

Lace & Steel



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FOREWORD CONCERNING ROLE PLAYING GAMES

(Ignore this section if you are an old hand at playing games)

For those of you who are new to the concept, a role playing game may be quite difficult to catch on to at first. Role playing games have no winners or losers, being played simply for the enjoyment of the exercise. A game will involve one or more players, each of whom creates an imaginary "character" which acts as a kind of alter ego, and whose adventures and misadventures will be guided by the will of its controlling player.

The game is presided over by a Referee (also called the Referee). The referee acts as a storyteller, presenting the players with problems and information, and adjudicating the results of the player characters' actions. A role playing game thus becomes an ongoing story in which both the players and the referee participate, the referee creating the general framework and the player characters creating the action.

These rules are intended as a framework which will allow the referee and players to simulate the adventures of their characters and the workings of the game environment. They are not intended to cover every possible eventuality. Referees should feel free to improvise or adapt the rules to meet their particular needs.

FOREWARD NOTE

Throughout the rule book, the side margins will be used to provide the reader with examples and optional rules. These notes are supplemental to the main text, but are not essential. Feel free to ignore these sections if you desire.





A LACE & STEEL adventure is romance, melodrama, magic and daring-do. Capturing a feeling of fun and fantasy is more important than stacking up the body count. Combat should be a part of the drama - Not the heart and soul of your game!

Players will quickly find that the game system is designed to maximize the fun and drama caused by such crisis situations as fights, sorcerous battles and repartee exchanges. You will encounter difficulties when trying to run traditional "hack n' slash" style adventures, with half a dozen characters constantly wading thigh deep through the blood of slain enemies. The combat system is not designed to accommodate this dubious style of play, nor does the author feel that this is a weakness in the system.

Introduction

LACE & STEEL is an attempt to create a fantastic game environment. With LACE & STEEL, I have sought to capture the elements of swashbuckling romance that are missing from the bulk of fantasy role playing games. Evil grand viziers, ladies in distress, the flash of rapiers and billow of sails in a fair wind! These are the elements of romantic fantasy, and it is just such things that dour, brutal medieval monster bashing games tend to ignore.

LACE & STEEL is an unusual game to run for a number of reasons. The LACE & STEEL combat system uses a unique card based combat system, where melee combats are played out as a card game. Combats are thus time consuming and challenging, with player skill affecting the final combat result. Combat with other characters thus becomes very dangerous and very entertaining (when compared to a dice based combat system), removing the need for wacky monsters and toothy beasts to provide challenging opponents for player characters.

Secondly, there are the interpersonal relations rules. Using these rules, the personalities of non-player characters become a major part of the game background environment. Players will constantly have to deal with difficult and cooperative people, and will have to learn to deal with friendships, enmities and self confidence as part of "day to day" adventuring. Loyalty, treachery, love and hate can all easily be simulated using the game rules, and will hopefully encourage referees to prepare thoughtful adventure plots.

SO WHAT IS THE ATMOSPHERE OF LACE & STEEL?

LACE & STEEL is highwaymen waiting by a mist-shrouded road, or the ferocious clash of cutlasses on the quarter deck. It is gallant young men scaling palace walls to visit their sweethearts. It is duelists meeting in the grey light of dawn, and plotters gathering in torch-lit cellars. LACE & STEEL is court intrigues and dazzling balls, secret messages and lovers met by moonlight. Just take your favorite romantic images, and live them through the game.

Do have fun playing the game. I certainly have.

PRELIMINARY NOTES

LACE & STEEL is set in a world that is reminiscent of our own seventeenth century Europe - specifically 1640's, which was the time of the English civil war and the thirty years war. The fantasy lands of "MITTELMARCH" have been chosen as the game's setting in preference to a historical setting to encourage a feeling of fun and fantasy. Games set in historical environments usually seem too restrictive, and this has been the great failing of most games which use the "swashbuckling" genre.

Several important decisions about the game's equipment lists and background have been made deliberately. Flintlock weapons have been edited out, since matchlocks and wheellocks capture more of the feel of the period. You will also find no rules for "rapier and dagger" fencing, since the use of the main gauche went out of fashion the instant rapiers became light enough to both parry and riposte.

The game systems have also been designed as they are for good reason. The card based combat systems are entertaining, but have a heavy reliance upon luck. This means that newcomers to the game are not completely disadvantaged when playing against more experienced hands. The combat system has enough fun and action in it to appeal to folk who swear that they hate role playing games (try showing it to some non-gamers and see if they will agree to play with you now!)

Magic has been included in the game environment as an important facet of the game's feel of fantasy. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to roll a character that qualifies as a Sorcerer. This is to make such characters rare - if it was easy to be a Sorcerer, then everyone would be one!

DICE CONVENTIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

Whenever dice are rolled, the player will be told the type of dice required for the roll in an abbreviated form. The first number in the abbreviated term is the number of dice to be rolled. The next term specifies the type of dice to be used for the dice roll in the form of a capital "D" followed by the number of sides the required type of dice possesses. Thus 2D6 is the shorthand term for 2 six sided dice.

Most of the game operates through that familiar old workhorse, the six sided die, which is the easiest and quickest of all dice to use. A six sided dice can be used to generate numbers between 1 and 2 (a roll of 1, 2 or 3 yields a result of 1, and a roll of 4, 5 or 6 yields a result of 2). A six sided dice is also used to generate numbers between 1 and 3 (i.e. as a D3). Simply halve the value rolled on the six sided dice, remembering to round fractions up to the next whole number. Other types of dice are called "polyhedral dice", and can be bought at most game and hobby shops.

DICE ROLL MODIFIERS (DRM)

When a number is to be added to or subtracted from a dice roll, it is referred to as a dice roll modifier (DRM). Thus a -1 DRM means that the players will subtract one from the score of their dice roll result.

Since LACE & STEEL usually requires a player to roll low numbers, negative DRM numbers are beneficial, while positive DRMs are harmful.

EQUIPMENT

To play LACE & STEEL you will need the following essential items:

2 six sided dice.

The LACE & STEEL rule books and combat decks. Shuffle the decks well.

Photocopies of the LACE & STEEL character sheet.

Paper, pens, pencils and 1 or more players.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

The following items might also be found useful, but are not absolutely essential.

A Tarot deck (used for generating improvised adventure episodes and for determining character dispositions).

A collection of washers and one cent coins (used to simulate money).

SUPPLEMENTAL BOOKS

It is the publisher's policy (as well as the author's feverish desire) to properly support their products with a range of supplemental material. Richly presented adventures, rules additions and background books will be made available to increase your enjoyment of the LACE & STEEL game system.





Comparative sizes:
Human and Half-Horse.

Races

The world of LACE & STEEL is populated by a number of races which coexist in an easy balance. The civilized races suppose themselves to comprise the bulk of the world's population, and it is these races which band together into great cities and alliances. The "wild" races do not have such visible power or numbers, and seldom seem to create communities larger than towns. They have a certain amount of commerce with the civilized races.

The faerie folk are the most enigmatic of the world's inhabitants, and keep themselves very much aloof from the affairs of other races. They keep to the deep forests or high mountains, and seldom ever meet up with other folk. Only the halfling peoples have any real contact with other races, and of these, it is Pixies which seem to be the most commonly abroad in the civilized lands.

The overall effect is a world which is largely populated by Humans and Half-Horses. A host of other races are widely known, and most folk will have seen them at one time or another, or will at least know them all by description. The net effect is a society which is far less "mundane" than one taken from our own history, with a great variety of differgnt peoples. The world which the game presents to its players should have recognizable imagery taken from the English civil war period, hut with a definite "Grimm's fairy tale" feel. The world is constantly livened up by the strange and the unexpected.

CIVILIZED RACES

The so-called civilized races are to be found all over "Other Earth". Humans (two-leggers) and Half-Horses (four-leggers) band together in mixed nations, letting geography dictate political affiliation rather than race. Both races live together in reasonable harmony, although they have the good sense to separate into communities (villages or suburbs) composed mostly of one or the other race. These communities will communicate freely with one another, and each race draws on services and talents which the other race can provide.

HUMANS

A prolific and flexible race, Humans take very readily to seafaring and urban living. The Humans of "Other Earth's" southern continent are white skinned, and average between 160 and 170 cm in height. Half-Horses usually refer to Humans as "two-leggers".



PLAYER CHARACTER RACES

Players may generate characters that are one of the following races:

- Human
- Half-Horse
- Satyr
- Harpy
- Pixie

HALF-HORSES (“CENTAURS”)

Half-Horses (or “four-leggers”) consist of a human-like torso married to an equine body. Though smaller than a horse, Half-Horses tend to have at least 10 to 20 cm greater height than a human of similar strength, and weigh immensely more. Their equine sections come in a number of different colors, ranging from dapple grey to bay - characters should always specify their coloration.

Half-Horses have a similar strength in the arms and upper body to that of a human, but they are able to apply their lower body’s strength very effectively to a number of tasks. Double the effective Strength of a Half-Horse in any task which requires the use of body weight (e.g.. Pushing a wagon out of a ditch). A Half-Horse is as speedy as a horse (effective speed = its Dexterity). Subtract a Half-Horse’s burden level from its Dexterity when determining its maximum speed in this manner. A Half-Horse’s burden level is found by dividing its total load in kilos by its (Strength + fatigue rating), rather than its fatigue rating alone.



In addition, although the hands of a Half-Horse are as flexible as a man’s, and their bodies as capable of twisting, leaping or sidestepping as a Humans, a Half-Horse’s Dexterity will be penalized under many circumstances. Half-Horses must make a Dexterity roll whenever they attempt such simple actions as climbing a ladder, clambering through a window, or whirling quickly around. Half-Horses find it extremely difficult to move silently. Halve a Half-Horse’s effective Dexterity whenever its sheer bulk promises to get in the way (such as moving through brush). In combat, Half-Horses can lash out with iron hard hooves (add 3 to a Half-Horse’s effective strength when delivering a low brawling blow). A Half-Horse’s great length of leg gives them a reach of 1 in brawling combat. In melee combat against cavalry, treat Half-Horses as infantry but add three to their effective Strength when resisting a push from a horse.

Half-Horses wear clothing on their upper bodies, and four legger women wear apron-like skirts. The equine hind-body is never clothed or armored, and this lack of covering can be a cause of embarrassment. Many a love-sick young male has had to hide his nether regions upon contemplating the charms of his sweetheart.... The position of a Half-Horse’s tail gives an extra dimension to its body language. Feisty young males hold their tails high, and a female might involuntarily hike her tail when in the company of a male

that she feels attracted to. Four-leggers always comb out their own tails - combing out another person’s tail is a sign of romantic attachment.

Four-legger society is noticeably “earthier” than that of humans, and has a more relaxed attitude towards sexual morals. Each spring, four-leggers go through a “courting season”, where romantic interest runs unusually high. Most unattached males will become argumentative and stropy, and fights become common. Mature aged sons will often fight with their fathers, or brother fight against brother as the family males contest for dominance.

All in all, Half-Horse behavior can often be modeled on a cross between Humans and horses. Half-Horses will involuntarily kick if their tails are pulled or their hind legs grabbed. An enraged four legger will sidle up towards its opponent to allow fore feet or hind legs to come into play. The diet of four-leggers is exactly the same as that of Humans, although they eat a far greater bulk of food (usually grains and cereals). Their houses contain furniture designed for their height and stature (such as chairs upon which they rest their rumps). A polite four legger wipes its hooves before entering the house. Half-Horses use horses as beasts of burden and drayage much as Humans do.

HALF-HORSE BEHAVIOR

“Four-leggers” share many behavioral characteristics with horses. Large, strong males often end up as leaders of their fellows.. Half-Horses tend to respect someone who can give them a serious drubbing. Stallions will have short tempers when they have been active, and will fall into fist fights easily when “courting”.

The “courting season” is a time when sexual urges run high. Daughters are quite literally locked up (and watched closely in case the little hoydens try to slip out the back door), and pregnancies often occur (as do resultant “blunderbuss weddings”). Of course, courtship and romance also occur in the normal way throughout the rest of the year. “Courting season” only lasts for a little while.

While they can make good soldiers, Half-Horses feel a distinct aversion to the reek of blood. They are not great eaters of red meat.

NOMENCLATURE

Half-Horses object to the word “Centaur”, and will react angrily if called such. A centaur is an unclad barbarian that skulks in the wilds. A Half-Horse is a civilized being. Being aware of the all important distinction can save characters from mortally offending their four legged friends.



WILD RACES

The “wild” races live at the edge of the Human/Half-Horse world, and engage in a small amount of trade and commerce with them. These races all live in their own communities, and avoid the cities and towns of the civilized folk.

SATYRS

A Satyr is a small creature with the upper body of a human and the lower body of a goat. Satyrs are smaller and shorter than an average sized man, and have a maximum Strength of 11 and a minimum Dexterity of 9. Their lower quarters are covered with shaggy fur, and they have short little tails which twitch back and forth when they become agitated. A Satyr also has a small pair of horns sprouting from it's head, and pointed ears.

Satyrs wear normal clothes on their upper bodies, but leave their lower sections bare. They never shoe their cloven-hoofed feet. They live in small communities, though a fair few seem to have adapted themselves to town life.

Satyrs have a high libido, and many races are made uncomfortable by their habits of making constant sexual innuendo or of undressing people with their eyes. They are also regarded as a particularly sly folk. They are shrewd and cunning businessmen, and gain a great deal of enjoyment out of driving for hard bargains. This is balanced out by their tradition of being generous and polite hosts.

Satyrs are prone to excesses of behavior which the more sedate Human and Half-Horse races find distasteful. They laugh loudly, argue volubly, fall into passionate love or affect attitudes of tragic melancholy with a speed which leaves other races breathless. This characteristic endears them to the faerie races, who have more truck with Satyrs than with any other species.

Due to the configuration of their feet, Satyrs find it more difficult than a human to perform tasks such as climbing a rope ladder. Their tall keen ears have better hearing than that of any other race - even pixies!



Comparative sizes:



Satyr and Human shown to scale.

THE YEARLY RUT

Satyr males undergo a yearly “rutting” season, in which their libido goes suddenly into overdrive! Satyr males often become lovesick during this season, and energetically compete for the attentions of the womenfolk.

For their own part, the Satyr women look forward to the yearly “courting season” with anticipation and delight. Courting season brings out the best qualities in the menfolk as well as their worst - Satyr males are more prone to enthusiastic romance than mere sexual lust. Courting season tends to be a time of fun and gaiety, with boisterous behavior the rule of the day.



Comparative sizes:

Human and Harpy female (Tiercel) shown to scale. Female Harpies are the dominant sex of their species, and are notably stronger and more aggressive than the males.

HARPIES

A harsh race which lives mostly in mountains, isolated islands, and other places which other races seldom covet. Harpies have fanged human heads and gigantic, upright avian bodies. Female harpies have fanged feminine faces and mammalian breasts (which we presume are covered in feathers). At the forward joint of their wings are long fingered hands (positioned much like the hands of a bat or pterodactyl). Their feet are the large, clawed members of some giant bird of prey.

Harpies are not a graceful race. Their sharp, angular features and prominent canines seem to speak of a cruel personality. Likewise, their voices have a harsh, shrieking quality which other races find irritating to listen to. Much like the raptorial birds of the mundane world, Harpy females are larger and much more aggressive than the males (always favor a female Harpy's strength characteristic). The females are far more haughty and commanding than the males, and have a higher social status than their mates. Though the males desire their women, they also fear them. The males are allowed to take much of the initiative in courtship, hesitantly approaching the fearsome females seeking approval and invitation, but half expecting the worst. Love between Harpies can be a dangerous game for the menfolk...

Harpies have much the same characteristic brackets as Humans, but have difficulty performing delicate manual operations. Harpies may fly great distances but only if they are not suffering from an encumbrance penalty of more than 2. Reduce a Harpies's wound level by 1 due to their hollow bone structure (minimum wound level of 1).

Harpies may not wield weapons while flying, and may only brawl with their sharp claws (which do damage like a dagger). Harpies wear clothes for their torsos, and hats on their heads. Their dwellings are usually designed only to be reached by flying creatures.

Harpies are not pleasant folk. When determining a Harpies's disposition, draw twice, and take the personality which seems the most rotten. (But the player may choose to keep a "nice" draw if it is major arcana).



MERFOLK

An aquatic race whose bodies meld a humanoid torso onto the rear portions of a dolphin. Merfolk thus have hands, flukes and a tail. They are air breathers, and can speak the standard tongue of the southern continent at need. Amongst themselves, they seem to converse with tight pulses of sound, which they also use to navigate dark or murky water.

Merfolk often have dealings with seaside communities and sailors, and appear at dockside fairs to trade fish, medicinal sea plants, pearls and coral for dried fruits, meats and gems. They are also often prevailed upon to perform marine salvage or rescue. They keep well away from sea battles and warfare. Their world is not really understood by land dwellers, and true communication of philosophy and abstract concepts proves difficult.



FAERIE RACES

The races of faerie are the most fantastic and elusive of the creatures which inhabit “Other Earth”. Faerie races remain aloof from the other peoples, preferring the company of their own kind. Wandering members of these races have usually been cast out of their own communities due to their unorthodox attitudes, or because of misdemeanors.

The faerie temperament is capricious and often cruel. Similarly, a faerie’s sympathies are also quickly aroused, which provokes him into extravagances of generosity. Faerie races are inclined to be vain, proud and boastful, and are always talkative. They are much given to melodramatic postures, extravagant rages and quick sulks. They are extremely sensitive to ridicule, which prompts them to paroxysms of rage. They admire beauty, and also oddity to the same degree - to the faerie, these are equivalent attributes. A fairy’s moods are seldom long lasting, and they quickly switch from joy to woe, wrath to friendship in a manner which bewilders other, more stolid races.

FAIRIES



True fairies are small (10 to 30 cm high) humanoid folk who vary their outward appearance entirely at whim. They cannot normally be seen unless they desire it or they are observed using “detect magic” skill. Fairies tend to live in small communities called “shees” (which change aspect as frequently as their owners), and they seldom move beyond the bounds of such places. Time at the heart of a fairy shee runs at seven times the rate of the rest of the world. Fairies like to pretend that they are immortal, but in fact they are not (they are so long lived that their claim is nearly true in any case).

Fairies are intensely magical in a way which cannot even begin to be emulated by mundane races. Fairies are magic! Their magic is only ever used for their own amusement, although they might bargain magical objects or favors with a mortal for an object which they value.

Fairies are jealous, impatient, malicious tricksters who are intolerant of intrusion. Woe betide an innocent trespasser who blunders into a shee! They might find themselves whipped with hazel twigs, or given the ears of an ass, or even showered with gold coins, since they enjoy dumbfounding mortals with good fortune no less than with sudden disaster.

Fairies are hedonistic and promiscuous, craving novelty. This has lead to a certain intermingling of faerie blood with that of the other races. Persons with a high proportion of fairy blood may be told by such signs as slit-pupilled eyes, webbed fingers, pointed ears or green fingernails.

For more information on the behavior of fairies, read LYONESSE by Jack Vance, and A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM by William Shakespeare. These creatures have a dangerous combination of Godlike powers and childish moods. They are proud, vain, petty and absolutely, unspeakably powerful!

Comparative sizes:
Fairy and Human’s boot shown



to scale.

Please note that the actual size of fairies will vary pretty much according to their own whim. Fairy royalty will usually present themselves as being taller than their subjects, often taking on human stature (or even taller, more impressive aspects when circumstances merit it).



Comparative sizes:
Pixie and Human shown to scale.

THE “HALFLINGS”

Halfling races are made up of a great part of common earthly matter, and thus lack the magic of true Fairies. They are all tied to a set physical form, and age and die like other mundane folk. On the other hand, halflings are less capricious and malicious than fairies, and have more dealings with other races. Many fairs will be visited by halflings, who hawk their potent pollen liqueurs and perfumes, delicate cloths pressed from dandelion or spider silk and luminous paints and inlays wrung from dandelions and fungi.

PIXIES

Pixies or “little folk” are a lightly built, dexterous race that love the forests, rivers, fens and mountains. In physical form they are small (110 cm), delicate humanoid with sharply featured faces and naked ratlike tails. They have large slit-pupilled eyes, pointed ears, and delicate antennae which they use as organs of scent. Their most distinctive features are their wings, which are the delicate, patterned wings of moths or butterflies. The coloration of pixie wings vary widely from individual to individual, and can be as subtle in coloration as a moth’s, or flamboyant as a tropical butterfly. With the aid of these wings pixies may perform short flights of a few meters duration (Max distance = Strength x 10), or slow a fall down to a manageable speed.

Pixies tend to live in closely grouped small communities, although there are quite a few town sized settlements. Their picturesque hive shaped houses are often placed in tasteful harmony with the landscape (usually high up in the trees or secreted amongst stumps and roots), and so their settlements can be missed by unwary travellers. Pixies are talkative and hospitable, passionate lovers and dedicated enemies. Their “cute” looks and erratic demeanor can sometimes blind other races to their keen sense of honor and their excitable passions (which can be a costly mistake).

Pixie culture emphasizes aesthetics. Pixie cuisine is excellent, although they tend to eat the flesh of some insects, so be careful to ask what you are eating! Pixies are brewers of fine wines, artists, musicians, surgeons and craftsmen - the makers of clever mechanisms and clever jokes. In the military they perform the function of skirmishers and scouts. Their small size stops them from riding anything larger than one of their little ponies, and from handling muskets and saddle pistols. Their close combat weapons are confined to the rapier and dagger weapons which they use with energetic virtuosity.

Pixies roll only 2D3 for strength, but roll 1D6 + 10 for Dexterity. All Pixies gain a bonus of +1 on their Intuition scores.



HOBGOBLINS AND GOBLINS

Average sized humanoids with broad, ugly noses, pointed ears and webbed hands. These folk live in small, isolated communities out in the deep forests. They are a coarse, jolly folk, and are more vulgar than the pixies, whom they consider overly nice.

TROLLS



Large, scaly humanoids with a Strength of $1D6 + 10$ and a Dexterity of $2D6 + 1$. Their skins are as tough as a buff coat. Trolls are semi-aquatic, and tend to live solitary lives in fens or forests. Although not exactly hostile, they are petty. Trolls might build a bridge or plant an orchard, and then wait for a passerby to cross the bridge or pick the fruit. The troll will then appear and demand payment at an exorbitant rate. When dealing with trolls, a person must be careful to specify his precise meaning, and look for hidden connotations in every word, phrase and act.

OGRES

Huge, powerful, hideously ugly humanoids which may reach almost 3 meters in height. An Ogre's Strength is effectively 25 to 30 (giving them a wound level of 5), and its Dexterity is about class 6 to 9. Ogres wield great cleavers and cutlasses which do 2 extra points of damage whenever they score follow up damage, get a +1 to their armor penetration and weight, and have a reach of +2. Some ogres might have horns, outlandish assortments of extra facial features, or even multiple heads!

Contrary to popular belief, Ogres are not necessarily stupid, nor do they always lack magic. Ogres love to eat the succulent flesh of children, and they will pay hobgoblins or trolls premium prices for any brats that they might catch. For this reason, Ogres are destroyed wherever they may be run to ground, and thus they are only found in remote or rugged terrain.



Comparative sizes:
Troll and Human shown to scale.



Comparative sizes:
Ogre and Human shown to scale.



NOTES ON FEMALE CHARACTERS

LACE & STEEL encourages the role play of female characters - indeed, the opportunities for courtly role play and romance make female characters a lot of fun to play.

The females of most of the sapient species are physically weaker than the males. Female characters always slight their Strength characteristic. In return, they may favor some other characteristic. The exception to this rule are females of the Harpy race, who are quite large and domineering. Harpy females always favor their Strength, at the cost of slighting some other characteristic.

Please note! Female characters of Human, Half-Horse and Pixie races tend to be forced into fairly "historical" roles. If a player wishes to play a female character, but tires of flirtation and repartee, there is no need to despair! Harpy females should provide all the outlet for those feelings of dominance and aggression that anyone could desire!

CHARACTERISTICS

The following section details the physical and mental attributes of individual characters which we will simulate in this game. The characteristics are fairly simple, but between them they adequately simulate each character's basic abilities.

The characters used in LACE & STEEL have eight basic characteristics: Strength, Endurance, Dexterity, Reason, Intuition, Drive, Charisma and Magical aptitude.



CHARACTERISTIC SCORES

All characteristics are rolled on $2D6 + 3$. If a character scores 14 or 15 on its initial dice roll for its Magical aptitude characteristic, it may roll an extra $D6 - 1$ and add the result to its total Magical aptitude score.

FAVORING AND SLIGHTING CHARACTERISTICS

Before rolling a character, a player may choose to favor and slight some characteristics. The player may nominate up to three characteristics that his or her character will favor. For each characteristic that is favored, another characteristic must be slighted and vice versa.

Favored characteristics are rolled for twice, with the final characteristic score being taken as the highest of the two dice rolls.

Slighted characteristics are also rolled twice, with the final characteristic score being determined by the lowest of the two rolls.

BUYING EXTRA CHARACTERISTIC POINTS

All characters start the game with experience points equal to their Reason + their Drive. For a cost of 5 of these experience points each, characters may purchase extra characteristic points on any of their characteristics.

Note that if a character's Magical aptitude is raised up to a level of 14 through this technique, then the character will also gain the extra $1D6 - 1$ Magical aptitude score as detailed above.

ROLLING A CHARACTER

STAGE ONE

To create a new character, firstly decide the character's race and sex, and then draw a significator for the character from the tarot deck (see 21).

Now the player is ready to determine his or her character's characteristic scores.

STAGE TWO

Roll the character's Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, Reason, Intuition, Drive, Charisma and Magical aptitude scores on $2D6 + 3$. Add $1D6 - 1$ to the character's Magical aptitude if its initial dice for its Magical aptitude characteristic score was 14 or 15.

STAGE THREE

Work out the character's ratings for Maximum hand, new draw etc. Do not work out repartee and sorcery ratings unless the player feels it to be necessary.

STAGE FOUR

Go to the rules section on skills, (page 30) and generate the character's social class. The character must then have its skills selected and recorded.

THE CHARACTERISTICS

The following characteristics serve to simulate the physical and mental faculties of the character. Readers should note that a character’s mental abilities are divided into Reason, Intuition and Drive; there is no all-encompassing measure for intelligence.

STRENGTH is the expression of the brute force which the individual can apply. It is also used to indicate the character’s physical size and hulk. Strength is a measure of the character’s ability to lift weights and arm wrestle, and its ability to resist damage and shock.

ENDURANCE is the measure of the character’s fitness and stamina. As such, it represents the amount of time that physical activity may be maintained. It should also be used in tests to resist disease.

DEXTERITY measures the character’s coordination and agility. It is also used as a measure of the character’s hand-eye coordination and skill at fine manual tasks.

REASON is a measure of the individual’s capacity for deduction, logic, memory and preplanning.

INTUITION is used to determine the character’s “sixth sense” - his ability to outguess his opponents, or make an accurate assessment of a character at first meeting. Intuition also represents the character’s innate perception, and is checked whenever searching for hidden objects or trying to detect lies.

DRIVE represents a character’s willpower and determination. It is a measure of the motivation and self discipline that a character can bring to bear on any task with which it is faced. DRIVE is tested whenever a character wishes to embark on a long and difficult project, or when his determination comes under attack.

CHARISMA is a measure of the combined effect of the character’s physical appearance, personal bearing and speaking voice. Characters who are enlivened by an inner energy may have a high Charisma characteristic even if their physical appearance is not immediately overwhelming. Add 1 to the character’s Charisma if either its Dexterity or Drive characteristic is 13+. Subtract 1 from the character’s Charisma if either of the character’s Dexterity, Reason or Drive characteristic scores are 7-.

MAGICAL APTITUDE is used in conjunction with the magic system to represent the character’s ability to use magic. A character’s Magical aptitude characteristic represents the individual’s ability to sense and interact with other-worldly powers.

SAMPLE CHARACTER LINETTE VULPINIERE

To generate a new character, we must first decide upon the sex and species of the character, and draw a signficator from the Tarot deck. The player decides that the character is to be a female human, and draws the card “The World” from the tarot deck as the character’s signficator. This tells us that the character is a restless dreamer, and the player decides that Linette will be a bit of a “Tom Boy”, who will avoid learning the finer ladylike graces in favor of more adventurous skills.

Linette’s Strength is slighted, but she decides to favor her Dexterity recompense. She must roll twice for her Strength and take the lowest value rolled, but she rolls twice for her Dexterity and take only the highest score. Her final characteristics are as follows:

Name: Linette Vulpinieri
Race: Human
Sex: Female
Social class: Gentle

Strength: 8
Endurance: 10
Dexterity: 13
Reason: 12
Intuition: 10
Drive: 10
Charisma: 12
Magical Aptitude: 8
Hit Points: 5



**SAMPLE CHARACTER
LINETTE (Continued)**

Wound level: 1
Maximum hand: 6
New draw rating: 3
Fatigue level: 9

Linette is quite a good character. Her physical strength is a hit on the low side, but this is not a problem in an environment dominated by rapiers and muskets. She is fairly charismatic (probably a combination of "Foxy" looks and an irrepressible personality), and quite dexterous. She will obviously never be a sorcerer or a beauty queen, but she is smart and quick enough to be a lively and interesting character.

Continued Page 29

SPECIAL FACTORS

Each character is also rated for several special factors which are used in combat. These factors are the character's Fatigue rating, Wound level, Maximum hand rating and New draw rating.

FATIGUE RATING

A character's fatigue rating is found by averaging the character's Strength and Endurance (rounding up).

HIT POINTS

A character's hit points are found by averaging the character's Strength and Endurance and halving the result. All fractions are rounded to the nearest whole number (0.5 rounds up)

WOUND LEVEL

A character's "Wound Level" determines the amount of hit points damage that a character can sustain before it loses part of its maximum hand rating. Divide the character's hit point losses from wounds by the character's wound level (rounding down) to determine the number deducted from the character's maximum hand.

A character's wound level is dependent upon the character's strength and drive. The chart to the right is used to determine a character's wound level.

Average of Strength & Drive	Wound Level
1 to 11	1
12 to 13	1.5
14 to 15	2

Dexterity	Maximum Hand Rating
1 to 4	3
5 to 7	4
8 to 12	5
13 to 15	6
16 +	7

MAXIMUM HAND RATING

The maximum number of cards that a character may retain in its hand during combat is dependent upon the character's dexterity. The accompanying chart shows the relationship between a character's dexterity and its maximum hand rating:

NEW DRAW RATING

A character's new draw rating is dependent upon the character's Intuition and Dexterity scores. Average these two characteristics, and lookup the resulting number on the chart to the right:

Average of Intuition & Dexterity	New Draw Rating
1 to 7	2
8 to 12	3
13 to 15	4

OPTIONAL RATINGS

The following ratings should be worked out for any characters who wish to become Sorcerers:

Magical Aptitude Score	Maximum Sorcery Hand
1 to 15	0
16 to 17	4
18 to 20	5
21 +	6

MAXIMUM SORCERY HAND

The maximum number of sorcery cards that may be held by any character is determined by the character's Magical aptitude score on the chart to the left:

Reason Score	New Sorcery Draw Rating
1 to 5	0
6 to 10	1
11 to 12	2
13 to 14	3
15 +	4

NEW SORCERY DRAW

Sorcerers may augment their hand of sorcery cards through new draws from the deck. The number of cards that they draw is determined by their new sorcery draw rating. This rating is determined by the character's Reason score on the chart to the left.

REPARTEE HAND

Reason Score	Repartee Hand
1 to 4	3
5 to 7	4
8 to 12	5
13 to 15	6
16+	7

These ratings should be determined for characters who gain the courtly skill "repartee".

NEW REPARTEE DRAW RATING

Average of Intuition & Charisma	New Repartee Draw
1 to 7	2
8 to 12	3
13+	4

DAMAGE

Damage caused by weapons is determined by the draw of cards from the combat deck. The numerical value of these cards is subtracted directly from the victim's hit points.

When a character reaches zero hit points, it is unconscious. When its hit point score is equal to or less than (0 - the character's wound level) then the character is dead.

Remember that wounds directly affect a character's maximum hand rating, (as determined by the character's Wound Level).

HEALING

Wounds heal very slowly. At the end of each week, wounded characters must roll their Drive characteristic vs. 10. If the roll is successful, the character heals one hit point. Characters who are recovering from a grievous wound must roll a saving roll of their Strength vs. 10. If the roll fails, then their Strength and Dexterity characteristics are lowered by 1 until such a time as they can be cured through magic. This gives the character an "old wound" that can be used to gain sympathy from the ladies....



STARTING EXPERIENCE

All characters start the game with experience points equal to their Reason characteristic score plus their Drive characteristic score. Page 32 of this book details the way in which these experience points are spent to purchase the character's initial skills.

REPARTEE AND SORCERY

Magical skills and repartee are closed to all but a few. Repartee will basically be closed to characters who are not of gentle birth. Sorcery skill requires a Magical aptitude of 16 or greater. Only determine a character's Maximum Sorcery Hand, New Sorcery Draw, Repartee hand and New Repartee Draw ratings if the character actually qualifies for these skills, and intends to take them.

WEIGHT

Should players wish to determine the weight of a character, use the following formulae:

Humans, Satyrs: Weight in kilos = $(\text{Strength} \times 5) + 4\text{D}10$.

Half-Horses: Weight in kilos = $(\text{Strength} \times 20) + 2\text{D}10$.

Little folk and Harpies: Weight in kilos = $(\text{Strength} \times 5) + 1\text{D}10$.



ENCUMBRANCE

Armor encumbers the wearer, reducing the wearer's fatigue level. Subtract the character's total armor fatigue penalty from the character's fatigue rating.

The weight borne by a character also drastically effects its performance in combat. Divide the weight in kilos carried by a character by its initial fatigue level (rounding down), to determine the character's burden level. Subtract the character's burden level from the character's effective fatigue level and Dexterity whenever it enters combat. A character's maximum running/galloping speed in paces per turn is also reduced by its (burden level $\times 2.5$ paces). Halve the effective weight of any object that is carried upon a Half-Horse's withers or back (the 'horse' section, not the human section).

The greatest burden that any two-legged character can bear is equal to its Strength $\times 5$ kilos. Half-Horses may carry a burden equal to their Strength $\times 10$, as long as the weight falls mostly upon their withers and back. Pixies and Harpies may only carry a burden equal to their Strength in kilos if they still wish to fly at full speed and distance. Harpies can fly for short hops while carrying a burden equal to their Strength $\times 2$ (pixies cannot fly at this level of burden).

Movement and labor will also lower a character's fatigue level when it enters combat. A character that has run or galloped for more than a turn, or who has been engaged in heavy manual labor immediately before the combat must roll its endurance vs. 10 (with its burden level acting as a DRM). If the roll is failed, then reduce the character's fatigue level by 1.



FATIGUE IN COMBAT

Subtract a character's armor fatigue penalty from their fatigue rating to determine their actual fatigue rating in combat.

See page 56 for details on the way fatigue effects combat performance.

SIGNIFICATORS

LACE & STEEL uses a Tarot deck to provide a means of generating personalities and dispositions of characters. Each character draws one card from a tarot deck as its signifier. This card will effect disposition and characteristic classes.

CHARACTERISTIC BONUSES OR SLIGHTS

Some cards will dictate a characteristic bonus or slight for the character in one or two particular areas. Characters who have a bonus in a characteristic should roll twice for the indicated characteristic and take the highest score thus rolled. The characteristic may never end up with a score of less than 11. Characters with a slighted characteristic should roll twice for the characteristic and take the worst score rolled. Slighted characteristics may never end up with a score higher than 9.

DISPOSITION

The character's signifier is used to give the character a "disposition" or personality. Each card of the lesser arcana has a disposition tied to it. Record this disposition on the character's record sheet, and use this as a basis of the character's role play.

Remember that a character's characteristic scores will give vital clues as to the overall personality of a character. A character whose disposition is sneaky and secretive will be played differently depending on whether it is smart or slow witted.

THE DECK

Tarot cards used in this game may be drawn from any normal Waite Tarot deck (don't use an "Egyptian Tarot" or a "Crowley Tarot", since these use different types of cards). If a Tarot deck is not at hand, then roll percentile dice to determine the card drawn (ignoring rolls of 78+). Once the type of card has been rolled, roll 1D6 to see if the card was normal or reversed (a 1, 2 or 3 causes the card to be reversed.).

There are no apologies for any of the interpretations that I have affixed to the various tarot cards. We are trying to produce a game, and not a monograph on cartomancy.



ADVENTURES FROM SIGNIFICATORS

Tarot cards may be used as an Referee's aid to improvising storylines and adventure ideas. By secretly drawing two or three cards from the tarot deck and consulting the results, the Referee can create new events based on the meanings of the cards he has drawn. Remember that tarot card meanings are in the eyes of the beholder. Trust what the pictures communicate to you as much as the meanings recorded in books on how to make tarot readings.

For example, if the Referee draws the card DEATH, and the NINE OF SWORDS (which shows a man awakening from a nightmare), he might decide not to consult any written descriptions of the meanings of the cards. Nightmares and death? A haunting! The Referee decides to have one of the characters haunted by the spirit of an NPC he has cruelly murdered. The next phase of the game has thus been quickly established by a simple card draw.

TAROT DECKS

Remember! Use a "Waite" Tarot deck. Other types of Tarot decks have completely different cards!



Death

THE MAJOR ARCANA

The major arcana are powerful cards much tied to Magical aptitude. Only characters whose significator is a card from the major arcana may become sorcerers.

0. THE FOOL

Normal: The character's Intuition score is slighted. The character is prone to folly, extravagance and foolish enthusiasms. He is also attended by "fool's luck", which somehow saves him from the worst of his own excesses (Referees take note!).

Reversed: The character is either extremely vain or apathetic.

1. THE MAGICIAN

Normal: The character has a bonus in its Magical aptitude and Drive characteristics. The character is self-confident of bearing, masterful and diplomatic.

Reversed: The character has a bonus in its Magical aptitude and Reason characteristics. The character is quiet and introverted - a bit of a loner.

2. THE HIGH PRIESTESS

Normal: The character receives a bonus in its Magical aptitude and Drive characteristics. The character tends to be willful, self indulgent but forceful. If male, the character might be a dandy. If female, the character might be a "tease".

Reversed: The character receives a bonus to its Drive. The character is conceited and passionate.

3. THE EMPRESS

Normal: The character's Intuition receives a bonus. The character is devious and secretive.

Reversed: The character gains a bonus on its Reason. The character is honest and responsible.

4. THE EMPEROR

Normal: Drive and Reason receives a bonus. The character is a confident person, and is very loyal to his or her friends.

Reversed: The character's Reason receive a bonus, but its Intuition is slighted. The character is generous and compassionate, but slightly "immature".

5. THE HIEROPHANT

Normal: The character gains a bonus to its Intuition. The character is occasionally struck by sudden bursts of inspiration or enthusiasm.

Reversed: The character tends to copy the opinions of its friends and associates.

6. THE LOVERS

Normal: The character gains a bonus on its Charisma. The character is very attractive, and has a cheerful personality.

Reversed: The character's Charisma gains a bonus. The character is vain, petulant, and used to getting its own way.

7. THE CHARIOT

Normal: The character is proud, boisterous and vengeful.

Reversed: The character is argumentative and short tempered.

8. STRENGTH

Normal: The character receives a bonus to its Drive. The character is courageous but generous to its foes.

Reversed: The character gains a bonus to its Drive. The character is proud, cruel, suspicious and untrustworthy.

9. THE HERMIT

Normal: The character's Reason receives a bonus. The character is cautious and cunning - a quiet rogue.

Reversed: The character's Intuition gains a bonus. The character is unreasonably suspicious and mistrustful.

10. THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Normal: The character's Intuition gains a bonus. The character is a happy-go lucky, cheerful individual with considerable luck.

Reversed: The character has been “spoiled” by too much good fortune. It has great expectations of advancement, and if crossed could go to great lengths to reach its goals.

11. JUSTICE

Normal: The character’s Reason and Intuition both gain a bonus. The character is an astute judge of right and wrong, with a keen sense of justice.

Reversed: The character gains a bonus to its Drive, but slights its Intuition. The character is bureaucratic, bigoted and pompous.

12. THE HANGED MAN

Normal: The character’s Magical aptitude and Intuition gain a bonus. The character is worldly wise, and views harmless vices with a pinch of salt.

Reversed: The character’s Magical aptitude gains a bonus. The character is selfish and power hungry.

13. DEATH

Normal: The character receives a bonus on its Magical aptitude score. The character is of a coldly violent disposition - ruthless and amoral.

Reversed: The character’s Magical aptitude receives a bonus. The character is of a morbid or fatalistic disposition.

14. TEMPERANCE

Normal: The character is economical and frugal, moderate and level-headed.

Reversed: The character is inquisitive and curious to the extreme. This will often supersede other considerations.

15. THE DEVIL

Normal: The character’s Magical aptitude and Drive both receive a bonus. The character is stubborn, selfish and has a foul temper.

Reversed: The character is incapable of empathy or responsibility towards others, and gains pleasure from causing others hurt.

16. THE TOWER

Normal: The character is proud and haughty - a disposition which might eventually cause him grief.

Reversed: The character is brash and self-assured - a disposition which covers up the character’s inner self-doubt and insecurity.

17. THE STAR

Normal: The character’s Drive receives a bonus. The character is an optimist disposed towards overcoming all odds and carrying on regardless. The character cannot bear defeat, and overcompensates for his own failings.

Reversed: The character’s Drive receives a bonus. The character is rash and reckless.

18. THE MOON

Normal: The character is paranoid.

Reversed: The character is chronically unstable. It will change its moods rapidly and unpredictably.

19. THE SUN

Normal: The character is self content and happy. The character reacts badly to seeing cruelty or privation.

Reversed: The character is a rational pragmatist.

20. THE LAST JUDGMENT

Normal: The character is brusque and decisive. The character believes that actions speak louder than words.

Reversed: The character’s Reason receives a bonus. The character is careful and exacting.

21. THE WORLD

Normal: The character is a restless dreamer, avid for adventure and excitement.

Reversed: The character is a stolid individual who fears change.



The Devil



The Five of Wands

THE LESSER ARCANA

The cards of the lesser arcana are divided into four suits, wands, swords, cups and pentacles, each of which are herein discussed separately.

WANDS

The suit of wands is often tied to the passions or emotions, art and spiritual matters.

22. KING OF WANDS

Normal: The character is friendly, honest and conscientious. An animated, ardent character of strong convictions and honorable nature.

Reversed: The character is austere, and tends to be severe in his judgments, gruff but tolerant.

23. QUEEN OF WANDS

Normal: The character is affectionate and loyal, but not vulgar and lustful. An honorable character who sets great store on true love.

Reversed: The character is amorous and deceitful - a self-centered, jealous personality.

24. KNIGHT OF WANDS

Normal: The character is friendly, and has an inquisitive nature. The character prefers reason to outright violence.

Reversed: A restless character who is very unsure of his or her own needs. This character can be witlessly cruel, in that it uses others and discards them once its needs are satisfied.

25. PAGE OF WANDS

Normal: A steadfast, faithful character with a decided romantic streak. He can be a dangerous rival.

Reversed: A talkative character.

26. TEN OF WANDS

Normal: A character of dark moods and sudden depressions. These might manifest as outbursts of anger, slumps into apathy, or perhaps even as a sharp sarcastic wit.

Reversed: The character is a born troublemaker who revels in intrigue and deception.

27. NINE OF WANDS

Normal: A bold character who reacts strongly against opposition.

Reversed: The character is careful and cautious, bold and wily.

28. EIGHT OF WANDS

Normal: A busy, active character who combines optimism with great industry.

Reversed: An extremely polite character whose conscience suffers from any unfairness to his or her fellows.

29. SEVEN OF WANDS

Normal: A highly competitive character.

Reversed: An anxious, timid character who dislikes conflict. It might show unknown qualities of valor in a real emergency (or it might not).

30. SIX OF WANDS

Normal: The character is an independent spirit, a striver against all odds who revels in his own individuality.

Reversed: The character fears and loathes failure.

31. FIVE OF WANDS

Normal: The character desires fame and fortune, riches and power above all else.

Reversed: The character is a sly trickster, cunning, devious and glib.

32. FOUR OF WANDS

Normal: The character is quiet, calm and gets on well with his or her fellows. The character is peaceful, but will stand up for what it sees as right.

Reversed: The character is boisterous, open, cheerful, and very friendly.

33. THREE OF WANDS

Normal: A planner, an entrepreneur.

Reversed: The character's experiences have taught it pessimism and disappointment.

34. TWO OF WANDS

Normal: The character is jaded and seeks new experiences. It becomes readily bored with mundane events and trivialities.

Reversed: The character has a finely developed sense of wonder and delight. The character is fascinated by magic, legends and tales of adventure.

35. ACE OF WANDS

Normal: A creative person, confident, imaginative, and often having the superior luck which surely follows such people.

Reversed: The character is completely decadent - either an intellectual poseur, or an indolent hedonist.

CUPS

The suit of science, study, visions and pleasure.

36. KING OF CUPS

Normal: An individual with an exacting sense of the social order and where he or she stands within it. Nevertheless the character is creative and fair.

Reversed: A dishonest, double-dealing character, unjust, exacting and brimming with vice. A spreader of malicious gossip and a hatcher of plots.

37. QUEEN OF CUPS

Normal: The character is honest and virtuous to a fault. Prim and proper.

Reversed: A vague, dreamy sort of character who seldom worries about practicality.

38. KNIGHT OF CUPS

Normal: The character is fastidious and finicky. If of gentle birth, then the character will be a snob.

Reversed: The character is subtle and clever. A born liar or trickster. If the character has a good charisma, it can be assumed to have a suave, attractive manner.

39. PAGE OF CUPS

Normal: A quiet, studious sort of person who attempts to apply himself to tasks with the best of his ability.

Reversed: The character is tasteful but reserved - a quiet individual with no patience for boisterous or coarse behavior.

40. TEN OF CUPS

Normal: The character is serene and hard to anger.

Reversed: The character is prideful and sensitive about his own reputation and honor.

41. NINE OF CUPS

Normal: The character loves ease and luxury, good food, good clothes and pleasant company above all else.

Reversed: The character is truthful, loyal, with a love of liberty.

42. EIGHT OF CUPS

Normal: The character is a dour aesthetic, finding little joy in the physical world. The character might be a philosopher, a student, a mystic or an intellectual.

Reversed: The character is a dour miser, a hoarder of goods. The character will be unwilling to do anything which does not result in his own gain.

43. SEVEN OF CUPS

Normal: The character is a plotter and planner, much given to careful deliberation. The character is sentimental and imaginative.

Reversed: The character is a determined, innovative entrepreneur.



The Page of Cups



The Knight of Swords

44. SIX OF CUPS

Normal: The character is a forward thinker with grandiose plans and ideas. A dreamer of grand dreams.

Reversed: The character is notably eager, and has a ready enthusiasm.

45. FIVE OF CUPS

Normal: The character suffers from an overdeveloped conscience, and will tend to overcompensate for his own faults and wrongs done to others.

Reversed: The character is a great starter of projects, but seldom finishes any. High Drive characters will have a great deal of energy, but a limited attention span.

46. FOUR OF CUPS

Normal: The character has a rigid personal code of behavior, and judges those around him by his or her own harsh standards. A potential crusader or puritan.

Reversed: A gregarious character who seldom develops deep loyalties. The character feels most comfortable as an accepted member of a group.

47. THREE OF CUPS

Normal: A card of healing and solace, this indicates that the character is of a helpful and understanding disposition. The character will react badly if it hurts others.

Reversed: The character thrives on success and achievement. A believer in action.

48. TWO OF CUPS

Normal: The character is passionate. This extends into the realms of both love and hate. Loyalty, revenge and suddenly falling in love all come easily to this character.

Reversed: The character is rash and reckless, seldom reckoning the odds or considering the long term results of its actions.

49. ACE OF CUPS

Normal: The character is good natured and humorous, canny and world wise.

Reversed: The character is rebellious against authority.

SWORDS

The cards of action, command, militant intelligence and authority.

50. KING OF SWORDS

Normal: A militant character, he or she will desire positions of command and authority - whether they are truly suited for it or not.

Reversed: A cruel, savage character - fierce, brutal and barbarous. A definite streak of perverse sadism.

51. QUEEN OF SWORDS

Normal: A dutiful character who will perform violent acts, but who gains no pleasure from them. The character desires no acclaim for these acts except for their own knowledge of having done what was necessary as efficiently as possible.

Reversed: The character is malicious and spiteful, and artful in deceit.

52. KNIGHT OF SWORDS

Normal: The character has a brave, proud, destructive temperament. A show off.

Reversed: The character is an imprudent braggart.

53. PAGE OF SWORDS

Normal: A character who loves positions of responsibility, who is cunning and secretive.

Reversed: The character is suspicious and sneaky.

54. TEN OF SWORDS

Normal: The character is cynical. Wary of power and authority, the character views justice and altruism in a suspicious light.

Reversed: The character is extremely stiff and formal. The character likes the idea of holding a position of power, and when holding such positions will be at pains to demonstrate its authority and maintain "proper" standards.

55. NINE OF SWORDS

Normal: The character is fey - a person with a death wish, with an apathetic attitude towards hopes and dreams.

Reversed: The character is of a hysterical (theatrical?) disposition, and overreacts to most situations. Fear, anger, love and laughter will always be kept to extremes.

56. EIGHT OF SWORDS

Normal: A rebel without a cause, the character is disappointed with the status quo.

Reversed: A person who admires authority. A potential sycophant.

57. SEVEN OF SWORDS

Normal: An opportunist. The character takes whatever he can, whenever he can, with no concern for others.

Reversed: The character is talkative in a malicious way - a slanderer or spreader of gossip.

58. SIX OF SWORDS

Normal: The character has a fascination for travel and far climes.

Reversed: The character is practical of disposition. A sad romantic who searches for their perfect love.

59. FIVE OF SWORDS

Normal: A character whose Self Image is tied in to proving himself better than those around him. The character will always go further or claim to have done better.

Reversed: The character gains pleasure from degrading others - a bully.

60. FOUR OF SWORDS

Normal: The character is a loner who needs little support from his fellows. Not unfriendly, but a man/woman of few words.

Reversed: The character is cautious but avaricious.

61. THREE OF SWORDS

Normal: The character has attitudes and beliefs which have made its own folk reject it. A sad, proud character who has a firm set of ideals.

Reversed: A character with no respect for authority. Smug and self satisfied.

62. TWO OF SWORDS

Normal: The character is law abiding and responsible. It thinks of the long range effects of its actions. Loyal and affectionate, the character is brave and cooperates well with others.

Reversed: The character is a charlatan - a poseur who speaks brave words but rarely follows these with actions. The character is chiefly interested in preserving its own skin at any cost.

63. ACE OF SWORDS

Normal: An active, aggressive character who revels in martial triumph and the exercise of authority.

Reversed: An aggressive, active forceful character who does not like being crossed.

PENTACLES

The suit of business, utility, acquisition.

64. KING OF PENTACLES

Normal: A valorous character of firm moral fibre. The character dislikes unnecessary effort.

Reversed: A lazy, corrupt individual.

65. QUEEN OF PENTACLES

Normal: A generous character that tries to uphold standards of justice. Potentially a very appealing personality.

Reversed: A suspicious character that calculatingly examines the motives of everyone around it.

66. KNIGHT OF PENTACLES

Normal: A dedicated, responsible character who might be a bit too inclined to practicality (read also "dull").

Reversed: An idle character who shirks its duties and obligations at every turn. The character is careless and easily distracted.



The Five of Pentacles



The Tower

67. PAGE OF PENTACLES

Normal: A level headed, serious character who values the qualities of reason and introspection.

Reversed: A spendthrift or wastrel with a cheerful disposition. The character has the fool's luck that seems to accompany such folk.

68. TEN OF PENTACLES

Normal: A stable, rational character who tries to curb rash companions. The character will deliberate before hazarding money or time on uncertain endeavors.

Reversed: A compulsive gamble and taker of risks. The character lives for hazard and adventure - wine, women and the toss of the dice.

69. NINE OF PENTACLES

Normal: A prudent character who expects to reap rewards from planning and industry.

Reversed: A rogue. Witty, adventurous with an endless source of cheek and humor.

70. EIGHT OF PENTACLES

Normal: The character is a diligent worker who delights in seeing his own efforts bear fruit.

Reversed: The character is vain and self important. The character has an exacting disposition, and never misses a chance to turn a profit, even from friends.

71. SEVEN OF PENTACLES

Normal: The character delights in business, barter and haggling. There is no delight like that of getting a good deal!

Reversed: The character is anxious about money - a careful investor who never loans out cash.

72. SIX OF PENTACLES

Normal: A character who is generous in his attitudes and hospitality.

Reversed: The character is amorous and greedy, with a real need to display his wealth and prowess.

73. FIVE OF PENTACLES

Normal: The card of a loyal friend and trusted retainer. The character will try to remain steadfast to its friends, liege lord or principles through all adversity.

Reversed: The character has no real convictions or loyalties except to himself. Self seeking, false hearted and amoral.

74. FOUR OF PENTACLES

Normal: The character has an easy grace of manner which comes from being at ease with its career and station.

Reversed: The character is jealous of those who have what he or she lacks (money, power, love). The character might have a bitter, spiteful streak.

75. THREE OF PENTACLES

Normal: A character who revels in invention, innovation and the products of his own labors. A practical person rather than a mad inventor.

Reversed: A petty character who resents the successes of others.

76. TWO OF PENTACLES

Normal: A gay, happy character with a great joi de vie. The character is still practical and industrious, but knows how to enjoy itself.

Reversed: A dandy or "wit" who plays a role of gaiety, frivolity and intelligence.

77. ACE OF PENTACLES

Normal: An easy going, friendly character which is nevertheless interested in self advancement.

Reversed: The character is acquisitive (money, art, companionship). Conspicuous display of wealth, snobbery and social climbing are all trademarks of this significator.

SKILLS

Whenever a character attempts to perform a task, a skill check must be made. All skill checks are made against the characteristic which seems most relevant to the task being attempted (e.g. if the character was trying to fire a gun, then his Dexterity would be tested. If the character was trying to perform mathematical calculations, then his Reason characteristic is tested).

Referees should feel free to discuss with players over which characteristics should be tested by various tasks.

BASIC TEST PROCEDURE

Whenever a task is attempted, the appropriate characteristic is tested to decide upon the success or failure of the character's attempt. Subtract the difficulty number (determined by the chart below) from the characteristic being tested, and look this number up on the comparison chart (below). Beside the number thus yielded, you will see a second number - the required dice roll. This is the number that must be rolled or less on 2D6 in order for the test to succeed.

The referee should sometimes check the results of character's skill tests in secret, since the success or failure of some tasks might not be obvious until some time passes.

TESTING ONE CHARACTER AGAINST ANOTHER

When the attempt is being made against an animate object (such as another person) the relevant characteristics of both parties are used in the test. Subtract the relevant characteristic of the defender from the relevant characteristic of the character who initiated the test (the "attacker"), and roll the dice as detailed above. DRM's to the dice roll are decided by subtracting the attacker's skill level from the defender's skill level. If the roll succeeds, then the "attacker" has won. If the roll fails, then the defender wins.

DETERMINING THE TASK DIFFICULTY NUMBER

The referee must decide the difficulty of the task which the character is undertaking. The following chart is then used to assign these abstract levels of difficulty a number suitable for using on the comparison chart.

Simple	5
Average	10
Difficult	15
Very difficult	20
Nearly impossible	25

TASK DIFFICULTY NUMBER

This number is compared defensively against the testing characteristic on this comparison chart.

THE COMPARISON CHART

Subtract the task difficulty number or the defender's relevant characteristic from the relevant characteristic of the character who is performing the test. The number yielded by this is now looked up at the top of the comparison chart. This gives a column in which the dice score required for success can be seen below the dividing line. The roll succeeds on any dice result equal to or less than the specified number. A failed comparison roll will often have more severe results if the roll is failed by a wide margin (e.g.. By more than 2 points).

(Offense - Defense)	Target or less on 2d6
-9 to -12	2
-6 to -8	3
-4 to -5	4
-2 to -3	5
-1	6
0	7
1	8
2 to 3	9
4 to 5	10
6+	11

SKILL TESTS

When in doubt as to what characteristics affect a skill use, the Referee must always have the final decision. When in doubt, you may average two characteristics.

INTUITION is a useful characteristic for testing against sheer luck or random chance. Roll vs. INTUITION for such strange actions as checking for secret doors, noticing evil auras etc.

EXAMPLE OF A SKILL TEST

In a desperate attempt to escape her pursuers, Linette decides that she wants to try jumping her horse over a burning fence. The Referee rules that she must make a RIDING skill roll to successfully complete the task. She will have to roll against her DEXTERITY, modified by her skill in RIDING.

The horse is frightened of the fire, and the fence is high, so the Referee rules that it is a difficult task (a difficulty number of 15). Linette has a DEXTERITY of 13. We now subtract the difficulty number from the characteristic being tested. Linette's 13 DEXTERITY minus the difficulty number of 15 gives a result of -2.

We now go to the -2 column on the comparison chart (the fourth column from the Top). Looking across, we see that the required dice roll is a 5 or less on 2D6. Since her riding skill is 0, there is no DRM.

Linette rolls, and scores a 7. She fails! Since she has failed her roll by 2 full points, something particularly bad has happened as a result of Linette's failure. The Referee rules that the horse has thrown her, rather than simply refused the jump. Linette ends up on the ground with her shapely rump well and truly bruised for her trouble.

**SOCIAL STATUS
OPTIONAL RULE**

Characters can be rated for their status and respectability within their own social class. Roll 2D6+3, and record this number on the character's record sheet. The higher the number, the greater the character's social status within its own social class. This number can be used as a "characteristic" when rolling to determine success in some social situations (e.g. when checking to see whether a character is invited to a social function, or gains an interview with an official).

Reputation and scandal will effect a character's social status. Vary a character's status rating as incidents seem to effect it. Status point increases can be part of the rewards of a successful adventure. Status point subtraction can be the penalty for unseemly behavior and poor role play.

Social status is only measured in relation to other people of the character's own social class. A character might be the most respectable peasant in the village, but to the nobility, he is still just a peasant!!!

SKILL RATINGS

A character's level of competence with its skills is measured on a scale from 0 and up. A skill level of 0 or higher is required for a character to be capable of taking a test in specialist fields (such as knowledge or combat skills).

Skill ratings make skill tests easier to pass. For every level of skill possessed by a character, the player receives a DRM of -1 when rolling a skill test vs. that skill.

There is no effective limit to the range of skill levels - skills of up to 5 or 6 might well be encountered, although people with skills at such levels will be famous within their fields. As a general rule of thumb, treat people with a level zero skill as having a fair grounding in a skill, characters with skill levels of 1 and 2 as being competent, and characters with level 3 or 4 skills as being experts. Other higher level skills would be termed "masters".

WOUND DRMS

A character's wounds adversely effect its chances of success with any skill. Every 2 full points of maximum hand rating lost due to wounds will give the wounded character a DRM of +1 on its skill rolls.

STARTING SKILLS

All characters have a starting "template" of skills gained from their social background. To this basic background template are added additional levels of skill purchased through skill points.

To generate a character's skills, first generate the character's social background on the table below, and copy out the initial skills for that social character type onto the character's record sheet.

RANDOM GENERATION OF SOCIAL BACKGROUND

HUMANS		HALF-HORSES, SATYRS		HARPY, PIXIE	
Die Roll	Social Class	Die Roll	Social Class	Die Roll	Social Class
2D6		2d6		2d6	
12	Noble	12	Noble	12	Noble
11,10	Gentle	11,10	Gentle	11 to 2	Lower "ordinary" class
9,8	Urban middle class	9	Urban middle class		
7,6	Rural middle class	8 to 6	Rural middle class		
5 to 2	Commoner	5 to 2	Commoner		

Referees should try to construct groups of characters into some sort of coherent whole. For instance, if a party consists of a female noble, a female gentlewoman and a male rural middle class character, then the referee might decide that the gentlewoman is lady in waiting to the noblewoman, and the male character is a servant/companion in the pay of the ladies.

All characters are assumed to possess level zero in such skills as spin yarn, persuade, pistol, long arms, brawling, sneak, spot hidden and first aid. "Unusual skills" are skills which are rare amongst the social class in question.



BASIC CHARACTER TEMPLATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

NOBLE OR GENTLE BIRTH - MALE

Nobles and gentlemen receive a level zero skill in the following areas:

2 social skills

Literacy

1 courtly skill

Etiquette

Thrusting Sword

Riding*

Unusual skills: Cutlass, Brawling, all craft skills

* This chart is also used for female Harpies. A Half-Horse or Harpy should substitute another social skill for Riding.

NOBLE OR GENTLE BIRTH - FEMALE

2 social skills

Literacy

2 courtly skills

Etiquette

Riding*

Unusual skills: All combat skills, all craft skills, Streetwise

* A Half-Horse should substitute another social skill for Riding.

URBAN MIDDLE CLASS - MALE

3 social skills

Literacy

Sword (Thrusting or Cutting)

1 craft skill at level 1 *

Unusual skills: All courtly skills

* The character might instead choose to take this level of skill in Law or Administration (making him a clerk), or Legend Lore (if the character is a mage's apprentice).

RURAL MIDDLE CLASS - MALE

1 social skill

Literacy

Sword (Thrusting or Cutting) or Dagger skill

Riding*

Farming

Travel 1

Unusual skills: All courtly skills

* A Half-Horse should substitute another social skill for Riding.

MIDDLE CLASS - FEMALE

3 social skills

Literacy

2 of the following skills: Merchant, Farming, Chief, Medicine, Legend Lore or Tailoring.

Unusual skills: All combat skills

COMMONER - MALE

Carousing

2 social skills

1 craft skill

Brawling 1

Cutting Sword

Travel 1

Unusual skills: All knowledge skills (except Legend Lore)

Banned skills: All courtly skills.

SAMPLE CHARACTER LINETTE (CONTINUED)

As a starting character, Linette has her initial skills for being of "gentle" birth, plus 22 experience points to spend on purchasing additional skills. Linette's starting skills for her social background are as follows.

2 social skills (Linette chooses Dancing and Persuade)

Literacy 2 courtly skills (Linette chooses Political lore and Hawking)

Etiquette
Riding

All of these skills are initially at level zero.

Linette must now spend her initial experience points. Firstly she purchases a skill level of 2 with the sword (in which she initially has no skill at all), costing 5 (for level zero) + 3 (for level one) + 5 (for level two) points, for a total of 13 experience points! This has been an expensive purchase because of the extra two experience points per level that she must pay for martial skills (these being unusual skills for a gentlewoman).

Linette now raises her Pistol skill to level 2, costing 3 + 5 points for a total of 8 (Linette already has a skill level of zero with the pistol, as do all characters). She now has only one experience point remaining, and decides to use this to raise her Persuasion skill to level one.

Linette does not have a great variety of skills, since she has chosen to adopt skills which are very difficult for a person of her class and sex to learn. She will have to avoid courtly functions and petty intrigues, since she does not have the skills to deal properly with them - skills which all her peers will have in abundance. Linette will thus find that she is a bit of a loner, since she is not really suited to the company of her peers. This suits her just fine, since she dreads the thought of being married off until she is well and truly ready.



COMMONER - FEMALE

3 social skills at level 1
1 craft skill
Travel 1
Unusual skills: All combat skills, Leadership, all knowledge skills (except Legend Lore)
Banned skills: All courtly skills.

LOWER CLASS PIXIE

2 social skills
Legend Lore
Literacy
Thrusting Sword or Dagger
1 knowledge skill
1 craft skill

LOWER CLASS HARPY

2 social skills
Brawling
Sword (Cutting or Thrusting)
1 craft skill
Travel 1

PURCHASING ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Additional starting skills are purchased using experience points. Each character starts the game with experience points equal to its Reason characteristic added to its Drive.

COST OF SKILL LEVELS

Additional skills are bought as individual levels of skill. Characters must purchase each level of a skill with experience points. Thus if a character wanted to purchase a skill level of 4 in a skill, he must pay the experience points costs for level zero, 1, 2, 3 and 4. If a character wishes to increase a skill in which it already has 0 or more levels of skill, it need only purchase the desired additional levels.

Skills which are unusual for the character's social "template" cost 2 experience points extra per level (only for initial purchase - not for experience increase during an adventure). Banned skills cost double the normal experience points cost.

Skills should be purchased in such a way as to fit the character for some sort of role or career. Sample careers might include the following:

Courtier
Soldier
Scholar
Merchant
Craftsman
Farmer
Thief
Sailor

Skill level	Experience point cost	Cumulative cost
0	3	3
1	1	4
2	2	6
3	4	10
4	8	18
5	16	34
6+	32	66

SKILL LISTS

The following list is intended as a guideline for players and referees as to the general types of skill that might be available for purchase by characters. Referees should feel free to expand upon this list as they see fit.

SOCIAL SKILLS

Assess Personality
Carousing
Dancing
Detect Lie
Gambling
Leadership
Literacy
Persuade
Play Musical Instrument
Spin Yarn
Streetwise

COURTLY SKILLS

Etiquette
Fashion
Flirtation
Hawking
Orate
Poetry
Political Lore
Repartee

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Administration
Geography
Law
Legend Lore
Military tactics
Natural lore
Navigation
Philosophy
Siege Engineer
Weather Lore

MILITARY SKILLS

Archery
Artillery
Brawling
Cutting Sword
Lance
Long arms
Pistol
Polearms
Thrown Weapons
Thrusting Sword

MOVEMENT AND PERCEPTION SKILLS

Climbing
Detect magic
Riding
Sneak
Spot Hidden Object
Swimming
Tracking
Travel

CRAFT SKILLS

Artist
Carpentry
Cook
Cut Purse
Farming
Farrier
First Aid
Gunsmith
Juggling
Leather Work
Lock Picking
Medicine
Merchant
Metalwork
Seamanship
Tailoring

MAGICAL SKILLS

Alchemy
Artificiery
Astrology
Demonology
Hedge Magics
Illusion
Mental Disciplines
Necromancy
Sorcery

BASIC SKILLS

Remember. All characters start the game with level zero in the following skills:

Brawling
First Aid
Long Arms
Persuade
Pistol
Sneak
Spin Yarn
Spot Hidden





LEADERSHIP

Leadership skill is used as a modifier on many Charisma rolls. Mostly used for motivating underlings, Leadership skill can also be used to reinforce loyalty or even smooth over enmities between subordinates.

LITERACY

The skill of reading, writing, and successful written expression. Characters who lack literacy skill are unable to read or write. Characters who possess high levels of literacy are capable of gaining the optimum effect out of the written word.

PERSUADE

The skill of getting others to perform favors that they do not really want to perform. Use persuasion skill as a DRM on favor rolls.

PLAY MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

This skill either allows the character to play one of the musical instruments available in LACE & STEEL, or makes the character a trained singer. The character must choose which instrument it may play. This skill also allows the character to read musical notation.

SPIN YARN

The character is talented at telling fanciful tales, telling smooth and consistent cover stories, and could generally be considered glib of tongue.

STREETWISE

The character is wise in the ways of “underground” society. Characters who have streetwise skill are capable of finding thieves for hire and buyers for stolen goods.

Social skills should be an integral part of any adventure. A ball, a party, carousing in a tavern or inspiring your followers are all part and parcel of an entertaining game.





THE GENTLE ART OF COURTLY LOVE

Courtly skills are the stuff of pure romance. The lady, the dandy, the courtier and the spy will rely upon these skills as their stock in trade.

COURTLY SKILLS

The courtly skills are social skills which mostly apply to only the uppermost strata of society. Like social skills, they are often useful for avoiding Self Image losses (embarrassment) in social situations.

ETIQUETTE

The character is familiar with the complexities of formal address, bows, salutes and curtsies. The character is also schooled in heraldry, the recognition of orders and awards, table manners and formal dress. Etiquette skill is essential for avoiding disgrace at courtly functions, but is rarely “tested” by normal circumstances.

FASHION

The skill of fashion consciousness. Fashion experts are able to keep abreast of all the latest fashions, and to select and coordinate garments which accord with the very latest trends. Characters who are skilled in fashion can order and develop outfits which are the very avant garde of fashion, setting the trends that others will follow and gaining a reputation thereby.

FLIRTATION

Mostly a female skill, a character skilled in flirtation may engage the interest and admiration of characters of the opposite sex. Flirtation is a complex skill, and can be used to tease and entice without ever becoming a blatant sexual invitation. Successful use of flirtation skill will definitely boost the user’s Self Image.

HAWKING

A blood sport much enjoyed by those who can afford it. Hawking skill enables a character to train a bird for the hunt, raising a bird from a mere fledgling. When out on a hunt, hawking skill will determine how well the character’s bird performs - and whether it comes back once launched!

ORATE

The character is skilled at public speaking, intriguing conversation and debate. This skill includes talents in the choice of lively and attractive language in all situations - not just in public announcements.

POETRY

The character is capable of creating attractive, meaningful or thought provoking poetic prose.

POLITICAL LORE

This skill is a general “current affairs” knowledge. Characters who are skilled in political lore are aware of current political alliances between states, noble families and clans. Characters who have this skill will know the doings and backgrounds of important public figures, and will recognize such characters when they see them. Politically aware characters are able to assess current events, and predict their effects on the near future. This skill is vital to diplomats, courtiers and spies.

REPARTEE

The skill of being a successful “wit”. Repartee is the ability to pepper one’s conversation with a constant stream of witticisms, ironies and ambiguities. It can be used both to make the user seem more intelligent in the eyes of his or her peers, and to make the victim seem ridiculous. A successful use of repartee will never cause direct insult, but will still be able to carry insulting meaning.

Characters should be careful how and where they use repartee skill. While it is useful at a ball, or for taking a rival down a peg or two, it could cause trouble if used in a tavern.

MILITARY SKILLS

Military skills are the skills of combat, and are acquired through long hours of practice and practical experience.

ARCHERY

The character is skilled at firing bows. Archery is practised both as a military skill by the Forijan nomads, and is a sport in more civilized climes. The skill of archery may be used on foot or horseback, but horse archers who have not learned their craft amongst the nomads will have to roll vs. their riding skill to avoid falling off their mount!

ARTILLERY

The character is a gunner, capable of efficiently loading, aiming firing and deploying artillery pieces. Artillery skill will assist in the speedy loading and accurate firing of cannon. Skilled gunners can direct the fire of a battery of guns, greatly increasing the overall effect of the battery's fire.

Old time gunners can usually be told by their constant cries of "Eh? What did you say?"

BRAWLING

The skill of infighting with hands, feet, teeth, improvised weapons and cudgels. Brawling skill also allows the character to wield daggers and knives.

CUTTING SWORDS

The use of one handed cutting swords (cutlasses, sabres and hunting swords). "Cutting Sword" skill also covers the use of one handed axes ("Polaxes"), hammers and maces.

This skill is more common amongst the lower orders than "Thrusting Sword" skill.

LANCE

The character may use the couched cavalry lance. This skill is slowly dying out, since sword and pistol have now replaced the lance as the dominant cavalry weapons. LACE & STEEL's equipment section details special rules for the use of lances in the cavalry charge.

Lance skill is appropriate for Half-Horses, since it makes good use of their mobility (Four-Leggers make awful pikemen due to the huge area that they occupy). Half-Horse lancers are at a disadvantage when facing cavalry.

LONG ARMS

The ability to accurately fire muskets, carbines and similar shoulder fired firearms.

PISTOL

The ability to accurately fire pistols.

POLEARMS

The use of spears, halberds, partisans etc. in hand-to-hand combat.

THROWN WEAPONS

The ability to accurately cast knives or throwing darts. These weapons are completely inaccurate over distances of more than 10 paces (thrown knives) or 20 paces (darts), and roll to hit vs. 10 at all ranges. They suffer the +2 armor modifier of daggers, and never cause "follow up" damage unless the hit was scored on the target's high line.

THRUSTING SWORD

The skill of fencing with rapiers and "backswords". No gentleman's education is complete without a firm grounding in the basics of fencing.

Military Skills will inevitably be very common specialties amongst player characters. Too much concentration on the skills of violence can make a boring character, however. In Lace & Steel, flirtation, repartee and detect lie might be of more use to characters than skill with pistol, knife and sword.



Movement and perception skills will often come under test during an adventure. Thieves and soldiers of fortune will find skills such as Sneak and Spot hidden objects amongst their most useful abilities. Other movement skills are more specialized and will be tested under stress less often. Never the less, a well rounded character should clock up a few skill levels within this category. A quick escape on a fast horse, or a swan dive out of a window into the castle moat can be difficult without the appropriate skills.

MOVEMENT AND PERCEPTION SKILLS

These skills are grouped together for no special reason. All of these skills involve training of the character's senses, or the learning of new movement skills.

CLIMBING

The ability to swiftly and efficiently scamper up ropes, trees and rubble, or to cling to precarious perches.

DETECT MAGIC

The ability to sense the mana which surrounds a magic item, sorcerers or a place of power. Skill rolls with this ability are taken vs. the character's Magical aptitude score, and will usually be vs. 15 or 20 (magic is quite hard to detect). Although anyone can learn the slight, it will normally be confined to characters who have a high Magical aptitude score.

RIDING

The ability to stay astride a horse or mule and make the wretched thing go in the desired direction at the desired speed. At higher levels this skill can be used for having the character's mount jump obstacles without the character falling off, or for urging the mount to greater bursts of speed.

This skill is also used to control panicking mounts, or to keep the mount steady while firing pistols or carbines from the saddle (an unsteady mount will cause a penalty of 1 higher difficulty level to the shot).

SNEAK

The skill of moving quietly and of hiding oneself efficiently.

SPOT HIDDEN OBJECT

The ability to see hidden things, spot hidden characters, or notice minor visual details. To find a hidden character, roll the seeker's spot hidden object skill vs. his target's sneak skill.

SWIMMING

The ability to keep oneself afloat in water. The level of skill will indicate the character's endurance at this task.

TRACKING

The ability to follow foot prints, and to interpret the signs and clues left behind by the quarry.

TRAVEL

The character is hardened to the "joys" of the road, and is used to sleeping in the open. Travel skill is used as a modifier to travel fatigue rolls. Travel skill cannot be learned through study, but only through experience.



CRAFT SKILLS

The crafts are knowledge skills which also involve a mastery of manual techniques. There are many more craft skills than those listed here, and players are welcome to become brewers, glaziers, potters or masons if they so desire.

ARTIST

The character is a skilled drawer/painter, or a skilled sculptor.

CARPENTRY

The character is skilled in the construction, repair and decoration of wooden artifacts. This skill can be used for making cabinets or repairing ships.

COOK

While most characters are at least capable of frying meat or boiling potatoes, it takes a skilled cook to make a truly appetizing or complex meal. Good cooks can make the best out of available materials.



CUT PURSE

The character is skilled in the dubious art of picking pockets, removing necklaces, cutting purses from victims belts and other illegal sleights of hand. This skill is learned only from thieves guilds.

FARMING

The character is skilled at raising crops and livestock. Skilled farmers know of proper land management, allowing them to get the best out of the soil by choosing the right crops for the right areas. A good farmer actually increases the wealth of the soil he tills.

FARRIER

The character is skilled in the care of horses and dray beasts. Skilled farriers are good judges of “horse flesh”, and can detect superior or inferior quality beasts. Farriers can treat the ills and injuries that these animals acquire, and can break and train new mounts.



FIRST AID

The skill of stanching blood loss, setting bones and bandaging wounds.

GUNSMITH

The character can make muskets and pistols when provided with the proper tools and materials. A highly skilled gunsmith can make superior quality arms with increased handiness, reliability and accuracy.

JUGGLING

The character is skilled in juggling and tumbling.

LEATHER WORK

The character can produce commercial quality leather goods, including shoes, boots, holsters, buff coats and saddles.

LOCK PICKING

The character can tease open locks. This skill is only learned through thieves guilds.

The function of craft skills is to provide characters with a means of earning a living. Characters who are not landed gentry, or out and out mercenaries will definitely need some sort of trade.



The craft skills are not considered appropriate for people of gentle birth.

After all, what's the point in having a Coach and four, if there're no peasants to run over with it!

SEAMANSHIP

A sailor is skilled in the dozens of minor skills needed to help crew a ship. Seamanship skill includes small boat handling, the setting of sails, the tying of esoteric knots etc. It also governs the character's ability to skillfully direct the handling of a ship, and its knowledge of the tactics of sea combat.

It is no disgrace for a noble or gentleman to learn seamanship.

TAILORING

The character is skilled at the production of useful and beautiful clothes.

MEDICINE

A doctor is skilled in assisting the long term recovery of patients and the combating of disease and fevers. If a wounded character is attended by a doctor, the doctor's skill level is used as a beneficial DRM on the character's wound recovery rolls.

MERCHANT

A merchant is a skilled buyer and seller of goods. Merchants know the normal price for most goods, and are skilled at enticing their customers into paying more than this level. Merchant skill is tested whenever the character shops for bargains or tries to sell at high profit. Merchants are also skilled at basic arithmetical calculation and the use of weights and measures.

METAL WORK

Metal workers are capable of producing useful metal artifacts including pike heads, axes and such. Characters at skill level 2 or higher must specialize, becoming either armorers, sword smiths or cannon founders.

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Knowledge skills encompass all of the scholarly skills which do not require vulgar manual labor. They are thus considered suitable for study by characters of gentle birth.

ADMINISTRATION

A skilled administrator is able to efficiently organize and supervise a bureaucratic organization. Administrators in LACE & STEEL are also able to handle arithmetic calculations, and acquire a knowledge of the right people to see and the right questions to ask in order to get things done. As such, administration skill acts as a sort of “streetwise” knowledge for society’s bureaucratic classes.

GEOGRAPHY

A knowledge of the physical layout of the known world, its peoples and their general customs.

LANGUAGES

Each character is presumed to speak their native tongue with fluency, and is capable of understanding regional dialects if they are pronounced carefully. Other languages must be learned as a skill.

The languages which a character may choose to learn are as follows.

AULD TANTIC

The character can read and speak the ancient language of Tantus, in which many magical texts and scholarly works are written. Knowledge of Auld Tantic is the mark of the true scholar.

The modern Tantic language is largely descended from the original Tantic tongue, though it now bears little relation to the classical form.

MODERN TANTIC

The corrupt form of the ancient tongue of the once-mighty Tantic empire. Modern Tantic is spoken in Duncruigh, Welfland, The Tantic empire, Forija and Scarmis.

ALAMARIAN

The musical language of Nantierre and Albernia. Some duchies of the Tantic empire speak a corrupted form of the Alamarian tongue.

HARABIAN

The ability to speak the principal tongue used in the far-off land of Harabi. This is a useful skill for far-ranging traders and explorers.

LAW

Characters skilled at law have a firm knowledge of the legal codes of all known states (all civilized countries have legal codes based on Tantic tradition). This skill may be used to successfully defend or prosecute a character in a court of law.

LEGEND LORE

The character is well versed in folk lore and legend. Characters who have a skill in Legend Lore have a wealth of knowledge about famous magical items, historical events, magic users of renown and sundry other topics.

MILITARY TACTICS

The skill of conducting large military forces in battle. This skill encompasses a knowledge of battle tactics as well as the principles of campaign strategy. A successful general will also need leadership to control his staff, a corps of Administrators and a good set of wits if he is to avoid disaster. Mere tactical aptitude is not enough...

NATURAL LORE

Characters who are skilled in natural lore are able to identify herbs and plants, and are familiar with the life cycles and habits of non sentient animals.

No lady or gentleman can be considered truly fit for society without the benefit of a Knowledge Skill.

Genteel skills such as languages and philosophy mark a truly polished education.

Magical skills are normally learned by private tuition and Study. There are no magical 'schools' that may be attended, although Magi do tend to form clubs societies in which they swap information and source material.

Some of the branches of magic would be considered ungentlemanly or unladylike (such as artificery).

NAVIGATION

The character is skilled in using the sun, stars, charts and compasses to determine its location on the globe. The current state of the art will allow navigators to determine how far north or south they might be from the equator (longitude), but as yet there is no way of telling distances travelled east or west (latitude). Navigators thus make use of log hooks recorded by their predecessors which record helm headings, rates of speed and estimates of distances crossed. Exploring new seaways is thus time consuming, dangerous, and often profitless.

PHILOSOPHY

The character is skilled in formal philosophical discourse. This includes a knowledge of the Christian religion, biblical texts and the major Gnostic variations on "mainline" Christianity.

SIEGE ENGINEER

Siege Engineers are skilled at constructing and breaking into fortifications. This skill includes knowledge of excavation and wall construction, demolitions, the siting of batteries and a host of similar talents.



WEATHER LORE

The measure of a character's ability to predict the weather. This can be used to give short term predictions (e.g. that there will be no storms tomorrow), or more generalized long term predictions (e.g. It looks like it's going to be a long cold winter). A very useful skill for farmers and sailors.

MAGICAL SKILLS

A full list of magical skills is provided starting on page 65. The most important thing to note with magical skills is that they come in "schools" or disciplines, each of which contains a number of specific spells. Characters must purchase skill levels within specific schools. Every level of skill within a school (from zero onwards) that they acquire also gains them the knowledge of one of the spells within the school. Individual spells may also be purchased separately.

ONGOING EXPERIENCE

LACE & STEEL characters should have the opportunity to expand their skills and abilities as part of the rewards of an adventure. Refining a player character's known skills and having it develop new areas of knowledge is a major part of the fun of any game.

At the end of each adventure, each character should roll for experience with every skill that it used during the scenario. Roll the character's score in whatever characteristic seems to most govern the use of the skill vs. 10, using the character's skill level as a positive DRM on the dice (e.g.. If a character has a skill level of 1 in an area, it will add 1 to its dice score when making the check). This makes it harder to gain experience in areas in which the character already has high skill levels.

NOTE: A character's Self Image DRM will effect all experience rolls made at the end of an adventure. Read the Self Image rules carefully, and use them well - they are vitally important to the experience system!

If the character's experience roll is made, then the character acquires one experience point with the tested skill. If the experience roll was 2 points or more below the minimum required score, and the character made particularly effective or frequent use of the skill during the past scenario, then the character gains 1 D3 experience points with the skill.

When enough experience points are accumulated to raise a skill up to the next skill level, increase the character's level of competence with the skill by one and reduce the experience points track for the skill to zero until fresh experience points are earned.

If a character earns experience in a magical field, its new experience points may either be spent on increasing its expertise in the field, or in gaining a new ability within the field.

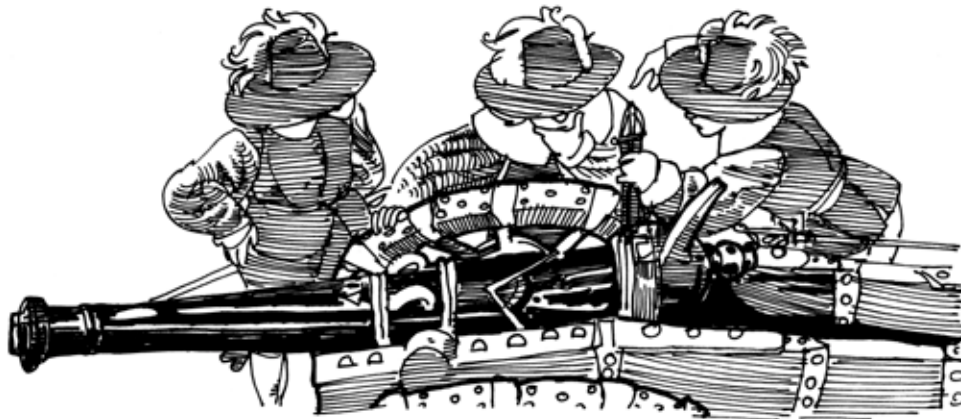
STUDY

Skills may also be learned through study. Two months study in a field will entitle the character to experience rolls in the field of study, but only if the character successfully makes a roll of its Drive vs. 10.

Study might be done as part of a job. If a character was press ganged onto a ship, then it would probably pick up seamanship zero without having to make any drive rolls, since its "study" in the subject is compulsory.

MAINTAINING SKILLS

Skills must be maintained through constant use. If a character spends a year or more without using a skill, it must roll its Reason score vs. 10. If the roll is failed, then the character's skill goes a bit rusty- reduce it temporarily by 1 skill level (to a minimum of level 0). Skill levels lost in this way may be regained at the cost of 1 experience point per level.



EXPERIENCE

Linette returns from an adventure, and the Referee tells her to make experience rolls.

During the course of her adventure, Linette has made rolls against her pistol skill, her riding skill and her brawling skill. She thus has three checks to make. Let's look at her first roll - the roll for experience in PISTOL skill.

For her pistol skill, she will roll vs. her DEXTERITY (the characteristic that most affects pistol skill rolls). She must roll her DEXTERITY of 13 vs. the task difficulty of 10. We subtract the task difficulty number (10) from her characteristic of 13, giving us a result of +3. The +3 column of the comparison chart yields a required dice roll result of 9- on 2D6 for success). BUT Linette has a pistol skill of 2. This counts as an adverse DRM on the dice roll, adding 2 to whatever number she rolls. Linette rolls her two dice, and scores a seven. Adding two to the result brings her dice score up to nine - still a success. She gains one experience point in pistol skill.

Looking at the charts which tell us the cost of purchasing skills, we find that to go from skill level 2 to skill level 3 will cost four experience points. Linette is thus three points short of going up another level in her skill, but she keeps the single experience point that she has earned in pistol skill, writing it down on her character sheet. As her adventures continue, she may one day accumulate enough points to raise her skill up to level three.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

As a major part of its policy of encouraging good role-playing, LACE & STEEL seeks to provide all characters with personalities. People form a major part of the game environment, and it is the personalities that the players encounter (rather than exotic toothy monsters) which will add spice to play.

LACE & STEEL is a conflict game, and not a combat game. In making allowances for personality development and interpersonal relations, this game seeks to move into a new sphere of conflict. While seldom lethal, interpersonal conflicts can be expressed in workable game terms, and can prove to be highly entertaining.



INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Romance, courage, loyalty and treachery are the classical elements of the "swashbuckling" genre. LACE & STEEL provides the unique opportunity to simulate emotions and attachments as part of the game system.

An integral part of an adventure should be the ties, antipathies and Self Image developments that occur as the scenario progresses. Adventures should be written in such a way as to take advantage of the interpersonal relations rules.

Will the fair female spy stay loyal to her country at the price of seeing her lover imprisoned?

Will a ship's crew mutiny against their captain?

In LACE & STEEL, this can be easily simulated by the game system!

Don't be afraid to liberally dose your adventures with potential sweethearts, lovers or even arch enemies. Ongoing ties and antipathies will absolutely make your campaign! The need to woo sweethearts, protect loved ones or pursue vendettas is what separates a true romantic fantasy campaign from the traditional "dungeon bash".

Using the interpersonal relations rules, LACE & STEEL adventures may easily be set up for court intrigue situations, spying, politics or mutinies at sea. The referee's imagination is the only limit.

DISPOSITIONS

The first aspect of interpersonal relations simulated by LACE & STEEL is character dispositions. All characters and NPCs must draw a card from the Tarot deck to provide their character with its initial disposition.

Use the disposition thus obtained as a general guideline to the role-playing of that character. This greatly eases the difficulty of creating believable and entertaining NPCs, and forces players into actually playing a role rather than acting out their own personalities all of the time.

TIES AND ANTIPATHIES

The second aspect of interpersonal relations simulated by LACE & STEEL are personal ties and antipathies. This allows a Referee to simulate the friends, enemies and beliefs of a character in simple game terms.

A tie is a feeling of friendship, loyalty, respect or duty towards a person, a nation, a group or an idea. An antipathy is a feeling of distaste, disgust or aversion to a thing. Ties/antipathies are treated very much like skills, being given a rating of zero or more. This rating is termed the tie or antipathy's strength.

USES OF TIES AND ANTIPATHIES

If a character is expected to perform an action which goes against its ties and antipathies, the character must make a successful roll of its Drive vs. the difficulty of the task in order to do so. The strength of the character's tie or antipathy is used as a DRM on this roll.

Tie and antipathy strengths are also used in the Self Image rules to determine the Self Image points that may be put into a task "investment" (see below). They also effect the Self Image gains that may be had from acting within the parameters of the character's friendships and hatreds. Ties and antipathies thus effect characters' experience and abilities - choose them with care!

STARTING TIE/ANTIPATHY EXPERIENCE

Unless a person grew up sealed in a wicker basket, he will normally have a number of ties and antipathies. Starting characters will have about 2D3 items/people/concepts with which they have ties of level zero or higher. There is a total of 2D3 levels of tie/antipathy strength to split between these starting ties/antipathies. Some ties or antipathies might thus start at level zero.

Sample entities with which characters might develop ties or antipathies include:

- An ideal (e.g.. Chivalry, justice, maintaining the social order or the law)
- Another character (e.g.. A leader, friend, enemy or lover).
- A military unit
- A nation, town or family
- An abstract phobia (e.g.. Fear of water, heights or fire)

Players should be discouraged from having their characters take a tie with themselves, since this is already covered by giving the character a conceited disposition. Ties/antipathies must be taken with things which will have a concrete effect on the character's personality and role play - referees must prevent useless or trivial ties and antipathies at all costs, since this trivializes the game. Friends, enemies and beliefs are appropriate - favorite foods and favorite colors are not!

NEW TIES AND ANTIPATHIES

When characters are first given a real opportunity to form an opinion about a person or organization, roll the Charisma score of the potential new friend/enemy vs. 10 on the comparison chart. If the roll is successful, and there is a good basis for the development of a new tie, then the target character will develop a level zero tie with the character/concept in question. If the roll fails, and there is reasonable basis for an antipathy to develop; the target character will instead develop a level zero antipathy.

If the charisma roll comes up as a natural 2 or 12, then an extreme emotional reaction might occur. If the dice comes up as a 2, then the character will develop a tie level of 2D2 with the subject (representing an instant affability of even love at first sight). Likewise if the charisma roll comes up as a 12, the antipathy thus developed will be at 1D3-1 strength rather than at level zero. Such feelings will often be mutual to both parties, and both will roll dice for increased tie/antipathy levels.

SEDUCTION

Completely dazzled by the good looks and easy laughter of her friend Alain (she has a tie of 3 with him), Linette sets out to offer him her virtue. Alain likes her, but Linette hopes to make their attachment much deeper. Unfortunately, Alain does not really see her in a romantic light.

All through the summers evening, she hangs on his every word, wide eyed and dreamy. Finally getting up the courage to broach the subject, she makes her play to seduce Alain. She has a tie of 3 with Alain, so this acts as her "Self Image investment" (see page 48). If she wins his heart, she will gain a bonus of -3 Self Image. If she fails, then she will receive a penalty of +3 on her Self Image.

Linette rolls her charisma of 12 vs. Alain's drive of 11. This gives her a roll of 8- on 2D6. Alain has a tie level of 1 with Linette, and so she receives a DRM of -1 on the roll. Unfortunately, Linette rolls a 10! Alain panics when she tells him of her feelings, and explains that he really wants to just stay good friends. Heartbroken, Linette flees back to her rooms, her self confidence shattered.

- Men!

EXAMPLE OF THE INTER PERSONAL RULES IN PLAY

INCIDENT I

Anton the thief climbs into the royal palace in the dead of night intending to perform a daring robbery. While doing so, he fails his sneak roll and makes a noise, attracting the attention of Marguerite (one of the ladies in waiting). Marguerite comes into the room to investigate.

Anton hides in the shadows, and pounces on Marguerite as she passes. In flinging her to the couch to silence her Anton sees such a look of shock and alarm on her face that he desists from roughly holding her and motions her to quiet.

Marguerite decides to do so since she is curious about this completely unexpected visitor. He does not seem dangerous, but rather seems very handsome and daring....

On impulse, Anton gently reaches forward and kisses her. A charisma roll is now made to see if any changes in Marguerite's ties and antipathies result. The dice roll a natural 2, giving an initial tie level of 2D2. Marguerite rolls, and scores a total of 4 - love at first sight! The Referee rules that the feeling is mutual, and Anton now rolls 2D2 for his own tie level with Marguerite, scoring a 4 also. Their encounter is obviously sheer fate at work, and we shall draw a curtain over this scene before we lose our "G" rating...

CHANGES IN TIES AND ANTIPATHIES

A character's ties and antipathies will fluctuate in strength as they come under test. If an event occurs which might possibly increase or decrease a character's tie or antipathy strengths, roll the character's Reason score vs. 10. If the roll is failed, then increase/decrease the character's tie or antipathy by 1 level of strength.

If a level zero tie drops to -1, then the tie disappears and is replaced by a level 0 antipathy and vice versa.

MAJOR EMOTIONAL EVENTS

Certain crises may trigger far greater changes to tie/antipathy experience levels than stated above (such as discovering that your beloved leader is a vicious, loathsome psychopath). In such cases, double the character's experience changes resulting from the tie/antipathy experience roll.

To simulate the emotional confusion caused by nasty revelations, the referee may decide to seesaw ties, antipathies and Self Image up and down several times before reaching a final result.

Favors

When a character approaches an NPC, to request a favor, the NPC's tie strength with the character may be used to determine whether or not the favor will be granted. Roll the NPC's Reason, Drive or Intuition score (whichever seems appropriate) vs. the difficulty of the favor, a successful roll meaning that the favor is granted. Use the NPC's tie strength as a DRM on the roll.

Difficulty levels of favors:

Very simple favor (often expected as a social nicety):	2
Minor favor (no real trouble to perform):	5
Major favor (definitely inconvenient to perform):	10
Very difficult or dangerous favor:	20



SPONTANEOUS NPC ACTIONS

The above system may also be used to check for spontaneous actions which might be performed by an NPC. Non player characters who have formed a good impression of a player character might do favors for the player character entirely by their own initiative (e.g. Minor offers of assistance, “carry your bags, ma’am?”, etc.). Likewise, NPC’s who have a dislike of the player character might perform minor actions of spite (spreading gossip or starting an unpleasant rumor).

Favors will have increased chances of being granted if an NPC realizes that they are important to the player character. In situations where the favor, if granted, will result in preventing the death or injury of a person with whom the NPC has no feelings of antipathy, drop the favor’s difficulty by one level.



FRIENDSHIP CONFLICTING WITH DISPOSITION

Favors or tests of friendship will sometimes require a person to go against their disposition, causing a certain amount of internal conflict. Going against a character’s disposition will be a difficult task.

These sort of tests are optional for player characters, since it is really up to the controlling player to determine whether its interests are best served by assisting the character’s friend, or by remaining true to its disposition.

SEDUCTION

To seduce a character, roll the would-be seducer’s Charisma vs. the “target’s” Drive characteristic. Use the target’s tie strength with the seducer as a negative DRM on the roll. If the roll is successful, then the seducer gets his or her way.

This technique assumes a not-unwilling “target”. Characters may never be seduced by characters with whom they have an antipathy.

CROSS RACIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Love between members of different species is not uncommon. It is simply a matter of whether

- a) Both parties find one another attractive.
- b) Sexual relations are physically possible.

Satyr’s are renowned for their romantic interest in Humans and Pixie nymphs. Pixies, too, have been known to fall hopelessly in love with Humans and vice-versa. Humans have also been known to moon over the charms of Merfolk - a difficult liaison at best!

Harpy females are renowned for their wide ranging sexual tastes. Harpy Tiercels are used to gratifying their whims and desires, and it can be dangerous to deny them! Their strength, domineering attitudes and aggressive energy can be a frightening experience to a male of another species - but it is rumored to have its attractions!

For obvious reasons, Half-Horses will clearly not indulge in physical intimacy with other races.

SELF IMAGE

The final aspect of psychology which these rules will attempt to simulate is the Self Image or ego of individual characters. The ego rules provide the means through which the disposition and tie/antipathy rules come firmly into play.

A character's Charisma and Drive characteristics are directly affected by the character's Self Image. Self Image is expressed as a positive or negative DRM which will be applied to all dice rolls using either of these characteristics. Self Image DRM's also effect all experience rolls (see the rules on ongoing experience).

The normal state of a character's Self Image is zero, or "neutral". If a character feels particularly confident, its Self Image DRM may drop down to -1 through to -3 (remember that negative DRM's are useful, and that positive DRM's are harmful). If a character feels had about itself, its Self Image will move up to a maximum of +3 (Self Image could conceivably suffer even greater deprivations, hut this would usually lead to apathy or even suicide).

Changes in Self Image are only temporary, lasting a few days at most. All depressions are eventually conquered, and all feelings of elation must eventually disappear. For short times, however, Self Image ratings can become quite important. To dissipate adverse Self Image modifiers, roll drive vs. 10 each day to lose one point of DRM (remember that the Self Image DRM will effect this roll, however!)

The exception to these temporary lowerings of Self Image are those caused by truly despicable acts. If a character performs an act which completely outrages all that it knows to be right, then the character will retain its Self Image penalty until it redeems itself.

SELF IMAGE "INVESTMENT"

A task or promise may have Self Image points hound to it, and this is used to determine the amount of Self Image modifier lost or gained if the promise is broken or the task fails.

Self Image investment is determined by the referee assigning an arbitrary value to the task (usually a number between 1 and 4). If the character succeeds in its goals, then subtract the Self Image value invested in the task from the character's Self Image modifier. If the character fails in its aims, add the invested value to the character's Self Image modifier.

The amount of Self Image points invested in tasks etc. can be decided arbitrarily between the referee and the player, taking the character's disposition into full account (as a rule of thumb, don't exceed a total of the characters Drive divided by 4). Where a promise is made to another character, or where a task heavily involves another character, the Self Image investment should be equal to the tie level that exists between them.

The character's success or failure in its chosen tasks will thus affect the character's Self Image. Keep a written record of all investments, and apply the bonuses and penalties thus accumulated with energy and discretion. The Self Image system is one of the most important systems of LACE & STEEL - don't ignore it!



SELF IMAGE

To simulate courage and morale, characters should roll their drive characteristics vs. the difficulty of the task. DRM's would include each individual's Self Image, as well as the leadership skill of the group's commander. If the bulk of a group seems inclined to perform a particular courageous act, then the laggards will probably go along for the ride anyway.

INCIDENT 2

The boarding action is raging, and Linette's Captain goes down under an enemy blade, leaving Linette in charge of the ship's defense.

Linette leaps onto the enemy crewman who has slain the captain, and kills him in single combat. Linette had a tie level of 2 with the Captain, and so the Referee rules that avenging her friend in this way increases her Self Image by a DRM of -2.

Linette's crew have suffered enough casualties to force her to make a leadership/charisma roll to hold them in place (see the massed combat rules). With the bonus of -2 from her bolstered Self Image, Linette easily makes her roll and rallies the crew to the attack.

OTHER INCREASES AND DECREASES IN SELF IMAGE

As a general rule, things which make the character feel good will increase the character's Self Image, and things which make the character feel bad will decrease the character's Self Image. When a character performs an action which satisfies its dispositions, it will feel good (e.g. A greedy character feels good when it makes a large amount of money). When a character performs an action which goes against its disposition, it will feel bad. When a player feels that his character has done something good or bad, the referee is free to impose changes to the character's Self Image. Thus, if the player's conscience seems to be bothering him about one of his character's actions, by all means drop the character's Self Image. Each of these cases will increase or decrease the character's Self Image by one or more points, depending on the judgement of the referee.

TIES AND ANTIPATHIES

Successfully contributing to something with which you have a tie (e.g. Rescuing your lady-love), or harming something with which you have an antipathy will influence a character's Self Image. The points lost or gained will usually be equal to the character's tie or antipathy level (or half the level rounding down if the act was fairly minor).



INCIDENT 3

Linette returns from an adventure downhearted. She has failed in her attempt to rescue her friend Alain from a prison galley. Her tie with Alain was level 3, and so she had invested 3 Self Image points in the action. Since she has failed, these points are added to her Self Image modifier. Wounded and dejected, she returns home to plan another attempt.

Linette's Self Image penalty will have an adverse effect on her healing rolls, since she is depressed and upset about her poor suffering friend. Her experience rolls for her adventure will also be adversely affected by her Self Image modifier - since she feels that she has failed, she will have a hard time learning from the experience.

MELEE COMBAT

Melee combat is played as a card game, rather than as a collection of random dice rolls. Using a card based system, "LACE & STEEL" combats seesaw back and forth in the thrust and parry manner of a fencing duel, with the outcome usually being decided by a single devastating hit.

The fencing styles used in LACE & STEEL are not unlike those used in modern fencing. The sword movements are almost completely like those used today in epee fencing, except that the sword is usually kept centered on the opponent's eyes rather than the chest or throat. Standard footwork also includes graceful sidesteps and turns, unlike modern fencing which has become overly linear.

Cutlass and broadsword technique uses similar footwork, but different cutting techniques to modern sabre fencing (due to the fact that real cutlasses and sabres have rather more inertia than modern fencing weapons). Cuts are delivered with considerable back-swing of the arm, or are preceded by a sweeping circle pivoting around the fencer's wrist much like Chinese sword technique.

MELEE COMBAT

Blade on blade, naked steel gleaming in dawn's early light! The lighting thrust and parry of rapiers as arch enemies meet in their final conflict. These are the classical elements of combat in romantic fantasy, and this is what Lace & Steel tries to capture.

The Lace & Steel combat system has been designed to bring a feeling of drama, risk and skill into role playing game combats. Duels suddenly become fearsome events. Combats become memorable because of the skill of your opponent, or the close whisper of death. The ultimate test of your own mettle is to face your opponent blade to blade, skill to skill. This is not a thing that can be dismissed in a mere flurry of dice rolls.

The card based system is slow compared to the quick, skill-less dice systems usually found in RPGs. I think you might find the experience refreshing.

THE DECK

The 52 card deck is divided into 3 different "attack lines", upper, middle and low. There are also dodge cards, and a special intuition card. All of these cards bear a number, and a suit marker. There are two suits - Rapiers and Roses.

Dodge cards and intuition cards have a bracketed numerical value for the purposes of determining initiative and damage.

There are more mid line cards than upper, and more upper line cards than low.

Shuffle the cards well - they will tend to cluster together in the same attack lines. Players might even want to draw cards alternatively from the top and the bottom of the deck to ensure the randomness of the draw.

RATIONALE

The upper attack line represents attacks aimed at the target's head and neck, and occasionally includes the shoulders or arms. The mid line covers the upper torso and the arms, and the low line the lower abdomen, groin and legs. Hits to any of these lines may be deadly, and minor wounds all lessen the target's fighting abilities in some way.



MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CARDS

Every character is rated for the maximum number of cards that it may hold in its hand (the average character may hold 5). Wounds and fatigue lessen the maximum number of cards which may be held in a character's hand.

No character may hold more cards than its maximum hand rating. If the character ends up with more cards than it may legally hold, then the controlling player must discard cards until the maximum hand limit is met. If a character is to draw new cards from the deck, it may never draw more than its current maximum hand rating.

When starting a combat, each character is dealt cards equal to its maximum hand.

INITIATIVE

The character which holds the initiative is the attacking character. Attacking characters play attack cards, and continue to do so until they lose the initiative, whereupon their opponent becomes the attacker and plays attack cards of his own.

At the start of a combat, both combatants cut the deck to determine which character begins the fight with the initiative. The player whose card shows the highest numerical value wins the initiative. If the numerical values are drawn, then the attack line of the cards is examined - mid line beats low line, and upper line beats mid line.

If one character has an intuition score 2 or more points higher than his opponent, he adds one to the numerical score of his card when determining initiative at the start of a combat.

Initiative in mounted combat is determined as normal, unless one combatant has a far higher momentum than his opponent (e.g. one is galloping and the other is trotting) in which case the faster moving rider automatically gains the initiative.

KEEPING THE DECK SHUFFLED

It can be a good idea to deal cards out from the combat deck alternatively from the top and bottom of the pack. This ensures that the cards coming into play are well and truly shuffled.

Only use this technique when playing *Lace & Steel*. Don't try doing this in other card games. Your opponent might shoot you!



EXAMPLE OF COMBAT

In the midst of a fierce and bloody boarding action, Linette finds herself facing the enemy pirate captain in a duel. Both use rapiers, and both are wearing buff coats, to which Linette has added a plate gorget.

Both combatants are evenly matched as far as skill. Linette has a Max Hand rating of 6, and her opponent a Max Hand of 5, but Linette is far the weaker in Strength and Endurance. She must hope for a quick kill before her opponent can wear her down.

Both characters are dealt a full hand of cards, and each cuts the deck to find out who starts the combat with the initiative. The captain draws a three (mid line), while Linette draws a three (low line), and so the pirate captain will attack first (since mid beats lower).

The pirate plays a mid line card, secretly playing a feint card (with a numerical value of 1) to draw out Linette's defense. Linette counters with a mid line - 4 card. Beating her opponent's attack card by such a high margin would normally give the initiative to Linette, but since the card played by the attacker was a feint, the attacker retains the advantage. The first pass is over.

Again the pirate attacks in mid line, and this time Linette counters and wins the initiative. Linette now attacks in high line with a high line 4 card. The pirate has a "stop-hit" card (mid line -1), and gleefully announces a stop hit in the mid line, feeling sure that he has drawn out all of Linette's mid line cards. Linette looks at her hand and discovers that her only mid line card is a mid line - 3 (disarm) possibly a very useful card, and she plays this as her defense.

Linette's parry is 2 points higher than the attacking card. Under the rules for the disarmament card, this means that she has successfully disarmed her opponent. The pirate's blade goes spinning from his hand, his stop-hit a failure.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

The combat takes place in "rounds" of play. Each round is the determination of one attack, and the events which result from this attack attempt. 10 rounds of combat typically average about ten seconds of time (one turn of missile combat).

A single attack and the defensive move made to counter it are referred to as a pass. A round of combat might have more than one pass if stop hit cards are played, or if one character is facing multiple opponents.

STEP ONE - PLAY ATTACK CARD

The attacker selects a card marked with an attack line, and plays this face down. The attacker calls out the line in which the attack is being made (e.g. "upper"), but conceals the card's numerical value.

STEP TWO - DEFEND AGAINST ATTACK CARD

The defender now selects a defensive card, and plays this card face down.

STEP THREE - HIT DETERMINATION

Both players flip their facedown cards. If the defender's card is in the same attack line, and is of equal or higher numerical value than the attacker's card, then the attack has been parried.

If the attacker's card is in a different attack line to the defender's card, or is of a higher numerical value, then the attack has succeeded (see the section on "Damage").



STEP FOUR - DRAW NEW CARDS

At the end of each pass, both players determine the drawing of new cards.

Check the suits of the attack and parry cards. If the suits match, then the defender draws a new card from the deck. If the suits are mismatched, then the attacker draw a new card. These cards may only be drawn if the character entitled to draw new cards was not hit in the current pass.

Some cards are marked "draw" or "rip-off". Draw cards allow the player to augment his hand by drawing new cards from the deck. Rip-off cards allow the player to draw cards at random from his opponent's hand and transfer them to his own. If draw cards or rip-off cards are played, the characters who played them now draw or rip-off cards as indicated. The attacker draws/rips-off first, followed by the defender.

New cards may only be drawn by characters who were not wounded during the current pass.

STEP FIVE - DETERMINE INITIATIVE FOR NEXT ROUND

The players now check to see which character has the initiative; The attacker will keep the initiative unless the defender's parry card beat the attack card's numerical value by one or more points.

The round is now repeated, return to step one, with the character who now holds the initiative playing the part of the attacker.

DRAWING A NEW HAND

There are three circumstances under which completely new hands are drawn from the deck in the middle of a combat. The number of cards drawn from the deck to make up the new hand will vary from character to character (all characters are rated for their “new draw” rating, which governs how many new cards they will draw to replace their old hand). The average new draw rating is three.

DESPERATE DEFENSE

If a character is attacked, he has the option of making a “desperate defense”. The defending player discards his current hand, and draws three new cards from the deck. This action may only be done once in any given round by any given player.

This is a dangerous but useful ploy which all players will use at some time or another. If a character is caught without a defense card in the same line as the attack which has been made on it, a desperate defense may well save the day.

LACK OF ATTACK CARDS

If a character wins the initiative, and has no cards marked with attack lines, he must discard his current hand and draw new cards from the deck.

PLAYER RUNS OUT OF CARDS

If a character runs completely out of cards, he may draw a new hand from the deck the next time he comes under attack or wins the initiative. The player is allowed to discard this new draw and immediately attempt a “desperate defense” (see above).

DAMAGE

When a parry or dodge fails to stop an attack, the defender is wounded.

STEP ONE - DETERMINE DAMAGE RATING

If the defensive card was in the same attack line as the attacking card, subtract the numerical value of the defensive card from that of the attacking card to yield the damage rating.

If the defensive card was not in the same attacking line as the attack card, then the damage rating is equal to the numerical value of the attacking card.

STEP TWO - “FOLLOW-UP” DAMAGE

If the damage rating thus determined is higher than one, check the suits of the attack and defense cards. If the suits are mismatched, then the attacker draws another card from the deck and adds the card’s numerical value to his damage rating. Dodge cards and intuition cards are given a bracketed numerical rating which is used for determining damage in this way.

Reduce the follow-up damage caused to a target by one if the attacker has a lower strength rating than its victim.

THE EFFECTS OF CHARACTER SKILL RATINGS ON COMBAT

In a combat where one character is more skilled than his opponent, the more skillful character gains a decided advantage.

Whenever the higher skilled character draws cards (due to suit matching, desperate defense or initial deals at the start of the fight), he will draw additional cards equal to the difference between the two combatant’s skill ratings. The character must discard cards from this draw until the draw equals the amount to which he would normally be entitled.

In addition, characters who outmatch their opponents by 2 or more levels of skill will actually get to see their opponent’s attack cards, rather than having their opponent play these cards face down.

Linette’s initial attack must now be determined, and the disarmed pirate has no option except to try a desperate defense, hoping to draw a “dodge” card. He throws out his old hand, and draws three new cards - none of which are dodge cards! He plays a card from his hand anyway (a low line - 1 card in Roses suit. Linette now flips over her card, revealing it to be in Rapiers suit. The suits mismatch, and so Linette draws an extra card of damage. Linette skewers him for four points (from the original card) plus another five points gained from drawing a “dodge” card from the deck for her extra damage. Linette’s follow up damage is reduced by 1, since she has a lower strength than her opponent - this brings the total damage to her target down to eight points. Eight points of damage through the throat ends the pirates buccaneering days forever.



SPECIAL CARDS

The following cards are special “wild” cards which are not marked with attack lines. Special cards have a bracketed numerical value which is used for determining initiative at the start of a fight, or for determining damage.

DODGE

The character jumps back or twists aside, cleverly avoiding the enemy’s blow.

A dodge card automatically negates any attack. If the suits on the attack card and the dodge card are mismatched, then the attacker will retain the initiative, otherwise the defender will snatch the initiative from the attacker.

INTUITION

Cunningly measuring up his foe, the character suddenly gains an insight into his opponent’s potential moves.

This card may be played immediately before either combatant makes an attack. The round is halted, and the player who plays this card may now inspect his opponent’s hand of cards before play continues.

DISENGAGE

The characters clash, and then suddenly separate - once again beginning to circle for advantage.

This card may be played instead of a normal attack card by any character that holds the initiative. The character who played the card may opt to flee (which he does without his opponent getting a strike against his back). On the other hand, the character may opt to reengage, and both combatants draw-for starting initiative as if the combat was just beginning anew. The character playing the card will also gain back one point of Max Hand lost through fatigue if he elects to reengage.

CARD MODIFIERS (OPTIONAL)

The following modifiers are applied to a number of cards in the deck. Cards bearing modifications have uses over and above those described above.

STOP-HIT

Anticipating the enemy blow, the character lashes out with a hit of his own, preempting the enemy attack.

Once the enemy announces an attack and plays his card face down, the defender may play a “stop-hit” card. This is played as an attack card. The erstwhile attacker must parry or dodge the stop hit before the defender is required to deal with the original attack.

The stop-hit card thus gives the defender the chance to kill his opponent before his opponent’s blow has the opportunity to land. Check the suits as normal to see if either player gains a new card before continuing play (the character playing the stop-hit has temporarily become the attacker for the purposes of suit matching).

The initiative for the next round will be won or lost by the original blow, and is never determined by the stop-hit.

Only one stop-hit card may be played per round (you can’t stop-hit a stop-hit)

FEINT

The character cunningly makes a swift strike at his opponent, drawing him out to make him vulnerable to a serious attack.

A low level attack card which will not lose the initiative if the opposing player’s parry exceeds it in numerical value. The feint is thus a useful card for drawing out your opponent’s high numbered defense cards. It is vulnerable to a riposte.

RIPOSTE

The character's parry twists aside his opponent's weapon, letting the defender press home an attack.

When used as a defensive card, the riposte will automatically win the defender the initiative for the next round, providing that the attacker's blow was successfully parried.

Ripostes always win the initiative from feints.

DISARM

With a lightning twist of the blade, the character beats at his opponent's weapon.

A "disarm" attempt is a special form of attack or defense. If the disarm card exceeds the opposing player's card value by 2 or more points, it will disarm him and render him helpless (the character may now only play dodge or intuition cards until his opponent allows him to take up his sword).

A useful card in the attack or defense, the disarm card cannot actually cause injury to the victim unless successfully used to parry a stop-hit (in which case the original attack must still be made, striking down the defender even as his blade spins out of his hand.)

Disarmed characters may pick up their weapon whenever they successfully win the initiative off their attacker.

DRAW

The character's move has given it new options for attack and defense.

When this card is played, the player may augment his hand by drawing two new cards from the deck. Discount the effect of a draw card if the character who plays the card was wounded in the current pass.

RIP-OFF

Your opponent is taken aback by the sudden audacity of your move.

As soon as this card is flipped over, the character who plays the card may take a random card from his opponent's hand and add it to his own.

Rip-off attempts occur before the drawing of new cards or before "disruption" occurs. Attackers rip-off cards before defenders. Discount the effect of a "rip-off" card if the character who plays the card was wounded in the current pass.

LOCK HILTS

As you parry your opponent's blade, your hilts lock together. Both fencers strain to overbalance their opponent and free their blade for a telling blow.

If a "lock hilts" card is played as a successful parry, then the normal flow of the melee briefly halts while the combatants match their strengths against one another. The defender must roll his/her Strength vs. its opponent's Strength. The combatant that wins the roll not only gains the initiative, but rips his/her opponent off for 2 cards.



REPAREE IN COMBAT

Two combatants who mutually wish to engage in reparee while fighting are quite at liberty to do so. At the start of the combat, roll a test of the two character's reparee skills (using each character's Reason score as their tested characteristic). The winner gets to snatch two random cards from their opponent's melee hand and add them to their own. Reparee exchanges of this kind will then also take place whenever the combatants disengage or lock hilts.

ARMOR

Linette wears a plate gorget to protect her upper attack line (this allows her some protection, but also lets her wear her hair flowing free under her floppy hat - everyone deserves a little vanity). Her protection in the upper line is 1 point.

Linette takes a hit in the upper line from a cutlass in combat. She would normally take the damage immediately, but since she wears armor in that attack line, the armor must be penetrated before the damage may be dealt.

The attacker draws a card from the deck to penetrate the armor, and draws a 1. Since this equals the value of Linette's armor, the blow fails to penetrate. Linette has luckily escaped being damaged.

Remember that blows which score follow up damage on their targets draw twice when checking for armor penetration.

LIVING AND WORKING IN ARMOR

Armor is extremely cumbersome. It is also very hot. Most troops will remove their armor at the first opportunity.

Sleeping in armor? Forget it!

Troops in the field tend to have set ways of wearing their clothes. The broad 'Falling bands' (collars) currently in vogue are usually knotted at the throat to prevent their becoming an inconvenience. Sleeves and coats are often left unbuttoned for coolness and ease of movement.

FATIGUE (OPTIONAL)

Fencing with thrusting weapons is not a contest of brute strength. In a proper lunge, the entire weight of the attacker is behind the point of his blade, making his strength largely irrelevant to the amount of damage caused. The main effect of strength on swordplay is to allow stronger characters to wear down weaker opponents through sheer endurance.

Characters become slower and less coordinated as they become tired. If fatigue rules are being played, then each player must keep his character's discarded attack, parry and dodge cards in a separate pile (keep cards discarded due to desperate defense in a general discard pile).

As part of character generation, each character determines its Fatigue Rating. Whenever a character accumulates discarded cards equal to its fatigue rating, decrease its wound level/maximum hand rating by one. Dump the character's discard pile into the general discard pile and start keeping tally of discarded cards once again. Using this method it is quite possible to wear the character down to zero maximum hand rating due to exhaustion.

Fatigued characters will recover maximum hand rating points lost through fatigue at the rate of 1 point per 5 minutes rest. They will also recover 1 point of fatigue whenever they choose to pass the initiative over to their opponent (simply announce that the character is resting, and pass the initiative over to the opposing character).

ARMOR

Characters may wear armor as a means of protecting themselves. Armor covers a line of attack (upper, middle or low) with a numerical protective value. If a hit is scored on an attack line that is protected by armor, the attacker must draw a card from the deck. The damage from the hit will only take effect if the card thus drawn exceeds the numerical value of the target's armor protection. If "follow-up" damage was scored on the target, then two cards are drawn for armor penetration, and the penetration will be decided by the highest value on either of the two cards thus drawn.

If multiple types of armor are worn in one attack line, only the piece of armor with the highest protective value is counted.

TYPES OF ARMOR ARE AS FOLLOWS

Armor type	Attack line	Protective Value	Fatigue penalty
Close helm	Upper	2/3/3	2
Morion/Lobster pot	Upper	1/2/3	1
"Iron secret"	Upper	1	0
Montero cap	Upper	0/0/1	0
Gorget	Upper	1	0
Half armor	Mid	3/4/4	2 (3 on foot)
Breastplate	Mid	3	1 (2 on foot)
Long buff coat	Mid and Lower	1/1/2	0
Short buff coat	Mid	1/1/2	0
Tassets	Lower	1/2/2	1
Leg harness	Lower	2/3/3	1 (2 on foot)

Where three protective values are given, the first value is the item's protective value against firearms, The second value is the armor's protection against thrusting weapons, and the third value is used as the armor's protective value against brawling weapons, cutting weapons and broadswords.





WEAPONS

There are five main types of melee weapons available in “LACE & STEEL”, Thrusting Swords, cutting swords, polearms, daggers, and brawling weapons (fists, feet and cudgels).

NOTES ON BRAWLING WEAPONS

The category of “brawling weapons” includes fists, feet, rocks, musket butts and cudgels - anything which comes to hand. Damage from brawling weapons lasts only 5 minutes or so. “Grievous wounds” caused by brawling weapons merely stun the victim for a minute or two. Wounds which would normally kill the victim are instead knockouts, which drop the victim unconscious for about 5 to 10 minutes (unless the damage was caused by an upper line hit by a heavy cudgel such as a musket butt, in which case the damage would be lethal).

Brawling weapons will increase the numerical value of their attack cards by 1 when wielded by a character whose strength exceeds its opponents by 2 or more points. In addition, hits caused by characters whose strength is three or more points lower than their opponents may be recovered in the same manner as fatigue (by passing initiative - see above).

Brawling weapons (except cudgels) cannot parry swords, cutlasses or polearms (only other brawling weapons or daggers). Against heavy blade weapons, a brawlers only defense is dodging.

WEAPON RATINGS

Weapons are rated for reach, heft, armor modifier and Minimum Strength. When characters with the same weapon types fight one another, there are no modifications to the basic rules (except for armor penetration - see below). When characters armed with different weapons fight one another, the relative capabilities of their weapons become important.

WEAPON RATINGS CHART

EXPLANATIONS OF WEAPON RATINGS

Weapon Type	Reach	Heft	Armour Modifier	Minimum Strength
Backsword	2/3	3	-	9
Cavalry Lance	4	2	-	8
Clubbed Musket	3	3	-	8
Cudgel	2	0	+1	0
Cutlass	2	4	-	10
Dagger	0	0	+1	0
Fists/Feet	0	0	+2	0
Halberd/partisan	4	5	-1	9
Pike	5	2	-	10
Poleaxe/Hammer	1	2	-1	10
Rapier	3	1	-	5
Sabre	3	2	-	5

REACH

The character with the longest weapon “danger space” receives a bonus when initiative is determined at the start of a fight. The character wielding the longest weapon adds the difference between the two opposing weapon’s reach ratings to the numerical value of its card when determining initiative at the start of a combat.

Note that a weapon’s danger space is not always governed by the actual length of the weapon. A balestra attack with an rapier can reach a target about four paces away, giving it a greater reach than a clubbed musket.

MELEE WEAPON PRICES:

Cheap Rapier	6 Silvers
Cheap Backsword	8 Silvers
GOOD Rapier or Backsword	2 Marks
Cutlass	4 Silvers
Hunting Sword	6 Silvers
Cheap Sabre	6 Silvers
GOOD Sabre	2 Marks
Wooden Hafted Poleaxe/Hammer	4 Silvers
Steel Hafted Poleaxe or Hammer	8 Silvers
Poor Knife	6 Groats
Cheap Knife	1 Silver
Good Knife	6 Silvers
Polearms	6 Silvers

ONE COMBATANT AGAINST MANY

At first glance, fighting a group of opponents looks suicidal. It is not a technique that could be reasonably recommended.

But - a highly skilled swordsman can take on multiple opponents and have a good chance of success. In fact, these combats will become very challenging. Master swordsmen can be kept occupied by bogging them Down with bunches of goons, preventing them from blithely dispatching their outmatched opponents singly. This is a good technique for stopping amazingly skilled characters from riding roughshod over your campaign!

HE FT

A combatant's Strength becomes very important when it parries an attack from a cutting or brawling weapon or a backsword. Add the character's Strength to the heft of its weapon. If the defender's total is 2 or more points lower than his or her opponent's, then the numerical value of all parries by the character with the smaller total will be lowered by one.

The lighter weapon in any combat receives a +1 bonus to its initiative draw at the start of the combat, unless it is 2 or more points shorter than the opposing blade.

ARMOR MODIFIER

The armor modifier is added or subtracted from the defensive value of the target's armor (if worn).

MINIMUM STRENGTH

All weapons have a Minimum Strength requirement. If a character uses a weapon that has a higher Minimum Strength requirement than the character's strength, then subtract one from the character's fatigue level, and one from the character's initiative card draws at the start of a combat.

If the result is equal to the user's strength, then subtract one from the character's initiative card draws at the start of a combat.

If the result is lower than the user's strength, then the weapon may be used with no penalties.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

If a single character ends up fighting multiple opponents, it will soon find itself in trouble.

The multiple attackers combine their hands into one (adding their maximum hand ratings together), and are generally treated in all ways as a single character. Each pass, they may perform a maximum of one attack, parry or dodge, as if they were a single individual. The new draw rating, wound level and fatigue rating of the group equals the average of the total ratings of the members who make up the group. The group will fatigue in the normal way.

As a "corporate entity" of this kind suffers damage, its abilities will lessen.

When enough maximum hand damage is dealt to a group to grievously wound or kill its weakest member, then that character will drop out of action.



MISSILE COMBAT

Missile combat takes place in ten second turns. In one turn of missile combat, meleeing characters may play a total of 10 passes.

ACCURACY ROLLS

The firing of missile weapons is done as a task.

When firing at fast moving target or a target which is obscured by soft cover, add an extra step to the difficulty level of the shot (e.g. a difficult task becomes very difficult). Use a similar technique if a character should decide to deliberately aim for one particular hit line of his target (e.g. high line).

RANGE	TASK DIFFICULTY
Short range	Average (or simple if the target is stationary)
Medium range	Difficult
Long range	Very Difficult
Extreme range	Virtually impossible
Maximum range	Virtually impossible (allowed only vs large targets).

SEQUENCE OF FIRE

When more than one character fires in a single turn, the characters with the highest initiative fire first. Initiative is determined by adding the character's new draw rating to the handiness factor of its missile weapon. Characters with tied values fire simultaneously.

Missile fire is always determined before melee or sorcerous combat takes place, unless the missile armed characters are taken by surprise. If characters are going to move during the turn, missile armed troops who choose to remain stationary during the turn may delay their fire until the most opportune moment during the movement phase. Characters who fire just before being contacted in melee (short range) will always lose the initiative when starting the melee combat.

Characters armed with a pistol in each hand may fire both weapons in the same missile turn. The second pistol receives a -4 handiness penalty, and has an accuracy DRM of +2.

RELOADING

Firearms take one or more Turns to reload. The missile weapons list details the different basic reloading times for the different weapons. Completing a turn of reloading occupies all of a character's attention - reloading characters may neither move, give orders nor fire other weapons.

A weapon may be reloaded in more or less time than the number specified on the chart. Characters who are reloading missile weapons must make a skill roll vs. their weapon skill (average difficulty) one turn before their weapon is due to be reloaded. If the roll is passed, then the weapon is reloaded one turn earlier than the time specified in the missile weapons list. If the roll is a critical failure, then reloading the weapon takes one turn longer.

If the reloading roll equaled 11 or 12 after skill DRMs are applied, then the character panics and fires off its ramrod. The shot misses, and the weapon is useless until a new ramrod can be found.

MOVEMENT

Once initial firing has been done, all characters may move. In one turn a character may walk up to 15 paces, jog 30 paces, run 40 paces or sprint (40 paces + dexterity). Running or sprinting for one turn will fatigue the character doing so, counting as if the character had already played 1 or 2 cards (respectively) when melee combat is reached.

Example

A cavalryman races towards a musketeer, who opts to fire his musket at the cavalryman at short range, just before contact. The target difficulty is average. Although the horseman is a fast moving target, the Referee decrees that no difficulty additions due to the target's speed will apply, since the horseman is galloping straight towards the firer.

EXAMPLE OF MISSILE FIRE RULES

Linette staggers to the side of the confused melee of a boarding action and reloads her saddle pistol. As soon as this task is completed, Linette looks up to see the enemy pirates swinging the evil muzzle of a swivel gun to bear on her shipmates. Linette elects to fire at the gunner and stop him firing.

Linette has a new draw rating of three, as does the pirate gunner. The handiness of Linette's saddle pistol is 1. While the handiness of a swivel is -2. This gives Linette an initiative total of four, and the swivel gunner a total of zero. Linette's fire is thus determined before that of the pirate.

The range is 30 paces - long range for a pistol but medium range for the swivel's hail shot. Linette must roll her dexterity of 13 vs. a very difficult task (difficulty number 20). Subtracting 20 from 13 gives us a total of -7. Cross referencing this on the comparison chart yields a required dice roll of 3 or less on 2D6.

Linette rolls a five, but her pistol skill level of 2 subtract from her dice total, bringing her final dice score down to three - a hit! The Referee rules it the pirate has hard cover for his low line (due to the wooden bulwark), so Linette now draws a card from the deck to determine the location of the hit (as it turns out, the pirate is hit in the high line).

Linette now draws for damage, scoring a 2 in rapiers suit, entitling her to another draw for additional damage. Linette draws again, this time getting a 4. The pirate gunner thus takes a total of six points of damage, and drops to the ground stone dead. The swivel may not fire this turn, although another pirate might pluck up enough courage to man the gun next turn if he makes a successful Drive roll.

Mounted characters and Half-Horses may walk at 15 paces per turn, trot at 30 paces, canter at 60 paces and gallop at (10 x speed characteristic) paces per turn.

If characters move into contact with enemy troops, melee will take place during the next turn.

Wounded characters may not sprint if their wound level has been exceeded and their maximum hand rating has suffered a loss. Characters who suffer wounds in the low line halve their normal movement rates.

DAMAGE

When a character is struck by missile fire, draw a card at random from the combat deck. If the suit of this card comes up RAPIERS, then draw a second card. The added numerical values of the cards drawn in this manner are subtracted from the target's Hit points/maximum hand rating in precisely the same manner as damage in melee combat. Subtract 1 from the numerical value of the second damage card if the weapon being fired is a pistol or carbine.

Subtract 1 from the numerical value of each damage card if the wound was caused by a weapon which fired at long range or extreme range. Subtract 2 from each damage card if the range was maximum.

The line which is attacked is decided by the first damage card drawn (unless that card was a dodge or intuition card, in which case the line may be determined by cutting the deck). Attack lines for missile weapons are only important for reasons of armor penetration or cover. If the target character is in cover, there is a chance that the missile will not strike him. Cover will block shots in the low line, or the low and mid lines depending on its height and the character's stance.

MISSILE WEAPONS

The missile weapons in "LACE & STEEL" are mostly smoothbore gunpowder weapons. Slow to load, inaccurate over long ranges and made useless by rain and wind, firearms should do little to restrict the romantic feel of the game.

PISTOLS

Lace & Steel's pistols come in two basic configurations - pistols and long barreled saddle pistols. Normal pistols have a handiness of 2, and saddle pistols have a handiness of 1.

Remember that pistols subtract one from their follow-up damage (due to their smaller, lighter ball).

LONG ARMS

Muskets, blunderbusses and carbines are "long arms". Muskets are long barreled, heavy caliber matchlock weapons which are the usual missile armament of common soldiers. Carbines are short barreled, pistol caliber wheel-lock muskets used by skirmishers. While lighter and handier, they suffer from a reduced range. Carbines have a handiness of 0, and muskets a handiness of -1. Blunderbusses are short, bell-mouthed muskets designed to fire a cloud of small shot, chains and nails. They have a handiness of 0. Carbines and blunderbusses may be reloaded from the kneeling position or from the saddle, while muskets must be reloaded by characters who are standing.

Reduce the protective value of armor by 1 vs. musket fire out to long range. Remember that carbines lower their follow-up damage by one.

BOWS

Short composite bows are still used by the nomadic tribesmen of Forija. These tribesmen are adept at firing their bows from horseback, but make little use of them as infantry weapons.

Although bows are fast firing and reasonably accurate, they have serious drawbacks compared to firearms. Arrows fired at long range or further are easily dodged by alert characters. Give the archer a DRM of (+ half of his targets new draw rating) if he fires at a character who is both watching the archer and spends the turn dodging/evading. Characters who are firing, reloading, giving orders or charging may not dodge arrow fire.

Bows are poor at armor penetration, and must test for penetration at all ranges. All armor raises its protection by 1 vs. bows at long range and over. Flight arrows (used for long range shooting) are very light, and do -1 point of damage from each damage card that they draw when they strike an opponent. Flight arrows are incapable of penetrating breastplates, close helmets and leg harness at extreme ranges or longer.

Bows have a handiness of -2, but may be reloaded by moving cavalry or walking infantry/ Half-Horses, unlike the game's gunpowder weapons.

SWIVELS

A "Swivel" is a very small swivel mounted cannon primarily used for discharging "hail shot" (chains, nails and pistol balls), although it can fire a small solid shot. Swivels are usually crewed by 2 characters, although they can be loaded by a single character in nine turns. They are most often found as fore or aft castle mounted swivel armament on warships, designed to fire down onto the decks during a boarding engagement, although large boats sometimes mount them as a bow armament. Swivels have a handiness of -2.

Solid shot is only used against large targets such as groups of enemy or buildings, since its accuracy is poor. Hits by solid shot ignore all armor, and do double the normal amount of damage to targets struck by the ½ pound ball.

Hail shot is an area effect weapon which spreads out from the barrel in a 60° cone. All characters caught in the blast zone are rolled for as targets. Armor protects against hail shot at long range, and counts for one higher than its normal protective value at extreme range. Other people's bodies offer complete protection from hail shot at medium range or more.

MISSILE WEAPONS CHART

All ranges are given in paces. Ranges that are underlined are the ranges at which the weapon will automatically penetrate an unproofed armor.

Type of weapon	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	Maximum	Reload	Handiness
Pistol	<u>10</u>	20	30	40	60	3 Turns	2
Saddle pistol	<u>10</u>	20	40	60	80	3 Turns	1
Blunderbuss	20	-	30	-	40	5 Turns	0
Carbine	<u>10</u>	20	50	100	150	4 Turns	0
Musket	<u>10</u>	<u>30</u>	60	150	250	5 Turns	-1
Bow (bodkin arrow)	10	20	50	80	120	1 turn	-2
Bow (flight arrow)	10	20	50	120	200	1 turn	-2
Swivel (hail shot)	<u>20</u>	<u>40</u>	60	100	-	6 Turns	-2
Swivel (solid shot)	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>600</u>	6 Turns	-2

ARMOR PENETRATION

Gunpowder weapons draw for armor penetration in the same manner as melee weapons. Remember that many firearms **automatically** penetrate unproofed armors at certain ranges.

PROOFING

Some metal armors are 'proofed' that is, made thick and heavy enough to withstand pistol and musket shot. These armors are actually tested by firing a pistol at them from 20 paces range, leaving a small dent on the upper left breast (buyers note: buy the armor if it has a dent, but say "no thanks" if the armor actually has a hole there...)

Proofed armor is never automatically penetrated at any range. Firearms must always draw to overcome the armor's protection.



MISFIRES AND BREAK DOWNS

Black powder firearms are not particularly reliable, and can suffer a number of different types of misfires and breakdowns.

Firearms must check for misfires whenever a roll to hit with the weapon equals or exceeds the weapon's misfire number (before adding or subtracting skill DRMs) as shown on the chart below:

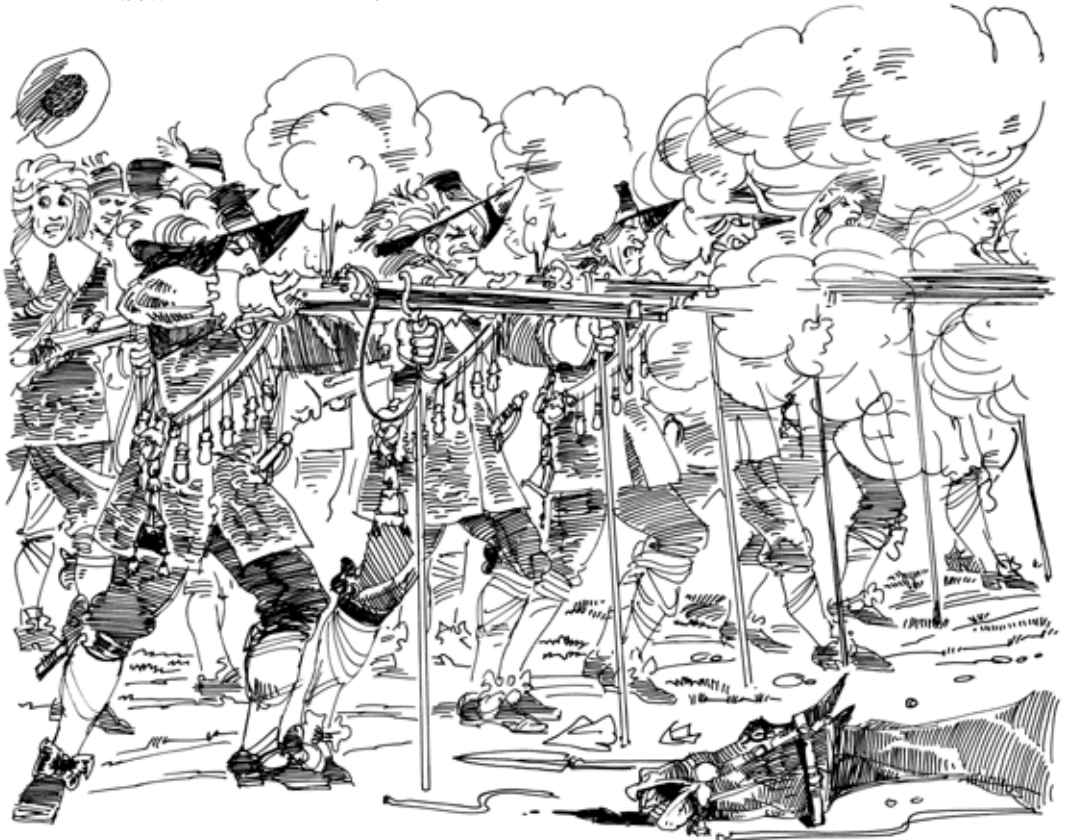
Type of weapon	Misfire number
Matchlock firearm	11
Wheellock firearm or Snaphaunce	12
Bow	11
Any missile weapon in fog or wind	10

Subtract 2 from a weapon's misfire number in wet conditions.

If a misfire occurs, then roll 2D6 on the following chart, subtracting the firer's skill from the dice roll. A roll less than the indicated amount will simply add an extra turn to the weapon's next reloading period. A roll in excess of the indicated amount will cause the weapon to snap a flint, jam, or be otherwise rendered temporarily useless. A roll of 11 or 12 always results in temporary breakage, regardless of the firer's skill.

Matchlock, wheellock	7
Snaphaunce	6
Bow	8

In conditions of steady rain, gunpowder weapons are effectively useless. Even with the barrels stopped with cork, and oilskin wrapped about the lock, only one in six has any chance of firing (roll a 6 on 1D6).



MAGIC

The world of LACE & STEEL pulses with an undercurrent of magic. The magical field of mana permeates and surrounds every object and every thought in an unperceived web of meaning. As mana gathers around a person or an object, the laws that rule the mundane universe become susceptible to change, and can even be warped by sheer power of will.

Many philosophers conjecture that mana is actually created by awareness, and thus magic comes from life itself. Objects and places which gain admiration or antiquity will absorb mana like a sponge, and magical events will tend to cluster about them. Likewise some people seem to acquire mana (even after death), and will be connected with fantastic events and strange happenings. The souls of living beings are perhaps the creature's awareness bound up into the creature's disembodied mana.

Mana is split into the twin aspects of light and shadow (which physically manifest themselves as heat and cold). Skilled sorcerers can draw on these two elements of the mana which surrounds them and use them as weapons, concentrating distilled ether into a physical form.

Mana is the raw stuff of magic. By shaping or collecting mana, mere herbs may be formed into magic potions, and swords may be given marvelous properties.

MAGICAL TALENTS

Magic is a special talent closed to all but a select few. The magical skills are divided into several branches.



Unlike other skills, magical skills will require practitioners to acquire experience at performing individual tasks covered by each general skill. Magical skills are closed to all characters whose Magical aptitude characteristics are 15 or lower.

Most skill rolls for spell casting will be made vs. the magician's Reason or Drive characteristic. Rolls vs. Intuition or Magical aptitude might sometimes be required, but only on rare occasions.

Characters may acquire skills in as many branches of magic as they may qualify for. Some will obviously find it profitable to concentrate on one major field, and thus might become specialized alchemists, artificers or sorcerers.

Most schools of magic have a number of different abilities encompassed within the main skill. Skill levels are bought in the school/discipline itself, and act as DRMs when performing specific tasks. Every time a character gains a level of skill in a field, it also learns one of the specific spells within the field. Each ability or technique available within the discipline may also be acquired separately (at a cost of 1 or 2 experience points each). Characters do not purchase separate skill levels in these abilities - once the technique/ability is purchased, the character brings its general skill into play on the particular task in question.

Note: Casting or attempting to cast spells is very taxing both mentally and physically. Every time a character makes a dice roll to attempt a spell, it will gain a point of fatigue. Fatigue points will act as an adverse DRM on all spell casting attempts.

If any spell casting roll is a critical failure, then the magician overtaxes himself. The magician may cast no more spells for the next 24 hours.

MAGIC

LACE & STEEL is a magical environment. Demons and imps, sorcery and strange creatures abound.

Always try to maintain a slight 'fairy tale' feel to your campaign world, and you will hold mundanity at bay.

Remember, 'fairy tale' doesn't necessarily mean childish and nice. The dark and sinister have as much a place in LACE & STEEL as the marvelous and surprising. Nightmarish terrors and evil creatures can lurk in the dark corners of your campaign, ready to lash out at the unwary..

BUYING MAGIC ARTIFACTS

Potions and magic artifacts are available for sale if the buyer knows where to look. Unfortunately, magic users are rare enough to have very little competition, and so they will charge as much for their services as the market will bear. Potions and artifacts will usually sell for at least twice their cost of manufacture, but the wealth of the local buyers and the prices charged by the competition will all affect final prices.

Most characters would have to make a STREETWISE skill roll to be able to find a shop selling potions and adjuncts. Referees should feel free to make magical curiosity shops interesting and weird places to visit.

ALCHEMY

Alchemy is the distillation of potions and magical adjuncts from natural materials such as herbs and essences. Alchemical skill may only be taken by any character who has a Magical aptitude of 15+.

To successfully brew a potion, an alchemist must roll his Reason vs. the difficulty rating of the potion (listed below). The character's Alchemy skill is used as a DRM when making the attempt. If the character's skill roll is failed, then the potion is ineffective (unless the character made a critical failure, in which case the potion is poisonous, causing wounds equivalent to firearm damage on the victim). For this reason, it is best for the Referee to secretly check for the success of all attempts at brewing potions, rather than having a player roll.

The formula for each type of potion must be learned separately at a cost of one or two experience points each. All potions require complex equipment and rare ingredients to prepare - they must be produced in the laboratory, and not in the field. Suggested potion types are as follows:

SLEEPING DRAUGHT

Experience points cost:	1
Difficulty:	Easy
Approximate cost to produce:	5 silvers
Time taken to brew:	1 day
Time taken to mature:	2 days

Sleeping draughts consist of a small vial of concentrated liquid. When mixed with another strong tasting fluid (such as wine) it has virtually no taste. Once ingested, this potion induces a deep and refreshing sleep.

HEALING POTION

Experience points cost:	1
Difficulty:	Average
Approximate cost to produce:	10 silvers
Time taken to brew:	1 day
Time taken to mature:	1 month

Ingesting a dose of this potion will heal one point of damage to a character's maximum hand rating. A character may only ingest one dose of healing potion per day.

Healing potions might take the form of a paste, poultice or swab. The water from a unicorn pool is a powerful healing potion in itself.

DISEASE CURING POTION

Experience points cost:	1
Difficulty:	Difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	20 silvers or more
Time taken to brew:	2 days
Time taken to mature:	1 week

This potion purifies the system of whatever disease the potion was formulated against. Sample diseases include plague, infections, swamp fever, and colds/flu/pneumonia. Each type of disease cure must be learned separately.



POISON

Experience points cost:	1
Difficulty:	Average
Approximate cost to produce:	10 silvers
Time taken to brew:	1 day
Time taken to mature:	0

When ingested, poison will attack its victims's maximum hand rating just like any other weapon. Draw one card of damage * and if the card suit is RAPIERS, draw a second card, then subtract the totaled numerical values of the cards from the victim's maximum hand rating as usual.

If the second card drawn is also in the RAPIER suit, then the victim will suffer more damage the following day (1 extra card of damage).

Note that some poisons may be collected from natural sources without recourse to alchemy skill, but can be amazingly difficult to collect...

POISON ANTIDOTE

Experience points cost:	2
Difficulty:	Average
Approximate cost to produce:	10 silvers
Time taken to brew:	1/2 day
Time taken to mature:	0

Cures the effects of poison if ingested before the victim actually dies. Poison antidotes are made vs. a specific type of poison - a sample of the poison or of a poisoned victim's blood will be required in order to formulate the correct antidote.

MIND ENHANCING POTION *

Experience points cost:	2
Difficulty:	Difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	2 Marks
Time taken to brew:	2 days
Time taken to mature:	1 month

Upon ingesting this potion, a character will fall into a deep trance for two hours, after which it will awaken in a state of extreme exultation. For the next two hours after awakening, all skill rolls vs. the character's Reason, Intuition and Drive characteristics are taken with an additional DRM of -1. Once the potion wears off, the recipient will collapse in utter exhaustion, and will be useless for half a day or more.

COORDINATION POTION *

Experience points cost:	2
Difficulty:	Difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	2 Marks
Time taken to brew:	1 day
Time taken to mature:	1 month

Characters who take this potion become very aggressive and hyperactive. Raise the character's Dexterity by 5, and recalculate the character's maximum hand and new draw ratings accordingly. The potion will last for approximately 2 hours, after which the recipient will drop unconscious for 24 hours.

STAMINA POTION *

Experience points cost:	2
Difficulty:	Difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	2 Marks
Time taken to brew:	1 day
Time taken to mature:	1 month

Increases the subjects strength by 5 for the next two hours, after which the character will fall unconscious for 24 hours. If ingested in conjunction with a potion of coordination, the subject will take a random card of damage to its wound level/maximum hand rating once the potion wears off.



STASIS POTION

Experience points cost:	2
Difficulty:	Difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	100 Marks
Time taken to brew:	1 day
Time taken to mature:	1 month

Once ingested, the subject falls into a state of suspended animation for a full year. Unfeeling and unconscious, the subject will not age, deteriorate from the effects of disease or poison or suffer any other such effects.

Any character that can brew a stasis potion can brew an antidote. This costs 100 Marks to produce, and takes 2 days to prepare and a week to mature. It can be used to counter act a stasis potion, awakening the victim with no ill effects.

DREAM TRANCE POTION

Experience points cost:	2
Difficulty:	Average
Approximate cost to produce:	1 Mark
Time taken to brew:	1 day
Time taken to mature:	1 month

When a character ingests this potion, it will fall into a deep trance for 8 hours. If the character falls asleep near an object or place that the character holds firmly in the mind whilst slipping into slumber, it may gain valuable information about the object of its concern. Likewise if the character falls asleep while concentrating upon a vexing problem, the character might gain valuable clues to its solution when it awakens.

When the character awakens, it must roll its Intuition vs. 10. If the roll was successful, the character will have gained a useful piece of information about the object or problem in question.

CREATE HOMONCULOUS

Experience points cost:	2
Difficulty:	Very difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	100 Marks
Time taken to brew:	1 week
Time taken to mature:	1 month

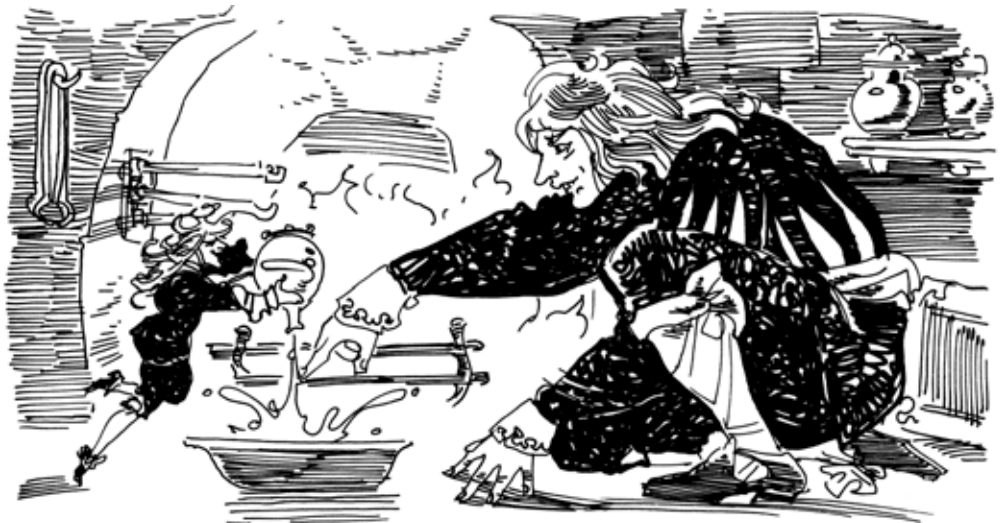
Using samples of his own tissue a skilled alchemists may create a tiny (8" high) living being as his familiar. Fashioned as a warped parody of the mage's own form, a Homonculous can be a useful and amusing assistant around the laboratory. Homonculi have infallible memories for details, a Dexterity of 15, a Strength of 1, and other characteristic scores equaling those of their creator. Any Reason based skill test taken with the assistance of a Homonculous is made at a DRM of -1.

While usually full of tricks and practical jokes, a Homonculi tend to be fond of their creators, and must always obey their creators if ordered to perform an action.

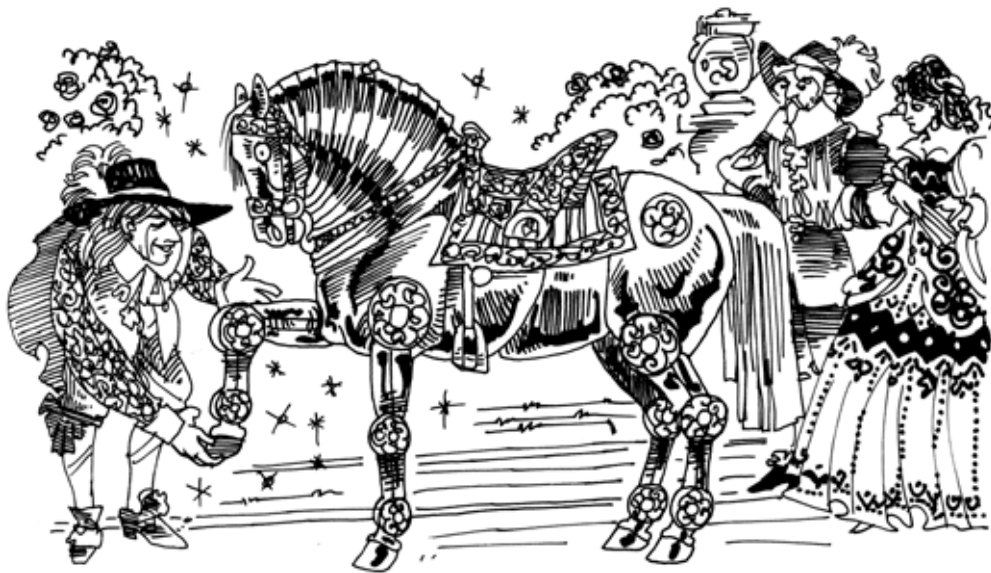
ADDICTION NOTE

Potions whose titles are followed by an asterisk are ADDICTIVE. If a character takes two addictive potions of the same type in a single week, it must test its Drive vs. 10 to avoid addiction. Addicts must ingest one such potion per week or suffer a DRM of +1 on all skill tests until they can gain a "fix". The effects of the potions ingested by such addicts slowly diminish over time, until finally the potion has no real effect upon the addict at all except to ease the character's craving.

An addiction is broken if the character can be kept from fueling its addiction for a whole month. Each day in which a character tries to go "cold turkey", it must roll its Drive vs. 10 to avoid giving in and trying to find a "fix". Most addicts will have to be closely watched or even physically restrained.



ARTIFICIERY



Artificiery is the sorcerous science of producing magical machines and tools. Artificers work on long projects, and can expect few immediate results from their craft. On the other hand, Artificers can expect few troubles in gaining employment!

Artificier skill is only open to characters whose Magical aptitude is 18+. Artificers will also be required to learn craft skills, since a successful craft skill roll will be required on many projects.

When working on a project, the artificier must make its skill roll vs. the difficulty of the task (artificier skill counts as a DRM to this roll). If the roll fails, then the project is a complete washout, and the time and materials spent are wasted.

MAGICAL LOCKS

Experience points cost:	1
Difficulty:	Average
Approximate cost to produce:	10 Marks
Time taken to create:	1 week

Magical locks may only be opened by the key which closed them. They are impossible to pick or shoot open, and will require stronger methods of forced entry (like a petard or a keg of gunpowder).

MAGICAL BOXES

Experience points cost:	1
Difficulty:	Difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	10 Marks per cubic foot of external size
Time taken to create:	2 weeks per cubic foot of external size.

The creation of boxes or containers whose insides are twice the volume of their outsides.

SLOW GLASS

Experience points cost:	1
Difficulty:	Difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	100 Marks
Time taken to create:	2 weeks
Required craft skill:	Glass work

A magical lens which slows down the light which falls onto it. Light which enters one side of the lens will pass out the other side 24 hours later. A useful device for spies, lenses of slow glass can be placed in an area and collected later, where the events that occurred in the lenses view may be studied at leisure.

Artificiery will probably not appeal to most player characters, since the skill requires a fairly sessile life-style. Artificers are vital to the game background, however, and have thus been included in detail. LACE & STEEL is an environment where magical nick knacks and wondrous devices constantly appear to add color to the campaign.

The list of magical devices offered here is extremely limited. Referees should feel free to enrich this list as desired. Magical devices such as mechanical songbirds, magical mirrors, weird and powerful objects of all shapes and kinds should lurk in the corners of palaces and workshops ready to surprise and delight the players (either that or scare the hell out of them).

MAGICAL WEAPONS

Experience points cost:	2
Difficulty:	Difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	1000 Marks
Time taken to create:	2 months
Required craft skill:	Metal work

Painstakingly crafted weapons fashioned from special alloys under exacting conditions. The construction of magical weapons must be started at the beginning of a lunar month, and must be ended before the next month is up. The artificier thus requires isolation for the duration of the project.

The final stage of creating a magical weapon is performed in one of two ways. The sword must either be quenched by being thrust through the heart of a living victim, or buried in a holy place for a year. The success or failure of the project may be assessed only after one or the other of these acts is performed.

Magical weapons draw one additional damage card when entitled to draw for extra damage (mismatched suits on the attack & defense cards when damage is caused), and discard the card with the lowest numerical value.

MAGICAL ARMOR

Experience points cost:	2
Difficulty:	Difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	500 Marks
Time taken to create:	1 month
Required craft skill:	Metal work

Breastplates, tassets, gorgets or helmets with one more point of protection than normal. Magical armor also provides protection against sorcerous attacks, and resists firearms at all ranges.

Magical armor must either be tempered by being quenched in the lifeblood of an intelligent being, or buried in a holy place for a year, much like magical weapons.

There are no magical buff coats...

"GREAT DEVICE"

Experience points cost:	2 or 3 (or even more)
Difficulty:	Very difficult
Approximate cost to produce:	10,000 Marks +
Time taken to create:	2 years or more

Upon expending the required experience point, the artificier conceives of some great project, and devotes the next year to researching its construction and laying out the design plans. With this work completed, the artificier may begin the actual construction.

"Great devices" are grandiose projects constructed over prolonged periods of time with the permission of the Referee. They might include such creations as mechanical riding beasts, magical toys or fearsome engines of destruction. Each such project must be researched separately and paid for with experience points.



ASTROLOGY

Astrology is the complex science of predicting events through the motions of the stars and heavenly bodies. The performance of an astrological calculation is a complex task taking anywhere from a day to a week. The astrologer must make careful calculations requiring references to a large store of manuals and charts, and the use of an astrolabe. The astrologer might also have to take star sightings through telescopes.

Astrological calculations require the astrologer to know the precise time and place in which the subject of his calculations was born or created. Astrologers will thus often become adept at Legend Lore.

Astrology skill is closed to characters who do not have a Magical aptitude of 16+ and navigation skill.

Like the other magical skills listed above, there are a number of different abilities grouped under the general skill of "Astrology". Each ability must be acquired separately, at a cost of 1 experience point each.

Astrology is an expensive profession when initially setting up shop. Astrolabes will cost about 8 Marks, small astronomer's telescopes might cost 20 Marks or more, and the usual prices must be paid for books, charts and manuals.

DIVINE PERSONALITY

Experience points cost: 1

Difficulty level: Average

The astrologer casts a horoscope and discovers the disposition of his subject, the target's profession, and a general indication of the character's level of competence within that profession.

DIVINE MAGICAL APTITUDE

Experience points cost: 1

Difficulty level: Average

The astrologer casts a horoscope and discovers his opponent's Magical aptitude rating, and its highest level of expertise with a magical skill. This spell can also be used to determine the power of a magical object.

DIVINE OMENS

Experience points cost: 1

Difficulty level: Difficult

The character may attempt to make readings to gain foreknowledge of up and coming critical or disastrous events. This does not give precise details as to the nature of the event, only a general indication that an event of a certain kind might be expected. The character may also divine a lucky day for an event to occur. This does not necessarily guarantee the success of the venture in question...

LOCATE PERSON

Experience points cost: 2

Difficulty level: Difficult

The astrologer may tell the general location of the character being sought - but only if he knows the times and places of birth of the character in question and his companions.

LOCATE OBJECT

Experience points cost: 2

Difficulty level: Very difficult

The astrologer divines the location of a lost object. To successfully locate an object through divination, the astrologer must know the date and place in which the object was created, and the birth date of the object's creator.

Harpy Astrologress.



No court is complete without its astrologer!

SAMPLE DEMON

"Randolph the rotten" is a tyro demonologist, who sets out to create his demon for the first time. Randolph wants to be revenged on the woman who spurned him (this unhappy affair has left Randolph quite unbalanced). He has no ties to anything anymore - but he does have an antipathy of 4 towards his ex-lady love! He also has an antipathy of 4 towards this lady's new beau.

Randolph has a drive of 14, and thus his demon's characteristics are all rated at a value of 14. BUT Randolph has 8 points of antipathies. This gives him 8 points to split up between the demon's 5 characteristics. Randolph chooses to put two points into increasing the demon's dexterity up to 16 (to give it a maximum hand rating of 7), and bundles the remaining 6 points into strength and endurance to make the creature tougher. Gloating over the fact that he will finally give his enemies just what they deserve, Randolph performs the summonation ceremony.

If Randolph's demon actually manages to kill its two targets, the objects of his antipathy will die and he will no longer have valid antipathies against these two individuals. His demon becomes weaker. Randolph will have to find new hatreds if he wishes to keep his demon strong...



DEMONOLOGY

Demons are beings of raw mana brought to life by the fears and hatreds of sentient creatures. They are hostile, inimitable creatures which hover at the very edge of consciousness.

Every person has his own demon, which represents his subconscious hatreds, fears and lusts. These demons are non-corporeal, and will be encountered only in nightmares. Demonologists gain the skill of giving their own demons physical form, using them as tools and increasing their powers rather than dismissing them and weakening them with wisdom and patience (as all sensible people seek to do).

Demonology skill is open to characters who have a magical aptitude of 17+. It is a skill which would only be learned by the sick, the power hungry or the perverse.

CREATING A DEMON

The creation of a demon is a taxing and dangerous task which requires weeks of preparation. The ceremony itself requires absolute concentration, and is always performed on blasphemed ground. The ceremony will require about 10 marks worth of incense, herbs and adjuncts.

To successfully firing a demon into corporeal being, the summoner must roll its Drive vs. 15, with its Demonology skill acting as a DRM. Mind enhancement potions will give a bonus to this roll, and are usually considered essential to the summonation ceremony.

A successful roll creates a demon. A roll which fails by more than 2 points causes the summoner's demon to overwhelm and destroy him utterly. Any given person can only create one demon. One is enough....

DEMON CHARACTERISTICS

When a demon is summoned, it will appear directly beside the its summoner, popping into existence out of the ether in which it lives. The mage may then give it instructions as to its task and limitations.

The appearance of a Demon is always terrifying, always nauseating, for they are the creatures of nightmare itself. Their physical structure varies as widely as the people who summon them, but they are usually chaotic collections of the images that the summoner loathes most. As such they are usually fiendish combinations of octopus, insect, spider and devil, with unmistakable reminders of disease and decay. The first sight of a demon will cause convulsions of absolute terror in any person. Characters who behold a Demon unexpectedly must make a drive roll vs. 10 even to be able to flee from such an apparition...

Demons are rated for their Strength, Dexterity, Reason, Intuition and Drive. A demon's characteristics all equal its summoner's Drive. Every antipathy point that the summoner possesses at the time of initial summoning is added power to the Demon, providing extra characteristic points that may be added to the Demon's characteristics. Rotten people thus have stronger Demons.

The summoner's Self Image has a profound effect upon its Demon's efficiency. Add the summoner's Self Image modifier to the creature's maximum hand rating. In addition, the summoner's Self Image modifier should be applied to all rolls made by the Demon. Unlike the characteristics bonus for antipathies, this modifier changes with the changes in the summoner from moment to moment. A demon can be seriously weakened by proper psychological assault on its master.

Summoned demons have a physical existence, and are halted by doors, windows and precipices just like anyone else. Demons can, however, swim, crawl up sheer surfaces and squeeze through astonishingly small gaps (due to their amorphous bodies). Demons move with the speed of a galloping horse for short periods. They can smell the souls of living men much like scavengers scent carrion, and can track a man by the smell of his soul. They are susceptible only to damage from fire, sorcery, silvered blades or silver bullets. Demons are unkillable while their creator lives. As long as a demon's creator is alive, Demons whose hit points are brought to zero or lower will merely dissipate back to the spirit world, where they will regenerate at a rate of 1 Max Hand point per day. Demons released by the death of their creator will roam free to live quietly or cause havoc according to their whims.

Demons may never cross hallowed ground.

A demonic summation ceremony is a time consuming and dangerous business. The ceremony itself must take place in a ritually cleaned and asperged environment with a lot of floorspace and a minimum of nosy neighbors. After hours of prayer to the dark powers, the celebrant must then draw out a complex series of pentagrams and protective patterns. Once this is completed, the ceremony can begin in earnest.

The actual summation ceremony must be properly "consecrated". This requires the summoner to perform some dire act - the sacrifice of an animal, an act of treachery, or something even more foul. Only the most depraved, power-hungry or insane magicians would ever stoop to demonology. A demonologist's soul is sick and diseased - carefully nurtured as a festering source of cruelty and hate.

A demonologist has a terrifying love/hate relationship with his or her own demon, adoring it, loathing it, commanding it, FEARING it. A person's demon is their nemesis, their worst fears - their self. By giving their dark side a lethal physical form, by setting it free to slay and wallow in destruction, they seal their own dooms. Eventually a demonologist's demon will slay them - it is almost a foregone conclusion.

Strangely enough, most demonologists don't seem to care.

USES OF DEMONS

DEMONOLOGY NOTE

Assassination at the hands of a demon is a very real threat to men of power. Most important persons will take precautions. The carrying of silvered weapons is the ultimate act of self aggrandizement - the wearer proclaims that he thinks he is important enough to be in danger of demonic attack.



Once a demon is created, it hovers in the spirit plane near its summoner, waiting to be called. The demon's creator may call on the demon at need, bringing it into physical existence. Roll the summoner's Drive vs. 10 (modified by demonology skill) to bring forth the Demon, rolling once per turn until the Demon appears. If the roll fails by more than 2 points, the summoner must roll 2D6. On a 12, the demon becomes enraged, and attacks its summoner, fighting him until it has destroyed him or until it is dissipated.

Demons may be used as warriors or assassins, or set as guards or laborers. They will obey verbal instructions literally, but will often use their own initiative to perform acts of malice, cruelty or destruction if these are not prescribed by their instructions. Once they have completed a mission, they will return to their summoner.

All demons have a sorcerous shield of 4 cards, which may be replenished by a maximum of 1 card per turn. In sorcerous combat, demons may assist their masters by increasing his effective sorcery skill and magical hand rating by 1.

In physical combat, demons are very dangerous opponents. They have a combat skill of 4, modified by the inverse of their summoner's Self Image score (a positive score gives a negative bonus). They fight with tough, horny extremities, teeth, horns or whatever, which are treated as edged melee weapons. Ignore weapon reach and weight when fighting a demon. Demons are covered in horny, rubbery or scaly hides which count as 3 points of "proofed" armor. Wounds caused by demons will always fester, and require the swift use of disease curing potions or amputation in order to save the victim from gangrene.

HEDGE MAGICS

Hedge magic is the somewhat derogatory term used in sorcerous circles to describe the “nature” oriented magical powers. Hedge Magics are only usable by characters whose Magical aptitude is 16+, and whose Intuition score is 12+.

ANIMAL SPEECH

Experience points cost: 1
Difficulty level: Average to very difficult, depending on message given

The magician may give simple verbal instructions to non-sentient creatures. This might be used to get a small creature to carry a message, or tell a riding beast to go and wait at a certain location. The complexity of the instructions and the attention span of the beast will affect the task’s difficulty level.

PURIFY FOOD/WATER

Experience points cost: 1
Difficulty level: Average

This spell purges food or water of disease, staleness and (to a lesser extent) decay. It can be a useful spell for travelers.

FIND DIRECTION

Experience points cost: 1
Difficulty level: Average

Upon casting this spell successfully, the mage will immediately gain his bearings.

FERTILITY

Experience points cost: 1
Difficulty level: Difficult

The mage may increase the chance of a creature bearing young, or increase the crop yield of a field for one season. There is a reverse version of this spell, called “Blight” or “Curse”, which has the opposite effects.

SCRYING

Experience points cost: 2
Difficulty level: Difficult

The mage uses a crystal ball or a pond/puddle of pure water to act as a window through which he may observe distant events. Scrying is not a precise art - sometimes the mage will be shown random snatches of the past, present or future, with little or no indication of which is which. If the mage is searching for a specific character or event, the task becomes very difficult.

GRAFTING AND GROWING

Experience points cost: 2
Difficulty level: Very difficult

Through a careful program of growth and experimentation, the mage may mutate and modify plants, even going so far as to combine organs normally associated with animal life with living plant matter. These creations are rooted in place, but make useful spies, door guards or decorations. In this way “hedge mages” produce many fantastic creations, including such wonders as the guardian “Eye bushes” of Craggy Tor.



HEDGE MAGIC

Spying out the enemy’s lair with an animal eyes spell is an opportunity to delve into another level of role playing. The player should now take the role of his animal agent as it timidly sets out on the mission that he has given it (the magic user effectively becomes the animal, directing its actions at will). Gigantic cats, housekeeper’s brooms, owls and spiders all become the player’s foes and problems as he steps into a new scale of existence.

ANIMAL EYES

Experience points cost: 2
Difficulty level: Very difficult

The Mage establishes a rapport with a non-sentient animal of some type. For the next hour or so (as long as the mage maintains his concentration) the mage may direct the actions of the subject animal, seeing through its eyes and hearing with its ears, feeling whatever the subject feels - effectively becoming the creature for the duration of the spell. If the subject creature is slain while this spell is active, the controlling mage will go into shock, falling comatose for a day or more.



PRACTICAL ILLUSION

Hattie is an illusionist who is down on her luck. All she has to eat is cabbage. Trying to make her meal more appetizing, she casts a combined visual, tactile and olfactory illusion over the nasty vegetable, trying to make it appear to be a roast chicken.

Overcoming her own drive requires a roll of 7- on 2D6. Her illusion skill of 2 gives her a -2 DRM on the roll. Hattie rolls an 8. Minus two for her skill DRM brings her score down to 6: Success!

In her heart of hearts, Hattie knows that she is really eating a cabbage. Certainly the nutrition is that of cabbage and not roast fowl. But for all intents and purposes the cabbage looks like a chicken, tastes like a chicken, smells like a chicken, and has the texture of chicken meat. Hattie may live like a pauper, but today she dines like a King!

ILLUSION

Any character with a magical aptitude of 16+ may learn the slights of illusion. Illusionists gain the ability to affect the senses and emotions of others. Rolls to cause living targets to believe in an illusion are always made by matching the illusionist's drive vs. that of his target, with the illusionist's skill as a DRM on the roll.

BEMUSE

Experience points cost: 2

The Mage tries to overcome his victim's drive. If this is successful, then the target becomes confused and befuddled, and will not act except in self defense. This spell has a maximum range of 100 paces, and lasts for about 2 minutes. The victim may roll to break the bemusement once per combat turn if it is surrounded by violent or exciting circumstances (e.g. a fight).

ILLUSION (SPECIFY VISUAL, SONIC, OLFACTORY OR TACTILE)

Experience points cost: 1

Illusions of sight, taste/smell, touch and sound can be molded together into a single spell, and only a single roll is made by the target to resist the entire illusion.

Illusions may only change the appearance of a real object - they do not create apparitions out of thin air. Illusions do not effect the apparent mass or dimensions of the object which is being disguised.

The creation of an illusion requires concentration. The subject of the illusion must be clearly pictured in the illusionist's mind, and the illusionist must therefore test to maintain an illusion whenever he is distracted from concentrating upon it (e.g. by gunfire or by having to talk).

As a rule, visual illusions may only cover a small physical area (e.g. about the size of a person's body). Simple visual illusions that flow over an existing object may be larger (e.g. it is possible to use illusion to change the color of a horse).

Illusions have many uses. A mage might cast an illusion over his own features, or disguise his voice. He might hide a door, create an imaginary pistol or change the cards in a card game to suit his own advantage. It costs 1 fatigue point per 10 minutes to maintain an Illusion.

MENTAL DISCIPLINES

Mental Disciplines are rare talents open only to those characters whose Magical aptitude scores are 15+, and whose Drive scores equal or exceed 14. Each discipline must be acquired separately.

HYPNOTIC INTERROGATION

Experience points cost: 1
Difficulty level: Difficult

The mage may read the surface thoughts of a victim who is in a state of shock, panic, fear or distress.

ESP

Experience points cost: 1
Difficulty level: Difficult

The mage may tell if he is being watched, discussed, or is about to be ambushed.

LEVITATION

Experience points cost: 1
Difficulty level: Difficult

Upon entering a trance for two to ten minutes, the mage may elevate himself off the ground for a number of yards equal to his Drive characteristic. The Mage may leave his trance once he loses contact with the ground, and may control his height and rate of ascent. After ten minutes, the mage must roll his drive vs. an average task to maintain his height, otherwise he will drift back down to earth.

ASTRAL PROJECTION

Experience points cost: 2
Difficulty level: Very difficult

The mage goes into a trance for an hour or more, during which time he projects his spirit (visible as a ghost of his true form) across great distances. His spirit form may observe its surroundings, speak, hear. It is vulnerable to the attentions of guardian spirits, which may fight the spirit in mental combat (roll each spirit's Drive vs. its opponent's Drive. If the roll is successful, reduce the target's Magical aptitude by 1D6. If either character's Magical aptitude reaches zero, it is dissipated/dead).

Astral travel is dangerous to the unskilled. If a character's first attempt at astral projection fails, then the character's spirit loses its way back to its body. The body will die in a week or so unless another mage can use astral projection to find the wandering spirit and bring it back home.





NECROMANCY

Necromancy is the art of dealing with the dead, and communing with the spirit world. It is only open to characters with a Magical aptitude of 20 or more. Necromancy does not involve the actual animation of corpses. This has been known to happen, but only through direct treaty with the Devil, whose province includes the souls and remains of the damned.

Necromancy is viewed with horrid fascination by the public. Necromancers are shunned, and most characters feel ill at ease in their ghoulish company.

Necromancy can be a useful skill for talking to dead party members!

SPEAK WITH DEAD

Experience points cost: 1

Difficulty level: Average if corpse of the subject is present.

Difficult if no corpse is present, but the task is performed at the site of the subject's death - otherwise the task is very difficult.

The necromancer raises the spirit of a dead person and may speak with it. Spirits do not like returning to the worlds of the living, and will leave if their interest is not held. It is thus easiest to deal with spirits whose own interests are served by communicating the information desired (e.g.. If the ghost was asked to reveal the name of its murderer).

This spell is dangerous if wrongly cast, since the enraged spirit might attack the necromancer and attempt to possess him (roll the spirit's Drive vs. the Necromancer's Drive for success). Possession attempts will not be made by gentle or sad spirits, but only by the shades of the angry or greedy.

COMMAND DEAD

Experience points cost: 2

Difficulty level: Difficult

The necromancer may force a spirit to perform an act that goes against its will (e.g. hold a spirit in place until it answers his questions, or cause the spirit to appear to another character and deliver a message).

SPIRIT BINDING

Experience points cost: 1

Difficulty level: Very difficult

The necromancer may bind a spirit into the land of the living as a ghost. The spirit is confined to a set area until the spell is lifted or the necromancer dies. If combined with a command spell, the spirit may be forced to perform certain actions within its specified domain (deliver warnings, attempt possession etc.).

EXORCISM

Experience points cost: 2

Difficulty level: Very difficult

The necromancer may liberate a bound spirit, or force a spirit to cease possession of another character's body. It can also be used to force a Demon temporarily back into the spirit plane (roll the necromancer's drive vs. that of the Demon).



The dead desire blood! Summanation of spirits must be accompanied by blood sacrifice.

SORCERY SAMPLE

1 - Linette's companion Annalise is a sorcerer, and she finds herself locked in mortal combat with an enemy sorcerer. Both antagonists have a skill of four and a maximum sorcery hand of 4. Annalise's New Draw rating of 3 is equaled by her opponent's score. Annalise looks like she might have quite a fight on her hands!

Of the four cards dealt to her, Annalise takes three of the most powerful and puts these face up in front of her as her shield (a LIGHT 2, and a SHADOW 2 and 4). Her opponent only puts up two cards as his shield (a LIGHT 3 and a SHADOW 4) - he's keeping the other two cards for offense.

Both combatants cut the deck to test for initiative, and Annalise gets the highest card (winning her the initiative). She elects to go for a new draw. Annalise now draws three cards from the deck and adds these to her hand. She now has four cards in her hand. With a maximum sorcery hand of 4, this is as many as she can ever hold (her shield cards don't count towards this total). Annalise's action is over, and the initiative passes over to her opponent.

Annalise's opponent chooses to make an attack. He plays a single card face up - a SHADOW 2, and adds a second card to his attack - a SHADOW 4 (this time face down). Both cards can truly be linked into one attack in this manner, since they are both in the same element and the same suit (skulls). This has exhausted his hand, but makes for a fairly powerful attack.

SORCERY

Sorcery is the skill of manipulating the 2 main elements of LACE & STEEL's magic - light and shadow. It is the skill of magical combat - a destructive talent of enormous potential. Sorcery skill is only open to characters whose Magical aptitude score is 15+, and whose signifier is one of the major arcana.

There are two main elements known to the magic of LACE & STEEL - Light and Shadow. Light is an element embodying heat and anger, and Shadow embodies cold, and calculating ruthlessness. Sorcerous attacks create finely directed blasts of intense heat or cold which are capable of causing fearful wounds to flesh or massive structural damage to wood, metal or stone. The physical damage caused by sorcery attacks is halved outside of 100 paces range, and sorcerous attacks have a maximum range equal to the sorcerers (Magical aptitude + Drive) x 10 paces. Sorcery attacks operate only within line of sight of the spell caster.

Sorcerers engaged in sorcerous combat will be readily noticeable to other characters. Auras of force swirl around the sorcerer, lunging forth to strike down an opponent or fend off enemy magics. The sorcerer will often be standing within a protective circle scribed upon the ground, a ring of symbols and runes which flicker with the forces of raw magic.

MAGICAL COMBAT

Like melee combat, contests of sorcery are simulated by a card game. More calculating and planned than melee combats, LACE & STEEL's magical combat system allows players to build up careful defenses and plan their moves a turn or two in advance. One turn of sorcery combat takes ten seconds (the same as a normal missile fire turn). Missile fire and melee are determined before sorcery attacks are made. Sorcerers should be made aware that whatever their powers, one bullet can still lay them low just like anybody else.

THE SORCERY DECK

The sorcery deck consists of 52 cards. The cards are divided into elemental cards (marked "Light" or "Shadow" after the element that they represent) and special purpose cards (marked "Intuition", "Disruption", "Feint" and "Dazzle"). Cards are divided into two suits, RAPIERS and ROSES.

Elemental cards are given a numerical value between 1 and 5. Special purpose cards have a bracketed numerical value which is used for determining initiative at the start of the game.

STARTING INITIATIVE

The sorcerer with the highest skill will start the combat with the initiative. If both combatants are of equal skill level, then both players cut the deck. The player who draws the card with the highest numerical value will win the initiative.

MAXIMUM SORCERY HAND

The maximum number of sorcery cards that may be held by any character is determined by the character's Magical aptitude score on this chart:

The character's maximum sorcery hand must not be confused with its normal Max Hand rating. As the character takes damage, its maximum sorcery hand rating will suffer at the same rate as its Max Hand rating, but it is the damage to a character's hit points which will determine when a character becomes grievously wounded or dies.

Magical Aptitude Score	Maximum Sorcery Hand
1 to 15	0
16 to 17	4
18 to 20	5
21 +	6

The cards played face up as part of a character's "shield" (see below) do not count towards its maximum hand.

NEW SORCERY DRAW

Sorcerers may augment their hand of sorcery cards through new draws from the deck. The number of cards that they draw is determined by their new sorcery draw rating. This rating is determined by the character's Reason score on this chart:

Reason Score	New Sorcery Draw Rating
1 to 5	0
6 to 10	1
11 to 12	2
13 to 14	3
15 +	4

SHIELDS

Upon entering into sorcerous combat, a sorcerer will establish a defensive shield. After taking their initial deals, all sorcerers select cards from their hand to act as part of their defensive shield.

Shield cards are placed face up in front of the player. The number of cards used as a character's sorcerous shield may never exceed the character's Sorcery Skill Rating, or its current Maximum Sorcery Hand Rating. If a sorcerer's maximum sorcery hand rating drops below the number of cards currently played as the sorcerer's shield, then the sorcerer must discard shield cards until his number of shield cards meets the new limit.

The numerical value of the cards played as a character's shield is the measure of its strength.

The establishment of a sorcerous shield requires the magician to stay within a carefully defined circle of protection (about 2 yards in diameter). Moving outside of this circle will deprive the sorcerer of all but one card of shield defense. The establishment of a circle of protection takes about 10 seconds (1 missile turn). If a mage suffers a surprise attack from sorcery, his defensive shield is initially limited to zero cards (unless he has a Drive characteristic of 12+, in which case his shield is determined by a random draw from the sorcery deck). The shield may be increased as part of the normal sequence of play (see below).



Annalise may now attempt to parry the incoming attack. To do so, she must produce cards of the LIGHT element from her hand (LIGHT opposes SHADOW). She figures that the little SHADOW 2 card that she can see face up is probably a bluff. The second, hidden card must be quite powerful, so she had best go all out to block the attack. Sadly, Annalise has only one LIGHT card - a LIGHT 4. She plays this by way of parry.

The attacker now flips over his hidden attack card, revealing a total attack strength of 6. Subtracting Annalise's parry value of 4 gives a total of 2 points of damage against Annalise. This 2 points of remaining damage now batters at Annalise's shield. Since she has a 2 point card in her shield, Annalise discards this. Her defenses are weakened, but not broken, but her opponent retains the initiative, since he managed to score a damaging hit.

The enemy sorcerer has no cards in his hand, rather limiting his choice of actions at this point. He takes a new draw of three cards, replenishing his depleted hand. The initiative thus passes over to Annalise.

Annalise goes over to the attack while she still can. She lays down a SHADOW 1 attack card face up, and attaches a FEINT card face down. Her opponent falls for the bluff and wastes a very powerful pair of LIGHT cards in a parry. Since her FEINT card retains her the initiative, Annalise now gets a second try. This time she hurtles in a face up SHADOW 4 card, backed by a Second SHADOW 4 card (in the same suit of course). Eat black Ice, beetle breath!

Her opponent cannot parry, completely lacking any card of the element of LIGHT (Linette's parry drew them all out of his hand). All 8 points of Linette's attack smash into his shield. His shield has a total of seven points of protection - It goes down with a bang and a flash! The enemy sorcerer suffers physical damage.

To determine the damage done, we subtract the total protective value of the shield from the incoming blast (8 minus 7 gives us only 1 point of damage). The enemy sorcerer takes 1 hit point of damage, and his shield is gone. Linette also retains the initiative, since she managed to make a damaging hit on her opponent. It looks like Annalise has this one in the bag. Her opponent surrenders and begs for mercy.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Whenever a character gains the initiative, it may choose to make one of the following actions.

- Play an attack.
- Make a new draw.
- Shore up his defensive shield.
- Play an intuition card.

The effects of these actions are explained below:

Any of these plays takes about 10 seconds (therefore there is one magic turns to the missile turn). Missile fire and melee take place before sorcery. It is thus possible to shoot a sorcerer or run him through before he is able to cast a spell.

PLAYING ATTACKS

PHASE ONE - PLAYING ATTACK CARDS

To play an attack, the player must announce his character's intention to attack, and the element with which he is attacking. The attacker then plays his attack cards.

Attack cards are played by first placing an element card face-up on the table. Additional cards may now be added to the attack, and these are placed face down below the initial card. Additional attack cards must be in both the same element and the same suit as the face-up card. The total number of cards included in one attack may never exceed the attacker's skill level

PHASE TWO - DEFENDER PARRIES INCOMING ATTACK

The defender may now attempt to parry the incoming attack. To do so, the defender must play cards from its hand in defense.

In order to block the incoming attack, these defensive cards must be in the opposite element to the incoming attack (Shadow cancels Light and Light cancels Shadow). As in the attack, multiple cards may be played in the defense, but only if the cards are all in the same element and suit.

Once the defender has arrayed his parry cards, the attacker reveals his face down attack cards. Total the numerical values of the attack and defense cards, and subtract the numerical value of the defense from that of the attack. If the result is zero or less, then the attack has been fended off, and the defender now gains the initiative. If the attacking value is higher than the defense, then the remaining value (once the defensive total is subtracted from the attacking total) goes onto the target as damage. If the attacker manages to damage his opponent, he retains the initiative next turn.

PHASE THREE - DAMAGE TO TARGET'S SHIELD

The target's shield blocks incoming damage which has not been fended off by the defender's parry.

When a character's shield is damaged, one or more shield cards of a value at least equaling the damage must be discarded. Individual shield cards may not be broken down for cards of lesser value - if one point of damage has been caused to a character's shield and the shield consists of a card with a value of 4, then the card must be discarded.

PHASE FOUR - DAMAGE TO OPPONENT

If the incoming damage exceeded the numerical value of the target's shield, then the remaining damage goes through onto the target. The numerical value of the damage done is subtracted from the target's Hit points/Maximum hand rating just as in normal physical combat, with the same wound results.

MAKING A NEW DRAW

The character who has the initiative may choose to draw new cards from the deck to augment his hand of sorcery cards.

The player draws a number of cards equal to his new sorcery draw rating or his maximum sorcery hand rating (whichever is lower), and adds these to his hand. If the cards now held in his hand exceed the character's maximum sorcery hand rating, the player must discard excess cards until his hand falls back within this set limit.

Once this process is finished, the initiative passes over to the character's opponent.

SHORING UP DEFENSIVE SHIELDS

The character who has the initiative may choose to modify its shield defenses in one of two ways. The character may either take one card from its sorcery hand and add this card to its shield, or the character may discard two cards from its current shield and replace them with a single card taken from its sorcery hand.

Once this process is finished, the initiative will pass to the character's opponent.

SPECIAL ATTACK CARDS

There are a number of special cards in the sorcery deck which cause special effects when they are played as part of an attack.

DAZZLE

The attack will cause the defender to discard one of his shield cards the moment this "Dazzle" card is played, before the effects of the defender's parry are calculated.

DISRUPTION

Once the effects of the attack have been determined, and all damage has been caused, the defender must discard his current hand and replace the cards thus lost with an equal number of new cards drawn from the sorcery deck.

FEINT

This card may be attached to an attack if it is in the same suit as the face-up attack card. Played face down, it is designed to mislead the defender into thinking that the attack is stronger than it actually is (feint cards have a bracketed numerical value which is only used for determining initiative at the start of the game, and not for damage).

Feint cards have the additional advantage of retaining the attacker's initiative if his attack is parried.

INTUITION

Playing this card when the character wins the initiative allows the sorcerer to see his opponents hand (the initiative then passes on to his opponent).

Alternatively, an intuition card may be played by a defender once the attacker has laid down his attack cards. The defender may then inspect his opponent's face down attack cards before committing defensive cards to his parry attempt.

RIP-OFF

Once the attack is determined and all damage has been caused, the attacker may take a random card from his opponent's hand and add it to his own.



SORCERY FATIGUE

A character's Drive characteristic is used to determine the mental fatigue that a character suffers when engaged in sorcerous combat. Each character must keep a track of its own element cards discarded due to attacks, parries or damage to the character's shield.

Every time the numerical value of the element cards that a character has played equals its Drive characteristic score, lower the character's maximum sorcery hand rating by one. Throw away the character's discard pile, and start keeping a new track of elemental cards discarded by the character. In this way it is quite possible for a sorcerer to tire himself into a zero maximum sorcery hand rating, removing his ability to cast spells.

Mental fatigue of this kind will be recovered in a few hours if the sorcerer is left undisturbed to rest and recuperate.

THE EFFECTS OF SKILL

A sorcerer's skill affects the number of cards held in his shield and the number of cards which may be played in an attack. In addition, it affects the numerical value of element cards which the character can safely play. If a character plays any attack or defense cards whose numerical values exceed the character's skill levels, then the character is meddling with forces beyond his control.

If the character uses these "uncontrolled" cards in an attack, and the attack is parried, or if the "uncontrolled" card is used in an unsuccessful parry attempt, then the "uncontrolled" card will damage their user. The user will suffer damage equal to the numerical value of the card minus the character's skill level.

Remember that sorcerers are still vulnerable! Although a powerful sorcerous attack is more than enough to destroy most characters, non-magi are still capable of fighting back!

Missile fire comes before spell casting, so magicians beware!

Power of attack	Penetration Bonus
1,2	-1
3 to 6	0
7 to 10	+1
11+	+2

MAGIC VS. ARMOR

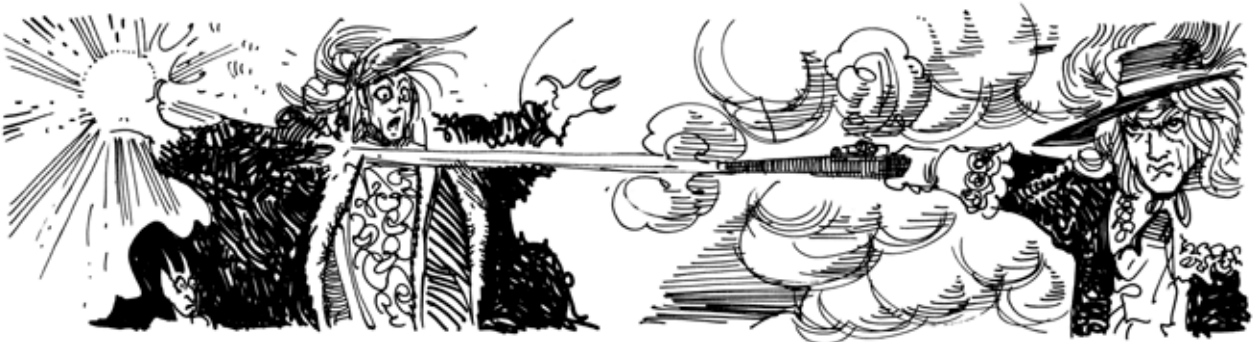
Sorcerous attacks must check to penetrate armor in the same manner as physical assaults. The penetration of sorcerous attacks is influenced by the power of the damage which gets through to the target.

Armor that is struck by a sorcerous attack reduces its protective value by 1 once the results of the attack have been determined, even if the attack does not penetrate.

Remember that armor reduces a character's fatigue rating, which will reduce an armored sorcerer's endurance in sorcerous combat.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

If a sorcerer faces multiple opponents in sorcerous combat, then his opponents will band together their hands into one large hand and one large shield. Character's banded together in this way are treated as the one "player" for purposes of initiative and the playing of attacks and parries. Damage will be split evenly between the multiple characters.



SORCEROUS COMBAT AGAINST NON-SORCERERS

Characters who are not sorcerers are not immediately vulnerable to sorcerous attack. Sorcery attacks may only be delivered against targets within line of sight, so concealment is an adequate defense.

Attacks against characters who do not have a sorcerous shield must roll to hit the target. The sorcerer must roll his/her Drive vs. 10 in order to hit (or drive vs. 15 or 20 under difficult circumstances).

As has already been noted, sorcery takes place after initial missile combat during a missile turn. It is therefore possible for non-sorcerers to slay a sorcerer before he has the opportunity to cast a spell.

OTHER SORCERY SPELLS

The control of light and shade has several uses other than out and out sorcerous attack, as shown below:

QUENCH

Experience points cost: 1
Difficulty level: Difficult

A blast of intense cold is used to condense water out of the air. This is used mostly for fighting fires, but can also be used to create drinking water.

CREATE LIGHT

Experience points cost: 1
Difficulty level: Easy

The sorcerer creates a glowing ball of light. The ball costs 1 level of sorcerous fatigue to maintain for every 30 minutes of the light's existence.

MAGICAL ITEMS

Readers by now will have seen that a number of magical items such as swords, armors, potions and creatures may be created by mages. The labor

that goes into all of these objects makes them rare. They are not the sort of objects that will be found lying around, but are all mostly used by someone or other, and valued for their powers. "Common" magic items may be produced on commission, but will be extremely expensive. Most competent magicians are patronized by court or guild, and will be hard pressed to find time for private commissions. The prices of healing potions etc. are given in the equipment section of the rules.

There are also magical items and places which are not the product of "common" magic. The effects of such magic is up to the Referee, but suggestions would include objects or places which add one card to a sorcerer's defensive shield, bowers in which healing takes place with greater ease and speed. There might be amulets which lessen the mental fatigue caused by sorcery, or which protect the wearer from poison or illness. Fairy magic could produce all manner of weird and bizarre curios which could be used to brighten up a campaign.

Always remember that LACE & STEEL is a realm of fantasy. A little magic adds sparkle to any adventure.



SORCERERS VS. NON SORCERERS

While in the midst of an adventure, Linette runs afoul of a sorcerer, who flings a bolt of energy at her even as she tries to duck around a corner and flee. The sorcerer draws his full hand of cards from the sorcery deck, and ends up with an interesting collection of cards. The sorcerer puts three of his LIGHT cards together into a single bolt (a 2 and a pair of 3's - that ought to do her in nicely!) and makes this his attack.

In order to hit, the sorcerer must match his Drive of 15 vs. a task difficulty of 15 (the Referee rules that the task is difficult, since Linette is ducking behind cover). 15 minus 15 gives us a total of 0. We look up the 0 column on the comparison chart, and find that the required success roll is a 7- on 2D6. Ouch!

The sorcerer rolls an eight. A miss! Linette will live to fight another day (the lucky little %(@*!)).

OTHER SORCERY SKILLS

Linette needs to start a campfire, and is diligently making Dexterity rolls vs. 20 to ignite the damp wood when Annalise comes along. Anna shoves her finger into the fire, and pumps a LIGHT 1 card into the kindling. WHOOMP! Instant fire. Linette's little problem is solved in a trice.

MASSSED COMBATS

For quick resolution of combats which involve a large number of characters, LACE & STEEL uses a map based “massed combat” system. This is played on a 1 hex = 5 paces ground scale, with a time scale of 1 turn = 10 seconds (1 missile turn). All characters are represented by a counter or figure. Attacks may only be to the front hex side of the attacking character.



The ring of steel on steel, the confusion and terror of battle massed combats can be a useful way of bringing drama into a campaign. The political background of ‘Mittelmarch’ is written in such a way as to suggest scenarios for warfare and mayhem. Siege and battle, ship to ship action and ferocious skirmishes are all possible parts of a roleplaying campaign.

The wounding and combat systems described below are not intended for use against important characters (player characters, major bad guys etc.). Such persons must be dueled with or wounded using the systems described under the melee and missile combat sections of the rules.

Both sides array their characters (only 2 characters may be stacked in a single hex and still fence without penalty, though up to 4 characters with pikes may effectively fight in the same hex).

STEP ONE - DETERMINATION OF INITIATIVE

The player whose side has the character with the highest leadership skill must now roll vs. his opponent’s leadership (rolling vs. Reason). If the roll is successful, then that player’s side has the initiative for the coming turn. If the roll fails, then the initiative passes over to the enemy.

Characters that are equipped with more than one weapon must now decide what weapon they will use during the turn (e.g. discard a boarding pike in favor of a cutlass).

STEP TWO - MISSILE FIRE

The player who lost the initiative nominates any of its characters that will fire or reload during this turn, and indicates the targets at which the missile troops will shoot. The player who won the initiative now nominates the characters on his/her own side that will fire or reload. Troops which fire or reload will not be allowed to move during steps three and four of the turn.

Both players now roll to hit with all missile fire in the normal fashion. Characters hit by missile fire are wounded and any character that is hit by more than 2 points under the minimum required dice roll to hit is killed. All missile fire is assumed to be simultaneous.

STEP THREE - SIDE “A” MOVES

The side which won the initiative now moves any or all of its characters. Characters may only be moved if they neither fired nor reloaded during step one of the turn. Characters in hexes adjacent to enemy characters may not move (unless they turn and flee), hut may change facing.

STEP FOUR - SIDE “B” MOVES

The side which lost the initiative now moves any or all of its characters. Characters may only be moved if they neither fired nor reloaded during step one of the turn. Characters contacted by the enemy during stage three of the turn may not be moved or turned to face their attackers..

STEP FIVE - MELEE DETERMINATION

All melee rolls are now made, the player who has won the initiative rolling all dice. Casualties are removed.

STEP SIX - MORALE

If one side lost twice as many casualties as they caused during the turn, and is down to 75% of its original strength or less, all characters belonging to that side will attempt to retreat back one hex unless their leader can roll his leadership skill vs. 10 (roll vs. Charisma). If this roll fails, then the leader will be penalized by a DRM of +2 when initiative rolls are made at the start of next turn.

If one side lost twice as many casualties as they caused during the turn, and is down to 50% of its original strength or less, the leader of that side must roll his leadership skill vs. 10 (roll vs. Drive). If the roll is failed, then the leader will attempt to surrender.

MOVEMENT RATES

All two-legged characters may walk up to three hexes per turn or run up to (8+ Dexterity divided by 5) hexes per turn. Characters who run must do so in a straight line, but may turn to face any hex side or hex spine before they commence movement. Walking characters may change facing before, during and after entering any hex. All movement stops once a character enters a hex which adjoins an enemy hex. Four-legged creatures may move considerably faster, usually walking up to 3 hexes per turn, cantering 12 hexes per turn, and galloping up to (Speed characteristic x 2) hexes per turn. Pixies may fly at sprinting speed. Harpies may fly at speeds equal to their dexterity x 2 hexes per turn. Flying Harpies may only change facing after they enter a hex.

Many hexes have an increased movement cost (e.g. it costs 2 or more movement points to enter them). Such hexes include areas where the footing is unsure (e.g. areas littered with debris or ropes such as a ship's deck). Moving across a linear obstacle (such as the side of a ship) takes a full turn. Moving up a steep slope or staircase costs double the normal movement cost.

Characters that are lightly wounded may not run/gallop, and lower their walking movement rate by 1 hex per turn.

COMBAT ROLLS

All characters who have an opponent in an adjacent hex may enter into melee combat. Combat rolls are always made by the player who has the initiative (the “attacker”). Pikes may reach out to strike targets that are one hex away from physical contact. Roll results of N+1 or more made while the target is out of melee range are ignored.

THE ROLL TO HIT

Roll the attacker's weapon skill vs. the defender's skill level on the comparison chart. If the roll was failed, then the attacker will suffer adverse effects. If the roll succeeds, then the defender will suffer.

ROLL	EFFECT
(N=required number)	
N + 3 or more	Attacker killed.
N + 2	Attacker wounded (out of action, but alive).
N + 1	Attacker lightly wounded
N	Defender retreats back one hex.
N - 1	Defender lightly wounded.
N - 2	Defender wounded (out of action, but alive).
N -3 or more	Defender killed.

MASSSED COMBAT

A handy game aid for playing massed combats is a clear hex overlay - a sheet of clear plastic printed with hexes (most good games shops will have these in stock). With an overlay roll, an Referee may draw maps of everything from ship decks to fortresses on paper, and then lay a hex grid over the top. This makes an easy method of coming up with quick skirmish maps right before your players' eyes.

FIGURES

Should players wish to fight out combats on a wargames table, treat 1 hex as 1 inch on the table top.

FACING DRMS

The facing of the attacker and defender in a melee will effect the attackers roll to hit.

Turn the defender to face its frontal hex towards the attacker. Every hex face that the defender must turn to do so will give a -1 DRM to the attacker's combat dice roll.

Now turn the attacker to face its frontal hex towards the defender. Every hex face that the attacker must turn to do so will give a +1 DRM to the attacker's combat dice roll.

OTHER DRMS

Character is lightly wounded, +1 DRM. (per light wound)

Cavalry vs. infantry or Half-Horses (unless infantry is armed with polearm) = a DRM of -1 (or -2 if the infantryman is moving)

Cantering or galloping cavalry/Half-Horses receive a DRM of -1, (unless contacting polearms)

Galloping/cantering cavalry receive a DRM of +2 when facing infantry polearms.

If the defender fired* or reloaded during this turn, the attack roll is given a -1 DRM.

If the attacker fired* or reloaded during this turn, the attack roll is made with a +1 DRM.

If the defender changed weapons during this turn, the attack roll is given a -1 DRM.

If the defender wears heavier armor than the attacker, the roll is made with a DRM of +1.

Polearm rolling vs. shorter weapon = a DRM of -1.

Infantry sword rolling vs. a polearm, or halberd/partisan rolling vs. a pike (unless the attacker is on a lower level, or is fighting across a linear obstacle) = a DRM of -1.

* Long arms or 2 pistols only. Characters who have a pistol in one hand and a sword in the other are not penalized for firing in the same turn as they enter melee combat.

Referees should also award penalties for attacking opponents who are higher than the attacker, or who are in protective cover. Wounded characters are assumed to be incapable of fighting, but may reload firearms for their unwounded companions.



SHIP VS. SHIP COMBAT

All ships are given ratings for firepower and structure, which represent their offensive and defensive capabilities. The ship lists also detail each type of vessel's maneuverability, and the typical number of crew. Each ship has a flotation factor equal to four times its structure rating.

INITIATIVE (THE "WIND GAUGE")

A maritime combat is enacted in Turns of three phases. At the beginning of each turn, the captain with the highest Intuition score must roll a test of his seamanship skill vs. that of his opponent (testing vs. the character's Reason score). If the roll is successful, then the character who rolled the dice has won the initiative for the turn - otherwise the initiative goes to the captain's opponent. The maneuverability rating of each ship is added to its captain's skill rating for the purposes of rolling for initiative.

If one captain or the other gains the initiative by more than 2 points on the dice, then he has managed to cross his opponent's stern. The ship that loses the initiative roll will only be able to fire with 10% of its guns (rounding down).

In each phase of the turn, the player with the initiative rolls to hit the opposing ship before the other vessel returns fire. In addition, the initiative player may elect to board his opponent after the third fire phase has passed.

The ship which gains the initiative may elect to break off the combat if it is not currently grappled with the enemy. If the enemy does not wish the combat to end then both captains must draw a card from the combat deck. If the captain who has the initiative draws a card with a higher numerical value than his opponent's, then his ship may break off and flee the battle.

FIRING

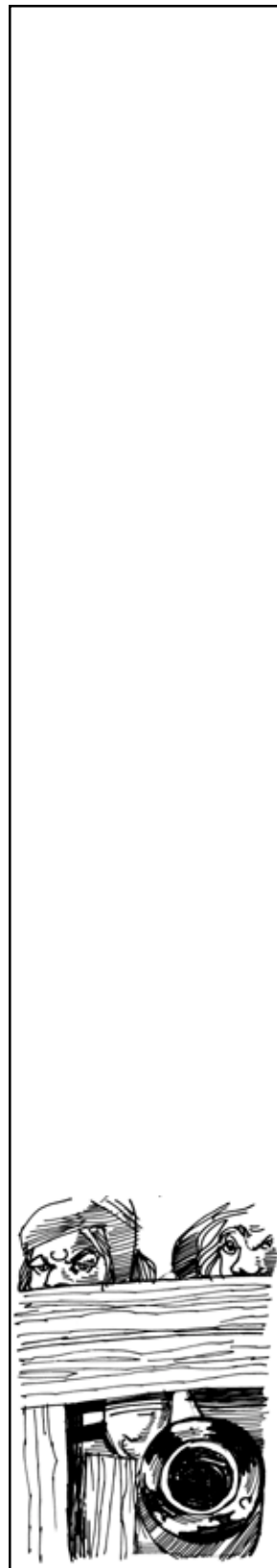
Roll the firing ship's firepower vs. the target's structure. If the roll is successful, then damage has been caused to the target.

If damage has been done, then draw one card from the combat deck for every 5 points of firepower (or part thereof) possessed by the attacking ship (though unskilled crews might only draw 1 card for every 6 or 7 gunnery factors). The numerical value of the card thus drawn is subtracted from the target's flotation factor. For each card of a numerical value of 3 or more that comes up Roses, reduce the target's firepower by 1 point. If a ship's gunnery ever drops to 0, then it loses the ability to fire.

If any cards turn up as a 5 or 6, then a mast has been shot away (give the vessel a DRM of +2 on her wind gauge rolls). Once all of a ship's masts are gone, she is unable to maneuver and will always lose the initiative.

CREW CASUALTIES

Crew casualties are calculated by drawing one card from the combat deck and multiplying the flotation damage caused to the target by (the numerical value of the new card -1). This yields the number of crew wounded or killed. Halve the damage caused once the target's crew complement drops below 50% of its starting level. The last 10% of a ship's crew is never affected by gunnery casualties, and must be eliminated through a boarding action, musketry, or by sinking the ship from under them. Divide crew casualties proportionately between soldiers and seamen.



SMALL ARMS

Men o' War will usually carry soldiers (or "marines") who add their firepower to the combat. In the third phase of any turn, a ship's complement of soldiers may fire. Draw 1 card from the combat deck for every 20 soldiers on ship, and apply these to the enemy as crew casualties. Divide these casualties evenly between enemy soldiers and crew. Small arms fire is conducted simultaneously, and is not effected by wind gauge.

SWIVELS

Many ships carry small swivel guns in their tops designed to spray the enemy decks with canister. In the third phase of any turn, swivel guns may fire. Each swivel which elects to fire draws one card from the combat deck, and applies this as casualties to the enemy crew.

Swivels which fire during the fire phase of the turn will be unloaded during the boarding phase.

Swivels may be lost during action. Every time a ship gains a DRM of +1 to its maneuverability due to structural damage, roll 2D6. On a 7-, the ship loses one swivel gun, and takes an extra card of crew damage (due to the gunners being wiped off the face of Other Earth).

PLAYER CHARACTERS IN MARITIME COMBAT

Every time a ship loses 20% of its crew, player characters should roll 2D6 to save themselves from taking damage. On a roll of 11, they have been wounded (draw 1 card from the combat deck and subtract this from their maximum hand rating). On a roll of 12, they have been killed.

THE EFFECTS OF FLOTATION DAMAGE

Every 20% loss to a ship's flotation value gives the ship a DRM of +1 to its wind gauge rolls.

If a ship's flotation drops to zero, it flounders (the ship may no longer move, and always loses the initiative). Draw a card from the combat deck, and consult the following chart after examining the card's numerical value:

Card value	Effect
1	Ship is waterlogged, but may be towed to safety.
2	Ship will sink in 1d10 days unless beached and repaired.
3	(Rapier) Ship capsizes. (Roses) Ship will sink in 1d10 hours.
4	Ship catches fire and burns down to the waterline.
5+	Magazine explodes, ship destroyed, crew killed.



BOARDING

Boarding combats use the massed combat system detailed above. Boarding is declared after all firing has been determined. Marines will start a boarding action with loaded weapons even if they have fired during the fire phase. Swivel guns that have fired during the fire phase will start the boarding action unloaded.

Use the ships deck plan's provided with these rules as the battlefield. The two ships might meet end to end, or side by side, so Referees will have to decide how the ships adjoin. About 30% of a multi-decker's crew will be below decks at the start of a combat. Any hatch can disgorge 10 crewmen per turn. A number of crew may be in the rigging (about 15%, divided evenly between the surviving masts). Characters may climb down from rigging on making a climb roll vs. 10. Characters may climb up into the rigging on making a climb roll vs. 15 (note that "in the rigging" implies being in the lower shrouds, where such characters may fire at targets on the main deck). Characters in open gunports may thrust with pikes or fire small arms at their opposite numbers.

If a quick abstract system of determining boarding combats is desired (wimp) then each ship draws 1 combat card per 10 crew or soldiers, and applies this total to the other side as casualties. Keep going until one or the other side surrenders.

MAGIC IN MASSED COMBAT

Sorcerous attacks come at the end of the missile turn, immediately before determining morale. Sorcerous attacks should be done in the usual way, playing cards against targets and shoring up defenses as described under the magic system.

In maritime combat, sorcerers may attempt to cause structural damage to a ship or casualties to its crew during the infantry fire phase. To cause structural damage, the sorcerer must draw a card from the sorcery deck and subtract its numerical value from his skill rating. This yields the structural damage that the sorcerer causes to the enemy ship. Otherwise the sorcerer may choose to fire at the enemy crew, counting as a full squad of musketeers when he does so.



Raechel curtsayed and smiled prettily at Miriam, her shimmering skirts making a pool of color all about her as she bowed.

"Why Darling! You do look lovely tonight! How do you keep your hair that color?"

Miriam fluttered her ivory fan. "Why Raechel, I dress it with a balsam I purchased from a little shop on Ducat street - right next to your wig maker's." Miriam looked her opponent up and down with mock interest. "What an interesting outfit! I'm sure that fashion will come back into style some day."

Raechel bared her teeth. "Yes darling. Well I can't wear those off-the shoulder things you favor. On me they just look cheap and tacky."

Miriam closed her fan with a bang and spun off in a haughty billow of silks. Raechel smirked after her, glowing with malicious pleasure. It looked like it was going to be a wonderful evening...

REPARTEE “COMBATS”

It is suggested that bouts of repartee be treated as a card based “combat” using the normal combat deck. This can make a court ball as interesting to play as a fencing combat, though with less dire results.

The normal combat deck is used, with each card played representing a remark as opposed to a blow. “High line” remarks are assumed to be comments on intellectual topics. The “mid line” represents comments on physical appearance or circumstances, and “low line” comments are “low blows” (insults or innuendo). All combat is played out in precisely the same manner as a sword fight, though with no fatigue rules or weapons. Hits affect the victim’s maximum repartee hand (see below). When a character’s maximum repartee hand drops to zero, all further “damage” adds to the victim’s Self Image rating (bringing it to a maximum of +4). The combat then ends, since the victim will then either shriek in outrage, storm “offstage” or burst into tears.

A character’s abilities at repartee are found by using the following charts:

MAXIMUM REPARTEE HAND:

Reason Score	Repartee Hand
1 to 4	3
5 to 7	4
8 to 12	5
13 to 15	6
16+	7

NEW REPARTEE DRAW RATING:

Average of Intuition & Charisma	New Repartee Draw
1 to 7	2
8 to 12	3
13+	4

RESEARCH (COLLECTING DIRT)

Proper preparation for a repartee encounter can give a character bonuses to its repartee ratings. If a character collects carefully researched scandal and gossip about another person, then increase the character’s New Draw Rating in combats against that particular person.

REPARTEE VS. UNSKILLED TARGETS

Repartee “attacks” may be made against characters who do not have repartee skill. If the unskilled character then chooses to engage in repartee, play out a combat as normal, but the unskilled character may only use “dodges” as defense (e.g. evasions and changes of subject as opposed to clever turns of phrase).

Any participant in a repartee “combat” may end the “combat” at any time simply by adding 1 to the character’s Self Image modifier and declaring the contest at an end.

MITTELMARCH

LACE & STEEL is set in an “alternative earth” inhabited by a number of different races. It is a world of magic and wonder, where fantastic events are known to happen.

Assume that the inhabitants refer to their world as “Earth” or “The World”. The section of this “Other Earth” which currently concerns us in this game is the civilized southern continent. The rest of the world is as yet “undiscovered”, but bold adventurers are now sallying forth on great voyages of discovery, and more and more is being found out about the world every year. The great age of exploration has begun!

GEOGRAPHY OF THE SOUTHERN CONTINENT

The great southern continent of “Other Earth” is termed Mittelmarch, a name which also applies to the nearby islands of Duncruigh and Scarmis. Six major nations hold sway over the divided continent, keeping the world in a constant turmoil of war, alliance and diplomatic maneuver.

A peninsula to the north east of the continent divides the southern nations from the mysterious lands of the east. The peninsular mountains are home to a number of warring tribes who act as a buffer between the east or west, although incursions from the east are common. The holy land is located in the east, and is now in the domain of the strange nations of Harabi.

POLITICAL NOTES

This is an era of change, with new political systems vying with traditional medieval modes of government. In many nations the central authority of the crown is rising to challenge the power of the great noble families, causing internal dissent and political intrigue. The new age of exploration and discovery is opening up hopes of a new life for the downtrodden and dreams of riches in the minds of merchants and monarchs. It is a time of exploration, conflict and war.

The southern continent is in a constant state of unrest. Duncruigh and Nantierre are in the throws of an extended war, with the tiny republic of Welfland being the cockpit in which the armies meet. This conflict has also drawn in the Tantic empire and Albernia, and the war may yet escalate into a wider scale.

Meanwhile, far to the north, the mysterious land of Harabi offers riches to traders and colonists. Of the plans of the Harabian sultans, no one can truly say...

DUNCRUGH

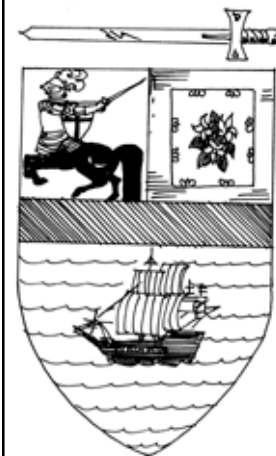
An innovative maritime nation ruled by the young (and tantalizingly, eligible) King Firined. The royal line of Duncruigh are Half-Horses, and Firined is generally liked by the more adventurous citizens of his nation. Firined is a firm, well educated ruler who has set up an efficient bureaucracy and a fair legal system which gives great opportunity to the middle classes at the expense of the nobility. This has not endeared him to the reactionary elements at his court.

Duncruigh is a naval nation renowned for the speed of its ships and the boldness of its sailors. The Duncruighan navy controls the straits of Nantierre, countering the ever present threat of invasion from Nantierre. The small Duncruighan army is well disciplined, and has at its core a number of regularly maintained regiments which are cleverly set up for expansion and training



THE POLITICS OF MITTELMARCH

LACE & STEEL's political background is designed to provide readers with hints of possible adventures. With conflict brewing and plots thickening, it should be easy for Referees to invent court intrigues, spying missions and military missions to occupy unruly player characters.



DUNCRUGH

(Dun-kreeg)

The island kingdom, preserved from invasion for centuries by the sea that surrounds it. As a leader of maritime exploration and political meddling upon the continent, it is a good choice of homeland for player characters.

SCARMIS

A powerful island nation of the cold south. Scarmis has a powerful army, but is preoccupied with an ongoing war against Forija.

NANTIERRE

Implacable foes of Duncruigh and the Tantic Empire. Nantierre is justly famous for its cuisine, its fashion, its cosmopolitanism, the touchy honor of its nobility and the size of its army!

duties during war time. The war in Welfland is being used as a means of “seasoning” a number of units, which have been lent to the Welfland republic for the duration of the campaign season.

Duncruigh is in a constant state of hostility with Nantierre (the basis of this lies in a Nantierran invasion attempt some 12 years ago, in the time of old King Firnel).

Duncruigh is a trading nation which has grown prosperous through trade with the mysterious northern land of Harabi. Duncruigh has a number of possessions and bases in the Harabian seas, where they face a constant struggle to fend off local warlords, Nantierran intruders and pirates.

SCARMIS

A dour martial nation hardened to the bitter weather of the far south. Scarmis is ruled by the energetic King Cleon, a talented soldier and tireless administrator.

Scarmis has a powerful army equipped to extremely high standards. It also has an efficient navy, although its navigators are not as experienced as those of Duncruigh. The military forces of Scarmis have recently been engaged on the continent in a war against the newly consolidated empire of Forija. As a result, the Scarmians have lost control of the south western peninsula (their only territorial foothold on the continent), and now plan a reconquest.

Scarmian ships range well into the western and southern seas, where they gather furs, oil, ambergris and ivory. A recent gold strike in the far western isles has caused some excitement.

Nantierre would greatly love an alliance with Scarmis to gain the navy she needs to tackle Duncruigh. Scarmis has no desire to fight a war with Duncruigh at present, so all negotiations along this line have been firmly rebuffed.

NANTIERRE

Nantierre is an energetic, martial nation ruled by Queen Aelis (a haughty young Half-Horse). Where Firined of Duncruigh is cool, cunning and dignified, Aelis of Nantierre is passionate, devious and proud. Fond of dynamic personal leadership, Aelis is a popular leader, although the populace has small enthusiasm for her military adventurism at present.

Nantierre has a large and powerful army, but her navy now lies mostly at the bottom of the Nantierran straits after tangling with the Duncruighan fleet. The Nantierran army is very conventional, with few surprises as to tactics, equipment or organization. Official appointments are usually based upon social class and family rather than standards of ability, and it is difficult for a poor man to advance to high rank.

Nantierre considers itself at war with Duncruigh, but is unable to properly pursue the matter due to its lack of a strong fleet. A Nantierran fleet is slowly being readied within fortified ports all along the south western coast, but dares not sally forth to rehearse tactics due to the presence of powerful Duncruighan patrols. Queen Aelis has a vocal dislike for King Firined of Duncruigh, and



takes every new Duncruighan success as a personal slight. One noble who suggested that she make peace between the two countries by offering marriage to Firined was immediately dismissed from court, and now supervises an onion works near the Tantic border.

ISLE OF AUREY

A rough, wild island ruled by petty barons. The council of barons is currently dominated by Casmir of Redet, a cool, calculating human. Casmir has lead the barons to declare fealty to Firined of Duncruigh, but the island is in a constant state of civil war as one baron after another defies the power of the council.

Aurey is not a civilized land, and still retains much more of the barbarity of the middle ages than the other lands. Feuds and wild celebrations are common, and the natives do not seem to set much store by civilized etiquette. Cattle raids, the kidnap of fair daughters and piracy seem to be a natural part of the native culture. Aurian clothing styles are different from those of other lands, with its use of plaids, kilts and tartan cloth.



FORIJA

The Forijan empire is a new addition to the map of Mittelmarch, having only recently been formed. In a dazzling display of military conquest combined with cunning political marriages, the tiny kingdom of Forija absorbed the scattered city states and minor nations of the east and welded them together into a single political entity. The wide, boisterous land of Forija is currently ruled by the charismatic King Vorsk. Vorsk is a burly, boisterous human, who somehow combines a love of tradition with a delight in learning and innovation. A capable warrior and an energetic administrator, Vorsk has completed his fathers work in establishing Forija as a major nation, conquering the north eastern nomad nations and resisting Scaramian attempts at expansion into Forijan territory.

Forijan nobility are not “gentlemen” by northern standards, being taken with loud song, extremes of emotion and public display. Visits from Forijan embassies are dreaded by court seneschals and excitedly anticipated by the ladies. Forijan fashion is very different from that of the north, and Forijans speak with a thick accent which places subjects before verbs (“we are this understanding, yes?”).

The Forijan army stresses cavalry over infantry tactics, although they have access to good conventional infantry from their northern possessions. The flamboyant Forijan winged hussars are some of the few heavy cavalry to retain the lance as a primary combat weapon. The nomadic nations also provide the Forijan military with light cavalry - an arm in which most western armies find themselves somewhat deficient. Native Forijan infantry tend to be skirmishers.

Forija has recently been at war with Scarmis, shoving the Scarmians out of their possessions in the rich southwestern peninsula.



AUREY

(Or-ee)

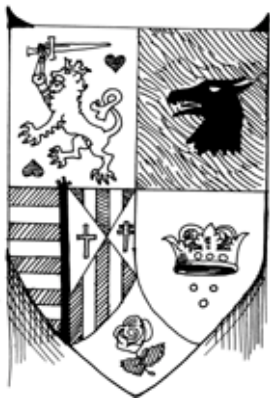
Wild islands rife with clan feuds and ancient magics. The ferocious highland warriors are justly feared.

FORIJA

(For-ee-ja)

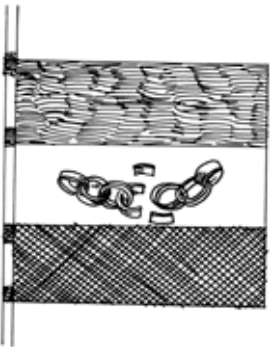


Flamboyant, strong, and ambitious, Forija is a new force on the political map, challenging the power of Scarmis in the frozen south.



ALBERNIA

Ruthless, ambitious and riddled with court intrigue, Albernians are the ready made bad-guys for any campaign! Albernian spies are everywhere, their ships viciously contest the sea lanes with the Duncruighan navy, and their armies are poised to intervene in the war to the south.



WELFLAND

A tiny nation which has suddenly found itself made into the cockpit of Mittelmarch, Welfland can provide an "interesting" location for adventures. Wracked with battle, torn apart by civil war and bitter conflicts, it is a country that can offer many causes worth fighting for.

ALBERNIA

A proud and sometimes cruel nation which occupies the warm northern peninsula of Mittelmarch. Albernia is ruled by the ancient house of Ruecha (humans), whose current scion, the boy King Grevira, is too young to rule in full stead. The real power in Albernia is held by the Regent Vasquez, who is a shrewd and ruthless politician. The only other claimant to the throne is Grevira's cousin, Frielle, who is now betrothed to the regent.

The Albernian accent is soft and hissing, and can be quite musical. Albernian fashion is somewhat more frivolous than that of the western nations. The typical Albernian is sensitive about his honor and his social "place", and mistrusts foreigners.

Albernia has a reasonably strong navy and a competent army. They are somewhat hampered by a venal system of administration, which blocks impoverished but deserving officers from reaching positions of authority.

Albernia has possessions in the northern Harabian seas, where they often come into conflict with the Duncruighans. Albernia has a tentative alliance with Nantierre.



WELFLAND

A small republic perched uncomfortably between Nantierre, Albernia and the Tantic empire. The old King of Welfland, Reglemont the Unjust was deposed by a bloody revolution, and now resides in Nantierre. Reglemont seeks to overthrow the republic and reinstate his rulership, and to this end he has tied his interests to those of Nantierre.

Nantierre has been at war with republican Welfland for the past year, seeking to reinstate Reglemont. The Welflanders have proved surprisingly stubborn, and have successfully defended their dikes and hedges against the invading Nantierrese forces. Both Duncruigh and the Tantic empire have supported the republic with supplies, skilled personnel and volunteer troops. It seems likely that Welfland will become a cockpit for the continuing northern war.



Welfland is a small, waterlogged country which has a good trade network which extends up to the Harabian seas. Its sailors are skilled and its shipyards could produce large quantities of ships (although she has a small navy at present). The Welflandish armies are quite conventional, but have good morale in the defense of their homeland and republic.

The "typical" Welflander is talkative and generous, and has a ready sense of fair justice. The republican system has not ended the class distinctions between nobility, gentry and common folk, since each "social order" elects its own representative to the Welfland parliament.

THE TANTIC EMPIRE

The traditions of the ancient Tantic empire are still maintained by their latter day inheritors. The Tantic empire occupies the area once conquered and colonized by the original Tantic empire millennia ago. The modern Tantic empire can show a definite (if somewhat torturous) descent from the original empire. Although language, customs and day to day life match those of most other countries, the Tantic empire has numerous ancient traditions which reflect their ancient past.

The Tantic empire is composed of 12 separate Principalities and Grand Duchies: Parvek, Oriol, Nammergil, Kaylia, Liauren, Mordenburg, Undic, Berden-Vassmarl, Clement, Faudren, Reiss-Claren and Darion. Each of these tiny states is ruled by a hereditary house, and the ruler of each Principality/Grand Duchy sits on the Imperial Council. The empire itself is ruled by an Emperor, who is elected by the council from amongst its own members at the death of the old ruler.

The current emperor is Haudric the 18th, Emperor of Tantis and Grand Duke of Parvek. Haudric is an intelligent, calculating ruler who is wise in the ways of politics. His position was won after a long period of careful negotiation and secret conniving, culminating in his election as emperor and the execution of his sworn enemy, the Prince of Faudren. Faudren is now ruled by Haudric's first cousin, Prince Eremor.

Haudric has met with Firined of Duncruigh, and the two have cooperated together to prevent Nantierre from overwhelming the Welflandish republic.



THE TANTIC IMPERIUM

A land of tiny principalities and ancient traditions, Tantis has legendary roots extending back to ancient times. A haven of culture and science, Tantis is also a place of brooding forests, dark magics and haunted ruins.



RELIGION

With magic in such ready evidence, religion and superstition come naturally to the inhabitants of “Other Earth”.

The standard religion of the southern continent is Christianity. The story of Christ in other earth is identical to Christian mythology in our own world, except that the legends are fitted into southern continent geography. Christ was thus crucified by the Tantic empire rather than by Romans.

There is an organized church, with each nation having its own clerical hierarchy. In a tradition long established since the Christian faith was officially adopted by the Tantic empire, each nation sends its chief cleric to a yearly council at the imperial capital. Here the great men debate over points of doctrine and organize the affairs of the church. The church of “Other Earth” has never undergone a great split such as Europe suffered in the 16th century, and gnostic doctrines are tolerated as long as their beliefs are not too far removed from mainstream dogma.

The end result is a church which contains some elements of earthly Catholic ritual, but with a level of toleration, debate and variety which is closer to that of the early Christian church. There is no belief in “saints”, no inquisition and no blots on the clerical conscience such as the Albigenian crusade. The wars which are being fought all across the continent are the result of dynastic ambition, rather than a clash of religious dogma.

The inhabitants of the southern continent also believe in ghosts and spirits (many glens and waterfalls have their attendant sylph or nymph). These creatures really do exist, though they may or may not choose to manifest to mere mortals. They are easy to placate as long as proper respect for their place of residence is shown.

As a final note on religion, readers should bear in mind that most aspects of Hebrew/Christian mythology are present in “Other Earth”. Lucifer truly exists, as does a whole pantheon of Devils (the distinction between Devils and mere demons is that Devils are fallen angels, whereas demons are the embodiment of a living person’s dark under-mind). Trafficking with the Devil is the only heresy which automatically rings all of the Church’s alarm bells, and it is the only thing which will spark religiously inspired persecution.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Although LACE & STEEL is not a “puritan” environment, religious convictions still run strong with most of Mittelmarch’s inhabitants. The average person is fairly pious, and blasphemous oaths are considered shocking.

God aids the Godly. Therefore the general opinion is that if one maintains a pious attitude, one will gain the Lord’s favor and assistance. The state and military officialdoms make a great show of religious belief (administration and battle being areas where divine aid is not so much desirable as essential!) In the military, blaspheming and impiety are punished, and religious display is lavishly pursued.

After all - a soldier needs all the help he can get...



ECOLOGY

The southern continent of LACE & STEEL's "Other Earth" has a mild climate. Most areas experience warm summer days and occasional snowfall in winter. Length of year, day and season are the same as our own. "Other Earth" has one moon, mild tides, and clearly visible stellar constellations.

Plant life on the southern continent is similar to Europe or Northern America, with the notable addition of a wide variety of magical species. Remember that this is a fantasy environment, so indulge your imagination about local flora. Mandrake roots really do look like people, and scream when they are pulled up! All manner of weird and wonderful herbs can be found, and only a skilled naturalist or alchemist will know of more than a few.

The animal life is similar to that of Europe. As well as wolves, deer, wildcats and squirrels, a fair few magical species can be found living alongside their more mundane cousins. A few of the more important mundane and fantastic species are found below.

BASILISK

Small snakes with crested, beaked heads which exhale a poisonous vapor. These creatures are vermin, and can be very dangerous in an enclosed space. They are killed whenever found.



GRIFFIN

Airborne carnivores which inhabit high mountain regions. Griffins are about the size of a large dog or a small lion, and can be dangerous to small livestock or unattended children. They have a cruelly beaked head equipped with feline ears, and a sturdy body fitted out with a huge pair of feathered wings and a single pair of leonine feet. At the rear of the furry body is a long, feather tufted tail. Readers will note that these are not quite the griffins of earthly myth.



In combat a griffin has a maximum hand rating of 5, and fights in the manner described for wolves. If the combat goes against them, they will attempt to fly off as long as they have suffered no damage to their mid attack line (which indicates damage to a wing or the flight muscles).

MINI DRAG

A tiny relative to the dragon, mini drags are very small (10 cm body length) reptiles with 4 gauzy wings (much like a dragon fly). They are ferocious hunters of beetles, grubs, moths and flies, and will also eat berries and fruit. Mini drags are much prized as pets.



SHAMBLER SLOTH

Huge, gentle ground sloths with pale fur and violet eyes. Slow witted and amiable, sloths are herbivores which exist by eating foliage in forests. Their great, scythe shaped claws deter most predators.



ECOLOGY NOTE

LACE & STEEL is not intended to be a game where players are expected to encounter monsters all of the time. The beasts listed above are mostly there for background atmosphere, and should not form the standard opponents that a player character fights.

FIGHTING BEASTS AND MONSTERS

Beasties with horrible teethies can be dangerous opponents to an unarmed man, but are easy meat for an armed and alert intelligent creature. Combat with beasts is handled in the usual fashion, but animals cannot parry edged weapons (they may only dodge).

By way of compensation, most beasts will be strong. Due to their high Intuitions and Dexterities, most beasts will also have a new draw of 4. Claws, fangs and tusks will normally do damage equivalent to knives and daggers.



UNICORN

Beautiful horselike creatures with leonine tails, cloven hooves, a goat's beard and a long straight horn on their foreheads. These elusive creatures cannot be held prisoner against their wills, for they soon sicken and die, and are thus left free to roam as they please. It is bad luck to kill a unicorn.

Some unicorns have been known to adopt a person as a friend of their own free will, and they will allow that person to ride them like a horse or will fight to defend them. Gaining the friendship of a unicorn in this way is a sign of future greatness and good fortune.

Unicorns of "Other Earth" do not have any strange fixations about virgins, and might befriend just about anyone. The people that they befriend are usually "good" folk. The stats of a unicorn will be similar to those of a fast race horse.

During the full moon, unicorns bathe in secluded pools. A unicorn pool is a place of great mana. Water from a unicorn pool is said to prevent mortification in wounds, and has a purifying influence on the blood.

WARNETS

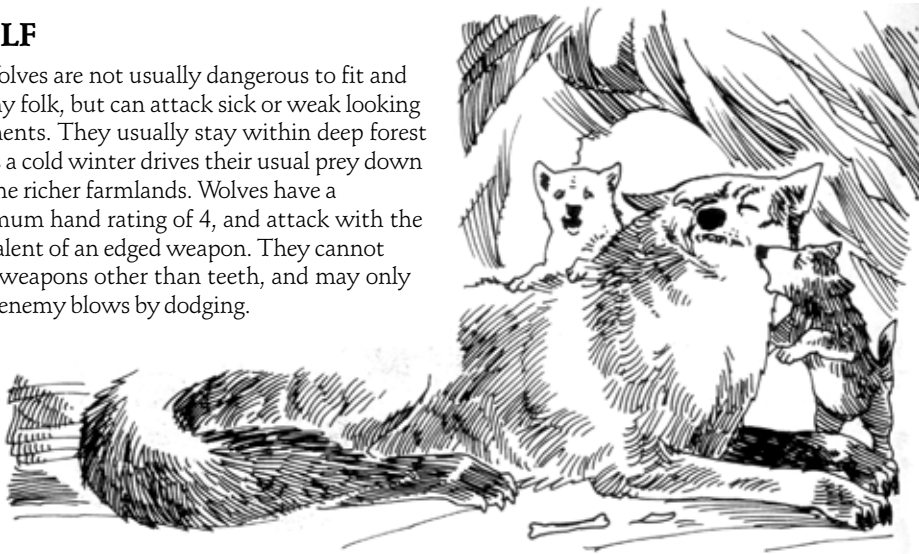
Large, energetic relatives of wasps and bees which grow up to 2 inches in body length. These creatures seem to be highly intelligent, and are no danger to people as long as people leave them alone. Instead, they seem to be constantly engaged in wars against their own kind, with alliances of nests clashing in ferocious battle far up in the trees. Warnets have been seen wielding thorns or strips of sticky web as weapons.



Some farmers have been known to strike up a kind of alliance with warnets which serves both parties well. By providing a nest of warnets with bowls of sugar water or honey and giving them access to over ripe fruit, the farmers gain a diligent set of wardens who chase off pests from their orchards.

WOLF

Wolves are not usually dangerous to fit and healthy folk, but can attack sick or weak looking opponents. They usually stay within deep forest unless a cold winter drives their usual prey down into the richer farmlands. Wolves have a maximum hand rating of 4, and attack with the equivalent of an edged weapon. They cannot parry weapons other than teeth, and may only avoid enemy blows by dodging.



THE KNOWN WORLD

The civilization of the southern continent is beginning a great age of colonization and exploration. Trading and exploring ships have discovered new lands to the north and west, and the sea lanes have become battlefields for the new maritime powers.

It is common knowledge on the southern continent that the world is round like a ball. Astrologers are also able to prove that the world revolves around the sun. The sun of “Other Earth” is held to be the center of the universe, and all the constellations parade around the sun and earth. There are substantial mathematical proofs of this theory.

Astral travelers have tried to cross the gulfs of space to the closest planets without success. The most famous of all astral travelers, the great sage Ugorio is said to have sent his awareness to the closest planet, Beora, but since his soul never returned to his body it is difficult to confirm or deny this claim.

THE NORTH EAST

The hot northeastern nations (collectively called Harabi after the most southern nation on the continent) have long been known to the mariners of the south, and nations such as Duncruigh and Welfland have always traded with the northerners for spice, silks and damasks. Harabian nations, on the other hand, value much southern produce such as fine guns, magical herbs, heavy horses and precision machinery. Harabian clothing tends to include loose baggy trousers, bright sashes and gowns, turbans and curl-toed boots.

Harabi is a collection of warring princely states. Their culture is very different from that of the south, including a very rigid division of noble ranks, and a slave class. Typical Harabian soldiers are matchlockmen, horse archers, carabineers and pikemen, often armored in intricate composite armors of brigantine and plate. The typical Harabian sword is a curved scimitar. Solid breastplates and articulated armor are not used by the inhabitants of the far east. Harabian states to the far north use armored war elephants in combat as platforms for musketeers and pikemen.

Harabian women often wear loose baggy trousers like their men, and get by with amounts of clothing which would raise a blush in cooler southern climes. Harabian males may legally have many wives, but the women may declare themselves legally “free” assuming the same social rights and duties as males (often serving as warriors and marrying multiple husbands).

Duncruigh and Welfland have permanent trading bases at several Harabian cities. Trade has proved profitable, despite the very long, arduous journey and the ravages of north sea pirates (Harabian corsairs). Several northern ports also act as bases for southern pirate ships or Albernian privateers.

THE WESTERN ISLES

The western isles are a recently discovered phenomena, and Duncruigh, Nantierre and Scarmis have all established small colonies there. The land is fertile, but inhabited only by scattered stone age savages ignorant even of basic farming and animal husbandry. No one has yet found much of a use for such land, since the massive distance between the western isles and Mittelmarch makes communication and support between colonies and their homelands very difficult. A recent gold strike in the Scaramian settled regions might make development more profitable.

It is possible that even more extensive lands lie further to the west. There are numerous hints of an ancient, vanished civilization in this region. Further evidence (and even greater discoveries) could yet lie to the west.

NOTE

The game's political environment is designed to give Referees inspiration for developing background to their adventure plots. Readers will note that there is plenty of scope for spying, assassination, piracy, exploration, colonization. There should be no need to feel that the game's background environment is constrictive or limited! Remember that this is a magical environment, and strange places lie awaiting discovery.





TECHNOLOGY

The technology used in the world of “Other Earth” is very similar to Europe of the 1640’s, with a few notable exceptions. The tolerance of “Other Earth’s” Christian church has been a great bonus to the establishment of clear thinking and experimentation, and the proliferation of magic has had a pronounced effect on the state of many technologies (such as medicine).

The southern continent has recently emerged from a period of medieval technology. The relics of this period are readily noticeable. Castles dot the land in various stages of repair (the inhabited castles have usually been reworked into country houses or surrounded by star fortifications). Many bridges and roads are relics of the Tantic empire, which are still in good use after more than a thousand years.

In general, technology is quite well advanced. Watermills and windmills provide power for grain mills, powder mills, automatic hammers etc., as well as the drawing of water. Clocks and watches are made by skilled artisans, and optical instruments are reasonably common amongst those who can afford them.

WARFARE

The advent of gunpowder has seen a revolution in warfare, with infantry firepower replacing cavalry shock action as the major factor in any battle. The development of firepower tactics and the need to quickly maneuver large formations of troops has lead to the formation of well drilled, disciplined units of foot and horse. Regiments of troops tend to be raised at the state’s expense, although some units are raised and equipped by entrepreneurs.

CAVALRY (THE “HORSE”)

Cavalry tactics combine firepower and shock to take advantage of the horseman’s mobility. Charges are performed at the gallop, sword in hand. Pistols are fired at point blank range within the melee, and are also used in the pursuit and to crack an infantry line before a charge. Skirmishing cavalry use carbines to harass their enemy. Lances are now only rarely used in battle, since the training of lancers is both lengthy and expensive.

The heaviest cavalry are the cuirassiers who wear Three Quarter Armor and ride extremely large, robust horses. Lighter armed troops with breast plates and buff coats are more common due to their higher mobility and the cheaper cost of their mounts. Another popular branch of the “horse” are dragoons, infantry mounted on cheap horses. These “rapid deployment” troops are proving more and more useful in the new age of maneuver and firepower.

In battle, cavalry are responsible for scouting, foraging, shock action and protecting the flanks of the more ponderous infantry. A charging horse can easily cross the entire range of a musket in less time than it takes to reload. Infantry must thus stay in or near formed bodies to avoid being overrun.



BATTLE

With warfare raging in Welfland, and a larger conflict threatening to break out at any moment, battle, siege and sea fight could all sweep player characters up into their cold embrace.

If player characters are caught up in battle, the battle field environment must be well presented to the players if the fear and excitement are to be properly captured. The descriptions on page 114 might be useful in establishing a feel of drama. When combined with hair raising action, this should provide players with enough excitement to last them for a little while at least!





Warfare in Mittelmarch is a science. The techniques of deployment, discipline, leadership and tactics are firmly based upon ancient principles modified by recent innovation. Fighting styles are perfect given the tools currently in use. The "pike and shot" period is one of the most colorful - made all the more so in LACE & STEEL by the addition of magic and non human races.

Despite the lace and ribbons, the honor and ceremony, warfare is brutal. The weapons used at this period cause horrific wounds, and are used with ruthless efficiency.

Despite their curled hair and their silken clothes, the fops and dandies, courtiers and gentlemen are capable of astonishing feats of courage. It is a time when beauty and grace meld with ferocity and cruelty - a world of paradox.

INFANTRY (THE "FOOT")

Infantry is divided into two basic categories - pike and shot. Every infantry regiment consists of two bodies of shot and one of pike. Pike are armored close combat troops whose primary task is to protect the musketeers of their formation from cavalry. In combat they form up in deep, closely packed ranks, presenting a hedge of points to their enemy. The reach of their weapons is the surest protection against cavalry, and their superior equipment makes them more than a match for musketeers in close combat with other infantry. The typical pikeman wears a morion helmet and a breast & back. Tassets are often discarded in favor of a long skirted buff coat. Some pikemen also discard the helmet in favor of a comfortable hat. They are armed with a long pike and a sword.

Pikes are an important weapon, in that they encompass any infantry unit's shock troops. Musket volleys are used as a prelude to the pike assault - for it is the pikes who deliver the decisive blow.

The shot element of an infantry regiment is armed with match-lock muskets, and lacks protective body armor. Current practice amongst the most disciplined regiments is to fire by platoon volley, with each platoon firing in unison and reloading. Volley fire is a remarkable improvement over the earlier "countermarch fire", where each man fired and then retired to the rear to reload, and has replaced the clumsier system of salvo fire, where an entire regiment fired off its weapons all at once. The lack of bayonets makes the musketeers reliant upon their pike armed comrades for protection from cavalry.

Infantry formations are quite deep (usually 4 to 6 ranks for musketeers, and 6 to 12 ranks for pike). The danger of direct cavalry assault and infantry shock tactics makes deep formations such as this extremely important.

Skirmishing troops are occasionally used, and a skirmish line is often referred to as a "forlorn hope". Skirmishers screen the main formation of troops from harassment by enemy skirmishers, and line and occupy close terrain. They rarely operate more than a hundred paces away from their parent regiments, since cavalry can ride them down with great ease.

ARTILLERY

The artillery is not a particularly mobile arm, but still has great importance in battle as a support for the line of battle. Guns fire solid shot or canister, while specialized siege mortars lob explosive bombshells. Gunnery is a well defined science, and field pieces can be quite accurate in the hand of truly skilled crew.

Light "galloper guns" are a recent development - light guns mounted on mobile carriages and accompanied by mounted gunners. Galloper guns are capable of moving forward with fast moving columns and cavalry assaults. Their short range makes them very vulnerable to counter battery fire from heavier pieces.

SIEGE

Important trade centers, ports and communications nexi are protected by fortifications. Forts are very important in the scheme of warfare, and become important bargaining points in peace settlements. The construction of fortifications has moved from being an art to a science, and the most modern forts are remarkable examples of engineering. Called star forts, these fortifications utilize systems of sloped angular walls to reduce the effects of enemy siege guns. The strength of those star forts makes a siege no easy business, and a small holding force can tie down a large besieging force for months, giving their attackers a severe mauling into the bargain.

Field fortifications are a common means by which outnumbered forces may augment their defenses. Lines of trenches and earthen ramparts will be thrown up, with gun batteries carefully protected by gabions (wicker baskets filled with earth). Many energetic commanders refuse to use field fortifications, since they tie the army to one spot, limiting tactical options.

Small earthwork forts called sconces will often be set up during a campaign to command a road, river or town. These will often house only 2 to 4 guns.

Besieging a fort is a matter of digging “parallels” - trenches and batteries which move ever closer to the fortress wall, allowing guns to be brought into ever lessening range of the walls. The task of sappers is made dangerous due to enemy mortars, gunfire and sniping, and leading sappers will often wear siege armor consisting of a close helm, proofed breastplate and tassets.

When a breach finally occurs, assault troops will storm forward under the cover of a mortar barrage, hurling grenades and dashing into the fortress. Many forts will surrender before the final assault.

NAVAL WARFARE

Ships have become floating gun platforms, and the broadside reigns supreme. Ships maneuver back and forth, each trying to steal upwind of her opponent, cross behind her and rake her stern. In battle, formations of ponderous ships of the line will be flanked and preceded by lighter scouting vessels. The use of these scouts greatly extends the search radius of a fleet, and increases the chance of snatching the wind gauge from the enemy.

NON HUMAN RACES ON THE BATTLEFIELD

All armies contain a substantial proportion of nonhuman troops. Though Half-Horses are the best represented, contingents of other less numerous races can usually be found in most musters. The capabilities of these peoples give warfare on “Other Earth” a very different flavor to that of 17th century Europe.

HALF-HORSES

Half-Horses are the most numerous nonhuman race in civilized lands, and have much of humanity’s martial temperament. Half-Horses take to the field as a type of cavalry/infantry hybrid, being faster afoot than human infantry but too lightly built to take on true cavalry on even odds. They will usually act as carabineers, cooperating closely with human troops.

Half-Horses also commonly form the crews of mobile “galloper guns”. Though few four-leggers choose the seafaring life, those who end up at sea are usually gunners and marines.

HARPIES

Harpies are often hired as scouts and skirmishers by other races (whenever they can be coaxed away from their interminable feuds). Harpies perform valuable service as airborne scouts, and are often sent forward to occupy valuable terrain (such as bridges etc.). They excel in raids and sorties.

When flying, Harpies usually use grenades for air to ground attack, dropping bombshells from on high. Harpies will usually carry carbines for use once they have grounded (muskets are too long to be carried slung).

A few ships carry a Harpy or two within their crew which are used for scouting or messenger duties at sea.

SATYRS

Satyrs rarely form homogeneous regiments, but usually band together into companies of musketeers which then attach themselves to human units (they make terrible pikemen or artillerymen due to their small size).

PIXIES

Pixies are masterful skirmishers who often fight as mounted infantry, riding into their area of operations on their little ponies and then dismounting. They excel at fighting in woodlands and even in urban areas due to their ability to flit up to rooftop level with great ease. They are also accomplished hamstringers of horses!

The nonhuman races are every bit as warlike as humanity, being subject to much the same passions and ambitions. Nonhumans are often not capable of the same level of systematic cruelty as humans, but are often subjected to swift rages and seasonal foul tempers.



Pixies will usually only fight in defense of their homes. They are notoriously disinterested in joining in organized military ventures, though they are often persuaded to do so in order to indirectly defend their own territory.

OTHER HALFLINGS

Other halflings will sometimes appear in battle, often as part of a human infantry regiment or a wizard's retinue.

BATTLEFIELD MAGIC

Magic is very much a part of warfare. No infantry regiment is complete without a regimental sorcerer, nor will a warship feel safe without a mage. In combat, these men rain down destruction with the efficiency of a squad of musketeers. In addition, they perform valuable ancillary services as doctors, scouts and advisors. Assassination at the hands (tentacles?) of a Demon is a very real fear for a battle commander, and astral travel and scrying are commonly used to scout out the enemy forces. Any command staff will always include a number of mages of varying talents.

Sorcerers are of limited utility during the mobile phase of a land battle, but come into their own once their unit has come to grips. Most sorcerers will combat their opposite number first before turning their attention to the rank and file. Sorcerers will be kept safely within the ranks of their unit to protect them from snipers and gunfire until they are able to properly use their powers.



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

Most nations of Mittelmarch all use a language which is based on the tongue of the ancient Tantic empire. Through the centuries, the Tantic language has been modified and corrupted into regional dialects. Each nation now has a set dialect and accent which makes its citizen's speech almost incomprehensible to the foreigner.

The "corrupt" or modern Tantic language is used in the nations of Duncruigh, the Tantic empire, Scarmis and Forija. The common root of these dialects means that folk from different regions can understand one another if they speak slowly and clearly.

Modern Tantic normally has a grammatical structure similar to English. The basic "Auld Tantic" root language uses sounds similar to English or German, but each nation modifies this with its own pronunciations and with words borrowed from the region's original native languages.

The second language used in Mittelmarch is the Alamarian language, derived from the tongue used by the ancient barbarian tribes which defied the might of the Tantic empire. Alamarian is spoken in Nantierre and Albernia (once again with great differences in regional dialect). In sound and grammatical structure Alamarian is similar to French or Spanish.

MUSIC

Music and song are highly developed arts in the lands of Mittelmarch. Song is used as a vehicle for extremely clever poetical lyrics, and satirical political themes are common. A skilled musician can take a simple fisherman's tune and endow it with clever depths of meaning, modulating and improvising on the basic tune to produce an extraordinary work of art.

The folk of Mittelmarch are very musically literate. Any fair will be brightened by wandering minstrels and song sellers. Traveling bands of musicians acquire reputations, and their performances are anticipated with interest and greatly discussed. Taverns will book musicians weeks in advance and advertise their performances.

INSTRUMENTS

Common instruments include the following

Bagpipes
Drum
Fiddle
Harp
Harpsichord
Horn
Lute
Organ
Recorder
Reed horn
Trumpet
Viol



Languages that might appear in a campaign are as follows:

Tantic (the tongue of Duncruigh, Welfland, Tantis, Forija and Scarmis)

Auld Tantic (The "Classical" language of Mittelmarch)

Alamarian (The tongue of Nantierre and Albernia)

Harabian (The language spoken by the distant nations of the north east)

Regional dialects are common, and can almost be languages in themselves. The thick brogue spoken on the Isles of Aurey is nearly incomprehensible to a Forijan Nomad.



PATRONAGE AND DEFERENCE

The social pyramid is held together by a complex web of patronage and deference. The lower orders defer to their social superiors, and in return receive protection and support. All social classes have duties and obligations extending above and below themselves on the social ladder.

RACIAL HARMONY

LACE & STEEL presents the reader with an unusual society - a society in which a number of different races cooperate easily together.

Any given nation will have a population composed of Humans and Half-Horses, with a lesser amount of Satyrs. Pixies and Harpies will exist in separate communities within the national boundaries, paying taxes and trading with their neighbors while maintaining some degree of isolation.

The overall result is a society where races work together in reasonable harmony. Every species has its own particular talents and weaknesses - by working together, each individual species becomes part of a stronger overall community.

DAILY LIFE

Day to day life in LACE & STEEL is very similar to that of 17th century Europe - only cleaner. The proliferation of magic has lead to a lack of disease and plague, and the easy attitude of the Church towards differences of religious opinion encourages tolerance and rationality - both things that 17th century Europe could have done with. It is an elegant period, where style and grace are supreme virtues, and where courage and innovation flourish.

LACE & STEEL has been designed to be a fantastic, swashbuckling environment, and so it has its fair share of injustice and bad guys. People being what they are, the ruthless ambition of rulers, the scheming of nobles and the violent battles of the underworld will provide quite enough conflict without the added "spice" of religious persecution.

THE STATE

The southern continent is currently in an age of absolutism, with most nations being governed by an all powerful monarch who works without the restraint of a parliament or constitution (notable exceptions being Duncruigh, which has just established a formal bill of rights, and the republic of Welfland, which is ruled by democratic process). Monarchs are seen as powerful repositories of mana, and extraordinary events and abilities must therefore be generated.

Despite the power of the monarch, most nations have a set of powerful noble families who wield enormous influence and power. These families often control the ministerial and advisory positions, holding the keys to national power. Many of these great houses are absolute overlords of their own lands, controlling their own troops and levying their own taxes. These families spend huge amounts of effort intriguing against each other in a never-ending effort to become the power behind the throne (note that the King of Duncruigh has ousted the great noble families from holding major positions, awarding them instead to talented commoners who owe their positions to royal favor. This has gained him enemies, but increased the monarch's power).

SOCIETY

The society of LACE & STEEL is divided into three main social orders - the nobility, the middle classes and the "lower orders".

The nobility is divided into titled nobility and gentry (folk accorded status and privilege but lacking titles). The noble orders perform all the direction and control of the society, providing army officers, patrons of trade and commerce, scholars and high ranking civil servants. Despite this, many nobles are comparatively poor, and must support themselves through careers in the military or with the navy.

The middle classes are a rising power, and the new age of exploration, trade and colonization holds the seeds of their greatness. Society has now entered an age where the strong or the imaginative can make their own fortune, and it is the middle classes with their education and entrepreneurial adventurism which benefit most readily.

The lower orders are divided into freemen and indentured sub-classes. A freeman owes service to no one, and may come and go as he pleases. These form the bulk of the laboring classes. Indentured men are effectively serfs, who are placed in debt to another person for the value of their indenture. Indentured individuals must work for the holder of their indenture until they have paid off their debt. Folk fall into indenture through debt, or as punishment for misdemeanors.

MODES OF ADDRESS

As shown in the section on language, there are a variety of different modes of address. The term "Force" is used as a very formal address for monarchs and mages, referring to the erudition and power embodied in such folk. "Anome" is used when formally addressing magistrates. The

term “Dignity” is a more polite term than a mere “Sir”, and has its uses when dealing formally with higher orders.

Visible respect is paid to persons of higher social rank by doffing the hat. Soldiers who wear helmets will simply tug at the forepeak rather than removing the whole helmet. Women will curtsy.

HONOR

The concept of honorable or gentlemanly conduct runs strongly through the society of the southern continent. Generosity towards enemies, the keeping of the verbal word and courtesy towards women are all valued, and contribute towards a gentleman's reputation. Honor also includes proper piety towards local spirits, and the protection of guests. Likewise, guests are expected to aid and assist their host.

“Honor” also has its dark side, of course. Vendettas and duels are the inevitable result of any formalized celebration of pride.

Duels are the means by which nobles and gentlemen decide matters of honor. Duels are always fought with swords (pistol duels have not yet developed, and are a damned silly idea in any case). A duel is usually fought only until one combatant is wounded. A doctor is at hand to deal with any injuries which result. According to the dueling code, if two men fight a duel, then their argument is ended, and they may meet in public with no stigmata attached.

Another aspect of the honor system is ransom. Captive gentlemen and nobles are seldom imprisoned when taken as prisoners of war, but are instead usually ransomed back to their own side (usually for about the equivalent of a years pay). The payment of a ransom depends entirely on the resources of the prisoner - if the prisoner cannot pay, then he remains a prisoner!



ON BEING A GENTLEMAN

Many low born player characters will show an interest in aping their betters. Be warned: dressing a sparrow in peacock's plumes does not make it a peacock. Manners, accent and attitudes all mark a gentleman from a low born imitation.

Sadly, it is virtually impossible for a low born commoner to ever truly become a gentleman. Money, titles and careful training might never make the character accepted by his peers as one of themselves. Wealthy, titled ex-bourgeoisie may well club together for mutual support and society.

THE “BRAVE FIGURE”

The Albernian gentry and nobility have a very different concept of honor to that of their neighbors. Lying, cheating, assassination - the Albernian male nobility do not blanch at any act if it preserves their “brave figure”.

Albernians will break oaths without compunction, cheat, lie and deceive without a thought - and take little offense at such acts being directed towards themselves. What must be preserved at all cost is the facade of virility and manliness. To laugh at an Albernian is to earn a mortal enemy - an enemy whose honor will be satisfied the moment his hired assassin reports that his commission is completed.



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Legal punishment in LACE & STEEL can be savage. Murder, treason and mutiny are all repaid with the noose or the axe, and serious misdemeanor will earn flogging. Very minor crimes can be punished by humiliation, where the miscreant is forced to stand in the market place crying out his crime to all who pass.

There are few prisons in LACE & STEEL due to the system of indenture. Rather than lose valuable labor by having it rot in a cell, prisoners will be indentured (virtually sold into slavery). The worse the crime, the worse place the indentured prisoner will be sent to. Thieves and thugs will find themselves working an oar in a galley (hey, how could we have a swashbuckling game without slave galleys?). Less heinous offenders will find themselves building roads or digging peat. An indenture lasts until the value of the miscreant's debt is paid off.

CLEANLINESS

LACE & STEEL is a physically cleaner environment than 17th and 18th century earth. There is a germ theory of disease, which leads to clean streets, well-tended wounds and good food preparation practices.

MORALS

Morals are reasonably "fluid" at present. It is not a "puritan" age, and dalliance, wild times and general flirtation are much in evidence. Marriage is an honorable institution, so beware enraged husbands....

All other considerations aside, remember that honor is the measure of a gentleman. There is a fine line between being a rogue and being a cad and a bounder. A true gentleman would never trifle with the affections of a sincere lady.

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

The monarchical system of government in most nations of Mittelmarch will confine politics to the royal court. Political factions will vie for the ear of the monarch, maneuvering for positions of influence and power.

Duncruigh and Welfland both have parliaments. This allows more common folk the opportunity to delve into the mire of party politics.

LEVELING

A recent development on the political scene are the "levelers". Levelers believe that God intended men to be equal, and that it is a crime before God that some men live in luxury while others live in poverty and squalor. Levelers believe that the man-made distinctions between social classes should be cast down, and that wealth should be distributed evenly. Men should live together in a state of mutual support and aid, each helping his brother.

To most people, levelers are dangerous crackpots and fanatics. To some of the more inventive and rebellious poor, leveling seems a dream that is worth dying for.

Levelers identify themselves by wearing a green ribbon about their hat or sleeve.

THE LUNATIC FRINGE

There are a large number of lunatic sects who can often be seen in market places (usually either preaching at the crowds or clapped in the pillories!) Some of these groups are very odd fish indeed. A major group are the "Diggers", who occupy common lands and plant crops, attempting to establish self sufficient communes. Diggers are usually run off their settlements as soon as they become established, since the local villagers need their common lands for grazing their flocks!

COURTLY LIFE

Most wealthy nobles will bring themselves and their families to their nation's capital city for much of the year, where they will maintain themselves in expensive "town houses". The reason for this expense and bother is simple - the royal court.

For nobles, the day to day life in the capital city is exciting and rewarding, filled with an endless pageant of parties, balls, soirees and gatherings. Evenings will be spent at musical performances, and the daytime will be spent in hunting, sports, business deals or at the royal residence paying court to the monarch.

This expensive round of events is very necessary to the establishment of position and reputation. Where a character goes, who he accompanies and what they do communicates their political affiliations, their plans and their weaknesses to a huge number of careful watchers. By attending the balls and enduring the parties, the ambitious can gain allies and patrons, gain valuable information and increase their chances of acquiring appointments and positions. The trivial language of repartee is used to slander opponents - and in an environment where rumor can quickly become established as fact, this is a valuable weapon and defense.

Characters who enter into the courtly round can be kept royally entertained. Their attendance at affairs will be the ground on which they establish their allies and enemies, and where they will engage in the world of back-room politics. They must avoid the perils of gambling, dueling and espionage, while maintaining their reputations and images.

Most gamers traditionally avoid playing within the "courtly" environment since they feel that it presents little challenge. Referees should examine the rich and varied possibilities of romance, espionage and intrigue that it offers. Here is the environment where coups are launched, devious political deals are hatched, and the leaders of important missions are chosen. A well set out courtly environment will consist of a stock of NPCs, each with their own aims and goals - which is surprisingly easy to set up. It makes an excellent background to adventures.

In *Lace & Steel*, the court is actually an adventure environment! The ballrooms, gaming tables and drawing rooms can offer as much challenge as the battlefield - plot and intrigue, duels and assassins can make courtly life every bit as dangerous! But for those who tire of violent roleplaying, the courtly round gives the opportunity for conflict and problem solving without relying upon bloodshed to provide excitement.





TOWN LIFE

The towns are the center of fashionable social life, of learning, and of technical crafts and trade. Towns have large populations, and thus most have a garrison of soldiers which are used in the capacity of police to keep law and order in the streets. Many towns will be fortified.

Life within a town can be fast moving and exciting. Humans and Half-Horses live together in very close circumstances, mingling freely throughout the town. The coffee shops and chocolate houses are common meeting points for the gentry and middle classes, and these become dens of gossip and political debate. More deals are closed or opinions formed in these places than in the market place or counting house, and characters will find that their reputations amongst the regulars of such places can be very important indeed. Here is the place to meet merchants and lawyers, gentry and entrepreneurs - the prime movers of many adventures (e.g. the guy who will hire characters to perform a task).

At the lower end of the social scale are ale houses and taverns which are the social gathering places of the lower orders. Here is the place where good food and jolly company can be had, stolen goods "fenced" and desperados hired. It will be a common haunt for player characters who seek employment.

If player characters develop a constant haunt, then the Referee should flesh it out with a proprietor, the proprietor's daughter, serving wenches, regular customers etc. to allow the characters a chance to gain valuable acquaintances and contacts. Non-player characters are a major source of background atmosphere and resources.

All towns have a market at least once a week, and this is a good place to pick up bargains, hire laborers, swap gossip and hear the news read out. Political leaflets, scurrilous songs, traveling performers and recruiting parties for the army and navy all add to the color and atmosphere. A lively presentation of a town market can provide a fun background for characters seeking to buy equipment or getting to into a new town.

THIEVERY

Most towns have an active "underworld" which consists of thieves, bullies and assassins. Certain taverns will be the secret haunt of such folk, and it is here that murders and robberies can be arranged - if you can gain admittance. There are no formalized "thieve's guilds", but sometimes there will be thieves brotherhoods whose members agree not to work against each other, and who collaborate together from time to time.

The underworld is a complex and frightening world which may become important to characters who cast themselves as thieves. It will be vital in such cases to establish a proper underworld for the character to interact with. Just like a courtly environment, the Referee must establish a list of NPCs - thieves, thugs, assassins, buyers of stolen goods and providers of forbidden materials - even sorcerers and alchemists who specialize in providing potions and spells to those who pay their price. All of these characters should be given dispositions, aims and goals, which will rapidly bring the whole scene to life. The fun that this adds to a campaign is certainly worth the evening's work that it will take to set up!

RURAL LIFE

Much of the wealth of a country comes from its rural regions, with their farms and stables. Rural characters will usually hail from a small community which gains its wealth from farming, animal husbandry and related industries.

Rural communities are invariably composed mostly of a single race. The communities of different races are always close by each other, and most farms will have both human and Half-Horse workers. A Half-Horse village will often use the local human blacksmith (who are rumored to be better than Half-Horse smiths), or a human farmer will hire a number of sturdy Half-Horses for performing heavy work. There is constant travel between the various communities as farmers and traders hawk their wares, or perform social visits.

A typical rural community will have a number of influential citizens (the more responsible or well-to-do locals) who take on the task of local administration through elected counselors. Markets and community meetings provide the platform for discourse and public opinion. A rural community relies upon its members supporting one another. Rich or poor, all will come together for harvest ceremonies, marriages and markets, binding their community together.

Any community of this kind will have its fair share of "odd characters" and "bad apples", which makes each settlement unique. This can provide rich background for adventure scenarios.



TOWN ENCOUNTERS (2D6)

- | | |
|-----|---------------------|
| 2 | Recruiting Party |
| 3 | Mountebank* |
| 4 | Thief or Prostitute |
| 5 | Street Vendor |
| 6 | Political Agitators |
| 7-8 | Common Citizen |
| 9 | Soldiers** |
| 10 | Travelers |
| 11 | Merchant |
| 12 | Nobility or Gentry |

RURAL ENCOUNTERS

- | | |
|-----|----------------------|
| 2 | Recruiting Party |
| 3 | Soldiers** |
| 4 | Village idiot |
| 5 | Thugs |
| 6 | Laborers |
| 7-8 | Farmer/farmer's wife |
| 9 | Well-to-do farmer |
| 10 | Travelers |
| 11 | Wealthy traveler |
| 12 | Mayor |

*e.g. a charlatan/confidence trickster of some kind

** There is a 1 in 6 chance that the soldiers will be conducting a search of some kind - e.g. fugitives, contraband etc.



MILITARY LIFE

Regiments of troops are usually stationed in the area in which they were raised, so that the officers and soldiers will participate in the same evening life as their civilian counterparts (courtly functions, taverns etc.).

The advent of massive state-recruited armies and the collapse of the feudal military system has ended the strict social stratification of the various arms of service. The cavalry is no longer filled only with nobility and gentry, but recruits its men from commoners and trains them to ride from scratch (although most recruits will be country lads who are already familiar with horses). Infantry regiments contain their fair share of upper classes. The pike is seen as a more honorable weapon than the musket (due to its primary role as a decisive shock weapon), and is thus a more popular arm of the infantry amongst the well to do. Artillerymen are now professional regular soldiers, usually with secure jobs even in peacetime.

There are few ranks in the military. Private soldiers are kept in line by corporals and sergeants, and sergeants are rated in seniority depending upon years of service. Officers consist of ensigns (or "cornets" in the cavalry), lieutenants, captains, lieutenant colonels and colonels. Generals are rated for the size of their command (e.g. a brigade general or an army commander).

Military posturing lacks much of the "slap and bang" of the modern world. The "attention" position keeps the left hand on the hip, and salutes are replaced by the removal of the hat. Odd ceremonies include the parading of the colors, where the ensigns dance and toss and twirl their banners during a parade, and captured colors are marched before the regiment held upside down by their captors. Tipple horns and drums make martial music quite gay and pretty, and military spectacle is thus very colorful and elegant.

Common soldiers are recruited by specialized recruiting parties which scour the markets, fairs and taverns for good material. A recruiting sergeant is a master of persuasion and oratory, who attracts his custom through charisma, story telling and charm. He will be assisted by "plain-clothed" helpers who can circulate amongst the crowd to encourage the dubious, and to be the leaders in any sudden drive to sign up. A good recruiting party is a finely tuned act, and master performers can reap in a rich reward (recruiting parties are paid a bounty for each man they enlist). See if player characters are dumb enough to sign up...

IN BATTLE

The infantry's line of battle is a terrifying place - an assembly of nightmarish images. The clockwork crash of platoon volleys, choking smoke shot through with flashes of fire and the screams of the wounded. Bullets buzz through the smoke, twitching eddies through the fog and thudding into earth or flesh. Sergeants walking up and down the line steadying the troops, hauling the sobbing wounded back out of the line of fire and passing dead men's muskets to men with jammed weapons. The shouts of the officers calling the rhythm of fire. Grim pikemen await the moment to scream down upon the enemy, sheltering behind the musketeers until needed.



For the cavalry, battle can be the surge and speed of a good horse under you, bright steel in your hand and banners whipping in the breeze, and the crack of your pistol as you fire into your enemy's teeth - a time when a man feels larger than life and more alive than he has ever been. On the other hand, it can also be a whirling nightmare of sword clash and pistol shot, the scream of wounded horses and piked riders.

War ain't fun, but the proper presentation of the battlefield environment can be invaluable. If you are interested in playing large battles, I would suggest using a good set of figure rules for the English civil war period (such as "Tertio"). Homemade counters can be substituted for figurines if you lack the funds for miniatures (try using the rules modifications for 5mm scale, which give a better sense of spectacle and grand tactics than those used for 15 and 25mm). Magic can be simulated by treating mages as short ranged ultralight guns, and allowing them to affect the morale of enemy units. Individual unit leaders can be created as NPCs, and their dispositions and charisma will have a definite effect on unit morale and tactical decisions. Battles fought in this way can be a valuable addition to campaign backgrounds.

Skirmish campaigns are also a possibility (especially if integrated with role play). Use the massed combat rules to simulate conflicts. These games can be played with figurines, since each player would only be required to collect a couple of dozen models. Model figures for LACE & STEEL will be forthcoming, so figures of nonhuman races in 17th century dress should be no problems.

THE SEAMAN'S LIFE

Life on a cramped, creaking square-rigger can be very uncomfortable, although the environment is cleaner and the food is better than the ships of our own 17th & 18th century. The ship's mage ensures that food is kept fresh, wounds are properly tended and that water is clean. In times of emergency, the navy often has recourse to press gangs, who snatch unwary folk off the streets and tumble them aboard ship. Discipline is not readily enforced with the lash, but the threat of corporal punishment exists, and insolence, theft or cowardice will gain a sailor a flogging. Pirates and mutineers will dangle from a yard arm with little ceremony. The lower deck takes care of its own - sailors who steal from their fellows or who get too fond of their knives can end up falling overboard....

Day to day life aboard a warship is an endless round of gun drill and sail drill. Experienced hands instruct novices ("Landsmen") in their duties. Cutlass drill, splicing broken ropes and stitching torn sails take up much of the daily watch. The ship's officers oversee the operations in the rigging, while the sailing master directs the set of the helm and sails to his satisfaction. The Captain rules the ship as a distant lord and master, directing his underlings through the ship's chain of command. Relaxation is a tot of rum, a yarn with your mates and tapping your foot to the tunes of the ship's fiddler.

A ship is an enclosed community. Characters on shipboard will need to know their watchmates and officers as a vital part of their environment.



NAUTICAL PROBLEMS

Campaigns set aboard a ship will provide players with a host of problems to solve and adventures to undertake. Some ideas for adventures and outings might include the following:

Watering Party: The player characters must land via boat in hostile territory to seek fresh water for their ship.

Storms: Skill rolls will be required to preserve life and limb against the onslaught of mother nature.

Mutiny: Troublemakers below decks start to split the crew.

Crime: A crime is committed, and the wrong man is punished! The player characters must find the true culprit before it's too late!

Difficult Passengers: Diplomats, nobles or important merchants, ladies and their maids can all sometimes be found as shipboard passengers. Their petulant needs and readiness to take offence, or conversely the need to protect them from the rest of the crew can all add to the fun of the voyage.

Fever: A disgusting disease grips the ship, and one by one the crew succumbs. In LACE & STEEL, this could become even more deadly. What if the awful nightmare of one fever victim should begin to take form as a demon and stalk the ship?



BATTLE

In battle, a ship is stripped for action by ripping down the screens which divide the lower decks up into separate areas, and all goods and furniture are taken below the waterline or lashed down out of the way. Sand is spread across the decks for good traction, and cutlasses and pikes are placed in racks for handy reach. Nets are spread above the upper deck guns to prevent falling rigging from striking the gun crews. When the command is given, the gunports are opened, and the great guns are run out ready for action. Gunners plug their ears with cotton and tie their scarves about their heads in readiness for the noise of the guns, and most crew will strip to the waist. All lamps and fires are doused. The ship's boats are removed from the deck and placed in tow, to be cast adrift immediately before contact.

Once action begins, the great guns dominate the scene with their deafening crash and choking smoke, making the hull leap and shudder with the force of their recoil. Enemy cannon balls plough through the hull, shattering cannon and pulping crew, sending up lethal splinters of wood which scythe through the air like darts. The gun crews cheer crazily as they fire and load, as if sheer enthusiasm will give more power to their shots. Musket balls drive into the deck as enemy sharpshooters fire on the ship's officers, and chain shot howls overhead, ripping into the rigging and canvas. Blood runs into the scuppers with a nightmarish slowness, as petty officers drag the wounded away from the violently recoiling guns.

When ships come close enough to board, the hulls meet with a grinding crash and the soldiers and sailors on both decks surge to the nets. Pistol shots and the clash of steel on steel turn the decks into whirling confusion. Swivel guns blaze from the tops, blasting fantastic gory swathes through the struggling figures below. Meanwhile, below decks the gun crews thrust pikes and fire pistols through the gunports at their opposite numbers. The action ends only when one or the other ship is captured as a prize, or when the exhausted crews stagger apart of their own accord.

The battle ends when a ship strikes its colors in surrender, or when she goes to the bottom. Captured ships are sold in auction, with half of the resulting money going to the capturing ships Captain and crew.

THE MAGICIAN'S LIFE

Magic is learned through apprenticeship to a capable teacher, and the student's attitudes to his craft will be heavily influenced by his or her teacher. The kindly old hedge wizard will teach different spells and different attitudes than those passed down from a sinister demonologist.

Those few individuals talented enough to acquire skills at magic will find their abilities much in demand. The underworld, the military and wealthy nobles can all find use for mages. Magicians can also find healthy practices as apothecaries and medics.

Mages need to be constantly aware of their fellow practitioners, and spend most of their time intriguing against one another. Mages will often form loosely knit societies in which they will meet and discuss their affairs, sometimes establishing rules of conduct for their members. This does not stop them from constantly seeking to gain advantage over each other (quite the opposite in fact!). Characters who become magicians will want to know details of their competitors and potential allies and enemies, so Referees should be prepared to create appropriate NPCs.

Playing a mage can be a lot of fun. Magicians should be encouraged to create bizarre residences, to seek out rare objects and to consult/spy on their fellow practitioners. Magicians will often need to go on far-roaming adventures to seek new experience and materials. Likewise a mage might find himself demonically transported to far shores by an enemy, or at the receiving end of a terror campaign or assassination attempt. Since mages have special powers, they tend to attract special attention.

MONEY

LACE & STEEL's money is divided into Gold Marks, Silver Pieces and Copper Groats. The exchange rates are as follows

12 Copper Groats = 1 Silver piece (called a schilling).

12 Silver pieces = 1 Gold Mark.

The smallest coins are half and quarter groats, which are quite literally made by cutting a groat into segments.

SIMULATING COINS

The author has found that a new dimension is added to game play when a player character's funds are simulated by solid objects. One or two cent pieces can simulate copper groats, and heavy washers make good silver and gold pieces. Washers or disks can be had from any hardware store. Go for big washers (20 to 25mm is good) with small central holes, such as muffler washers. Brass washers are used for gold marks, and steel washers for silver schillings.

"Real" money is excellent fun to use, and players soon develop odd habits such as fondling their money or stacking it into neat little piles. Parting with money can be a traumatic experience for miserly players, since they are handing over a physical object rather than just crossing a number off a piece of paper. Players will also tend to keep a less ready tag on their wealth, which adds a bit of spice to play.



A character's stock of coins should be kept in bags or envelopes for easy transport (and to discourage players from counting their funds too often), and at the end of a sessions play all such bags will be kept by the Referee and stored with the player's character sheets.

STARTING FUNDS

Wealthy nobles start the game with 1D100 gold Marks.

Poor nobles and gentlemen receive initial funds equal to 4D10 gold Marks.

Middle class characters initially receive 1D20 gold Marks.

Lower class characters start the game with 2D20 silver Pieces.

Wealthy nobles and wealthy gentlefolk have a chance of receiving a monthly allowance from their families or estates. Roll 1D6. On a score of 4, 5 or 6, the character has a monthly allowance of 1D10 Marks.

Although the upper classes start the game with more money than those from the "lower orders", they will be expected to spend more. Gentlemen and nobles will have to purchase fine horses, good blades, elaborate clothes and eat fine food if they expect to maintain their Self Image and the respect of their fellows.

BANKS, WRITS AND BANKNOTES

Although there is no "paper money" in LACE & STEEL, there is a system of promissory notes similar to the modern "check". Since individuals who have enough wealth to matter always keep their money in a bank, they are also able to issue notes that are redeemable from their account at their bank. Promissory notes are also useful for signing away estates and sisters, etc. when gambling!

Metal coins are minted at central state mints to set specifications. However, cities under siege sometimes mint their own coin from bar stock, and major towns are sometimes allowed to mint coins in times of emergency. In the end, it is the weight of the coin that is important, and not whose head is stamped on the back!

WAGES

These are the pay rates for various jobs that player characters might commonly be expected to hold. Hirelings are not expected to provide their own equipment. If they do, then the employer would normally enter into an agreement to reimburse his employee for any equipment losses.

Type of job	Weekly wages
Infantryman	2 silvers
Cavalryman	5 silvers
Dragoon	3 silvers
Sergeant	+ 1 silver
Skilled labor	3 silvers
Common labor	1 silver

OFFICERS

Colonel	2 Marks
Captain	1 Mark
Lieutenant	10 silvers
Ensign	8 silvers

COURT SINECURES

Lady in waiting	1 Mark
Minor functionary	1 Mark

These pay rates do not include food or drink, but do include lodging. The pay of palace guard troops would be double the rate listed above.

Check the sections on food, drink and entertainment to see how easily characters can make ends meet.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

All measurements have been given in metric form as a convenience to the reader. The proliferation of local measurements and special terms would otherwise have proved too confusing to the reader.

The standard distance measurement used throughout these rules is the pace, which represents a double pace (e.g. right foot forward, then left foot). This is a distance of about 1 meter or 1 yard. The measure is standardized at the distance crossed by an average sized, two-legged creature.



ARMOR AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Armor soon disappears in an environment dominated by thrusting weapons and firearms. The armor of LACE & STEEL protects the wearer's most vulnerable points from attack, but does not attempt to provide complete coverage (the exception being the three quarter armors worn by heavy cavalry). Plate armor and thick leathers are common, but armor formats such as chainmail and scale are highly dangerous to the wearer when struck by bullets, and have disappeared entirely.

Plate armor can be made bullet proof, and the best breastplates are "proofed" against pistol fire. The evidence of this proofing is a small dent over the left breast where the smith has fired a pistol at the armor at a range of 20 paces.

The weight of pieces of armor is not listed, since the fatigue penalties for the different items are incorporated into the armor statistics chart. (See page 122). For the purposes of determining the weight of a horse's rider for fatigue purposes, however, increase the rider's weight by 10% if it wears light armor (breastplate & helmet), and by 50% if it wears three quarter armor.

HEAD AND THROAT PROTECTION

HELMETS

Helmets fall into 3 basic types - the morion, the lobster tailed pot and the close helm.

A morion is a footman's helmet which combines a bowl with cheek guards and a wide, flaring brim. They are simple to make, protect the wearer against the weather with as much facility as a hat, and are useful in a variety of other roles (e.g. gathering strawberries or as a shaving bowl).

A morion helmet costs about 3 silvers.



Lobster tailed pots (or zischagge) are cavalry helmets. They consist of a hemispherical bowl, to which are attached an articulated neck guard, a frontal brim and a set of cheek guards. These helmets guard the wearer's face with a sliding nasal or a pivoting bar visor (the "fall") attached to the forepeak. The bowls of these helmets usually bear a low ridge, although some variants equipped with nasal bars have fluted skulls for added strength.

A lobster tailed pot costs 6 silvers.



A close helm is worn in conjunction with 3/4 armor. It is a full helmet which entirely encases the wearer's head with heavy metal. The solid visor of a close helm gives good protection against pistol shot, but is very confining. Any character who wears a close helm receives a DRM of +1 on all attempts to spot hidden objects/foes, read signals or sneak. The protective value of a close helm includes the effect of a gorget, which is purchased inclusive with the listed price.

A close helm costs about 10 silvers.



Linette much admires a suit of three quarter cavalry armor that she sees in a shop and decides to try it on (luckily there is space enough under the pigeon breasted chest plate to allow for her - ah "endowments"). The complete suit consists of a closed helm, half armor and leg harness, for a total fatigue penalty of 7 (2+3+2). When we work out Linette's fatigue level when wearing the armor, we find that it is depressingly low (her strength averaged with her endurance is 9, minus 7 points of fatigue penalty and halving the result gives her a fatigue level of only 1 !). Oh dear! Linette can hardly move in the stupid thing when she is afoot, although it gets much lighter when she gets onto horseback (giving her a fatigue level when mounted of 2). Rats! Sadly shaking her head, Linette leaves the suit on the racks. It looks wonderful, but it is just too heavy. Maybe one day she'll find a magic one that weighs nothing. Now that would be a fine thing!

IRON SECRETS

A hemispherical padded steel cap designed to be worn beneath a hat. “Iron secrets” are not easily seen when concealed by other headgear, and are popular due to their light weight.

An “Iron secret” costs about 2 silvers.



MONTERO CAPS

Billed leather caps with a fold down neck guard. The crown and neck guard are reinforced with steel strips. This construction gives it reasonable protection against slashes and punctures, but no protective value against firearms.

Monteros are a popular item of wear amongst soldiers due to their simple construction, light weight and comfort.

A montero cap costs about 1 silver piece.



HALF-HORSE ARMOR

Humans and Half-Horses wear much the same armor. Half-Horses will protect their humanoid sections, and will wear tassets to protect their front legs, but will leave their equine hind bodies largely unprotected. Thus Half-Horses are never protected by their armor from low blows delivered from the sides or rear.

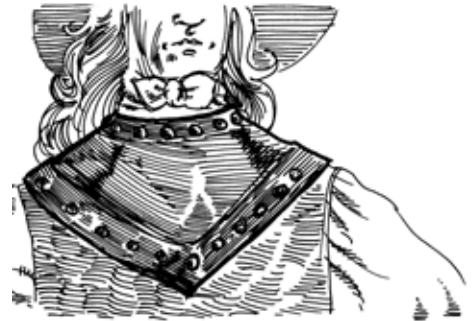
The astute will notice that there is no horse armor in use in Mittelmarch. Horse armor could never be made heavy enough to withstand firearms and still preserve some skerrick of the horse's maneuverability, and so it has been abandoned altogether.

Half-Horses always count as If they are on foot (and not mounted) for fatigue penalty purposes. Four-leggers pay the full fatigue penalty for armor at all times.

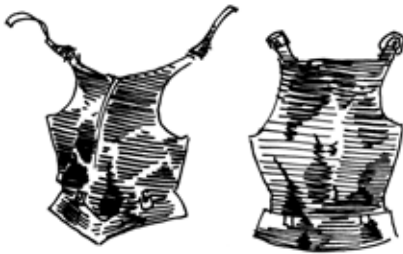
GORGETS

A protective collar which shields the throat, clavicles and thorax. Gorgets are always worn as part of a half armor (see below), but are a popular piece of armor by themselves. Most officers in infantry units will wear a gorget even if they wear no other armor.

Gorgetts cost about 2 silver pieces.



TORSO PROTECTION



BREAST & BACK

Rigid back and breastplates are a very common form of armor much worn by cavalry and pikemen. Breastplates give the wearer exceedingly good torso protection for a minimal loss of flexibility.

The best breastplates are “proofed” (tested for resistance against pistols at 20 paces range). Proofed breastplates count their armor protection against pistols and carbines even at close range, but are

extremely encumbering when worn by characters who are on foot (including Half-Horses!).

Mounted cavalymen receive no extra penalties for wearing proofed armor.

A full breast and back costs 8 silver pieces.

A breast and back with a “proofed” breastplate costs 1 mark.



HALF ARMOR

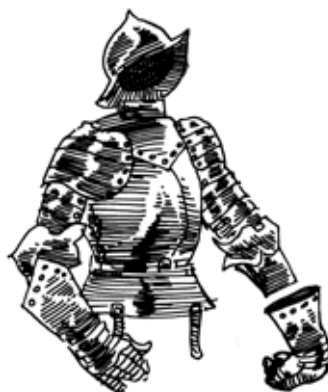
Back and breast, gorget, and articulated armor for the upper arms. Plate vambraces protect the wearer's lower arms, the hands are protected by plate gauntlets, and the shoulders are covered by smooth, articulated shoulder guards. The net result is complete plate armor protection for the upper body. The breastplates of half armors are always "proofed". Half armors may be combined with tassets.

Half armors are usually combined with leg harness to form a suit of three quarter armor (usually called a "lobster suit"). These suits are worn by the heaviest cavalry, but are not suitable for wear on foot.

The encumbrance for wearing a suit of half armor is halved for characters on horseback.

A set of mass produced half armor encompassing a proofed breastplate, a back plate, gorget, arm harness, bridle gauntlet and shoulder guards costs 4 marks.

A tailored half armor costs at least 6 marks.



BUFF COATS

Hide jerkins are common wear for hunters, and so tend to be commonplace on the battlefield as well. Buff coats are made from very thick leather (often as thick through as your little finger), and are quite capable of blocking a sword cut. They are reasonably light, very weatherproof, and are easily maintained once properly oiled and dressed.

Buff coats often have extensive skirts which extend down to cover the wearer's thighs and upper legs.

A short buff coat costs 8 silvers.

A buffcoat which extends down to cover the low line costs 12 silvers.



Half-Horse Leg Harness

The leg armor worn by Half-Horses offers the same protection as tassets, at the same encumbrance.

THIGH AND LEG PROTECTION

TASSETS

Two metal flaps to protect the upper thighs, to which is added an articulated plate flap to cover the wearer's rump. Tassets are usually added to infantry armor to increase the protective value of the suit.

Tassets cost about 4 silvers.



LEG HARNESS

Articulated plate housings for the legs which attach directly onto the wearer's breastplate. The leg coverage is accompanied by an articulated flap which covers the wearer's rump. The encumbrance of leg harness is halved for characters who are on horseback.

Leg harness costs about 8 silvers.



ARMOR PRICES

Closed Helm	10 Silvers
Morion Helmet	3 Silvers
Lobster tail helmet	6 Silvers
Iron Secret	2 Silvers
Montero Cap	1 Silver
Gorget	2 Silvers
Half Armor	6 Marks
Breastplate	8 Silvers
Proofed Breast	1 Mark
Long Buff Coat	1 Mark
Short Buff Coat	8 Silvers
Tassets	4 Silvers
Leg Harness	8 Silvers
Bridle Gauntlet	6 Silvers

ARMOR
STATISTICS

Where three protective values are given, the first value is the item's protective value against firearms, the second value is the armor's protection against thrusting weapons, and the third value is used as the armor's protective value against brawling weapons, cutting weapons and broadswords.

OTHER ITEMS

BRIDLE GAUNTLETS

A bridle gauntlet is a heavy metal sheath for the forearm of the wearer's non sword arm. The gauntlet includes a jointed metal glove to protect the hand, and curves around to protect the wearer's elbow. They are too heavy to wear on the sword arm.

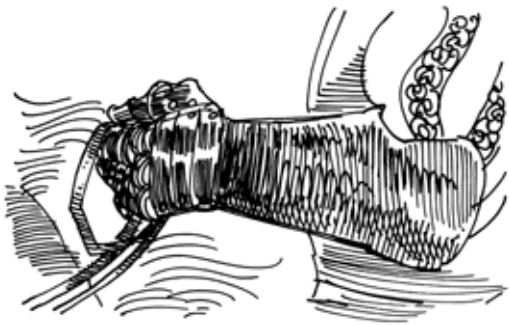
A bridle gauntlet's main protective value is its ability to block incoming blows. An unarmed man may parry with his bridle gauntlet even if deprived of his sword. Such parries are at -1 to the normal numerical value of the defensive cards thus played.

Bridle gauntlets weigh one kilo, and cost 6 silvers.

PLUMES

Helmet plumes cost between a groat (for a bunch of pheasant feathers) to a silver piece (for a spray of brightly colored ostrich plumes). Some common soldiers have been known to affix sprays of oak leaves to their helmets as simple decoration.

Armor type	Attack line covered	Protective Value	Fatigue penalty
Close helm	Upper	2/3/3	2
Morion/Lobster pot	Upper	1/2/3	1
"Iron secret"	Upper	1	0
Montero cap	Upper	0/0/1	0
Gorget	Upper	1	0
Half armor	Mid	3/4/4	2 (3 on foot)
Breastplate	Mid	3	1 (2 on foot)
Long buff coat	Mid and Lower	1/1/2	0
Short buff coat	Mid	1/1/2	0
Tassets	Lower	1/2/2	1
Leg harness	Lower	2/3/3	1 (2 on foot)



FIREARMS

Gunpowder weapons are the universal missile weapons in LACE & STEEL, having almost completely replaced bows and crossbows. As a result, the heavy forms of personal armor have largely disappeared.

LACE & STEEL's firearms use a sulphurous blend of powder which produces a great deal of thick, yellow smoke. Concentrated gunfire will create a masking blanket of dirty smoke which is impenetrable to view. Rain, wet fog and high winds make gunpowder weapons useless. Sentries will usually plug their gun muzzles and wrap their locks with rags to protect them from damp, a process which takes one missile turn to free the weapon for action.

Firearms shoot a fair puff of smoke out of their touch holes as they fire, and this can panic many inexperienced gunners and throw them off their aim. This flash also smudges the faces of musketeers with dirty black powder stains, and can singe the whiskers of the unwary novice.

Matchlocks use a spring operated lock to touch a smouldering match to the powder in the touch hole of the firearm. Matchlocks require a lit match in order to fire (lighting a match requires a dexterity roll vs. 10 per turn if the match is being lit via a tinder box). This burning match makes it hard to conceal the musketeer at night, and can also prove dangerous near loose powder. Burning match consumes itself at a rate of 1/2cm per turn. Lit match may be carried looped about the arm or belt with a protective cover being fitted about the glowing end. Most musketeers will carry lengths of spare match looped through their belt or wound about their hat or wrist.

Wheellocks are clockwork mechanisms which operate by spinning a toothed pyrite wheel against a flint, showering sparks down into the priming pan. They are more expensive, more easily broken and more reliable than matchlocks. Wheellock weapons are wound (or "spanned") by a spanning key, which is usually kept on a chain around the user's neck. Wheellocks must not be left wound for action for long periods, since this weakens the springs. Lower the misfire number of a wheellock weapon by 1 for every ½ day that it is left cocked.

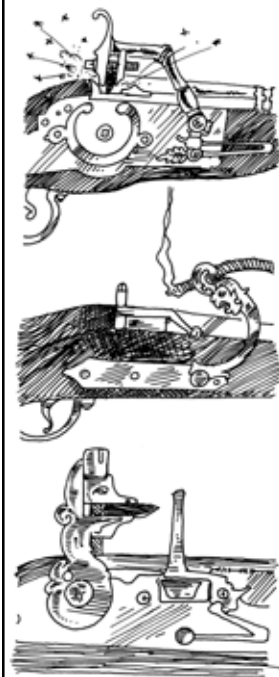
Snaphaunce firearms work on the flintlock principle, using a spring loaded arm to strike a flint against a steel, showering sparks into the priming pan. Unlike true flintlocks, the priming pan cover must be swivelled aside manually before firing. Snaphaunces have some of the reliability of a wheel lock without the crippling expense.

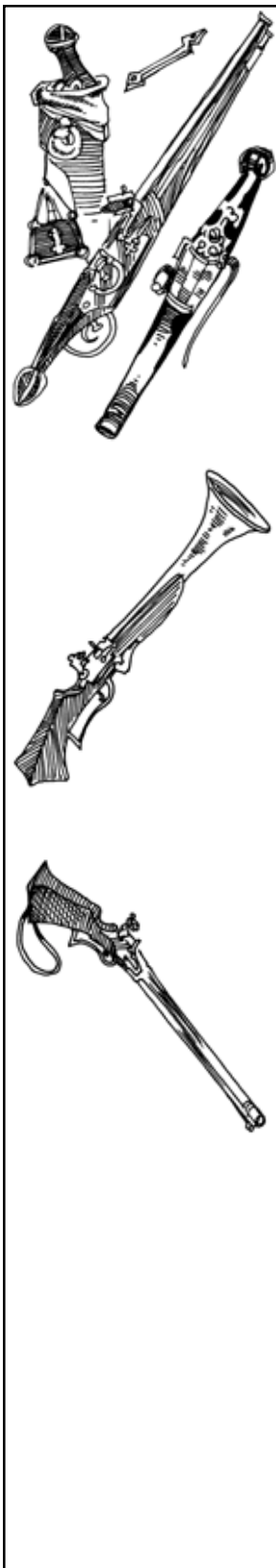
The cocking/winding and priming of firearms constitutes the last turn of reloading of the weapon. Weapons may be carried "charged" (primed) but carrying a charged weapon around for any length of time will usually cause the priming powder to knock itself loose (lower the weapon's misfire number by 2 or more).

All weapons come complete with a ramrod, cleaning tools and ball extractors (in case of jams).

Custom made guns will vary widely from the basic models listed below. Amongst the unusual, experimental systems being played with are weapons with rifled barrels which have a greatly extended range, but a lowered reliability and double the normal reloading time. Double barreled pistols can also be bought, once again with a reduced reliability number. Double barreled weapons should also receive a penalty to their handiness rating.

All custom made weapons will be prohibitively expensive.





PISTOLS

Pistols are low powered wheellock firearms designed to be held in one hand. They come in two formats - saddle pistols (66 cm in length, 1.5 kilos in weight) and pistols (40 cm length, 1 kilo in weight). Pistol bullets come 50 bullets to the kilo.

Pistols are bulky weapons, and usually have a heavy pommel on the butt to balance the weight of the barrel. Saddle pistols make particularly effective cudgels, although this can damage the weapon's lock. All pistols are fired by canting the weapon to one side so that the touch hole is uppermost (held in the same manner as a sword during the thrust). For this reason, left handed and right handed pistols are different, in that they have their locks on the left or right sides of the weapon respectively.

Pistols have a belt hook attached to their stocks which allow them to be securely thrust through a belt or sash for easy access. When holstered, pistols are carried with the butts forwards, and are drawn by reaching across the body in the manner of a sword.

A pair of wheellock pistols costs about 3 gold marks.

A pair of snaphaunce pistols costs 30 pieces of silver.

BLUNDERBUSSES

A blunderbuss is a short, hell mouthed musketoon designed to fire a cloud of small shot - very much like a modern shotgun. Blunderbusses discharge their loads of "swan shot" (a dozen small bullets) in an untidy cloud which may roll to hit characters that are closely grouped (friend or foe). They are poor weapons for penetrating armor. Beyond medium range, halve the damage inflicted by a blunderbuss against its target.

Blunderbusses are about 60 cm in length, and weigh 4 kilos. They use twice the powder charges of muskets. They get about 16 shots per kilogram.

A matchlock blunderbuss costs 8 silvers.

A snaphaunce blunderbuss costs 14 silvers.

CARBINES

Shoulder fired weapons of the same caliber as pistols, carbines use pistol bullets hut a musket charging flask. Most carbines are wheellocks, but some are matchlocks. Carbines are about 76 cm in length and weigh 4 kilos.

Carbines are the weapons of skirmishers, and are lighter and handier than muskets. They come equipped with a snaffle sling (a shoulder strap with detachable eyelet for speedy unslinging of the weapon). Carbines can be loaded from the kneeling position.

Matchlock carbines cost 8 silver pieces.

Snaphaunce carbines cost 14 silver pieces.

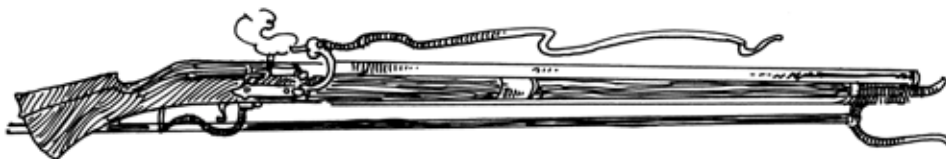
Wheellock carbines cost 2 gold marks.

MUSKETS

Heavy, long barreled firearms fired from the shoulder. Muskets must be propped on a forked rest in order to fire. Muskets are normally matchlocks, although wheellock muskets are sometimes used by the wealthy or by specialist guard units. Muskets are generally 140 cms long and weigh about 6.5 kilos, and their bullets come at 24 to the kilo.

Matchlock muskets cost 8 silver pieces.

Snaphaunce muskets cost 14 silvers.



BOWS

Bows still see service with the nomadic tribes of eastern Forija, but have otherwise been completely supplanted by gunpowder weapons. The typical Forijan bow is a composite recurve bow with a pull of about 40 to 50 kilos. Firing a bow is tiring - every shot with a bow counts as the same fatigue as a melee action.

Bows are very poor at armor penetration (armor counts as +1 protection vs. bows at long range and over), but are swift to reload. Bows may be reloaded from a moving horse, or by a walking character, although this will cause a +1 DRM on the character's reloading roll.

Bows are at least as badly affected by foul weather as firearms, since their strings stretch and their glues soften. Bows which become thoroughly wet (e.g. from being soaked in a river for a day) will become warped and useless. Bows are not carried fully strung unless trouble is expected - reduce a bow's reliability by 1 for every 2 days that it is left fully strung (though high quality bows may be left strung for longer periods without any danger). Instead, most bows will be kept "half strung" (with the string attached at one end, and slipped loosely across the other). Stringing a how which has been kept "half strung" is taken as a reloading action.

Bows must be carried in a bow case (which has a flap to protect the bow against the weather). Contrary to popular belief, bows may not be "slung across the back" - this is a good way of getting strangled!

A composite bow costs 1 mark.

Arrows cost 1 groat each (specify flight or bodkin).

Quivers with an attached bow case cost 2 silvers.

The quiver holds a maximum of 24 arrows.

A quiver for carrying 36 arrows costs 6 groats.

Spare how strings cost 2 groats.

MISSILE WEAPONS CHART

All ranges are given in paces. Ranges that are underlined are the ranges at which the weapon will automatically penetrate an unproofed armor.

Type of weapon	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	Maximum	Reload	Handiness
Pistol	<u>10</u>	20	30	40	60	3 Turns	2
Saddle pistol	<u>10</u>	20	40	60	80	3 Turns	1
Blunderbuss	20	-	30	-	40	5 Turns	0
Carbine	<u>10</u>	20	50	100	150	4 Turns	0
Musket	<u>10</u>	<u>30</u>	60	150	250	5 Turns	-1
Bow (bodkin arrow)	10	20	50	80	120	1 turn	-2
Bow (flight arrow)	10	20	50	120	200	1 turn	-2
Swivel (hail shot)	<u>20</u>	<u>40</u>	60	100	-	6 Turns	-2
Swivel (solid shot)	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>600</u>	6 Turns	-2



THE COMPLEAT MUSKETEER

- A musketeer's full accoutrements consist of the following:
- 1 matchlock musket @ 8 silver schillings.
 - 1 bandolier @ 1 silver schilling.
 - 1 charging flask @ 1 silver piece.
 - A full measure of charging powder @ 8 groats.
 - 1 priming flask @ 1 silver piece.
 - A full measure of priming powder @ 1 silver schilling.
 - 1 kilo of bullets (in a bullet bag) @ 5 groats.
 - 1 meter of slow match @ 1 groat.
- Total cost: 13 silver schillings, 2 groats.
- Total weight: 8 1/2 kilos
- The musketeer has 24 shots, 12 of which are in cartridges on the bandolier.

FIREARM PRICES

Wheellock Pistols (Pair)	3 Marks
Snaphaunce Pistols (Pair)	30 Silvers
Blunderbuss (Matchlock)	8 Silvers
Blunderbuss (Wheellock)	14 Silvers
Carbine (Matchlock)	8 Silvers
Carbine (Snaphaunce)	14 Silvers
Carbine (Wheellock)	2 Marks
Matchlock Musket (Matchlock)	8 Silvers
Musket (Snaphaunce)	14 Silvers
Bow	1 Mark

ACCESSORIES

BANDOLIER

A leather shoulder belt from which dangle 12 charge bottles, each a wooden, tin or leather container which holds the powder and bullet for one firing of a musket. Once the charges from a musketeer's bandolier are used up, apply a DRM of +1 to the character's reloading rolls. A bandolier weighs about 1/2 a kilo.

Bandoliers cost 1 silver piece.

CHARGING FLASK

Charging flasks are powder flasks equipped with a lever which will deliver a measure of powder sufficient for the loading of a firearm. Charging flasks come in pistol and musket versions. Charging flasks are equipped with a belt hook which allows them to be clipped onto a sword belt, or they can be hung on a cord from a bandolier. Charging flasks hold powder sufficient for 24 musket shots or 50 pistol shots. Their weight is 1/4 of a kilo.

Charging flasks cost 1 silver piece, although fancy versions made from carved horn can be had at a higher price (5 to 10 silvers).

PRIMING FLASK

A small flask (much smaller than a charging flask) which delivers a measure of fine powder used to prime a firearm's touch hole. A priming flask contains enough fine powder to last for 50 shots, and weighs about 1/4 of a kilo. If a firearm is primed with charging powder rather than priming powder, lower its misfire number by 1.

Priming flasks cost 1 silver piece.

BULLET BAG

A small leather or canvas hag which contains a kilo of bullets. Bullet bags are kept on the Bandoleer or sword belt hanger, and are of negligible weight.

Bullet bags cost one groat.

BULLETS

A kilo of leaden bullets costs 4 groats.

MATCH

The "slow match" used for matchlock weapons consists of cord impregnated with saltpeter and vinegar.

A 1 meter length of match costs 1 groat.

POWDER

Powder comes in standard measures suitable for filling priming flasks or charging flasks.

A measure of charging powder costs 8 groats.

A measure of priming powder costs 12 groats.



ARTILLERY

Smooth bore artillery pieces are usually made of cast bronze (cast iron guns are less reliable). Most guns are laboriously hauled into battle behind teams of horses, with the gunners accompanying the weapon on foot, although some “flying batteries” of light guns are accompanied by mounted gunners. Guns fire cast iron solid shot, and “langridge” (a sort of canister shot composed of chains, nails, musket balls etc.) and “hailshot” (musket balls).

Standard guns include light weapons of up to 2.5 kilos weight of shot, field pieces of up to 7 kilos shot weight, and siege pieces with shot weights of up to 28 kilos! There are also a variety of unwieldy heavy mortars used to lob explosive shells across fortress walls during sieges.

The names of cannon vary according to their size e.g.

Weapon name	Weight of shot
Falconet	.5 kilos
Falcon	1 kilo
Saker	2.5 kilos
Demi-culverin	4 kilos
Culverin	7 kilos
etc.	

The astute will note that cannon are named after birds of prey in ascending order of size. A “musket” is the smallest member of the hunting hawks, so small arms also fit into this neat little scheme of things.

Guns are very expensive pieces of machinery. A falconet will cost about 30 gold marks. Other guns will be custom jobs, costing a varying amount of money depending on the size of weapon and the availability of materials.

Master gunners can be told by the tool of their trade, the “gunner’s quadrant”. This is an “L” shaped brass set square & plumb bob used for aiming guns, and it is usually found thrust through the gunner’s sash when not in use. A gunner’s quadrant is a precision measure, and costs 2 silver pieces. Master gunners would also carry priming flasks.

Guns may be easily sabotaged by driving a nail into the touch hole and filing it roughly flat. Called “spiking” a gun, this is perhaps the quickest way of rendering a gun useless, since the touch hole must be drilled out in order for the gun to be made usable once again.

Other explosive devices of note are “petards”, heavy shaped charges used to blow down gates and doors. These items are about the size of a barrel (or larger), and are usually wheeled up to their target and braced in place with a stout pole. Grenades (small spheres of metal or glass filled with powder and pistol balls) are also well known, and are commonly used in sieges for tossing over palisades and trenches. They are not commonly used in the field, since they can explode prematurely and cause wounds to the thrower and his mates.

Grenades are hideously dangerous to use. A roll of 12 when throwing a grenade indicates a premature explosion, and the thrower will suffer the effects of the cast unless he is completely protected by cover, or the grenade was being dropped from a height. An exploding grenade automatically does missile damage to everyone within 5 paces, and all characters within 10 paces should roll an 8- on 2D6 to avoid taking one random card of damage from fragments.



Grenades

Cost: 4 copper groats

Weight: 5 kilos

Reload Time: (Time taken to prepare weapon and light fuse) 2 Turns

A grenadier must carry a lit slowmatch, which is kept burning inside a protective cover and stored on the bandolier.

The maximum thrown range of a grenade = Str x 5 paces. Rolls to hit at out to half maximum range are made vs. 10. Throws at greater... than half range are made vs. 15.

Harpies may drop grenades from on high. They must roll their dexterity vs. the height / 5 in order to hit the target.

MELEE WEAPONS

Hand to hand encounters are a frequent occurrence in LACE & STEEL. All nations maintain a dueling tradition amongst the nobility and gentry, and the commonality sometimes settles legal questions through lethal or nonlethal combat. In a military environment dominated by slow loading, one shot firearms, melee weapons become an essential part of the soldier's armament.

Swords are carried in a sheath which is attached to the swordbelt by a hanger. The hanger is linked to the swordbelt by a hook and eye, making it easy to detach at need. It is customary to unhook the hanger and discard the sheath upon drawing a sword to prevent the sheath from entangling the fencer's legs in combat.

The fencing style currently in vogue uses the fencer's blade as his main defense. This renders obsolete the earlier "rapier and dagger" style of fencing, since the rapier blade is now maneuverable enough to defend the fencer without recourse to a secondary weapon.

THRUSTING SWORDS

LACE & STEEL's rapiers are long straight bladed Thrusting Swords. The blades are about 100 cm in length and are sharpened all along their length. A complex swept hilt or cup guard provides protection for the hand, and the twisting metal of the guard or upturned rim of the cup is capable of entangling or even breaking an enemy blade. A rapier weighs about 3/4 of a kilo.

The "backsword" or broadsword is primarily a cavalry weapon. About 90 cm in length with a straight, two edged blade, these basket hilted weapons have game statistics identical to those of a cutlass, except that their length is increased to 2 when being used from horseback. Essentially a cut and thrust weapon, a character's level of competence with a backsword is measured by its Thrusting Sword skill, even though more use of the edge is made than with the rapier. Backswords weigh about 1 kilo.

There are two main qualities of sword - "ammunition" quality and good quality. Ammunition quality swords are cheap mass production items, and can shatter upon taking a heavy shock. They also tend to break if used for such mundane tasks as cutting brush or sod.

An ammunition quality rapier costs 6 silvers.

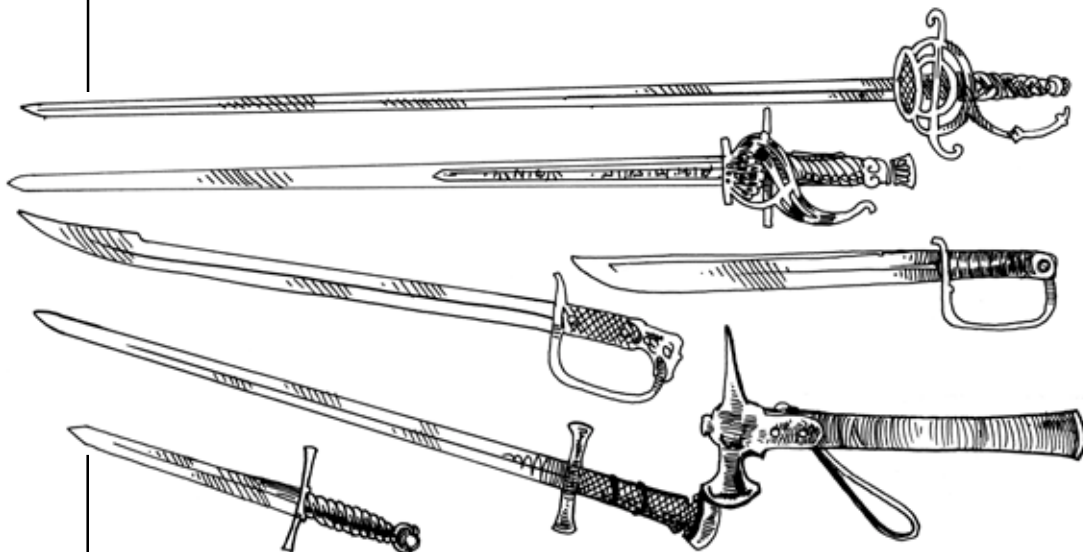
An ammunition quality backsword costs 8 silver pieces.

A good quality rapier or backsword costs 2 Marks.

A silvered rapier or backsword costs 10 marks.

Linette falls off her horse. Since she is carrying a poor quality rapier, the Referee decides to check to see if the sword was damaged. He decides to roll 2 dice. On an 11 or 12, the sword will break (this is just an arbitrary random dice roll created at the spur of the moment by the Referee).

The dice roll, and come up "box cars" (a 12). SNAP! Linette screams blue murder. This is just typical of her luck!



CUTTING SWORDS

There are a number of heavy cutting swords still in use in LACE & STEEL. The cutlass is a short, single edged, broad bladed weapon with very little “point” which is commonly used by seamen. A similar weapon is the “hunting sword”, a short, single edged, curved blade much used by hunters and woodsmen. Both of these swords are about 65 to 70 cm long, and are weighted towards the point, making them cumbersome during the finer fencing maneuvers but devastating in a slash. Cutlasses usually have a rough basket hilt, and hunting swords usually make do with an elegantly efficient bow guard. Both of these weapons will stand up to rough service as brush gathering and butchering tools, cutting rigging and splitting kindling.

These short cutting swords should be given an advantage when fighting in close quarters (e.g. amongst rigging or inside cramped rooms). This can be done by lowering the “new draw” rating of the wielders of longer weapons.

Sabres are longer, more slender weapons than cutlasses or hunting swords. They consist of a long, curved blade, with the user’s hand being protected by an elegant bow-guard. Sabres are slowly gaining popularity amongst the cavalry, and are used by most infantry in Forijan territories. Poor quality sabres are susceptible to breakage in the same manner as ammunition quality rapiers.

Cutlasses and hunting swords weigh about 1 kg. Sabres weigh about 3/4 of a kilo.

A cutlass costs 4 silver pieces.

A hunting sword costs 6 silver pieces.

An ammunition quality sabre costs 6 silver pieces.

A good quality sabre costs about 2 marks.

A silvered cutting sword costs 10 marks.

POLAXES, MACES AND HAMMERS

These weapons all still find favor as “lobster crackers” designed to overcome heavy body armor. Polaxes, maces and hammers all consist of a metal business end attached to a wooden haft. They have a shorter reach than most swords, but their increased impact makes them very efficient at punching through armor.

Axes, hammers and maces are all wielded through using cutting swords skill. Hafted side arms of this kind weigh about 1 kilo.

A wooden hafted polaxe or hammer costs about 4 silvers.

A sturdy polaxe or hammer with a steel haft costs about 8 silvers.

DAGGERS AND KNIVES

Daggers and knives of all shapes and sizes are common weapons, since they are universally carried as tools. Knives are single edged, whereas daggers have two edges. A knife is more specifically used as a tool than daggers, but both are equally dangerous as weapons.

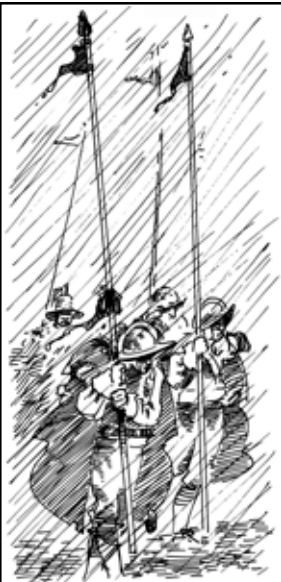
In combat, knives are used in both an overhand grip (like a sword) and in an underhand (“ice pick”) grip. The fighter’s free hand is kept cautiously presented towards the enemy, ready to grab an opponents weapon arm.. Dagger attacks are made in short, brutal arcs with the fighter stepping in with his weapon to put the maximum force behind the blow.

Knife fights are deadly serious affairs. A dagger wound is quite as lethal as a sword thrust, and knife fights usually lack the air of gentlemanly good conduct which accompanies a rapier duel.

Cheap quality knives may break if subjected to undue stress (such as using them as levers). Knives and daggers are all of negligible weight.

A cheap knife will cost about 6 groats. An ammunition quality dagger will cost about 1 silver. A good quality dagger costs 6 silvers.





LANCES

A Fortijan winged hussar charges an enemy cuirassier with his lance.

Having been missed by the cuirassier's pistol shot, the lancer now gets to try and score a hit with the lance. He must roll his dexterity of 10 vs. his opponent's dexterity (also 10). This gives the lancer a basic success roll of 7-.

The lancer has a very extensive horse that has a higher strength than his opponent. As he has a bigger horse, the lancer receives a DRM of -1. Thus the lancer must roll a 8- to hit.

The lancer rolls a 9. A miss! The two horsemen are now in combat. The lancer will have to discard his lance, automatically giving his opponent the initiative as they both match swords.

POLEARMS

Important polearms in hand to hand combats are halberds, partisans and pikes. These weapons are handy enough to be dangerous weapons in hand to hand combat, and long enough to give the user an advantage over swords and clubbed muskets.

Partisans and halberds are often carried by infantry officers and sergeants as badges of rank. These leading staves are useful for dressing ranks, signaling, prodding up laggards, and can be seen over the heads of the common troops. The close combat element of some infantry regiments have discarded their pikes in favor of halberds, since these are long enough to hold off cavalry while being handier to carry (the formation becomes more flexible since it no longer requires great depth). These units are obviously at a disadvantage against pikemen in an open encounter, although this is balanced by the greater proportion of shot used by such units.

Pikes are long hafted spears used by the close combat element of most infantry units, and by the frontal wave of many boarding assaults. A long, unwieldy weapon, pikes are about 6 meters in length, although most soldiers lop a meter off the weapon to bring it down to a more manageable size. In close combat, pikes are gripped halfway down the shaft, making them surprisingly quick and dangerous.

All polearms are octagonal or hexagonal shafts to prevent them turning in the user's hand. Steel strips run down the top 30 to 50 cm of the haft to prevent the business end of the weapon being lopped off in combat. Most polearms have a tassel just below the head of the weapon to prevent rain or blood running down onto the haft.

A typical polearm weighs about 2 ½ to three kilos, and costs 6 silver pieces.

CAVALRY LANCE

The lance has effectively gone out of use in the period covered by LACE & STEEL, but some units of cuirassiers still cling to it even though most cavalry now use sword and pistol.

Lances used in a cavalry charge do not use the fencing system described in the melee combat rules, but instead rely upon a dice roll. Lances may only be used in this way against weapons with an equal or shorter reach than their own. Roll the lancer's Dexterity vs. his opponent's (modified by the weapon skills of both parties). Give a DRM of -1 to the character with the heaviest horse (if the lancer is attacking another horseman). Half-Horses attempting to use a lance vs. cavalry receive a DRM of +1. A successful roll indicates that the lance has hit. Lances used in a charge always do follow-up damage, and have an armor modifier of -2.

When used in melee with a halted or slowly moving/trotting horse, the lance is not very effective. Fight using the normal melee rules. The lancer may opt to discard his lance and draw a sidearm immediately after making a charge attack, or whenever he wins the initiative in melee, but this will hand the initiative to his opponent.

A lance consists of a hollow tube of hardwood, tipped by a spear point and pennon, with a thick, solid grip at the base. The user's hand is protected and his grip improved by a metal plate or a hardwood hall. Lances weigh about 3 kilos, and are very cumbersome. No-one will carry a spare lance, nor may a rider carry a lance and a carbine! Lances are carried in a stirrup bucket, and fully occupy one of the rider's hands at all times. Lancers may not fire pistols while charging.

A lance costs about 3 silvers.

WEAPON RATINGS CHART

ACCESSORIES

SWORD BELT

A sword belt clasps about the wearer's waist and serves to support the sword, dagger and purse. The sword belt is fitted with a "hanger", a flat piece of leather fitted with a hole to which the scabbard is attached via a hook and eye. This facilitates the easy removal of the scabbard when entering combat.

A plain sword belt costs about 3 groats.

A well finished sword belt costs 1 silver piece.

A decorated sword belt costs at least 4 silver pieces.

SABRETACHE

A utility pouch which hangs from the sword belt. A sabretache is a flat sided wallet which is used to hold pens, notepaper, cash, maps etc.

A plain sabretache costs about 4 groats.

A decorative sabretache costs at least 1 silver piece.

FOILS

Light, blunt practice swords, complete with mask, glove and jacket cost about 1 Mark per set.

Weapon Type	Reach	Heft	Armour Modifier	Minimum Strength
Backsword	2/3	3	-	9
Cavalry Lance	4	2	-	8
Clubbed Musket	3	3	-	8
Cudgel	2	0	+1	0
Cutlass	2	4	-	10
Dagger	0	0	+1	0
Fists/Feet	0	0	+2	0
Halberd/partisan	4	5	-1	9
Pike	5	2	-	10
Polaxe/Hammer	1	2	-1	10
Rapier	3	1	-	5
Sabre	3	2	-	5

MELEE WEAPONS PRICES

Rapier (Ammunition Quality)	4 Silvers
Rapier (Good Quality)	2 Marks
Backsword (Ammunition Quality)	8 Silvers
Backsword (Good Quality)	2 Marks
Cutlass	4 Silvers
Hunting Sword	6 Silvers
Sabre (Ammunition Quality)	6 Silvers
Sabre (Good Quality)	2 Marks
Polaxe (Wooden Haft)	4 Silvers
Polearm (Steal Haft)	8 Silvers
Knife (Cheap)	6 Groats
Dagger (Ammunition Quality)	1 Silver
Dagger (Good Quality)	6 Silvers
Polearm	6 Silvers
Lance	3 Silvers
Silvered Weapon	10 Marks





Characters do not simply start the game owning clothes. Clothing must be bought as part of each character's initial purchase of equipment.

Remember that clothing is a means of communication. Choice of quality, cut and color are a statement about the wearer. Players should be encouraged to record such details on their character sheets. Live a little!

CLOTHING

In a “swashbuckling” environment, clothing is vital to the feel of the game. Clothing is an important part of the image projected by most characters. Poor quality clothing will cause adverse DRMs when dealing with better dressed characters.

All player characters must purchase clothing as part of their starting equipment. Spare clothing weighs about 1 or 2 kilos to carry. Players might want to write down the color and cut of their clothes as an aid to keeping a track of their character's appearance.

CLOTHING STYLES

Clothing styles are dictated by utility and technology. Trousers and skirts fit loosely not simply because of the pleasing soft lines that this gives them, but because tight leg covering are restrictive and uncomfortable. Lace making and knitting are widely known as “frogging” (hussar style cross-braiding). Lace, bows and ribbons are part of male as well as female dress, and represent wealth and gentility.

Male dress styles consist of long jackets (cassocks) which reach down to cover the rump or upper thighs. Collars are small and upright, but are always hidden beneath the projecting shirt collar. These wide, white collars are termed falling bands. A falling band is worn with all clothing, even armor, and its size and material conveys much information about the wealth and personality of its wearer.

The shoulders of many coats bear “swallow's wing” epaulets, giving a swaggering masculine line to the coat's shoulders. Sleeves are loose, and are often designed to be opened via buttons down the inside seam. Thus sleeves may be opened and left to hang loose for style or convenience. Good coats will often have a bright, attractive lining which will show when the sleeves are worn open. A good deal of lace or linen shirt cuff usually peeks through past the coat. Trousers are loose fitting and reach just past the knee. Head gear usually consists of a broad rimmed hat, although other types of headgear are known.

Frogging is a Forijan fashion which has caught in more northern climes. Forijan influenced coats have bold cross-braids running across the chest, a bright sashes clinching in the waist. Forijan footwear also tends to have pointed toes which curve slightly upwards.

Female dress styles consist of flaring skirts with over multiple petticoats. Waist lines are low, emphasizing the wearer's figure to the best possible degree. The bodice retains the same soft lines, and evening gowns can be very low cut. A Lady's sleeves may be long or short, but usually show a large amount of lace or linen cuff. Head gear usually consists of lace caps or wimples, though broad brimmed hats in the male style will be worn for protection against the weather.

Current hairstyles for men of most classes have the hair loose and shoulder length. Male tradesfolk and apprentices from urban areas will usually wear short hair (thus gaining the name “roundheads”). Women wear their hair long, often a frontal fringe.



WOMEN'S CLOTHING

Female dress consists of comfortable bodices and flaring skirts. Underwear tends to be soft, comfortable pantalettes, and supportive corsets. Women who wish to engage in rough, unladylike activities will wear men's clothes.

HOW TO BE "THE BELLE OF THE BALL"

Ladies' dress at balls and courtly functions is a competitive field, and ladies go to great expense and trouble to outdo one another in appearance. While men's formal gear operates within set parameters, Ladies will hate the idea of being seen in the same ball gown twice.

Lady's ball gowns have an appeal rating which is generated by rolling 2D6, and add both the client's fashion skill and the tailor's/seamstress's tailoring skill to the result. A further 1 is added to the result for every extra 5 marks spent on the dress (for a maximum money bonus of +4). Subtract 1 from a gown's appeal if it has ever been worn in public before.

When two Ladies encounter one another at a formal courtly function, check to see which one's outfit outdoes the other's. Add each woman's gown's appeal rating to the wearer's Charisma. The lady with the lowest Charisma now rolls the dice, comparing her totaled Charisma and gown rating vs. that of her "opponent". Whoever loses the roll gets a +1 Self Image penalty in any relations involving the other character for the rest of the evening.

BALL GOWN

Sumptuous confections of satin and silk with wide hooped skirts, and plunging necklines designed to enhance the wearer's décolletage. Ball gowns are bulky, and require a trunk for proper storage.

A ball gown costs a minimum of 5 marks.

RICH GOWN

A bodice and skirt of silk or velvet which shows the wearer's figure off to great advantage. Rich clothing will be the day to day wear of the wealthy, or the formal clothes of the "well to do". Such gowns are worn as less than full formal wear at occasions where appearance might be important.

Rich gowns cost a minimum of 2 marks.

GOOD GOWN

An attractive outfit of fine cloth, usually trimmed with lace. This style of clothes shows the wearer off to great advantage. Country styles will be brightened with embroidery and ribbons, whereas those worn by urbane gentry will be elegantly simple.

A good gown costs about 6 silvers.

PLAIN GOWN

A sturdy, plain outfit of good quality cloth designed for utility and not for looks.

A plain gown costs about 3 silvers.

POOR GOWN

A rough, simple gown made from coarse, low quality cloth. Such clothing is usually plain brown in color.

A poor gown costs about 1 silver, but old clothes will cost about 6 groats.



BALL DRESSES

Linette is being dragged into a court ball, and is mortally afraid of making a fool of herself. Unfortunately, there is no way out of it. Her patron, the Lady DeWarde, is footing the bill, and will pay a maximum of 10 marks for the dress. Linette glumly accepts her awful fate and goes off to the seamstress.

Luckily, Linette has managed to befriend a lady of the court who can give her fashion advice. This lady has a skill of 1, and the Referee rules that this will help Linette's dress look better if the lady can roll her Intuition vs. 10 (helping someone else choose clothes is always a trial). The lady successfully makes the roll, much to Linette's relief.

Linette's dress has a total appeal rating of 2D6 plus relevant DRMs. The DRMs are +1 for her friend's fashion skill, +1 for the extra 5 marks being spent on the dress, and +3 for her seamstresses level three tailoring skill. This gives Linette a total DRM of +5.

Linette rolls her dice, and scores a 12! This gives her a total appeal rating in her dress of 17. Gorgeous! Linette is surprised to find herself the belle of the ball. This will be a great help in bolstering her fragile Self Image during the terrifying evening to come.



WOMEN'S ACCESSORIES

JEWELRY

Jewelry can cost anything from 1 mark onwards. Jewelry is used to give DRMs to the clash of ball gown vs. ball gown at a formal function. If one contestant's jewelry is at least 50% higher in value than her opponent's, then that lady receives a -1 DRM to her roll when contesting her ball gown's attractiveness vs. the other woman's.

FANS

Fans are useful shields behind which private comments may be passed. They can conceal a face, or be used to signal. Female characters who have a fan should receive a bonus when using flirtation in a ballroom environment.

Paper fans cost about 1 silver piece.

Carved ivory fans cost about 2 marks.

Elaborate fans of peacock feathers cost about 6 marks.

POMANDERS

Filigree balls containing perfume which are slung from the wrist by a fine ribbon. Delicate use of a pomander can be a subtle means of communicating distaste. Pomanders cost at least 4 marks.

MUFFS

Lush fur muffs are common additions to formal winter wear. They are also useful for carrying and concealing small items. Muffs cost about 1 mark.

BOOTS

Normal women's footwear is low heeled ankle boots. Such boots cost about 1 silver.

SLIPPERS

Indoor "delicate" lady's footwear consists of cloth slippers. Slippers cost about 4 silvers.

MEN'S CLOTHING

Men's clothing consists of loose shirts, short breeches (just past knee length) and comfortable thigh length coats.

COURT CLOTHES

Closely tailored clothes of silk and satin, festooned with ribbons and silver buckles. Court clothes include a magnificent silken shirt with a broad lace falling band and multiple tiers of lace cuffs.

Men's court clothes cost about 5 marks minimum.

RICH CLOTHES

Well tailored clothes fashionable from velvet worn over a silk shirt. Ribbons, buckles and lace trim the whole suit. Rich clothing will be the day to day wear of the wealthy, or the formal clothes of the "well to do".

Rich clothing costs about 2 marks.

GOOD CLOTHES

Sturdy, attractive clothing made from high quality cloth. Good men's clothing includes a fine linen shirt, woolen stockings and lace over-stockings. The uniforms of special guard troops might well be classed as good clothes, usually being of bright colored cloth tricked out with lace and braid.

Such gear costs about 6 silvers.

PLAIN CLOTHES

Hard wearing clothing made from good cloth designed for day to day wear. Plain clothing includes a linen shirt and good woolen stockings. Most military uniforms will be plain clothes, usually dyed a bright color to distinguish them from common civilian truck.

Plain men's clothes cost about 3 silvers.



POOR CLOTHES

Rough clothing made from strong, coarse material and dyed in some dull color. Poor clothes cost about 1 silver, but tattier versions could be had for 6 groats.

MEN'S ACCESSORIES

HATS

Hats are common day to day wear for all men (although some races with very flat skulls will not wear them e.g. Dragons). Most hats are low, flat crowned affairs with broad, sweeping brims. They are circled with some sort of hat band (often with a buckle). An alternative sort of hat favored by the lower classes in trading professions is the stocking cap, a knitted "beanie" with a long tail which is left hanging down beside one ear. These hats are warm, but fit closely enough to the head to avoid being a nuisance when worn indoors or in ship's rigging.

A knitted woolen stocking cap with a tassel costs about 2 groats.

A broad brimmed hat of leather costs 8 groats.

A cloth montero cap of bright cloth costs 6 groats.

A broad brimmed hat of good felt costs 1 silver.

A gentleman's hat of fine felt, decked with ribbon in the band costs about 4 silvers.

HAT PLUMES

Common feathers such as pheasant tail feathers cost about 2 groats. A pair of ostrich plumes dyed into bright colors cost about 1 silver.

FOOTWEAR

Men's footwear consists of low heeled shoes which cost 1 silver for common shoes, or 2 silvers for good shoes. Wooden clogs might be had for a groat, and sailors in hot climes might wear home made rope or straw sandals.

"Bucket" boots are very long riding boots, reaching to the wearer's mid thigh to protect the leg from chafing against the riding leathers. Spurs are attached to the boots with a "butterfly leather", which may be unstrapped and removed at need.

Sack boots are shorter riding hoots worn with 3/4 armor or worn on foot. They reach somewhat above the knee.

The tops of riding boots are folded down when the wearer intends walking, and the lace over stocking will usually show over the top.

Plain riding boots cost 4 silvers.

Fine riding boots cost 1 mark.

Spurs cost 1 silver.

CANES

A brass headed walking cane will cost about 4 silvers. Silver topped ivory canes will cost about 1 mark. Canes might be used to conceal a sword, but such swords are shorter and lighter than a rapier blade.

SASHES

Military officers are usually distinguished by broad, colorful sashes. These sashes can be either worn about the waist, or bandolier style from the shoulder. They are always tied in a large, decorative how in the small of the back or at the hip

A colored linen sash costs 4 groats.

A bright satin or silk sash with tassels costs about 1 silver.



CLOTHING PRICES

Male Clothing

Knitted Cap	2 Groats
Leather Hat	8 Groats
Cloth Montero	6 Groats
Felt Hat	1 Silver
Fine Felt Hat	4 Silvers
Feathers	2 Groats
Plumes	1 Silver
Riding Boots	4 Silvers
Fine Boots	1 Mark
Shoes	1 Silver
Good Shoes	2 Silvers
Clogs	1 Groat
Sandals	1 Groat
Court Clothes	5 Marks
Rich Clothes	2 Marks
Good Clothes	6 Silvers
Plain Clothes	3 Silvers
Poor Clothes	6 Groats to 1 Silver

Women's Clothing

Ball Gown	5 Marks +
Rich Gown	2 Marks
Good Gown	6 Silvers
Plain Gown	3 Silvers
Poor Gown	6 Groats to 1 Silver
Slippers	4 Silvers
Boots	1 Silver
Jewelry	1 Mark +

FOUL WEATHER CLOTHING

HEAVY CLOAK

A calf length cloak with multiple mantles over the shoulder. Heavy cloaks are made of very close woven wool covered with oil cloth, and are quite rain proof if worn with a broad hat. A heavy cloak costs about 2 silvers, and weighs a kilo.

GREATCOAT

A long woolen coat designed to be worn over normal clothing in cold weather.

A plain woolen greatcoat costs 3 silvers.

A fine woolen greatcoat trimmed with fur costs 1 mark.

An attractive greatcoat lined with fine fur costs 4 marks.

A fine fur coat costs 12 marks or more.

OTHER ACCESSORIES

MASKS

A plain black domino mask costs about 4 groats. More elaborate domino masks might cost about 1 Silver. Carnival masks made into fantastic shapes might cost 2 silvers or more.

CLOAKS

A cheap woolen cloak costs 1 Silver. A good woolen cloak costs 4 silvers. A fine woolen cloak, lined with good cloth costs about 10 silvers. An elegant silken cloak, decorated, lined and trimmed costs about 2 marks.

SPECIAL NOTES ON HALF-HORSE CLOTHING

Half-Horses clothe their upper bodies in much the same manner as humans. Male Half-Horses wear no clothing on the "equine" segment of their bodies. Female Half-Horses wear apron-like skirts which reach down to the pastern (ankle) at the front, but which leave their equine section exposed.



Pay normal costs for clothing for Half-Horses. "Four-leggers" wear horse shoes on their hooves, which cost the same as those used for normal horses (see the section on transport).

CLOTHING FOR OTHER RACES

All other races (except merfolk) wear clothes, and must pay the costs listed above. Clothing for Harpies consists of sleeveless coats or tunics. Satyrs wear human style clothing on their upper bodies and leave their lower half bare. Pixies wear clothing of normal kinds, although Pixie clothes make allowance for tails and wings.

And before you ask - no! Half-Horses and Satyrs do not receive rebates on normal clothing prices for not wearing trousers.

TRANSPORT

Most folk travel from place to place by the use of their own two feet. For those who can afford it, however, there are a number of alternatives to walking.

HORSES

Horses are a part of everyday life. They function as efficient (though expensive) beasts of burden and transportation.

EQUINE CHARACTERISTICS

Horses have four basic characteristics which define their capabilities - Speed, Maneuverability, Strength and Endurance.

A horse's speed dictates its maximum rate of movement in the gallop (10 paces x the horse's speed rating per missile turn). Note that not all horses gallop - "hacks" will never rise above a canter. A gallop is only maintained for a number of turns equal to the horse's endurance characteristic.

Horses that are grain fed add 2 to their speed.

Maneuverability represents the horse's ability to turn, carrieole, jump obstacles and climb steep slopes. Roll vs. a horse's maneuverability whenever the horse moves through muddy ground, or if the rider attempts to perform a rapid maneuver.

A horse's Strength represents the animal's raw size and muscle power. It is used whenever the animal attempts to carry a heavy load, and is used in close combat (see below). A horse's strength also governs how much of a load it can carry. Every 10 kilos over the horse's (strength x 10) subtracts 1 from the horse's effective speed, maneuverability and endurance.

A horse's Endurance represents the amount of time that it may bear a load or keep moving. In a long, hard slog, a horse will keep moving at a walk without rest for a number of hours equal to 1/4 of its endurance. If a character is pushing his horse into a long period of high speed (a canter), the character must roll for his horse every hour of travel. Roll vs. 10 in the first hour, 15 in the second, 20 in the third, 25 in the fourth etc. If the roll is failed, then the animal "breaks down" and will not move. Roll the animal's strength vs. 10. On a failed strength roll, the animal actually dies of exhaustion.

Horses that are grain fed add 2 to their endurance.

Each of these characteristics is rolled on 3D6. In addition, special (and therefore expensive) breeds of horse will have an extra D6 in one or two of these characteristics, or an extra 1D6+1D3 in one characteristic.



HORSES

Linette falls in love with a rangy steppe pony from Forija. Although everyone else says that it is shaggy and ugly, she thinks it is cute. What's more, her friend the ostler is suitably impressed by the beast. She buys the horse (as a trained warhorse with 1 extra die in 2 characteristics this horse costs 12 marks), and rolls up its characteristics.

The creature has an extra dice of characteristic points added to its Speed and Maneuverability. This gives it characteristics as follows:

Speed (3D6+3): 19
Maneuverability (3D6+3): 18
Strength (2D6+3): 8
Endurance (2D6+3): 11

An excellent mount. Ugly as he is, Linette is overjoyed with her buy.

HORSE "QUIRKS" (OPTIONAL RULE)

When a player acquires a horse, roll 2D6. On a score of 12, the player's horse will have special characteristics. Roll 2D6 on the table below:

2	Very ugly
3	Lazy
4	Cowardly
5	Greedy
6	Unusual color or feature
7	Handsome/Beautiful
8	Good performance on heavy/wet ground
9	Good performance on slopes (sure footed)
10	Good jumper
11	Quick starter
12	Very intelligent*

*Roll 2D6 again - on a score of 12, the horse is able to understand speech, can count etc.

This helps give player characters mounts with character. Greedy horses can slyly sneak meals out of apple baskets, embarrassing their owner. Lazy horses can require riding rolls to motivate them, intelligent horses can be loyal companions or smart-arse jokers. Pick a personality trait for the beast and play him or her in character.

EXAMPLES OF THESE SPECIAL BREEDS OF HORSE INCLUDE

A CAVALRY CHARGER has an extra die in both its speed and strength.

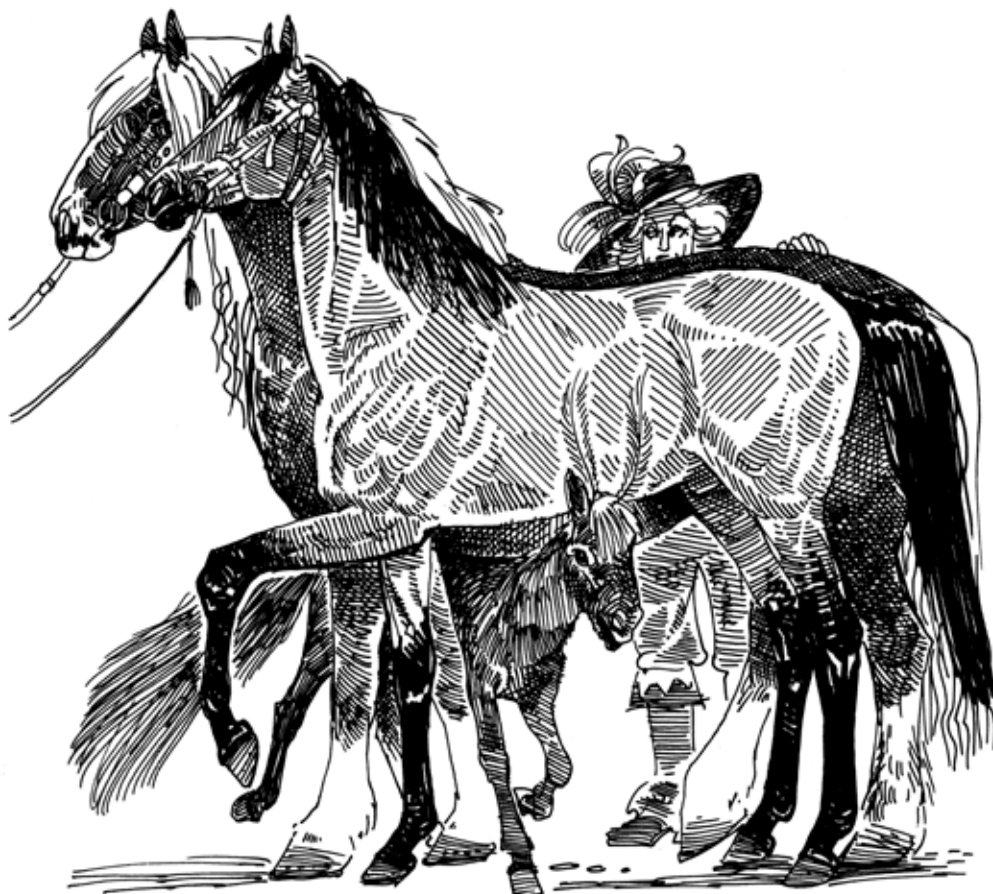
A DESTRIER (a cuirassier's mount) has an extra 1D6+1D3 in its strength.

A speedy HARABIAN STALLION would have an extra die in each of its speed and endurance.

A FINE RACING HORSE would add 1D6+1D3 to its speed.

A QUARTER-HORSE would have an extra die in both its maneuverability and endurance.

PIXIE PONIES are a special breed. These creatures are about the size of a shetland pony, though they are far more slender. Pixie ponies have shaggy grey fur (like a wolf), and have a pair of feathery antennae. They have a speed and maneuverability of 1d6+10, and strength of 2D3. They never grow larger than strength 7.



TRAINING

Harness trained horses are not trained to respond to a rider, but will pull loads.

Riding trained horses will bear a rider. If additional training is paid for, they will also jump obstacles etc.

A Warhorse will bear a rider and jump. In addition, warhorses are trained not to shy from fire, carrion or loud noise (gunfire), nor will they panic if crossing a wooden bridge (other horses will have to be lead across such bridges). Trained war horses will "bear down" on infantry in combat. Non-warhorses which are exposed to gunfire etc. will panic, requiring a drive roll vs. 15 (with the rider's riding skill acting as a DRM) to calm the horse.

MOUNTED COMBAT

MOUNTED VS. MOUNTED

Combat is determined as normal, but the combatant's horses push and shove against one another for advantage. When testing for starting initiative, the character with the strongest horse draws an extra card. If one character's horse is 3 or more points weaker than his opponent's horse, then the weaker horse will lose 1D3 endurance points per missile turn. When a horse's endurance drops to zero, the horse will collapse.

The big, heavy horses don't have it all their own way however. Maneuverability plays an important part in a cavalry melee. The character with the least maneuverable horse (found by rolling Maneuverability vs. Maneuverability modified by Riding Skill), lowers his maximum draw rating by 1.

MIXED CAVALRY AND INFANTRY COMBATS

Combat is handled in the usual fashion, except that characters on foot may not strike at a cavalryman's high line unless the infantryman is wielding a polearm. Likewise the cavalryman may never strike at the infantryman's low line, counting low blows as shots against the infantryman's high line or mid line (attacker's choice).

Missile fire which strikes a mounted character in the low attack line always hits the horse. Roll the strength of the damage caused vs. half the horses strength. A successful roll kills the horse outright. A failed roll reduces the horse's strength, endurance, speed and maneuverability by half the numerical value of the damage caused. When a horse is wounded, the rider must roll his Riding Skill vs. 10 to avoid being thrown. If the horse's strength is brought to zero, the horse dies. If other characteristics are brought to zero, then the horse collapses (and will die eventually). The rider of a wounded horse must make a riding roll vs. his drive in order to control his mount, otherwise the horse will throw him to the ground.

FOOT VS. MOUNTED

The infantryman may attack the rider's horse whenever he attempts a low blow (announce that the attack is against the horse when playing the attack card face down). Damage scored on the horse is subtracted from all of the horse's characteristics (the horse dies if its strength reaches 0, or collapses if any other characteristic = 0). When a horse is wounded, the rider must roll vs. his riding skill, testing his drive vs. 10 to control the beast and avoid being thrown. Blows against a horse may be parried by the rider in the normal fashion (low line cards only).

If a horse goes down, the rider must roll its dexterity vs. 10, with a positive DRM of +1 if it is wearing a breastplate, or +2 if it is wearing a half or 3/4 armor. If the roll is failed, then the infantryman gets one free attack at the rider as he lies helpless on the ground, otherwise the rider will roll clear of the horse and the combat will continue as normal on foot. Riders who have come off a horse in this fashion must lower their fatigue level by one.

The pike is the anti-cavalry weapon par excellence. Pikemen always gain starting initiative against cavalrymen, and add 2 to the numerical value of their attack cards if their target is charging towards the pike wielder.

MOUNTED VS. FOOT

Mounted characters may bring their horses into play against their targets. At the beginning of each missile turn, warhorses may "bear down" on infantrymen. Roll the horse's strength vs. the infantryman's at the start of each turn. If the roll succeeds, reduce the infantryman's fatigue level by 1. If the roll is a critical success (succeeds by 2 or more points under the required roll), then the infantryman is knocked off its feet. The mounted player draws a card from the combat deck, and applies this as damage to his opponent. The combat will then continue as normal, but the cavalryman will have the initiative.

Linette finds herself matching swords from horseback with a cavalryman mounted on a big, brutal charger (Strength 16). Having the bigger horse gives her opponent a bonus when determining the initiative at the start of their sword fight. In addition, Linette's horse loses 1D3 points of endurance every 10 melee passes since the enemy horse shoves and batters at her wiry little mount. She is more maneuverable, however, and so she actually manages to dispatch her opponent easily, since his new draw rating is lowered by 1.

Linette sees more enemy cavalry coming for her, and turns to flee. As she gallops off, she fires back over her saddle at her pursuers with her pistol, and scores a hit on one. She draws a card for hit location, and strikes her enemy in the low line - she has hit his horse!

Linette draws for damage, and gets a powerful hit (with her follow up damage, her total damage score is 8). With a strength of 16 and an endurance of 10, the enemy horse has a total of 8 hit points. Eight points of damage brings the enemy horse to a grinding halt, and it collapses to the ground throwing the rider. Pleased at the confusion she has caused, Linette claps her heels to her ugly horse and spurs off, easily outdistancing her clumsy pursuers.



PRICES

Harness horses cost 2 marks.

Riding horses cost 4 marks.

A riding horse which is also trained as a jumper costs 5 marks.

Warhorses cost 7 marks. 1 extra die in 1 characteristic costs +2 Marks.

1 extra die in 2 characteristics costs +5 Marks.

An additional 1D6+1D3 in 1 characteristic costs +8 Marks.

Handsome horses or horses of unusual colors will sell for a higher price.

SADDLES & TACK.

To ride a horse, characters will need saddles and tack. The purchase of “saddles and tack” includes a heavy saddle, a pair of pistol holsters mounted just before the pommel, bridle, stirrups, saddle cloth etc. Saddles and tack weigh a total of 10 kilos.

Plain saddles with pistol holsters cost about 1 mark. Well tooled saddles & holsters cost about 2 marks. Elaborately decorated saddles, holsters and tack cost at least 10 marks.

OSTLERY

Horses require a great deal of care. Horses on the move will not normally be able to keep themselves fed merely on wayside grass (particularly on well traveled routes). Proper forage must be found (hay, gathered grass etc.) and in rural territory the gathering of enough forage to feed a mount for a day will take an hour or two at least.

Horses acquire fatigue if they are hard pressed day after day. Lower a horse's endurance by 1 for each full day it is pressed to continuously travel or exert itself. The fatigue caused by 1 day's travel is nullified by ½ a day's rest, or by giving the horse a good ale steep with its grain at night. Every day of travel, riders should roll 2D6. On a score of 11+ their horse has thrown a shoe, and has its speed halved until it can be re-shod.

The reader will have already noted that grain fed horses are better conditioned than forage fed horses. Horses must be continually fed on grain and oats to qualify as “grain fed” (at least 3 meals in 4 must be grain).

Every evening that a rider stops at an inn, the rider's horse must be cared for in some way. The nightly charges for feeding and keeping horses at an inn are as follows.

Hay and forage; 1 groat

Grain and oats; 3 groats

Ale steep; 5 groats

Stabling; 1 groat

Shoeing; 8 groats

OTHER BEASTS OF BURDEN

Oxen, donkeys and mules are common cargo carrying beasts due to their relative cheapness. Oxen are very slow, seldom rising above walking pace. They mostly serve as heavy dray beasts pulling carts and ploughs. Donkeys are not really suitable for serious riding or towing duties, but can carry a fair burden on their backs. Mules are reasonably cheap riding beasts, but will never rise above a canter.

An ox costs about 8 silvers.

A donkey costs 12 silvers.

A trained mule costs about 1 mark.

VEHICLES

There are numerous types of vehicles which may be drawn or carried in LACE & STEEL. Vehicles will normally be confined to roads, since they bog down in soft or uneven surfaces.

Note that the following costs for the hire of vehicles do not include drivers and servants.

SEDAN CHAIR

A covered booth containing a comfortable chair. Sedan chairs are carried by 4 servants, and are thus used only by the wealthy, and only over short distances within cities.

A sedan chair costs about 10 marks to purchase, or 1 Silver piece to hire for an evening.

CART

2 wheeled carts are commonly used for transporting light cargoes. They may be pulled by 1 or 2 oxen or horses.

A cart costs about 12 silvers. Spare wheels cost 1 Silver piece. A cart will cost about 4 groats to hire for a day.

WAGON

4 wheeled wagons are used to lug heavy cargoes. They are pulled by 2 or more oxen or dray horses.

A wagon costs about 1 mark, and may be hired at a rate of 8 groats per day. Spare wheels cost the same as cart wheels.

CARRIAGE

Persons of gentle birth and sufficient funds will often make their long distance travel in a carriage. Carriages have four wheels, and are sprung and upholstered for the passenger's comfort. Carriages may carry up to four passengers inside the cabin, and outside the cabin there is room for a driver and a driver's mate at the front of the carriage, and two footmen on the rear.

A plain carriage costs 40 marks. A well appointed carriage costs about 100 marks. The hire of a carriage costs about 1 mark a day. A seat on a highway passenger coach costs 1 or 2 silvers, depending on the distance to be traveled.



STAGECOACHES

Most towns are linked by stagecoach routes, which shuttle passengers speedily along highways. Passage in a stagecoach costs 1 or 2 silvers, depending upon the distance that will be traveled.

Highwaymen often waylay stagecoaches (since the routes and timetables are well known), and the driver's assistant will normally be armed with a blunderbuss to prepare him against such an emergency. Even so the coach's crew have a responsibility to see that their passengers remain unharmed, and they will surrender if their charges come under serious threat.

Many Highwaymen have reputations for gallant or eccentric behavior (e.g. they never steal from a lady, will ransom a lady's' jewels in return for a kiss, or only steal lupins etc.). Some highwaymen become quite famous, and many ladies half hope that they will be lucky enough to be held up by them!

BOATS AND SHIPS

Water travel is usually faster, more economical and requires less effort than travel by land. Apart from seagoing vessels and coastal boats, water vehicles will also be found plying rivers, lakes and canals. There is no cheaper way to ship cargo than by boat or barge.

ROWING BOATS

Small boats are commonly used for fishing, or for transport out to large ships. A small sailing dinghy costs about 2 marks, while a ship's long boat costs about 4 marks. Spare oars cost about 8 groats, and spare sails cost about 2 silvers.

Given the prices of boats, fisher folk treasure their craft and hand them down from father to son. A boat thief is just about the very worst sort of criminal to such simple people, and culprits are beaten and handed over to the authorities if caught.

BARGES

Barges are a common sight on rivers and canals. Barges are low, flat platforms designed to transport bulk cargo along calm waters. Most barges will be towed along by one or more horses or oxen which plod along a tow path which runs beside the canal or river.

Passage on a barge between 2 nearby points along the same waterway should only cost a groat or two. Cargo transport will cost about 6 groats to 1 silver per tonne.

SHIPS

The southern continent is just entering a great age of exploration and discovery. New lands and trade routes are being discovered every year, and the maritime nations bitterly contest the sea lanes for supremacy. The seafaring life is not quite as grim as its historical counterpart thanks to higher standards of cleanliness, good nutrition (thanks to the alchemists), disease curing potions, and purify food and water spells. The seaman's profession is well respected, and sailors tend to be more well-to-do and better educated than their historical counterparts.

The sailing technology of LACE & STEEL is well advanced. Multiple decked ships with combined square/lateen rigs serve as steady gun platforms in combat. The ships are close rigged, and can sail within about 60° of the wind. Sea combats consist of hard pounding and tight sailing, usually followed by a bitter boarding action. The stout sides of most sailing vessels will withstand long ranged cannon shot (which simply springs the boards and causes the ship to take water). The difficulty of actually sinking a wooden ship means that most actions eventually come down to cutlass point.

The ships of LACE & STEEL have straight "beakheads", 3 or 4 masts and 2 to 3 decks. The largest warships are about 1600 tons displacement, and measure about 65 meters in length and 12 meters in beam.

Ships are virtually autonomous communities in their own right. A full ship's company includes blacksmiths, carpenters, coopers, divers and cooks, and many other skilled crew apart from sailing crew and gunners. Characters who choose the sea as their profession might find themselves cast in any one of a number of roles.

The author must confess to being a hopeless fan of pirate movies. Characters who go seafaring should be kept busy with evil bosuns, fearful storms, doldrums and crew dissent. The actual combats should be played up for all they're worth.



SHIP STATISTICS

STRUCTURE

A ship's structure value is equal to its tonnage divided by 50, unless the ship is larger than 1000 tons, in which case the structure = 10 + (1 per 100 tons total displacement).

GUNNERY

Tonnage divided by 50 (halved or quartered for merchantmen). 1 gunnery factor represents about 2 heavy cannon (1 on each broadside of the ship), or a larger number of lighter guns.

CREW

The gunnery crew	=	12 x the ship's gunnery factor.
The sailing crew	=	1/4 of the tonnage
Warships will carry soldiers	=	to 1/10 x the ship's tonnage.

MANEUVERABILITY

A ship's maneuverability rating is used as a DRM on the vessel's "wind gauge" (initiative) rolls. Ships maneuverability ratings are dependent upon their tonnage displacement.

Tonnage is 100 to 450 tons	DRM = -2
Tonnage is 451 to 700 tons	DRM = -1
Tonnage is 701 tons to 900 tons	DRM = 0
Tonnage is 901 tons to 1200 tons	DRM = +1
Tonnage is 1201 tons to 1600 tons	DRM = +2

The speed of a ship is directly related to its maneuverability rating. Small ships tend to be fast ships, and have shallower drafts than their heavier brethren.

SWIVELS

Most ships will mount 1 swivel per 400 tons. Some merchantmen will be armed with swivels alone, in which case they might be expected to carry a total of 4 to 6 swivel guns regardless of size.

MERCHANTMEN

Merchant ships are round bowed sailing craft of between 100 and 1200 tons displacement. They can carry cargo totaling about a third to a quarter of their displacement in weight. Merchant ships are slow, and have a +1 penalty to their "wind gauge" rolls. They also have only 3/4 the sailing crew of warships.

MEN O' WAR

Men o' war are "race" bowed vessels capable of higher speeds than the average merchant ship. Warships carry the heavy guns necessary to cause real damage to other vessels.

Men o' war add an additional 10% to their structure.

Warships may choose to add an extra 10% (rounding up) to their gunnery factor at a cost of +1 to their maneuverability.

PASSAGE ABOARD SHIP

Passage aboard ship includes bedding and food. Luxury passage has the passenger seated at the Captain's table served by the entire crew. Deck class passage has the passenger living in a hammock in the forecabin and eating with the crew.

The following costs are for sea travel along coasts or out to popular ports. Long and involved sea journeys might require transfer to several different ships.

Deck class passage costs 1 mark.
Cabin class passage costs 4 marks.
Luxury passage costs 10 marks.

Passage for a horse costs 8 silvers. The owner must also provide food for the beast.

THE "SAUCY GANNET"

The "Saucy Gannet" is a new Man 'o War of 1500 tons. Looking at the charts, we see that this gives her statistics as follows:

Structure: 28 (25 points, +10% [2.5 rounded up] for being a Man 'o War.)
Gunnery Factor: 30
Gunnery Crew: 360
Sailing Crew: 325
Soldiers: 150
Maneuverability: +2
Swivels: 4

TRAVEL

Traveling long distances by foot or horseback can be very wearying. LACE & STEEL seeks to make traveling tiresome, and frequent stops at taverns rewarding by introducing the following travel rules.

TRAVEL FATIGUE

Whenever characters travel for a day on foot or horseback, or 2 days by coach, they must check for travel fatigue. The characters must make a roll of their endurance vs. 10 (with a DRM of the character's traveling skill). If the character is on short rations for the day, then 2 rolls must be made. Failed rolls indicate that the character has accumulated travel fatigue, and must now roll 1D6 on Table 1 below

TABLE 1

Dice roll	Effect
1,2	Character becomes weary (-1 to Strength, Endurance and Dexterity)
3	Character's temper frays (Reason and Intuition -1)
4	Character becomes disheveled (Charisma -1)
5	Character suffers an embarrassing accident* (Self image penalty of + 1)
6	Special effect (roll on table 2)

* e.g. falls into a mud puddle, comes off his horse etc

TABLE 2

Dice roll	Effect
1	Character's clothes become torn (must be fixed with tailoring skill)
2	Food spoils (some of the character's supplies become useless)
3	Dropped item (the character drops one piece of equipment by the wayside)
4	Weapon or armor rusts (one piece of metal equipment goes rusty, and requires maintenance)
5	Character suffers a bite, sprain etc which halves its dexterity for the next day
6	Character catches a chill/fever (becomes a cold if the night is spent in the open*)

*Characters with colds lower all their characteristics by 1 and receive a self image penalty of +1 until the cold is cured (roll endurance vs 10 each week to cure a cold).

Losses to characteristics due to travel fatigue are temporary, but are cumulative until a recovery roll is made (see below).



TRAVEL FATIGUE

After a miserable day on the road, Linette is just about ready to call it quits. Adventuring isn't all the fun it's made out to be. With her short rations, Linette has had to make two rolls of her endurance vs. 10, and has failed both times. She has become WEARY (-1 to her Strength, Endurance and Dexterity). What's worse, she slipped over in the gutter and splashed face first into a mud puddle, and has had to endure the laughs of passersby ever since. The roadside inn is the most welcome sight she has ever seen.

Linette orders a meal, and goes off to repair her Self Image by having a bath. The compensatory action of bathing and turning out for dinner in her prettiest clothes will cancel Linette's Self Image DRM caused by her embarrassing accident.

Now for her WEARINESS. She arranges for a single room. This will cure her travel fatigue on a 9 or less. Linette has ordered a good quality meal, which gives her a DRM of -1 on her travel fatigue recovery roll. In addition, she drinks wine with her meal, giving her an extra DRM of -1 on her recovery roll.

Linette has her meal, listens to the jokes and music in the tap room, and tells a few tales of her own while sharing drinks with the other guests. After a good nights sleep, she makes her recovery roll - a six. Success! Much restored, Linette: feels able to go on with her journey the next day.

RESTORING TRAVEL FATIGUE

The characteristic losses imposed on travelers by travel fatigue are eliminated by a good meal and a good night's rest. This means that a meal must be prepared by a cook, with a skill roll being successfully made vs. cooking skill. Tavern meals have a set chance of restoring weary travelers depending upon the quality of the meal.

If the night's rest which follows the meal is in the open, then a roll must be made of each traveler's drive vs. 10. If the roll was failed, then the character restores only 50% of its ailments.



COSTS FOR TAVERN MEALS ETC. ARE AS FOLLOWS

INN ACCOMMODATIONS (INCLUDES BREAKFAST)

- Sleeping on a bench in the common room (Cures travel fatigue on a 5-) 1 groat
- Sleeping in a shared room (Cures travel fatigue on a 7-) 3 groats
- Sleeping in a single room (Cures travel fatigue on a roll of 9-) 6 groats
- One night in a well appointed room complete with bath, room service etc. (Cures travel fatigue on a roll of 10-) 2 silvers

TAVERN MEALS

- Poor quality food and drink (DRM of +1 on travel fatigue recovery roll) 1 groat
- Average quality meal and drinks (DRM of 0 on travel fatigue recovery roll) 3 groats
- Good quality meal and drinks (DRM of -1 on travel fatigue recovery roll) 6 groats
- Luxurious quality meal and drinks (DRM of -2 on travel fatigue recovery roll) 2 silvers

DRINK

- Tankard of ale 1/2 groat
- Tankard of "sack" (coarse, cheap wine) 1 groat
- Bottle of common wine 4 groats
- Bottle of rum 6 groats
- Bottle of good wine 1 silver or more

Drink is normally included with a meal, but characters may well desire more drinks both before and after a meal, or when carousing. A few drinks taken in good company will give a DRM of -1 on travel fatigue recovery rolls. Travel Skill acts as a DRM on recovery rolls.

As an alternative means of alleviating travel fatigue, travelers may elect to take a day's rest. This will cure travel fatigue on a 6- unless the weather turns bad, or the spot chosen for the days rest turns out to be less than peaceful.

Please note that these restoration techniques do not cure colds or restore lost or damaged equipment! Staying in a warm, comfortable inn with a bottle of grog is the best way of curing a cold, so apply DRMs to cold recovery rolls for good food and accommodation, or adverse DRMs for staying out in the cold and wet.

HIGHWAY ENCOUNTERS

- | | |
|----|--|
| 2 | Recruiting party. |
| 3 | Highwaymen. * |
| 4 | Troll or ogre. |
| 5 | Laborer. |
| 6 | Farmers (going to/ returning from market). |
| 7 | Stagecoach. |
| 8 | Soldiers. ** |
| 9 | Travelers. |
| 10 | Oafs, thugs or brigands. * |
| 11 | Unusual weather (rain, hail, storm, heat, etc.). |
| 12 | Nobleman/ Noblewoman and entourage ** |

* Will often ignore numerous or well armed parties.

** 1 in 6 chance of being on a vital mission of some kind.

SONGS AND LEAFLETS

A typical figure found in a Mittelmarch marketplace is the pamphleteer. These folk sell news sheets, song lyrics, political pamphlets or information on various topics for a minimal price.

The level of education during this period is quite good. Most commoners will know someone who can read and write, and will take pamphlets and newspapers to these people to have them read. Songs are written to match common tunes that everyone knows (tunes such as 'Greensleeves', 'Prince Rupert's March' and 'Mary Mary Quite Contrary' are tunes that were used in this way in our own world - the lyrics that are now associated with these tunes are simply the ones that were popular/printable enough to be passed down to us).

SCIENTIFIC/SCHOLARLY EQUIPMENT

LACE & STEEL is currently in a "printing age", where books are being type set and printed on a large scale, and the literacy rate is spreading. Political leaflets and scurrilous songs are handed out at every market, and houses of learning are now serving minor gentry and middle class scholars as well as the offspring of the nobility. Poetry, plays and technical texts are now freely available to the public, giving all people the opportunity to intellectually better themselves.

Having a book printed is a very expensive business. It is customary to entice a wealthy nobleman to patronize a book (underwriting the initial printing expenses), and therefore the most widely read authors will be those with influence at court.

PRINTED MATTER

Books are reasonably well available in cities and towns, but are very uncommon in areas of smaller population. They are printed using movable type, and are often decorated with lithographs and wood cut prints. New books are made in "uncut" form, necessitating the separation of every pair of pages with a knife. It is easy to see which sections of a book have interested the reader if some of the pages are cut, while others remain joined.

POCKET BOOK

Small books designed to fit in a coat pocket. These texts are popular for travelers. Pocket books are by necessity short, and lack internal illustrations.

A typical pocket book might cost 2 silvers.

BOOK

Large books are not particularly portable. The price of a book might vary between 4 silvers and 10 marks, depending upon the rarity of the volume.

MAPS AND CHARTS

Reliable maps and technical charts will cost at least 8 silvers. They are normally stored in a folio or a wooden or ivory tube for protection (tubes or folios might cost about 1 Silver or more).

LEAFLETS

Leaflets and broadsheets will cost about 2 silvers for the initial type setting, and 1 groat for every 4 copies produced. Delivery might take a day or two.



OPTICAL INSTRUMENTS

The glaziers of LACE & STEEL are capable of producing very fine lenses.

PERSPECTIVE GLASS

A “perspective glass” is a telescope. Small folding telescopes are very useful items for military officers, and are reasonably robust. Small brass shutters protect the outer lens, and the folded instrument would be a tube about 20 cm long. Folding telescopes weigh about ½ a kilo.

Heavier astronomer’s glasses are mounted on tripods, and are in no way portable.

A small folding perspective glass costs about 10 marks. An astronomer’s glass costs about 20 marks.

SPECTACLES

Spectacles are now widely in use amongst the poor of sight amongst the middle and upper classes. Spectacles cost about 2 marks.

Monocles are sometimes used as an alternative to spectacles by military minded noblemen. The cost is about the same as that for a pair of spectacles.

QUIZZING GLASS

A magnifying lens set into a long, decorative handle. “Quizzing glasses” are a part of a noble’s court dress, and are used for “takin a closer look” at something that has attracted the user’s attention. The effect is thus to exaggerate the user’s interest, rather than to actually aid the user’s sight.

A quizzing glass costs about 2 marks. Ivory handled “deluxe” models would cost about 6 marks. Male characters who are using a quizzing glass and who are engaged in repartee with another male character who lacks a quizzing glass should receive a favorable DRM.

SCIENTIFIC HARDWARE

The mathematicians of LACE & STEEL have been able to perfect very accurate measures and scales. Such items are difficult to reproduce, requiring meticulous care, and are therefore somewhat expensive.

ALCHEMIST’S EQUIPMENT

Crocks, scales, mortises and pestles are an essential part of any alchemist’s workshop, and these adjuncts don’t come cheaply. A simple set of such gear costs about 8 marks.

ASTROLABE

A type of slide rule used for making astrological calculations. Astrolabes cost about 8 marks for a simple model, and 16 for a complex version (which gives the astrologer a -1 DRM on all astrological skill rolls).

NAVIGATION TOOLS

Navigational dividers, sextants etc can be bought for about 4 marks. They are essential to accurate navigation. Their total weight might be about 2 kilos.





Example

"Gentlemen:

You see a lovely young woman (wearing peasant dress) running towards you, weeping and wailing. Twenty paces behind her you see an angry group of men, all 5 or 6 of whom wave fists or cudgels. They seem intent on beating the poor girl.

The girl sees you and sobs in relief. She runs straight towards you with desperate hope in her lovely eyes."

Note: The girl might be a thief or witch who is being chased by the enraged townsfolk. She will cry out to the player characters for protection, involving them in a sticky situation.

RUNNING ADVENTURES

LACE & STEEL is an atmospheric game, and so melodrama and feel should always be emphasized throughout any adventure.

An adventure is like a story or movie, where the Referee and players have the unique opportunity to develop the storyline and enhance the drama through their own decisions and imagination. For the best entertainment value, the participants must be given the opportunity to enter into the realm of the fantastic, and play out some of their own favorite romantic fantasy images.

A good adventure will bring to life some sort of image that the player can relate to, whether it be swinging across the deck on a rope with your cutlass between your teeth, or grimly ordering a cavalry troop into the charge, or alighting from a carriage all dressed for the court ball (fashionably late as usual). LACE & STEEL deals with a genre which is the very quintessence of swashbuckling adventure, courtly splendor and dashing romance, so there should be few problems in creating scenarios and campaigns which capture this atmosphere.

The following pre-prepared adventures are designed to introduce the reader to the wide variety of adventures that can be run for LACE & STEEL. Each one is suitable for use as a single scenario, or can act as the lead-in to an ongoing campaign. They also contain incidents, descriptions and characters that may be used in the reader's own scenarios.

USING THE TAROT TO CREATE ADVENTURE EPISODES

Tarot cards may be used as a general play aid, assisting the Referee in his or her task of thinking up story lines in which to involve the player characters.

IMPROVISING ADVENTURE EPISODES

Whenever the Referee needs to come up with a brief plot of future events from the "top of the head", try pulling out two cards from the tarot deck, and looking up the results in the guide book that comes with the deck. This might provide a good idea for a set of events which the characters might have the opportunity to get involved in. Thus the Referee might draw a Five of Wands (showing a group of young men squabbling and contesting with one another) and The High Priestess. This might suggest to the Referee that the characters should be given the opportunity to make fools of themselves over a woman, or that a woman might start a plot, fight or argument which will somehow involve the player characters.

CHARACTER SIGNIFICATORS

The appearance of the cards which act as the signifiers of player or non player characters in such a tarot reading can be used as an indication that that particular character will become central to the up and coming events.

ASTROLOGY SKILL

Characters who have a high skill in astrology could be given the opportunity to see the first of the two cards drawn, thus gaining a limited, confused foreknowledge of events. Otherwise the Referee should be careful to keep the cards which have been drawn carefully concealed. This is for two main reasons

A) To prevent players from gaining unfair hints about coming events

B) To prevent the annoyance caused by players who style themselves as skilled tarot card readers. There's always some dozy blighter who wants to impress everyone with how much he or she knows about the tarot. Remember: the Referee always knows more than the players - when in doubt, just look wise and smirk knowingly...

“PRESSED MEN”

A SCENARIO FOR ANY NUMBER OF PLAYERS

(PREFERABLY HUMAN MALES OF LOW BIRTH)

This scenario is designed as a means of introducing characters and players to the seafaring life. It is a good introduction into a campaign, and certainly cuts down on all the tedious buying of equipment that usually slows down the start of a new game.

The scenario is most suited to characters who are not gentlemen or nobles. If gentry are being played as characters, then they should perhaps be worked into the adventure as criminals or prisoners of war who have been pressed into naval service.

THE PRESS GANG

Consciousness returns slowly and painfully, and you begin to grope your way across a flat, unsteady wooden surface. The stench of tar and salt lies thick upon the air, making your stomach queasy and your head spin. As your wits slowly return, it dawns on you that the rocking motion around you may not all be in your head...

The player characters have been up late at night drinking in a dockside tavern, and their inebriated bodies have been snatched up by a press gang and dragged on board a ship of war. The characters have been stripped by their captors, and own only the clothes they stand in.

The ship has put to sea, and the characters awaken to the melodious tones of Petty officer Woodcock. Woodcock's initial greeting will be a rain of kicks and blows, and shouts of "on your feet, filth!" In their queasy condition, the party will do just about anything to stop all the noise and racket.

As you stand in line, you blearily see a huge bear of a man dressed in seafarer's clothes. A rope dangles from his wrist, with which he lashes laggards into line.

You have never seen such a hypnotically ugly person in your whole life. Hugely strong, scarred, pot bellied and with mad, staring eyes, the fellow seems like he might fly into a hysterical fit of rage at any moment, or slaver in the corner like some sort of beast. His head twitches uncontrollably on its neck as he looks the line over, and he cackles with glee. Suddenly he looks past you, and snaps smartly to attention.

Onto the deck stalks First Lieutenant Marko, a tall, grim figure in his austere blue uniform. He nods to the "beast" and says "Thank you Petty Officer Woodcock". He looks over the party and informs them that they are now in the navy aboard his majesty's ship "Terminator". The party is to be placed in amongst the lower deck gun crews.

If a player character interrupts or protests, Woodcock will lash out with his huge fist and punch the offender in the stomach. The victim will fold over and lie helplessly on the deck spewing his guts out. The rest of the party will see Woodcock's eyes as he attacks - childlike blue eyes quivering on the edge of madness. The Lieutenant will wait calmly until Woodcock has administered his treatment, and then continue on as if nothing has happened.

Cackling with glee, his absurd, childlike blue eyes gleaming, Woodcock will shove his characters below decks. He will bully and terrify the player characters, trying to provoke a reaction, for he desperately hopes to make an example of one of the new men. He will push the player characters into dangerous jobs (e.g. sending terrified landsmen up to the tallest yardarm), hoping for that one word or act of rebellion that will let him have a player character seized up and flogged.



The "Terminator" is not a happy ship. The crew lives in mortal terror of their captain and petty officers, fearing and loathing their leaders. Fear rules the "Terminator" - fear of the rope and lash. The ships discipline is ruthlessly administered by the first lieutenant with little regard for justice. As long as the scum from below decks are trembling the captain is happy.

THE "TERMINATOR"

Duncruigh's HMS Terminator is a 1200 ton man of war. A newly built and outfitted three master with 2 decks, her statistics are as follows:

Name: Terminator - 1200 ton Man o' war

Structure: 22

Gunnery factor: 24

Crew: The ideal crew is 588 seamen, +120 soldiers (80 musketeers and 40 armored halberdiers). The Terminator currently lacks 60 seamen to make up its full complement. The ship's crew includes 2 Harpies (used as scouts and couriers), 6 Half-Horses, 1 Satyr and a Troll.

Maneuverability: +1

Swivel guns: 3

The Terminator is about 60 meters long and 10 meters abeam. Her armament consists of 60 guns (24 culverins, 24 demi-culverins and 12 sakers). Her crew is newly gathered, and is not yet well trained.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN HARDICH

Disposition: Justice (R) - The captain is bureaucratic, bigoted and pompous.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	9
Endurance:	10
Dexterity:	12
Reason:	12
Intuition:	8
Drive:	14
Charisma:	13
Magical Aptitude:	8
Hit Points:	5
Wound level:	1
Maximum hand:	5
New draw:	3

SKILLS:

Seamanship - 4, Navigation - 2, Military Tactics - 2, Thrusting Sword - 2, Pistol - 2, Leadership - 2, Administration - 2, Artillery - 0

Description: A individual who firmly believes in social distinctions and the inferiority of the lower classes. He cares nothing for the welfare of the folk on the lower decks, but only for the running of an efficient ship. Justice takes second place to efficiency. He has chosen his officers for their family backgrounds rather than records. Brutal warrant officers are applauded for their efficiency and zeal.

Hardich's ship runs well, even though he does nothing to encourage the love of the common crew. This is because every man soon knows his place, and what is expected of him. Players will soon find that the ship lacks heart and love - which might prove important in the trials to come.



FIRST LIEUTENANT MARKO

Disposition: The Tower (R). The Lieutenant is proud and haughty, which conceals his inner uncertainty and fears. He feels a constant need to prove his power over his subordinates.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	10
Endurance:	9
Dexterity:	10
Reason:	10
Intuition:	11
Drive:	12
Charisma:	7
Magical Aptitude:	12
Hit Points:	5
Wound level:	1
Maximum hand:	5
New draw:	3



SKILLS:

Seamanship - 3, Navigation - 2, Military Tactics - 1, Leadership - 1, Gunnery - 2, Thrusting Sword - 2, Pistol - 1, Law - 0, Fashion - 1

Description: Tall, spindly and grim, Marko always keeps to a forbidding martial character. He is always impeccably dressed. Marko fears the scum from the lower decks, and is glad to have his Bosun act as go-between. He will pick on men as scapegoats for any unforeseen accidents and events, and delights in having such men savagely punished.

SECOND LIEUTENANT PAVEL

Disposition: Two of Swords: Lieutenant Pavel is law abiding and responsible, taking care of his men and dispensing an even handed justice. He is patriotic and brave, and cooperates well with others.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	8
Endurance:	13
Dexterity:	11
Reason:	11
Intuition:	12
Drive:	12
Charisma:	13
Magical Aptitude:	10
Hit Points:	5
Wound level:	0
Maximum hand:	6
New draw:	4



SKILLS:

Seamanship - 4, Navigation - 2, Military Tactics - 1, Thrusting Sword - 3, Pistol - 1, Leadership - 3, Administration - 0, Artillery - 1

Description: A handsome, level headed officer who cares for his men. Pavel is extremely popular, and most sailors feverishly wish that he was the Captain. Pavel will attempt to shield men from the excesses of petty officers such as Woodcock, but First Lieutenant Marko will often interfere and foil him in this regard.

The conflict between the first and second lieutenants might well come to a head during the course of the adventure. Start a list of ties and antipathies for Lieutenant Pavel (he begins the scenario with a level 0 antipathy for the Captain and Lieutenant Marko, and a level three tie to his duty). Once his hatred of his superior officers begins to challenge his tie to duty, trouble might start. Roll his antipathies v.s. his ties to see if the lieutenant "flies off the handle" and calls his superior out to a duel, or becomes insubordinate.

LIFE UNDER WOODCOCK

The indignities that Woodcock heaps upon the player characters are many and varied. This man is evil! He is brutal, amoral and twisted.

To make life easier, Woodcock bullies underlings into completely cowering to him. By falsely reporting subordinates for misdemeanors, engineering equipment breakages or provoking incidents of insubordination, Woodcock can have crewmen seized up and flogged. To avoid this fate, the players and seamen must pay him their rum rations, fruit rations, polish his boots and run errands. They might even be called upon to provide less savory services (shudder).

Play Woodcock well and he will haunt your player's nightmares forever!

KILLING WOODCOCK

Killing Woodcock is virtually impossible. The Referee must make all relevant dice rolls in secret. If a player fires a musket at him during battle, it should jam. If they put poison in his beer mug, he will gulp his drink down and ask for more with no ill effects (he will choose that day of all days to switch drinking mugs!). Woodcock will realize that his crewmates are after his hide, and might arrange suitable accidents for the ringleaders. Though it is possible to get him, Referees should stretch this out for as long as possible. When dealing with someone like Woodcock, there must be no chances taken. If an escape is possible, then he will make it somehow. Any murder attempt must be a sure thing in order to succeed.

PETTY OFFICER WOODCOCK

Disposition: The Moon (R): Woodcock is an unstable psychopath, who tends to quickly switch between giggling amusement and extreme brutality. A sick man.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	15
Endurance:	13
Dexterity:	8
Reason:	9
Intuition:	13
Drive:	14
Charisma:	5
Magical Aptitude:	13
Hit Points:	7
Wound level:	3
Maximum hand:	5
New draw:	3



SKILLS:

Long Arms - 1, Pistol - 1, Cutting Sword - 2, Brawling - 3, Dagger - 1, Seamanship - 2, Swimming - 1, Gunnery - 1, Legend Lore - 0, Climbing - 1, Spot Hidden - 1, Weather Lore - 1

Description: This huge, brutal individual will soon become the pivotal hatred of the player character's lives. A cackling, brutal disciplinarian, Woodcock also happens to be a thief and an extortionist. He will soon find weaker characters and manage to have them flogged for some imaginary offence. Once this has happened, he will use this example to extort money and favors from others, and will soon have the entire watch working for him.

Woodcock is barking mad. He tends to look at his potential victims and giggle, and often speaks into thin air ("I hate them! I really do, you know! I really hate them!" or "They're all going to die, soon. All of them!"). He is hugely strong, and shambles about like some half-tamed beast. He is hypnotically ugly, with a long, livid scar across his face and a huge pot belly. Woodcock is always the perfect sailor when in the presence of his superiors, and knows all the tricks of dealing with the upper echelons. Most officers simply don't know how they could manage without him, and will treat complaints against him as seditious nonsense.

Woodcock is well steeped in the lore of magic, and will scare simple sailors with the mystical air about him - for Woodcock is the man who cannot die. Woodcock has survived walking the plank (swimming calmly to shore 2 days later), and has suffered innumerable wounds. He (and everyone else on board) is firmly convinced that he cannot die. He has an utter contempt for pain, and simply knows that all his wounds will heal. Sailors will tell players tales of Petty Officer Woodcock - that he was in the front of a group which was blown apart by grapeshot, and when the smoke cleared, only he was left alive, cackling and capering. Tales are told of the times sailors have tried to shoot him down from behind, and of how the bullets mysteriously missed, leaving Woodcock to kill his would-be murderer with his own hands, giggling all the time. In battle he is ferociously brave, constantly giggling to his companions "Stick near me mates - they can't kill me, so you're safe with me. They can't kill me!"

Referees must play up Woodcock for all that he is worth, and make the player character's lives a misery. The players will probable decide to kill him - but how do you kill a man who cannot die? If their intentions are found out, they will surely hang, so they must be careful!

RODGER AURICULUS, SHIP'S MAGE

Disposition: The Empress. Rodger is a devious, secretive little sneak.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	6
Endurance:	7
Dexterity:	13
Reason:	12
Intuition:	9
Drive:	10
Charisma:	5
Magical Aptitude:	18
Hit Points:	5
Wound level:	1
Maximum hand:	6
New draw:	3
Sorcery hand:	5
Sorcery draw:	3



SKILLS:

Legend Lore - 1, Sorcery - 3, Alchemy - 2 (Can brew poisons, "cure fever" potions and healing potions), Hedge Magic - 0 (Can purify food and water), Detect magic - 1, Sneak - 2

Description: With a devious manner and a voice like Peter Laurey, Rodger makes a perfect ship's mage. He has come to sea to escape embarrassments at home, but has taken his fallen fortunes in his stride.

The ship's mage should be much in evidence during the scenario, if only to emphasize the fact that this is a fantasy adventure. He will give poison to player characters if they can trade information, but might use his knowledge to their discomfort later on in the adventure.

SEAMAN URIAH QUIZLING

Disposition: Five of Pentacles (R): Uriah is self seeking and amoral little creep.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	7
Endurance:	12
Dexterity:	12
Reason:	8
Intuition:	13
Charisma:	8
Magical Aptitude:	7
Hit Points:	5
Wound level:	0
Maximum hand:	5
New draw:	4



SKILLS:

Sneak - 2, Artillery -1, Cutting Sword - 1, Dagger - 2, Gambling - 1, Carousing - 1, Jeweler - 0, Carpentry - 1

Description: An ingratiating little cur who is attached to the player character's gun team. He is a spy for Woodcock, and keeps him informed of plots and gossip amongst the men.

Uriah is greedy and ambitious. He is also cowardly, but he fears Woodcock more than the player characters.

THE SUPPORTING CAST

The ships company is full of all manner of characters. The selection offered here are merely those who come most easily into the notice of the player characters. Feel free to create NPC's at whim. Thieves and troublemakers, bullies and thugs, story tellers and "Gun room lawyers" can all be found.

SEAMAN KERAGH

Disposition: Ten of Pentacles (R): A compulsive gambler and risk taker, with a happy-go-lucky air.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	10
Endurance:	10
Dexterity:	10
Reason:	8
Intuition:	12
Drive:	12
Charisma:	12
Magical aptitude:	6
Hit Points:	5
Wound level:	1
Maximum hand:	5
New draw:	3



SKILLS:

Gambling - 1, Artillery - 2, Seamanship - 1, Swimming - 0, Cutting Sword - 1, Dagger - 1, Long Arms - 1

Description: Keragh is a "Half-Horse" - one of only six such on board. He is excused all duties in the rigging or boats, and instead finds employment on the captain and gun deck, where his strength comes into play.

A cheerful member of the watch and a good worker, Keragh loves to play at cards and dice. He will constantly prevail upon characters to gamble with their scant funds or their rum ration. He will make bets on all manner of odd things (e.g. He might bet that his own gun scores more hits than the player character's weapon in a battle).

"OLD MAN"

Disposition: Ten of Pentacles: A wise, rational character who will try to curb his rash companions.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	9
Endurance:	13
Dexterity:	10
Reason:	10
Intuition:	13
Drive:	11
Charisma:	12
Magical Aptitude:	12
Hit Points:	6
Wound level:	1
Maximum hand:	5
New draw:	3

SKILLS:

Spin Yarn - 1, Leadership - 3, Seamanship - 2, Cutting Sword -1, Brawling - 1, Long Arms - 1

Description: The "Old Man" is a grizzled old hand who is a member of the player character's mess. He is a wise old fellow (no one knows just how old) who has seen just about everything, and knows the wisdom of careful planning and forethought. A man with a keen sense of justice and fair play, he is slow to rouse but tends to act decisively when he does finally move. Woodcock keeps away from him.

The old man will fill his shipmate's evenings with tales of far places and weird happenings. He is a colorful and helpful character, with an endearing streak of larceny and humor.



TRADE GOODS

At the start of the adventure, the player characters have no funds and no goods of value except the clothes on their backs. This gives them virtually no purchasing power.

All crewmen receive a daily rum ration (1/4 pint) that can be traded off for goods and services (One day's rum ration has the purchasing power equivalent to about 2 groats). This can be used to acquire knives, clothes, other food or small favors that may make life more bearable. If the ship ever reaches port, the crew will receive back pay, but only the most trusted crew members will actually be allowed ashore to spend it. The rest of the sailors will have to barter with "bum boats" that come out from the shore to offer fruit, spirits and women to the sailors.



SEAMAN SNAGGLETOOTH

Disposition: Six of Swords: Snaggletooth likes being onboard ship, since he likes to discover new things and see new places. He is a practical person at all times.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	16
Endurance:	14
Dexterity:	11
Reason:	5
Intuition:	12
Drive:	8
Charisma:	6
Magical Aptitude:	8
Hit Points:	8
Wound level:	4
Maximum hand:	5
New draw:	3



SKILLS:

Brawling - 2, Singing - 1, Swimming - 2, Weather Lore - 1

Description: Snaggletooth is a Troll. Large, green and scaly, he is also extremely thick in an easy going sort of way. Snaggletooth has become familiar with navy life, with all of its little perks and hidden traps, and always acts within the rules. He is employed on the gun deck as a gun layer and shot carrier, and seems entirely happy.

Snaggletooth is mostly included as background color. He sings very strange songs when he is particularly happy or sad. He has a childlike enthusiasm for games, and goes into sulks when he loses. Play him up as much as seems necessary to add fun to life below decks. He could be a good ally in the fight against Woodcock, but he would be very difficult to motivate - after all, Woodcock always stays within the rules...

TRAINING AND LIFE ABOARD

The player characters end up on the lower deck's gun crew as the pivotal members of a cannon team. This spares them the nerve wracking duty of the "top men", who scamper up into the upper shrouds to trim sails and brail-up canvas, but they are also expected to learn to assist with the main sails, etc.

The player characters will all be assigned jobs such as "Rammer", "Gun layer", "Spike man" or "Loader" depending upon their stature and abilities. They service one of the heavy culverins on the lower deck, in company with several other teams under the watchful eye of Petty Officer Woodcock and a Junior Lieutenant. The characters sleep on the self-same deck by their gun, in the weird lamp-lit world of lower decks.

A square-rigged ship can be a strange place. The hull trembles and vibrates as the sails thrust 1200 tons of timber and artillery through the waves, and the hull houses a constant mutter of creaking planks and ropes. The air is thick with the smell of tar and salt. Canvas screens stretched across the beams separate the lower deck into semiprivate sections (but you can hear every word the neighbors say, so watch out!) Within these "rooms" swing hammocks, each holding their owner's small bundle of possessions. Off-duty sailors swap yarns, play games or practice handicrafts, relaxing after the rigors of their watch.

Player's should initially be confused and harried by having a petty officer yell at them to "climb up and help brail the fore-to'gln't'sl" or take a message to the "loblolly" boys (surgeon's assistants). Terrorize your players by forcing them up into the "tops", or having dangerous duties given the slowest gun crew during gun drill. The practical upshot of all this will be to have all character's roll their Reason vs. 10 to acquire level 0 seamanship skill, Dexterity vs. 10 to acquire a level of climbing skill and Reason vs. 10 to gain level 0 artillery skill.

Oh - A life on the ocean waves, Is the key to a watery grave...

The lower decks have their own codes and methods of justice. The strong tend to cow the weak, and factionalism is rife. Nevertheless, the typical sailor has a strong sense of justice. The crew is universal in its hatred of Woodcock. Unfortunately, they fear the consequences of defying authority. The "Terminator" is not kind to mutineers!

SETTING SAIL

Once all the carefree, happy crew are safely aboard, the "Terminator" heads out to the fabled Northern seas to patrol the waters around the spice islands. Hot summer nights, blazing sun and desert islands provide an exotic environment of adventure, likewise fever and storm can offer constant peril. The North Seas are home to Alberian ships as much as Duncruighan vessels, and privateers, pirates and enemy vessels prow! the seas.



Characters will have access to cutlasses, boarding axes and boarding pikes, and will probably pick up a knife from somewhere. Other equipment can be purchased aboard. Typical pay will be 1 silver per week, collectible once per month.

ADVENTURES AT SEA

The following incidents are set aboard the Terminator and should be integrated into an ongoing campaign. Referees should flesh out shipboard life with numerous encounters with the evil Petty Officer Woodcock, gaming sessions, larcenous undertakings and mutinous mutterings below decks.

THE “CUTTING OUT” EXPEDITION

The ship heaves-to off a headland, and First Lieutenant Marko calls the player character's out on deck (with the ever present Woodcock at his elbow). He addresses the group as follows:

Marko paces up and down, his eyes never seeming to look at you. He turns to you with an expression of distaste, and then comes to some sort of decision.

“Men, you are being sent on a mission which will be our first real encounter with the enemy. Tomorrow at dawn the Terminator will go into the next bay and attack a number of Albernian merchant vessels which are stationed there. Unfortunately the bay is protected by a small scone which commands the bay, and so we are sending in a landing party tonight to capture the fort and spike the guns. Petty Officer Woodcock has told me of your enthusiasm for this task, and so I have decided to accede to your request to go on this dangerous mission.”

“I must say that this sudden devotion to duty on your part is most heartening. Well done men!”

Marko immediately leaves, and Woodcock gives you an evil grin before following him...

The party will leave at dusk in a jolly boat, and will be armed with muskets, pistols and swords. The storming party will be lead by the Second Lieutenant, who is accompanied by a couple of other marines (enough to raise the party's numbers to 12). The group is to land on the beach under cover of darkness, and proceed to the fort (which is about 3 miles away across the headland). The Terminator will attack at dawn - the guns must be silenced by then. The Terminator will pick up the shore party once it has secured its prizes.

THE LANDING

The boat will come into shore on a murky night. The half moon makes the beach a place of eerie shadows and booming surf. The sailors at the front of the boat leap out and run up the beach while the rest of the party begins to drag the boat up the sand towards the nearby trees.

As the party starts to shift the boat, they will be attacked by a group of 4 or 5 Albernian irregular cavalry:

Suddenly a volley of shots ring out, lighting up the darkness. A man near the boat screams and is hurtled back into the surf, firing his musket uselessly into the air. The beach trembles to the sound of hoofbeats as the night erupts into chaos!

Kill off one or two of the NPC sailors in the initial volley (enough to show the players that their enemy means business!) The enemy cavalry will all have average characteristics (e.g. a score of 10, and a sword skill of 1), and ride awful horses which have characteristics of 7 in all categories. They are armed with carbines (now unloaded), backswords and unloaded pistols, and wear buff coats and helmets. They start off in the tree line some 50 meters up the beach, and trot down towards the group by the boat waving their swords and yelling like banshees.

All the sailor's firearms must subtract one from their reliability due to their trip through the salt and spray. The cavalymen are moving targets in the dark, and so might prove somewhat difficult to hit. The player characters who were furthest up the beach have not been seen by the cavalry, and may take advantage of this in any way that they see fit.

Somewhere in the course of the melee, Second Lieutenant Pavel gets grievously wounded (but not killed). The players should manage to drive the enemy off or kill the lot, and should hopefully decide to carry on with the mission without their officer, who is conscious enough to give them encouraging little messages or patriotic orations.

CROSS COUNTRY

Moving up the rocky headland is difficult and tiring. All characters must roll for travel fatigue. Wounded characters, and characters who are carrying a wounded comrade must roll twice.

There is a picket post at the top of the headland which must be bypassed. 1 musketeer stands on watch (spot hidden skill of 2, intuition 12), while another two eat a meal and mind their supply of signal rockets. Players may either try to sneak past, or bump off the sentry.

THE SCONCE

From the hill, the characters can see down into the bay, where two merchant ships lie at anchor. A small square sconce lies within the protection of the headlands, and from the light of the garrison's campfires the party sees that the fort has 4 Cannon royale (30 kg shot!), all mounted facing towards the sea. A small gate is guarded by a sentry, and a sentry walks the walls. Between the fort and the hillside is a collection of tents, and a number of soldiers (20 or 30) are camped within.

The characters will have to skirt through the slumbering camp somehow, and come up with some plan for getting into the fort. Luckily the garrison is not too alert, but normal precautions will be taken. If the guns can be sabotaged somehow, the party must still get away!

THE TERMINATOR'S ATTACK

At dawn the Terminator will attack. If the sconce has not been disabled, then the ship will bombard the fort and camp. The forts guns and walls are too powerful for the ship, and it will sail off (presuming the landing party to be dead).

THE REWARDS

The merchantmen will be sold in a prize court, and should give the common crew about 2 marks in prize money. The shore party will be rewarded if their attack was successful, and so might earn as much as three marks.

The Island

The player characters will land upon the island of Montuega, a desert island with a sheltered, fortified anchorage on the south side. There is a lookout post atop a tall hill, with a signal beacon that will be lit should enemy ships be sighted.

The night of the landing is hot and breathless, the air heavy with the hum of mosquitoes. There is a half-moon that casts weird shadows across the beach, and the rush and rumble of the surf muffles all but the loudest sounds.

There are tiny sea urchins in the shallow waters at the edge of the beach. Lieutenant Pavel warns the seamen dragging the boat into shore to keep their boots on!





COMBAT

The Terminator encounters an Albertain Man o' war of about the same tonnage and engages. Play out the combat as described in the rules (The Albertain ship has a Captain with a Seamanship skill of 3 and an Intuition of 12). Once the ships grapple, a boarding action will commence. The player characters are down on the lower gun deck, and know nothing of this

Cannon roar and flash - men scream in agony as wood and steel scythe through the air. An enemy ball smashes into a nearby cannon, which hurtles backwards over the crew. The gundeck becomes choked with smoke, lit from within by the flash of the guns. A man staggers past you in the choking smoke, clutching at his eyes and screaming hysterically. All through the din and confusion you keep shouting and cheering, firing ball after ball from your long cannon at the encroaching enemy hull broadside for broadside! Over all chants the calm voice of the gunnery officer: "Stop vents! Sponge out! Load!"

Suddenly the guns go silent, and a furious spate of small arms fire comes from the upper decks. With a crash the two hulls meet side by side, and a voice shouts from above "Ware boarders!"

The players are in a gunport about 5 meters from a gunport on the opposing ship. They must now engage the enemy gun crew of 5 men in a duel of pistol shot and pike thrust (pikes are kept in a nearby rack). It should be possible for a bold party to enter the enemy gunport, and lead the lower deck gun crews into the enemy decks. The party might then go on to climb to the enemy's upper decks and attack the enemy command crew on the poop.

This is a damned good idea, because the Terminator has been boarded, and is losing the fight!

CAPTAIN HAUTFLEUR

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	9
Endurance:	10
Dexterity:	12
Reason:	12
Intuition:	12
Drive:	8
Charisma:	10
Magical aptitude:	8
Hit Points:	5
Wound level:	1
Maximum hand:	5
New draw:	3

SKILLS:

Thrusting Sword - 2, Pistol - 1



The captain wears a helmet and breastplate, and carries a rapier and pistol.

The enemy ship will surrender once their captain is killed or forced to surrender.

To liven up the scenario, the Referee might want to have the players see a fanatical torch-bearing Albertain officer race down towards the forward powder magazine. The player characters will have to beat him there (perhaps by swinging down from the poop deck on a rope!) and kill him before he can blow the magazine and kill everyone aboard both ships. A blazing torch used in combat should be treated as a cudgel which deals an extra +1 follow up damage.

"Deck thar! Sail off the bow!"

The captain coolly paces over to the railings, and rakes the officers with his icy glare.

"Midshipman of the watch! Aloft with your perspective glass if you please"

A twelve year old cabin boy in a loose fitting uniform scrambles the shrouds and perches far above the deck. Finally his shrill voice pipes down to the listeners below.

"Albertain Man o' war Sir! Ship of the second rate!"

The Captain flashes a glance to his officers. "Clear for action."

The marines race to their posts at the gangways, and the rattle of drums fills the air. Seamen race to their posts and cannon are loaded as the "Terminator" readies itself for battle!

REWARDS

If the enemy ship is captured, then everyone might expect about 10 silvers in prize money. If the players were instrumental in the vessel’s capture, they might receive as much as 2 marks.

This combat is also an ideal time to bump off Woodcock, if the party has not already done so.

ALBERNIAN “EXTRAS”

The Referee might find that the following characters make useful enemies to parties.

#1 CHARACTERISTICS	
Strength	12
Endurance	10
Dexterity	8
Reason	9
Intuition	10
Drive	10
Charisma	9
Magical aptitude	11
Hit Points	6
Wound level	2
Maximum hand	5
New draw	3
SKILLS	
Long arms - 1	
Pistol - 1	
Cutting sword - 2	
Brawling - 1	
#4 CHARACTERISTICS	
Strength	10
Endurance	13
Dexterity	10
Reason	10
Intuition	7
Drive	10
Charisma	10
Magical aptitude	13
Hit Points	6
Wound level	1
Maximum hand	5
New draw	2
SKILLS	
Long arms - 0	
Pistol - 1	
Cutting sword - 1	
Brawling - 1	

#2 CHARACTERISTICS	
Strength	8
Endurance	11
Dexterity	13
Reason	10
Intuition	11
Drive	8
Charisma	12
Magical aptitude	6
Hit Points	5
Wound level	0
Maximum hand	6
New draw	3
SKILLS	
Long arms - 1	
Pistol - 1	
Cutting Sword - 2	
Dagger - 1	
#5 CHARACTERISTICS	
Strength	15
Endurance	15
Dexterity	7
Reason	10
Intuition	14
Drive	11
Charisma	12
Magical aptitude	9
Hit Points	8
Wound level	2
Maximum hand	4
New draw	4
SKILLS	
Long Arms - 1	
Pistol - 0	
Cutting Sword - 3	

#3 CHARACTERISTICS	
Strength	13
Endurance	13
Dexterity	8
Reason	8
Intuition	13
Drive	12
Charisma	6
Magical aptitude	11
Hit Points	7
Wound level	2
Maximum hand	5
New draw	3
SKILLS	
Long arms - 0	
Pistol - 0	
Cutting sword - 3	
#6 CHARACTERISTICS	
Strength	6
Endurance	7
Dexterity	15
Reason	6
Intuition	15
Drive	13
Charisma	10
Magical aptitude	6
Hit Points	4
Wound level	11
Maximum hand	7
New draw	4
SKILLS	
Long arms - 3	
Pistol - 1	
Thrusting Sword -1	

OTHER RANDOM NPC'S

Most ships will include Harpies amongst their crews, and these vicious creatures are an invaluable part of the vessel’s complement of soldiers. Likewise Pixies make nimble “top men”, and often serve as sail crew. Non humans are always a possibility for NPC crewmen.

The “average” character will have level 10 in all characteristics, a Max Hand of 5, a new draw of three, and a sword skill of 1. Typical seamen will be armed with either a sword, polearm or an axe.



A MASKED BALL

MEETING MARISSA ARCADIE (FEMALE CHARACTERS)

While scurrying about the seamstress's establishments, the player characters will encounter Marissa Arcadie (Marissa will probably be being fitted for her dress at the time the player characters enter the dress shop). Exquisitely obnoxious, Marissa should quickly establish herself as the enemy.

If desired, the Referee can establish a deeper reason behind this enmity on Marissa's part. Perhaps the player character is newly arrived from out of town, and Marissa fears that the new arrival will steal attention at the ball. On the other hand, perhaps Marissa and the player character have had dealings before....

THE TOWN

This adventure takes place in an unspecified section of Mittelmarch, in a large town. Feel free to bring to town to life with a bustling market place, dangerous streets, elegant salons and mansions. For her own part the player character will be living in a townhouse (possibly with relatives), with access to a coach, servants and a chaperone.



This is a “courtly” scenario designed to be played by one or two characters of gentle or noble birth. It may be played by either male or female characters, since the scenario contains incidents which will amuse and entertain either or both.

The adventure will work perfectly with player characters who are Half-Horses. Make sure that the romantic interest NPCs, Marissa Arcadie and Morton Fitz-Clarion are the same race as the player characters.

THE INVITATION

The player characters receive an invitation to a masked ball, which promises to be a major social event.

Their dignities the Marquis and Marchioness D’ Argenon will hold a Masque on the evening of next Monday week.

The family D’Argenon would be most deeply pleased for the company of.....

at the banquet and ball.

The festivities will be at the family’s town residence from dusk until dawn.

The Argenons are renowned for their lavish entertainments, and everybody who is anybody will be there. It is an exciting sign of social recognition to have been invited - definitely an occasion not to be missed.

PREPARING FOR THE BALL (LADIES ONLY) GETTING DRESSED

Female characters will definitely want to organize a new ball gown for the event, but time is fairly short (14 days). The minimum time that a tailor/seamstress could produce a dress without working 24 hours a day would be 4 days.

There are a number of reputable seamstresses in town, most of whom have about level 2 tailoring skill (although 2 have level 3 tailoring skill, and 1 has level 4 tailoring skill). The tailor with level 4 skill is already well and truly booked out by women who have got news of the ball long before the player characters (amongst them is Marissa Arcadie, a pretentious woman who any female character will have met several times before).

This means that a player character who seeks a dress must be satisfied with one of the level 2 or 3 tailors, and be automatically disadvantaged at the ball! The player might choose any one of a number of ways to remedy this awful situation, e.g.:

Bribe the level four seamstress (she will refuse, and the scandal will spread about town!), or somehow manage to cancel one of the other ladies’ orders. Another seamstress might be found.

There is in fact a “hidden talent” buried in town, just waiting to be discovered. She is Paulette Kerin, a poor country girl who has just come to town to tend her brother’s dying wife. She has a tailoring skill of 5, but no real knowledge of courtly fashion. Working for gentle folk has never occurred to her, and she makes ends meet by doing pretty country frocks for country festivals, scraping enough money together to buy medicines and food for her patient.

Paulette’s work could be accidentally discovered on a shopping expedition to a common market or some other similar accident. She would have to be tracked down through streetwise skill, or by clever deduction. She will be found in a small house somewhere in the poorer segment of the artist’s quarter (an expedition into this seedy part of town could be an adventure in itself for a gentle lady!)

Paulette is a gentle, kindly soul who lives in a sad state of poverty. She would be surprised and delighted to work for a grand lady, but says she cannot leave her sister-in-law unattended, and so she will have to refuse the player character's offer. If an arrangement can be made where the player character gets a proper doctor to see the ailing patient, and then has an appropriate cure disease potion made up and given to the seamstress's sister in law, then Paulette will be pleased and gratified to make a dress (she must still be paid, however!)

Paulette's gratitude and inspiration is such that the resulting dress will be very good indeed (roll 3 dice for appeal and discard the lowest). The dress will be an unusual style, and will create a great deal of comment and interest at the party. Paulette is obviously something of a discovery.

SPYING

Finding out what the competition will be wearing could be a great advantage. Money paid to junior seamstresses at the major tailors will secure details on the cut and color of other ladies' dresses which are being prepared for the upcoming ball. If a character gains this information, have them roll their fashion sense vs. 10 (rolling vs. intuition). If the roll was successful, then increase the appeal of their own ball gown by 1 (or by 2 if the roll was more than 2 points under the minimum score required).

HAWKING

Dice roll	Creature	Speed	Size
1	Small ground bird	6	2
2	Small, swift bird	16	3
3	Medium bird	12	6-8
4	Large bird	8	12
5,6	Small ground animal	5	12

The D'Argenon family will be holding a hawking expedition the week before the ball, and characters with hawking skill might be able to wrangle themselves an invitation if they just "happen" to drop by the D'Argenon residence on some other pretext (the characters would discover the Marchioness tending her hawk, which will give them a reason for bringing up the subject).

The hawking expedition can be role-played. A hawk is rated for two characteristics - speed and size - between which it splits 5 dice (minimum of one dice per characteristic). Prey that is flushed also has speed and size ratings, with numerical values determined as follows.

To catch prey, a hawk must first stoop down upon it (roll the hawk's speed vs. the speed of its prey, modified by the handler's hawking skill level). To make a kill, the hawk must then match its size vs. its target's size (hawking skill does not modify this roll).

Please note that if the hawk's size is double or more than that of its target, it will ignore such trivial prey and return to the glove. A natural roll of 12 during a "stooping roll" will have the hawk ignore the prey and go off flying free. The handler must roll vs. its hawking skill (testing vs. Drive or Intuition) in order to recover the bird.

As prey is randomly flushed, hunters with a hawk which seems appropriate to the prey may release their birds. If a hunter's bird catches more prey than it misses during the day's outing, then the hunter may increase its Self Image modifier by 1.

If the player characters make a good impression, then the Marchioness will begin talking about the upcoming party. This counts as successful "spying" (see above). In addition, the characters will be forewarned of the guests who will be there. The Marchioness will give a female player character a few juicy bits of gossip which will increase her repartee hand vs. Marissa Arcadie by 1 for the evening of the party.





PREAMBLE TO THE BALL

(MALE CHARACTERS ONLY)

Male characters should have a peripheral involvement in a ladie's preparations for the ball. The scenario will really start for them when they go to visit the Marchioness or go on the hawking expedition (even if they don't hawk, they can at least ride along and keep the ladies company).



While on the hawking expedition, the character will suddenly see the most wonderful woman that he has ever beheld - Theresa Mantiennne:

You sit astride your horse with the other onlookers, admiring the terrible beauty of a hawk's flight. Suddenly you become aware of a haunting, musky feminine scent on the air. Like a man enchanted, you swing towards the source.

A small way away from you is the most wonderful woman that you have ever seen. Her sweet, plain face is hardly the epitome of fashionable beauty, but is warmed from within by such grace and gentle humor that you feel your heart catch in your throat. Her slight figure is sitting sidesaddle on the back of one of the D'Argenon's spare horses. You notice that her hands, so at ease on the reins of the horse, seem rougher than those of the other ladies in the party. For some reason, this makes you curious and sad.

Suddenly you notice that she has seen your scrutiny, and stares back. For a long moment you gaze into her deep brown eyes, and see her face soften. Her tired, worried expression drains away, to be replaced by dreamy bemusement. Then suddenly her pupils widen, and the smile goes out of her eyes. She whirls her horse around and swiftly trots away...

Obviously, if Theresa is a Half-Horse, then this description will have to be slightly modified.

The helpless player character gains an immediate tie of 2 with this vision of loveliness. Inquiries as to her name and station will reveal that she is the gentlewoman Theresa Mantiennne. This is not good news, since the player character's father was instrumental in ruining her father, ex-governmental minister Aurey Mantiennne. This would probably explain her strange behavior. Talking with the Marchioness will reveal that the family has fallen on hard times.

If the player can make a poetry or repartee roll, successfully sing or play an instrument or some similar such activity while near to Theresa, she will gain a +1 tie with him. She will hide her attraction well (roll Detect Lie skill to see that her aversion is elaborately feigned). Theresa will coldly rebuff any direct advances on behalf of the player character.

If the player character manages to impress the Marchioness, she will gossip along about the upcoming party for a while, revealing that Theresa will wear a distinctive mask (shaped like blue moth wings).

The player character's time before the ball will be spent in a constant seesawing of hopes and fears (raise and lower his Self Image at random). Theresa will firmly refuse to see the player character, nor will she accept gifts, poems or serenades.

THE BALL

The ball begins with a buffet at seven, and dancing at eight. The D'Argenon residence is set in large bowered gardens. The party takes place in a huge ballroom, which is surrounded by smaller rooms which will be used for games of whist or dominoes (gentlemen's gambling activities), refreshment, quiet reading or gossip.

The ideal arrival at the ball will be in a private "coach and four", fashionably late (by an hour or so). No lady would dream of turning up unaccompanied, nor of turning up with an unsuitable companion (this would give an opponent a +1 to their repartee hand when engaging the lady in repartee "combat"). Noble characters will be announced at the head of the hall by a footman, unless they ask to be admitted incognito.

The ball is to be a masque. All guests will wear a domino mask of some kind, which will be removed at midnight. Most people at the ball will be readily recognizable despite their masks - although there might be a few surprises!

CHARACTERS AT THE BALL

MARISSA ARCADIE

Disposition: The Lovers (R) Marissa is vain and petulant. She is an habitual tease, and is annoyingly self important.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	7
Endurance:	9
Dexterity:	12
Reason:	12
Intuition:	11
Charisma:	12
Magical aptitude:	10
Hit Points:	4
Repartee hand:	5
Repartee draw:	3

SKILLS:

Etiquette -2, Fashion -1, Poetry -1, Political Lore -1, Dancing -0, Persuade -1, Sneak -1, Repartee -2

Description: Marissa is an exquisitely obnoxious character who will intrude herself into the player character's attentions early on in the evening. She is an irritatingly "posh" lady who delights in making other women look foolish. Men tend to find her extremely attractive.

Marissa will become a repartee opponent for any female player character sometime during the evening. She will also try to grab the attention of a male player character, delighting in any trouble that this might cause.

Marissa wears a ball gown with an appeal rating of 16.



THUGS

Aurey Mantienne will be displeased by any attentions from a male player character towards his daughter. If the player character persists, Mantienne will have brigands waylay the character one dark night to beat him black and blue. They will only draw weapons if the player character does so. If necessary, the player can be rescued by the timely intervention of the enigmatic Duke of Dunharrow (Still in Mufti). He will gladly aid the player character, but will keep his own identity a secret.

DESCRIBING THE BALL

To capture the full romance of the moment, the Referee will have to be prepared to outdo his/her self when describing the D'Argenons ball. Coaches with proud horses, footmen lining the stairs, the still evening air touched with the fragrance of roses... The evening should capture a feeling of magic. Beguile your players with visions of grace and beauty. You will hopefully find the effort well spent.



THE BALLROOM CROWD

The D'Argenon's ball is attended by about 200 of the local gentry and nobility - everybody who is anybody will make sure to attend! The characters listed in this section are only those who most readily come to the player characters' attention. Feel free to populate your masque with fops, dandies, giddy young girls and predatory ladies. The air is thick with flirtation, and many a whispered tryst will occur as the night grows old.

GOSSIP (FEMALE CHARACTERS)

The nifty gossip that the player character might uncover is quite rich. Marissa Arcadie's affections have been spumed, a dashing stranger has been seen about town, and foreign gentlemen have taken up residence in a house by Market Street. Most alarmingly, the player character will uncover the reason why her invitation was so late - most other people received their invitations two weeks ago - Marissa Arcadie was entrusted with the delivery

A STRANGE MESSENGER

While scurrying about town, one player character is questioned by a strange, discreet servant (Roland, Duke of Dunharrow's footman). He quizzes the player character about her identity, and whether or not she will be attending the masque, but will reveal no information as to why the questions are being asked.

If there is a second player character present, she can also be drawn off by a mysterious stranger. This person (an agent of the Duke's enemies - the mysterious foreigners who have taken up residence in town) will try to encourage the second player character to agree to help them at the ball. This mysterious messenger simply wishes to point out a character at the ball (it will be Roland), and the player character need only lure him out onto the terrace alone. What could be simpler?

THERESA MANTIENNE

Disposition: Queen of Wands: Theresa is potentially a deeply affectionate character who sets great store on true love.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	5
Endurance:	11
Dexterity:	14
Reason:	12
Intuition:	7
Drive:	13
Charisma:	13
Magical aptitude:	12
Hit Points:	4

SKILLS:

Assess Lie - 1, Dancing - 0, Detect Lie - 1, Play Lute - 1, Riding - 0, Travel - 1, Farming - 2, Administration - 1

Description: Theresa is the only daughter of the disgraced gentleman Aurey Mantiennne. Since her father's fall from power, Theresa has kept her family going, taking over the management of her family's estates and doing common manual labor just to make ends meet. She is a practical girl who harbors wistful romantic longings, but who remains fiercely loyal to her ailing father.

The Marchioness D'Argenon has always been a friend of the Mantiennne family, and helps them whenever she can. She is determined to make sure that Theresa keeps in touch with polite society so as to catch her a worthwhile husband. Theresa has been loaned one of the ball dresses owned by the Marchioness' daughter, and is present at the ball against her wishes (although she has tried to beg out of the occasion, the Marchioness will not hear a word of it!)

Theresa wears a distinctive blue mask shaped like moth wings.



THE MARCHIONESS D' ARGENON

Disposition: Nine of Pentacles (R): The Marchioness is a witty, lively gossip with a kind heart.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	12 (big woman!)
Endurance:	7
Dexterity:	8
Reason:	8
Intuition:	13
Drive:	8
Charisma:	10
Magical Aptitude:	6
Hit Points	5

SKILLS:

Spin Yarn - 2, Assess Personality - 2, Detect Lie - 2, Etiquette - 2

Description: Theresa's guardian angel is a canny, gossip loving woman of great good humor. She has an uncanny talent for assessing a person's true intentions and feelings, and has the wit and tact to use these skills well.



MORTON FITZ-CLARION

Disposition: Queen of Swords (R): Morton is malicious, spiteful, and deceitful.

CHARACTERISTICS

Strength:	10
Endurance:	10
Dexterity:	13
Reason:	10
Intuition:	13
Drive:	11
Charisma:	9
Magical Aptitude:	5
Hit Points:	5
Wound Level:	1
Maximum hand:	6
New Draw:	3

SKILLS

Thrusting Sword - 3, Etiquette - 2, Repartee - 2

Description: A sinister character with a considerable reputation as a duelist. He will seek to provoke a duel with any male player character who pays court to Theresa Mantierre. Morton's intentions towards Theresa are dishonorable, and Theresa has spurned him. He has acquired the loan on her family's farm, and seeks to force Theresa to be his by threatening to foreclose! What a cad !



FITZ-CLARION

If desired, male characters can have run-ins with Morton Fitz-Clarion in the early part of the evening, thus developing an antipathy towards him. He might become an opponent at the gaming tables, a repartee encounter - anything that might throw the player into conflict with him.

Just remember the more you hate him, the better it feels to defeat him!

THE HANDSOME MASKED STRANGER

(OTHERWISE KNOWN AS HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS ROLAND, THE DUKE OF DUNHARROW)

Disposition: The Hierophant: His Highness is a charismatic devil who is subject to sudden bursts of energy, enthusiasm or inspiration.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Strength:	9
Endurance:	8
Dexterity:	13
Reason:	12
Intuition:	12
Drive:	13
Charisma:	13
Magical aptitude:	12
Hit Points:	4

SKILLS. (Only those relevant to this scenario!):

Spin Yam - 1, Gambling - 1, Oratory - 2, Literacy - 2, Political Lore - 3

Description: The lonely (and tantalizingly eligible) "Laird" of Dunharrow has slipped away from his townhouse tonight and has crashed the party incognito to have some fun. He is a romantic at heart, and is tired of being approached by offers of political marriage. He would be delighted to meet a lady who values him for himself - and thus the masque offers him a unique opportunity.... The Duke will be interested in gambling, gossip and talking to the ladies. If someone impresses him during the evening, they might get a surprise job offer at a later date! The Duke is usually shy and polite around womenfolk (although his mask has given him courage for the evening) and would back off in embarrassed confusion if approached boldly and directly with offers D' l'amour.



ENDING THE SCENARIO FOR MALES

For male player characters, this scenario will probably culminate in a duel with Morton Fitz-Clarion. Though lightning fast and superbly skilled, Fitz-Clarion has a weakened left leg. Being forewarned of this ailment might save the player character's life. Increase the numerical value of Fitz-Clarion's opponent's attack cards by 1 if they follow a low line attack, and by a further 1 if Fitz-Clarion dodged the previous blow. If Fitz-Clarion is forced to do a desperate defence against a low line attack, he draws only 1 new card and not three.

OTHER CHARACTERS

The Referee should be prepared to improvise a number of giggling daughters of the nobility, haughty poseurs and upper class twits to flesh out the party.



This section of the adventure introduces the players to the repartee rules. Carefully read page 92 to learn the repartee conflict rules before beginning the card game.

THE EVENINGS EVENTS (FEMALE CHARACTERS ONLY)

Once at the party, a female character should face down a couple of other female characters in a test of dresses to give them an idea of how they stand for the evening's activities. They should make a roll vs. Etiquette (using either Reason, Intuition or Charisma) to avoid a +1 to their Self Image for the rest of the evening. Play up the party for atmosphere and interest. The lady might play an instrument, play (gamble) at whist or make a business deal if desired.

The character should then notice the handsome masked stranger (see above)

Suddenly the crowd parts, and you see a beautifully dressed man in a plain mask walking towards you. For some reason, you feel your breath catch in your throat, and your heart begins to beat faster. Even though he is wearing a mask, he is surely the most handsome man you have ever seen! His eyes stare at you with a wistful longing which seems strangely touching. He hesitates for a moment, and then goes back to talking to a pair of gentlemen who stand nearby.

The lady should now receive a tie of 1 with the masked stranger.

From the corner of your eye you see that little snake Marissa Arcadie attach herself to the masked stranger's group, and begin talking to one of the two other gentlemen. She gains an introduction to the masked stranger, and you can see her intentions as plain as the nose on her simpering little face!

Since you know Marissa, it would not be too forward of you to go over to say hello to the rotten little minx, gain an introduction to the handsome stranger and head her off..

That should be enough to get any girl worth her salt moving over to meet the masked stranger.



GETTING BITCHY

Once the player character reaches the stranger's group, Marissa will shoot her a dark look and be forced to perform introductions. The masked stranger will choose to remain anonymous, which seems very intriguing and exciting.

The player should roll the attractiveness of her own dress vs. that of Marissa. The character will now be able to roll her Flirtation skill vs. Marissa's, and the winner will gain a dance with the stranger. If the player character wins the Flirtation roll and does not disgrace herself on the dance floor, then she must check for tie experience increase with the stranger, who pays her a flattering degree of entranced, tender attention.

There will be more talk, and Marissa will begin to make catty comments, trying to edge in the way and gain the stranger's sole attention.

IT'S REPARTEE TIME!

The girls should now play out a repartee “combat”. The loser will storm off and leave the handsome stranger in the company of her foe.

THE REST OF THE EVENING

Assuming the player character wins in repartee vs. Marissa, the rest of the evening will be spent in the company of the stranger (who gains a level 4 tie with the player character). The lady should gain at least 1 or 2 more tie points with her mysterious beau.

Suddenly, just before the unmasking at midnight, the stranger hurriedly takes his leave and races for the door, leaving the player character standing in confusion by the dance floor. Upset as she might be, she notices another masked stranger detach himself from the crowd and sidle off in pursuit in a very suspicious way.

If the lady follows, she will see the handsome stranger get into a plain carriage and drive off (unless he is a Half-Horse, in which case he will walk home on his own four feet), followed by the suspicious stranger on horseback. Neither one is moving particularly fast. The lady can grab her cloak and bundle into her own carriage and pursue the pair.

The chase eventually leads into the deserted streets of the artist's quarter, where the handsome stranger dismounts from his carriage and proceeds on foot into the alleys. The other man follows quietly, and moves to stand behind a corner watching. The handsome stranger stands under a lamp and removes his mask, revealing a pale, good-looking face. As he does this, the other man reaches under his cloak and produces a pistol, which he aims at the handsome stranger.

At this point, the player character will have several options. She may scream, which would make the assassin whip around and fire off the shot at her. She may yell a warning, which will make the assassin turn around, see her and then snap off a shot at his startled target (up the difficulty level from average to difficult). The player character might also have wormed her way quite close to the assassin, in which case she might toss her cloak over his head. The possibilities are nearly endless.

The assassin will run off once he has fired. If the handsome stranger is struck, then he will fall to the ground in a faint. If the player character is struck, then the handsome stranger will run to her aid and take her back to his abode where she will be tended by his private physician. Either way, the girl should eventually learn her beau's identity.

EXPERIENCE

Self Image gains for the evening will include a -1 for each level of tie that the female player character has gained with the handsome stranger. Experience rolls should be made against all skills used throughout the evening.

ALTERNATIVE ENDING (FEMALE CHARACTERS)

In a scenario run for a female character, a variety of different endings might occur. If a second player character has been beguiled into helping some unknown, sinister strangers coax the Duke of Dunharrow out onto the terrace, then another ending is possible. The Duke will be waylaid, beaten unconscious and dragged into a carriage. The player character who has fallen for him will then have to pursue the kidnappers in her own coach!





THE EVENINGS EVENTS

(MALE CHARACTERS ONLY)

If the player character wishes to track down Theresa Mantienne at the ball he had best enter the hall unannounced. He will then be at liberty to stalk the house and try to find her. With the anonymity of his mask, he might just be able to impress Theresa without her family loyalties affecting her judgment.

The start of the evening should be spent in meeting some terrible empty-headed "bimbos", and in small talk. He will find Theresa wistfully watching a game of whist. Asking her to play will cause her to ruefully shake her head (she has no money). She will gladly watch the player character try a few hands, and will be glad for him if he wins or sorry if he loses (she's a nice girl). Take this as an opportunity to play a few rounds of gambling (see below).

Theresa should now be won over. Dancing, poetry, music or repartee might at least engage her full attention, and then the character can roll his charisma vs. 10 in order to increase Theresa's tie level with her gallant masked companion.

AN INTERRUPTION

Just as everything seems to be going well, a black-clad stranger (Morton Fitz-Clarion) forces his way through the crowd and angrily demands to talk to Theresa (he seems to know her quite well). Theresa's eyes show annoyance, hatred and alarm at the intrusion.

The stranger sweeps Theresa off into a nearby corner, and a heated discussion begins. Theresa remains icily cold, while the stranger seems confident and threatening.

If the player character sneaks closer, he will hear that Morton is threatening foreclosure on Theresa's family's debts unless she should marry him. She replies with a cold fury, saying that he is lucky that she has no brothers to avenge such an insult. Morton laughs aloud, and grabs Theresa, and tells her that she has no choice - she must answer him now or face the consequences.

The player character should now step in and stop Morton from hurting Theresa. Morton will then try to provoke a duel. If he succeeds, or if the player character provokes one himself, Morton will dismask himself, and turn angrily to the weeping Theresa:

"It seems you have attracted this fools affections, my dear. I will kill me this idiot, and then we shall return to our business!"



THE DUEL

Morton Fitz-Clarion will storm outside (the duel is to be settled immediately out in the mansion grounds). Theresa will beg her masked benefactor not to fight: Fitz-Clarion is one of the most renowned blades in the city! This is possibly a good time for the player to dumbfound Theresa by having his character remove his mask.

Theresa will follow the character and inform him of Fitz-Clarion's weak leg (see page 165.) This is the only way the player character will stand a chance.

The combat is now fought in the normal way, going to the death, or until one party is too wounded to continue (a wounded character may cry "enough!" upon taking a hit, ending the combat there and then at a cost of +1 to his Self Image). Killing Fitz-Clarion is a better solution to the problem than merely defeating him, since leaving him alive will earn the character a mortal enemy. Once the combat is over, Theresa will rush to the player character's side.

Theresa will gain 1 or 2 tie points with her benefactor, no matter how the combat turns out. It has been a long time since anyone offered Theresa affection or loyalty....

Unfortunately, Theresa's father (also at the party) has recognized the player character. He appears from out of the crowd (hobbling on a cane) and drags Theresa from the player character's side. The player character will gain one last despairing look from her eyes before she is dragged from his sight. He should immediately roll for tie experience increase.

THE AFTERMATH

The character's Self Image will gain an extra -1 for each level of tie that Theresa gained with the player character. The character may then make experience rolls for all skills used during the scenario.

So what happens now? Well, Theresa is forbidden to see her new paramour, and so she languishes in her family's heavily guarded mansion. In order to see her and declare his love, the player character will have to sneak in at night past the guards, scaling the walls and up onto her balcony in the moonlight. The pair of lovers are just going to have to see what happens from there.

Meanwhile, there is a strong possibility that Fitz-Clarion is still out there somewhere planning both the lovers' dooms.

This should be enough for any Referee to go on. Good luck!

NOTES ON SIMULATING GAMBLING

Gambling can be done by matching dice rolls of one gambler vs. another, or by playing a real game of cards with the more skilled characters being allowed free draws or special powers. Make sure that you use simulated coins, which will give your game a better feel.

Another alternative is to devise a simple game using LACE & STEEL's combat cards. For instance, characters could draw a hand of cards of a number equal to their new draw rating, +1 for every 2 points (or part thereof) by which their Reason score exceeds 12. Each player can then discard cards equal to his gambling skill (one at a time until their limit is reached). Both players would then bet on their hand (a minimum bet of 1 silver) and the player with the highest numerical total of cards in his hand would win the pass.

THE COMBAT

This section introduces the player to melee combat rules of Lace Steel. Carefully read through the combat rules from page 52 onwards, and make sure everyone involved in the combat understands the card game!





FAIRIES

Though gifted with near Godlike powers and capricious imaginations, fairies are tightly bound by their own laws and restraints.

- Fairies are always held by their word - to the letter. They will exploit any loopholes or unspoken clauses if they can.

- Fairies may never freely give. They must always bargain or barter favor for favor.

- No Fairy gift is ever completely without "side effects." For every good thing a fairy gift can do, it will have a corresponding bad effect. Thus fairy gold fades to dust in the sunlight, or an ever full purse will actually teleport in money from someone else's pocket.

Punishment: Fairy honor requires them to retaliate against any slight. Fairy humour requires any punishment to be cruel and apt.

STOCK INCIDENTS

Running an ongoing role-playing campaign can be a very difficult proposition. One of the major problems that most Referees have with running a campaign is conceiving of the dozens of minor incidents which should pad out their player's day to day existences.

The following pages provide notes and comments on a variety of situations that an innovative Referee can rapidly expand into an brief, entertaining scenario.

FAIRY MUSIC

Characters walking through a secluded area of wildlands hear the sound of music wafting on the evening air. If the sounds are followed, the characters will come to the edge of a clearing or circle of fungi in which a party of strange Fairies are energetically dancing to the music played by a Fairy band.

Characters should make sneak rolls. If the rolls are failed, then the Fairies will be disturbed by the characters blundering in upon them, and will shriek with outrage and disappear. The characters will suffer some sort of malicious curse - such as being made to speak backwards for 30 days or being teleported 100 miles away!

If the characters make their sneak rolls, then the music will stop and the Fairies will greet their watchers courteously. They will ask the characters their opinion of the music (beware their ire if you criticize it! You would be required to play beside them without pause for a week!). The characters will then be invited to dance.

Agreeing to dance with the Fairies is a mistake. Once a character starts to dance, they cannot stop as long as the music plays, and they will dance far past the point of exhaustion. At the end of the dance, some days will have passed and the characters will be miles away, footsore and sick with exhaustion. Roll the character's Dexterity vs. 10. If the roll failed, then the Fairies take pity on such a clumsy dancer and put a spell on his or her feet. For a year and a day, the character will always dance whenever it hears music. All characters who danced with the Fairies may roll for experience in dancing skill.

If the characters refuse to dance with the Fairies, they must come up with a glib reason ("Oh we cannot possibly match such artistry - we shall just watch and admire your skill!"). Flattery might earn the characters a skin of potent Fairy wine, or the gift of Fairy dancing shoes (which allow a character to dance without incurring fatigue whenever they are worn).

THE FAIRY MARKET

Once every year a market is held at a clearing in an enchanted forest. Halflings, Fairies and normal folk all come to set up booths and display their wares. The ingredients for all manner of potions will be found at bargain prices, as will all manner of magical apparatus and curiosities. Mountebanks and charlatans come to cry the benefits of their powders and salves, and performers come to demonstrate their skills. Many powerful magicians come to the fair dressed incognito, consulting with friends and cautiously greeting enemies (a truce is held for the duration of the fair). It is the most colorful market in the kingdom.

The fair is a golden opportunity for impoverished characters to try to make a few groats. Characters could try to sell food or trinkets (baking pies or casting fake amulets), and can be kept busy paying booth fees, spying on competitors, and coming up with imaginative ways of hawking their wares.

Since local magicians all come to the fair, their houses are therefore left attended. The party might be approached by an unscrupulous trader who will tell them that he will pay top rates for any items of interest pilfered from such places....

SOMETHING NASTY IN THE WOODPILE

The characters take shelter in a house on a rainy autumn night, and the temperature begins to drop. Anyone who goes near the huge woodpile which lies stacked under the eaves of the house feels sick and faint, so gathering wood for the fire is a problem.

The problem is caused by a little Basilisk, who has curled up into the woodpile to hibernate. His venomous breath hangs in a cloud around the region of the woodpile, and makes it impossible to approach. He could probably be chased out of the woodpile by making a great deal of noise - although hammering on the woodpile will only make him burrow further towards the middle in order to escape the racket.

If the characters gather wood from elsewhere (which is difficult in the rain), the basilisk will feel the lovely heat, and come indoors through a knothole....

A QUESTION OF WARNETS

Upon camping for the night, small items of equipment begin to go missing from the characters' supplies (this can be done in combination with players being taken aside for private chats with the Referee, to generate an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust between the characters). Swiped items include shiny objects, sewing needles, powder charges and tinder boxes.

Upon sitting back to contemplate the night sky, an intuitive character will get the feeling that he is being watched...

"Ah, just look at those stars - they're like thousands of tiny little eyes"

"- Harry... "

"Yes Robert?"

"- Those are thousands of tiny little eyes... "

The party is the victim of a nearby hive of warnets, who have been attracted by the fire and have come to look for items of interest. The morning will reveal the blighters nest, which is now stuffed full of minor items of value.

Getting angry is only going to get the characters stung. Warnets can be traded with (they like sugar, overripe fruit, needles and thread, scalpel blades etc), and this is a good means of getting back the items which the warnets found least useful.

If the party trades with the warnets, they might also be given a coin of great antiquity. The warnets have picked this up from a hidden ruin which contains a magical or haunted garden (which they regularly visit to collect fruits and nectar). Following warnet nectar gathering parties will lead the party to the ruin.

If there was an old torture chamber underneath the old buildings, then the warnets might lead the characters to rack and ruin....



CATCHING DINNER

The party of characters catches sight of a low tunnel forged through the brush or brambles. Some sort of fresh looking dung lies on the ground nearby.

The tunnel is a “pig run” - a pathway forged by a wild boar. The party can be lead up the path by tracks, and terrified by rustling noises and heavy breathing in the bushes.

The episode can end with the quarry revealed as being a tiny piglet. This piglet might lead the players back to its mother, or it might run across thin ice - whatever seems to be necessary to make the episode fun or alarming.



FOOD AND LODGINGS

Getting decent food and lodgings at an inn can be made a problem in itself. This can be done in any one of several different ways:

AN UNSCRUPULOUS HOST

The innkeeper can be an unscrupulous man. He might notice that the player characters have more money than seems good for them, and make a few “mistakes” at tallying up their tab. This will be facilitated by offering the party a lot of drink, so that they lose any track of what they have actually ordered. Tavern girls might also offer to provide certain extracurricular favors, and take the opportunity to rifle the player characters’ purses in their sleep.

LACK OF ROOM OR FOOD

The player characters find that the one and only inn is fully occupied, and that the only food they can be offered is extremely poor fare. By talking to a rude and obnoxious guest, who has hired a private room and ordered a sumptuous dinner, the guests find out that they can expect no service tonight.

The players might decide to draw away the obnoxious guest through a ruse, and then take charge of both his dinner and his room.

THE HAUNTED RUIN

A ruined castle offers the only hope of shelter at night. The crumbling ruins are overgrown with hawthorn and whins (thorns), and the wind howls eerily through the broken stones.

Pick a character who has a turn at guard duty in the wee hours of the night, and take the character's player aside. Tell the player that he or she can see a figure moving through the ruins, or that they can hear music, or any other tale which suggests itself. Return the player to the group, and watch the fun.

The problem is that only the one selected player will ever see/hear anything out in the ruins. If he or she keeps waking up the others, they will become stropky in short measure. The selected victim will keep having visions until someone else takes over guard duty.

If the victim goes to sleep, it will suffer from vivid dreams (a corpse stooping over their bed, an evil presence drawing nearer, or a sad eyed girl watching him from the battlements). This should keep the party awake for the rest of the night

The haunting can be terrifying or enchanting - the victim might see and hear echoes of haunting beauty rather than something blood curdling. The night's events might have repercussions on the following day, since they might induce searches of the rubble, desecration of mouldy old graves or the finding of odd artifacts.

INJUSTICE

Upon entering a village, the characters encounter the friend or relative of a person who is to be executed in the village square on the following morn. It will be revealed that the accused is actually innocent of any crime, but is the victim of a cruel and ambitious local magnate who he has had the misfortune to cross (e.g.. An old man has denied the local squire free access to his young daughter).

The object should be to stimulate the players into taking some sort of action, or into making a conscious decision to walk away and leave the situation alone. This should provide fuel for Self Image change, friendships and enmities with very little strain on the Referee's imagination.

OLD FOUR-AT-A-GULP

The player characters are walking along an isolated road towards evening when they come across a gallows, from which swings four corpses. Sitting at the foot of the gallows is a gaunt young man, who carries a long stick.

The man introduces himself as "Scavenger William". He declares his profession to be a simple one. He waits at the foot of a gallows until its occupants drop to the ground of their own accord. He then claims their clothes and accoutrements. He will agree that his profession is unusual, but will point out that there is little competition, and that he has ample time for relaxation and contemplation.

Scavenger William informs the party that the gallows is called "four-at-a-gulp", since it always claims its victims in batches of four. He proceeds to describe each of the felons currently dangling from the engine, their personality, their crimes and their capture. If his audience seems willing, he will begin to regale the party with his knowledge of when the corpses will drop, prodding the corpses with his stick to emphasize his points:

"Look you at this fellow now, sir: The characteristic stretching of the vertebrae and the greenness of the flesh usually indicates a ripe plum which will drop sometime on the morrow!"

Scavenger William could be a bandit who seeks to spy out the parties goods, and detain them long enough so that they must continue along the road in the dark. On the other hand, he could just be a disturbingly ghoulish encounter who can light up an otherwise boring day..

BIOGRAPHY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Name: Paul Kidd

Occupation: Games Designer

Favorite movie: The Scarlet Pimpernel (1980's version with Anthony Andrews and Jane Seymour. Yeah!)

Preferred weapon: Left handed swept-hilt rapier

Paul Kidd is one of Australia's best selling fantasy authors, with novels in print throughout the USA, UK and Germany. He is also one of Australia's top selling comicbook and computer games authors. Paul also writes scripts for animation and TV comedy.

An avid role playing gamer and wargamer, Paul is forever designing games of all shapes and kinds. He now has 3 RPG games to his credit, plus a growing repertoire of board games and wargames rules.

Paul has a long series of excuses for his preoccupation with swashbuckling. The distant descendant of a famous seafaring personality, he has a rather unfortunate hang-up on swords. An epee fencer, he also has extensive experience in foil, sabre, kendo, SCA and various silly martial arts weapons. As an impressionable youth, he joined the Royal Australian Army Reserve, enlisting with the 4/19th Prince of Wales Light Horse (Hussars), partially to play with things that go boom, and partly for the pleasure of being able to claim that he was the finest swordsman in the regiment (actually - the only swordsman in the regiment). Eventually the medication took hold and he left.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Name: Donna Barr

Nationality: American

Occupation: Artist

Preferred weapon: Short magazine Lee-Enfield.303.

Since 1986, Donna Barr has been a constant, energetic and respected presence in drawn-book publishing. Her award-winning, critically acclaimed THE DESERT PEACH and STINZ enjoy a loyal, worldwide audience.

THE DESERT PEACH is The Desert Fox's Gay Brother, and is about Love, Honor, Death and Tea. It does to World War Two what needs to be done. STINZ is about a black centaur stallion — but really about all us two-leggers. Both books have been recognized as masterful portrayals of the outsider's view. Her military themes are firmly supported by her own three-year service in the US Army.

She has been called "charming and witty," and is always ready to entertain.

Donna lives in Bremerton, Washington, with her husband and army buddy, Dan, a gang of thoroughly spoiled cats, and "Tree," Kitsap County's grandest Deodar Fir.

If you have trouble finding Donna's excellent drawn books, you can order them from her web site at

<http://www.stinz.com/home/>



CHARACTER RECORD SHEET



Included for your enjoyment, Non-random Character Generation in Lace & Steel

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<http://www.io.com/~sos/>

Lace & Steel is an awesome game of swashbuckling in a low-magic world much like earth. I personally dislike random character generation systems, however, so the game is a little irritating in that sense.

But take heart! Those who dislike random character generation can still use Lace & Steel quite easily. Use the following rules instead of the listed rules.

P. 16: Rolling a Character

Stage One: unchanged.

Stage Two: Instead of rolling for Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, Reason, Intuition, Drive, Charisma, and Magical Aptitude, players distribute 80 points among the eight characteristics as they please. (For more cinematic games, the GM may increase this to 85 points or even more.) There are only a few restrictions on how the points may be spent:

- The minimum score for any characteristic is 5.
- The maximum score for Magical Aptitude is 20.
- The maximum score for any other characteristic is 15.

Certain races have different maximums and minimums as follows:

Pixies: Only 78 points to spend on characteristics. Strength between 2 and 6, inclusive. Dexterity and Intuition may be as high as 16.

Satyrs: limits as listed.

Modifications to Half-Horse characteristics are unchanged.

Stage Three: unchanged.

Stage Four: P. 30. The GM will tell the players which Social Classes their characters may be from. The players will then choose the Social Class they wish to play from this range. Follow the skill rules exactly using this information.

Other rules that need to be addressed:

Experience points: unchanged. Each player has (Reason+Drive) experience points at character creation to spend on either characteristics or skills. Each five experience points spent on a characteristic raises it one level, as stated on p. 16. Skills may be purchased as listed in the table on p. 32.

Significators: allow the player to choose a card from the list as his/her character's significator. If the card refers to a "bonus" or "slight" in a given characteristic, the character receives no actual bonus or penalty. Instead, this simply means that any characteristic labelled as a bonus must be higher than ten, and any labelled as a slight must be lower than ten. If the player doesn't wish to set the appropriate characteristic to these levels, he or she must choose a different card as significator.

Note that the Significator chosen also has an effect on Disposition - see p. 44.

Starting Tie/Antipathy Experience: instead of 2D3 as listed on p. 45, use four levels to distribute among starting ties. The GM may vary this number, of course, granting each player five or even six levels of ties, for example.