

THE AGE OF SHADOW

Role-playing Game

By Kristian Richards



Based on
OpenQuest
By Newt Newport

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Note that *The Age Of Shadow* uses the OpenQuest Development Kit by D101 games (which in turn uses Mongoose Publishing's RuneQuest System Resource Document).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a world of adventure!

“Beastlings!” Gilmir spat the word out as though it pained him to do so. He could see them more clearly now, perhaps half a dozen of the vile creatures, gathered close together around a small fire pit at the centre of the clearing. Amongst them stood a large brutish figure with a broad back and long sinewy arms that hung down past its knees. In the dim light of the fire its face took on an almost demonic form as it barked out orders to some of the shorter, bowlegged, figures.

“I have never known them venture so far south.” whispered Elmíriel, his sister, from a little way behind. “Perhaps it would be wiser to turn back?”

Anthar stood nearby, silently shaking his head in disagreement. Unlike his travelling companions, he was no elf, and the men of his household had already suffered much at the hands of the enemy. Even from here the foul stench of the beastly creatures was vaguely perceptible, and the thought of them journeying freely in these lands pained him grievously.

...so what happens next?

If this were a novel we would be reading what the author intends to happen next to our group of heroes. Perhaps Anthar and his two elven companions charged into the camp with weapons drawn and slew the creatures with little effort; or maybe the elves persuaded Anthar that now was not the best time for him to seek his revenge, and the trio went on to find an alternate route to their destination (and to whatever peril may await them there). But you are not passively reading this in a book - you are sat around a table with some of your friends, each of whom has taken on the role of Gilmir, Elmíriel and Anthar, while another friend (who is the appointed Games Master) has been describing the creatures and their camp to you all.

...so what do I do now?

Whatever happens next is for you to decide. If Anthar is your character (i.e. your alter ego within the game) then maybe you do decide to draw your sword and charge the largest brute with little regard for your own safety, or maybe you and the other players decide to fit arrows to your bows and fire a volley at the smaller creatures first. It's entirely up to you. You can tell the Games Master whatever you want based upon what you know about Anthar's abilities and personality, and then you and the Games Master narrate the result of your decision - often making a dice roll to determine how successful your actions are (this is explained later). Play then continues, with more decisions, rewards and risks, until the adventure comes to its natural conclusion.

...what is this game about?

It is worth noting that *The Age Of Shadow* is a roleplaying game based upon the *OpenQuest* system by Newt Newport (available from www.d101games.co.uk). As such, *The Age Of Shadow* is a game of fantasy adventure - a game that takes place in the imagination of its players, in a world where monsters exist and magic is quite real. The players can take on the roles of brave warriors, crafty thieves, noble elves, or any other type of fantasy character.

As mentioned above, the game requires a number of players to take on the role of the story's protagonists (called Player Characters or PC's for short), and one player to act as a kind of impartial referee to play out the roles of the other characters and monsters that the PC's interact with (called the Games Master or GM for short).

These roles are explained in a little more detail below:

Players: The game will usually consist of around 5 players, four of whom will take on the role of a single character known as a Player Character. This character becomes that player's alter ego within the fantasy world and has a set of numbers that describe their abilities (which are written down on a character sheet). Otherwise they exist only in the imagination of the player and come to life

during the game (though you may find some kind of counter or miniature to represent your character useful at times - though it is not absolutely necessary).

Games Master: The Games Master is the player who is in charge of running the fantasy world and the Non-Player Characters (NPC's) that the players encounter during their adventures. Typically the GM describes the scene that the PC's find themselves in - including details of the location, the non-player characters, and anything else that is relevant. The players then take turns in describing their character's actions (making any relevant dice rolls that the GM deems necessary) and the GM informs them of the results of their actions (see the example at the end of this chapter to see how the game plays).

Features Of The Rules

The Setting

For the most part this book concentrates on the rules aspect of fantasy role-playing and does not concern itself much with the setting in which the player characters find themselves (though a small map can be found at the end of the book to help get you started). However, the default rules do assume a few common fantasy archetypes, such as the existence of a Dark Lord (or lords), and the presence of elves, men, fantastical creatures, and so on.

Flexible Character Creation & Advancement

In this game you decide what your character will be like and choose the skills, weapons and magic that they are proficient in. As the character grows during play the player chooses which areas the character should advance in. At no point does the character get tied down to a set path determined by the boundaries of a predefined character type or class.

Percentile Rolls

The core game mechanic is the percentile roll. The character's chance to succeed at any given task is expressed as a percentage. For example Anthar's chance to hit with his Sword

is 55%. This is then rolled on a 'd100': two ten sided dice of different colours thrown together with one acting as the 'tens' value and the other as the 'units.' The dice determine whether the character succeeds in combat and either hits an opponent or not.

Simplicity

While other d100 roleplaying games modify the chance of success by adding a 10% here and taking a 5% away there, *The Age Of Shadow* avoids some of this complexity. If a roll is modified then it is by adding a meaningful modifier, such as 25% or even 50%. Not only does this remove the amount of fiddly additions and subtractions players have to do, but it means that when modifiers are applied to dice rolls they have a meaningful and significant effect on play.

Other d100 roleplaying games may also ask a player to roll not once but twice to attempt some tasks. As far as possible *The Age Of Shadow* tries to keep dice rolling down to a bare minimum, so that the system stays in the background and the players and Games Master can enjoy their roleplaying.

Risky And Dangerous Combat

Weapon and armour rules are kept to a minimum to preserve the game's goal of keeping things simple. The game models a world where combat is always a risk and characters face grievous (and sometimes permanent) damage if they take the violent option.

Two Approaches To Magic

In *The Age Of Shadow* there are two magic systems - innate magic and sorcery.

Innate Magic: This is the most basic type of magic, and the ability to wield it is derived from the inherent power contained within the individual. As far as player characters go, only elves (or those of elven lineage) are able to obtain spells of this kind.

Sorcery: Sorcery on the other hand, is the magic which draws upon the very fabric of the world itself. However, the default setting assumes that the entire world (at least in part) contains a portion of the Dark Lord's essence -

as he put forth much of his own power into it - so that no corner has gone unmarred. Therefore, sorcery spells are potentially the most powerful and the most flexible form of magic, but dabbling in the art is both perilous and time consuming - demanding extensive study and understanding.

What You'll Need To Play

A set of polyhedral dice: These can be obtained from online suppliers or your local game store. As well as the familiar six sided dice that come with most board games, you will need dice with four, eight, ten, twelve, and twenty sides. Dice are referred to as d(x) in the rules, where (x) is the number of sides of the dice. For example d10 refers to a ten sided dice

The most commonly used dice in game are d100's. These are not actually one hundred sided dice, but two d10's that are rolled together. Therefore, before the dice are rolled you must state which will be the 'tens' die and which will be 'units' (note that some dice are already numbered in this manner).

For example, if you are using a blue d10 for the 'tens' and a red d10 for the 'units' and then go on to roll a result of a two on the blue die and a five on the red die, your d100 result would be 25.



Paper: You'll need paper for note taking, drawing maps and any other quick explanatory pictures or diagrams that either the players or the Games Master want to draw to help describe what is going on during the game. You can also find a character sheet at the back of the book that you will need to print out for each player character.

Time: Game play usually happens in 'sessions' of three to four hours. Sessions can take more or less time usually determined by such factors as the players concentration and

enjoyment, coming to a natural end of the adventure, or reaching a climactic cliff hanger where play can be picked up again quickly after a short recap at the next session.

Some friends: Roleplaying games are inherently social, so you need at least two players; one to play the heroes of the story and the other to be the Games Master. More players can be added, and the usual number is four to six players and one Games Master. Any more than six players and it becomes difficult for the Games Master to get round the table to find out what each player wants to do.

Imagination: *The Age Of Shadow* takes place in the imagination of the players and Games Master. Although miniatures and battlemats (available online and at games stores), can be used to help the players visualise the action (which may be especially useful during combat situations), at the end of the day the game stands or falls on how much the players and Games Master use the power of their imagination to fuel the story they are co-creating.

What This Book Contains

In addition to this introduction the book contains the following chapters.

Characters: This chapter gives rules and advice on how to create your character, which is your alter ego in the fantasy world.

Skills: This chapter details the skills that your character will use to perform tasks and actions. It gives rules on how skills are used in various types of situations.

Equipment: The tools of your character's trade. All the weapons, armour and other pieces of equipment your character will need are found here.

Combat: Hand to hand, missile and unarmed combat is the meat of this chapter.

Innate Magic: This chapter details the basic rules as to how innate magic works within the game. It also lists all the available spells from that system.

Sorcery: This chapter deals with an advanced type of magic known as sorcery.

Adventures And Quests: This chapter contains a number of 'situational rules' that cover most of the hazards that a character may encounter during their adventures - such as poison, disease, falling, fatigue and encumbrance. Also practical advice for players on what to expect on an adventure, how to improve their characters, and what their characters can do in-between adventures.

Creatures: A selection of the some common creatures and monsters that inhabit the fantasy world. This chapter is for the GM's eyes only and concludes with a listing of creatures with full game rules and statistics.

An Example Of Play

The following example shows how a game might develop if applied to the opening text in this chapter. You'll get to see how the game progresses as a conversation between the players and the Games Master (with the occasional dice roll thrown in where the action is less than clear). Don't worry how the numbers are worked out at this stage (or how the rules actually work), as all that will be explained later in this book.

For now, all that's important is that John is the GM and three of his friends are each playing as one of the PC's. Gary is playing Gilmír (a young Elf), Emily is playing Elmíriel (Gilmír's elder sister), and Andrew is playing Anthar (a reckless human warrior).

John: OK, so at the end of the last session you were journeying through a dark wooded area when you came upon a band of beastlings that had made their camp in a small clearing. What would you like to do?

Andrew: Anthar draws his sword and looks eager for battle.

Emily: Elmíriel fits an arrow to her bow and whispers "I still think it would be wiser to try and find another way around them."

Gary: Gilmír unslings his shield and readies his sword. Then he whispers "I agree with Anthar ...we cannot allow these foul creatures to roam at will through these lands."

Emily: Since it looks like Elmíriel is outvoted 2 to 1, I guess we'll be attacking the monsters. OK then, Elmíriel will nod to her brother and then target the largest creature and be ready to fire as soon as Anthar and Gilmír make their move.

John: OK, what are Gilmír and Anthar actually doing at this moment in time?

Andrew: Anthar will try to sneak toward the edge of the clearing - just as far as the edge of the trees.

Gary: So will Gilmír.

John: OK, both of you need to make a deception roll to avoid being spotted.

Andrew: I rolled a 56 and I only have a score of 30 ...so I failed. It looks like Anthar steps on an old branch and it makes a loud cracking noise as he approaches.

Gary: I rolled a 23 and I have a score of 44, so I make it.

John: Not necessarily, let me make a perception roll for the beastlings. Well, I got a 93 for the smaller ones, so they are completely oblivious to both of you, but I rolled a 13 for their large captain, which is easily a pass for him.

Gary: But I rolled higher ...so he didn't notice me right?

John: That's right ...Gilmír's approach goes unnoticed, but the bestial-looking captain does hear the loud 'crack' when Anthar steps on the branch, and looking up he easily spots Anthar as he darts between the trees.

Andrew: Well there goes the element of surprise.

John: Right then. As soon as the thing sees you it lets out a bloodcurdling roar and begins to bark out orders to its comrades as it reaches down to pick up its huge axe.

Emily: OK, I'll assume that things aren't quite going according to plan, so Elmíriel will curse quietly under her breath and fire her arrow at the brute.

John: OK, make your roll...

Of course, this is just a brief example of how a combat situation might arise during the course of the game (and judging by this example, our 'heroes' may have bitten off a little more than they can chew).

CHAPTER 2

CHARACTERS

What Is A Player Character?

A character is your representation in the game. Your eyes, ears, touch, taste, and smell in the imaginary world that you and your fellow players create.

On the one hand the character is a collection of numbers which describe his or her characteristics, skills, and magic spells - all of which are written down on a character sheet. This chapter will explain how you create these numbers in a process known as 'Character Generation.'

But that's only half of what a character is. The other half exists mainly in the imagination of the player, with perhaps some quick notes on the character sheet. This half is the personality of the character and other intangibles such as goals and past history. These are the things that you can't express in cold hard numbers, which really bring the character to life and give the player guidelines on how the character acts and thinks.

Character Generation

The process of creating a character is known as 'Character Generation.' In *The Age Of Shadow* character generation is a simple five step process - and at each step the player makes decisions about what their character is going to be like at the beginning of the game (which is usually while they are still a young adult, or maybe at a particular turning point in their lives).

Generating A Character Step 1

- Characteristics -

These are the primary building blocks of the character. All characters and creatures have seven characteristics which give the basic information about the character's physical, mental, and spiritual capabilities. As well as being useful indicators of how to roleplay the character (see below) they are the scores that skills are initially based upon.

The seven characteristics are:

Strength (STR): Strength is a measure of a character's brute force. It affects the amount of damage he deals, what weapons he can wield effectively, how much he can lift, and so on.

Constitution (CON): This is a measure of the character's health. Constitution affects how much damage he can sustain in combat, as well as his general resistance to disease and other illnesses.

Dexterity (DEX): Dexterity represents a character's agility, co-ordination, and speed of reaction. It aids him in many physical actions, including combat.

Size (SIZ): This is an indication of the character's mass and (like strength & constitution) can affect the amount of damage a character can deal, and also how well he can absorb damage.

Intelligence (INT): This is a character's ability to think around problems, analyse information, and memorise instructions. Intelligence is a very useful characteristic for characters interested in becoming accomplished spellcasters.

Power (POW): Perhaps the most abstract characteristic, power is a measure of the character's life force and the strength of his willpower.

Charisma (CHA): This quantifies a character's attractiveness and leadership qualities.

Generating Characteristics

In *The Age Of Shadow* most PC's will start with characteristics that fall within the range of 6-18. Each of these characteristics is generated randomly by rolling a number of six-sided dice (d6's) and totalling the result. In some cases this total is also modified by adding a further +6 or +3 to the result (see table 2.1). In addition to this it is also worth noting that players are always allowed to re-roll any dice that give a result of 1.

But before any rolls are made you will first need to decide upon the race of your character, as this will affect the amount of dice you will be required to roll.

In line with *OpenQuest's* stance on keeping things simple (*OpenQuest* being the ruleset that *The Age Of Shadow* is based upon) the players may choose to play either a human, an elf, or a dwarf (i.e. no attempt has been made to divide these three races into further subtypes or different cultures with regard to their starting characteristics). However, it may be beneficial for new players, or players not familiar with the setting in which they will be playing, to begin their first few games with human characters.

Once you have decided which race you would like to play, you should then consult table 2.1 (shown below) to obtain the number of dice you need to roll for each of your characteristics (as well as any modifications you might need to make to the totals).

Table 2.1 Characteristics			
	Human	Elf	Dwarf
STR	3d6	3d6	2d6+6
CON	3d6	2d6+6	3d6+6
DEX	3d6	2d6+6	2d6+3
SIZ	2d6+6	2d6+6	1d6+6
INT	2d6+6	2d6+6	2d6+6
POW	3d6	2d6+6	3d6
CHA	3d6	2d6+6	2d6+3
<i>Note that all dice rolls of 1 are re-rolled.</i>			

These totals should then be added to your character sheet.

Using Characteristics In Roleplaying

As well as being numbers that are used to calculate the skills and attributes that influence the dice rolls during the game, characteristics can also be used to give rough ideas as to what the character is like. For example, the average human PC will have scores of around 13, so a character with strength of 17 will be of above average strength and posses a toned physique. A character with a charisma of 7 on the other hand is well below average - perhaps being shy or obnoxious and socially inept.

Characters with a few low characteristics may at first glance look undesirable, on account of how base skills are affected, but actually they present good opportunities for roleplaying the flaws of the character, and may make the character more interesting as a result.

However, if any players are genuinely unhappy with the characteristics they have rolled, then they should be allowed to re-roll the entire batch again (so long as the GM agrees).

Generating A Character Step 2

- Attributes -

Attributes are a set of secondary scores that define the character's potential to do and take physical damage, and the amount of magical energy available to the character. Attributes are determined from the character's characteristic scores.

Damage Modifier (DM): The damage modifier applies whenever the character uses a melee or thrown weapon. It is calculated by adding the character's strength and size together (since bigger, stronger, characters deal out more damage than smaller, weaker characters). The damage modifier is calculated by consulting table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2 Damage Modifier Table	
Total of STR & SIZ	Damage Modifier
1-10	-1d6
11-15	-1d4
16-25	+0
26-30	+1d4
31-45	+1d6
46-60	+2d6
61-75	+3d6
76-90	+4d6
Every additional 15	+1d6

Hit Points (HP): These determine how much damage the character can sustain before reaching unconsciousness or death. Hit points equal size plus constitution divided by 2 (rounded up).

Major Wound Level: When the character takes this amount of damage in one go, they suffer a major wound. Major wounds are injuries, such as a severed limb, broken ribcage or broken skull, which may render the character unconscious immediately and leave permanent affects if not healed by powerful magic. Major wound level is equal to total hit points divided by two (rounded up).

Magic Points (MP): These are used to activate any spells the character knows. The character's starting magic points will be equal to the character's POW.

Corruption Level: This is a measure of how much the character has been affected by sorcerous spells and items (corruption is covered in the sorcery section). All characters begin the game with a corruption level of zero.

Movement Rate: This is the amount in metres that a character can move in a five second combat round. Human and elf characters have a movement rate of 14 metres. Dwarves have a movement rate of 10 metres.

Generating A Character Step 3 - Skills -

Skills are things that the character can do. They represent very specific areas of expertise, and when they are used in play the player rolls d100 and compares the result to their skill. A roll equal to or less than the skill percentage usually indicates that the skill has been used successfully. For example, Gilmír has a Dodge skill of 54%, which means that in combat he has to roll 54 or under on d100 to avoid the incoming blows of his opponent.

What The Numbers Mean

Table 2.3 (below) translates the skill percentage into a 'real world' description of the level of expertise.

Table 2.3 Skill Levels		
Skill	Expertise	Description
0-25%	Novice	Someone with virtually no experience with the skill.
26-50%	Apprentice	Someone who is learning the skill.
51-75%	Veteran	Someone who regularly uses the skill as part of their everyday life.
76-99%	Expert	A local expert with in the skill, who can perform it under most conditions with ease and elegance.
100%+	Master	The acknowledged best in that skill, and regularly performs the seemingly impossible in extremely difficult conditions.

Looking at the above table you can see that Gilmír, with his Dodge of 54%, is quite proficient in the skill, having an expertise level of veteran (probably learned from his previous experiences on the battlefield).

Skill Lists

The following tables list all the skills that every character possesses and the characteristics used to determine the skill's base score. The tables also give each skill a brief description of what the skill does, but a more detailed description is given in the skills chapter.

Skills are grouped into the following categories for easy reference:

Practical Skills: These skills measure the character's ability of performing a variety of everyday and specialist tasks.

Knowledge Skills: These skills measure the intellectual skills of the character.

Resistances: These are skills that get the character out of harms way.

Combat Skills: These skills measure the character's skills in physical violence.

Magic Skills: These skills cover either casting magic or knowledge of magical practices.

Note that some skills, such as Lore (Type), Language (Other), etc. have a descriptor in brackets after the main skill name. This denotes that at time of points allocation the player must decide what 'type' or 'other' is. For example Language (Other) could be Language (Elvish).

Practical Skills

These skills allow the character to do things in the game, and *Athletics*, *Influence* and *Perception* get called upon reasonably frequently. Also if your character's concept is that of a rogue *Deception*, *Mechanisms* and *Streetwise* also deserve some points. If you see your character as a dwarven craftsman then *Craft* and *Engineering* are skills to increase. If your character has a background of entertaining people *Performance* is a skill to pick. If your character concept is any form of merchant *Trade* is a must buy.

Table 2.4 Practical Skills

Skill	Base	Description
Athletics	STR+DEX	Measures the PC's ability at running, lifting, jumping, and climbing.
Craft	INT+10	This skill allows you to make things such as pots, weapons, and buildings.
Deception	DEX+INT	Stealth, hiding and picking pockets are all handled here.
Driving	DEX+INT	This skill covers vehicles such as carts and wagons.
Engineering	INT+10	Large constructions and siege engines are covered by this skill.
Healing	INT+10	Healing wounds and treating disease using first aid and surgery.
Influence	CHA+10	This is used when the character wants to persuade another to do something against their normal interests.
Mechanisms	DEX+INT	Locks and anything with complex moving parts are covered by this skill.
Perception	INT+POW	Used to spot hidden objects and small details in the PC's environment.
Performance	CHA+10	Acting, playing instruments, dancing, and singing are all covered by this skill.
Riding	DEX+POW	Used when trying tricky manoeuvres when riding animals such as horses, camels and even more fantastic beasts such as giant eagles.
Sailing	DEX+INT	This skill covers the use of ships and boats.
Streetwise	POW+CHA	How well the character operates in a city environment. Finding information and navigating the city streets are covered by this skill.
Trade	INT+10	This skill is used by merchants / traders to value and sell goods.

Knowledge Skills

Knowledge skills are good for characters that are sages or scholars (i.e. those who make their living from obscure information that other people do not have the time to learn). Culture (Other) and Language (Other) are also useful to characters whose abilities revolve around communications.

Table 2.5 Knowledge Skills

Skill	Base	Description
Culture (Own)	INT+10	What a PC knows about the history, politics, geography, etc. of their own land and society.
Culture (Other)	INT	What a character knows about the history, politics and geography of a foreign land.
Language (Own)	INT+40	How fluent a PC is at speaking their own language. A score of 80 or more is needed to have the ability to read and write.
Language (Other)	INT	How fluent a character is at speaking a foreign language.
Nature Lore	INT+10	Recognising / caring for animals and plants, predicting the weather, geology, or survival in the natural world.
Lore (Type)	INT	Other types of specialist knowledge skills, such as Lore (Herbalist) or Lore (Heraldry), that are not covered by any of the above.

A note on the default languages

Elvish - the noble speech of the Elves and thus the common speech of the civilised world (note all characters gain an additional +20 bonus to this language).

High Elvish - the ancient tongue of the Elves (remembered now only as a language of lore).

Dwarvish - the secret language of the Dwarves.

Mannish - the language spoken in the houses of men.

Bestial - the harsh sounding speech of the enemy (not usually known by the free peoples). Bestial has no written form.

Resistances

It's worth putting the majority of your points into *Dodge* if you are going down the route of the warrior with your character. If you are thinking more of a magic using character *Persistence* is probably more appropriate. *Resilience* is good for hardy characters that can shrug off disease and stay conscious when they take damage.

Table 2.6 Resistances		
Skill	Base	Description
Dodge	DEX+10	Gets you out of the way of physical threats, such as an incoming axe or dragon breath.
Persistence	POW+10	This is a measure of your character's will-power and resistance against hostile magic. It is also rolled to resist attempts to influence the character against their will.
Resilience	CON+POW	This is a measure of a character's health and their ability to survive exposure, hunger and thirst. It is also their chance to resist the effects of diseases.

Combat Skills

It goes without saying that all these skills are appropriate for characters who want to be warriors. A few points however in either *Close* or *Unarmed Combat* are useful even for non-combative characters since these skills can be used for self-defence.

Table 2.7 Combat Skills		
Skill	Base	Description
Close Combat	STR+DEX	A character's skill with melee weapons, such as swords, axes, spears, and shields.
Ranged Combat	DEX+INT	A character's skill with missile and thrown weapons.
Unarmed Combat	STR+DEX	A character's skill with natural weapons such as bite, fist, kick, grapple and claws.

Magic Skills

Magic is explained later in this book, but for now all you need note is that there are two magic skills that relate to the two different types of magic.

Table 2.8 Magic Skills		
Skill	Base	Description
Innate Casting	POW X 3	Used with innate magic. This skill allows you to use basic personal magic.
Sorcery Casting	INT	Used with Sorcery. This skill is used to cast and manipulate sorcery spells. For the non-magician it is your chance to use talismans, scrolls, or other sorcery items.

Calculating Skills

For each skill calculate the starting value (i.e. the base score) from the calculation provided (e.g. when calculating your Close Combat skill add your STR and DEX scores together). Then write this value down on the character sheet next to the relevant skill.

Once that is completed you may then distribute additional points between these skills (see below), with a limit of no more than 30 points to be allocated to any one skill.

During character generation the player gets a pool of points to spend on each group of skills. These are as follows:

Practical Skills: 75 points.

Knowledge Skills: 50 points.

Resistances: 50 points.

Combat Skills: 50 points.

Magic Skills: None.

Note that, for ease of use, these additional points are also shown on the character sheet (in the top left corner of each category).

Optional Rule

GM's may allow players to trade some of their skill points for extra background points. The first background point gained this way will cost the character 10 skill points, the second will cost 20 points, the third 30 points, and so on (so 3 extra background points will cost a total of 60 skill points).

Generating A Character Step 4

- Additional Points & Abilities -

Starting characters also begin play with a number of background points, fate points, and special abilities - the number of which is dependant on their race. Each of these additional points and abilities are explained in more detail below.

Background Points

Background points work in a similar fashion to improvement points (improvement points are explained later in this book), except that characters are allowed to use these points during character creation to further customise their characters. The number of background points available to your character will depend upon his or her race, as shown below:

Humans: The race of men receive 3 background points.

Elves: Elvish folk each receive 1 background point.

Dwarves: All dwarves receive 2 background points.

The manner in which these points may be spent is shown in table 2.9 below.

Table 2.9 Background Points	
Cost	Improvement
1 point	+2d4 to any one skill
1 point	+1d4 to any two skills
3 points	+1 to any characteristic
2 points	Elven lineage (humans only)
1 point / magnitude	Learn an innate spell* (elves or humans with elven lineage only)
2 points	Learn a sorcerous spell*
1 point	An extra 500 BV worth of equipment (elves and dwarves only)
2 points	An extra 500 BV worth of equipment (humans only)
*Note that players that choose these options are allowed to choose a single spell from those listed in the magic chapters of this book. More details on how magic works will be discussed in those particular chapters, but for now it is worth noting that a character will be required to make a casting test whenever they attempt to cast such a spell (i.e. a d100 roll made against their relevant skill), and that each spell will require the caster to spend a number of their magic points in order for it to take effect (note that this cost is doubled for elvish-blooded humans casting innate magic spells).	

Special Abilities

The character's race may also bestow the character with a few minor special abilities as detailed below:

Humans: The race of men have no special abilities.

Elves: Elvish folk have night-sight*, are immune to non-magical diseases, and gain a +25% bonus to Persistence tests made against the fear† effect of *Fearsome I* creatures.

Dwarves: All dwarves have night-sight*, they also gain a +25% bonus to fatigue‡ checks and ignore overloading‡ penalties.

*This ability allows the character to treat partial darkness as illuminated, and darkness as only partial darkness. More information on illumination can be found on page 56.

† See page 63.

‡ See pages 56-58.

Fate Points

Every starting character (except for elves - see below) begins play with two fate points. These fate points are what distinguishes the player characters from the normal 'stay-at-home' type folk. They allow a player to:

- Re-roll any failed dice roll.
- Downgrade a major wound to a normal wound. The character still takes the full damage they would normally to their hit points, but they do not suffer the messy effects of a major wound.
- Avoid character death. If the character's hit points are reduced to zero or less, instead of dying the character is merely unconscious. The character remains in such a state until the combat is over at which point they awaken with one hit point.

Once fate points are spent they are gone. The Games Master awards fate points at the end of the game session for moments of outstanding heroic play.

However, elves (due to their fate being tied to that of the world) begin the game with a single fate point. In addition, they may never have more than one fate point at any time.

Generating A Character Step 5

- Finishing Off The Character -

By this stage all the hard decisions on making your character are over. All that remains is to note down a few numbers on the character sheet and ponder about the character's background and motives.

Age

Human characters start out at any age between 18 and 28. To randomly determine this, roll 2d6 and add 16. For dwarven characters this number should be doubled (resulting in an age between 36 and 56), and elves should multiply the result by 10 (giving an age range of 180 to 280).

Equipment

Each character typically starts off with some valuables and the tools of their trade. These include:

- Leather armour
- Dagger
- Backpack
- Two weeks worth of travelling provisions
- Flint and tinder
- Waterskin
- Either a two-handed weapon **or** a one-handed weapon and a shield **or** a ranged weapon (including ammunition)
- 6d6 x 10 BV* of additional goods

**Each item of equipment in this game has been allocated a particular Barter Value (BV). The figure generated here represents the max. BV worth of additional goods that the player may begin the game with. More on barter values can be found in the equipment chapter.*

Background, Appearance, & Personality

A background is useful not only to give the character a history before the game starts but also as a way of noting all the 'intangible' elements of the character's personality.

Even if you don't create a fully written up background it is worth making a mental note of what the character is like as a person and roughly what their background is previous to play, as well as visualising what they actually look like.

Character Generation Summary

- Choose a race and roll characteristics.
- Note your character's damage modifier.
- Calculate hit points, major wound level, and magic points.
- Note your character's corruption level and movement rate.
- Total the starting value (i.e. base score) of each of your character's skills.
- Spend the relevant amount of points on each group of skills.
- Check how many background points your character has, and spend them accordingly.
- Note any special abilities.
- Note the number of fate points that your character receives.
- Work out your character's age.
- Give your character a name and detail as much (or as little) of his or her background as you wish.
- Work out your character's starting equipment.

Character Creation Summary			
- CHARACTERISTICS -			
	Humans	Elves	Dwarves
STR	3d6	3d6	2d6+6
CON	3d6	2d6+6	3d6+6
DEX	3d6	2d6+6	2d6+3
SIZ	2d6+6	2d6+6	1d6+6
INT	2d6+6	2d6+6	2d6+6
POW	3d6	2d6+6	3d6
CHA	3d6	2d6+6	2d6+3
Note that all rolls of 1 are re-rolled			
- TYPICAL DAMAGE MODIFIERS -			
Total of STR & SIZ		Damage Modifier	
16-25		+0	
26-30		+1d4	
31-45		+1d6	
- MISCELLANEOUS -			
Movement Rate	14m	14m	10m
Special Abilities	N/A	Night-sight Immune to all natural diseases +25 to Fear-some I tests.	Night-sight +25 to fatigue tests Ignore all overloading penalties.
B'ground Points	3	1	2
Fate Points	2	1	2
Age	18-28	180-280	36-56

CHAPTER 3

SKILLS

Characters use skills to get things done in the game. When the outcome of an action is in doubt the Games Master will ask the player to make a skill test against the relevant skill to see if his character is successful.

For example:

John: Anthar comes to a large and very deep ravine. Far below he can hear water rushing along the bottom of the ravine, and in front of him is the remains of a rope bridge that has been deliberately broken.

Andrew: How far across is it?

John: About four metres.

Andrew: OK, Anthar is going to take a running jump across the ravine.

John: Give me an Athletics skill test, since that covers jumping. You do realise that if Anthar fails he's facing a very nasty fall?

Andrew: Yeah, Anthar works that out, but decides to worry about that when and if it happens. Anthar's Athletics is 50%.

Andrew then rolls a d100 and his blue die (tens) comes up 3 and his red die (units) comes up 4.

Andrew: 34 a success. Anthar takes a running jump across the ravine and is now on the other side, what's there?

This chapter describes when and how to make skill tests, how to modify skills depending on the conditions the test is made under, and how to judge tests where two characters are competing against each other.

This is followed by a list of all the skills that are used in the game.

Characters that are considered masters in their fields of expertise can have skills above 100%. How *The Age Of Shadow* manages these very high skills is explained later in this chapter.

The Basic Skill Test

To make a skill test the player first describes what his character is doing. Then they roll a d100 and compare this to the relevant skill's score. If the dice roll is equal to or less than the skill's score, the attempt is successful. If the total is greater than the skill's score, then it has failed. The Games Master then describes the result of the character's success or failure.

Under normal conditions a skill test is asked for when the character is placed on the spot and has to make a successful action under pressure.

If, however, the character has lots of time, has the tools of his trade, and is in a sufficiently relaxed environment and state of mind, he completes the task to the best of his ability.

For example, an apprentice potter (Craft 30%) will, day in day out, produce a couple of pots of passable quality while working at his master's workshop. Of course work beyond the skill of this character is still out of their reach, unless the player decides to take the chance with the dice and ask for a skill test. To illustrate this, let us assume that the same character would like to make an artistic piece of pottery for a grand celebration that is being held later in the month. Knowing full well that his normal work will definitely not be up to scratch, the player decides to roll the dice in the hope that he can produce something of the standard that he desires.

Critical Successes

If the dice roll on a skill test is equal to or less than 10% of the modified skill, then a critical success is achieved.

A critical success has an outcome that far exceeds the expectation of the player when the original skill test was made. It's the best possible result based upon the player's original statement of intent.

The actual result of a critical success during a skill test is largely up to the Games Master - thought in most cases it will achieve one of the following results:

- The task is completed sooner.
- The task is completed to a higher degree of expertise than normal.
- The task is completed with élan and style, generally impressing witnesses.
- The character gains additional information or insight into the task thanks to their brilliance.

For example, when Anthar is jumping the chasm, his Athletics skill is 50% and therefore his chance of getting a critical is 5. If Andrew rolls a 5 or less then Anthar has jumped with a critical success and the Games Master rules that Anthar easily jumps the chasm with grace that allows him to carry on running without having to pause to catch his breath.

Fumbles

Whenever a skill test results in a roll of 00, i.e. the two d10's both come up 0, then the player has rolled 100 rather than zero. The character has fumbled the roll.

A fumble is the worst imaginable outcome of the skill test based upon the player's original description of what their character was planning to do when the skill test was called for.

The actual result of a fumble is largely up to the Games Master to decide. It normally results in one of the following mishaps:

- The task takes twice as long to finish and is still a failure.
- The task produces a useless result that actually makes further actions more difficult.
- The task fails spectacularly, opening the character up to derision and scorn from witnesses.
- The character becomes impeded or even harmed by his failure.

Conversely if Andrew rolls 00, Anthar not only fails to make the jump over the chasm but goes plunging down the ravine head first.

There are specific critical success and fumble results for weapon skill tests in combat and magical casting skill tests, which are described in the relevant chapters.

Difficulty

Difficulty modifiers (shown in table 3.1 below) are temporarily applied to the skill for the duration of the test only. A penalty will make the test harder while a bonus makes it easier. Modifiers are applied before the dice are rolled.

Table 3.1 Difficulty Modifiers		
Difficulty	Skill Modifier	What the modifier means
Easy	+50%	The task is much easier than usual and the character should have an almost certain chance of success.
Simple	+25%	The task is simpler than usual and while success is still by no means certain, the character has a boost to their chance of success as a result.
Normal	+0%	The skill is unmodified since normal conditions apply.
Difficult	-25%	The PC is significantly hindered in their chance of success.
Hard	-50%	The character suffers a serious set back that may make success beyond their reach.

Impossible Success & Automatic Failure

Any skill which is modified to 0 or less will automatically fail when tested. Roll dice anyway, since the character can still fumble.

Any skill which is modified to 100% or greater will automatically succeed when tested. Roll the dice anyway since the character can still critical (10% of the modified skill) or fumble if the player rolls a 00.

When The GM Should Apply Difficulty Modifiers

Modifiers should only be applied when they have a significant effect on the character's chance of success. They should not be doled out for every skill test, since this cheapens their dramatic effect. Only apply a modifier

when it is important and brings something to the story. Resist the urge to hand out +10% here and take -5% there. These little modifiers don't add much to the player's chance of success and bring needless fiddly addition and subtraction into play, breaking the player's immersion in the game.

Broadly speaking there are three areas where the Games Master should modify the player's skill before a skill test. The Games Master should consider all three areas and decide which of them provides the deciding factor, and only apply the modifier based on that. For example if the player has roleplayed his character to the hilt, while influencing a guardsman in the pouring rain, it is the roleplaying for which the Games Master awards a +50% bonus and not the rain, which would have dampened the enthusiasm of the guardsman to -25%. So, only the +50% applies to the player's roll. The three areas are:

- As a result of the task being intrinsically easy or difficult.
- As a result of planning.
- As a result of good roleplaying.

As A Result Of The Task Being Intrinsically Easy Or Difficult

Some things are just naturally easier or harder to do than others. For example, climbing a steep cliff with natural hand holds and with the proper equipment (e.g. ropes and iron spikes) is an unmodified task. Doing the same climb in the pouring rain, makes it difficult (-25% to the skill) and if the character has also forgotten his ropes and spikes then this makes it hard (-50% to the skill).

In comparison, climbing a cliff where there are numerous ledges, and where the character can rest and actually 'walk' up the cliff in places becomes an easy (+50%) skill test.

As A Result Of Planning

The players have outlined how their character prepares to perform a task well in advance. If their plan is a sound and good one you should make the skill test easy. Conversely, if the players have given no thought as to how their characters approach a

complex task which really does require preparation and planning, then make the resulting skill test hard.

For example, let us assume that several groups are preparing to head out into a particular part of the wilderness where food and water are hard to come by. The Games Master has decided in advance to ask the players to make Nature Lore skill tests, to see how their characters fare in this unforgiving environment.

The first group spend an extra couple of days planning and preparing for the trip. They acquire more than adequate supplies and equipment, along with the extra beasts of burden to carry them. They also manage to track down an old guide (a survivor from a previous foray into the area). The Games Master awards them a +50% (easy) modifier to their survival roll.

The second group makes the traditional preparations for the journey. They ensure they have enough supplies, but no back up mounts or proper travelling clothing. In this case the Games Master does not modify their survival roll on account of their preparation.

The third and final group decide to simply ride out on the horses they arrived on, without replenishing supplies. The Games Master makes their survival roll appropriately hard (-50%) as a result of their rashness.

As A Result Of Good Roleplaying

This usually happens for skills that involve some form of communication, like Influence. When the player describes the action of their character, the exchange between their character and the non-player character(s) being influenced may be roleplayed out. If the player was entertaining, kept in character and added to the fun of the game, the Games Master may award them a +25 or +50% bonus.

In exceptional circumstances, where the player was outstanding in their portrayal of their character (or maybe even took the time to prepare a few elvish phrases before the game for just such an occasion) the Games Master may decide waive the necessity for the skill test completely.

Remember good storytelling always comes before any dice rolling!

Opposed Skill Tests

Opposed skill tests are made by characters who are in direct competition with each other. Both characters make the skill tests as normal, rolling 1d100 and attempting to roll equal to or under their skill.

One Character Succeeds

If one character succeeds their skill test and the other fails, then the successful character has won the opposed skill test.

Both Characters Succeed

If both characters succeed then whoever rolled the highest in their skill test wins the opposed test. However, if one character rolls a critical, while the other rolls an ordinary success, then the character that rolled the critical (which is regarded as a higher level of success) wins.

Both Characters Fail

Whoever rolled the lowest in their skill test wins the opposed test.

For example, let us assume that Elmíriel is making her way along a wide mountain pass when she comes upon a small group of carousing wildlings. As of yet, the wildlings seem to be completely unaware of the elf as she watches them from the cover of a large boulder. Elmíriel, knowing full well that she would be no match for them on her own, decides to try and sneak past them, using the cover of a small line of trees that grow upon one side of the valley.

The Games Master calls for a Deception skill test from Elmíriel, since this skill deals with sneaking (note Elmíriel's Deception skill

is 39%). Simultaneously the Games Master makes a Perception skill test for the wildlings (these particular wildlings have a Perception of 45%). Fortunately for Emily (Elmíriel's player), the Games Master decides that due to their condition (they have been carousing for some time after all), it will be difficult for them to spot anything (-25%), which means their Perception is now 20% for the purpose of this test.

Once the rolls are made, both Emily and the DM compare their results ...some examples of which are shown below:

- If Emily rolls a 3 she gets a critical success and Elmíriel manages to slip past them, regardless of whether they succeed or not. The only way the wildlings could possibly notice her is if they rolled a critical too.
- If Emily rolls a success (but not a critical) and the wildlings fail their roll, then Elmíriel succeeds again.
- If Emily rolls a failure and the wildlings roll a success, then they spot a shape moving in the trees and head over to investigate.
- If Emily rolls a 15 and succeeds, and so do the wildlings who roll a 9, then since Elmíriel both succeeded and made the highest roll she wins (and once again goes unnoticed). Perhaps one of the wildlings thought he heard something for a brief moment, but he thinks little of it.
- However, if Emily rolls a 65 and the wildlings roll a 75, then even though both fail, Elmíriel wins again because she rolled the lower of the two. In this instance maybe Elmíriel caught her foot on an old tree root and stumbled into view for a brief second - but the wildlings are so lost in their own business that they are completely oblivious.

Table 3.2 Opposed Skill Test Results

Player / Opponent	Critical	Success	Failure	Fumble
Critical	Highest Roll Wins	Player Wins	Player Wins	Player Wins
Success	Opponent Wins	Highest Roll Wins	Player Wins	Player Wins
Failure	Opponent Wins	Opponent Wins	Lowest Roll Wins	Player Wins
Fumble	Opponent Wins	Opponent Wins	Opponent Wins	Both Fumble

Very High Skills

Character's with skills over 100% are considered masters in their fields and under normal circumstances do not fail and quite often perform tasks that are considered impossible by normal people.

Very High Skills and Opposed Tests

In opposed skill tests characters with skills over 100% are already considered to have succeeded. Therefore, to be beaten his opponent needs to score a critical success. Of course the master may also roll a critical, in which case the highest roll wins.

For example, Belegorn is a master archer with a Ranged Combat skill of 120%. If Gilmír (who has a Ranged Combat skill of 40%) foolishly decided to challenge him to an archery contest, then Gilmír will automatically lose unless he himself rolls a critical success (4% or lower).



Assistance

Characters will often have the opportunity to help each other during various skill tests. If one or more characters can assist and make a significant contribution then the skill test is one level easier. On rare occasions the assistance will make the skill test two levels easier (GM's discretion). The assisting character or characters must have the appropriate helping skill at a suitable level determined by the Games Master. How high this needs to be is usually dependent on the 'difficulty' of the test. In most cases as long as the assisting character has a skill of at least 'apprentice' level (i.e. more than 25%) then they can help.

For example, let us assume that Anthar is trying to force open an old door. If Gilmír with an Athletics of 50% decides to help him, Andrew would then add +25% to Anthar's Athletics skill for the purpose of this test.

Skill Descriptions

What follows is a full list of all the skills in alphabetical order.

Athletics (DEX+STR)

This broad skill covers a range of athletic activities useful to adventuring characters, including climbing, jumping and swimming.

Acrobatics: This allows a character to perform a variety of gymnastic and balancing tasks, such as tumbling, walking a tightrope or keeping balance on a narrow or unstable ledge. The character can move at half his normal speed across an unstable surface without penalty. To move at a normal rate requires an acrobatics test. A successful acrobatics test will also halve the damage suffered from falling.

Brute Force: Brute force is a particular application of Athletics that relies purely on power, with no finesse involved. Brute force basically involves pushing, lifting or dragging.

Climbing: Given enough hand and footholds, a character can climb any surface given enough time without the need for a test. Under normal circumstances, a character can climb or descend one quarter of their movement per combat round (see chapter 5 for more details). A character can double the rate of his climb or descent by making a hard Athletics test.

Jumping: In general, a successful Athletics test allows a character to jump up to twice his own height horizontally or up to half his own height vertically, as long as he has at least four metres to run first. If he is making a standing jump these distances are halved. Penalties for jumping Athletics tests can be accrued by trying to jump further. A cumulative -25% penalty is bestowed for every extra metre the character is trying to jump. If this penalty reduces the skill below 0% the jump is impossible - even on a critical.

Swimming: Characters normally swim at half their usual movement. Athletics tests are only required when conditions are less than ideal - swimming while heavily encumbered or in strong currents for example.

Close Combat (DEX+STR)

This skill deals with the art of hitting things and defending yourself with melee weapons, such as swords, clubs, spears, polearms and shields.



Craft (INT+10)

The Craft skill is actually several separate skills grouped under a single heading. It measures the character's ability to make and repair items. The following list is by no means exhaustive:

Armourer, baker, basket weaver, blacksmith, bowyer, brewer, butcher, candle maker, carpenter, cartographer, cobbler, cooper, fletcher, joiner, leatherworker, mason, painter, potter, sculptor, smith, tailor, weapon smith, weaver.

As a very rough guide it takes one day per 50 BV to produce an item. The base BV of the item in materials needed is 50% of the listed finished BV.

Culture (Own) (INT+10) / (Other) (INT)

Each Culture skill is used to provide information about the common world view of that group of people (or creatures). This includes history, politics, weather cycles, geography, superstitions and popular mythology.

Culture (Own) is the world view of the people that the character is born into. All other foreign or alien cultures are Culture (other).

Deception (DEX +INT)

Deception tests are opposed by the Perception skill and are modified according to the situation. Deception covers the arts of:

Disguise: used to change a character's appearance and adopt a different outward persona.

Sleight: used to hide or take objects, without drawing undue attention.

Stealth: used whenever a character attempts to personally evade detection by another character. This usually happens when a character either tries to move quietly past an enemy, hide from one, or performs a combination of both.

Dodge (DEX+10)

The Dodge skill is used to avoid incoming objects that are swung or thrown at the character. The Dodge skill is normally used when a character attempts to dodge an incoming blow in combat or a physical hazard that can be avoided, such as falling masonry.

Driving (DEX+INT)

If a character is driving a wagon, chariot or similar vehicle at not more than walking pace across flat terrain, a Driving skill test will never be required. Skill tests are required when a character wants to do something out of the ordinary with a vehicle - such as traverse treacherous terrain, jump obstacles and so on.

Engineering (INT+10)

This skill is used to design, build, activate, repair, sabotage or disassemble large mechanisms or constructions such as siege machines, city gates and drawbridges, mine-shafts, sailing ships and so forth.

Healing (INT+10)

Using this skill without access to a first aid kit incurs a -50 penalty. Each use of the Healing skill generally takes a few minutes to perform. Both characters must remain stationary and may not use standard actions or reactions while this occurs or they will lose the benefits of the healing.

The use of Healing requires suitable medical equipment such as bandages or salves or appropriate improvised alternatives. Typical types of injuries or ailments that may be treated are listed below:

Unconsciousness: A successful Healing test can revive a character from unconsciousness, though drugged patients may inflict a penalty on the Healing test.

Minor Injury: A successful Healing test on a minor injury will heal 1d6 hit points.

Stabilise Major Wound: A successful Healing test on a major wound will not restore the lost hit points. This Healing merely stabilises the patient enough so that they will not die of blood loss.

Curing Diseases: A successful Healing test allows a diseased patient to add a bonus to his next opposed Resilience versus disease Potency test to resist the disease. The bonus is equal to the healer's Healing skill divided by 10 (i.e. the critical success range).

Curing Poisons: A successful Healing test allows a poisoned patient to attempt a second opposed Resilience versus poison Potency test. The patient gains a bonus to his Resilience skill equal to the healer's Healing skill divided by 10 (i.e. the critical success range).

Surgery: Other than magical healing, successful surgery is the only way that a character can recover from a major wound. Once a successful Healing test has been made to quench the bleeding of a major wound, a further Healing test can attempt to set broken bones, stitch together rent flesh and restore the wound location so that it is on the road to recovery. As long as the Healing test is a success, the stricken character gains one hit point and will begin to heal as normal.

Influence (CHA+10)

This is the art of verbally persuading another character to do what you want. Characters can use both logical and or emotional arguments. If successful in an opposed skill test, the character's audience is temporarily swayed in favour of the character's argument. In time they may understand that they were fast talked, bamboozled or hoodwinked and their judgement clouded, but in the short term they go along with what the character suggests. Influence can never be used to get a character to act against their instinct for self-preservation.

Influence skill tests are normally opposed by the Perception, Persistence or Influence skill. They are further modified by how much

a character is trying to change an opponent's mind. Influence skill tests are often modified by how well the player roleplays the exchange (see When The GM Should Apply Difficulty Modifiers on p14).

Influence tests are either applied to individuals, where each character rolls individually against the influencer, or against crowds, where one roll is made to resist based upon an average Persistence for the entire crowd.

Innate Casting (POW X 3)

This skill represents the character's ability to cast innate magic spells. It also represents their knowledge about innate magic and the rough ability to recognise magic items.

Language (Own) (INT+40) / (Other) (INT)

The Language skill is actually several separate skills grouped under a single heading. Language (Elvish), Language (Dwarvish) and Language (Bestial) for example are all individual skills.

Every character with a Language skill of 50% or more is fluent in that language, although they are likely to have an accent if it is not their native language. A score in a Language skill of 80% or more will mean the character can also read and write in that language.

The default languages are as follows:

Elvish: The language of the Elves. Elvish is the common speech of the civilised world, and as such every character gains an additional +20 bonus to this skill (even if it is their own language).

High Elvish: This is the ancient tongue of the Elves. It is rarely used nowadays and remains only as a language of lore.

Dwarvish: This is the secret language of the Dwarves. As such few non-dwarves have ever mastered it.

Mannish: The language of Men.

Bestial: Being the language of the enemy, few of the free peoples have ever learned it. It is a crude and guttural tongue with no written form.

Lore (INT)

The Lore skill is actually an umbrella term for several different skills, each of which must be improved separately.

Each Lore skill defines an area of knowledge for the character and skill tests are made whenever a player wants to see if his character knows something about the subject at hand.

The range of possible Lores is only limited by a player's imagination. A list of potential study areas of Lore is listed here:

Alchemy, art, astronomy, gambling, geography, heraldry, law, logistics, military tactics, philosophy, poisons.

Mechanisms (DEX+INT)

Usually, a character will simply make a Mechanisms test in order to succeed at assembling or disassembling a device, with appropriate bonuses or penalties decided upon by the Games Master. If a device has been designed to specifically resist attempts at disassembly, the Mechanisms test becomes opposed by the Mechanisms skill of the character that created it.

Mechanisms is also used for picking a lock or disassembling a trap. This usually takes at least one minute (12 combat rounds) to perform, whereas larger or particularly complex devices will take longer.

Nature Lore (INT+10)

Broadly speaking this Lore deals with the character's knowledge of the natural world. It can be broken into five specialist areas.

Animal: This covers the ability to recognise an animal, know its feeding habits, breeding cycle, habitats and so on. A character with a skill of at least 50% may try to domesticate a wild animal, making a skill test after every full week of training. If the character also has a Riding skill of at least 50% and the animal is capable of being ridden, he may train the animal to ride during this period. The character may later train the animal not to panic in battle and to strike at his enemies. This takes a further period of training, with the character making a skill test at the end of each week to succeed.

Plant: A character can identify plants in the wild, discover good places to grow crops, decide which plants are edible, and what unusual properties they may possess.

Mineral: This skill allows the character to identify precious metals and stones, detect fault lines, and other dangerous features in the rock.

Survival: One Survival test will be required every day that a character lacks either food, water or a safe place to sleep. Success indicates the character manages to find whatever he is lacking - failure means he will go without - which, over several days, could result in very serious consequences. Survival tests are not used when the character is in a village or town. Survival also covers tracking in the wilderness. With this skill a character can locate the tracks of a specific creature and follow them. A test must be made to locate the trail and then again every ten minutes they are being followed.

Weather: The character can predict changes in the weather.

Perception (INT+POW)

The Perception skill is used to represent the five senses of the character when detecting objects or other characters. For example, a common use of the Perception skill is as a straight skill test to detect hidden objects in a room, or as an opposed test to detect a hidden character.

Performance (CHA+10)

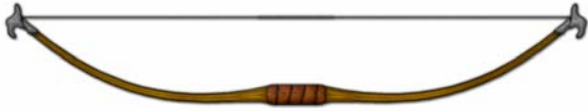
A successful test with this skill will result in the audience or partner being pleased by the character's performance. This skill covers acting, composing poetry, dancing, singing, readings and playing an instrument.

Persistence (POW+10)

This skill represents a character's mental willpower. Persistence is used to resist the effects of magic, and often against another character's attempt to use the Influence skill against them.

Ranged Combat (DEX+INT)

This skill covers the use of missile weapons, such as bows, thrown spears and thrown daggers. It is covered in more detail in the combat chapter.



Resilience (CON+POW)

This is a measure of how physically tough a character is. The higher a character's Resilience, the more likely he is to handle adverse physical conditions, such as weathering a vicious sandstorm, surviving in a drought, or overcoming the effects of poison or disease.

Riding (DEX+POW)

If a character is riding a creature with the help of saddle and stirrups at not more than a walking pace across flat terrain, then a Riding test will never be required. Tests are required when a character wants to do something out of the ordinary with a mount - such as traverse treacherous terrain, jump obstacles, ride bareback and so on.

Sailing (DEX+INT)

This covers small waterborne craft propelled manually by oars or paddles, commonly known as boats, and larger craft powered by sail or rows of oars. Travelling across calm water does not usually require a skill test but adverse conditions such as currents and bad weather can bestow penalties.

Sorcery Casting (INT)

This skill covers not only the successful casting of sorcery spells which the caster knows, but also the ability to manipulate the effects, range and duration of those spells. This skill also allows the use of magic items with stored spells (commonly called matrices) and scrolls with sorcery spells written on them. It can also be used to represent the character's knowledge of sorcery and its works.

Streetwise (CHA+POW)

Streetwise allows a character to find fences for stolen goods, black markets and general information. Such uses of Streetwise normally require a minimum of 1d4 hours. Streetwise also covers following people down crowded city streets without them noticing you.

Trade (INT+10)

This skill is primarily used when characters trade, barter or other wise negotiate over the sale of goods. In such transactions a successful opposed test using the Trade of the buyer versus the Trade of the seller is needed for the buyer to get the best deal. If the buyer wins they get a discount (-10% for a success, -25% for a critical). If the seller wins the BV that they can trade the item for increases by +10% for a success and +25% for a critical. If the opponent fumbles their roll double the increase or decrease.

The Trade skill also enables the character to determine the value placed on something by others (i.e. to estimate its market value). Particularly common or obscure objects might give a bonus or penalty to the skill test. Success will allow a character to guess the average barter value of the object, normally guessing accurately to within 10% of its actual value.

Unarmed Combat (DEX+STR)

This skill covers the use of natural attacks. For humans this is punching, kicking, and grappling. Non-human characters may also have bite, horns, claw and tail attacks.



CHAPTER 4 EQUIPMENT

Fantasy roleplaying games can be thought of as a form of co-operative improvised theatre. You could think of the players as the actors and the Games Master as the director and production team providing the stage and scenery, a huge big budget supporting cast, and every prop that the actors could possibly need. This chapter deals with the props, the equipment that the player characters will be using.

In-game Economics

These rules do not give detailed rules for trading and fantasy world economics. Although dry economic markets are unlikely to feature heavily in adventure stories, the exploits of daring and wily merchant adventurers may arise. The following section outlines how to approach such stories using *The Age Of Shadow*.

Opportunities For Merchant Based Games

Some players will feel inclined to create colourful and flamboyant merchant characters and weave stories around their previous trade missions, creating drama and tension on their trade negotiations and deals. This is great and is to be encouraged. Opposed Trade tests can be used to handle the outcome of such actions where it is less than clear cut, and the ebb and flow of the character's finances acts as an indicator of success (see the Trade skill description on p21). The more martially and magically inclined characters can provide support and have their moments in the spotlight too on these mercantile adventures, taking on bands of wildling raiders who attempt to disrupt the trafficking of dwarven goods into elven lands for example.

Merchant characters also make great information gatherers, since they tend to have good social skills. Often this goes on under the cover of trading in the market, gathering gossip from the locals, or sorting out a new

trade deal with a noble family (which is a legitimate way of finding information about such people).

Availability Of Goods

The equipment lists serve as 'game tools' to allow players to quickly and easily gain equipment for their characters. Generally speaking, the complete range of goods listed at the quoted 'barter values' is only going to be available in larger settlements with organised markets and the like. In less prosperous settlements there might be a smaller range available, sometimes at higher costs. In rural areas, only local produce and a small amount of locally crafted goods will be available for trade.

Barter Value

Bartering, in one form or another, is the main method of exchanging goods in *The Age Of Shadow*. However, in the spirit of keeping things simple (and also to give the GM a baseline to work from) each item of equipment in this chapter has been allocated a particular 'Barter Value' as an indication of its worth (in a similar way that most other roleplaying games would assign them a monetary cost). Therefore, we can see that something like a longsword (BV 150) could be traded for five sheep (BV 30 each) without much trouble.

However, during their adventures it is unlikely that the player characters will wish to be accompanied by livestock and other bulky trade goods, so it is entirely plausible for them to be carrying around a certain amount of small (yet desirable) items in the form of golden trinkets, precious gems, jewellery, etc., to be used in a similar fashion to hard cash. It is not necessary to note all these individual items on the player's character sheet, as a simple note of the total BV worth of such 'trinkets' will suffice.

Consequences

The main thing to remember is that with any item of equipment there are consequences in their use as well as benefits. The most obvious consequence is encumbrance. A heavily armoured and equipped character will

be slowed, unable to use skills as effectively, and will become fatigued more easily.

A less obvious effect is that an obviously wealthy character might become the target for both minor and major theft (from the opportunistic thief to the more organised bandit group). In addition, a character's obvious wealth (or lack thereof) might have social consequences.

The Equipment Lists

The remainder of this chapter is given over to the equipment lists. These provide the barter value of each item and detail any game effects. Where appropriate, they also give an encumbrance value (ENC) for the item in question. This is a value which rates both the weight and how physically unwieldy an item is.

Close Combat Weapons

All close combat weapons use the Close Combat skill. Each close combat weapon is characterised by the following qualities:

Damage Dice: The damage the weapon deals on a successful attack.

Type: This shows whether the weapon is one-handed, two-handed, or whether any special rules apply (see notes below).

STR/DEX: The minimum STR and DEX scores needed to easily wield this weapon. If either of the characteristics are below these minimums, a -25% penalty is applied to a character's skill when attacking and parrying with this weapon.

ENC: The weapon's encumbrance. The weight and bulk of the weapon.

Size: Normal weapons are rated in the following size categories: Light, Medium and Heavy. Weapons need to be of the same category or larger to block all damage. If the defending weapon is one category less they block half damage. If two categories less they cannot block the damage.

BV: The items barter value. This is how much the item is worth in relation to other tradable goods.

Table 4.1 Close Combat Weapons

Weapon	Type	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	Size	BV
Ball & Chain	1H	1d8	9/9	2	Medium	120
Bastard Sword	Flex	1d8	13/9	2	Medium	250
Battle-axe	1H	1d8	9/9	2	Medium	120
Club	Flex	1d6	5/9	1	Light	20
Dagger	1H / Range	1d4	-/-	-	Light	20
Great Axe	2H	2d8	13/5	4	Heavy	200
Great Hammer	2H	2d8	13/5	4	Heavy	200
Greatsword	2H	2d8	13/9	4	Heavy	300
Hatchet	1H / Range	1d6	5/9	1	Light	20
Lance	Set / Flex	1d10	11/9	3	Heavy	150
Longspear	Set / Flex	1d8	9/5	2	Medium	30
Longsword	1H	1d8	9/9	2	Medium	150
Mace	Flex	1d8	9/9	2	Medium	120
Military Flail	2H	2d8	13/5	4	Heavy	200
Polearm	LS	1d8	9/9	3	Heavy	200
Quarterstaff	2H	1d8	5/9	2	Medium	20
Scimitar	1H	1d8	9/9	2	Medium	150
Shield (small)	-	1d4	-/-	1	Medium	50
Shield (medium)	-	1d6	9/-	2	Heavy	150
Shortspear	Set / Flex / Range	1d6	5/5	2	Medium	20
Shortsword	1H	1d6	5/5	1	Medium	100
Unarmed*	-	1d3	-/-	-	-	-
War Hammer	1H	1d8	9/9	2	Medium	120

*Note that when a character fights with no weapons he uses his Unarmed skill.

Notes On Close Combat Weapon Types

Set: This weapon may be set against a charge.

Range: This weapon suffers no penalty when thrown.

LS: This weapon may be used as a long spear. If used as a long spear it may be set against charges. The wielder must state, however, at the start of combat how it is being wielded and must take a 'change stance' action to alter its usage.

Flex: This weapon can be used two-handed. When used in two hands, it gains +1 damage and can be used by someone with a strength 2 less than that listed.

1H: This weapon must be used one-handed.

2H: This weapon must be used two-handed.

Note that improvised and primitive weapons, such as a stone hatchet, stone spear or a convenient log picked up and used as a club, do the same damage as the base weapon -1.

may be attacked without penalty. A target within double the weapon's range may be attacked, but the attacker's effective Ranged skill is halved (before other modifiers are applied). Attacks against targets beyond double the weapon's range will automatically fail.

Load: This shows how many actions are required to either load or reload the weapon in question.

STR/DEX: The minimum STR and DEX scores needed to easily wield this weapon. If either of the Characteristics are below these minimums, a -25% penalty is applied to a character's skill when attacking and parrying with this weapon.

ENC: The weapon's encumbrance. The weight and bulk of the weapon.

BV: The items barter value. This is how much the item is worth in relation to other tradable goods.

Notes On Ranged Weapon Types

1H: This weapon is a one-handed weapon.

2H: This weapon must have two hands free to be used effectively unless otherwise specified. A buckler can be strapped to the forearm but cannot be used whilst wielding or shooting this weapon.

Close: This weapon suffers no penalty when used in close combat.

Thrown: A character can use his/her damage modifier with this weapon.

Ranged Weapons

Each ranged weapon is characterised by the following properties:

Type: This shows whether the weapon is one-handed, two-handed, or whether any special rules apply (see notes opposite).

Damage Dice: The damage the weapon deals on a successful attack.

Range: This is the effective range of the weapon. A target within the weapon's range

Table 4.2 Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Type	Damage Dice	Range	Load	STR/DEX	ENC	BV
Dagger	Close / Thrown	1d4	STR x m	-	-/9	-	20
Dart	Thrown	1d4	STR x m	-	-/9	-	15
Hatchet	Close / Thrown	1d6	STR x m	-	-/9	1	20
Improvised	Thrown	1d4	STR x m	-	5/5	1	-
Javelin	Thrown	1d6	STR x 2m	-	5/9	1	20
Longbow	2H	1d10	150m	1	13/9	1	150
Shortbow	2H	1d8	75m	1	9/9	1	75
Shortspear	Close / Thrown	1d6	STR x 2m	-	5/9	2	20
Sling	1H	1d6	50m	1	-/9	-	5
Whip	Close	1d3	5m	-	-/5	-	50
If you are using a battlemat it is recommended that you use a scale of 2m per square/hex. Note that on a battlemat with squares you should count diagonal distances as 3m.							

Using Ranged Weapons In Close Combat

If used in close combat, a ranged weapon is treated as an improvised weapon, doing damage equal to its closest hand-to-hand equivalent if that is less than its ranged weapon damage.



Armour

Each piece of armour is characterised by the following qualities:

AP: How many armour points this type of armour provides.

ENC: The armour's encumbrance (i.e. the weight and bulk of the armour).

Table 4.3 Armour Types

Armour	AP	ENC	BV
Leather	2	3	500
Ring Armour	3	5	1,000
Scale Armour	4	7	1,500
Mail Hauberk	5	7	3,000
Upgrades	+1	+2	500

Armour Descriptions

Leather: Either padded leather, boiled and stiffened leather, or linen armour.

Ring Armour: Metal rings sown onto a padded leather shirt.

Scale Armour: Metal scales sown onto a padded leather shirt.

Mail Hauberk: A shirt of linked chain rings.

Upgrades: Helms, greaves, gauntlets, etc.

Effects Of SIZ On Armour

Armour made for creatures of SIZ 1 to 5 will have its BV and ENC halved from that shown. Similarly, creatures of SIZ 21 or higher will double the BV and ENC.

General Items

What follows is a fairly comprehensive list of miscellaneous adventuring items and their barter value.

Table 4.4 General Items

Item	ENC	BV
Arrows (10)	-	1
Backpack	1	5
Bedroll	1	1
Block & tackle	1	15
Bottle, glass	-	2
Candle, 1 hour	-	¼
Chain, 2 metres	2	40
Climbing kit	1	25
Codex	1	60
Craft tools	2	75
Crowbar	1	25
First aid kit	-	25
Fish hook	-	2
Fishing kit	1	15
Flint & tinder	-	½
Food & drink, poor (1 day)	-	¼
Food & drink, average (1 day)	-	½
Food & drink, superior (1 day)	-	2
Grappling hook	-	5
Hammer	-	1
Ladder, 3m	4	2
Lantern	1	10
Lock picks	-	75
Mining pick	1	35
Musical instrument	2	70
Oil, flask	1	1
Papyrus, sheet	-	½
Pole, 3m	1	1
Quiver	-	2
Rope, 10m	2	10
Sack, large	1	½
Sack, small	-	¼
Scythe	2	30
Slingbag	1	½
Sling bullets (10)	-	½
Spade	1	25
Torch	-	½
Trail rations, 1 day	-	5
Waterskin	1	½
Writing kit	1	45

Backpack: It can hold 20 ENC of equipment.

Block & Tackle: Adds +25% to Mechanisms tests to make or disarm large traps and makes Engineering tests possible in some circumstances. It requires at least 10m of rope to function.

Candle: A candle illuminates a one metre radius and burns for one hour. Any wind stronger than a slight breeze will extinguish it.

Climbing Kit: A climbing kit provides a bonus of +25% to any Athletics skill tests made to climb.

Crowbar: Adds +25% to brute force Athletics tests. If used as a weapon, it is considered a club (wielded with a -25% penalty).

First Aid Kit: A first aid kit is good for five uses (whether the skill test succeeds or fails).

Fish Hook: This item allows a character to use his *Nature Lore* skill to catch a fish without suffering a penalty on the test.

Fishing Kit: The fishing kit grants a character a +25% bonus to his *Nature Lore* test to catch fish.

Flint & Tinder: A character with flint and tinder can build a fire in one minute under normal conditions without having to roll his *Nature Lore* skill.

Grappling Hook: It will support the weight of 50 ENC or 50 SIZ, or any combination thereof.

Hammer: If used as a weapon, it is treated as a club (wielded with a -25% penalty). Hammers may be used on inanimate objects without being destroyed.

Lantern: A lantern provides clear illumination out to a three metre radius. It will burn for two hours on a flask of oil.

Mining Pick: If used as a weapon, it is considered a club (wielded with a -25% penalty). Mining picks may be used on inanimate objects without being destroyed.

Oil: A flask of oil is enough to fuel a lantern for two hours or, if broken on the ground and ignited, enough to sustain a small fire for one minute.

Quiver: Quivers can hold up to 30 arrows.

Rope: A standard 10 metre long rope that can support the weight of 50 ENC or 50 SIZ, or any combination thereof.

Sack (large): Able to hold 10 ENC of equipment.

Sack (small): A small sack can hold 5 ENC of equipment.

Scythe: If used as a weapon, it is considered a polearm (wielded with a -25% penalty).

Slingbag: It can carry 15 ENC of equipment.

Spade: If used as a weapon, it is considered a club (wielded with a -25% penalty).

Torch: A torch will burn for one hour and illuminate a three metre radius. If used as a weapon, it is considered a club (wielded with a -25% penalty), except that it does not inflict normal damage - instead, it inflicts 1d4 fire damage and a fumble or critical hit will also extinguish the brand.

Waterskin: A waterskin can hold enough water to sustain an adventurer for two days.

Animals & Transportation

Table 4.5 Animals & Transportation

Animal	BV
Bison	200
Bull	250
Cart	75
Cat	2
Chariot	600
Cow	150
Dog, domestic	2
Dog, hunting	25
Fowl	1
Goat	50
Hawk	400
Horse, draft	400
Horse, riding	350
Horse, combat trained	500
Mule	125
Ox	200
Pig	50
Saddle & bridle	75
Sheep	30
Travel (by post-horse)	2 / km
Travel (by ship)	1 / km
Travel (by wagon)	5 / km
Wagon	300

CHAPTER 5 COMBAT

The Age Of Shadow is a game where swords will be drawn during epic quests with the aim of spilling blood. Be it for glory, honour, riches or revenge, when all else fails violence is a means of achieving these goals. However, it should be remembered that *The Age Of Shadow* is not a game purely about combat, and it would not be unusual for whole sessions to pass without any physical violence. However, in time, characters will no doubt find themselves involved in dangerous life threatening fights.

Therefore, this chapter provides you with a straightforward and direct system for playing out action packed and deadly combat.

What To Expect During Combat

Characters that have combat skills less than 100% are at the whim of the dice to determine whether or not they land a blow in combat. Anything you do to increase your character's chances to hit (or hit first) will stand in your favour and make the outcome more certain.

Once you are hit in combat, things start getting messy. Your character has a relatively low number of hit points, and in a couple of blows (or one lucky blow) these hit points can easily be reduced to zero (which indicates that the character has died). So make sure your character can dodge, parry, or maybe even be magically protected. You should also be aware that the major wound system places your character at risk of grievous and permanent harm every time you decide to use violence to solve a problem.

If you are facing off against multiple opponents, even weak and unskilled ones, you are quickly going to run out of attacks and reactions. In practical terms this means that your character may, at best, reduce the number of attackers by one per round, while only being able to protect themselves against one of several incoming attacks.

Be aware that even masters who have 100% or more in their weapon skills can be brought low by a lucky critical hit, or by an opponent

who has lured them into an ambush and stacked the odds against them through surprise and careful planning.

These harsh realities mean that players would do well to avoid combats where they do not have a very good chance to win. Instead of wading into masses of weaker opponents, hoping that lucky dice rolls will see them through, they would do better to carefully plan ambushes, where they have the benefit of terrain and possibly even supporting soldiers that will allow them to wipe out the majority of the enemy before the first proper round of combat. They might even be able to call upon their own innate magic to boost their damage, chances to hit, and armour - and if things are really tough, invoke powerful sorcery spells to boost their chances of survival.

Life Insurance

Since combat in *The Age Of Shadow* can be deadly there are a number of ways that you can avoid your character dying if things go badly wrong.

Realise that some foes are best left alone. There's always going to be someone or something more powerful than your character in the game world. Since *The Age Of Shadow* is also a game of exploration and interaction, you might get to meet these people and creatures early on in your adventurer's career as part of an adventure or quest. Some foes, such as the chief lieutenant of the Dark Lord, are always going to be beyond the capacity of the player characters to harm directly. Be wise and move along quietly and quickly.

Live to fight another day. Use magic or fast feet to move out of combat. Heal, regroup and make a better plan of attack if you absolutely need to best a foe. Otherwise learn your lesson and avoid the opponent in the future.

Surrender! Before things really get messy, throw down your weapons and hope for the best (some creatures might just take you prisoner rather than slaughtering you outright). Maybe some of your friends or allies can come back and mount a rescue attempt at a later date?

Spend fate points. These are your ultimate insurance policy against death. If you have them, use them.

Summary Of Combat

Work out encounter distance: The GM determines how far away the hostile group is to the characters, either at *Range* or *Close*.

Drop into combat time: Combat is divided into rounds. A single round has a duration of five seconds of time, giving 12 rounds in every minute. During a round every character can perform one or more actions. Combat rounds cycle through the following steps:

- 1. Determine Order:** At the start of every combat, check each character's DEX, or INT if they are spell casting. This will determine the order in which every character involved acts for the round.
- 2. Characters Take Actions & Reactions:** In a combat round each character may perform one movement action, one standard action, and one reaction. Movement and standard actions (such as attacks) take place in DEX order (i.e. the character with the highest DEX will act first, followed by the character with the second-highest DEX, and so on). Reactions (such as parries or dodges) on the other hand, may be called upon at any time during this process. Characters casting spells act on their INT.
- 3. End Of Combat Round:** Once all eligible characters have acted in the combat round, it is over. If there are characters still engaged in combat with enemies, another combat round begins.

For example, Elmiriel (INT 18) is casting a spell, while a bandit (DEX 14) is attacking her with a sword, and Anthar (DEX 12) is attacking the bandit. The order of action is Elmiriel first, then the bandit and finally Anthar.

Encounter Distance And Engaging In Combat

Not all combats start with the two sides (the players and their opponents) directly facing each other within swords reach. At the beginning of a combat, or potential combat, the Games Master must determine which of the two distances the encounter starts at.

Close: Close is a range of two metres or less and is the distance at which a character can engage in either Close or Unarmed combat.

Ranged: The distance which the character can engage in ranged combat is generally beyond two metres and up to double the range of the missile weapon a character is holding. Ranged combat typically happens out in the open countryside where groups of combatants can see each other coming over the horizon or emerging in the distance from old ruined buildings.



Movement Actions

A single movement action may be taken either before or after the character performs a standard action. The actions available to a character when it is his/her turn to act are detailed here, along with any restrictions that may accompany them.

Change Stance: The character may stand up from prone, or vice versa.

Move: The character may move a distance up to his/her movement score.

Miscellaneous Action: The GM may decide that certain simple tasks (such as opening or closing an unlocked door, picking up an item, retrieving an item from a backpack, drinking a potion, etc.) require a movement action to complete.

Ready Weapon: Drawing a sword from its sheath, unhooking an axe from one's belt, nocking an arrow to one's bow - all these actions take one movement action to perform. A single ready weapon action can also include dropping a weapon currently held to the floor

and then drawing a new one. Sheathing one weapon and drawing another takes two actions, as does readying two weapons. Ranged weapons can be reloaded with this action - this takes as many movement actions as noted in the weapon's description.

Sprint: The character may move a distance up to three times his/her movement score, forsaking all other actions and reactions that turn (except for a single dodge reaction).

Standard Actions

A character may perform a single standard action either before or after a movement action. The actions available to a character when it is his/her turn to act are detailed here, along with any restrictions that may accompany them.

Movement Actions

Instead of taking a standard a character may instead opt to convert his/her standard action into another movement action.

Close Combat Actions

Charge: If a character can move a minimum of four metres towards his opponent, then he can make a charge. He may move a distance up to his movement rate (which must be in a straight line), and he must end up adjacent to an enemy. When the move is complete, a close combat attack may be made against the enemy. If the attack is successful, the character gains a bonus of +1d6 damage. When making a charge action the character loses his reaction for the round that he charges on. Characters may not charge uphill and gain the damage bonus.

Close Combat Attack: The character can make a single close combat attack. As well as a normal attack, there are the following special attacks:

- **All Out Attack:** The attacker gives up their reaction for the round but gains a second attack, which happens straight after the first attack. Both attacks are at -25% due to the loss of skill during this frenzied attack. This type of attack cannot be combined with a great attack or a disarming attack.

- **Disarming Attack:** Attacker attacks at -25% to his weapon skill with the aim of disarming their opponent either of their weapon or shield. If the attack is successful and the opponent fails to parry or dodge, the weapon or shield is thrown d6 metres away from the owner.
- **Great Attack:** This attack is made using swords, axes or maces where the attacker has enough room to wind up the weapon for a really forceful blow. The attacker gains a +25% to attack and does maximum damage modifier damage but loses his reaction for that combat round.

Set Weapon: A character can spend an action setting the shaft of a weapon, such as a spear or polearm, in the ground in anticipation of a charge from an opponent. When the charge actually comes the character automatically gets an attack at +25% before the charging character gets their attack. If the character makes any other action or reaction before the charge, the weapon becomes 'unset.'

Ranged Combat Actions

Ranged Combat Attack: The character can make a single ranged combat attack. As well as a normal attack, there is also the following special attack.

- **Aim:** Every round spent aiming adds a +25% bonus to the character's Ranged Combat skill (up to a max. of +50%). This bonus only applies to the first attack the character makes with the weapon, which must be fired at the target being aimed at. A character can take no other action while aiming without losing the aim bonus.

Throwing Close Combat Weapons

If a close combat weapon that isn't designed to be thrown is hurled at an enemy then it has a range of 8m and suffers a penalty to the attack equal to its ENC x 10. Ranged Combat skill is used.

Other Actions

Cast Spell: No other action may be taken whilst casting a spell, though the character may walk up to half their movement rate.

Delay: A character may pause to assess the tactical situation around him. If a delaying character merely wishes to act after a specific character has acted, they wait until that character has finished their action. If a delaying character wishes to interrupt a specific character's action as it occurs, the character must make a test appropriate to his interrupting action (a Close Combat skill test if the character wishes to attack, for instance). Whoever wins the test acts first.

Intimidate/Persuade: The character tries to get the other side to surrender or flee. This can either be targeted at a single enemy or a group.

Do an opposed roll using the character's Influence vs. the enemies' Persistence, modified as listed below. Groups roll once using the Persistence of the group leader. If the group leader's Influence skill is higher than his Persistence, then they may use that skill instead. Apply the following modifiers to the enemy's skill depending on the state of the enemy:

- +50% if the enemy is still at full strength, but has taken some minor wounds.
- +25% if the enemy out numbers the player's side, but have had at least 25% losses either in numbers or hit points.
- -25% if the enemy is fewer than the player's side and has taken some wounds.
- -50% if the enemy has taken more than half hit points in wounds and/or has seen half his group incapacitated by the players.

Note: these modifiers are not cumulative. Apply the one that best describes the situation.

If the enemy is at full strength and/or out numbers the players then only a critical roll for Influence vs a failed Persistence roll will make them surrender. A fumbled Persistence roll will see the enemy suddenly rout.

The player attempting the roll must declare whether they are targeting the whole group or singling out an individual before any dice are rolled.

For example, Anthar is fighting a group of four small beastlings, one of whom he has already badly wounded while the other three are still at full hit points.

If he decides to single out the wounded creature, then its Persistence roll to resist Anthar's taunting (and the resultant urge to flee) will be at -25%. If he decides to target the whole group, which as a whole is undamaged and outnumbers him, then the beastlings will be at +25% to their Persistence.

The character need not speak the same language as the opponent they are trying to influence, but they must be capable of some sort of sign, gesture or body language that the opponent is capable of understanding.

Skill Use: The character performs one action which requires the use of a skill (e.g. opening a locked door with the Mechanisms skill).



Close Combat Attacks

- 1. Making the Attack:** A normal attack is made by simply rolling d100 and comparing it to the character's relevant combat skill. If a character rolls equal to or lower than his skill, he has hit his target. If a character rolls greater than his skill, he has missed his target.
- 2. Target Reaction:** The target may either attempt to dodge or parry the attack, as they choose. However, only one reaction can be made to a successful attack per round. If the enemy has already reacted this round, or chooses not to react against this attack, then this attack is unopposed (move straight on to damage resolution). If the attack is opposed, the defender makes a Dodge or Parry (see p31).
- 3. Damage Resolution:** If the attack is successful, damage is rolled. Each weapon has its own damage score, to which is added the attacker's damage modifier in order to determine the total damage being dealt. If the defender is armoured then the armour will absorb some of this damage. Reduce the attack's damage by the armour points (AP) of the defender's armour.
- 4. Damage Application:** Apply any remaining damage to the defender's hit points.

**Table 5.1 Close Combat
Situational Modifiers**

Situation	Skill Modifier
Target is helpless.	Automatic Critical
Target is prone or attacked from behind.	+25%
Attacking or defending while on higher ground or on mount.	+25%
Attacking or defending while prone.	-25%
Attacking or defending while on unstable ground.	-25%
Attacking or defending while underwater.	-50%
Defending while on lower ground or against mounted foe.	-25%
Fighting in partial darkness.	-25%
Fighting in darkness.	-50%

Critical Hits

Every attack skill a character possesses has a critical score. A critical score is the attack skill's score, divided by ten, and rounded to the nearest whole number. It represents a lucky and effective hit in an unprotected area of an opponent.

If the d100 attack roll is not only lower than the attack skill, but also equal to or lower than the character's critical score with that skill, then the attack is considered a critical hit.

A critical hit automatically causes maximum damage for the weapon and maximum damage modifiers. If the character has a negative damage modifier (i.e. -1d4 or -1d6) it is not rolled for a critical hit. Critical hits also ignore armour.

For example, Anthar with his 55% Close Combat skill, rolls a 05, which is a critical! He is wielding a longsword with a damage of 1d8 and has a damage modifier of 1d6. He is fighting a beastling who is wearing chainmail armour (5AP). However, this armour is completely ignored as Anthar's sword slides through a gap in the armour doing a devastating 14 points of damage (8 from the sword and another 6 from the damage modifier).

A critical hit is made into a normal hit by a critical parry or critical dodge (i.e. damage is rolled by the attacker as normal and the defender's armour counts).

Reactions

A character can make one reaction in a combat round. Unlike actions, reactions are made in response to the successful hits of enemies. There are two types of reaction - dodge and parry.

Parries can be made against close combat attacks. Shields can also parry hand thrown missile weapons. A medium shield (i.e. size category 'large') provides a -25% cover modifier to the ranged attack of the attacker against arrows and sling shot.

Dodges can only be made against close combat attacks and hand thrown missile weapons providing the target is aware of the attack. Dodge can also be used as a reaction, if still available, to avoid the damage of spells which are projected at the defender (see the appropriate spell descriptions in the magic chapters for more detail).

Reactions are declared after a successful attack has occurred but before its effects are applied.

Dodge

When an attacker successfully hits, the defender may choose to dodge as his reaction, in order to avoid damage. The defender rolls against his Dodge skill.

If the defender succeeds then they have successfully avoided the attack.

If dodging against a critical hit, then if the defender rolls a critical on their dodge they reduce the attacker's critical to a normal success. If the defender fails his dodge against a critical hit, the attacker does maximum damage and ignores the defender's armour.

Parry

When an attacker successfully hits, the defender may choose to parry with a weapon or shield as his reaction to avoid damage. The defender rolls against their Close Combat skill.

If the defender succeeds then, depending on the relative weapons used, they may be able to reduce or remove all of the rolled damage. Weapons are rated in the following size categories: Light, Medium, and Heavy (and in the case of some large creatures, Super-heavy). Weapons need to be of the same

category or larger to block all damage. If the defending weapon is one category less they block half damage. If two categories less they cannot block the damage at all.

A critical parry against a normal success deflects all the damage regardless of size category. If parrying against a critical hit and the defender rolls a critical on their Close Combat skill roll then they reduce the attacker's critical to a normal success.

So what's the difference between parry and dodge? ...it's mainly down to a matter of combat style. Parrying has the advantage of being based off the same skill that you use to attack with - but it is only effective against similar sized weapons as your own. A successful dodge on the other hand, will get you out of harms way no matter what.

Two Weapon Use

A character wielding two weapons or a weapon and a shield may use the offhand item to either:

- Parry one additional attack per combat round (over and above the normal reaction allowance).
- Gain a single bonus close combat attack action. This bonus attack is at -25% and occurs at half the character's DEX in order of combat. Also this may only be a normal close combat attack, not an all out attack, disarming attack or a great attack.

For example, a warrior armed with sword and shield, can attack with the sword normally and then follow this up with a shield bash at -25% to that attack later in the same round.

Close Combat Skills Greater Than 100%

A character with over 100% may, if he chooses, split his skill to perform multiple attacks and parries or dodges.

In such cases the number of attacks and the allocated % of each one must be declared at the start of the combat round. Any allocation of split is allowed. For example, a character

with a Close Combat skill of 120% can split it 90% / 30% or make four attacks at four opponents in range at 30% each.

Divide the character's DEX by the number of attacks to find when attacks occur in the DEX sequence. The first attack is at normal DEX and then subsequent attacks are at intervals of DEX divided by the number of attacks. In the above example let us assume that the character has a DEX of 10, and splits his attack 60% / 60%. His first attack would occur at DEX 10 and the second at DEX 5.

Parries and dodges do not need to be declared at the start of a combat round but careful track must be kept of how many have already been used. For example, the above character might parry one of his attackers with 75% of his skill and still have 45% left to parry another foe in the same round.

Ranged Weapons

All ranged attacks are handled in the same manner as close combat attacks with the following exceptions:

Charge: Ranged attacks may not be used as part of a charge.

Loading Ranged Weapons. Most ranged weapons only take a single movement action to ready. Others can take longer to reload. See the weapon description in the equipment chapter.

Range A target within the weapon's range may be attacked without penalty. A target within double the weapon's range may be attacked, but the attacker's Ranged skill is halved before other modifiers are applied. Attacks cannot be made at a distance beyond twice/double the weapon's range.

Dodging And Parrying. The target may attempt to parry or dodge a hand thrown ranged attack but may not normally dodge or parry ranged missile weapons (such as bows). A character must have a shield in order to attempt to parry hand thrown missile weapon, and must also be aware of the attack. The same character might also modify the attacker's skill for missile attacks as described on the previous page.

Disarming. A character may not attempt to disarm targets with ranged attacks, nor may he attempt to strike a target's weapon or shield.

Firing Into A Crowd: When firing into a crowd, the Games Master will determine how much cover the defender has from the ranged attack. The ranged attack is then resolved as normal for a target behind cover. If the attack fails to hit the defender and succeeds against the unmodified attack skill, the firer has hit one of the individuals adjacent to the target. The accidental target may dodge against this attack as normal.

Table 5.2 Ranged Attack Situational Modifiers

Situation	Skill Modifier
Wind*	
High wind.	-25%
Fierce wind.	-50%
Hurricane.	Automatic Failure
Target Movement*	
Target has moved 10m or more since attacker's last action.	-25%
Target has moved 30m or more since last combat round.	-50%
Target Visibility*	
Target obscured by smoke, mist or is in partial darkness.	-25%
Target obscured by thick smoke, fog or is in darkness.	-50%
Target is above SIZ 20.	+25%
Target Condition*	
Target is helpless.	+25%
Target prone.	-25%
Attacker Condition †	
Attacker is prone.	-50%
Attacker is underwater ‡	-25%
Attacker is on unstable ground.	-25%
Attacker is blinded.	-50%

* Modifiers within these sections are not cumulative. However, modifiers from different sections are cumulative. Therefore, shooting at a target within a mist that has moved more than 10m since the attacker's last action imparts a -50% penalty.

† Attacker condition modifiers are cumulative.

‡ Only thrown weapons may be used underwater. Bows and other projectile weapons will automatically miss if fired underwater.

Cover

Cover affects both ranged and close combat attacks. For missile attacks the defender benefits from any modifiers in table 5.2 opposite and the cover modifier below.

Partial Cover -25%: For example, a low wall that leaves only the head and torso exposed.

Very Good Cover -50%: For example, a defender on a castle wall, firing from protected battlements.

Virtually Total Cover -75%: For example, castle wall with arrow slits for defenders to shoot through.



Damage

When a character successfully scores damage against a target it must be deducted from the target's hit points. Every weapon has a damage rating, which is listed in its entry in the relevant weapon table in the equipment chapter. This rating is the amount of dice rolled when the weapon successfully hits a target. The attacker's damage modifier is usually added to this.

One hit point: When hit points are reduced to the final one the character falls prone and must make an immediate Resilience test divided by ten (rounded down) to stay conscious.

Hit points equal zero: Character is dead. In the grim and gritty world of *The Age Of Shadow* there is no chance to make farewell speeches. You can spend fate points however!

Beyond the pale: Hit points in the negative to a value equal to the original total value. Character is dead and his/her body is utterly destroyed or horribly mangled.

For example, if a character with ten hit points is blasted by a Dragon's fiery breath for 30 points of damage, then his body is most likely reduced to ash.

Major Wounds

If the character takes half of their original HP in one go then they suffer a major wound. This represents badly mangled limbs, shattered bones and severely damaged internal organs. Roll on the table 5.3 below to see what type of wound the character has suffered. They must immediately make a Resilience roll, with a -50% modifier, or fall unconscious. If the roll is made then the character's DEX is immediately halved and the character may only fight on for as many combat rounds as their remaining hit points before failing unconscious (in addition to any effects described below). Note that the halved DEX is regained once the character starts to heal, since it only represents the shock and trauma of the initial wound.

Table 5.3 Major Wound Table

d10	Major Wound
1	Lose an eye. All Perception rolls become -50%. Lose 4 points of DEX and 1 point of CHA permanently.
2	Cracked skull & brain damage. Lose 4 points of INT. All skills involving mental processes become -25 permanently. This includes Perception, Persistence, and all Lore, Culture, Religion and Craft skills.
3	Right Leg muscles badly cut/mangled or leg bone shattered and becomes useless. Fall prone & can only crawl at 2m / round. Lose 2 points of DEX and 2 STR permanently.
4	Left Leg muscles badly cut/mangled or leg bone shattered and becomes useless. Fall prone & can only crawl at 2m / round. Lose 2 points of DEX and 2 STR permanently.
5	Broken ribs. All skills become -50% due to severe pain.
6	Slashed stomach. Lose one extra hit point per round from blood loss. Lose 3 points of CON permanently.
7	Heart stops in shock! Lose consciousness for the next d10 combat rounds. Fall prone and can not move. Lose 2 points of CON permanently.
8	Spine broken - character permanently paralysed below the neck (odd result on dice) or the torso (even result on dice). Half DEX permanently.
9	Left arm badly broken and becomes useless permanently. Automatically drop any held items.
10	Right arm badly broken and becomes useless permanently. Automatically drop any held items.

Fatal Wounds

If a character takes damage equal to, or in excess of, his original HP in one go he is killed outright. This represents hacked off limbs, decapitation, blows that stab the heart or other vital organs directly.

Mounted Combat

A mounted warrior gains a +25% bonus to his attacks and parries against adjacent opponents on foot, and a character on foot suffers a -25% penalty to his reaction skill when defending against a mounted attacker. These modifiers do not apply if the target on foot is as tall as the mounted character is while mounted. A mounted character uses his mount's movement score when moving rather than his own.

Untrained Mounts

The rider of a mount that is unused to combat must make a Riding skill test at the start of each combat round. Failing this test will cause the horse to automatically flee (use the sprint action) at every opportunity for the remainder of the combat round.

Succeeding this test allows the horse to be treated as a trained mount for the remainder of the combat round. Also note that a mounted adventurer can use no weapon at a skill level greater than his Riding skill score.

Unarmed Combat

If an unarmed attack is parried by a crafted or natural weapon, then the attacker will immediately suffer the rolled damage of the parrying natural weapon (with no damage modifier) to the limb he is using. This is in addition to the normal effect of the parry.

Natural Weapons

Natural weapons such as the teeth and claws of monsters are counted as weapons and not unarmed attacks. The damage they deal is listed in the monster's description. They may parry other natural weapons or unarmed attacks, but not crafted weapon attacks.

Grappling

A grapple attack is made in the same way as a normal unarmed or natural weapon attack but must be declared as such before any dice are rolled. Should the attacker hit with his grapple attack, no damage is initially caused. Instead, the attacker then opposes his Unarmed Skill to the target's Unarmed Skill in a roll similar to an opposed skill test.

Grapple Fails: The grapple attempt fails and the attack is considered to have missed.

Grapple Succeeds: The two combatants are now grappling and the attacker may immediately follow up on this success by throwing, inflicting pain, or immobilising the target (see opposite).



Grappling Combatants

Grappling combatants will remain locked together until one combatant breaks free or is thrown out of the grapple. Grappling combatants suffer a -25% penalty to any tests that do not target or directly respond to their grapple partner. Grappling combatants may not use reactions.

A grappling combatant is restricted to the following special actions:

Break Free: To break out of a grapple, the character makes an opposed grapple attempt. The characters may only use the Unarmed skill in this case. If the character succeeds his roll while his opponent fails then the character has succeeded in breaking free and the combatants are no longer grappling, though they will be adjacent.

Immobilise: While immobilised, enemies are considered helpless. Once per round the defender may attempt to break free.

Inflict Pain: The grappler inflicts damage is 1d4 + damage modifiers. Armour does not help. Once per round the defender may attempt to break free or may attempt to turn the tables on their attacker by counter grappling or attacking with a weapon or other unarmed attack.

Throw: The opponent is thrown 2 metres and suffers 1d4 damage. Armour does not help. The grapple ends in this case.

Table 5.4 Combat Results

Attacker	Defender	Result
Fumble	N/A	Attacker fumbles.
Failure	N/A	Attacker fails to hit defender.
Success	Fumble	Attacker hits, defender takes damage rolled minus armour points and fumbles.
Success	Failure	Attacker hits, defender takes damage rolled minus armour points.
Success	Success	When dodging, defender avoids the attack. When parrying, then if the attacker's weapon is smaller or equal in size to the defender's weapon all damage is avoided. If parrying weapon is a rank smaller, halve the damage taken. If two ranks smaller then no damage can be avoided.
Success	Critical	Defender avoids attack and takes no damage. If parrying the weapon size penalty does not come into it.
Critical	Fumble	Attacker does maximum damage and ignores the armour of the defender. Defender fumbles.
Critical	Failure	Attacker does maximum damage and ignores defender's armour.
Critical	Success	Attacker does maximum damage and ignores defender's armour.
Critical	Critical	Attacker hits, defender takes damage rolled minus armour points.

CHAPTER 6

INNATE MAGIC

Of the two approaches to magic, innate magic is the most commonly available type.

During the course of the game the most frequently encountered spells (and as such those making up the majority of the spell list) are those that relate to combat situations. However, it is also worth noting that not all the spells in this group are directly applicable to physical combat, as there are a fair few that will aid the wily charmer and golden tongued manipulator.

Magic Points

All characters start play with magic points equal to their POW characteristic score. A character's POW score also acts as a maximum limit to the amount of magic points a character can store at any one time.

Some characters might also have access to additional pools of magic points, via magic items that act as magic point stores (see Create Magic Point Store spell). However, these pools regenerate, if at all, independently of the character's natural rate (see below). Experienced magic users might even have several magic point stores at their disposal, which allows them to cast many of their spells without using their own precious pool of magic points.

However, a character who is reduced to zero magic points falls unconscious until he has regained one magic point.

Regaining Magic Points

Using magic points is a draining and exhausting activity that requires a major effort from which the body needs to recover. Magic points regenerate once the character fully rests, either by sitting down and taking it very easy or by having a good night's sleep.

For every two hour period that a character rests they regain magic points equal to a quarter of their POW total.

For example, if a character with a POW of 8 takes two hours of rest, he will regain two magic points. For four hours of rest he will regain four magic points; six hours will allow him to regain six magic points and eight hours to allow him to regain the full eight magic points.

Basically if the character has a comfortable uninterrupted sleep of eight hours they will regain their full magic points. However, characters may never exceed their original magic point total by resting.

Learning Innate Magic Casting

Innate magic casting is treated as a skill. The base chance for Innate Casting is POW x3. Spells are learnt separately, but the Innate Casting skill determines the success for casting all innate magic spells. Under the default rules only elvish player characters (or humans with elvish ancestry) have the option of starting play with one of these spells.

Learning Innate Magic Spells

It is possible that elvish characters (including humans with elvish ancestry) may learn how to manipulate their own innate magic from other characters who know other such spells. It costs one improvement point per magnitude to learn an innate magic spell (note that improvement points are covered in Chapter 8). If a character knows a spell at a lower magnitude, they only have to pay the difference in improvement points to gain the spell at a higher magnitude. So, if for example, a character already knows a spell at magnitude 2, he only needs to spend one improvement point to gain the spell at magnitude 3.

Of both the approaches to magic, innate magic is the least powerful, but it is the easiest to obtain (assuming of course your character has elvish blood).

Innate magic can also be obtained from a number of other sources if the GM sees fit (from weeks of inner reflection, to hereditary powers manifesting themselves, or even the result of a particular deed or quest), though the final word will always be that of the GM.

Casting Spells

A character must be able to move his hands to make gestures and be able to chant in order to cast a spell, as well as being able to see his target.

When the character is casting a spell under duress, such as in the midst of combat, they must pass an Innate Casting test to successfully cast the spell. In this regard innate magic is like any other skill. If the character is relaxed and has all the time in the world then no casting test is needed, the spell is automatically cast.

If the Innate Casting test succeeds, a number of magic points are deducted from the spellcaster's total, equal to the magnitude of the spell. The spell then takes effect.

If the Innate Casting test fails, the spell does not take effect and the character loses one magic point.

Critical Success

A critical success on an Innate Casting test means that the caster has been able to control the flow of the magic particularly effectively. The character loses one magic point instead of the normal cost of the spell.

Fumble

A fumble on an Innate Casting test means that the caster has been unable to control the flow of his own innate magic. Rather than losing a single magic point for failing to cast the spell, the caster loses a number of magic points equal to its magnitude.

Casting Time

No other action may be taken whilst casting a spell, though the character may slowly walk up to half their movement while spell casting.

All spells take one combat round to cast. Casting begins at the start of the combat round and a spell's effect happens on the caster's INT, instead of DEX.

Distractions, or attacks on the caster as he casts, will automatically ruin the spell unless the caster successfully passes a Persistence test, thereby maintaining concentration on the spell. Examples of distraction include blinding, disarming, or wounding the caster.

Dismissing Spells

In a single combat round, a caster can dismiss any permanent spell (or spells) he has cast as a free action. Ceasing to cast a concentration spell is immediate and not an action.

Spell Traits

Unless noted otherwise all innate spells have the following traits.

- They have variable magnitude. This means that the magnitude of the spell starts from the stated magnitude and then can be cast at a higher magnitude (assuming the caster knows it), giving an increase in the effect of the spell. The maximum magnitude that a caster can learn is equal to their POW divided by 3.
- Base magnitude is one.
- Range is equal to the caster's POWx3 in metres.
- All spells, unless noted otherwise, have a duration of ten minutes.

Other traits used by spells are detailed below:

Area (X): The spell affects all targets within a radius specified in metres.

Concentration: The spell's effects will remain in place so long as the character continues to concentrate on it. Concentrating on a spell is functionally identical to casting the spell, requiring the caster to continue to chant and ignore distractions.

Instant: The spell's effects take place instantly. The spell itself then disappears.

Magnitude (X): The strength and power of the spell. Also the minimum number of magic points required to cast it (note that magic points are doubled for human characters).

Non-Variable: The spell may only be cast at the stated magnitude.

Permanent: The spell's effects remain in place until they are dispelled or dismissed.

Resist (Dodge/Persistence/Resilience): The spell's intended effects do not succeed automatically. The target may make a Dodge, Persistence, or Resilience test (as specified by the spell) in order to avoid the effect of the spell entirely. Note that Resist (Dodge) spells require the target to be able to use reactions in order to dodge. In the case of area spells, the Resist (Dodge) trait requires the target to dive in order to mitigate the spell's effect.

Touch: Touch spells require the character to actually touch his target for the spell to take effect, using a Unarmed skill test to make contact. The caster must remain in physical contact with the target for the entire casting.

Trigger: The spell will lie dormant until an event stated in the description takes place. The spell then takes effect and is expended.

Innate Magic Spell List

Befuddle: *Magnitude 2, Non-Variable, Resist (Persistence).*

The affected target may not cast spells and may only take non-offensive actions. The target may run if it so chooses and may dodge and parry normally in combat, though it may not make any attacks unless it is attacked first.

This spell is effective against humanoids and natural creatures. Other creatures (such as spirits or magical beasts like dragons) are not affected by this spell.

Clear Path: *Touch.*

This spell allows the caster to move through even the most tangled, thorny brush as if he were on an open road. For each additional point of magnitude, he may bring one person with him.

Co-ordination: *Touch.*

For every point of magnitude of this spell, the target's combat order increases by +2 (whether casting spells or fighting), and adds 10% per magnitude to dodge or DEX-based Athletics tests. The characteristic can be increased above normal racial maximum for the duration of the spell.

Countermagic: *Instant.*

Countermagic is only ever used as a reaction, and only when another spell is cast within Countermagic's range that the character wishes to counter. A successful Countermagic disrupts the other spell and nullifies it. As long as Countermagic's magnitude equals or exceeds the target spell's magnitude, the target spell is countered.



Create Charms: *Permanent, Casting Time (Special).*

A charm is a physical item that stores one or more magic spells. A charm could be a necklace that holds a Befuddle spell, a sword etched with runes that holds a Weapon Enhance 2 spell or even a sheet of paper with a poem written on it that, when held against the skin, provides a Protection 1 spell.

- To create a charm a character must possess both the spell they wish to store and Create Charm at the same magnitude.
- The item into which the charm is to be cast must be prepared and in contact with the caster for the length of the casting.
- If the caster spends one improvement point at time of creation the spell within the charm is reusable. Otherwise once the spell is cast the charm is dispelled.
- A spell stored in a charm is used like any other spell that the possessor knows. It uses the wielder's Innate Casting skill and is powered by the wielder's own magic points.
- The time taken to create a single-use charm is one hour per point of magnitude of the spell being stored. Reusable charms take three hours per point of magnitude to create.

Charms are mundane items in their own right and if the item is broken the Charm is dispelled.

Create Magic Point Store: *Permanent.*

This spell allows the caster to create an item which has magic point storing capabilities. These allow the owner to have a pool of magic points in addition to their own.

Typically crystals mounted atop staves are used due to their physical toughness (in game terms treat these crystals as unbreakable). This also applies to charms, such as a sword with Weapon Enhancement 2 stored in it, to provide a pool of magic points to cast the spell from.

Magic point stores take one hour per magic point stored in them to create. The caster must fill the item with their own magic points as part of the spell. The amount of magic points put into the item at the time of casting becomes the maximum that can be put into the item and cannot not be increased after the spell is cast. Unless one improvement point is spent when they are created they are non-reusable (i.e. once the magic points are used the item loses its ability to store magic points). If the improvement point is paid the item then becomes reusable and once all the magic points are used, the item can be refilled instantly from the user's own magic points.

If the item is destroyed the magic points are released harmlessly into the surrounding area.

Create Potion: *Permanent.*

Potions are liquids that store one or more magic spells. The magnitude of the Create Potion spell needs to equal or exceed the highest magnitude of the spell being stored into the potion.

- All potions are one use. They must be drunk in one swift gulp to work.
- The potion automatically works and doesn't incur a cost in magic points to the person who is drinking the potion.
- The potion costs the enchanter magic points. They must know the spell at the magnitude they are enchanting it at, with the magic points of the spell being put into the potion.
- There is an associated cost of 50 BV (in ingredients, etc.) per magnitude.

- To make the potion, the enchanter must roll successfully against their Innate Casting skill for each spell being placed in the potion and against Lore (Potion Making). If they fail the potion is ruined and they lose the cost of the ingredients.

Potions take one hour per point of magnitude of spell(s) stored to create. It must be stored in an airtight container or it evaporates losing one point of magnitude per week.

Darkwall: *Area 5, Magnitude 2, Non-Variable.*

Light sources within a Darkwall area shed no light and normal sight ceases to function. Other senses such as a bat's sonar and other senses such as night vision function normally.

The caster may move the Darkwall 15 metres per combat round. If this option is chosen, the spell gains the concentration trait.

Demoralise: *Magnitude 2, Resist (Persistence), Non-Variable.*

This spell creates doubt and uncertainty into the very heart and soul of the target. The target of this spell has all combat skills halved and may not cast offensive spells. If this spell takes effect before combat begins, the target will try to avoid fighting and will either run or surrender. The effects of this spell are automatically cancelled by the Fanaticism spell and vice versa.

Detect (x): *Magnitude 1, Concentration, Non-Variable.*

This covers a family of spells that all operate in a similar fashion, allowing the caster to locate the closest target of the spell within its range. This effect is stopped by a thick substance such as metal, earth or stone that is at least one metre thick. It is also blocked by Countermagic, though the caster will know the target is somewhere within range (though not its precise location) and that it is being protected by Countermagic. The separate Detect spells are listed below and must be learned separately.

- **Detect Enemy:** Gives the location of the nearest creatures that intend to harm the caster. The maximum number of creatures is equal to the magnitude of the spell.

- **Detect Magic:** Gives the location of the nearest magic item, magical creature or active spell.
- **Detect Species:** Each Detect Species spell will give the location of the nearest creature of the specified species. Examples of this spell include Detect Demon, Detect Elf, etc.
- **Detect Substance:** Each Detect Substance spell will give the location of the nearest substance of the specified type. Examples of this spell include Detect Coal, Detect Gold and Detect Wood.

Dispel Magic: *Instant.*

This spell will attack and eliminate other spells. Dispel Magic will eliminate a combined magnitude of spells equal to its own magnitude, starting with the most powerful affecting the target. If it fails to eliminate any spell (because the spell's magnitude is too high), then its effects immediately end and no more spells will be eliminated. A spell cannot be partially eliminated, so a target under the effects of a spell whose magnitude is higher than that of Dispel Magic will not have any spells currently affecting it eliminated.

Disruption: *Instant, Resist (Resilience).*

Disruption literally pulls a target's body apart. The target will suffer 1d4 points of damage, ignoring any armour points.

Dull Weapon:

This spell can be cast on any weapon. For every point of magnitude it reduces the damage dealt by the target weapon by one.

Enhance Skill (x):

Like Detect (x), this is a number of different spells, each of which affects a different skill. For each point of magnitude of the spell, the recipient gains +10% to any skill test using the skill enhanced. Alternatively, for each additional point of magnitude of the spell, the caster can affect one more target.

The bonuses and targets can be split as necessary providing each bonus is in multiples of 10% and the total of bonuses equals the spell's magnitude x 10%. For example, a character may have Enhance Skill (Deception) 5. He could cast it all on himself to give a whopping +50% to his Deception, or could

cast it on himself and an ally, giving himself +30% and his ally +20%. If in a larger group, he could even cast it on 5 allies, each of which would gain +10% to their Deception skill.

Some example spells of this type are as follows:

- Enhance Skill (Deception), which is useful to stealthy types.
- Enhance Skill (Trade), which is useful to aid merchants.
- Enhance Skill (Resilience), which may be useful for martial types.
- Enhance Skill (Persistence), which is very useful for magic types.

Extinguish: *Instant.*

This spell instantly puts out fires. At magnitude 1 it can extinguish a flame, magnitude 2 a small fire, magnitude 3 a large fire and magnitude 4 will put out an inferno.

Fanaticism: *Magnitude 2, Non-Variable.*

The target of this spell will have close combat skills increased by +25% but may not attempt to parry, dodge or cast spells. Also for the duration of the spell the target has a +50% bonus to any Persistence test related to morale. The effects of this spell are automatically cancelled by the Demoralise spell and vice versa.

Fire Arrow: *Magnitude 2, Touch, Trigger, Non-Variable.*

Casting this spell on a missile weapon will cause it to burst into flame when it is fired/thrown and strikes a target. When it hits a target, the missile will deal +1d6 points of magical fire damage in addition to its normal damage. Since Fire Arrow does magical damage, it affects creatures that are immune to normal damage. A missile under the effects of Fire Arrow cannot benefit from Speed Dart.

Fire Blade: *Magnitude 4, Touch, Non-Variable.*

For the duration of the spell, this weapon will deal +1d6 points of magical fire damage in addition to its normal damage. A weapon under the effects of Fire Blade cannot benefit from Weapon Enhance. Since Fire Blade does magical damage, it damages creatures immune to normal damage.

Heal: *Instant, Touch.*

For every point of magnitude of this spell, the caster can repair one hit point of damage on either himself or another target of the same species. Creatures of a different species will have half this damage repaired (minimum of one hit point restored).

A magnitude 5 or higher Heal spell will also cure any single poison or disease affecting the target.

A magnitude 6 or higher Heal spell will also reattach a severed limb so long as it is accomplished within ten rounds of the loss.

Hinder Skill (x): *Duration 5, Ranged, Resist (Persistence).*

Like Enhance Skill (x), this is a number of different spells, each of which affects a different skill. For each point of magnitude of the spell, the target gains a -10% penalty to any skill test using the affected skill.

Alternatively, for each additional point of magnitude of the spell, the caster can affect one more target. The bonuses and targets can be split as necessary providing each penalty is in multiples of 10% and the total of bonuses equals the spell's magnitude x 10%. If used in this way, each target is affected separately, i.e. if one target succeeds on resisting the spell, other targets may fail and be affected.

Some common spells of this type are *Hinder Skill (Perception)* which is often used when stealth is an issue, or *Hinder Skill (Persistence)* which is useful to cast on other magic users prior to casting spells upon them.

Ignite: *Instant.*

Ignite will set fire to anything flammable within range, creating a flame. Skin or flesh cannot be ignited and if the target is attached to a living being (such as fur or clothes) then the spell gains the Resist (Resilience) trait.

Light: *Area 9.*

Cast on a physical object (including living material), this spell causes the object to shed light across the area of effect. Note that only the specified area is illuminated - everything outside the area of effect is not. This spell creates raw light, not a flame.

Mind Speech:

This spell can affect one target for every point of magnitude. It allows telepathy between the caster and any target, though targets will not have telepathy with one another. The words transmitted by telepathy must be whispered and will be heard directly in the head of the recipient in the same language in which it was spoken.

Mobility:

For every point of magnitude of this spell, the target's movement rate will be increased by 2m

Pierce: *Touch.*

This spell can be cast on any weapon with a blade or point. For every point of magnitude, it ignores one armour point when it strikes armour. Pierce can bypass magical armour as easily as normal armour.

Protection:

For every point of magnitude of this spell one armour point is added to the armour of the target. This stacks with any existing armour and is treated in the same way.

Second Sight: *Magnitude 3, Non-Variable.*

Second Sight allows the caster to gauge the POW of every creature within range. The spell is blocked by anything that blocks normal vision. The caster will know if each aura is less than his own POW, within three points of his own POW or greater than his own POW (note that any enchanted items will also be noticeable as such).

Additionally, Second Sight provides a +25% bonus on Perception tests to notice hidden magical items or hiding people/creatures. Second Sight will also reveal invisible entities; though only a hazy image will show (treat such targets as partially obscured).

Slow: *Resist (Resilience).*

For every point of magnitude of this spell the target's current movement rate will be reduced by 2m. A target's movement may not be reduced to below two metres through the use of this spell.

Speed Dart: *Magnitude 2, Non-Variable, Touch, Trigger.*

Cast on a missile weapon, this spell is triggered when it is fired. It gives a +25% to Ranged Combat and +3 damage while using the missile. A missile under the effects of Speed Dart cannot benefit from Fire Arrow.

Spirit Shield:

This spell forms a magical barrier that protects the caster from magic point loss as the result of a successful incorporeal attack (such as those made by evil spirits). Each point of magnitude reduces the damage done by an attacking spirit by one point.

Strength: *Touch.*

For every point of magnitude of this spell the target's damage modifier increases by one step and strength based athletics tests are +10% per magnitude. Note that the damage increase is not treated as magical damage.

Vigour: *Touch.*

For every point of magnitude of this spell, the target's hit points score increases by +2. A target cannot have its hit points increased in this way to more than twice its original score. Damage is taken from the 'magical' hit points first, so when the spell dissipates the damage that was inflicted on the magical hit points disappear too. Note that this will also alter the target's major wound level while the spell is in effect.

Weapon Enhance: *Touch.*

This spell can be cast on any close combat weapon or unarmed attack. For every point of magnitude, it increases the chance to hit with the weapon by +10% and deals one point of extra damage. This extra damage is magical and will affect creatures that can only be hurt by magic. The weapon's base damage remains non-magical. A weapon under the effects of this spell cannot benefit from Fire Blade.

Table 6.1 Innate Magic Spells Summary

Spell	Traits	Effect
Befuddle	Magnitude 2 Non-Variable Resist (Persistence)	Confuses the target so they cannot attack.
Clear Path	Touch.	Clears the way through dense undergrowth.
Co-ordination	Touch	+2 per magnitude to combat order, +10% per magnitude to Dodge and Athletics.
Countermagic	Instant	Used as a reaction, spell automatically dispels any magic cast within range whose magnitude is lower or equal to its own.
Create Charms	Permanent	Creates magic items with innate magic spells.
Create Magic Point Store	Permanent	Creates a magic point store which can later be used instead of the caster's own magic points.
Create Potion	Permanent	Creates potions with stored innate magic spells.
Darkwall	Area 5 Magnitude 2 Non-Variable	Creates a moveable solid wall of darkness.
Demoralise	Magnitude 2 Resist (Persistence) Non-Variable	If cast before combat begins, target losses will to fight. If cast during combat, weapons skills are halved and may not cast offensive spells.
Detect (x)	Concentration Non-Variable	Where 'X' is a substance or a group of living beings.
Dispel Magic	Instant	Dispels spells of magnitude equal or lower to it.
Disruption	Instant Resist (Resilience)	Causes 1d4 damage per magnitude.
Dull weapon		Reduces a weapon's damage by one point per magnitude.
Enhance Skill (x)		Adds +10% per magnitude to a particular skill.
Extinguish	Instant	Puts out fires.
Fanaticism	Magnitude 2 Non-Variable	+25% to all close combat skills, but may not parry or cast spells.

- INNATE MAGIC -

Spell	Traits	Effect
Fire Arrow	Magnitude 2 Touch Trigger Non-Variable	+1d6 magical flame damage to affected arrow.
Fire Blade	Magnitude 4 Touch Non-Variable	+1d6 magical flame damage to affected sword.
Heal	Instant Touch	+1 Hit point per point of magnitude.
Hinder	Duration 5 Ranged Resist (Persistence)	-10% to a target's given skill per point of magnitude.
Ignite	Instant	Starts fires.
Light	Area 9	A magical light that illuminates its area.
Mind Speech		Allows mental communication with one target per point of magnitude.
Mobility		+2m to movement rate per magnitude.
Pierce	Touch	-1 AP per magnitude.
Protection		+1 AP per magnitude.
Second Sight	Magnitude 3 Non-Variable	Allows the caster to judge how many magic points a target has.
Slow	Resist (Resilience)	-2m to movement rate per magnitude.
Speed Dart	Magnitude 2 Non-Variable Touch Trigger	+3 damage, +25% to Ranged Combat skill.
Spirit Shield		Repulses evil spirits.
Strength	Touch	+10% to any strength based Athletics test per point of magnitude. +1 step for damage modifier per magnitude.
Vigor	Touch	+1 Hit point per point of Magnitude, for the duration of the spell.
Weapon Enhance	Touch	+10% to hit and +1 damage to close combat weapon/unarmed attack cast on. The additional damage caused by the spell is considered magical.



CHAPTER 7 SORCERY

Sorcery is an approach to magic that draws upon the very essence of the world itself. However, the Dark Lord put forth a great deal of his own power into the word, misshaping things from their very beginning if he thought it may serve in some fashion, or corrupting them out of spite.

As such it is impossible for any type of sorcery, whether it be used for good or evil, to not be touched by this 'Dark Lord element' in some manner.

Also, unlike innate magic, it is possible for any character (given the right circumstances) to learn sorcery - though it should be noted that unlike many other fantasy roleplaying games (where wizards and the like are commonplace), the availability of such magic to the player characters should be kept to an absolute minimum in *The Age Of Shadow*.

Learning Sorcery

In order for a character to be able to cast any sorcerous spells he must first attain a suitably mastery of the skill itself (see table 7.1 opposite for more details).

To gain the ability to cast a particular spell the character must have access to the spell he wishes to research (i.e. the caster must possess the spell in written form, be taught it by a teacher, etc.), and also spend two improvement points to learn it.

Each sorcery spell is governed by the Sorcery Casting magical skill. This skill is automatically acquired at its basic score (INT) when the character is first created. This skill may be improved normally though the use of improvement points and even non-sorcerers have this skill since at its base - as it is used to give them a chance to use magic items that store sorcery spells.

In addition, the character's Sorcery Casting skill will also limit the number of sorcery spells the character may learn (also shown in table 7.1 opposite).

Table 7.1 Sorcery Spells Known		
Sorcery Skill	Expertise	Max. Number Of Spells
0-25%	Novice	1
26-50%	Apprentice	2
51-75%	Journeyman	4
76-99%	Adept	7
100%+	Magus	11

Note that the character may forfeit old spells in order to make room for new ones.

Casting Sorcery Spells

A character must be able to gesture with his hands and be able to chant in order to cast a spell. Whenever a spell is cast using sorcery, there will always be a sight and sound that nearby creatures can detect, be it a flash of light, a crack of thunder or a shimmering in the air. The exact effects are up to the Games Master and player to decide for any given spell, but it will automatically be detected by any creatures within ten times the Magnitude of the spell in metres.

Casting a sorcery spell requires a successful skill test using the Sorcery Casting skill. If successful, the spell takes effect. If the casting test fails, the spell does not take effect.

Magic Points

All sorcery spells cost a base of one magic point to cast. If a manipulation effect is applied to a spell, each effect costs one magic point to apply (see overleaf).

Casting Critical Successes

If a Sorcery Casting test results in a critical success then any attempts to resist or counter the spell suffer a -25% penalty and the magic point cost for applying any manipulation effect is negated.

Casting Fumbles

If a Sorcery Casting test results in a fumble then the spell fails and the sorcerer loses 1d6 magic points in addition to the magic point loss for any manipulation effects. The character also adds one point to his corruption value (corruption is discussed in more detail later in this chapter).

Casting Time

No other action may be taken while casting a spell, though the character may slowly walk up to half their movement.

A spell takes effect at the end of its casting, which starts at the beginning of the combat round and ends on the INT of the caster in the combat order. Note that while spellcasting a character will draw possible attacks from enemies they are adjacent to during a combat round.

Distractions or attacks on the spellcaster as he casts will either automatically ruin the spell (if the spellcaster is blinded or disarmed, or suffers a major wound) or require Persistence tests to maintain concentration on the spell.

Manipulation Of Sorcery Spells

Sorcery spells have three basic effects which can be manipulated by the caster: magnitude, duration, and range.

Each effect has a default value which the spell can be cast at, costing one magic point. The default value for the spell effects are listed in the manipulation table below.

The 'tens' value of the caster's Sorcery Casting skill determines the maximum number of additional magic points that can be spent on each of the manipulation types. For example, a character with a Sorcery Casting skill of 87% can spend an additional 8 magic points on manipulating each of the spell's effects, in magnitude, duration and range. That's a manipulation of up to 8 levels for each effect, not 8 levels in total across all three effects.

The decision of which effects to manipulate and how many extra magic points are to be spent is made before the spell is cast.

For example, let us assume that Elmíriel casts Damage Boosting on Anthar's sword, and wants it to be at a magnitude of 4 for an hour. She has a Sorcery Casting skill of 60%, which means she can spend an additional six magic points on manipulating any spell's effects. Looking at the manipulation table (opposite), Elmíriel can comfortably manage a magnitude of 4, for three additional magic points, and can manage a duration of an hour with her remaining three points.

Elmíriel's player rolls the dice and compares the result against Elmíriel's casting

skill of 60% to see whether she successfully casts the spell.

In fact Elmíriel can spend a maximum of six points on a magnitude of range 640m, another six on a duration of 12 hours and another 6 on a magnitude of 7, which is a total of 19 Magic Points (18 for the manipulations and 1 for the spell itself).

Table 7.2 Spell Manipulation Cost

Magic Point Cost	Magnitude	Duration	Range
1 (Default)	1	5 minutes	10m
+1	2	15 minutes	20m
+2	3	30 minutes	40m
+3	4	1 hour	80m
+4	5	2 hours	160m
+5	6	4 hours	320m
+6	7	12 hours	640m
+7	8	1 day	1km
+8	9	2 days	2km
+9	10	5 days	5km
+10	11	1 week	10km
+11	12	2 weeks	20km
+12	13	1 month	50km
+13	14	2 months	100km
+14	15	1 Season	200km
+15	16	2 Seasons	500km
+16	17	1 Year	1000km
+17	18	2 Years	2000km
+18	19	5 Years	5000km
+19	20	10 Years	10000km

As you can probably work out from the example above, it is possible for a sorcerer to cast a spell which needs more magic points in its manipulated form than a sorcerer will normally have. Sorcerers can get round this by carrying magic point stores (see innate magic spell Create Magic Point Store).

Corruption

Unlike innate magic, those that dabble in sorcery do so at their own peril, and the consequences for tapping into the marred essence of the world comes with substantial risk. Therefore, whenever a player character fumbles a Sorcery Casting test (regardless of whether it is for casting a spell or using a magic item) they also add one point to their corruption level.

This represents the character's inner conflict with the underlying malice of the Dark Lord - an evil that pervades all things throughout the world.

So long as the character's corruption level remains below the value of their POW characteristic, the character will have little cause for concern. However, once the corruption level is equal to their POW characteristic, the character may begin to show outward signs of their struggle (an immortal elf may look more like one of the aged amongst men for example).

In the unfortunate case of a player character's corruption level exceeding their POW characteristic, the character becomes subject to the will of the Dark Lord. In such instances the character effectively ceases to be controlled by the player and becomes a NPC controlled by the Games Master. Such are the perils of sorcery.

Spell Traits & Descriptions

The traits used by Sorcery spells are detailed below.

Concentration: The spell's effects will remain in place as long as the character concentrates on it. Concentrating on a spell is functionally identical to casting the spell, requiring the spell caster to continue to gesture with both arms, chant and ignore distractions. This trait overrides the normal sorcery spell default duration.

Instant: The spell's effects take place instantly. The spell itself then disappears. This trait overrides the normal sorcery spell default duration.

Permanent: The spell's effects remain in place until they are dispelled or dismissed. This trait overrides the normal sorcery spell default duration.

Resist (Dodge/Persistence/Resilience): The spell's effects do not take effect automatically. The target may make a Dodge, Persistence or Resilience test (as specified by the spell) in order to avoid the effect of the spell entirely. Note that Resist (Dodge) spells require the target to be able to use reactions in order to

dodge. In the case of area spells, the Resist (Dodge) trait requires the target to dive in order to mitigate the spell's effect.

Touch: Touch spells require the character to actually touch his target for the spell to take effect. The spell caster must remain in physical contact with the target for the entire casting. This trait overrides the normal sorcery spell default range.

Trigger: The spell will lie dormant until an event stated in the description takes place. The spell then takes effect and is expended.

Defaults

Sorcery spells tend to have far fewer traits than innate spells. This is because most sorcery spells share the same basic qualities: A duration equal to 5 minutes, a magnitude of 1, a range equal to 10 metres, and the default sorcery spell will only affect one target.

Sorcery Spell List

Animate (Substance): *Concentration.*

This spell allows the sorcerer to animate the substance indicated, up to one SIZ for every point of magnitude. The sorcerer can cause it to move about and interact clumsily (movement of 2m per three points of magnitude).

The sorcerer's chance to have the animated object perform any physical skill successfully is equal to his own chance to perform that action halved (before any modifiers). If the appropriate Form/Set spell is cast immediately after this spell, the caster can perform much finer manipulation of the object. In this case, the animated object will use the caster's full skill scores for physical activities.

This spell can only be used on inanimate matter.

Cast Back:

This protective spell shields the caster from hostile magic and has a chance of sending it back to the attacking spell caster.

Cast Back only affects spells that target the user specifically and have the resist trait. Such spells may affect the protected character

normally, but if it is resisted, the spell is launched back at the person who cast it, as long as its magnitude is not greater than the Cast Back's magnitude.

Create Scrolls: *Permanent.*

These are written items which store sorcery spells. All scrolls have an attached cost of 50 BV per magnitude of spell in ingredients for special inks, parchments, etc.

The resulting scroll is a one use item which, upon a successful Sorcery Casting test, is cast (with any manipulations) at the magnitude that was cast on the scroll. Alternatively, upon a successful Sorcery Casting test the reader of the scroll can learn the spell at base skill percentage.

Either way, upon a successful use of the scroll the spell fades from the scroll. If the casting roll merely fails the spell remains, but the reader cannot attempt to use the scroll until their Sorcery Casting skill increases. If the casting roll is fumbled the spell fades from the scroll, without any benefit to the reader.

Create Spell Matrix: *Permanent.*

This spell creates items that store sorcery spells. All spell matrices have an attached cost of 500 BV per spell in special materials, and the enchanter must pay 1 improvement point per spell stored in the matrix.

The wielder can cast and manipulate the spell at the skill of the original enchanter, using their own magic points to fuel it. Spell matrices are also reusable.

Spell matrices are mundane items in their own right and if the item is broken then the spell is dispelled. However, at the time of enchantment the enchanter can spend another improvement point to magically harden the item, doubling its hit points and armour points.

Damage Boosting: *Touch.*

This spell can be cast upon any weapon up to five ENC. Each point of magnitude adds one point to the weapon's damage (the basic spell will increase a hatchet from 1d6 damage to 1d6+1 damage, for instance).

Damage Resistance: *Touch.*

This spell protects the body of the recipient. Any incoming attack dealing damage equal to

or less than the magnitude of the spell is ignored. Any incoming attack dealing more damage than the magnitude of Damage Resistance is unaffected and will deal its full damage as normal.

Damage Resistance may be combined with the innate magic spell Protection. In such instances, incoming damage is compared to the Damage Resistance spell first and only encounters the Protection spell if the Damage Resistance is bypassed.

Diminish (Characteristic): *Resist (Persistence/Resilience), Touch.*

There are actually seven Diminish spells, one for each characteristic. The spell will temporarily apply a penalty to the specified characteristic equal to the magnitude of the spell. The penalty applied by this spell may not reduce a characteristic below one and a creature must have the characteristic in question to be affected by this spell.

Diminish (STR, DEX, CON and SIZ) are resisted with Resilience. Diminish (INT, POW and CHA) are resisted with Persistence.

Applying a penalty to POW does not reduce the character's magic points, nor does it affect a character's corruption status.

Dominate (Species): *Resist (Persistence).*

This spell allows the caster to gain control over a creature belonging to a specific species. If the target fails to resist the spell, it must obey the commands of the caster for the duration of the spell.

The controlled creature shares a telepathic link with the sorcerer by which it can receive its orders. If the sorcerer and the creature dominated do not share a common language, the sorcerer can order it about by forming a mental image of the actions he wishes the dominated creature to perform.

Enhance (Characteristic): *Touch.*

There are actually seven Enhance spells, one for each characteristic. Essentially the reverse of the Diminish spell, Enhance allows the sorcerer to temporarily apply a bonus to the specified characteristic equal to the magnitude of the spell. A creature must have the characteristic in question to be affected by this spell.

Applying a bonus to POW does not increase the character's magic points, nor does it affect a character's corruption status.

Form/Set (Substance): *Instant.*

There are an unlimited number of Form/Set spells in existence, one for every substance imaginable, from steel to smoke to water.

Each point of magnitude allows the caster to shape one ENC of a substance. The caster must be familiar with the shape he is forming.

When the caster has finished the forming process, the substance retains its shape. Rigid substances like steel will hold the form they had at the end of the spell, while more mutable substances like water will immediately lose their shape.

This spell can be used to mend damage done to an object. The sorcerer must Form the entire object and must succeed at an appropriate Craft test, but if successful he will restore the item to its original condition.

This spell can only be used on inanimate substances.

Glow:

This spell causes a glowing point of light to appear on a solid substance. At its base, the spell creates an area of light one metre in radius, giving off the same illumination as a candle. Each additional point of magnitude increases the radius of effect by one metre. At magnitude 3, the brightness of the spell increases to that of a flaming brand at its centre. At magnitude 5, it increases to that of a campfire and at magnitude 9 to that of a bonfire.

This spell can be cast on an opponent's eyes. If cast on a living being the spell also gains the Resist (Dodge) trait. If the target fails to resist it, he will suffer a penalty to all attack, parry and dodge tests, as well as any skills relying upon vision, equal to five times the spell's magnitude, until the spell ends or is dispelled.

Haste:

Each point of magnitude of Haste adds 2m to the movement rate of the recipient. Every two points of magnitude also adds +1 to the recipient's Dexterity or Intelligence for the purposes of determining order in combat.

Hinder: *Resist (Resilience).*

Each point of magnitude of Hinder subtracts 2m from the movement rate of the target. Every two points of magnitude also subtracts 1 from the recipient's Dexterity or Intelligence for the purposes of determining order in combat.

Hold Fast: *Touch.*

This spell causes two adjacent ten centimetre by ten centimetre surfaces (roughly the size of a man's palm) to commingle into one. Each additional point of magnitude will either increase the strength of the bond or double the area affected. Any creature attempting to break the bond suffers a -10% penalty to their Athletics skill for each point of magnitude.

This spell can affect organic and inorganic substances. If the caster is attempting to bond a living being with this spell, the spell gains the Resist (Resilience) trait.

Mirage:

This spell creates an illusion based on all five senses. The illusion will seem real and solid unless the person looking at it succeeds in a Perception test, which is subject to a modifier based on the magnitude of the spell. If the viewer succeeds in a Perception test and the illusion could usually cause damage if believed in, it can no longer cause damage to that character. As soon as a viewer disbelieves the illusion it becomes insubstantial and ghostlike to him.



The size of the illusion is also governed by the magnitude. A magnitude 1 illusion can quite happily create small household items, say a fake table and chair, but would not be able to create an illusion of a fire breathing dragon.

Table 7.3 Mirages		
Magnitude	Perception Modifier	Type Of Illusion
1	+50 %	Not capable of motion or causing damage. Slightly fuzzy and unreal around the edges. Limit of SIZ 10.
2	+25 %	Some minor discrepancies. Capable of motion, but not of damage. Limit of SIZ 15.
3	0	Capable of motion and causing damage. Limit of SIZ 20.
4	-25 %	Capable of motion and causing damage. Limit of SIZ 30.
5	-50 %	Indistinguishable from the real thing, capable of motion and damage. Limit of SIZ 40.
+1	-50%	+10 SIZ per Magnitude

Mystic Vision: Concentration.

This spell allows the recipient to literally see magic. By augmenting the recipient's natural vision, the spell allows him to see a creature's magic points, as well as enchanted items with their own magic points or spells. The recipient must be able to actually see the creature or object for this spell to work. Mystic Vision also allows the recipient to see into the spirit world - thus revealing any invisible entities.

On a normal success the recipient of the spell will only know roughly how many magic points an object or creature has (1-10, 11-20, 21-30 and so forth). On a critical they will know exactly. On a fumble the Games Master should give the player a misleading total.

By looking at a spell effect, a recipient of Mystic Vision will automatically be aware of its magical origin (i.e. innate magic or sorcery). By increasing the magnitude of Mystic Vision, the caster can learn more about what he is seeing. Compare the magnitude of

Mystic Vision to the magnitude of any spell that the target is either casting or under the influence of. As long as Mystic Vision's magnitude exceeds the other spell's, the caster will be able to precisely determine the effects of the perceived spell, and a mental image of who cast the spell (if it is not obvious).

By looking at an enchanted item, a recipient of Mystic Vision will automatically be aware of its gross magical effects (such as the types of enchantment currently on the item). Each additional point of magnitude of Mystic Vision will also determine either the power (i.e. magnitude) of one of those enchantments, or a particular condition laid upon the enchantment itself (the Games Master's choice).

Neutralise Magic: Instant.

This spell allows a caster to neutralise other spells. Neutralise Magic will eliminate a combined magnitude of spells equal to its own magnitude, starting with the most powerful affecting the target. If it fails to eliminate the most powerful spell then it will instead target the second-most powerful spell. As soon as Neutralise Magic can no longer dismiss a target's spells (because all the remaining spell's magnitudes are too high), its effects immediately end.

Note that a spell cannot be partially eliminated, so a target under the effects of a spell whose magnitude is higher than that of Neutralise Magic will not have that particular spell altered in any way.

Neutralise Magic can be cast as a reaction, but only when another spell is cast within Neutralise Magic's range that the character wishes to counter. A successful Neutralise Magic disrupts the other spell and nullifies it so long as Neutralise Magic's magnitude equals or exceeds the target spell's magnitude.

Palsy: Resist (Resilience).

If the caster is able to overcome his target with this spell, he can turn the victim's own nervous system against him. The spell will paralyse the target, provided the spell's magnitude is greater than a quarter of target's current hit points.

Protective Sphere:

When completed, the Protective Sphere will create a sphere-shaped area of protection with a radius in metres equal to the spell's magnitude. If this spell is cast on the ground (or other immovable place) it cannot be moved. If cast on a vehicle (such as the bed of a wagon) or a person, it will move with the target. After the sphere has been completed any one or all of the following spells can be added to provided the defensive capacities of the sphere: Damage Resistance, Spell Resistance, and/or Spirit Resistance (note that the sphere on its own provides no protection - that is down to the resistance spells).

The Protective Sphere's perimeter contains the benefits of its combined resistance spells. The Protective Sphere only inhibits spells or attacks entering the circle from the outside - attacks or spells originating within the circle are unaffected. Thus a Protective Sphere against spirits would block out outside spirits but have no effect on those already inside its perimeter. A Protective Sphere against damage or spells would block out incoming attacks/spells but have no effect on those attacks made within the sphere (including attacks targeting those outside the sphere).

Sense (Substance): *Concentration.*

Eminently useful for finding valuables from afar, this spell has a variation for every substance imaginable. Sense (Substance) will cause all sources of the substance within range of the spell to glow an appropriate colour visible only to the caster - diamonds will gleam like ice, amber will shine like a camp fire and so on. Each point of this spell's magnitude allows it to penetrate one metre of rock, wood or dirt. If the source is concealed behind such a material, the surface nearest the caster will glow for a moment. The spell cannot penetrate refined metal, though it can penetrate ore.

Spell Resistance:

This spell compares its magnitude against the magnitude of any incoming spell. If Spell Resistance's magnitude is greater than the incoming spell's, then the incoming spell has no effect. If the incoming spell's magnitude is equal to or greater than the magnitude of Spell

Resistance, then the spell affects the target normally.

Unlike many protective spells, Spell Resistance remains in place for the entirety of its duration - spells that successfully breach the spell do not dispel it. However, it does not discriminate between incoming spells (i.e. a comrade attempting to magically heal the recipient of Spell Resistance must still overcome it in order to successfully use a healing spell).

Spirit Resistance:

This spell compares its magnitude against the POW of any spirit that comes into contact with the recipient. If the recipient of the spell's combined POW + Spirit Resistance's magnitude is greater than the spirit's POW, the spirit cannot touch the recipient.

A spirit unable to touch a recipient will not be able to personally attack or harm him, including through ranged attacks. A spell cast by a spirit at the recipient is blocked unless its magnitude exceeds the Spirit Resistance's magnitude.

Tap (Characteristic): *Concentration, Resist (Persistence), Touch.*

There are actually seven Tap spells, one for each characteristic. These devastating spells allow the caster to permanently strip a target of characteristic points, transforming them into magic points for his own use.

The caster must make physical contact with the target in order to tap it - therefore the spell cannot be used on incorporeal creatures, such as spirits. Tap will only work if its magnitude is equal to or greater than the target's specified characteristic. Thus a magnitude 6 Tap Strength spell would only work on targets with a STR of 6 or lower. The number of points tapped by the spell are equal to 1d6 per combat round.

Characteristic points lost to Tap are lost permanently, though the victim can raise them again through normal means of increasing a characteristic. Characteristics may be tapped to 0 which usually involves the death of the victim. The exception being charisma.

For each characteristic point the sorcerer taps, he will gain one magic point. The sorcerer is limited in the number of magic

- SORCERY -

points he can gain through Tap; the spell can only increase his magic points to double his normal limit. A sorcerer may simply tap a target and dissipate any gained magic points.

If the sorcerer gains more magic points through Tap than his normal maximum, they will disappear at the rate of one magic point per minute once the spell finishes.

Treat Wounds: *Instant, Touch.*

This spell must be cast upon a wounded character. Once cast it dramatically accelerates the natural healing rate of the target. For every point of magnitude of this spell, the caster can repair one hit point. Treat Wounds cannot reattach or re-grow a severed limb and will not work on any major wound.

Table 7.4 Sorcery Spells Summary

Spell	Traits	Description
Animate (Substance)		Each point of magnitude animates one SIZ of inanimate substance.
Cast Back		This protective spell shields the caster from hostile magic and has a chance of sending it back to the attacking spell caster.
Create Spell Matrix	Permanent	This spell creates items that store sorcery spells.
Create Scroll	Permanent	Creates scrolls that store spells.
Damage Boosting	Touch	Each magnitude of this spell cast on a weapon adds one point of damage
Damage Resistance	Touch	Any incoming attack dealing damage equal to or less than the magnitude of the spell is ignored.
Diminish (Characteristic)	Resist (Persistence/Resilience) Touch	Reduces a specified characteristic by an amount equal to the magnitude of the spell.
Dominate (Species)	Resist (Persistence)	This spell allows the caster to gain control over a creature belonging to a specific species.
Enhance (Characteristic)	Touch	Increases a specified characteristic by an amount equal to the magnitude of the spell.
Form/Set (Substance)	Instant	Manipulate the form of a given substance.
Glow		This spell causes a glowing point of light to appear on a solid substance.
Haste		+2m to movement rate per point of magnitude. +1 to DEX or INT (for combat order only) per two points of magnitude.
Hinder	Resist (Resilience)	The reverse of the above.
Hold Fast	Touch	Binds two surfaces together.
Mirage		This spell creates an illusion based on all five senses.
Mystic Vision	Concentration	This spell allows the recipient to literally see magic.
Neutralise Magic	Instant	Eliminates a combined magnitude of spells equal to its own magnitude, starting with the most powerful affecting the target.
Palsy	Resist (Resilience)	The spell will paralyse the target, provided the spell's magnitude is greater than the target's hit points/4.
Protective Sphere		When completed, the Protective Sphere will create a sphere-shaped area of protection with a radius equal to the spell's magnitude.
Sense (Substance)	Concentration	Will cause all sources of the substance within range of the spell to glow an appropriate colour visible only to the caster.
Spell Resistance		If Spell Resistance's magnitude is greater than the incoming spell's, then the incoming spell has no effect.
Spirit Resistance		If the recipient of the spell's combined POW + Spirit Resistance's magnitude is greater than the spirit's POW, the spirit cannot touch the recipient.
Tap (Characteristic)	Concentration / Touch Resist (Persistence)	Allows the caster to convert a target's characteristic points into magic points.
Treat Wounds		For every point of magnitude of this spell, the caster can repair one hit point per combat round the spell is applied.

CHAPTER 8

ADVENTURES AND QUESTS

An adventure or quest is an epic story that involves the player characters as the main protagonists. There is a chance of reward or failure, of encountering foul monsters, dangerous magics, and hidden traps. Like any story it has a beginning, middle, and an end. It may last one or more game sessions. Whatever might happen, it will be a memorable event in the character's lives that leaves them altered, for good or for bad, forever.

Adventures are at the centre of play in *The Age Of Shadow* and they will often be the main focus of the player character's life. They may have some sort of normal life that they return to between quests, but it is during their adventures that they drastically change. For the players, adventures and quests are where the fun happens, where their creations are placed centre stage.

A Note On GM Preparation

Some Games Masters are perfectly at home with just a rough idea of some of the events that may transpire during the course of an adventure, and can quite easily improvise their way towards its eventual conclusion. Whereas other GM's might be more comfortable if they have prepared extensive notes prior to the game that they can then make reference to during play (including maps and descriptions of locales the PC's might visit, the names and statistics for various NPC's and monsters, numerous encounters for the players to overcome along the way, a detailed backstory for the group's main adversary, and so on). Neither of these two approaches are right or wrong, and there are of course Games Masters that will fall somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. All that matters is that the Games Master prepares for the game by whatever method suits him/her best (though a few notes to get things started, such as details regarding the characters' starting locale, might not be a bad idea).

It is also worth noting that once the players are more familiar with the game they may start to define reasons for participating in adventures themselves (maybe there is a villain from a previous adventure that they want to hunt down, or maybe there's a particular area of the game world that they wish to explore).

A Typical Game Part 1

- The Beginning -

This is the part of the game where the Games Master and the players set up the introduction to the adventure. To begin with this will largely fall upon the shoulders of the Games Master - especially if this is the first adventure that the group is undertaking. For example, the GM may describe some kind of major event that has happened in the player characters' locale, and as such it is obvious that they must all work together if they are to have any chance of survival (a raid on their home town for example).

Alternatively the Games Master might begin play by summarising any important events that transpired in previous games, and might even have some kind of 'Player Introduction' prepared to get things underway.

A Typical Game Part 2

- The Middle -

This part of the game should be the main focus of the adventure. The middle is where all the dice rolling and action happens (and also where most of the story is told). Since each story is different, with its own characters, hazards and settings (and, of course, the unique actions of the players), the middle of the adventure can vary greatly for each adventure. There are however a few common features to all adventures.

Preparation

Before the adventure starts in earnest the PC's may have the opportunity to make some basic preparations. This may include making sure that they are suitably equipped for a long journey, trying to find out about any perils they might face along the way, and so on.

The Adventure Itself

Hazards and dangers are part and parcel of the adventure itself, as without risk the rewards have little worth. Some of the things that the player characters may meet on their adventures include fearsome monsters, cunning traps, and mysterious magics.

The backdrop to the adventure might also bring its own challenges. A ruined tower may be littered with unstable masonry as well as the occasional trap laid by the creatures who have made it their lair. Once away from the comforts of their home, the wilderness on the edge of civilisation has many dangers. Scarcity of food and water, adverse weather conditions and the danger of getting lost in difficult terrain are all things the player characters will have to deal with.

Through investigation the player characters will find out more about what is going on in their immediate surroundings and maybe some of the deeper mysteries of the adventure. This will bring them into contact with non-player characters, who they will need to influence to prise out information. There will also be clues in the locations they find themselves in. Much of this will be roleplayed out, with both the players and Games Master being in-character. Sometimes the Games Master may call for skill tests using Influence, if questioning non-player characters, or Perception, if searching for hidden clues. Like all skill tests the Games Master should be wary about making the players roll dice every time in an investigation. Some clues are readily apparent if the players ask or look in the right place in the right way, especially if they combine this with good roleplaying. In these cases the Games Master should simply give the players the information. Part of a good mystery anyway is down to how the players interpret the clues and how they act based upon what they know. They might jump to conclusions when only knowing part of the picture.

In addition, most people (and even some monstrous creatures) that the player characters meet upon their adventures will have their own motives. Sometimes these motives will run counter to their own (often leading to conflict or even combat), and other times (assuming the player characters stop to talk and work out

what the person/creature is doing) they have aims and objectives similar to their own. Some creatures of course will be neutral, perhaps merely interested in defending their own territory and easily avoidable if the player characters stay away from their lair.

A Typical Game Part 3

- The End -

Every story has an end. If it's a good story it will have an exciting climax which leaves the reader satisfied at the end of it. Both the players and the Games Master should be aware that this is the aim of playing *The Age Of Shadow* and should gently steer the action towards such a satisfying conclusion.

After the adventure has ended the Games Master should hand out any improvements that the players have earned for their characters.

Improvement Points

These are a measure of how the character grows with experience. Generally speaking, the more experiences that a character has during the course of his adventures, the more improvement points he will have earned along the way. Improvement points are spent by players to increase and add new skills and spells (see Improving Characters overleaf).

- 1 improvement point is awarded for each adventure that the character played in.
- 1 improvement point is awarded for being the person who pushes forward the plot at a crucial point in the story.
- 1 improvement point is awarded for being the player who helped everyone have the most fun. This is determined by a vote amongst the players and Games Master.

Fate Points

In an average adventure each PC should also receive a fate point or two. This can be modified if the character performed particularly poorly or heroically (giving a range of zero to four); though it should be noted that elves may never accrue more than 1 fate point.

Opportunities For Further Adventures

If you are playing in a series of linked adventures, then not all the plot threads need be closed at the end of the adventure. Enemies might escape to fight another day, side line mysteries and dilemmas may remain unsolved, and a successful resolution may still pose as many questions as it answers. All these give the players and Games Master more ideas for future quests and adventures.

Campaigns

In heroic literature, we often follow the exploits of a hero (or band of heroes) over a number of stories which build up to a suitable climax. In *The Age Of Shadow* a series of interconnected adventures are known as a campaign. What interconnects these adventures are the prize, themes and reoccurring characters.

The prize is the overall goal of the campaign. It is only obtainable over many gruelling adventures, with each adventure or quest seeing the player characters one little bit further to obtaining it. For example, in the story of Jason and the Argonauts the crew of the Argos, led by the hero Jason, is engaged in a search for the fabulous Golden Fleece.

Themes are less obvious at first. They are the subtle ideas that set the tone of the adventures that the players will encounter during the campaign. An example theme that could be explored might be as simple as 'does power corrupt?'

Reoccurring Characters include the player characters themselves, their close and powerful allies, and nemeses. One of the big attractions of running a campaign is watching how the player characters develop as they go from adventure to adventure. Indeed, in some campaigns this will be the main reason why the players are playing. Even if the Games Master has elaborate themes and prizes in mind, he must make sure that he provides opportunities in the campaign for the players to develop their characters in the direction they want. Of course it doesn't mean that the Games Master should hand player desired

improvements on a plate. Risk and danger should still pave the way to rewards, but the direction in which the player wants to develop their character gives the Games Master a pool of ideas for further quests and adventures.

During a campaign the players will develop and meet powerful allies. Initially, these allies may be little more than people who offer advice or steer the players toward their early adventures, but later on these allies could become impressed with our heroes' noteworthy deeds and decide that their own cause is aligned with that of the player characters. Of course such allies may not necessarily be good at heart and their allegiances to the player characters may change with the wind. Allies could become enemies if they suffer slights, real or imagined, at the hands of the player characters.

Nemeses on the other hand are enemies who, adventure after adventure, oppose the efforts of the PC's. They may be people that the players are ideologically opposed to, or more likely, an evil servant of the Dark Lord.

Unlike an individual adventure's resolution, the finality of the campaign's climax must be absolute, with all plot threads resolved. When a campaign finally climaxes, it is at the end of several sessions of play. Although the player characters may live on and adventure with one another afterwards, this is the last time that they will all be questing together in this particular story. As such the players expect and deserve an even bigger pay off than at the end of a standalone adventure.

Improving Characters

When an adventure comes to a close each player will typically be awarded a number of improvement points. These points may then be spent to improve certain aspects of their character as follows.

Improving Skills

A player can choose to spend one improvement point to increase one skill by +2d4%, or two skills by +1d4% each. Note that there is no limit to the score a skill can reach.

Improving Characteristics

A player can choose to spend three improvement points to increase one characteristic by one point (note that SIZ may never be increased using improvement points).

The maximum any character can increase a characteristic to is equal to the maximum possible starting score for the characteristic in question plus three. For example, a human character's maximum value for each characteristic is 21.

Learning & Improving Spells

A player can choose to spend one improvement point to increase the magnitude of an existing innate spell by one.

A player may also be able to learn new spells at a cost of one point per magnitude for an innate spell, and two points for a sorcery spell - so long as the character has had the proper in-game opportunity to do so (and if the Games Master allows). Note that certain parameters must be met before characters can learn sorcery spells (see p44 for more details).

Table 8.1 Summary Of Improvements

Cost	Improvement
1 improvement point	+2d4 to any one skill
1 improvement point	+1d4 to any two skills
3 improvement points	+1 to any characteristic except SIZ.
1 improvement point per magnitude	Learn an innate magic spell.
2 improvement points	Learn a sorcery spell.

Improving Outside Of Adventures Practice & Research

The player characters may often experience long stretches of 'downtime' between adventures. This is quite normal. Group members may need to heal from wounds suffered during the last adventure, the players may engage in some activity that takes time, or life may simply return to normal until the next danger to face the player characters appears. During such downtime the players may improve their characters. The players might actually request downtime between adventures

to learn new skills and it is up to the Games Master to determine if this is appropriate. For each three month period of practice or research a character may gain 1 improvement point.

Situational Rules

This selection of rules is designed to deal with individual situations that may crop up during the game.

Travel

The rates given in the table below are based on average movement rates. If you need to precisely determine which of two groups reached a destination first, use an opposed Athletics (for walking) or Riding test.

Table 8.2 Daily Travel Rates

Type	Rate / Day (km)	Notes
Hiking	Movement Rate x 3.5	Ten hours of steady walking on a road or path with no wagons or animals. Need to make fatigue test at the end of the hike to avoid becoming fatigued.
Marching	Movement Rate x 2	Marching in organised groups for ten hours, ready to fight at the end of the day. No need for a fatigue test, since pace is such still able to fight at the end of the march.
Riding	Mount's Movement Rate*	Moving at a steady walk, accompanied by pack animals and wagons.
<i>*This distance may be doubled if unaccompanied by wagons etc., though both mount and rider will be required to make a fatigue test at the end of the day.</i>		

The above rates should also be modified by the type of terrain being crossed.

Table 8.3 Terrain Modifiers

Terrain	Effect on movement rate
Road / Path	100 % of normal rate
Light brush	80% of normal rate
Medium scrub / Light woods	70% of normal rate
Rolling hills	70% of normal rate
Heavy woodland	50% of normal rate

Table 8.4 Illumination & Darkness

Environment	Example	Effects
Brightly Illuminated	Blazing summer day.	None.
Illuminated	Heavily candlelit room, overcast day, within radius of illuminating item.	None.
Partial Darkness	Cavern mouth, misty day, within 3 x radius of illuminating item (see below).	-25% to vision-based Perception tests.
Dark	Large cavern illuminated only by embers, foggy day, within 5 x radius of illuminating item.	-50% to vision-based Perception tests. Movement rate halved.
Pitch Black	Sealed room with stone walls, cavern many miles underground, mountaintop whiteout.	Perception tests reliant on vision become near impossible, as are ranged attacks. Close combat attacks are at -75%. Movement rate a quarter of normal.

Illumination & Darkness

Table 8.4 (above) gives the effects of various types of illumination and darkness on the characters.

Dark Sight

This allows the character to treat pitch black conditions as if dark. Normally possessed by subterranean creatures.

Night Sight

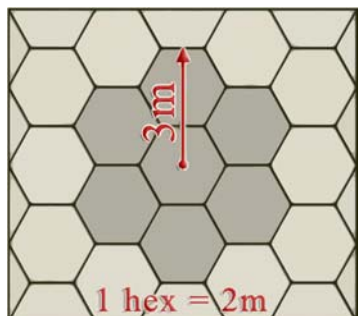
This ability allows the character to treat partial darkness as illuminated and darkness as only partial darkness. This is normally possessed by nocturnal creatures, or races that awoke before the rising of the sun and the moon.

Illuminating Items

Table 8.5 Illuminating Items

Example	Radius
Candle / Embers	1m
Torch / Lantern	3m
Campfire	5m
Bonfire	9m
Light Spell	9m (see spell description)

Note that when using a battlemat the recommended scale is that of two metres per hex, as this allows for the radius to fill whole hexagons as shown in the diagram opposite.



Fatigue

Combat, sprinting, climbing, swimming against a strong current, are all examples of when a character can become fatigued and tired.

If the Games Master thinks that a character has been engaged in an activity that may have drained him of physical energy, then they may call for a Resilience roll. If the character fails the roll they suffer the effects of fatigue (see below). For example, Anthar has just been in a long, ten round, combat against a group of bandits. Although he has emerged victorious, the Games Master rules that Anthar's player must successfully roll against Anthar's Resilience of 30% or become fatigued.

This roll is usually made after the activity has been completed, unless the activity is long and drawn out and there is a real danger that fatigue will stop the task being completed successfully. For example, on a long hard march the characters are pressing on ahead so that they can reach a fort before an enemy army arrives there. In this case there is a real danger that the player characters will arrive not only too late but tired and worn down.

The Effects Of Fatigue

If a character fails the Resilience test then they become fatigued. All skill tests are at -25%. Also movement rate drops by a quarter. The character also becomes sluggish, DEX and INT are each reduced by three points for the purposes of determining order in combat.

If the fatigued character insists on engaging in heavy activity, such as combat, heavy labour or running, then another Resilience roll

is made at -25%. If the character fails this second skill test they become heavily fatigued and all the above penalties are doubled.

If a character fumbles any of their Resilience rolls, then they immediately fall unconscious for 3d6 minutes and upon waking are still fatigued.

Recovering From Fatigue

A character who completely rests for 20-CON hours will remove the effects of any fatigue. A Vigour spell (see innate magic) will also remove the effects of fatigue.

Exposure, Starvation & Thirst

A character can normally survive for a number of hours equal to his CON before suffering from exposure.

A character can survive for a number of days equal to his CON before becoming starved, though after three days they will begin to suffer a -10% penalty to fatigue tests.

A character can survive for a number of hours equal to his CON x 2 before becoming chronically thirsty, though particularly arid environments may reduce this to CON x 1 or even CON x ½.

Whenever a character is suffering from exposure, starvation or thirst, the fatigue test penalty immediately doubles to -20%. In addition, the character will automatically suffer 1d6 points of damage every day, for every condition he is experiencing. Natural or magical healing will not heal this damage - only sufficient shelter, food, or water can remedy the problem and allow natural or magical healing to take place.

Healing

Healing can be performed in one of three ways - using the Healing skill, a magical spell, or through natural healing (i.e. resting while the injuries heal themselves).

Natural Healing

A character's minor injuries regain CON/4 (round down) hit point per 24 hours, as long as

the character does not engage in anything more than light activity. A major wound on the other hand requires treatment with a successful healing test or magical healing. Once this is done major wounds heal at a rate of one hit point per day, as long as the character does not engage in anything more than light activity, and the character succeeds a daily resilience test.

Magical Healing

However magical healing is achieved, whether from a spell or potion, it has an instantaneous effect.

In addition to the restoration of hit points, any character suffering a major wound that receives even a single hit point restoration through magical healing will immediately stop bleeding and is healed sufficiently to benefit from natural healing.

If a character has been knocked unconscious due to a major wound, the restoration of a single hit point to the wound that caused the unconsciousness will revive the character.

Unless specifically stated, magical healing cannot reattach severed limbs or revive the dead.

Encumbrance

Every piece of equipment in the equipment chapter has an encumbrance (ENC) score, apart from those items that are too small or light. Characters can usually ignore the effects on encumbrance that these light items have until they start to carry a lot of them (assume that an average of 20 such items will equal 1 ENC, on the basis that the character has a suitable means of carrying them, such as a sack or backpack).

A character can carry equipment whose total ENC is less than or equal to his STR+SIZ without penalty.

Note that encumbrance is a measure of not only weight but also bulk of the item, reflecting the awkwardness of handling the item. Roughly 1 ENC is equal to ¼ of a SIZ point.

Overloading

A character carrying total ENC greater than his STR+SIZ is overloaded.

Overloaded characters suffer a -25% penalty to all tests that require physical actions, including combat skill tests and most tests that have DEX or STR as a characteristic. Overloaded characters also have their movement halved and suffer a -25% penalty to all fatigue tests.

A character cannot carry more than twice his STR+SIZ in ENC.

Falling

A character that takes damage from a fall ends up prone. Armour points do not reduce falling damage.

A character takes 1d6 damage per 1m fallen after the first metre. As long as the character was not surprised, they may attempt an Athletics test to mitigate falling damage. A successful test allows the character to treat the fall as if it were two metres shorter than it actually is. In addition, as long as this test is a success and the character is not reduced to 0 hit points due to the fall, the character lands safely and is not prone. If the roll is a critical then miraculously no damage is taken. If the roll is a fumble then the maximum possible damage is taken.

Characters falling onto soft surfaces may have the distance they fall effectively halved for the purposes of damage.

Suffocation

While underwater or moving through a poison gas cloud a character can hold his breath for a number of combat rounds equal to his CON.

Once a character has surpassed the time for which he can hold his breath, he must then make a Resilience test every round with a cumulative -10% penalty. If he fails, he automatically starts inhaling the suffocating substance.

Armour points do not reduce suffocation damage and the damage will only cease once the character can draw breathable air once

more. Even then, the character will require a Resilience test to be able to do anything other than wretch or gasp for breath for 1d4 Combat Rounds.

Table 8.6 Suffocating Substance	
Substance Inhaled	Damage Taken
Water	2d6
Vacuum	2d6
Thick Smoke	1d6
Poison Gas	Character is exposed to the poison. If the gas is also a thick smoke, then 1d6 damage is incurred in addition to the poison's effect.

Fire & Heat

The amount of damage per combat round suffered from fire or heat will depend on its intensity, as shown on the Fire & Heat table below. Metal armour, such as chainmail, does not subtract from the rolled damage.

Table 8.7 Fire & Heat		
Damage Source	Example	Damage Per Round
Flame	Candle.	1 point
Large Flame	Flaming brand.	d4 points
Small Fire	Camp fire, cooking fire.	d6 points
Large Fire	Scolding steam, large bonfires, a burning room.	2d6 points
Inferno	Lava, inside a blast furnace.	3d6 points

Poison

Some plants and creatures have developed poisons as a method of protecting themselves against predators. They are also used by assassins and wrong doers of all kinds to murder their victims.

Every type of poison has the following information detailed:

Name: The poison's name. Also, if the poison is magical in nature, it will be mentioned here.

Type: Lists whether the poison is ingested, smeared on a weapon, or inhaled.

Delay: The time between the poison's introduction to a character, to the time its effect takes hold.

Potency: This is a number between 10 and 100 that measures the strength of a poison. Some magical poisons have even higher potencies. A character must make an opposed Resilience test versus the poison's Potency test in order to avoid or mitigate the damage of the poison.

Effect: Usually hit point damage, though this is not universal. Some poisons cause a character to sleep for a period of time. More exotic poisons may cause hallucinogenic effects, paralysis, or a combination of effects. These take place after the delay noted above.

Duration: How long the poison (if effective) will affect the victim. The effects of the poison cannot be removed or healed until the poison itself has been neutralised or has dissipated in the victim's system. Hit point damage caused by poison will not automatically heal - it must be healed through magical or natural healing.

Poison Succeeds, Character Fails

If the poison succeeds its Potency test and the character fails his Resilience test, the poison has its full effect.

Character Succeeds, Poison Fails

If the character succeeds his Resilience test and the poison fails its Potency test, the poison has no effect.

Both Poison And Character Succeed

Whoever rolled the highest in their test wins.

Both Poison And Character Fail

Whoever rolled the lowest in their test wins.

Example Poison

What follows is an example poison, one that is commonly applied to missile weapons:

Name:	Dart poison
Type:	Ingested or smeared
Delay:	1d3 combat rounds
Potency:	35
Full Effect:	1d3 hit point damage applies -3 penalty to victim's CON.
Duration:	6d10 minutes.

Disease

Disease is always a source of threat, either from commonplace diseases or those caused by more fantastical means.

Every type of disease has the following information detailed:

Name: The disease's name. Also, if the disease is magical in nature, it will be mentioned here.

Type: Lists whether the disease is spread through contamination, touch, or is airborne.

Delay: The time between the disease's introduction to a character, to the time its effect takes hold. It is also the time following the disease contraction that a victim will be forced to make follow-up opposed disease tests.

Potency: This is a number between 10 and 100 that measures the strength of a disease. Some magical diseases have even higher potencies. A character must make an opposed Resilience test versus the disease's Potency test in order to avoid or mitigate the damage of the disease.

Effect: Usually hit point damage, though this is not universal. Many diseases will apply a penalty to characteristics or skills. More exotic diseases may cause hallucinogenic effects, paralysis, or a combination of effects. These take place after the delay noted above. The effects of the disease cannot be removed or healed until the disease itself has been neutralised or has dissipated in the victim's system. Hit point damage caused by disease will not automatically heal - it must be healed through magical or natural healing.

Disease Succeeds, Character Fails

If the disease succeeds its Potency test and the character fails his Resilience test, the disease has its full effect.

Character Succeeds, Disease Fails

If the character succeeds his Resilience test and the disease fails its Potency test, the disease has no effect.

Both Disease And Character Succeed

Whoever rolled the highest in their test wins.

Both Disease And Character Fail

Whoever rolled the lowest in their test wins.

Additional Information On Diseases

Unlike a poison, diseases will progress if a character does not resist its effects. Once the first opposed test is failed by the victim, they will have to make an additional opposed test after an amount of time determined by the disease's delay statistic.

If the victim succeeds this second opposed test, he has overcome the worst of the disease and will no longer suffer its effects (other than remaining hit point damage) after a while. Use the disease's delay statistic to determine how long this takes.

If the victim fails this second opposed test, he falls deeper into the disease. Apply all of the disease's effects again to the character. Once the delay period has elapsed once more, the victim will have to make a third opposed disease test, and so on.



Example Disease

What follows is an example mundane (though possibly fatal) disease:

Name:	The shakes
Type:	Touch
Delay:	1d3 days
Potency:	50
Effect:	This flu like disease renders its victims in a cold and constantly shaking state, during which DEX is halved. For each day that the victim suffers from the disease they will suffer 1d3 HP damage.

Inanimate Objects

All inanimate objects have armour points and hit points. Except in the most unusual of circumstances, attacks on inanimate objects will automatically hit - characters simply need to work out how much damage they deal.

The object's armour points will be deducted from any damage dealt as normal, with the remainder being applied to its hit points. Once an object's hit points have been reduced to zero, it is smashed and useless.

Table 8.8 Inanimate Objects

Object	Armour Points	Hit Points
Boulder	4	40
Castle gate	4	120
Castle wall (2m section)	5	250
Hut wall (2m section)	2	15
Iron door	4	75
Wooden chair	2	6
Wooden door (normal)	2	25

Also note that using an inappropriate tool or weapon on an inanimate object (such as hitting a boulder with a longsword) will cause as much damage to the tool/weapon as it does to the object being struck. In such cases treat the weapon as having as many hit points as its damage dice (for example, a longsword will have 8 hit points, a greatsword will have 16).

CHAPTER 9

CREATURES

In *The Age Of Shadow*, monsters can be as richly detailed as the characters themselves. As well as characteristics they have skills, weapons, and possibly even magical spells. They often have their own motives that bring them into conflict with the player characters, and are not mere cannon fodder to be killed and looted.

This chapter is split into two lists. The first is the Monster List which contains creatures such as dragons and beastlings. The second is the Animal List, a smaller list which details more mundane creatures which the characters may encounter or commonly use as mounts and beasts of burden.

Using The Monster List

The characteristics, attributes, skills and special rules for each of the creatures listed in this section are collectively known as a 'stat block.' Each stat block features three possible creatures from that particular race or breed - a lesser creature, a common creature, and a greater creature. Generally speaking, the lesser version will be a smaller, lithe, version of the monster in question, whereas the greater version will be tougher, larger, and stronger.

To create your own individual monsters and adversaries (perhaps a reoccurring wildling captain for example), simply refer to the relevant stat block to obtain the number of dice you need to roll for their characteristics, and then generate the monster as you would a player character (perhaps giving the monster anywhere between 5 and 20 improvement points depending on its experience). Alternatively, you could just improve on the existing examples with the addition of a similar amount of improvement points.

It is also worth noting here that it is not always wise to throw ever increasing numbers of monsters at the player characters. This is because combat in *The Age Of Shadow* works best when there are a similar amount of monsters as player characters in an encounter.

Treasure & Magic Items

In *The Age Of Shadow* the needs of the story will usually dictate what (if any) trinkets and treasures any particular monster, or group of monsters, will possess. However, Games Masters should be aware that *The Age Of Shadow* is not really a game of 'killing things and taking their stuff' (unless of course the players are playing a group of bandits), and caution should be taken to avoid it becoming such.

Magic Items

Magic items belonging to monsters will usually be of the type used by the creature (though it is possible that they could be oblivious to the nature of something they have recently looted, or something that is kept because of its perceived value or beauty).

It is also worth noting that the following spells can be used in the creation of magic items (refer to the relevant magic chapters for further details):

- Create Charms (innate magic)
- Create Magic Point Store (innate magic)
- Create Potion (innate magic)
- Create Scroll (sorcery)
- Create Spell Matrix (sorcery)

Magic Items format

Magical or enchanted items will usually have the following format. This is to give a concise description of the item and some background information which prevents the item from being bland and colourless.

Name: If the item has a particular name (or names) it will be noted here.

Background: Details of who and why it was created, and any significant owners and events in its history.

Description: This is a physical description of the item.

Creation: How the item was created. Usually this section details the spells that were used and any special rituals that the creators performed.

Magic Powers: This section lists the relevant spells stored in the item. Also, if the item acts as a magic point store, or has any special magic powers unique to the item, then that too is recorded here.

Notes: This section lists any additional information that is relevant to the item that does not fit into any of the above sections. This might be any individuals or groups who would like to see the item destroyed, or a particular race who might be fearful of it.

Value: If listed this is the approximate barter value of the item. As a rough guide an item is worth an additional 250 BV per magnitude of spell stored in it. Very rarely will a magic item be available on the open market as there are no such things as 'Ye Olde Magic Shoppe' in *The Age Of Shadow*.

An Example Magic Item

Name: Elhathol.

Background: Created in the smithies of the Elves, this sword (and many others like it) was forged for use in their unceasing war with the Dark Lord.

Description: A razor-sharp long sword, with a large crystal at its hilt which glows with a soft inner light when it has magic points in it. When activated, the blade of the sword also glows with a pale light if any enemy is nearby.

Creation: This item was created using the *Create Charm* and *Create Magic Store* innate magic spells.

Magic Powers: *Weapon Enhancement 4* and *Detect (enemy)*. The hilt of the sword is a magic point store which holds 12 magic points, which may be regenerated by the user transferring their own into it.



Notes: Like all similar elvish weapons, the forces of the enemy both fear and hate the sword (though not enough for this to be expressed in any game terms).

The Monster List

Each of the monsters that follow are described in the following format:

Characteristics (stat block)

These are the characteristics that the monster possesses. If a monster is missing a characteristic for any reason the effect of this is noted beneath the stat block. As mentioned previously, three different scores are given for each characteristic (to represent common, lesser, and greater variations of the creature in question), as well as the dice range that you can roll to randomly determine an individual's characteristics (note that if you randomly roll characteristics you will have to adjust the rest of the skills and other characteristic dependant scores accordingly).

A creature with a randomly determined INT score is considered sentient (i.e. it is a rational being capable of logical thought and self-determination), whereas a creature with a fixed INT is not sentient. Fixed INT creatures operate solely on instinct rather than logic or intuition.

Attributes (stat block)

This includes the Hit Points, Major Wound Level, Damage Modifier, and Magic Points of the creature. Again, these are based upon the characteristic scores of the three variations noted above. Movement Rate is also noted here (along with any special movement rates, such as its flying speed), as well as the creature's Damage Modifier, and the typical type of armour worn (including Armour Points where applicable).

Skills (stat block)

Monsters have skills just like player characters. This section breaks the skills down into the five main categories, and details the significant skills that the average members of this species will possess.

Additional Information

Beneath the stat block you will find the details of any weapons (including natural weaponry) that the creature uses, spells the creature is capable of casting, and any other special rules or items that are applicable.

Note that unless it is stated otherwise a creature with multiple attack forms will only get to use one of these as its combat attack.

In addition, some creatures are so terrible to behold that they are considered to be fearsome creatures. Therefore, when a character encounters such a creature they will be required to make a Persistence test and compare their result to table 9.1 below.

Table 9.1 Fearsome Creatures		
Victim's Persistence	Fearsome I Creatures	Fearsome II Creatures
Fumble	Victim turns and flees in terror for a number of combat rounds equal to 20 minus its own POW (min. 1).	Victim is so overcome that it passes out for a number of minutes equal to 20 minus its own POW (min. 1).
Fail	Victim is shaken and suffers a -25% penalty to all skill tests for a number of rounds equal to 20 minus its own POW (min. 1).	Victim turns and flees in terror for a number of combat rounds equal to 20 minus its own POW (min. 1).
Pass	The victim is not affected and cannot be affected by the same type of creature ever again.	Victim is shaken and suffers a -25% penalty to all skill tests for a number of rounds equal to 20 minus its own POW (min. 1).
Critical	As above except that the victim inspires its allies to such an extent that they gain a +25% bonus to their own Persistence skill test this round.	The victim is not affected and cannot be affected by the same type of creature for a number of minutes equal its own POW.

Note that if a monster is considered to be a fearsome creature it will be noted as either Fearsome I or Fearsome II in the special rules section of its entry.

Beastlings

Beastlings are bipedal creatures that take the form of hideous human/animal hybrids. They are the foot soldiers of the enemy - and whether they were created by the dark arts or by vile experimentation, none truly know.

Characteristics		Lesser Beastling	Common Beastling	Greater Beastling
STR	2d6+6	11	13	15
CON	2d6+6	11	13	15
DEX	3d6	14	11	8
SIZ	3d6+3	11	14	17
INT	2d6+3	10	10	10
POW	2d6+3	10	10	10
CHA	2d6	7	7	7
Attributes				
Hit points		11	14	16
Major Wound		6	7	8
Damage Mod.		+0	+1d4	+1d6
Magic Points		10		
Movement		14m		
Armour		Leather (2AP)		
Combat Skills				
Close		45	44	43
Ranged		44	36	28
Unarmed		35	39	43
Resistances				
Dodge		54	41	28
Persistence		30	35	40
Resilience		31	38	45
Practical Skills				
Athletics		45	49	53
Deception		54	46	38
Perception		45	45	45
Knowledge Skills				
Language (own)		50	50	50
Language (man)		30	30	30
Nature Lore		50	50	50

Combat: Beastlings carry a wide variety of weapons, though the most commonly used are shortbows (1d8) and battle-axes (1d8).

Primal Rage: If a beastling has been reduced to half of its total hit points or less in a single combat round and is not suffering the effects of a major wound, it has a POWx3 chance of entering a primal rage on its following turn. This has the exact same effect as the Fanaticism spell and is a free action.

Special Rules: All beastlings have night sight and are considered to be *Fearsome I* creatures.

Demons

Demons are human-like creatures, though greater in stature, with the ability to shroud themselves in fire and shadow. They are, without doubt, terrible creatures to behold, and the most trusted lieutenants of the enemy.

Characteristics		Lesser Demon	Common Demon	Greater Demon
STR	12d6	30	42	54
CON	6d6	15	21	27
DEX	3d6+3	17	14	11
SIZ	4d6+6	16	20	24
INT	6d6	21	21	21
POW	3d6+9	17	20	23
CHA	2d6+9	14	16	18
Attributes				
Hit points		16	21	26
Major Wound		8	11	13
Damage Mod.		+2d6	+3d6	+4d6
Magic Points		17	20	23
Movement		18m		
Armour		Armoured Hide (4AP)		
Combat Skills				
Close		72	81	90
Ranged		53	50	47
Unarmed		57	66	75
Resistances				
Dodge		27	24	21
Persistence		67	75	83
Resilience		62	76	90
Practical Skills				
Athletics		77	86	95
Deception		58	60	62
Influence		74	81	88
Perception		68	71	74
Knowledge Skills				
Culture (own)		61	61	61
Language (own)		86	86	86
Magic Skills				
Innate Casting		61	75	89

Combat: Raugnaur Longsword (1d8).

Magic: All Demons know the following innate spells; Countermagic, Darkwall, Demoralise, Dispel Magic, Ignite, Fire Blade, and Weapon Enhance.

Where appropriate, the magnitude of the spells known will be the maximum available to the creature (i.e. its POW divided by 3, rounded down). So a common Demon would know Countermagic 6 for example.

Special Rules: All demons have night sight and are considered to be *Fearsome II* creatures.



Magic Items

Name: Raugnaur Longsword.

Background: Created in the forges of Dark Lord, these are evil weapons indeed.

Description: Dark and cruelly shaped weapons that glow with a fiery light when they have magic points stored in them.

Creation: These items were created using the Create Charm and Create Magic Store innate magic spells.

Magic Powers: Pierce 4. The hilt of the sword is also a magic point store which holds 16 magic points, which may be regenerated by the user transferring their own into it.

Dire Beasts

Dire beasts are creatures that have been corrupted and deformed by the dark arts - often appearing as larger, fiercer, and more despicable versions of their lesser cousins. Due to the fell spirit within them, they also possess a cunning intellect.

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Characteristics		Lesser Dire	Common Dire	Greater Dire
STR	3d6+6	14	17	20
CON	4d6	10	14	18
DEX	3d6+3	17	14	11
SIZ	3d6+6	14	17	20
INT	2d6	7	7	7
POW	2d6	7	7	7
CHA	2d6	7	7	7
Attributes				
Hit points		12	16	19
Major Wound		6	8	10
Damage Mod.		+1d4	+1d6	+1d6
Magic Points		7		
Movement		18m	16m	14m
Armour		Hide (1AP)	Hide (2AP)	Hide (3AP)
Combat Skills				
Unarmed		61	61	61
Resistances				
Dodge		52	44	36
Persistence		37	37	37
Resilience		32	41	50
Practical Skills				
Athletics		61	61	61
Deception		49	46	43
Perception		44	44	44
Knowledge Skills				
Language (own)		47	47	47
Nature Lore		47	47	47

Combat: Bite (1d8), or claw (1d6). Dire beasts may make either a single bite or two claw attacks per combat round.

Options: Due to the variety of creatures covered by this entry, the GM may give a dire beast a special form of movement if the creature in question warrants it (a fly speed for example), or any of the abilities listed below.

Ability	Description
Poisonous Bite	Potency: <i>POW</i> x 5 Delay: 1 combat round Full Effect: 1 hit point per round Duration: 1 round /per point of <i>POW</i>
Dark Sight	This assumes the creature uses some form of echo location (or similar) that functions instead of normal sight.
Primal Rage	As the beastling ability on page 63, except that it is a <i>POW</i> x 5 chance.
Frightful Appearance	The creature is so terrible to behold that it is considered <i>Fearsome I</i> .

Special Rules: All dire beats have night sight, and may act as mounts to creatures whose size is no more than half of their own.

Dragons

These mighty reptilian creatures rank amongst the most feared of the servants of the Dark Lord. Unlike some of the later dragons, those of *The Age Of Shadow* are wingless creatures that go on all fours. They are sometimes referred to as 'fire-drakes' due to the fiery nature of their breath.

Characteristics		Lesser Dragon	Common Dragon	Greater Dragon
STR	16d6	40	56	72
CON	8d6	20	28	36
DEX	3d6+3	17	14	11
SIZ	8d6+30	50	58	66
INT	6d6	21	21	21
POW	3d6+12	20	23	26
CHA	4d6+3	13	17	21
Attributes				
Hit points		35	43	51
Major Wound		18	22	26
Damage Mod.		+4d6	+6d6	+8d6
Magic Points		20	23	26
Movement		14m		
Armour		8AP	10AP	12AP
Combat Skills				
Unarmed		87	100	113
Resistances				
Dodge		27	24	21
Persistence		80	88	96
Resilience		70	86	99
Practical Skills				
Athletics		77	90	103
Influence		83	92	101
Perception		71	74	77
Knowledge Skills				
Culture (own)		56	56	56
Language (own)		81	81	81
Nature Lore		61	61	61
Magic Skills				
Innate Casting		70	84	98
Sorcery Casting		71	76	81

Combat: Bite (1d10), Claw (1d8), Tail (1d12). A dragon can make either a single tail attack, or two claw attacks, or one bite attack in a combat round.

Magic: Dragons know the following spells; Befuddle (I), Countermagic (I), Demoralise (I), Dispel Magic (I), Dominate (S), Mind Speech (I), and Palsy (S).

Where appropriate, the magnitude of the spells known will be the maximum available to the creature (i.e. its POW divided by 3, rounded down). So a common Dragon would know Countermagic 7 for example.

Breathe Flame: The Dragon may breathe flame over an area as a standard action. The flame will cover a cone in front of the Dragon, which stretches for its POW in metres. At its furthest extent, the cone is equal to the creature's POW in width.

Any creature caught in the flame suffers 4d6 fire damage, though on a successful Dodge roll a character may dive for cover to halve this damage and AP counts as normal.

A Dragon may only breathe flame once per hour. Further attempts to breathe flame within this time period require the creature to make a Resilience test, with a cumulative -25% penalty for every attempt.

Special Rules: All Dragons have night sight and are considered to be *Fearsome II* creatures.



Fellgrim

Fellgrim is a term used to describe those beastlings that possess a giant-like stature, or indeed those that retain some other bestial feature that sets them apart from other beastlings (a humanoid torso atop a quadrupedal lower form for example).

Characteristics		Lesser Fellgrim	Common Fellgrim	Greater Fellgrim
STR	4d6+6	16	20	24
CON	3d6+3	11	14	17
DEX	3d6	14	11	8
SIZ	4d6+6	16	20	24
INT	2d6+3	10	10	10
POW	2d6+3	10	10	10
CHA	2d6+3	10	10	10

Fellgrim Contd.	Lesser Fellgrim	Common Fellgrim	Greater Fellgrim
Attributes			
Hit points	14	17	21
Major Wound	7	9	11
Damage Mod.	+1d6	+1d6	+2d6
Magic Points	10		
Movement	18m		
Armour	Tough Hide (2AP)		
Combat Skills			
Close	50	56	62
Ranged	44	31	18
Unarmed	40	46	52
Resistances			
Dodge	44	36	28
Persistence	35	35	35
Resilience	31	44	52
Practical Skills			
Athletics	60	61	62
Deception	34	31	28
Influence	35	35	35
Perception	40	40	40
Knowledge Skills			
Language (own)	50	50	50
Language (man)	40	40	40
Nature Lore	40	40	40

Combat: Fellgrim favour weapons of the two handed variety - such as great axes (2d8) or greatswords (2d8).

Because of their large size (or due to a particular feature of their bestial form) most fellgrim will usually possess some kind of natural attack (1d6) in addition to their normal attack. This may be in the form of a bite (in the case of large mawed creatures), a gore (for horned creatures), a kick (for four-legged creatures), and so on. However, they may only ever make one weapon attack or one natural attack in a single combat round (not both).

Special Rules: All fellgrim have night sight and are considered to be *Fearsome I* creatures. The GM may also give the creature a special form of movement if the creature warrants it (a fly speed for a winged creature for example).

Giant Spiders

These monstrous arachnids infest deep vales and mountainous regions - making them places of terror and dread. They are, on the whole, pale-fleshed and venomous creatures, with many eyes and evil intent.

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Characteristics		Lesser Spider	Common Spider	Greater Spider
STR	2d6+6	11	13	15
CON	2d6+6	11	13	15
DEX	3d6+6	20	17	14
SIZ	3d6	8	11	14
INT	2d6	7	7	7
POW	2d6	7	7	7
CHA	1d6	4	4	4
Attributes				
Hit points		10	12	15
Major Wound		5	6	8
Damage Mod.		+0	+0	+1d4
Magic Points		7	7	7
Movement		18m		
Armour		2AP	3AP	4AP
Combat Skills				
Ranged		57	49	41
Unarmed		51	55	59
Resistances				
Dodge		50	47	44
Persistence		32	32	32
Resilience		33	35	37
Practical Skills				
Athletics		41	45	49
Deception		47	39	31
Perception		34	34	34
Knowledge Skills				
Nature Lore		42	42	42

Combat: Bite (1d6 + venom), Web (special). A giant spider can either bite or project its web in a combat round.

Project Webbing: A giant spider may project its webbing once every ten combat rounds. This is treated as a thrown weapon with a range equal to that of the spider's strength in metres.

Any creature hit by the web will then be required to make a successful opposed Athletics test (versus the spider's attack roll) in order to break free - otherwise they are considered helpless. An ally may attempt to cut a 'webbed' creature free using a sharp implement, but the web itself will have hit points equal to that of the STR of the spider.

Spider Venom: Whenever anyone takes damage from the bite of a giant spider, they will be required to make an opposed Resilience test or suffer the effects of the spider's venom as detailed below:

Potency: Spider's CON x 3

Delay: 1d3 combat rounds

Full Effect: Paralysis.

Duration: 6d6 minutes

Special Rules: All giant spiders have dark sight and are considered to be *Fearsome I* creatures.

Great Eagles

Alike to normal eagles but far greater in stature, the Great Eagles are the noblest of all birds. Friends of elves and men, these giant creatures often lend their aid in the war against the dark powers.

Characteristics		Lesser Eagle	Common Eagle	Greater Eagle
STR	8d6	20	28	36
CON	4d6+6	16	20	24
DEX	3d6+12	26	23	20
SIZ	4d6+12	22	26	30
INT	4d6	14	14	14
POW	2d6+6	13	13	13
CHA	2d6+9	11	13	15
Attributes				
Hit points		19	23	27
Major Wound		10	12	14
Damage Mod.		+1d6	+2d6	+3d6
Magic Points		13	13	13
Movement		10m walk / 30m fly		
Armour		Thick Feathers (2AP)		
Combat Skills				
Unarmed		76	81	86
Resistances				
Dodge		41	38	35
Persistence		63	63	63
Resilience		49	53	57
Practical Skills				
Athletics		76	81	86
Deception		45	42	39
Perception		57*	57*	57*
* gain a +25 bonus to this skill for vision based tests				
Knowledge Skills				
Language (own)		54	54	54
Language (elf)		54	54	54
Nature Lore		54	54	54

Combat: Bite (1d8), Claw (1d6). Great Eagles can make either a single bite attack, or two claw attacks in a combat round.

Special Rules: All great eagles are considered to be *Fearsome I* creatures to their enemies.

Orcs

Orcs are latest abomination contrived by the dark arts of the enemy. Seemingly endless in number, they are typically swarthy, squat, bowlegged creatures with long arms and evil faces. They make no beautiful things and smile not.

Characteristics		Lesser Orc	Common Orc	Greater Orc
STR	3d6	8	11	14
CON	3d6	8	11	14
DEX	2d6+6	15	13	11
SIZ	2d6+3	8	10	12
INT	3d6	11	11	11
POW	2d6+3	10	10	10
CHA	2d6	7	7	7
Attributes				
Hit points		8	11	13
Major Wound		4	6	7
Damage Mod.		0	0	+1d4
Magic Points		10		
Movement		14m		
Armour		Leather (AP2)	Ringmail (AP3)	Scalemail (AP4)
Combat Skills				
Close		33	44	55
Ranged		56	44	32
Unarmed		33	34	35
Resistances				
Dodge		45	43	41
Persistence		35	35	35
Resilience		33	36	39
Practical Skills				
Athletics		43	49	55
Deception		56	49	42
Perception		46	46	46
Knowledge Skills				
Culture (own)		31	36	41
Language (own)		61	66	71
Nature Lore		51	41	31



Combat: Scimitar (1d8), Small Shield (1d4), Shortbow (1d8). Note that orcs may use a wide variety of weapons, but those given here are fairly typical.

Special Rules: All orcs have dark sight and are considered *Fearsome I* creatures.

Sorcerers

Sorcerers are (or at least were once) humans that have given themselves over to the power of the dark arts. Though few in number, and rarely seen, they are said to live far longer than what is usual for mortal folk - often appearing as wizened old men with an unnatural vigour for one of such an age.

Characteristics		Lesser Sorcerer	Common Sorcerer	Greater Sorcerer
STR	2d6+3	10	10	10
CON	2d6+3	10	10	10
DEX	3d6	11	11	11
SIZ	2d6+6	11	11	11
INT	1d6+12	15	16	17
POW	2d6+6	11	13	15
CHA	3d6	11	11	11
Attributes				
Hit points		11	11	11
Major Wound		6	6	6
Damage Mod.		+0	+0	+0
Magic Points		11	13	15
Movement		14m		
Armour		None		
Combat Skills				
Close		31	31	31
Ranged		36	37	38
Unarmed		31	31	31
Resistances				
Dodge		41	41	41
Persistence		51	53	55
Resilience		21	23	25
Practical Skills				
Athletics		21	21	21
Deception		41	42	43
Influence		41	41	41
Perception		41	44	47
Knowledge Skills				
Language (own)		85	86	87
Nature Lore		25	26	27
Lore (alchemy)		40	41	42
Magic Skills				
Sorcery Casting		45	46	47
Spells Known		1	3	5

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Combat: Sorcerers tend to not carry large or cumbersome weapons, and will instead rely upon such weapons as daggers (1d4) when needs must.

Magic: Sorcerers commonly choose (but are not restricted to) spells such as Damage Resistance, Dominate, Mirage, and Palsy.

Unlike player characters, Sorcerers may learn a number of spells equal to their POW score minus ten.

Spirits

These evil beings are known by a number of different names. Phantoms they are to some, wraiths or ghosts they are to others.

Characteristics		Lesser Spirit	Common Spirit	Greater Spirit
STR	-	-	-	-
CON	-	-	-	-
DEX	-	-	-	-
SIZ	-	-	-	-
INT	3d6	8	11	14
POW	2d6+6	11	13	15
CHA	3d6	8	11	14
Attributes				
Hit points		N/A	N/A	N/A
Major Wound		N/A	N/A	N/A
Damage Mod.		N/A	N/A	N/A
Magic Points		11	13	15
Movement		20m		
Armour		None		
Combat Skills				
Incorporeal		63	69	75
Resistances				
Dodge		30	30	30
Persistence		30	30	30
Resilience		N/A	N/A	N/A
Practical Skills				
Deception		38	41	44
Influence		43	46	49
Perception		39	45	54
Knowledge Skills				
Language (own)		78	81	84
Magic Skills				
Sorcery Casting		58	61	64

Combat: Spirits are immune to normal damage and if any attack is to harm them, it must be magical in nature. This magical damage is deducted from the spirit's magic points, and once its magic points reach zero

the spirit is destroyed. Spirits also observe the following rules during combat:

- Spirits use INT to determine their combat order.
- A spirit's attack is an opposed test using its Incorporeal combat skill versus the target's Persistence.
- If the attack succeeds, the target loses 1d4 magic points.

Magic: Spirits know the following sorcery spells; Diminish (constitution), Palsy, and Tap (constitution). Spirits may also become invisible at will, though they must remain visible in order to cast spells or to attack.

Special Rules: All spirits have dark sight and are considered to be *Fearsome I* creatures. However, because different spirits manifest themselves in different way, PC's who pass their Persistence test may thereafter only ignore the fear effect of that particular spirit (i.e. they will still be required to make Persistence tests for other spirits they encounter).

Trolls

Trolls are a primitive race of humanoids with great strength and poor intellect. Standing roughly twice the height of an average man, these lumbering brutes possess an extremely tough hide - making them fearsome opponents indeed.

Characteristics		Lesser Troll	Common Troll	Greater Troll
STR	3d6+12	20	23	26
CON	3d6+6	14	17	20
DEX	2d6	9	7	5
SIZ	3d6+12	20	23	26
INT	2d6	7	7	7
POW	3d6	11	11	11
CHA	2d6	7	7	7
Attributes				
Hit points		17	20	23
Major Wound		9	10	12
Damage Mod.		+1d6	+2d6	+2d6
Magic Points		11		
Movement		20m		
Armour		Tough Hide (3AP)		

- CREATURES -

Trolls Contd.	Lesser Troll	Common Troll	Greater Troll
Combat Skills			
Close	49	50	51
Ranged	28	24	22
Unarmed	49	50	50
Resistances			
Dodge	19	17	15
Persistence	41	41	41
Resilience	55	58	61
Practical Skills			
Athletics	59	60	61
Deception	26	24	22
Perception	28	28	28
Knowledge Skills			
Culture (own)	22	22	22
Language (own)	52	52	52
Nature Lore	32	32	32



Combat: Club (1d6), Boulder (1d6). Trolls may throw large rocks and boulders a distance equal to their STR characteristic in metres.

Special Rules: All trolls have dark sight and are considered to be *Fearsome I* creatures.

Vampires

Vampires are large bat-like creatures in the service of the enemy. Often used as messengers or spies, these hideous iron-clawed monstrosities are fell creatures one and all.

Characteristics	Lesser Vampire	Common Vampire	Greater Vampire
STR	3d6+6	14	17
CON	2d6+12	17	19
DEX	3d6+6	20	17
SIZ	2d6+6	11	13
INT	2d6+6	13	13
POW	2d6+6	11	13
CHA	3d6	11	11

Vampires Contd.	Lesser Vampire	Common Vampire	Greater Vampire
Attributes			
Hit points	14	16	18
Major Wound	7	8	9
Damage Mod.	+0	+1d4	+1d6
Magic Points	11	13	15
Movement	14m walk / 30m fly		
Armour	Hide (1AP)		
Combat Skills			
Unarmed	54	54	54
Resistances			
Dodge	40	37	34
Persistence	56	58	60
Resilience	48	52	56
Practical Skills			
Athletics	49	49	49
Deception	63	60	57
Perception	54	56	58
Knowledge Skills			
Culture (own)	53	53	53
Language (own)	53	53	53
Nature Lore	43	43	43

Combat: Talon (1d6), Bite (1d4).

Poison: Whenever a vampire attacks with its bite it may decide to attempt to poison its victim by spending magic points (i.e. the number of points used equals the poison's magnitude exactly as if it were a spell). If the target goes on to take damage from the attack he/she will be required to make an opposed Resilience test or suffer the effects of the poison as detailed below:

Potency: *Magnitude x 5*

Delay: *1 combat round*

Full Effect: *1 point of damage per round*

Duration: *1 combat round per magnitude*

Special Rules: All vampires have night sight and are considered to be *Fearsome I* creatures.



Werewolves

These terrible servants of the Dark Lord are inhabited by dreadful spirits and are, in appearance, alike to great lupine beasts.

Characteristics		Lesser Werewolf	Common Werewolf	Greater Werewolf
STR	3d6+6	14	17	20
CON	3d6+3	11	14	17
DEX	3d6+3	17	14	11
SIZ	3d6+6	14	17	20
INT	2d6+3	8	10	12
POW	3d6	8	11	14
CHA	2d6+3	8	10	12
Attributes				
Hit points		13	16	19
Major Wound		7	8	10
Damage Mod.		+1d4	+1d6	+1d6
Magic Points		8	11	14
Movement		22m		
Armour		Hide (1AP)		
Combat Skills				
Unarmed		61	61	61
Resistances				
Dodge		47	44	41
Persistence		38	41	44
Resilience		39	45	51
Practical Skills				
Athletics		51	56	61
Deception		55	49	43
Perception		41	46	51
Knowledge Skills				
Language (own)		48	50	52
Nature Lore		58	60	62

Combat: Bite (1d8).

Venom: Whenever a werewolf attacks it may decide to attempt to poison its victim by spending magic points (i.e. the number of points used equals the venom's magnitude exactly as if it were a spell). If the target goes on to take damage from the attack he/she will be required to make an opposed Resilience test or suffer the effects of the venom as detailed below:

Potency: *Magnitude x 5*
Delay: *1d4 combat rounds*
Full Effect: *1d4 + damage modifier hit points. If this figure surpasses the victim's major wound level, the victim falls unconscious.*
Duration: *1 hour per magnitude*

Special Rules: All werewolves have night sight and are considered to be *Fearsome I* creatures.

Wildlings

Wildlings are barbaric humans in the service of the evil powers.

Characteristics		Lesser Wildling	Common Wildling	Greater Wildling
STR	3d6	8	11	14
CON	3d6	8	11	14
DEX	3d6	14	11	8
SIZ	2d6+6	11	13	15
INT	2d6+3	10	10	10
POW	3d6	11	11	11
CHA	3d6	11	11	11
Attributes				
Hit points		10	12	15
Major Wound		5	6	8
Damage Mod.		+0	+0	+1d4
Magic Points		11		
Movement		14m		
Armour		None		
Combat Skills				
Close		37	42	47
Ranged		49	36	23
Unarmed		32	37	42
Resistances				
Dodge		54	41	28
Persistence		31	36	41
Resilience		29	37	45
Practical Skills				
Athletics		37	42	47
Deception		49	41	33
Perception		46	41	36
Riding		35	37	39
Knowledge Skills				
Culture (own)		40	40	40
Language (own)		60	60	60
Nature Lore		40	40	40

Combat: Wildlings carry a wide variety of weapons, though the most commonly used are slings (1d6) and shortspears (1d8).

Berserker Fury: As a standard action a wildling may attempt to enter a 'berserk' state so long as he is not already fatigued. The chance of success is POWx3, and the effect lasts 10 minutes or the remainder of the combat (whichever is shortest) - at the end of which he immediately becomes fatigued. In the berserk state he is so overcome with bloodlust that he automatically succeeds any Resilience test, and doubles the percentage of his Close Combat skills. However he may not parry, dodge, or cast spells while in this state.

Animal List

Animal	STR	CON	DEX	SIZ	INT	POW	CHA	Hit Points	Major Wound	Damage Modifier	Move	Armour Type	Combat
Bear	3d6+15 (25)	2d6+6 (13)	3d6 (11)	3d6+15 (25)	5	3d6 (11)	5	24	12	+2d6	18m	Tough Hide (3AP)	60% Bite 1d8 Claw 1d6
Big Cat (lion, tiger, etc.)	3d6+12 (24)	3d6 (11)	3d6+6 (17)	2d6+12 (19)	5	3d6 (11)	5	20	10	+1d6	22m	Hide (2AP)	60% Bite 1d8 Claw 1d6
Cattle	4d6+6 (20)	2d6+9 (15)	2d6 (7)	2d6+9 (15)	4	2d6 (7)	4	15	8	+1d6	14m	Hide (2AP)	40% Charge 1d8 Trample 1d8
Crocodile	4d6+12 (26)	3d6+8 (19)	2d6 (7)	2d6 (7)	3	3d6 (11)	3	13	6	+1d6	6m land 6m water	Thick Hide (5AP)	50 Bite 1d8
Dog	2d6+6 (13)	3d6 (11)	2d6+6 (13)	1d6 (3)	5	1d6+6 (9)	5	7	4	0	22m	None	40% Bite 1d6
Hawk	1d3 (2)	2d3 (4)	3d6+18 (27)	1d2 (2)	4	2d6 (7)	4	3	2	-1d6	10m land 30m flying	None	50% Claw 1d6 Bite 1d4
Horse	2d6+18 (25)	3d6+6 (17)	2d6+3 (10)	2d6+18 (25)	4	3d6 (11)	5	21	11	+2d6	30m	Hide (2AP)	40% Kick 1d6
Giant Octopus	12d6 (42)	4d6+6 (20)	3d6+12 (23)	12d6 (42)	4	3d6 (11)	4	31	16	+4d6	2m land 30m water	Tough Skin (4 AP)	50% Bite 1d8 Arm 1d4
Giant Python	3d6+24 (35)	3d6 (11)	2d6+6 (13)	3d6 (11)	3	3d6 (11)	3	11	6	+2d6	14m	Scales (3 AP)	50% Bite 1d4 Constrict 1d8
Viper	2d6+6 (13)	2d6 (6)	3d6+18 (27)	2d6 (7)	3	2d6+6 (13)	3	7	4	0	18m	Scales (1 AP)	60% Bite Venom*
Wolf	3d6 (11)	3d6+3 (14)	3d6+3 (13)	2d6+3 (10)	5	3d6 (11)	5	12	6	0	22m	None	50% Bite 1d8 Claw 1d6

* **Viper Venom** = Delay: 1 combat round / Potency: 50 / Full Effect: 1 hit point per minute of duration / Duration: 6d6 minutes

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VERSION 1.0a

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THE AGE OF SHADOW

CHARACTER RECORD SHEET

NAME	
RACE	
GENDER	
AGE	

STRENGTH	CONSTITUTION	DEXTERITY	SIZE	INTELLIGENCE	POWER	CHARISMA

HIT POINTS				
Total Hit Points =				
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
Major Wound Level =				

DAMAGE MODIFIER	
MOVEMENT RATE	
ARMOUR WORN	
ARMOUR POINTS	
FATE POINTS	

SPECIAL ABILITIES

MAGIC POINTS				
Total Magic Points =				
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
Corruption Level =				

Total Hit Points = average of CON and SIZ (round up). Major Wound Level = half of total hit points (round up). Total Magic Points = POW.

75	SKILL	BASE	%
PRACTICAL SKILLS	Athletics	STR + DEX	
	Craft ()	INT + 10	
	Craft ()	INT + 10	
	Deception	DEX + INT	
	Driving	DEX + INT	
	Engineering	INT + 10	
	Healing	INT + 10	
	Influence	CHA + 10	
	Mechanisms	DEX + INT	
	Perception	INT + POW	
	Performance	CHA + 10	
	Riding	DEX + POW	
	Sailing	DEX + INT	
	Streetwise	POW + CHA	
	Trade	INT + 10	

50	SKILL	BASE	%
COMBAT SKILLS	Close	STR + DEX	
	Ranged	DEX + INT	
	Unarmed	STR + DEX	
	WEAPONS		

50	SKILL	BASE	%
KNOWLEDGE SKILLS	Culture (Own)	INT + 10	
	Culture ()	INT	
	Culture ()	INT	
	Language (Own)	INT + 40	
	Language ()	INT	
	Language ()	INT	
	Nature Lore	INT + 10	
	Lore ()	INT	
	Lore ()	INT	

0	SKILL	BASE	%
MAGIC SKILLS	Innate Casting	POW x 3	
	Sorcery Casting	INT	
	SPELLS		

Note that all characters gain an additional +20 bonus to the Elvish language - due to it being the common speech of the civilised world.

50	SKILL	BASE	%
RESIST.	Dodge	DEX + 10	
	Persistence	POW + 10	
	Resilience	CON + POW	

ARROWS		
□ □ □ □ □	□ □ □ □ □	□ □ □ □ □
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EQUIPMENT	ITEM	ENC	NOTES
	Total ENC		

NOTES	