicate yourself to her. Not to forget the all-important sacrifices at her shrines and temples, and the singing of her praises wherever you go.

Aphrodite tends to bore easily, and the best way she's found to stir up some excitement is to swing down to the mortal world and instigate new romances—usually between two people who for some reason or another can't possibly be together. When she can, she brings her son Cupid (some call him Eros) and his magical arrows into the fun.

You can find major Aphrodite sanctuaries throughout the world, though I would definitely recommend the one in Corinth (for a modest offering you can partake of some...well, let's just say the priestesses there aren't virgins—in any sense of the word).

Her Bodaciousness considers the myrtle and the dove sacred, so be careful not to kill, maim, or otherwise offend these precious creatures.

Roleplaying Notes: When you play the part of Aphrodite, think about that really popular chick in school who thought of herself as the gods' gift to humanity. Then give her supernatural powers, a jealous streak, a Valley Girl vocabulary, and the tiniest hint of a well-intentioned heart. Oh, and remember: flattery will get the heroes everywhere. And if all else fails, just respond with the standard, "Tubular." (Does anyone know what that really means?)

APOLLO

Pronunciation: ah-POL-low

Realms & Powers: Healing, light, music, plague, prophecy

Quote: [Apollo was unavailable for comment. Something about "keeping the sun moving across the sky on its appointed schedule so mortals don't burn to a crisp or freeze into solid chunks of flesh," yada-yada-yada. Sometimes with the gods it's just me, me, me.]

Apollo doesn't like to get involved—in anything. He rarely makes appearances in the mortal world (aside from his daily cruise across the sky in that wicked fiery chariot). I don't know why. Supposedly he's the most handsome of all the male gods—you'd think he'd want to show off.

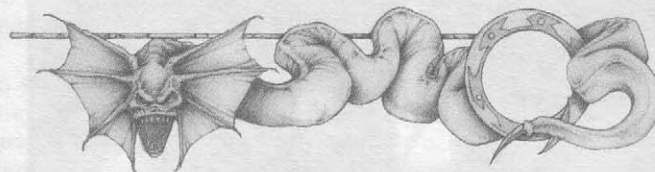
From what I've heard, he's kind of a primma donna (then again, what god isn't?). He styles himself the Lord of Morality, Principles, and Law—whatever that means. It's like he's got some kind of "holier than thou" attitude.

One important part of Apollo's divinity is his foresight. He maintains several oracles across the world, most notably the Oracles at Branchidae, Clarus, and Delphi. Here, for the cost of a sacrifice in Apollo's name, any individual can get a glimpse of his Fate in the form of riddles from his High Priestesses.

By the way, in my research I have also discovered that Apollo considers the island of Delos sacred, so don't mess it up, or his wrath will come down on you like fire from heaven.

Roleplaying Notes: When you take the role of Apollo, you've just become the perfect man—strong, handsome, sophisticated. And you'd better make sure everyone knows it (come on, let's see a good flex). Most of the time, you're too busy working out or culturing yourself to get involved in anything, which suits you just fine.

Unlike you, mortals are so crude, so unrefined, so gouache, that you wish you didn't have to stoop down to their level. But every once in a very long while, you do need their help, so, if it's in your best



IMPORTANT GOD STUFF

When bringing the gods into play during your *Hercules & Xena* adventures, remember these points:

- The gods may be omnipotent in their respective spheres of influence, but they're far from omniscient. Without a mystical device, deities do not have the power to snoop on events occurring beyond their immediate vicinity. They have the same limitations as humans—if they're not present for a particular conversation, they have no way of knowing what was said or who was involved.

- All gods have the ability to remain invisible to the mortal eye. At will, they can make themselves visible to all or to select individuals (which can result in some severely odd behavior). This power allows them to eavesdrop without risk of detection, thereby helping them get around the first point above (note, however, that in accordance with that point, the god must be present as the event).

- With regard to their Realms, gods have ultimate power, without restriction—at least in the sense of possibility. They may find themselves limited by politics or emotions, but not by the physics of the universe. In your role as Hades, Lord of the Underworld, for example, you may choose to sentence a soul to Tartarus, bring a hero back from the dead, cause a legion of corpses to rise from their graves and attack a local village. You're limited only by your imagination and the Realm of the deity in question. I think Ares summed it up best when he said, "Cool."

interests and agrees with all of your philosophies, you will deign to speak with and even—yes, I know it's painful, but here it comes—make a mutually beneficial pact with them.



ARES

Pronunciation: AIR-ees

Realms & Powers: War

Quote: "If you ever pray to me again, I'm going to come down there and kick your little merchant ass."

Ares delights in slaughter—blood, guts, and gore (especially gore). If you ever cross Ares, you might as well start picking out a nice little grave site, 'cause unless you're Xena, you don't stand a chance.

While Ares is the most brutal warrior in all the world, his schemes often fall short and he is bested by superior intellect, tactics, and strategy. His vengeance has no equal, but, to his credit, he takes losing well—better than would be expected from the God of War.

To fulfill his diabolical plots, he relies on his demonic squires: Fear, Terror, and his protégé Strife. They act as messengers and gophers and perform other sundry lackey duties.

Unlike the majority of his kin, Ares prefers to live in Thrace rather than on Mount Olympus. His exact reasons remain his secret, but he resides close to the territory of his daughters, the Amazons. According to Gabrielle, Ares visited Amphipolis in the guise of Xena's father who was away at war at the time. Xena's mother, Cyrene, grew ripe with child after Ares' visit, and soon gave birth to the Warrior Princess. Of course, whether this is the truth or another of Ares' lies intended to accomplish some unknown, though surely nefarious, end may never be resolved. I'll keep you posted.

Beware of dogs and vultures, for Ares considers them his personal pets. Harm one of them, and expect fierce and swift retribution.

Roleplaying Notes: Sure, Ares can kill a man before he gets within a hundred paces. But his devastatingly handsome features and his dashing charm conspire to melt the heart of almost every woman he encounters. You must blend both aspects of Ares' character to capture his personality.

Ares speaks few words, but the ones he chooses are saturated with conflict, derision, and hatred. To play him best, pretend you've just been scolded by a boss or teacher and you've now come up with a plan to get your revenge and the power to enact it. You're a slow fuse, biding your time, but fully aware of your boundless strength.

ARTEMIS

Pronunciation: AR-ta-miss

Realms & Powers: Archery, hunting, the moon, wildlife

Quote: "Let's see. Well, my sister Athena is a librarian. My other sister Aphrodite is...well, an airhead. Me, I'm a hunter—you know, a jock. I can kill a stag at a thousand paces, and my arrows carry instant death. That's all I have to say."

Artemis doesn't mess around. She's direct, succinct, and extremely busy. My advice: no matter what the situation, don't bother her. She's just as likely to listen to your plea as she is to strike you down with one of her lethal arrows.

If you ever encounter her, she'll most likely be garbed in animal skins, camouflage for her hunting forays. As I've mentioned, she carries a bow and a quiver full of arrows plus a knife for skinning her kills.

From what I've picked up around Olympus, Artemis has a vicious vindictive streak—just ask Niobe

(that's a story for another time). The Amazons, who themselves possess a dangerous need for vengeance, consider Artemis their matron deity, the epitome of the warrior huntress to which they all aspire.

Artemis is linked to the moon just as her twin brother Apollo is to the sun. Many of the rituals of her adherents, especially sacrifices, occur during the full moon.

Roleplaying Notes: When you play Artemis, think of yourself as that intense la crosse player from school. She's determined, athletic, strong, and she doesn't have time for BS (I'm referring to the degree, of course). If you feel your heroes are wasting the goddess's time, have her knock an arrow and begin to point her bow in their direction. That should either speed things up or send the heroes scurrying, thereby ending the conversation and allowing Artemis to continue her hunt.

ATHENA

Pronunciation: ah-THEE-na

Realms & Powers: Arts, citadels, cities, crafts, technology, wisdom

Quote: "I fail to see how this childish endeavor of yours could possibly benefit anyone in any way. Frankly, I consider it a waste of time. I mean, sitting around all day long playing with dice will only soften your mental capabilities. Why don't you all go to your local library and read a scroll?"

I don't care how sexy Athena is—she's still a nerd. Of course, I don't mean that in the negative sense of the word. On the contrary, I'm sure some people find that scrollish quality intriguing, even alluring.

If you ever catch a peak at the Goddess of Wisdom, you'll most likely find her wearing conservative clothes with her hair done up in a tight bun on the top of her head. During times of conflict, however, she has been known to don armor and carry a spear and a shield (if you see her during one of these moments, you are in some terrible trouble). Her strategies and tactics have enabled her to defeat Ares on the field of battle more than once—her intellectual skills certainly make her a formidable warrior, far more than her typical appearance would suggest.

Athena considers owls her sacred property. At this point you should know the drill: don't mess with owls or you'll wind up facing Athena's wrath. Autolycus once made the mistake of killing an owl—and though he'd like to forget about the repercussions of that incident, his companions on that adventure will never leave it be. (Oh, and by the way, you didn't hear about that from me.)

Roleplaying Notes: You are the quintessential expert on all matters intellectual. You're the most intelligent, quick-witted deity ever to walk the face of the earth. You realize you have other qualities, too, beauty among the foremost of them, but nothing is more important than wisdom. Poor mortals, they have such limited brain capacity, and they waste much of it on the unimportant: love, pride, greed. You feel it is your duty to educate them, even though—no, no, *especially* since they seem reluctant to partake of your knowledge.

BACCHUS (DIONYSUS)

Pronunciation: BA-kis (dy-a-NIS-us)

Realms & Powers: Nature, mystic ecstasy, wine

Quote: "Please, come closer, my fine merchant friend. My Bacchae would like to have you over for dinner."

Bacchus, a towering brute some nine-and-a-half-feet tall, looks more like a demon than a man, his dark red skin stretched tightly over his well-muscled form, a pair of pale white horns protruding from his thick skull. Any who have found themselves within his vicinity know that his unsettling presence can be felt at great distances. Only the bravest souls (or the insane) would dare approach the Lord of Mystic Ecstasy.

Bacchus creates servants for himself by capturing young girls and transforming them into Bacchae, feral women with sharp fangs and otherworldly eyes. According to Gabrielle, "Bacchae women take many forms, sometimes roaming the forest as wolves. Driven by an unquenchable thirst for blood, they track their intended victim relentlessly until they corner him, and tear him limb from limb."

Each Bacchae has the power to corrupt another young innocent by injecting a venom into her victim's system by means of her long fangs—which are most often sunk into the soft tissues of the neck. Should you encounter a woman with a pair of tiny puncture wounds on her throat, beware. She may do the same (or worse) to you.

Only the music of Orpheus can stop the Bacchae—unfortunately, he has recently passed into the Underworld, leaving Bacchus free to maneuver as he wishes.

Bacchus often carries a thyrsus, a staff entwined with ivy, the emblem of his cults and his choice of weapon in combat.

Roleplaying Notes: You are a hulking demon, with the power and the will to tear the heart from a mortal on the slightest whim. You revel in orgiastic ecstasy, with a particular dedication to the humors of wine. Festivals drive you mad with pleasure, and you take every opportunity to attend them yourself—in disguise, of course.

Heroes annoy you. At times, however, they can prove useful, especially when you dupe them into performing tasks they otherwise would never do.

DEMETER

Pronunciation: dih-MEE-ter

Realms & Powers: Agriculture, corn, wheat

Quote: "You mortals are more trouble than you're worth. I've given you food; be happy with that and leave me alone."

Demeter is worshipped throughout Greece, especially at Eleusis.

She plays a central role in the Eleusian Mysteries, a set of rituals that guarantee initiates a happy afterlife. The rites involve several secret sacred objects hidden away somewhere in Eleusis by the Demeter's priests and priestesses. Once per year the sacred items are carried from Eleusis to Athens and back again, and somewhere along the route the initiates reenact stories from Demeter's mythology. The ceremony culminates at Eleusis when the High Priest reveals the sacred objects to the initiates after they endure a one-day fast.

Demeter has many emblems, all related to agriculture or nature, among them an ear of corn, a narcissus lily, and poppy seeds. Her sacred animal is the crane.

Most tales involving Demeter revolve around her relationship with her daughter Persephone, whom Hades stole away to the Underworld—but that is a story for another time and place.

Roleplaying Notes: Think of Demeter as a middle-aged woman well into her menopausal stage. She has been a mother, both to her own daughter and to the world at large, for thousands of years, and frankly, she's tired of it. She just wants to perform her godly duties without interference from anyone. Oh, and does she have a temper. Cross her, like Hades did, and she's likely to cancel the harvest, letting every mortal across the world starve until she gets what she wants—and, of course, she makes it known to the general population who's to blame for their hunger (which can make things very difficult for that person or group—if you know what I mean [wink, wink]).

HADES

Pronunciation: HAY-deez

Realms & Powers: The souls of the dead, the Underworld

Quote: "I'll see you in Tartarus!"

When the Greeks bury their dead, they place two dinars under their tongues so that they have money to pay Charon, the Ferrymaster of the River Styx. Those who cannot pay are not allowed to cross the river into Tartarus, and usually return to haunt those who failed to give them the fare.

On the other side of the river stands a great wall, its gate guarded by the three-headed dog Cerberus. Inside the gates sprawls a wide plain, the Asphodel Meadows, filled with dark poplar trees, among which the dead await their sentencing by three judges: Minos, Rhadamanthys, and Aeacus.

Those who have particularly displeased the gods receive special punishment. Just ask Sisyphus's (who must continually push a massive boulder up a hill and then watch it tumble down again) or Tantalus (who is utterly parched and chained only a few feet away from a well of water).

Those souls not too good and not too bad returned to the field to wait for eternity. Those of unusual virtue are sent on to the Elysian Fields, where it is always a holiday.

Hades lives in a giant palace made of black rock in Erebus, the deepest part of Tartarus. Persephone stays with him six months out of the year, a deal struck between Persephone's mother, Demeter, and Hades. This region also is home to the Furies (see "Divinities" below for more information).

Hades demands a headcount from Charon at the end of each day so that he can gloat over his growing kingdom and make sure no one escapes. Never does he allow the dead to return to the world of the living (well, almost never anyway).

Hades possesses, among other treasures, a Helm of Invisibility, an item that tends to draw foolish adventurers into his realm with hopes of stealing the magical object for themselves. Most never survive to return from the Other Side, as any living mortals who eat anything in the Underworld will find themselves forever stranded here, even if they somehow managed to evade Cerberus, Hades' Harpies, and every other pitfall and minion of the Lord of the Dead.



Roleplaying Notes: Hades loves black—black helmet, black cape, black boots, black, black, black. And his favorite color completely matches his disposition. Most of the time, the Lord of the Underworld seems detached and ultra-serious, as if he broods over every issue with the same amount of intensity. He does not care for unresolved situations, leading him to a state of driven fury during which he does everything within his power to put an end to the loose strings. This does not mean that he feels he must win every battle, just that he wants it resolved one way or the other so that he no longer must concern himself with it. I mean, hey, lots of people are dying each day—he's got tons to do. Give the guy a break.

Adventurers who dare to enter the Underworld had better have a very good reason. Hades doesn't take kindly to invaders—though he has no problem turning them into permanent residents.

HEPHAESTUS

Pronunciation: heh-FEST-us

Realms & Powers: Fire and smiths

Quote: "Well, well, well, middleman...swindled any smiths out of their due wages lately? Come closer to the flame. I want to show you something..."

A son of Zeus and Hera, Hephaestus was born lame and cast out of Olympus to the island of Lemnos, where he grew up to become the most talented smith in the world.

His superb craftsmanship has won him the admiration of the other gods, who continually beg him to create wondrous items for them. It is rumored that Hephaestus forges his crafts in the earth's fiercest furnaces—volcanoes—so that they can never be destroyed, except by returning them to their place of origin, boiling magma.

For the most part, Hephaestus tends to keep to himself, rarely appearing in any form to mortals. His unending work makes him one of the busiest of the Olympians, preventing him from manipulating mortals in any direct way. The objects of his labors, however, usually end up causing trouble for someone, usually when they fall into the wrong hands.

Recently, Hephaestus has scored big time by enticing Aphrodite to be his lover. Only time shall tell if the union holds, but if it ends in disaster, look out—it's not going to be pretty...for any of us.

Roleplaying Notes: Hephaestus has little time for mortals. He bears them no ill will—in fact he tends to side with them against the deities most of the time—but his work at the forge consumes most of his energy and time.

Many have learned that the God of Smiths, for all of his hardened exterior, has a warm heart, perhaps

kept that way by the raging fires of his forge. He has been known to create small trinkets for his favorites or even beautiful works of art imbued with magical powers.

Play him as an overworked older brother who cannot spare much of his time, but who would do anything for his younger siblings, no matter the cost.

HERA

Pronunciation: HEH-ra

Realms & Powers: Marriage

Quote: "How dare you invoke my name, you sniveling rodent. I am the Queen of the Gods!"

Hera seems to suffer from eternal PMS. She hates pretty much everyone and everything, save Zeus, her husband, who continually drives her crazy with his gallivanting and infidelity. Of late, Hercules has occupied much of her malevolent thoughts, but on any given day she may suddenly turn her wrath toward another individual who has in some way defied her.

While Hera officially controls the realm of marriage, she holds sway over many other spheres through her relationship with Zeus, who, as King of the Gods, can command favors from the other deities. If Hera wants a mortal to suddenly find himself butt-ugly, she can simply nag Zeus until he agrees to ask Aphrodite to perform the feat.

Heroes who come under Hera's scrutiny had better find other allies among the gods or their days are numbered. Though Hercules has managed to survive the ongoing ordeal inflicted upon him by the Queen of the Gods, you must remember that he is half-god himself. Very few mortals could hope to be as successful.

The Queen of the Gods prefers to remain out of direct contact with mortals, even those she wants to destroy (though she has been known to break this rule when the mood strikes her—just ask Hercules). Her plots typically involve complex machinations that call for the assassination of the target of her wrath or that attempt to force an individual to perform a deed that would cause him to suffer unending sorrow (killing his own family, for example), much like she endures.



Roleplaying Notes: Hera is a bitch, plain and simple. But remember that her attitude evolved mostly from her experience with Zeus. She's not evil for evil's sake. In her mind, her husband, the god she loves, rejects her time and again, coming crawling back on his knees begging her forgiveness once he's done with his latest fling.

Play Hera as a scorned, angry, powerful, and intelligent woman, obsessed with revenge against Zeus. Rather than striking at the source of her pain, however, she directs that rage at others.

HERMES

Pronunciation: HER-meez

Realms & Powers: Athletics, fertility, literature, luck, merchants, oratory, roads, and thieves

Quote: "Idon'thaveverymuchtimetotalkrightnow. It'snotthatIdon'twanttoansweryourquestion—in fact, I think it's a good one but right now I'm extremely busy delivering a message from Zeus and overseeing the construction of some new roads, plus I have to get back to Homer on a few things...." [There's a lot more, but I think you get the point—and I only talked to him for about five seconds!]

Hermes is a god on a mission—well, on several missions, at once. Since he was one of the last Olympians to join the Pantheon, he assumed dozens of minor spheres rather than any singular realm—those responsibilities not already doled out to the other gods. To his credit, he carries out all of his tasks with the utmost speed and efficiency, and quickly earned the respect of his fellow deities.

While Hermes has many duties to perform, he accomplishes them all in style. His typical outfit includes winged sandals and a winged hat, and he often carries a caduceus, a staff topped with the heads of a pair of intertwined serpents—a device rumored to hold many wondrous powers.

Roleplaying Notes: Play Hermes as a late FedEx driver on amphetamines. He's not rude or arrogant, just busy. While he'll gladly agree to help mortals, they shouldn't expect him to get to it any time soon.

As Herald of the Gods, Hermes may play a useful role as a means to bring the heroes into an adventure. He can suddenly appear, charge them with a mission to accomplish, and then disappear before they can ask any questions.

POSEIDON

Pronunciation: poe-SY-den

Realms & Powers: Earthquakes, horses, the sea, water

Quote: "I allow you to travel across my seas so that you can peddle your worthless trinkets, and yet you have the audacity to risk my benevolence by asking me to take part in one of your wretched schemes?"

If there's one thing you can say about Poseidon, it's that he's territorial. No one passes across his domain without his permission, which is why mariners always make sacrifices to him by throwing valuables into the water whenever they venture out to sea.

Most of the time Poseidon will leave you alone, but cross him and you're in deep trouble. He can hold a grudge for centuries, if not longer, and his wrath knows no bounds. A sudden squall or maelstrom can quickly wreck any ship, drowning or stranding all crew and passengers.

To help him patrol and protect his realm, he employs many sea creatures, most notably the Sirens, the Nereids, and various sea serpents.

When the God of the Sea appears to mortals, he normally takes the form of a massive column of water shaped into the image of a bearded man wearing a crown and carrying a trident. Depending on the situation, he can stand anywhere from ten to a hundred feet tall—a daunting sight if ever there was one.

Roleplaying Notes: Poseidon is the guy who seems calm and collected, but who flips out during any crisis. As soon as things start to go wrong, you can count on him to make it worse by trying desperately to counteract events which are in actuality beyond his control.

He's certainly no whimp, and he loves to threaten his adversaries, but deep down he's a decent, honest fellow.

ZEUS

Pronunciation: ZOO-ss

Realms & Powers: Weather

Quote: "Hera isn't around, is she? Answer me now or I'll put a lightning bolt right through you."

Zeus's ascent to power involves deceit, backstabbing, and war—a tale for another time. Suffice it to say that the Titans would love the opportunity to wage another war against their younger siblings. Unfortunately, for the moment, they remain imprisoned in stone in various parts of the world.

Zeus, King of the Olympians, rules over all of the other gods—though some, especially his wife Hera,

continually defy him. Depending on the politics of the situation, he may immediately strike back at his transgressors, or he may let the event fade away for the moment, only to wreak his vengeance in some other manner farther down the road.

Zeus remains one of the most complex of all the deities. He holds their highest office, yet seems to spend the majority of his time among mortals, disguising himself in hundreds of different forms to eavesdrop, dazzle, or seduce. Some (not me!) would say that Zeus has become bored with his eternal life, that since he defeated the Titans he has no ambition, no ultimate goal. I mean, once you're King of the Gods, where do you go from there?

Up until a few years ago, the King of the Gods still visited earth on an frequent basis. Now, however, he seldom surfaces, meaning that he may have decided not to take human form or that he refuses to come at all. This recent development may bode ill, for who knows what plot may have arisen among the other gods to overthrow their leader (it's been known to happen before)....

Roleplaying Notes: Play Zeus as an old man who has lead a wild life. Unfortunately, he has now passed into another stage, one in which he seems tired of the adventure and idles away his time with minor bouts of meaningless fun.

DIVINITIES

Not all of the higher powers can be Olympians—there's just not enough room on Mount Olympus. That doesn't mean that these lesser gods aren't as important, just that they fall beneath the Olympians in the hierarchy of the Pantheon.

As Game Master, you may wish to first introduce the deific element by incorporating Divinities into your adventures, saving the more powerful Olympian set for later scenarios when the heroes have gained more experience (and therefore have even a slim chance of surviving such an encounter unscathed). The lesser gods still possess vast powers over their particular sphere of influence and typically report to one of the Thirteen (Helios to Apollo, Strife to Ares, Cupid to Aphrodite, and so forth), thereby testing the heroes and at the same time making the Olympians aware of their existence—which is not necessarily a good thing, as I've mentioned before.

Below you'll find a list of several (though far from all) of the Divinities and brief entries on their natures.

ACHELOUS

Son of Oceanus and Tethys, Achelous bears the moniker River God. His worshippers believe that he lives within the longest river in Greece (located in Boeotia), which carries his name.

Achelous has burning desire to find the perfect mate, leading him to kidnap young virgins who bathe in his waters. When confronted by appalled local villagers, he has been known to assume the form of a watery dragon or bull to frighten them away or, if that doesn't work, fight them off.

ADONIS

God of vegetation and fertility, Adonis is most often associated with Aphrodite. He spends two-thirds of the year with the Goddess of Love and one-third of the year with Persephone, the daughter of Demeter.

Adonis's cult continues to flourish, especially on Cyprus and in Byblos, where a river bearing his name flows through the city. His sacred flower is the anemone, its reddish hue supposedly imbued by his blood when he brushed up against a patch of the them after suffering a wound during battle.

For some reason, Ares appears to have a vendetta against Adonis, but how he plans to carry out his vengeance remains to be seen. Then again, maybe Adonis is just paranoid.

ASCLEPIUS

God of Medicine and son of Apollo, Asclepius learned the art of healing from the Centaur Chiron and eventually became so skilled that he could revive the dead.

After much experimentation, he discovered that while the blood from the left side of a Gorgon causes instant death, the blood from the right restores the deceased to life, wresting them away from Tartarus before they cross the River Styx (which occurs within twenty-four hours of the soul's departure from the body).

The Cult of Asclepius is centered at Epidaurus in the Peloponnese, where he has constructed his own school of medicine. While much of the healing art taught here comes from mystical practices, Asclepius has begun to form a more scientific foundation that he feels will greatly benefit mankind.

Zeus has become uncomfortable with Asclepius's ability to resurrect the dead and his interest in scientific methods of healing, believing the godling may upset the natural order. How the King of the Gods plans to handle the situation, however, has not yet been made known.



CUPID

As son of Aphrodite, Cupid bears the responsibility of uniting couples by shooting them with his magical bow and arrows. He appears as a good looking dude in his twenties, well built, with short-cropped blond hair and a pair of really rad wings (at least, that's how his mother describes him).

Cupid enjoys his duties, even though he has less time for them as he has recently married Psyche, daughter of Holidus, and produced an offspring he and his wife have (perhaps a bit too hastily) named Bliss.

FORTUNE

Let me put it this way: Fortune means well, she just gets a bit...mixed up. Not that I mind, of course. I personally feel she does an excellent job and I hope to someday meet her in person. It's other people who seem to have a problem with her.

From what Hercules says, Fortune appears in a shower of coins that, unfortunately, fade out of existence within a few moments. Apparently, she just recently earned her deific status, though her rise to that position remains somewhat a mystery. Then again, we're talking about the gods here, so why should I be surprised.

In general, Fortune likes to deal with mortals, who usually pay her more respect than her fellow gods. Whenever she must choose whether a person will receive good or bad fortune, she flips a coin: heads, you're golden; tails, you're screwed.

THE FURIES

The Furies—Tisiphone, Alecto, and Megaera—are older than even the gods. Their duty is to visit earth and punish evil-doers, especially those who had managed to thus far pass through life relatively unscathed. Most often, the three beautiful (and scantily clad) Divinities judge the fates of mortals who have reneged on their duties to avenge the deaths of their kin. Those found guilty suffer either persecution or madness, at the discretion of the Furies. In extreme cases—those brought by the gods themselves—the three may decide to sentence the charged mortal with both punishments, but this happens only with extreme rarity. Very few mortals could even hope to survive such a decree.

To prevent invoking their names directly (for fear of calling their attention), some mortals have taken to referring to them as the Eumenides (the Kindly Ones).

HELIOS

Closely allied with Apollo, Helios, God of Fire or of the Sun (depending on your point of view), is one of the few Titans (supposedly the son of Hyperion and Theia) who sided with the Olympians in the Great War of the Gods. For his treachery against his own kind, Zeus rewarded Helios by allowing him to remain free, unlike his fellow Titans, who were (for the most part) encased in stone throughout the world. So as not to allow Helios too much power, however, Zeus made Apollo the new God of the Sun, thereby placing Helios under the guidance of an Olympian.

Since his demotion (through which he lost his fiery steeds and golden chariot to Apollo), Helios has grown restless with his place. He has recently begun to question his choice during the War of the Gods. Whether or not he will act on these impulses is a question that the Olympians (especially Apollo) have started to worry about.

Those who have seen Helios describe him as a beautiful figure with a mane of golden hair streaked with orange.

HESTIA

While Hestia is the sibling of Zeus and Hera, she is not counted among the thirteen Olympians. She is worshipped as the Goddess of the Hearth and Virginity. Of all of the gods, Hestia is the least likely to be found anywhere but on Mount Olympus.

Hestial Virgins throughout the world gather once per year at Temples of Hestia to worship their deity. Their ceremonies often begin with the tolling of a bell—which has caused a strange drooling reaction in males in the vicinity.

MORPHEUS

Morpheus, God of Dreams, uses the Dreamscape—an alternate existence somewhere between dream and reality—to invade the thoughts of mortals and use their greatest fears to defeat them. Some of his disciples, the Mystic Priests, have learned to access and manipulate the Dreamscape, but such activities hold great danger for the initiator as for the target.

Morpheus's greatest temple sits among the rocky peaks of the Mystic Mountains.

PROMETHEUS

The Benefactor of Mankind, as the other gods derisively refer to him, Prometheus provided mortals with precious gifts, among them fire and the body's ability to heal itself. If Prometheus were ever incarcerated in any way, mortals would lose these endowments.

At one point, this event did occur, and Prometheus found himself chained to a rocky outcropping. An eagle, the offspring of Echidna and Typhon, slowly consumed his liver until Hercules, Xena, Iolaus, and Gabrielle went to the Cave of Hephaestus in Vulcan Mountain and retrieved the only sword that could break the chains binding the god (the Sword of Hephaestus). Luckily, the heroes managed to avoid touching the sword as it severed the chains, for, as the legend goes, the wielder would have been immediately destroyed.

STRIFE

Strife, God of Eternal Turmoil and nephew of Ares, has an unrivaled ambition to increase his power. Unfortunately, his youth and his impetuosity have so far prevented him from succeeding at his goal.

Strife enjoys masquerading as a mortal, using the disguise to force humans into situations they would not otherwise have become involved with. Those who have seen the god say he has a fondness for black leather, which matches his jet-black hair—a stark contrast to his alabaster skin.

DEIFIC ADVENTURES

As previously mentioned, the gods provide an excellent impetus for almost any type of adventure. The key is to determine what a particular deity might seek: power, love, knowledge, revenge. Though the gods have similar desires to mortals, they seem to possess them with greater intensity.

Remember, whatever one god wants, another (if not more than one) seeks to prevent. As a result, the deities attempt to use mortals as their avatars in the world in an attempt to prevent the other gods from knowing what scheme they have initiated. In this way, the heroes can quickly become embroiled in a deific feud from which there is no escape.

Don't forget about the heroes' past Deeds. The gods will most certainly base their opinions of any mortal and his or her past encounters with divine beings.

As Game Master, you have complete control of the powers of the gods themselves. Use them at your

discretion, but use them wisely. Don't simply smite the heroes—the gods would never do that (well, unless they really got teed off). On the other hand, don't let the heroes push the gods around. You have to find a happy medium where mortals fear confrontation with deities but don't expect them to act overtly. The gods prefer subtlety in their schemes—though you wouldn't think that considering their personalities.

Gods can do anything within their sphere of influence: Hades has the power to restore the dead to life. Apollo could refuse to drive the Sun across the sky. The question you have to answer is: What's in it for them? Each god has certain responsibilities and laws he must uphold. If he chooses to renege on a duty or break a rule, he'd better have a damn good reason, or else the other gods are going to come down on him with serious vengeance.

One warning: don't allow the gods to take control of heroes. Simply allow them to influence the heroes' lives. The players themselves should maintain (for the most part) complete control of their characters. Otherwise, they'll become frustrated with the game and give up. It's no fun if someone else is playing your hero.

Well, I hope you've enjoyed our brief tour of the Pantheon. Don't worry, there's a lot more where that came from. We just don't have the space here to discuss it all—which is why we're writing an entire book for you to buy—I mean, check out. Trust me, you're going to love it, or my name's not Lord Seltzer.



SCROLL VII
DENIZENS OF THE
ANCIENT WORLD

Monsters come in all shapes and sizes, and I can't say I'm particularly fond of any of them. They're far too busy trying to kill or eat you to slow down and listen to a skillful sales pitch or a reasonable business proposition. You've no idea the kind of dinars an enterprising showman could rake in by opening an all-Siren revue in Athens—I do, and it's killing me.

Um, where were we? Ah.

If you lived the sort of sheltered life I did as a child, you probably discount many of the stories you've heard about monsters. While it's true that bards occasionally exaggerate encounters for dramatic effect (Hercules has a beard and black curly hair according to some, if you can imagine), don't think for a second monsters don't actually exist. Unfortunately for mankind, they are all too real.

Monsters are the bread and butter of many adventures, so we ought to spend some time going over the highlights. Jason and his Argonauts compiled an interesting catalog of the creatures they encountered in their travels, and I've used that as a basis for my monster commentaries (I kind of like the sound of that: Salmoneus's Monster Commentaries). I've seen a thing or two myself and plied Hercules and Gabrielle with questions, so I've added a few

comments here and there.

The monster entries are organized into the following order: description, habitat, diet, origin, and vulnerabilities (if any). This order makes it easier for you to decide what the heroes might know about any given creature when they use the monsters skill (see Scroll II of this collection). Each entry includes a sample monster of that type; consider it representative of the species (i.e., make as many changes as you like once the players seem to get used to the abilities, strengths, and weaknesses of the creatures—that way you can keep them on their toes).

At first, it may not seem like it makes sense to assign Charisma and Knowledge attributes to a dumb monster like a Cloud Eel. Obviously, a Cloud Eel or Harpy can't use the bargain or flirt skills—but they certainly can intimidate, and that's what their Charisma score is used for. Intelligent creatures that are capable of communication, like Serpent Women, use their Charisma scores just like a hero would—they have access to all the related skills.

And on the topic of intelligence, consider the *Knowledge* score. A rating of 0D indicates that the creature is utterly unintelligent, acting purely on instinct. Such a denizen can't use any of the *Knowledge* skills. A score of 1D represents animal intelligence, and some *Knowledge* skills might be used at the Game Master's discretion. *Knowledge* scores of 2D and up put the denizen in the realm of heroes, and give them access to all the *Knowledge* skills like any other character.

A creature's Fame attribute is more a measure of its infamy—how likely is it that someone has heard of it? For example, everyone knows about Dragons—hence their fame of 75. However, few souls have heard of, much less seen, a Cloud Eel, which gives them a Fame of 10.

CHIMAERA

Description: The Chimaera is a horrifying conglomeration of different beasts. Most have a lion's head, a goat's body, and a serpent's tail, but I've heard tell of Chimaeras with leopard heads as well. Three times as big as a horse and five times as strong, Chimaeras are fearsome beasts. Did I mention that they breathe fire?

Habitat: Most Chimaeras favor isolated mountain peaks for homes, but occasionally one will crawl into a populated area to terrorize its inhabitants and eat a few slow citizens. One infamous Chimaera plagued Lycia for some time before King Iobates convinced a young hero named Bellerophon to slay it.

Diet: Chimaeras are carnivores, of course. They seem to be happy enough dining on wild boar, cattle, and deer, but they'll drop everything else to hunt a human if they catch the scent.

Origin: According to Aeneas (you know, hero of the Trojan War and son of Aphrodite), Chimaeras are originally from the infernal regions, where presumably the gods created them. But who knows?

CHIMAERA

COORDINATION 4D

ENDURANCE 9D

REFLEXES 6D

STRENGTH 9D

AWARENESS 3D

CHARISMA 6D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

METTLE 6D

Body Points: 60

Character Points: 5

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 65

Speed: 40

Special Powers:

Claws: The sharp claws of the Chimaera have a base damage of 4.

Teeth: The Chimaera's strong jaws have a base damage of 2.

Fire Breathing: Chimaera can breathe out great gouts of fire once every three exchanges for a base damage of 7 (use *marksmanship* for the attack roll).

CLOUD EEL

Description: The cloud eel is a long slithery snake-like animal, a light beige in color. Cloud eels come in a wide range of sizes, but most seem to measure roughly twenty feet long and two feet wide, though there may be those who grow even larger.

Habitat: Cloud eels swim through, well, clouds. No, really. I know it sounds outlandish, but Hercules says he fought one, and I've found him to be a reliable fellow. Soooo...

Diet: I'm not sure what exactly roams the clouds aside from cloud eels, but whatever it is, I suppose cloud eels eat them. Is anyone else finding all this kind of hard to believe?

CLOUD EEL

COORDINATION 3D

ENDURANCE 6D

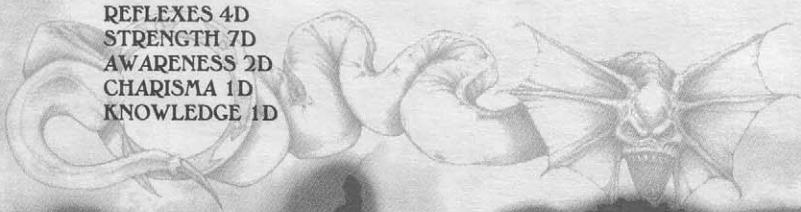
REFLEXES 4D

STRENGTH 7D

AWARENESS 2D

CHARISMA 1D

KNOWLEDGE 1D



METTLE 4D

Body Points: 35

Character Points: 1

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 10

Speed: 55

Gear: None

Special Powers:

Teeth: The Cloud Eel's wicked bite inflicts a base damage of 3.

CYCLOPS

Description: Cyclopes are hirsute giants characterized by a singular eye located in the center of the forehead. Though large, they aren't Titans. And for the most part, they aren't very clever, either.

Habitat: Most Cyclopes live on small isolated islands far out to sea. Some live in huts, but most live in large caves (those islands are riddled with caves). A tribe of Cyclopes is said to have helped the god Hephaestus forge Zeus' thunderbolts. Another particularly rowdy band of shepherd Cyclopes live in Sicily. Ulysses put out the eye of Polyphemus, one of the Sicilian Cyclopes, during his long voyage home to Ithaca.

Diet: The Cyclopes herd sheep and oxen, and live largely on the byproducts of their herds: meat, milk, cheese, and skins. Some ambitious sorts ferment their own wine, but they don't like word getting around because as soon as the wine is aged properly, other Cyclopes too lazy to make their own start dropping by carrying large clubs and making pointed comments about the importance of proper hospitality toward guests. They love manflesh, though, and will drop all else to get it if they can.

Origin: The Cyclopes are said to be offspring of Poseidon. It isn't wise to slay one who isn't bothering anyone, since dad takes a dim view to that sort of thing. If you do feel obliged to kill one, don't board a ship soon thereafter, unless you enjoy the thought of mighty tempests foundering your ship.

Vulnerabilities: Ulysses defeated Polyphemus by blinding him. I don't know if you can actually kill a Cyclops, since, like Hercules, they are the offspring of a god. They aren't very steady on their feet (something about a lack of depth perception, I suppose), and you can occasionally trip one if you're clever about it. If the Cyclops is in a reflective mood and not immediately inclined to attack, you can trade stories and tales for information and sometimes food.

CYCLOPS

COORDINATION 2D

ENDURANCE 8D

REFLEXES 4D

STRENGTH 11D

AWARENESS 2D

CHARISMA 2D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

METTLE 4D

Body Points: 45

Character Points: 3

Fate Points: 1

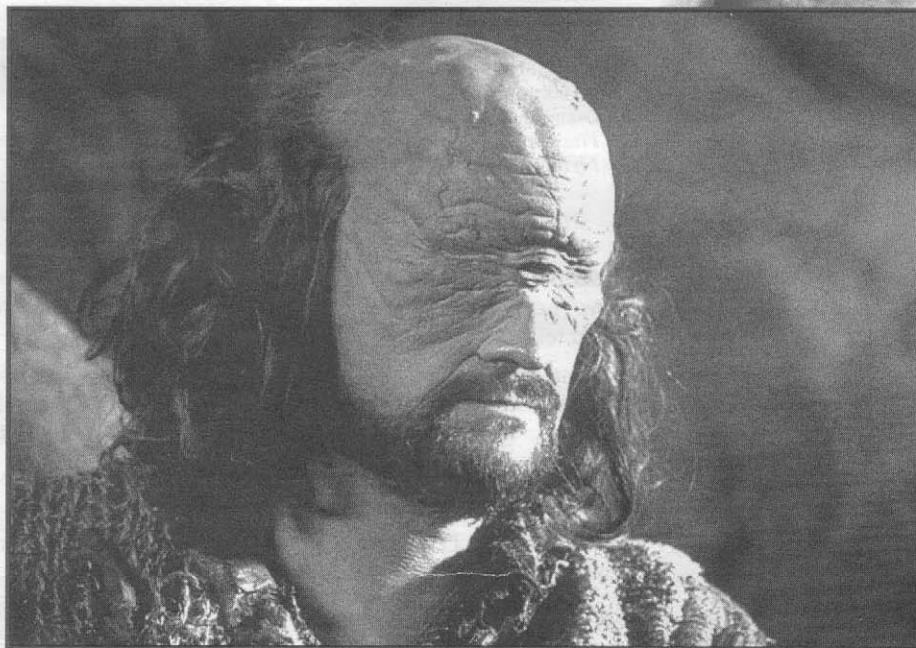
Fame: 75

Speed: 45

Gear: Various, but a huge club (8) should always be handy.

Special Powers:

Resistance to Normal Attacks: A Cyclops cannot be killed by mundane weapons, unless the heroes find a way to utterly destroy the body. Immersion in molten lava would do the trick, but dumb as they are, it's still tough to get them in it.



DRAGON

Description: Dragons are fell, horrifying beasts of near legend who seldom enter the world of men. When they do, doom and bloodshed are sure to follow. Except when they're little. Young Dragons are cute, playful little tikes.

No two Dragons are alike in appearance. Some Dragons have long snouts and smooth shiny-green bodies, while others are short and squat with knobby red scales. The Dragon that Cadmus slew (a pet of Ares) was a horrid serpent with a large crested head and scales which glittered like gold. Braxis, a young Dragon Hercules and Iolaus once helped, was a smallish Dragon.

Some Dragons breathe fire, while others emit a poisonous gas. Though not all Dragons fly, many do.

Habitat: By nature, Dragons are reclusive, though they sometimes enter civilized areas in search of food. The gods often use Dragons as guardians, so they might be found protecting sacred sites and objects the gods don't want disturbed. The Golden Fleece was protected by a Dragon. The Dragon La'don guarded Hera's golden apples which she received as a wedding present (Hercules slew La'don and took some of the apples to Eurytheus as one of his twelve labors; at least that's what the bards say—he won't talk about it).

Diet: Dragons eat bears, deer, oxen, and occasionally people.

Origin: Like Hydras and Chimaeras, Dragons are probably spawns of the underworld.

Vulnerabilities: There is a special elixir one can brew if one knows the secret, the very scent of which will cause a Dragon to fall asleep. Princess Medea of Colchis cooked up such a brew for her betrothed Jason when he was seeking the Golden Fleece.

DRAGON

COORDINATION 5D

ENDURANCE 10D

REFLEXES 7D

STRENGTH 7D

AWARENESS 4D

CHARISMA 8D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

METTLE 8D

Body Points: 70

Character Points: 6

Fate Points: 1

Fame: 75

Speed: 40 (ground), 65 (flying)

Special Powers: Dragons are all unique. The Game Master should feel free to give each Dragon the heroes encounter some kind of special ability or even vulnerability to keep things interesting. Feel free to change the attributes, too.

Claws: The sharp claws of the Dragon inflict a base damage of 6.

Teeth: The Dragon's strong jaws cause a base damage of 9. Once hit, a character is considered seized. Until he breaks free by a successful *Strength* against a difficulty of five (whether accomplished by him or his companions), he takes an additional 3 damage each exchange as the Dragon shakes his body (which counts as an action for the Dragon).

Fire Breathing: Dragons can breathe out great gouts of fire once every five exchanges for a base damage of 10.

Flying: The Dragon can fly.

EEL

Description: Giant eels are long, slithery nasty creatures, often a mottled dark green or gray in coloration. They vary in length according to age; Hercules told me he once fought an eel ten feet long, but I've heard tell of eels twice that length.

Habitat: Eels live in the dark waters of deep pools, or subterranean streams and lakes. Others haunt the cesspools and flooded catacombs of the cities, palaces, and fortresses of Greece. Most eels are freshwater creatures. There may be sea-going eels as well, but if so, are likely to be confused for seas monsters.

Diet: Smaller eels eat small fish, bigger eels eat bigger fish, and huge eels eat whatever falls in the water. Don't fall in the water.

Vulnerabilities: Eels have really long necks, so strangulation comes to mind. By the way, Hercules reports that eels make good ropes in a pinch.

EEL

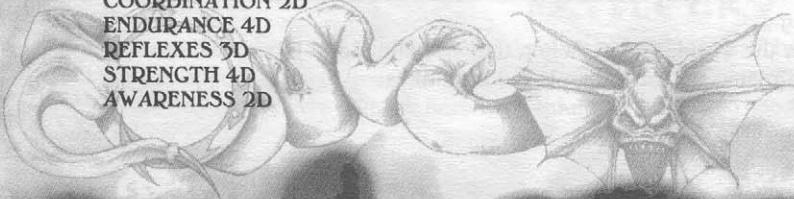
COORDINATION 2D

ENDURANCE 4D

REFLEXES 3D

STRENGTH 4D

AWARENESS 2D



CHARISMA 2D
 KNOWLEDGE 0D
 METTLE 3D
 Body Points: 30
 Character Points: 0
 Fate Points: 0
 Fame: 20
 Speed: 20
 Special Powers: None
 Vulnerabilities:
Soft Spot: Attacks that successfully hit the eel right below the head cause an extra 4 points of damage
 Specialties: None
 Special Moves: None

ENFORCER

Description: Enforcers are inhuman assassins created by Hera to take care of her enemies. Formed from one of the four elements (earth, wind, fire, water), most are given the form of a beautiful woman. Don't be fooled. She may look like a tiny slip of a girl, but she has the strength of Hercules and does not sleep, eat, tire, or weaken. Even if you manage to slay one, she will reform moments later ready to renew the battle.

Habitat: Enforcers go where their targets go. They are extremely rare, but can conceivably be encountered anywhere. If you see one, make sure she isn't interested in you before letting her get close.

Diet: Not being true living creatures, Enforcers don't eat. They do consume great amounts of the element from which they were created.

Origin: Enforcers are automatons formed of a base element, animated by Hera's will, and imbued with a sort of life and intelligence.

Vulnerabilities: There isn't much that can stop one of Hera's Enforcers. The only sure way of killing one for good is to reduce it to cause the dissolution or breakdown of the element from which the Enforcer was created. Hercules and Nemesis lured a water Enforcer into a smithy and maneuvered her into a forge (remember that forges are a *lot* hotter than a simple torch or campfire).

ENFORCER

COORDINATION 3D
 ENDURANCE 10D
 REFLEXES 7D
 STRENGTH 10D
 AWARENESS 3D
 CHARISMA 4D
 KNOWLEDGE 2D
 METTLE 5D

Body Points: 35
 Character Points: 0
 Fate Points: 0
 Fame: 25
 Speed: 30

Gear: Equip an Enforcer as an experienced warrior.

Special Powers:

Reformation: If slain, the Enforcer collapses into a pool (or pile) of the element. These base components reform into a completely restored Enforcer in ten seconds (two exchanges).

Vulnerabilities:

Extreme Exposure: The Enforcer can only be destroyed by exposure to an energy source, object, or event that breaks down the Enforcer's base components. For example, lava for a water Enforcer, the ocean for a fire Enforcer, great pressure for an earth Enforcer, and a vacuum for a wind Enforcer. It takes 2-6 exchanges of exposure to destroy the Enforcer. If the Enforcer isn't totally obliterated, it permanently loses those Body Points.

Specialties: None

Special Moves: Choose any four Special Moves for the Enforcer to use.



GIANTS

Description: Giants are, well, giant people (they aren't Titans, as many people think). They are extremely strong and long-lived. Many people assume that giants are rather slow and stupid, but this is not the case. This myth arises from the fact that slow and stupid giants are most likely to hang around us mortals. The smart ones have better things to do (unless they're on errands for the gods). Hercules has fought a number of giants, including Athaeus, Gargan, and Eurytion. He also has a few giant allies, such as Typhon and his brother Typhoon.

Habitat: Giants live in forests and mountains, where game is plentiful. Some giants work for Hephaestus and dwell with him.

Diet: Giants are omnivores, though they prefer meat (especially stag) when they can get it.

Origin: Giants are the offspring of the gods.

GIANTS

COORDINATION 2D

ENDURANCE 6D

REFLEXES 3D

STRENGTH 9D

AWARENESS 3D

CHARISMA 5D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

METTLE 6D

Body Points: 50

Character Points: 3

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 50

Speed: 45

Gear: Various, but traditionally a giant will have a large, blunt weapon such as a hammer (5), pick (6), or club (6). Giants who fight frequently wear various types of armor, too.

Special Powers: None

Vulnerabilities: None

Specialties & Special Moves: Giants are people too, you know. Flesh out important giants as you would any other characters!

GORGONS

Description: Gorgons are monstrous females with sharp teeth, huge claws, and serpents for hair. The very sight of one of these horrifying females will turn a man to stone. There are several Gorgons known to walk the land: Medusa, the most famous of her sisters, was slain by Perseus. Her severed head caused more mischief dead than alive; Perseus used it to turn to stone the Titan Atlas and half the royal court of Ethiopia. The spilled blood of the Gorgon is said to have special powers: some say the winged horse Pegasus rose from ground soaked with Medusa's blood.

Habitat: Not surprisingly, Gorgons are not welcomed in settled lands. They tend to take as lairs the ruins of ancient cities and temples, where they can bask in their hatred of mankind surrounded by his failed endeavors.

Diet: Gorgons are herbivores. (How exactly would you go about eating meat if every creature you looked at turned to stone?)

Origin: Medusa was once a beautiful woman who was cursed by Athena when the vain mortal favorably compared her own fair visage with that of the goddess (important safety tip: the gods are always better at everything). Some say the other Gorgons are similarly cursed mortals while others maintain they are immortal offspring of the gods. I've never had much of a desire to get close enough to one to ask.

Vulnerabilities: Gorgons are vulnerable to the effects of their own horrid gaze. If you can get one to view her own reflection, you'll have a brand new Gorgon statue for your collection. Of course, her powers fade when she turns to stone, so you can't have as much fun with her head as Perseus did. By the way, the death of a Gorgon restores her stone victims to flesh.



GORGONS

COORDINATION 3D

ENDURANCE 4D

REFLEXES 4D

STRENGTH 4D

AWARENESS 5D

CHARISMA 6D

KNOWLEDGE 4D

METTLE 5D

Body Points: 35

Character Points: 2

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 80

Speed: 30

Gear: When you can turn people to stone, what kind of gear do you need? Well, if the Game Master wishes, a Gorgon can have any type of gear a hero would carry, just to make things more interesting.

Special Powers:

Deadly Gaze: If a hero meets the Gorgon's gaze, he must make an *Endurance* roll of 10 or better to avoid being turned to stone.

Claws: The cruel claws of the Gorgon have a base damage of 2.

Teeth: The Gorgon's sharp fangs have a base damage of 2.

Vulnerabilities:

Mirrors: All Gorgons are vulnerable to their own gaze in a mirror, or to the gaze of another Gorgon. If a Gorgon meets another deadly gaze, it must make the same *Endurance* test as a hero. Failure results in instant petrification.

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None

GRIFFON

Description: The magnificent Griffon is a large animal with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle. Its wings and back are covered with brilliant white feathers. Its claws and talons are of such a size that Griffon hunters make drinking cups of them.

Habitat: Like the eagle, Griffons dwell in nests built on the upper peaks of tall mountains. They find gold in the mountains and build their nests of it, making them tempting targets for hunters. Griffons are native to India, but have spread to other countries.

Diet: Griffons dine on animals common to the mountain slopes, including wild goats, tigers, and other great cats, bears, and deer. They fight men to defend their nests and young, but do not care for the taste of manflesh. The Griffon's primary means of killing prey is snatching it into the air in its great talons, carrying it to a great height, and dropping it.

GRIFFON

COORDINATION 4D

ENDURANCE 7D

REFLEXES 4D

STRENGTH 7D

AWARENESS 3D

CHARISMA 7D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

METTLE 6D

Body Points: 40

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 45

Speed: 40 (ground), 60 (flying)

Gear: None

Special Powers:

Beak: The Griffon's beak causes a base damage of 5.

Talons: The strong talons of the Griffon inflict a base damage of 6.

Flying: Griffons can fly.



HARPY

Description: Harpies are winged creatures with the upper bodies of grotesque women and the lower bodies of filthy birds of prey. They have razor-sharp talons which they use for rending their victims.

Habitat: These fierce and malevolent creatures can be found throughout the world. Jason and his Argonauts encountered a small volery of Harpies tasking the blind sage Phineus on a small island near Hesperia, land of the Romans. (Did you know a group of Harpies is called a volery? Neither did I). A few years back, a bunch of them descended on the Persian city of Susa and ruined Queen Vashti's bathhouse before being driven off. According to Gabrielle, Harpies guard Hades' palace in Tartarus.

Diet: Harpies are scavengers, and eat whatever carrion they find or can kill. I image they have really bad breath.

HARPY

COORDINATION 3D

ENDURANCE 5D

REFLEXES 4D

STRENGTH 4D

AWARENESS 2D

CHARISMA 4D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

METTLE 3D

Body Points: 25

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 30

Speed: 75 (Harpies are very, very fast creatures.)

Gear: None

Special Powers:

Talons: A Harpy's talons have a base damage of 2.

Fangs: A Harpy bite has a base damage of 2.

Tail: A blow from a Harpy tail does a mere 1 point of base damage, but if the Harpy rolls the Thunderbolt of Zeus, the tail strike knocks a human-sized hero down. The hero loses his ability to act for the rest of the exchange, and must spend an action on the next exchange to regain his feet.

Natural Body Armor: The feathers of the Harpy deflect blows like armor (3).

HYDRA

Description: The dreaded Hydra is one of the great terrors of the world. A great multi-headed serpent, the Hydra strikes with great speed. Hydras have been known to have as many as seven, nine, or even fifty heads. Cutting off any one head results in the immediate regeneration of two new heads.

Habitat: Hydras favor isolated woodlands or dark caves as homes.

Diet: A Hydra will attempt to consume anything that moves.

Origin: Some say that the Hydra is the spawn of the half-woman, half-serpent Echidna and the giant Typhon (what a pair). Others, like Aeneas, claim that the Hydra Hercules fought was one of many spawned in the infernal regions. Whichever way it goes, there is definitely more than one Hydra, as both Hercules and Iolaus have fought the creatures on different occasions—one in Thrace and one in Argos.

Vulnerabilities: Only fire can defeat this formidable beast, according to Iolaus.

HYDRA

COORDINATION 5D

ENDURANCE 9D

REFLEXES 9D

STRENGTH 10D

AWARENESS 4D

CHARISMA 10D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

METTLE 6D

Body Points: 80

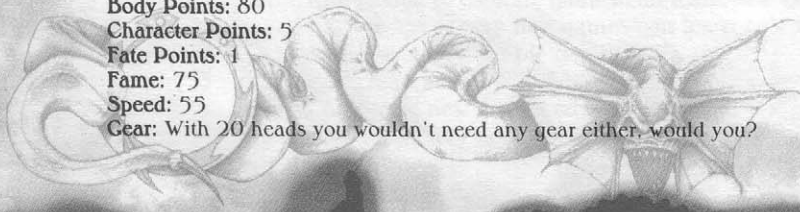
Character Points: 5

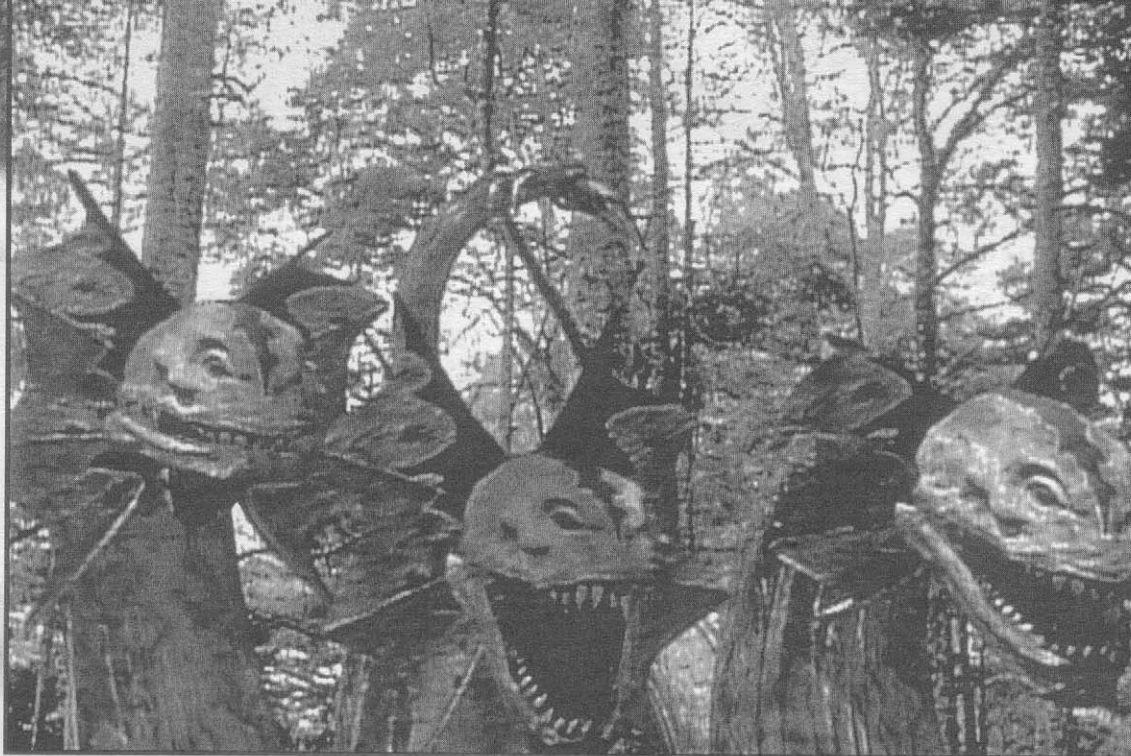
Fate Points: 1

Fame: 75

Speed: 55

Gear: With 20 heads you wouldn't need any gear either, would you?





Special Powers:

Resistance to Normal Weapons: Mundane weapons do only one half damage to a Hydra. Enchanted weapons do full damage, however.

Regeneration: When a head is cut off, two new heads, both twice as angry as the first, sprout from the stump during the exchange immediately following the severing. When this happens, the Hydra recovers the Body Points lost when the original head was severed. In addition, any damage done by mundane weapons heals during the next exchange.

Vulnerabilities:

Fire: In the absence of enchanted weapons, a Hydra can only be put to rest for good with fire, which does normal damage.

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None

LIZARD MEN

Description: Lizard men are man-shaped creatures some eight feet tall. They have rough, horny skin, which is a mottled greenish gray color. Their heads are those of lizards, with eyes placed on either side of the head and a long snout filled with sharp teeth. Their intelligence is not that of men, but their cunning makes them formidable hunters and warriors. They use simple tools and weapons, which augment their sharp claws.

Habitat: Lizard men dwell in the swamps of Asia Minor (especially along the Euxine Sea). Some live in the wild, while others have built small villages comprised of mud and straw huts.

Diet: Cranes, fish, and small mammals make up the primary diet of the lizard men.

Origin: Some say the lizard men were once human, but I haven't heard any tales specifically describing them as cursed by the gods, so this may be untrue.

LIZARD MEN

COORDINATION 3D

ENDURANCE 4D

REFLEXES 4D

STRENGTH 3D

AWARENESS 6D

CHARISMA 4D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

METTLE 5D

Body Points: 30

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 15

Speed: 40

Gear: Lizard Men carry an assortment of primitive weapons such as spears and flint knives. They are not in the habit of wearing armor.

Special Powers:



Teeth: A Lizard Man can inflict a painful bite with a base damage of 1.
Claws: The claws of the Lizard Man inflict a base damage of 1.
Vulnerabilities: None
Specialties: None
Special Moves: None

MANDRAKE

Description: Favored servants of Hera are sometimes granted the boon of a sacred Mandrake root stored in a jar. When removed from the jar and cast to the ground, the Mandrake root transforms into a hideous reptilian monster. The Mandrake has a toothy maw and a vicious tail—and no sense of self preservation. It will mindlessly assault whomsoever it is commanded to attack until victorious or destroyed.

Habitat: Mandrakes are not natural creatures, and return to their root-like status when slain or when Hera decides their purpose for being has ended. They are not found wandering in the wild; when unleashed on the world, they have specific missions to complete.

Diet: Mandrakes do not eat. They do lots of biting, but live on Hera's will rather than food.

Origin: Mandrakes are created by Hera's powers on a case-by-case basis.

Vulnerabilities: A Mandrake can be subdued by trapping it in its jar. Of course, it's a tighter fit going in than out.

MANDRAKE

COORDINATION 2D
ENDURANCE 6D
REFLEXES 6D
STRENGTH 6D
AWARENESS 2D
CHARISMA 5D
KNOWLEDGE 0D
METTLE 6D

Body Points: 40

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 35

Speed: 35

Gear: Well, they do come with a jar...

Special Powers:

Teeth: The Mandrake's vicious bite causes a base damage of 4.

Tail: A slap from the Mandrake's tail is good for base damage of 3. Heroes need to generate a 3 or better with on a fast-react *Reflexes* roll to stay on their feet; if the roll is failed, the hero loses all his actions for the remainder of the round and must spend an action on the next exchange to regain his feet.

Vulnerabilities:

Jar: Heroes may stuff a Mandrake back into its jar by making a Strength roll of 5. Once inside the jar, the Mandrake cannot escape—unless, of course, someone releases it again.

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None

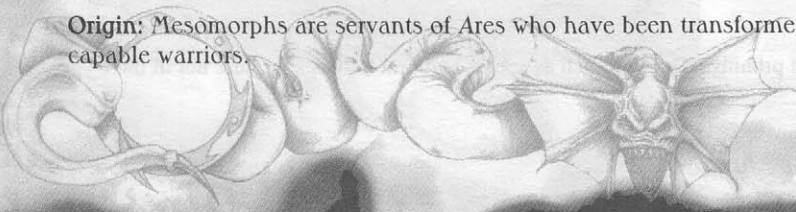
MESOMORPHS

Description: Mesomorphs are massive, man-shaped monsters. They were once human warriors who were transformed by Ares to better serve him as slaving war beasts. Mesomorphs have little of the intelligence they had as men, but their bestial cunning and strength have been greatly heightened, giving them a cleverness in battle and a delight in bloodshed that is a terror to behold.

Habitat: When under the guidance of a high-ranking servant of Ares, Mesomorphs travel in warbands as they did as humans. When freed of obligation or deprived of a commander, most Mesomorphs either slowly die from the shock or flee into the deep woods to live as beasts.

Diet: Mesomorphs are omnivores, but it seldom occurs to a Mesomorph to eat anything but the flesh of its victims.

Origin: Mesomorphs are servants of Ares who have been transformed to become more vicious and capable warriors.



MESOMORPHS

COORDINATION 2D

ENDURANCE 6D

REFLEXES 4D

STRENGTH 7D

AWARENESS 2D

CHARISMA 5D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

METTLE 5D

Body Points: 35

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 20

Speed: 20

Gear: Mesomorphs can carry and use a wide variety of wicked weapons should the occasion demand it.

Special Powers: None

Vulnerabilities: None

Specialties: None

Special Moves: Game Masters should feel free to let each Mesomorph use a different Special Move.

MINOTAUR

Description: The Minotaur is an imposing muscular man with the head and shaggy shoulders of a bull. A fierce warrior, the Minotaur is immensely strong and powerful. He has incredible endurance, a keen sense of direction, and can see in the dark.

Habitat: I only know of two Minotaurs, and they both lived in mazes and catacombs. If there are other Minotaurs, they probably live in more natural settings, like woods or mountains.

Diet: Minotaurs eat human flesh when they can get it, and beast flesh when they can't. They often trap victims they are not yet ready to consume in mucky cocoons, where they remain until the Minotaur gets hungry.

Origin: The Minotaur that Hercules slew was Gryphus, one of Zeus's many half-sons (and half-brother to Hercules). An exceedingly handsome man who used his beauty to control and manipulate people, Gryphus was transformed by Zeus into a Minotaur and placed in the labyrinth beneath Alturia as punishment. From there, he tormented Alturia's citizens—until Hercules killed him. The famous Minotaur of Crete has a more randy origin; he is the result of a tryst between a sacred bull sent by Poseidon and Pasiphaë, the wife of King Minos (apparently they live it up in Crete). Raised in the mazes built by the artificer Daedalus, he was slain by the young warrior Theseus. There are reports of other Minotaurs in the land, but if they are genuine, I don't know how they came to be. I have heard tell of a band of Minotaurs mustering for war in Thessaly, but these may just be stories.

MINOTAUR

COORDINATION 2D

ENDURANCE 7D

REFLEXES 5D

STRENGTH 8D

AWARENESS 4D

CHARISMA 4D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

METTLE 5D

Body Points: 35





Character Points: 3

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 60

Speed: 25

Gear: Minotaurs sometimes carry crude weapons or tools. They usually do not wear armor.

Special Powers:

Cocoon: Prey that is subdued by a Minotaur may be encased in a sticky cocoon. Just how the Minotaur produces the cocoon we'll leave up to the scholars to decide, but any hero caught in one must make a *Strength* roll of 8 or better to escape.

Direction Sense: Minotaurs never get lost on land. A Minotaur need never make any kind of roll relating to land navigation — they can find their way out of any maze, and they never forget where they stashed a cocooned snack.

Vulnerabilities: None

MUMMY

Description: Mummies are the preserved remains of ancient Egyptian Pharaohs. Most Mummies are good enough to lie still so honest merchants can make a few dinars

displaying their mortal remains for the educational benefit of good Greeks everywhere, but a few rude apples in the bunch actually get up and start shambling around scaring decent citizens. I don't know why or how they get animated, but they seem to be driven by the goals and temperaments they had in life. Mummies are very strong and difficult to slay.

Habitat: Most Mummies have the manners to stay in their tombs in Egypt. If you ever encounter a Mummy on this side of the Mediterranean Sea, somebody must have shipped it over for some reason.

Diet: Mummies don't eat. However, once they animate, they grow more powerful by absorbing the life energies of their dying victims.

Origin: Mummies are from Egypt. As far as I know, no one else mummifies their dead.

Vulnerabilities: Mummies are buried with an ankh. If you can obtain the ankh of an animated Mummy, you can control it, at least until it has absorbed the life energies of its first victim. Slaying a Mummy is a lot harder. Even Hercules has his hands full with the Mummy of Ishtar. Hercules finally defeated Ishtar by quickly unraveling its wrappings, exposing the bones inside. I wouldn't count on this stunt working twice—unless you're a son of Zeus or something.

MUMMY

COORDINATION 2D

ENDURANCE 5D

REFLEXES 3D

STRENGTH 8D

AWARENESS 3D

CHARISMA 4D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

METTLE 4D

Body Points: 35

Character Points: 2

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 35

Speed: 20

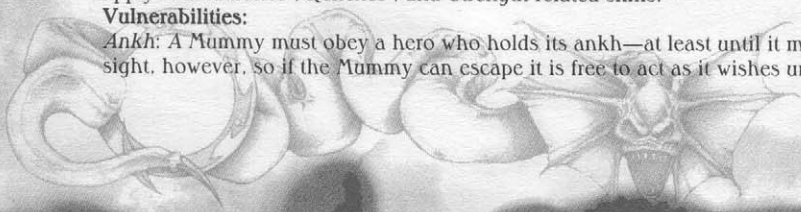
Gear: Usually none, though a Mummy may have been buried with a special weapon that it chooses to use in unlife.

Special Powers:

Life Force Drain: When a Mummy kills a victim, it permanently gains 3D of skill dice which it can immediately apply to *Endurance*-, *Reflexes*-, and *Strength*-related skills.

Vulnerabilities:

Ankh: A Mummy must obey a hero who holds its ankh—at least until it makes its first kill. The range of control is sight, however, so if the Mummy can escape it is free to act as it wishes until the hero catches up with it.



PRIMORDS

Description: Primords are hairy half-man, half-beast creatures. The shaggy men stand from six to seven feet tall, and are as adept at swarming through the trees as running through the underbrush.

Habitat: The Primords live deep in the forests near Zebran. No one has actually seen a Primord community, though scouting and hunting parties are occasionally spotted on the fringes of the forest.

Diet: Primords eat both animals and plants.

PRIMORDS

COORDINATION 5D

ENDURANCE 4D

REFLEXES 5D

STRENGTH 4D

AWARENESS 3D

CHARISMA 3D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

METTLE 4D

Body Points: 30

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 15

Speed: 40

Gear: Primords can use any primitive tools or weapons the Game Master wishes.

Special Powers:

Brachiation: Primords can move adeptly through the trees. In heavy forest, they can move as rapidly through the branches as they can on the ground. Primords also suffer no penalties for fighting above ground.

Vulnerabilities: None

Special Moves: All Primords have the *Head Bash* and *Knock Down* special moves.

PROMETHEAN BIRD

Description: The Promethean Bird is a gargantuan eagle. It got its name because one of its number was tasked by the gods to eat the liver of the Titan Prometheus to punish him for giving humans the gift of fire and healing.

Habitat: Promethean Birds live on the steep lower slopes of Mount Olympus. They range out from their aeries to hunt across the land and to do the errands of the gods, but always come back to Mount Olympus to mate.

Diet: Giant eagles are predators. Like their smaller cousins, they eat whatever mammals they can carry off, including small humans.

PROMETHEAN BIRD

COORDINATION 6D

ENDURANCE 5D

REFLEXES 4D

STRENGTH 5D

AWARENESS 4D

CHARISMA 4D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

METTLE 5D

Body Points: 30

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 55

Speed: 65

Gear: None to speak of

Special Powers:

Claws: A hit from the talons of a Promethean Bird causes a base of 3 Body Points of damage.

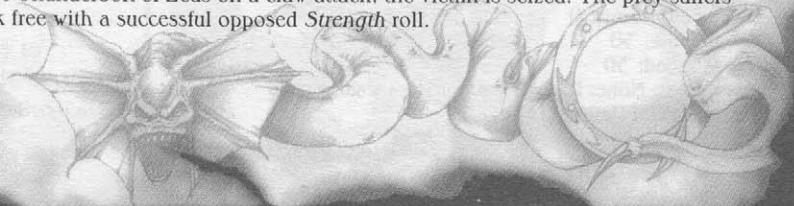
Beak: The Promethean Bird's bite inflicts a base of 4 Body Points of damage.

Grapple: If a Promethean Bird rolls the Thunderbolt of Zeus on a claw attack, the victim is seized. The prey suffers no further damage, but can only break free with a successful opposed *Strength* roll.

Vulnerabilities: None

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None



PYRO

Description: Pyro is one of Hera's evil minions, an imposing, fiery beast. Pyro, who was killed by Hercules in Orestia, was unique, but Hera can create more such beings if she so desires.

Habitat: Pyro goes where Hera sends it. It can sometimes be seen in the service of a favored worshipper of Hera, such as a high priest or warlord.

Origin: Pyro is a creature created out of Hera's twisted will. If you see one, you can be sure that Hera's attentions are focused on your immediate vicinity.

PYRO

COORDINATION 3D

ENDURANCE 8D

REFLEXES 5D

STRENGTH 6D

AWARENESS 3D

CHARISMA 6D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

METTLE 5D

Body Points: 55

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 35

Speed: 30

Gear: None

Special Powers:

Claws: The Pyro's bite causes a base of 4 Body Points of damage.

Teeth: Heroes unfortunate enough to be bitten by a Pyro suffer a base of 2 Body Points of damage.

Flame: All successful attacks from a Pyro cause an additional 5 Body Points of fire damage. Also, a Pyro will ignite anything flammable that it touches.

Vulnerabilities:

Cold & Water Sensitivity: Water or cold-based attacks cause an extra 3 Body Points of damage to a Pyro.

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None

SANDWORMS

Description: On a desolate island off the coast of Sparta, giant wormlike creatures burrow through the sandy soil, erupting from the ground to consume unwary travelers. It can sense vibrations on the ground—like the footfall of a man—and moves immediately for that location.

Habitat: Sandworms live in the loose sandy soil of their island. They cannot travel through rock, and are therefore restricted to the sandy portions of the island covered in scrub brush.

Diet: The Sandworm eats animals it detects walking over it. Most animals—those smaller than a man—are easily swallowed whole.

Vulnerabilities: Sandworms can only burrow through loose sandy soil. If you can get to rocky ground, you should be able to escape. Unless you can burrow underground yourself, you will have difficulty in killing these fell creatures, since they don't expose much of their bodies to the surface.

SANDWORMS

COORDINATION 2D

ENDURANCE 6D

REFLEXES 5D

STRENGTH 7D

AWARENESS 3D

CHARISMA 5D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

METTLE 4D

Body Points: 40

Character Points: 0

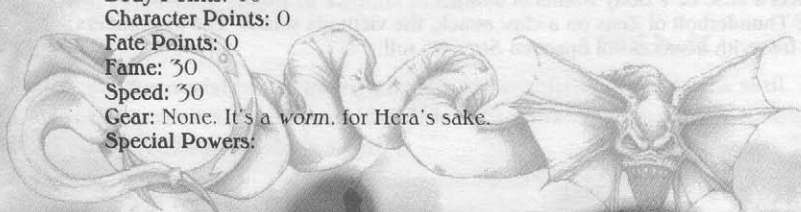
Fate Points: 0

Fame: 30

Speed: 30

Gear: None. It's a worm, for Hera's sake.

Special Powers:



DENIZENS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Teeth: Getting bitten by a Sandworm hurts to the tune of 2 Body Points of damage.

Swallow: Creatures smaller than an average human can be swallowed whole if the Sandworm rolls the Thunderbolt of Zeus on its attack. Swallowed creatures have three exchanges (15 seconds) to act before they are overcome by the worm's digestive system. Yuck. However, all damage the worm's prospective dinner may cause while within is doubled.

Vulnerabilities:

Solid Earth: Sandworms can't burrow through anything more compact than loose sand.

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None

SEA SERPENTS

Description: If you're planning on sailing the seas, be prepared for hideous serpentine creatures that lurk in the dark depths. Sea Serpents vary in appearance; some are long and smooth-skinned, while others are stubbier with rough scaly skin. Hercules has slain several Sea Serpents in his many adventures. His most famous victory was over the serpent Perfidia, who struck at a seaside estate where Jason and Hercules' mother Alcmena were to be wed.

Perseus also killed a Sea Serpent. The sea nymphs sent a sea monster to ravage Ethiopia when its queen, Cassiopeia, dared compare her beauty to theirs. To appease the sea nymphs, the queen's daughter Andromeda was chained to a rock as a sacrifice. Fortunately, Perseus was able to slay the creature before it could slay Andromeda.

Habitat: Sea Serpents live in the depths of the sea, rising to the surface only to destroy those who dare to disturb their domain. If summoned by a god, they can also strike at targets on the coast.

Diet: Sea Serpents are carnivores, and live on fish, shark, and whale.

Origin: Seas Serpents are creations of Poseidon. While many Sea Serpents act at the behest of the God of the Sea, some have been released from their service and now kill at will.

SEA SERPENTS

COORDINATION 4D

ENDURANCE 9D

REFLEXES 7D

STRENGTH 9D

AWARENESS 3D

CHARISMA 7D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

METTLE 3D

Body Points: 60

Character Points: 3

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 45

Speed: 50

Gear: None

Special Powers:

Bite: A Sea Serpent's bite inflicts a base of 4 Body Points of damage.

Body Slam: Sea Serpents can heave themselves out of the water to crush enemies underneath them for a base of 7 Body Points of damage.

Vulnerabilities: None

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None

GREAT SERPENT

Description: Great Serpents are huge snakes, some of which reach over 100 feet in length. The most feared aspect of this swift serpent is its gaping maw, which is big enough to swallow a man whole. Its powerful coils are not to be ignored—they can crush the life out of a man in seconds.

Habitat: Great Serpents are thankfully rare creatures who under normal circumstances remain in the bowels of the world. Unfortunately, they occasionally crawl up into the



upper world to lurk in dark forests, swamps, ruins, and rivers.

Diet: A Great Serpent only eats once every few days. Diet depends on what the local ecology has to offer. Typically, the serpent pursues the largest animals around, be they bears, oxen, or people.

SERPENT

COORDINATION 3D

ENDURANCE 9D

REFLEXES 8D

STRENGTH 10D

AWARENESS 4D

CHARISMA 6D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

METTLE 6D

Body Points: 65

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 25

Speed: 40

Gear: None

Special Powers:

Bite: The serpent's bite causes a mere 10 Body Points of base damage. Once it bites, it holds on, and inflicts an additional 3 Body Points of damage automatically each exchange until the victim breaks free with a successful opposed *Strength* roll.

Constrict: Once an opponent is bitten, the serpent will try to constrict them. The serpent and prey each make *Strength* rolls; if the serpent wins, it has managed to loop its coils around its enemy, and it will then do 2 Body Points of damage each exchange. If the victim struggles, opposed *Strength* rolls can be made each turn; success means the victim has escaped the serpent's clutches. The victim's companions can work together to help free him.

Thrash: Serpents can whip their bodies about, inflicting 8 Body Points of base damage to anyone hit by their muscular coils. An older, longer serpent (at least fifty feet in length) can constrict a few heroes and still have enough tail left to knock the stuffing out of any heroes who approach.

Vulnerabilities: None

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None

SERPENT WOMEN

Description: The Serpent Women of Chae, also known as the Handmaidens of Aphrodite, are voluptuous she-demons; beautiful human females above the waist, long-tailed serpents below (it is against Aphrodite's nature to create an ugly being, so even her monstrous servants are attractive). A Serpent Woman is a seductive temptress, luring men into her arms and snaky coils despite her unsettling appearance. Her embrace is deadly, however; with a single prick of her barbed tail, the man turns to stone.

Habitat: Despite their dazzling beauty, Serpent Women are ashamed of their monstrous forms, and hide themselves in dark caves and the inner sanctums of temples dedicated to Aphrodite.

Diet: Serpent Women have similar appetites to humans, but derive true substance only by the rush they feel as they turn men to stone. The heady surge fills their hearts with a vicious joy terrible to behold.

Origin: The sultry handmaidens were once human maidens of the village of Chae. Their parents angered Aphrodite by daring to compare the beauty of their daughters to the vain goddess in her very temple (you'd think people would learn). To punish them, she transformed the young maidens into Serpent Women, who fell on their families and turned them to stone. The new handmaidens then scattered throughout the world to serve Aphrodite in their new forms. Each handmaiden harbors a deep hatred of humans in her heart—especially men—and is driven to turn as many to stone as possible.

Vulnerabilities: A Serpent Woman is vulnerable to her own sting. Should she prick herself with her barbed tail, she will be turned to stone, and her victims will be restored to life.

SERPENT WOMEN

COORDINATION 3D

ENDURANCE 5D

REFLEXES 4D

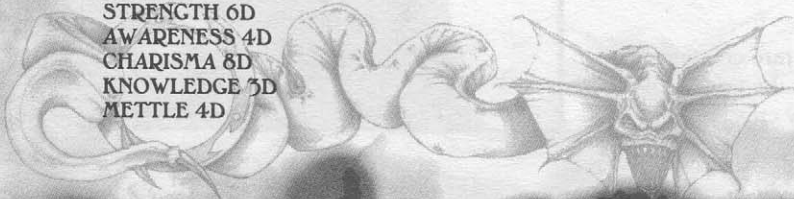
STRENGTH 6D

AWARENESS 4D

CHARISMA 8D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

METTLE 4D



Body Points: 30
Character Points: 4
Fate Points: 1
Fame: 55
Speed: 25

Gear: Serpent Women could have any sort of gear a hero might—since they have probably killed several adventurers in their lair.

Special Powers:

Tail Stinger: Any hero hit by the tail stinger of a Serpent Woman is instantly turned to stone. They can be restored to life only by killing the Serpent Woman that stung them.

Seduction: Male heroes are in extreme danger of being seduced by Aphrodite's Serpent Women. Compare the Serpent Woman's *Charisma* roll against the hero's *willpower* roll; if she wins, the hero can't help but be more receptive to her. "No, listen guys, I think we should talk to her. Really." Once the Serpent Woman has done this to a hero thrice, he will willingly walk into her arms, there to meet an unpleasant fate...

Vulnerabilities:

Tail Stinger: Serpent Women are not immune to their own stinger. Rolling the Eye of Hera on a stinger attack may, at the Game Master's discretion, result in the Serpent Woman turning herself to stone. If this frees her stony victims or traps them forever is left up to the Game Master! Heroes may specifically attempt to trick the Serpent Woman into stinging herself: a *fighting* roll of 8 or higher results in success. However, the hero also makes himself more vulnerable to attack, lowering his Defense Total by 2 (not to fall below zero, of course).

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None

SIREN

Description: Sirens are beautiful sea nymphs who charm men with their singing and lure them to their dooms. In appearance, Sirens are breathtakingly beautiful maidens. Some say that they look entirely human, while others maintain that they are mermaids. It is possible that Sirens can take on either form, or that there are two kinds of sea nymphs with similar habits. Usually, the Sirens station themselves on dangerous coastlands so investigating mariners wreck their ships. A few sailors hold that rocky shores are not required—upon hearing the song of the Siren, men lose their heads and jump overboard to their destruction. No one knows why the Sirens behave as they do, nor what they do with the bodies of their sailor victims, if anything.

Habitat: Sirens are tied to the sea, and divide their time between the water and the beaches. However, since they only sing when on shore, it is unlikely that a surface dweller will see one except when she is performing.

Diet: According to poets and bards, Sirens dine on salt spray and the whisper of the western winds, but this sounds like a load of Centaur droppings to me. If they eat, it isn't difficult to guess what their meals might consist of.

Vulnerabilities: The song of the Siren is effective on the unsuspecting, but those on their guard can stop their ears and negate its effects. According to Gabrielle, the Siren's song did not affect her and Xena as it had Ulysses—perhaps they have greater willpower than most mortals, or perhaps the Siren's song does not draw females as it does males. Hard to say, since there aren't many female mariners, and none that I know of who have encountered Sirens other than these two.

By the way, I didn't really mean that remark I made a minute ago about Aphrodite being vain. Aphrodite is a kind and generous goddess who would never think to take her raging jealousy out on mortals, especially her faithful servant Salomeus. Not that she ever gets jealous. Not at all.

SIREN

COORDINATION 2D
ENDURANCE 4D
REFLEXES 3D
STRENGTH 3D
AWARENESS 5D
CHARISMA 7D
KNOWLEDGE 3D
METTLE 3D

Body Points: 25
Character Points: 2
Fate Points: 0
Fame: 75
Speed: 30

Gear: Aside from skimpy gowns spun from sea-foam, Sirens have no gear at all.

Special Powers:



Siren Song: Sirens can sing an unearthly, seductive song that drives men wild. The supernatural song is audible for miles around the Siren's lair. Each Siren beyond the first that sings contributes 1D to the Siren's effective *Charisma* attribute, and as Sirens often work in threes, mariners will usually have to oppose 9D of *Charisma* with their *willpower* scores. Every few minutes, as the Game Master wishes, have all the men who can hear the song make opposed *willpower* rolls against the Sirens' *Charisma*. Failure means the victims are distracted with longing. Three failures and the hapless victim throws himself into the sea, or steers the ship into the rocky shore in order to reach the Sirens.

Vulnerabilities:

Silence: If the victims plug their ears, they will be able to resist the effects of the Siren's song (no rolls required).

Specialties: None

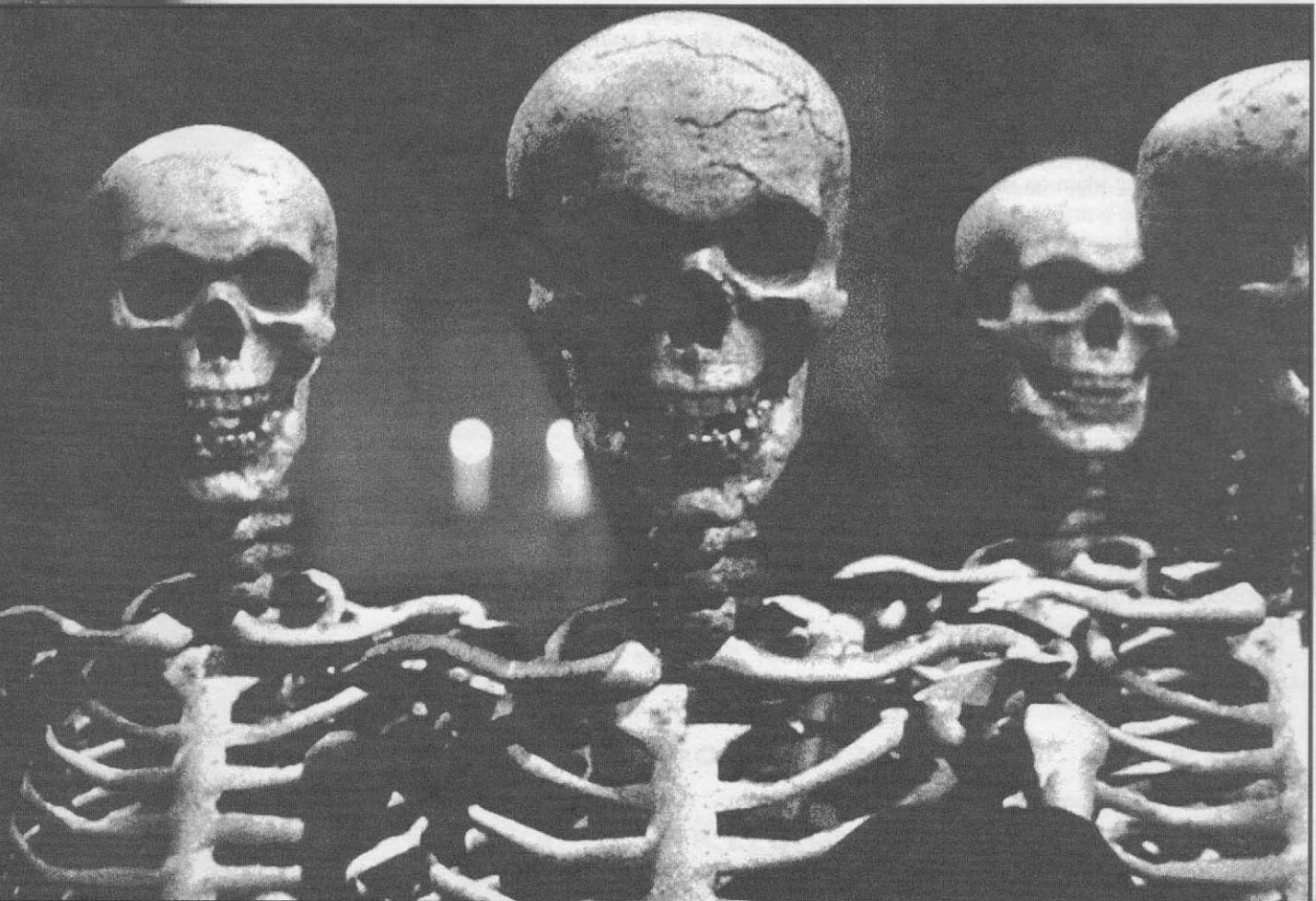
Special Moves: None

SKELETON WARRIORS

Description: If you've ever seen a man's bones, you know what a Skeleton looks like. Now imagine it running at you with a sword, and you've got the Skeleton Warrior down pat. Sometimes Skeletons are animated by Hades or one of the other gods to protect a site or attend to some errand. Other Skeleton Warriors are summoned by casting the teeth of a Dragon on the ground. From each of these teeth springs a Skeleton armed and ready for battle, who will obey the orders of the caster.

Origin: I don't know if any old Dragon's teeth will do to produce Skeleton Warriors, or whether they have to be given as tokens by the gods. I have heard the hero Cadmus (the founder of Thebes) used the teeth of a Dragon to generate living men, but more recent stories of sown Dragon teeth tell only of Skeletons being produced.

Vulnerabilities: Skeletons are brittle creatures, and are easily hung up on protrusions such as torch sconces.



SKELETON WARRIORS

COORDINATION 3D
ENDURANCE 6D
REFLEXES 5D
STRENGTH 4D
AWARENESS 1D
CHARISMA 4D
KNOWLEDGE 1D
METTLE 4D

Body Points: 20

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 15

Speed: 20

Gear: Equip Skeleton Warriors with any sort of gear that seems appropriate—give them swords at the minimum.

Special Powers:

Awareness of the Living: While the *Awareness* attribute of a Skeleton Warrior is poor, they have an uncanny aptitude for sniffing out the living. They can unerringly sense the location of any living hero within 30 feet, making them impossible to sneak up on and difficult to ambush. In game mechanics, Skeleton's gain an extra 2D on all *perception* and *Awareness* rolls when sensing nearby characters.

Damage Resistance: Weapons that do piercing damage, such as arrows or thrown knives, do half damage to Skeleton Warriors.

Vulnerabilities:

Brittle: Skeleton Warriors take 2 extra Body Points of damage from crushing attacks, such as shield bashes or being steamrollered by a huge keg of wine that just happens to roll down a narrow stairway into an undead patrol.

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None

STYMPHALIAN BIRD

Description: The Stymphalian Swamp located near the city of Calydon is home to many horrors, including Great Serpents and, some say, Harpies. Of all its dangers, the Stymphalian Bird is at the top of the list. A giant pterodactyl-like creature, the Stymphalian Bird possesses a toothy maw and long, sharp talons. It delights in snatching riders from their mounts and tossing them high into the air.

Habitat: The Stymphalian Bird is native to the Stymphalian Swamps.

Diet: Large mammals, including people and horses.

Vulnerabilities: As with all flying creatures, the Stymphalian Bird loses its edge if you can injure its wings and bring it to Earth.

STYMPHALIAN BIRD

COORDINATION 5D
ENDURANCE 6D
REFLEXES 6D
STRENGTH 7D
AWARENESS 3D
CHARISMA 7D
KNOWLEDGE 1D
METTLE 5D

Body Points: 40

Character Points: 0

Fate Points: 0

Fame: 65

Speed: 60 (airborne), 5 (ground)

Gear: None

Special Powers:

Teeth: The Bird's bite causes a base of 2 Body Points of damage.

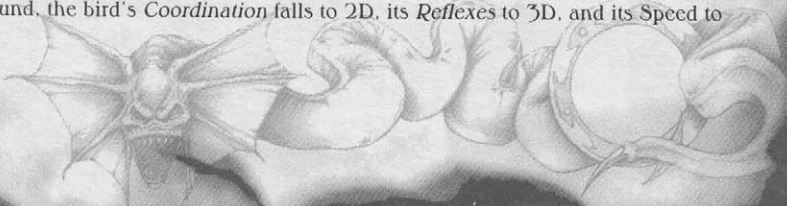
Talons: A swipe from the Bird's talons inflicts a base of 9 Body Points of damage. Rolling the Thunderbolt of Zeus means that the victim is tossed into the air, falling back to the earth for an additional 3 Body Points of damage. At the Game Master's whim, a tossed hero may be able to use *acrobatics* to lessen or negate this damage.

Vulnerabilities:

Wings: If the Stymphalian Bird's wings take 25 Body Points of concentrated damage (all must be called shots), it will be unable to fly. When on the ground, the bird's *Coordination* falls to 2D, its *Reflexes* to 3D, and its *Speed* to 10.

Specialties: None

Special Moves: None



SCROLL VIII

TREASURES OF THE
ANCIENT WORLD

Hello, Autolycus here. Of course, you probably know me as the King of Thieves. It's a title that I truly deserve, because I'm the best. However, as any king will tell you, with any crown, even a metaphorical one, comes responsibilities. My responsibilities are to my many customers and friends. So, when one of my friends came around asking for a favor from me, being the generous and caring soul that I am, I naturally agreed. Then I found out that, instead of stealing something, he wanted me to write about some of the items I've stolen. That'll teach me to be so generous and caring. Well, when he finally told me he wasn't looking for a confession, just some information, some witty tales about my exploits, it started to sound like fun. And when they let me know that my scroll would be collected with others, by other authors, I couldn't refuse. I just couldn't allow another colorless collection of words to be released to bore the public—not when I could provide what would surely be the only gem among the chaff.

Now, I don't know what Salmoneus or anyone else has written about, but I'm certain you're bored to tears by now. Rest assured, though, I'll write with the same entertaining style that I use to tell stories

in person. And not only is this scroll written by the King of Thieves—me—but the subject is intriguing in its own right. You see, I'm talking about the fantastic treasures of our world. What could possibly be more interesting or important? And naturally, when they wanted the best source to write about treasures, they came to me, for who would know more about treasures, and be able to relate it with more flair, than...the King of Thieves?

I know what you're thinking: you're wondering if you really need somebody to tell you about gold, gems, works of art, and items of mystical power. Well, no offense, but someone with my level of expertise is sure to notice a few details that would escape most people. I've spent many years collecting, as well as aiding the economy by keeping valuable items in circulation, and I've studied and handled more treasures than most people will ever glimpse. That's one of the reasons I'm called the King of Thieves.

To simplify matters for those less educated about valuables, I've decided on a standard format. With each treasure, I'll first talk about the item in general terms, including what it looks like, that kind of thing. Next, I'll give you a brief history of the item, with its origin, as well as any stories or rumors about it. Finally, I'll discuss the treasure's last known location, and any traps or guards that might be found with it. Now, keep in mind that some of my information might become outdated. While I

naturally won't make any mistakes, someone else might come along and add a new trap, or eliminate a guard, something like that. Of course, I can't be held responsible for such changes, so don't get upset if the information I give you turns out to be incorrect. A good thief checks things out himself.

And that's just what I did. I have personally handled each of the items I'm about to describe. I studied them, I stole them, and I used them. I stopped time with the Cronos Stone, flew on the Wings of Daedalus, and played the Lyre of Orpheus. Now, I'm writing about these items, sharing a small amount of my vast knowledge with others, so tales of these great treasures can be enjoyed by everyone...well, everyone who buys these scrolls.

You know, I like writing. Getting paid for something like this isn't much different from stealing. In fact, I think I'll write a much longer work on treasures. I've handled enough items in my illustrious career, I'm sure I could fill several scrolls with even more colorful stories about beautiful treasures. Maybe I'll call it "The Best Steals in the World," or perhaps "The Biggest Hits of the King of Thieves." Maybe I should just use a simple title, like "Treasures." Anyway, keep an eye out for it at your local merchant's shop.

CRONOS STONE FRAGMENTS

You know, this one irritates me a little. See, the Cronos Stone wasn't always in fragments. It used to be just the Cronos Stone, also known for a time as the Quallus Crystal: a beautiful, green-white stone, spiraling up to a point, about the size of a man's fist, tucked into brass-like base with mysterious symbols. I was going to use the stone to travel through different eras, pulling off historical acts of larceny. My perfect chance for even greater glory, ruined when I did a favor for Hercules. Now, it's just a bunch of little chunks, none bigger than the end of my little finger, and some dust.

On the bright side, the fragments have some very interesting properties. And I have a few of them in my possession. You see, the fragments allow the user to manipulate time. Like the stone did when it was still in one piece, the fragments glow brightly when they're activated.

HISTORY

Now let me see if I can get this straight. I've learned to tell stories chronologically, but I have some trouble with this one.

First, the Cronos Stone was run over by a horse and broken. I picked it up, lamenting its loss, since I had just stolen it in a few years. I dropped some of the pieces, but also put a few in my pockets. Thank the gods for good habits.

Then, I got together with myself to steal the unbroken stone from King Quallus. It was a little tough to work with me, because I was sort of pigheaded. I mean, I wasn't, but I

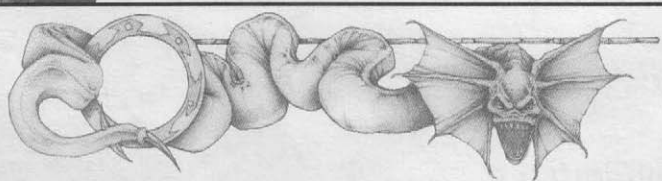
was. Well, anyway, the two of me entered the fortress by a route I knew, that hadn't been guarded later, but turned out to have guards right then. We got captured, but escaped not long after. Then I had a falling out, and ended up tying myself up. Two of me is just too much of a good thing.

After that, I went and stole the stone alone, without me. I took the Cronos Stone to my sidekick Hercules, and we left that time.

Then, I had a lot of adventures, and eventually I decided to try for the treasures of Quallus again because one of me had been unsuccessful a long time ago. The treasures were now in Quallus' fortress, which had been converted to a museum when he died. I came up with a great plan, and posed as a statue of Hermes. He's my patron god, sort of, you know, and he might even be a slightly better thief than I am. At least when I'm having a bad day.

So anyway, disguised as the statue, I stayed behind after the museum closed, and stole the Cronos Stone again, then learned quickly how to use it. A little later, I used it to send Hercules and me back in time. A few minutes later, I arrived from the past, and Hercules smashed the stone to powder. Luckily, I got some of the powder, too.

I'd like to find more fragments of the stone, because I was just learning how to use it when it got



CRONOS STONE ADVENTURE IDEAS

- A thief, traveling from the distant past, arrives in the present with the Cronos Stone intact. The instruction booklet is not included, because the instructions were created after the thief's time (perhaps by the thief, depending on the actions of the heroes). To make things interesting, this character might be idolized by one of the heroes, or could have ambitions very similar to those of one of the heroes (for example, if the character were to interact with Autolycus, he might also consider himself the King of Thieves, but from an earlier time).

- Strange stories crop up, of people finding themselves in unusual places, and in strange situations. Someone is using the freeze fragment to play pranks on people, by freezing them, then moving them into humorous or compromising situations before they rejoin normal time.



broken. Twice. I've still got a little of the powder, and one active fragment. They're pretty nice: a pinch of the powder can freeze a man in time, and the stone can...you know. I don't think I'll tell you what the fragment can do. That's best left to the experts. Like me.

Anyway, since the last time the stone got broken, I've checked a little bit into its background. Supposedly, it's been around as long as the gods. But then again, you might have noticed that time doesn't really make much sense around the Cronos Stone. For all I know, it hasn't even been created yet. Hercules seemed to know about it, but he hasn't been very forthcoming with information, and I haven't been able to track down more than a couple of stories about it, and those stories are as convoluted as my own.

LAST KNOWN LOCATION

The last time I saw most of the fragments, they were in Cyreneia, a little town where Hercules lived for a while—well, sort of. I guess they don't remember him living there any more. Anyway, when I made it back there a while ago, I couldn't find any more fragments, so I guess somebody—or maybe several people—picked them up. Most of them probably don't even know what they have.

After all, I've still got the instruction booklet.

WARDS

Well, my fragment, and my small amount of dust, are pretty well-guarded. I'm not too sure about the other fragments. Some of them might be under lock and key, a few may be guarded, one or two could just be lying in the dirt somewhere.

I do know this much: time travel is forbidden to the gods, but it's apparently okay for those with some regular human blood, like Hercules. I don't know what the punishment would be for a god who used the stone, and believe me, I don't want to find out.

POWERS

While the original Cronos Stone had a wide variety of powers, each of the remaining fragments has only one power. Anyone has a chance to activate the fragment's power by holding it and concentrating

on the specific ability it holds. In general, to activate a fragment, the user must make a Moderate (3) *willpower* roll. A few sample fragments follow; the Game Master should feel free to create others, or to duplicate the ones listed.

- **Freeze dust.** A pinch of dust placed on a person will freeze that person in time, while everything and everyone else continues to move. The person remains frozen for 4D minutes (with a minimum of one minute), or until the dust is removed (for instance, by dousing the person with water). The dust is activated when it touches the target; dropping it on the target requires a normal attack roll using the hero's *hurled weapons* skill. The target must be within a foot of the dust's user, or the dust will dissipate before it reaches the target.

- **Freeze fragment.** Like the dust, this piece of the Cronos Stone can freeze one person in time for 4D minutes (again, with a minimum of one minute). However, while the dust needs to come into contact with its target, this fragment can be used at a distance, on any target that can be seen by the user.

- **Travel fragment.** Using this fragment requires a Very Difficult (5) *willpower* roll. With it, the user can travel up to an hour into the future. Travel into the past is not possible (unless the Game Master wants to deal with it). No full god is allowed to use this fragment.

- **Slow fragment.** With this fragment, a user can slow a target, reducing that target's movement rate by half. Speech is slowed as well, and all the target's actions occur at half speed. A single target can be affected twice with this stone, slowing the target's movement to one-fourth normal. Slowness lasts 3D minutes (minimum of one minute). During that time, the target perceives everything else as moving at twice normal speed.

- **Speed fragment.** The hero using this fragment can affect time for herself; a single use of the fragment allows the user to move (and talk) twice as fast as normal (allowing her two actions per exchange without multi-action penalties).

- **Age fragment.** This fragment is activated automatically when touched. Anyone holding or wearing the fragment ages one year per hour. Related fragments might reduce the holder's age, or may function at different rates.

- **Anti-aging fragment.** The person who wears this fragment will not age while wearing it.

LYRE OF ORPHEUS

Orpheus is nearly as famous as I am, just in another field; he's the greatest musician living, just as I am the greatest living mortal thief. Like me, he was a prodigy, born with an excessive amount of talent. As a youth, he invented a seven-stringed lyre, a beautiful instrument known for the beauty of the notes played on it.

HISTORY

Of course, Orpheus and his lyre didn't become famous right away—but it wasn't long. Of course, his profession demands less discretion than mine does, so he had it a little easier. Anyway, people soon started to notice all the animals—and even a few trees—that followed Orpheus around when he played. As with any artist, it wasn't merely the instrument, but the talent, though the musician's lyre seemed to absorb some of the talent of Orpheus as well, becoming not just a fine instrument, but one of mystical power. I suppose some of my lockpicks have become mystical in nature by now.

Well, the well-constructed and talented lyre, in the hands of the great musicianly man, allowed him to accomplish great feats—like going to the Other Side and back. If you think that's easy, boy are you wrong. Not many people have done it. Well, Xena did, and then she used my body for a while...but that's another story.

Orpheus used his lyre to charm Cerberus, Charon, and everyone and everything else he ran into in the Underworld, until he found himself before the big man, Hades himself. Orpheus poured everything he had into his ballad, about the recent, untimely, and unfair death of his beautiful young wife, Eurydice, who had been bitten by a snake.

Now Hades was unmoved, being such a gloomy guy, but fortunately, his wife Persephone was there, and she was crying her eyes out. So Hades said to Orpheus, "Orph," he said—Hades is big on nicknames—"I'll let you take Eurydice back to the land of the living. You walk, and she'll follow, but if you turn and look at her, she'll have to stay here." Orpheus thought he could deal with this, because his musician's ear would allow him to hear his wife's footfalls. Well, to cut to the chase here, Hades tricked Orpheus, putting

a soft bed of pine needles in the path, so Orpheus couldn't hear the footfalls. Assailed by doubt, he turned around—and watched the love of his life fade out of existence, for good this time.

So what does this have to do with the lyre? Well, after he got back to the surface, Orpheus set aside that lyre—bad associations and all—and made a new one. And to me, this meant that he wouldn't mind if someone, like me, quietly borrowed the lyre. I know what you're thinking, "how could Autolycus be so cruel as to steal the man's reminder of his dear wife."

Well, I *didn't* steal it, smarty, I just borrowed it. And I had a good reason. You should have seen her, long legs and hair, nice perky...anyway, I wanted her to notice me, and she was a music fan. So I broke in, borrowed the lyre, played a ballad of my own creation, wooed the lady, and had the lyre back before daybreak. Just a couple of days later.

Well, Orpheus might have noticed, but he never complained. And I left him a little rental fee besides: A little ring I found—yes, found—that I knew had once belonged to his wife. I don't like to admit it, but I've got kind of a soft spot for the old guy and his hard-luck story. Not too long after that, he kinda lost his head—well, actually, he lost his body—but again, that's a whole other story.

LAST KNOWN LOCATION

As far as I know, the lyre is in the house of Orpheus, in a locked room, a little shrine to Eurydice.

WARDS

The room is guarded by a bunch of animals, wolves and bears and some less violent types, all charmed by the musician's songs. To make matters worse, Orpheus has great ears. If you can't be completely silent—which of course is no trick for the King of Thieves—then you might as well forget it.

No matter how pretty she is.

POWERS

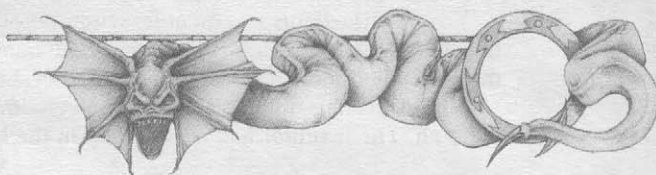
- The lyre essentially plays itself, allowing anyone who strums it to create music as if he had a Specialty of 7D in *instruments: lyre*.

- Listeners are charmed by the music produced by the lyre. Just a few seconds of music from the lyre requires all listeners (humans, monsters, gods) to make an Heroic (6) *willpower* check or become calm and well-disposed toward the lyre's player. This doesn't mean they'll necessarily do him any favors, but they will hear him out, without trying to eat or kill him.

- Those who listen to the lyre's music for five minutes or more become susceptible to suggestions from the player. The player must make the suggestion in song (if the Game Master is so inclined, she can have the player actually sing). The Game Master should decide on a difficulty, based on the outlandishness of the suggestion or request, as well as the personality and intelligence of the listener. If the musician makes the required musical instrument roll, the listener will do its best to fulfill the suggestion.

WINGS OF DAEDALUS

Ah, the wings. I think every man has dreamed of flying like a bird. Every man but *me*, that is—I have flown like a bird. They were great white wings, with golden trim, wings truly befitting the King of Thieves. Each wing is about as long as I am tall, made from a metal framework covered with wax that holds the gold-tipped white feathers. I put my arms inside the wings, and my fingers could move little levers that changed the way I flew. Of course, the real power came from my arms, which I used to flap the wings.



LYRE OF ORPHEUS ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Somehow, someone has stolen the lyre from the home of Orpheus. He didn't hear anything, and there's not much evidence, but the great musician would greatly appreciate some help from the heroes. Well, the thief is none other than the god of thieves, Hermes, who has (like Autolycus) borrowed the lyre to woo a lady. Of course, if there is a female hero, it's possible that she is the object of Hermes' affections.

- For some reason, the heroes need to make a trip to Hades. Not far, perhaps, maybe just across the River Styx. Of course, this means they still have to get past Cerberus and Charon. The lyre would be a great help, and while they might be able to convince Orpheus to loan them another lyre, it will be tough to get this one, since it has been to Hades already.

- A friend to the heroes has fallen under the spell of the lyre, which Orpheus recently played near his home. Of course, with the power of the lyre combined with Orpheus' natural skill, every living thing in hearing distance—including the friend—became charmed, and helps to guard the room where the lyre is kept. Meanwhile, the friend is missed by his or her family, as well as the heroes, who should try to rescue the friend from the well-meaning Orpheus—and all of his guard animals.

Well, maybe it had something to do with the magic in the feathers, and the skilled workmanship of Daedalus. But without my great agility, some sort of accident might have happened. One did before.

HISTORY

You see, Daedalus is a great inventor, possibly the greatest of our time. A while back, though, he got himself in some trouble with a king by the name of Minos. It had something to do with a Minotaur, one of those half-bull monsters I mentioned earlier, but I don't know all the sordid details.

Well, Daedalus and his son, Icarus, were imprisoned in the Minotaur's labyrinth, which Daedalus had planned. The inventor had a workshop in the labyrinth, and there, he built two pairs of these wondrous

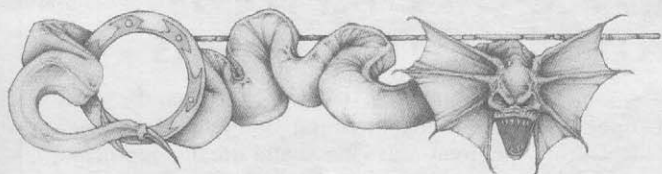
wings, so he and his son could fly to their freedom. Well, Icarus apparently flew too high, ignoring his father's warnings, until he flew so high that the sun's heat melted the wax that held important parts of the wings together.

Daedalus was greatly saddened, of course, but flew on, eventually landing in Euboea, where he began inventing things for the court of one King Nikolos. Not long after, I happened to be visiting Nikolos—on business—and while I was looking for a particular room and the ring that was supposed to be there—a ring that bound people to the wearer, if he could get them to kiss it—I stumbled across an almost empty storage room.

Empty except for the wings. And being the clever fellow I am, it didn't take me long to figure out how to use the wings. Fortunately, I'd also been hanging around the royal family for a few days, and I'd heard the story of Icarus, so I knew better than to fly too high.

Anyway, I got the ring—of course; did you have any doubts?—and then took the wings. With the royal family—and their retainers, and their guards—all watching, I flew from the top of the palace to my freedom. A few days later, I made a grand entrance into Athens, an entrance truly fitting for the King of Thieves.

I'd thought about using the wings for some of my more difficult break-ins, but I thought that would remove too much of the challenge, so I sold the wings—for a very high ransom.



DAEDALUS'S WINGS ADVENTURE IDEAS

- A series of mysterious robberies have been committed, in places difficult to reach. Some investigation should allow the heroes to discover that the culprit is using the wings in Owl Mode. Catching the criminal is another matter...

- The heroes must ascend to the top of a tall mountain, and they hear of the wings. They must either convince Daedalus of their need for the wings, or steal them, bypassing the many traps.

- Someone has found the remains of Icarus' wings, and is trying to rebuild them. To do so, they just need to study the wings, or the plans for a time. The wings are in Euboea, the plans in the Labyrinth. The heroes are placed in a position to help guard either the wings or the plans.

LAST KNOWN LOCATION

That's right, ransom: the wings went back to Euboea. And on my next trip—to get some special flowers from the garden of King Nikolos—I looked in on the wings again. I must say, the security measures had improved greatly. Though, naturally, they were no match for the King of Thieves. 'Course, Nikolos died using another one of Daedalus's inventions to fight Hercules, but the wings remain where they were left.

WARDS

The first thing Nikolos and Daedalus did was construct a special room just for the wings. The room was pretty normal, four walls made of stone, one door, no windows, that kind of thing. The special part was the door, or rather, doors. See, the room has three doors, each locked, and interlocking with the other two. To open the doors, you had to open all three at the same time, with three different keys in three different locks. Fortunately, my tongue can hold a lockpick, and I don't have to see what I'm doing to use my hands to pick locks—even both hands at the same time, while picking a third lock with my mouth. Now, with all respect due to Daedalus, I will admit the locks were a challenge. Each one had an entirely different mechanism, requiring different, yet simultaneous, movement for each lock.

And, lest I forget to mention, the third lock was at the bottom, so I did the whole thing standing on my head.

Then, once the door opened, I felt compelled to speak my name very loudly. And while this wasn't a problem for me—I usually don't mind letting people know who I am, at least once I've finished a job—some lesser known thieves might be a little shy.

Inside the room was a strange floor, no doubt another invention of Daedalus. It had square blocks covering it, nothing new, but you have to step on the blocks in a certain order, or they start sinking, rising, and setting off various traps. I decided not to spend too much time in the room, and left. I had nothing to prove.

After all, I'm already the King of Thieves.

POWERS

The user places one wing on each arm and chooses a mode with the levers inside the wings. The wings then allow the wearer to fly by flapping the wings like a bird would. The wings have five different settings, chosen with the levers (sort of like the gear settings on a bicycle). If both wings are not on the same setting, the user can fly only a few feet before crashing back to the earth.

After the wings have been used, they must be rested for four hours, during which time they regain their energy. The wings can be used for different times in different modes; if players want to switch modes during use, figure out the proportion of the time that has been used, and subtract that fraction from the time available in the new mode. For example, if a flier uses the wings in Dove Mode for two minutes, he or she will have used up two-tenths of their available time. If the user switches to Owl Mode, two-tenths of the time available in owl mode (two hours, or 120 minutes), or 24 minutes, is lost—leaving 96 minutes in Owl Mode.

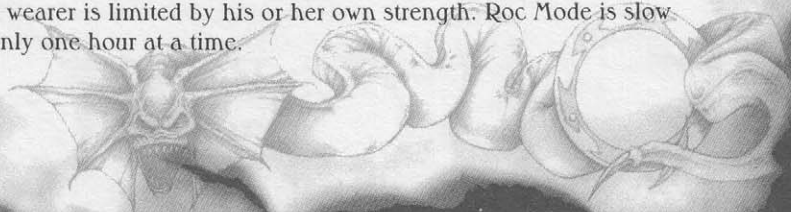
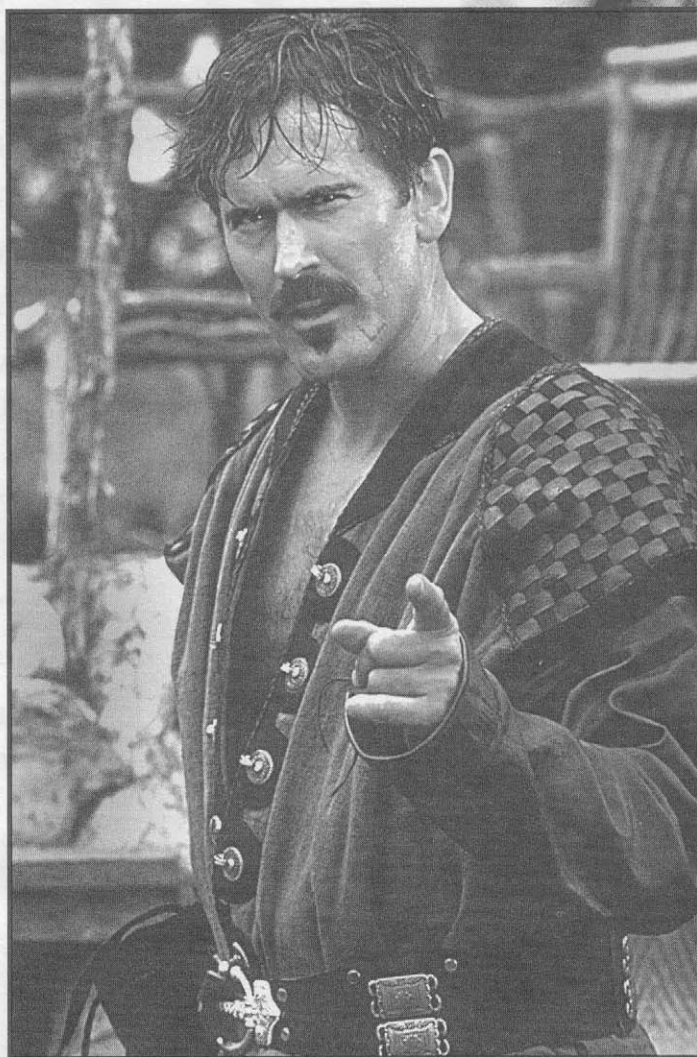
- **Dove Mode.** At this setting, the user can fly very fast, but for only a short time, and only in a basically straight line. The wearer can fly at a Speed of 75. However, at this speed, the wings can be used for only 10 minutes before they must be rested. Few maneuvers are possible, but simple changes of direction are possible.

- **Hawk Mode.** When in Hawk Mode, the wings allow a great deal of maneuverability; the flier is capable of great acrobatic feats—though the user must make an *acrobatics* check for more difficult maneuvers (the Game Master should base the difficulty of the check on just how ludicrous the maneuver sounds). Failing the check means the maneuver fails, and the user must make a Moderate (3) *Reflexes* check and a Moderate (3) *Strength* check to stay safely in flight. Speed in this mode is lessened to 50. Hawk Mode can be used for thirty minutes before rest is necessary.

- **Pegasus Mode.** This mode allows the flier to travel great distances without stopping—but flight is relatively slow, with a Speed of 35. Basic changes in direction are possible, but daring maneuvers are not. Pegasus Mode can be used for 10 hours before it becomes necessary to rest the wings.

- **Owl Mode.** Another medium speed mode, this setting also allows the user to travel at a Speed of 30. Travel in this mode allows a small amount of maneuvering, but nothing too risky. Flight in Owl Mode is completely silent, and can last for as long as one hour.

- **Roc Mode.** This setting allows the user to carry great weights. These can be placed on the flier's person, or hung from the wings, attaching near the arm holes. About 1,000 pounds can be carried if attached to the wings; otherwise, the wearer is limited by his or her own strength. Roc Mode is slow (Speed of 35), and can be used for only one hour at a time.



It is a time of myth and legend, when the ancient gods ruled heaven and earth and plagued mankind with suffering. It is a time of vicious warlords, horrific monsters, and twisted intrigues. It is a time of power, of danger, of passion. A time when the land cries out for heroes...

