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LOVE AND WAR



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OF KNIGHTS & CHIVALRY
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INTRODUCTION

The news passed through the armies on the wings of rumor, changing the mood from resignation and fear to one of anticipation. The knight's challenge had been accepted; the issue would be decided by a duel rather than by battle. One person would die rather than hundreds. A few voiced regret at the loss of their chance for glory, and others expressed a cynical disbelief that either lord would accept a result that went against him, but most were relieved and eager to watch the two champions battle.

The challenging knight would, of course, champion the opposing army, but both sides waited eagerly to see whom the other lord would choose to uphold his side of the dispute. The forces drew into a circle around the plain chosen for the duel, the wings of each army coming close together. A few insults were exchanged, but the captains quickly knocked some sense into their troops — no sense in having battle break out anyway.

Two figures detached themselves from their forces, and rode into the open space. A cheer rose from both armies, as each side looked upon its champion and saw the certainty of victory. From one side an armored figure paced slowly into the circle. The light glinted from his polished plate, and his shield proclaimed his proud arms. The other figure was smaller, mounted on a light horse, without weapons or armor. She was dressed in a light robe, and had a wand thrust through her belt. As the two figures descended, she paused and, turning back towards her army, drew the wand and held it out. A messenger ran from the ranks to take it from her, and it seemed that she spoke a few words to him before turning back to the field of combat.

The duelists drew up and simply gazed at each other for long moments, each taking measure of the other. Then they saluted, one drawing and raising his sword, the other bowing her head in acknowledgment. And

the duel began, both combatants dodging in and out looking for openings, one swinging a sword and the other trying merely for a touch. The flare of magic and the striking of steel were visible, but in the chaos none of the observers could see who was winning.

And then it was over. The knight rode slowly back to the army, cheered by the troops and captains alike as they formed into a passage leading to their lord. The troops of the other side rushed onto the field to recover the body of their champion, hoping to find signs of life. The victorious knight seemed hardly to hear the shouts, but rode quietly through the army, dismounting in front of her lord.

"It is done," she said, as she knelt before him.

CHIVALRY

Valorous and loyal, serving both his god and his lady, the knight is the archetypal hero. Not for him cunning words or tricks, not for him disguises and ambushes. The knight faces his enemies boldly on the field of combat, risking his own body in the conflict. A worthy opponent, even a villain, is assured of fair treatment. The knight's life is one of quests, tournaments, and epic battles, recounted in poems recited for the pleasure of his lady-love.

But the knight is not made by his sword and shining armor, nor by his steed. The scion of knights need not be a knight himself, and, although many would deny it, a knight can spring from base stock. The knight is made by his virtue. A knight is one who follows the path of chivalry.

Chivalry is defined by the combination of four virtues: valor, loyalty, piety, and love. Only by combining all four does a person become a knight; one alone is not

enough. After all, many warriors are valiant, but if they serve no lord, no god, and no lady, they can't claim to be knights. Similarly, the gods have many pious servants, but those who show no valor, loyalty, or love are assuredly not knights.

Even so, there is much variation between knights, because the four virtues can be ranked in any order and interpreted in many ways. While many knights ride into battle wearing shining armor, some wield powerful magic instead, or spend much of their time at court, serving their lord and waiting on their lady. Some take loyalty to enjoin absolute obedience; others see it as requiring service to a lord's true interests, not necessarily his commands. Some knights would never wear shining armor, because such arms offend their god.

This sourcebook investigates the role of chivalry in the typical roleplaying game setting, concentrating on options for characters, but also providing some ideas for GMs to use in designing adventures and campaigns.

WHO ARE KNIGHTS?

The classic image of a knight is that of a paladin in shining plate armor, mounted on a warhorse. Knights can range far from this stereotype, however, and members of any class, any race, and either sex can follow the path of chivalry. In the introductory fiction, the mounted warrior in plate is not a knight, but the female wizard is. Knighthood is not about your skills,

but about your attitudes and the way you live your life. Accordingly, this book provides extensive resources for members of all classes who want to be knights.

BECOMING A KNIGHT

At one level, becoming a knight is extremely simple. The character simply decides to follow the chivalric virtues — to act as a knight would act. This decision can be made at any point, from character creation to the climax of a glorious career. For the overwhelming majority of this book, the term “knight” refers to any character who has decided to uphold the chivalric virtues. Such a decision does not, however, mean that anyone else will recognize the character as a knight — although if a powerful wizard decides that she wants to be called a knight, few are going to argue to her face.

Knights do have some status in society, as discussed in Chapter Six, so your GM might not want your character to be recognized as a knight until he has gained a few levels. This doesn't stop you from playing the character as a knight, though, and doing so makes it more likely that your character will receive recognition when his level makes knighthood appropriate. The status of a knight brings responsibilities, which means adventure hooks as well as privileges, so most GMs will be happy for your character to achieve public recognition of his status.

Public recognition of knighthood can come in several ways. Characters born into the noble class of a feudal

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society can follow a standard path, serving as a page, then a squire, and finally being knighted. Pages are basically servants, and are almost invariably children. They are taught courtly manners, and are expected to pick up the general idea of chivalry. Squires are normally adolescents, and receive more specifically military training. They serve a particular knight, fetching and carrying for him as well as receiving military training from him. Squires are generally dubbed knight when they reach adulthood.

Dubbing someone a knight involves a ceremony. This can be as simple as a symbolic blow with the flat of a sword, or as elaborate as a week-long celebration culminating in a huge service in a temple. The grandness of the ceremony depends on the status of the new knight, as well as the customs of the country.

The standard path to knighthood is unlikely to be suitable for player characters, as it involves rather too much menial work and service to other characters. Instead, it makes a good bit of background for a player character who starts play as a knight.

Another way to be recognized as a knight is to receive the title in return for a great deed. This is the easiest way for low-born characters to become knights, and by far the most common method for adventurers, who do great deeds all the time. A character is only likely to be knighted if he has been following the chivalric virtues, however, so this recognition will normally follow the player's decision to play a knight.

A final way to become recognized as a knight is to join an order of chivalry, as described below.

ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

Knights like orders of chivalry. They provide a focus for the knight, allies, and clear public recognition of his status. Thus, a large number of orders are described in the course of this book, and rules for founding your own order are provided.

WHY SHOULD I JOIN?

The first question that arises is why your knight should want to join an order of chivalry. There are several answers.

The first is that most orders are devoted to some ideal, and the knight might want to express his devotion to the same thing. Joining a group of other knights with the same interests also provides him with allies he can call on if things become too difficult. The order may also have other resources that could be useful to the knight, such as a base of operations.

The second reason has to do with social status. A knight who's a member of a prominent order has higher status than a simple knight, and if the knight was base-born, membership in an order might be what other knights need to see before they'll accept him. Membership in an order could open a whole new social world to your character, along with potential for adventure.

The third reason is that many orders are associated with a prestige class, and the only way to get the benefits of the class is to join the order. The character and the player both know what these benefits are, so it's perfectly reasonable for the knight to seek an order out purely because of the abilities that come with membership.

HOW DO I JOIN?

The description of each order in this book includes the in-game requirements for joining the order. In theory, if your character meets those requirements, he can join the order.

Your GM may wish to impose other meta-game requirements, however. She could require your knight to complete a quest before he can be considered for membership, for example. This provides a good way of motivating an adventure, and makes entry into the order an important part of the game. She could also require extensive roleplaying with various members of

the order as your knight gathers supporters who will advocate his acceptance.

She may also want to save membership of the order for a particular point in the campaign, when it will open up a new plotline. Your character may not be allowed to join right away, because joining the order at that point would interfere with the plot that she's currently running. Alternatively, you might find that your character has been inducted into an order without his knowledge, because that drives the GM's next adventure.

TYPES OF ORDER

There are different types of chivalric orders. The first division is between honor orders and service orders. Knights are invited into honor orders as a tribute; the order makes few demands on them, but membership indicates that the knight is respected. Service orders are organized around a purpose, which most of the members are supposed to uphold. The orders described in this book are almost all service orders, with different objects of service. The members of Iphigenia's Devoted (Chapter Five) serve the halfling woman Iphigenia, while the members of the Order of Naussabben (Chapter Three) serve their kingdom.

Both kinds of order generally have a focus, but the focus can take different forms. The primary options are a person, a kingdom, a god, and an ideal.

The Knights of the Slipper (Chapter Two) are focused on a person — the queen, in fact. These sorts of order tend to be the shortest-lived, as it's very hard for them to outlive the person on whom they focus. This focus need not be supportive, as with the Knights of the Slipper. An order of chivalry could be founded that was devoted to destroying a particular person. While these are the shortest-lived orders, they are also the easiest to create.

Orders focused on a kingdom are perhaps the most common type. They tend to be long-lived, since, as the Knights of the Fountain (Chapter Three) demonstrate, they can even outlive the kingdom, and they can be founded by mortal effort alone. Because of this, they are

created relatively quickly and disappear relatively slowly. The difference between an order focused on a kingdom and one focused on the king is often subtle, only coming out strongly in times of crisis, or at the succession. An order focused on the king disbands when the king dies; one focused on the country transfers its allegiance to the king's heir. Similarly, if a king starts to act against his kingdom, an order focused on the kingdom will most likely turn against him. The Granite Wall (Chapter Three) is a borderline case, because their loyalty is to the king, but it is to the king *because* they trust him to have the best interests of the kingdom at heart. If the king were to explicitly turn against his kingdom, it's not clear what the order would do.

Orders focused on a god are simple; they are religious orders carrying out the god's will on earth. The Order of Lightbearers (Chapter Four) is an example. These orders are often very long-lived, as they are supported by their deity, but it's hard to found one without the explicit approval of the god, so they remain somewhat uncommon. It is possible for these orders to overlap with other kinds: the God's Storm (Chapter Four) is focused on the nature god Pandril, but also on the elf Senlas Soforen, who gathered the order together and still leads it. In a theocracy, the divine order might also defend the country. Finally, most gods have ideals that they hold dear, so most divine orders overlap to some extent with those focused on an ideal.

Orders focused purely on an ideal do exist. The Order of Sir Palastrin (Chapter Two) is an example, being focused on the defense of the helpless. These orders have a potentially long life, if the ideal appeals to a large number of people, but they are rare. It's difficult to found such an order, because you must create some reason for those who devoted to the ideal to join you. The best way is to exemplify the ideal yourself, and announce the order as a way of gathering those of a like mind. The Order of the Sun (Chapter Six) is of this kind of organization. Idealistic orders do overlap with other kinds, as well. Iphigenia's Devoted is almost an idealistic order, as some of the members have never seen Iphigenia, and have no real hope of ever doing so. Thus, the order is driven as much by the ideal of devoted love as by the person of Iphigenia.

ORDERS AND PRESTIGE CLASSES

Most of the orders described in this book are associated with a prestige class, but not all. It's possible for an order of chivalry to be a purely social institution, with no game-mechanic implications at all.

Most orders do have a prestige class, however. The requirements for such a prestige class almost always involve membership in an appropriate order, while that order requires members to have the prestige class. In this case, a character can fulfill both requirements by joining the order and the prestige class at the same time.

A number of orders share the same prestige class. Indeed, each of the prestige classes in this book that are associated with one of the chivalric virtues has two orders of chivalry described, showing different approaches to the same virtue. In part, this is to make the GM's life easier. Instead of creating a new prestige class or trying to fit a pre-generated order of chivalry into her campaign world, she can create her own order and attach it to one of the generic prestige classes if she likes.

In game terms, it makes sense for multiple orders to follow the same prestige class. Consider the effects of an order splitting in two due to political disagreements. In most cases, this would create two orders, but each would follow the same prestige class. Particularly in the case of the prestige classes related to the chivalric virtues, there is no reason why a campaign world can't have several orders using each class. Some of the prestige classes, such as Sister of Destruction in Chapter Seven, are much more specific, and unlikely to be found in more than one order, and Chapter Six provides guidelines for creating your own prestige class to go with an order of chivalry founded by your character.

KNIGHTLY RETINUES

It's very common for knights to travel with a retinue of servants and retainers, even when they're on a quest. The retinue is supposed to deal with all the non-knightly problems that arise, leaving the knight

free to handle obstacles within his abilities. This, of course, sounds a lot like a party of player characters. The other player characters are unlikely to take orders from the knight, but they are quite likely to deal with the sorts of problems that the knight can't handle.

If the knight is publicly recognized as such, then acting as a more servile retinue — at least in front of others — would be a good way for all the player characters to get into places normally prohibited to them. A rogue of dubious reputation would most likely not be allowed into the royal palace, but the squire of a famous knight would be. Similarly, the motivations of the members of a knight's retinue are unlikely to be questioned; it will be assumed that they have no choice but to follow him.

TROUPE-STYLE ROLEPLAYING

Several of the chapters in this book mention troupe-style roleplaying. This style of gaming was pioneered by the **Ars Magica** RPG, also from Atlas Games, and involves players handling characters other than their main player character. These secondary characters may be created by the GM or by the players themselves, and are often passed around between the players so that everyone gets a chance to play them.

Troupe-style play is very useful when one of the player characters wants to do something by himself. Instead of simply watching, the other players can take on the roles of the other characters he encounters, and thus be fully involved in the game. Secondary characters may return over several game sessions, and can be a lot of fun to play. Since they are not your main character, you can take more risks, and since they aren't in play every session, you can really ham up your portrayal.

There are no special rules for troupe-style play, but it's important to balance the attention that each player's main character gets. It's also a style of play that needs the agreement of all the players, in advance. As the

secondary characters are important to the plot, the players must all be willing to go along with the game. After all, if the player controlling the murderer chooses to confess right at the beginning, a murder-mystery scenario will be rather less satisfying for all concerned.

EXAMPLE

Taehee is the GM for David, John, Michelle, and Will. David's character, Sir Andurin, is a knight and a fighter, while Michelle plays a cleric, John a sneaky rogue, and Will a sorcerer. David decides that Sir Andurin wants to ingratiate himself at the court of the local Grand Duke. The other characters aren't interested in going along, so Taehee decides to handle it troupe-style. She creates three characters, Caestia the wizard, Bessamon the bard, and Dussara, another knight, and distributes them among the players. David, of course, will continue to play Sir Andurin. Will wants to play Dussara, and John likes the look of the sneaky bard, because he likes devious characters. Michelle has no problem with playing Caestia.

When Sir Andurin arrives at court, Bessamon, Caestia, and Dussara are the main characters to whom he talks. Taehee plays all the extras, and the Grand Duke when necessary, but most of the active politics takes place between those four characters. Over the course of the session, Caestia becomes an ally of Sir Andurin, while a rivalry springs up between the knight and Bessamon. Dussara doesn't really take off as a character, though.

The next few sessions are standard adventures, with everyone playing their normal characters, but then Sir Andurin wants to return to court. Michelle and John want to play Caestia and Bessamon again, but Will wants another character. Taehee has a cunning plot in mind, and so lets Will play the Grand Duke. As a result, the Grand Duke has no trouble acting properly surprised when it turns out that Sir Andurin is his long-lost son!

OVERVIEW

This book is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One, the introduction, is the one you are reading right now.

Chapters Two through Five each deal with one of the four chivalric virtues: valor, loyalty, piety, and love. Each of these chapters has the same structure. First is a general discussion of the virtue, and the sorts of behavior that it requires. Next, a prestige class for knights emphasizing that virtue is described, along with orders of chivalry associated with that class. This is followed by feats and magic items related to the virtue. The next section discusses a particular race, and how that race sees chivalry, along with a description of a race-based order of chivalry. After that comes a discussion of the sorts of people or situations that might have difficulty with this virtue, and ways round the problems. Sometimes, but not always, this includes rules; for example, Chapter Two gives information on and a prestige class for arcane spellcasters as knights. This section is followed by other rules related to the virtue; generally, these are game mechanics for doing things that the virtue enjoins, but which are not well supported by the standard d20 System. The final sections of each chapter are concerned with roleplaying. There's a discussion of possible character concepts, the ways that the virtue in question relates to the other virtues, and a section on how to incorporate that virtue into adventures.

Chapter Six breaks this structure, instead dealing with the things that people expect of a knight. Knights expect high standards of themselves, and others also have expectations. These expectations can have an impact on game mechanics, and should certainly have an impact on roleplaying. This chapter also includes rules and guidelines for creating your own order of chivalry and associated prestige class.

Chapter Seven, finally, is concerned with characters who aren't quite knights, but are similar in many ways. It includes discussions of characters who uphold only three of the virtues, characters who take a very different approach to one of the virtues, and evil knights, who twist and pervert all of the virtues. Again, rules material and roleplaying suggestions are both provided.

VALOR

“Now,” said Priamus, “cease your words, for I warn you ye shall find in yonder woods many perilous knights; they will put forth beasts to call you on, they be out of number, and ye are not past seven hundred, which be over few to fight with so many.”

“Nevertheless,” said Sir Gawain, “we shall once encounter them, and see what they can do, and the best shall have the victory.”

— Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D’Arthur*, Book V, Chapter 10

DEFINING VALOR

Valor is physical courage in the face of the enemy. At its most obvious, this means that a knight should not run away from battle, even if things are a bit dangerous. However, valor has been elaborated to mean rather more than this.

A truly valorous knight fights fairly and honorably against worthy opponents. Worthy opponents are those who pose a real threat to the knight — foes who approach or exceed him in power. Foes who greatly outclass the knight are also worthy, but it’s generally considered foolish to deliberately make trouble with such enemies. Nevertheless, a low-level knight faced with an ancient dragon attacking his home should go out and fight the beast fairly, even though it will almost inevitably result in his death.

In a fair fight, all combatants can fully use their abilities. If one side is much stronger than the other, the battle will not be fair in a broader sense, but a valorous knight will still not seek advantages. It is unfair, and unvalorous, to steal an enemy’s magic sword before a battle, for example, or to

ambush a dragon rather than riding to its lair and issuing an open challenge.

Honorable combat means, essentially, melee combat, in which both the combatants are equally exposed to the risk of injury. Magic that removes an opponent’s ability to fight, other than by injuring him, is dishonorable. Thus, spells that compel friendship or obedience are dishonorable. Similarly, missile weapons are dishonorable, because the person shooting the arrow is staying back out of harm’s way. Poison, traps, ambushes, and surprise attacks are also dishonorable, because in each case the aim is to protect the attacker.

This is, of course, the ideal, and actual knights inevitably fall short. Any warrior must, at least sometimes, confront opponents who are far weaker than he, and a valorous knight is not expected to handicap himself in such a situation — that would make the fight unfair. Similarly, while a truly valorous knight would stay and fight against suicidal odds, few people hold it greatly against a knight who withdraws to fight where he has more chance of success.

Knights are expected to die through acts of valor. The gods who approve of chivalry strongly approve of their clerics raising such knights from the dead, though, so risking your life is often little more serious than risking injury. Indeed, the most valorous knights can expect to die several times. The gods may require quests in compensation, but such activities are exactly the sort of thing that knights are supposed to do anyway. The afterlife of some chivalric deities includes an area where valorous knights wait to be raised. This area often resembles the rest and recuperation area at a tournament, with pavilions and servants, but no great luxury, so that the knights will be willing to return to the fight. If the god believes that the knight has served enough, he will be invited into the feasting pavilions, from which few return.



DIELTIZ PINKIT.

KURT

Very few knights use magic as their primary means of attack, but there are some; arcane knights are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Similar considerations apply to missile weapons, which are rarely seen in knightly hands. Stealth, poison, and traps are all but unheard of, even among evil knights, as their use is so far from the chivalric ideal.

In some cultures it's traditional for knights to fight from horseback, but this is far from universal. Indeed, some knights, particularly among the smaller races, feel that being mounted gives a knight an unfair advantage, and thus is incompatible with true valor. Humans, particularly, strongly resist this interpretation, and feel that knights should be mounted; fighting on foot is considered ignoble. This difference of opinion rarely gives rise to much more than arguments, however, as the knights still have much in common.



PRESTIGE CLASS:

THE VALOROUS KNIGHT

The valorous knight exemplifies valor, but he does not neglect the other aspects of chivalry. Such knights often gather in chivalric orders devoted to valorous pursuits.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a valorous knight, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +7

Feats: Iron Will, Might of Courage

Special: Do a notably valorous deed that becomes generally known. Fighting and defeating a superior opponent is the simplest such deed, but others may qualify at the GM's discretion. Also, become a member of a valorous order of chivalry.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for the loyal knight prestige class (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the valorous knight prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: The valorous knight is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all types of armor, and shields.

Skill Points: 2 + Intelligence modifier per level.

Cowards' Confusion (Ex): Beginning at 1st level, the valorous knight is protected from cowardly strikes. This includes all ranged attacks, Sneak Attacks, ambushes, poison, subtle magical attacks, and damage inflicted while the knight is helpless, surprised, or massively and obviously outclassed (opponents' encounter level is 4 or more levels higher than the knight's character level). The valorous knight has Resistance equal to his class level against such attacks, which allows him to ignore this amount of damage each time he takes damage of this kind.

Valor's Mantle (Ex): A valorous knight who goes, alone, to attack a foe he knows to be worthy may call upon Valor's Mantle. This gives him temporary hit points equal to 20 + 6 per class level, which last until the end of the combat. The foe remains worthy, because otherwise there would be no real valor involved, but the knight has an increased chance of surviving.

A valorous knight may invoke Valor's Mantle once per day at 2nd level, twice per day at 4th level, three times per day at 7th level, and four times per day at 10th level.

A worthy foe is an individual or a group with an EL no more than one lower than the knight's character level. Attacking alone requires that the knight receives no support from other characters, such as spells, missile fire, and assistance in melee. It doesn't require that the knight have no allies, as long as the allies attack other targets. If the knight does receive help, he immediately loses all these temporary hit points.

Undaunted Heart (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, the valorous knight is immune to magical *fear*. He can still feel mundane fear.

Duellist's Mandate (Su): From 5th level, the valorous knight may call out a single worthy opponent (as defined in Valor's Mantle, but this must be an individual), and challenge her to a duel. The character so challenged must make a Will save against a DC of 10 + valorous knight's Cha bonus + valorous knight class level or be forced to accept the challenge. She may also choose to accept the challenge.

If the challenge is accepted, whether voluntarily or under compulsion, any effect imposed on one of the combatants by someone outside the duel affects both of them equally. The effects are equal, rather than the sources, so if one of the duellists is immune to fire and her ally casts a fireball at the other, both of the duellists take damage. Similar considerations apply to magic that hampers the combatants.

This ability may be used once per day. The valorous knight may call upon Valor's Mantle in the duel.

Duellist's Ward (Su): From 9th level, the valorous knight may call out a worthy foe, as with the Duellist's Mandate ability, and have the duel protected from any outside interference. Nothing other than the two combatants can influence the outcome of the battle unless it overcomes a Spell Resistance of 10 + valorous knight Will save bonus + valorous knight character (not class) level.

This ability may be used once per day. The valorous knight may call upon Valor's Mantle in the duel.

VALOROUS ORDER OF CHIVALRY: THE DRAGONBANE KNIGHTS

The Dragonbane Knights are dedicated to seeking out and fighting monsters of all kinds. Humanoid opponents do not, in their eyes, qualify as monsters, so they only fight such opponents if required to do so. Good creatures do count as monsters, as the order has evil members.

Requirements: Valorous knight prestige class, chaotic alignment. The knights of the order, while accepting the importance of loyalty to a person or ideal, are

THE VALOROUS KNIGHT

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Cowards' Confusion
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Valor's Mantle (1/day)
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Undaunted Heart
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Valor's Mantle (2/day)
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Duellist's Mandate
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Valor's Mantle (3/day)
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	Duellist's Ward
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Valor's Mantle (4/day)

not at all keen on rules and regulations, and tend to go off monster hunting by themselves.

Symbols: The order's badge is a dragon's head impaled on a sword. Most of its members keep trophies of the creatures they have killed — usually these are preserved heads. Some of the showier knights work representations of all the monsters they have killed into their armorial bearings.

Origin: The origin of the Dragonbane Knights is rather obscure, as the order has never kept good records. It appears that it started as a simple group of like-minded warriors, all of whom enjoyed proving their valor by fighting monsters. One member liked the idea of orders of chivalry, but was too individualistic to be admitted into most orders. Thus, he decided to turn the group of monster hunters into a chivalric order. As he had already killed two great wyrms, he had enough renown to form an order around himself.

This story is intrinsically plausible, and would be universally accepted were it not attached to half a dozen different names. Three of these knights — Sir Dessarin, Sir Guillaume Deschamps, and Sir Flavia Igna — are actually associated purely with the Dragonbane Knights, but other elements of their stories suggest that they lived hundreds of years apart.

Organization: As an order of chaotic individuals, the Dragonbane Knights have few rules. The only absolute rule is that no Dragonbane Knight must knowingly fight another. If any member of the order is found to have broken this rule, all the other Dragonbane Knights are honor-bound to hunt him down and kill him. Dragonbane Knights are also expected to offer hospitality to one another, and they usually do. When knights meet in this way they normally swap war stories and rumors of monsters ripe for slaying.

The order's headquarters is called Dragonbane Castle. This is a large castle in a remote area, built around an enormous hall. The hall contains the relics of some of the greatest kills achieved by Dragonbane

Knights, which is why it's so large — the heads of six great wyrms can be found there, along with many other trophies. The buildings around the hall include numerous chapels — one to every deity that has ever been the patron of a member of the order — as well as living quarters. The castle is supported by donations from the knights, who often gain large treasures when they kill monsters.

Every new Dragonbane Knight is admitted into the order by three current knights. Ideally, this ceremony takes place at the order's headquarters, but some are too far away for this to be practical. All Dragonbane Knights try to visit Dragonbane Castle at least once in their lives, and bring a particularly impressive trophy with them.

Activities: The knights ride around the country killing monsters. Because they are averse to killing humanoids, even the evil members of the order tend to be popular with ordinary people. Despite the order's name, its members do not concentrate particularly on dragons, and most dragons have no particular animus against the order. There are, of course, exceptions on both sides. Indeed, it's quite common for individual knights to specialize in a certain type of monster, particularly those who used to be rangers and thus have favored enemies.

Campaign Integration: The Dragonbane Knights are a good low-impact order for chaotic fighter types to join. Normal adventuring activities tend to fulfill the order's aims, and it doesn't issue commands that might drag a player character away from the rest of the party.

If a player character does join the order, then the requirement that members not fight one another can be used to good effect by having one of the characters' opponents turn out to be a Dragonbane Knight. This would provide an opportunity to talk rather than fight, and give some motivation to find a non-violent solution to the conflict.

The order can also impinge in obvious ways on non-members. If the characters get a reputation as non-

ster-slayers, members of the order might well seek them out. Some simply want to share hunting stories and compare trophies, and maybe offer membership to anyone who qualifies, but others see the characters as rivals and set out to prove themselves superior. These knights can either be a threat, or get themselves in way over their heads and need rescuing by the player characters.



VALOROUS ORDER OF CHIVALRY:

THE ORDER OF SIR PALASTRIN

Members of the Order of Sir Palastrin act as martial champions to those who are less able to defend themselves. They rarely fight in their own cause, but display no fear when fighting for the cause of others. This other can be a lord, a beloved, or a deity; what matters to the order is that its members fight bravely for another.

Requirements: Valorous knight prestige class. There are no restrictions on alignment, as knights may champion a wide range of causes. Members of the order must always be either championing a cause, or looking for a new cause to champion.

Symbols: The conventional depiction of Sir Palastrin is an image of an armored knight standing between a hideous monster and a defenseless young woman. The badge of the order is an upright sword superimposed on a manche — a heraldic charge that represents a woman's sleeve. Individual knights often take arms showing an upright sword superimposed on the symbol of whatever they choose to champion.

Origin: Sir Palastrin lived several hundred years ago. A brave and renowned knight, he set out to carve himself a realm from the wilderness. His valor cleared all armies before him, and his kingdom grew. At length, his forces invaded a land ruled by a lady whose husband, a noble warrior, had recently fallen in battle. The lady, Contessa Mathilda, went with her maids to meet Sir Palastrin to plead her cause, emphasizing that she had no one to defend her and lead her troops.

That night, Sir Palastrin left his armies under the control of his lieutenant, and traveled in disguise to Mathilda's castle. There he offered his services as a defender of her realm, and she gratefully accepted him. On the next day, Sir Palastrin led the defenders against his own army, and fought the battle to a stalemate. Still in disguise, he returned to his own camp and asked how the battle had gone. His lieutenant, expecting criticism, reluctantly told the story of the mysterious and valiant knight who had led the opposing side. Sir Palastrin merely nodded and listened.

The expansion of his realm stopped there, and Sir Palastrin left its administration to his servants as he took to traveling the lands defending the weak and worthy. Other knights gathered to his cause, and after his death they formed themselves into an order that took on both his name and his purpose.

Organization: The Order of Sir Palastrin has its headquarters at the castle that used to be the center of Palastrin's kingdom. That realm fell many years ago, but the knights were tolerated by the new rulers, and have prospered ever since. The castle is large and well-maintained, with a great meeting hall, chapels, and accommodation for visiting knights. The order holds lands in many kingdoms, and administers them from chapter houses. The chapter houses provide hospitality for knights, but are run by non-military servants of the order. The knights spend their time traveling.

The order is headed by a grand master, currently Sir Menoenes, a 6th-level fighter/8th-level valorous knight. Three masters serve under him, and are appointed by him. On the death or retirement of the grand master, the three masters choose a new grand master from the order. Their choice must be unanimous, and thus rarely falls on one of them.

The order has the normal rules of brotherhood, but does not require obedience. Members of the order must be admitted in a formal ceremony at the headquarters, but after that they may travel and serve as they wish, provided that they uphold the order's aims.

Activities: Knights of the order seek out people and organizations in need of a champion, and fulfill that role. Some knights choose a single cause to defend, and remain loyal to it. Others travel, defending those who find themselves in serious need and then moving on. The only limitation on this aid is that it always takes the form of battling enemies. The Order of Sir Palastrin is an order of valorous knights, after all.

As the knights of the order almost always find themselves championing the weaker side in a dispute, they are popular with the powerless and looked upon with some suspicion by the powerful, particularly those who are trying to expand their realms. However, there are many countries where the current authorities owe their position to the intervention of a knight of Sir Palastrin, so there are few places where the knights are actively persecuted.

Campaign Integration: Player characters can easily become wandering knights of this order, and an obligation to defend those in need of help provides an excellent way for the GM to get the characters involved in adventures.

As player characters are normally the stronger side in a dispute, they may find themselves opposed by knights of the order, as well. Since players and characters are likely to approve of the order's activities, they make good antagonists — the characters should be reluctant to simply wipe them out. Opposition from the order might also make them think again about their actions. They need not be wrong, after all — the knights of the order do sometimes pick the wrong causes to champion.



FEATS OF VALOR

The following feats enable a knight to emphasize valor in his actions.

COUNTERSTRIKE [GENERAL]

You are unusually capable when fighting opponents who pose a real threat to you.

Benefit: During your action, you designate one of your opponents. This opponent must have already done one or more hit points of damage to you in the battle. You now get a +1 bonus to all attacks on this opponent. You may designate a new opponent at any time, but the new opponent must also have wounded you in this battle. Foes who wounded you in a previous encounter but lived to fight you again can't be targeted by this feat until they have wounded you in this encounter.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

COWARD'S BANE [GENERAL]

You can strike hard against anyone who attacks you in a cowardly fashion.

Prerequisite: Counterstrike feat

Benefit: During your action, you designate one of your opponents. This opponent must, in the current battle, have dealt you 1 or more hit points of damage with a cowardly strike. Cowardly strikes include all ranged attacks, Sneak Attacks, ambushes, poison, subtle magical attacks, and damage inflicted while the knight is helpless, surprised, or massively and obviously outclassed (encounter level is 4 or more levels higher than the knight's character level). You gain +2 damage to any melee attacks made against that opponent.

You may change the opponent on any action, but any one designated must have wounded you in a cowardly fashion in this battle. The bonus from this feat stacks with the bonuses from Counterstrike and Might of Courage, but overlaps (does not stack) with the bonuses from Dying Blow.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

DYING BLOW [GENERAL]

You are able to surge back from the brink of death and often take your opponent with you into the shadows.

Prerequisites: Might of Courage feat, base attack bonus +4 or higher

Benefit: You may invoke this feat when you are reduced to 0 or fewer hit points in a combat. You gain a +8 bonus to each of your Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores, so that you gain +4 to hit and damage in melee combat, +4 to Armor Class, and +4 hit points per level. Your critical threat range with any melee weapon is tripled, and non-magical attacks are treated as +1 magical attacks for purpose of overcoming Damage Reduction.

However, the only actions you may take are full attack actions against the opponent who dropped you to 0 hit points or fewer, and any move actions required to pursue him if he flees. The effects of the feat expire when the opponent is killed, or when you are reduced to 0 or fewer hit points again.

When the feat expires, you lose the extra hit points and your current state is determined by your hit points remaining. If you took any damage while under the influence of this feat you'll have fewer hit points than you did when you invoked it, and it's likely that you'll be dead. If you're raised from the dead, and the level loss means you must lose a feat, you must lose this feat. You can regain it once you regain a level.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

HEART OF IRON [GENERAL]

You are extraordinarily brave. Although you feel fear as normal, you almost never act on it.

Benefit: You get a +4 bonus to all saving throws to resist fear, whether natural or magical.

IMPROVED KNOCKOUT [GENERAL]

You are particularly skilled at knocking your opponents unconscious, rather than killing them.

Benefit: You may use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal nonlethal damage at no penalty. You must declare that you're using Improved Knockout to deal nonlethal damage before rolling for the attack.

Normal: Strikes to do nonlethal with a weapon that deals normal damage are at a -4 penalty.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

KNOWN OPPONENT [GENERAL]

You know the fighting styles of a particular kind of opponent, and are better able to defeat him.

Prerequisite: Wis 13+

Benefit: You get +2 to hit opponents of a single type. A single type of opponent is a type that can serve as a ranger's Favored Enemy. You may take your own race as a Known Opponent without being evil.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

MIGHT OF COURAGE [GENERAL]

You have reserves of strength you can call on when facing an opponent who is better than you, which might tip the balance in your favor.

Prerequisite: Counterstrike feat

Benefit: During your action, designate an opponent. This opponent must have dealt damage to you with at least three separate attacks, and you must have failed to deal damage to him with at least three separate attacks. All these attacks must have taken place in the current combat. For the rest of the combat, you get a +2 bonus to all attacks on this opponent, and a +2 bonus to Armor Class against this opponent only. You may not change the target of this feat.

The bonuses from this feat overlap (do not stack) with those from Counterstrike.

Special: You can only use this feat once per day. You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you gain it, you may use it one additional time per day.

A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

WARRIOR'S PATH [GENERAL]

When you wish to face a worthy opponent, no lesser foes can stand in your way.

Prerequisites: Great Cleave feat, base attack bonus +6 or higher

Benefit: Designate a worthy foe. You may move towards that foe at double your normal Speed every round, even if there are other opponents in the way. If your movement would normally provoke an attack of opportunity against you, you may attack that opponent instead. If you drop him to 0 or fewer hit points with a single blow, your movement is not interrupted. If you fail to drop him, you must come to a stop, and that opponent gets his attack of opportunity against you.



A worthy foe is one whose Challenge Rating is no lower than one less than your character level. If the foe is not powerful enough, this feat will not work.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.



ITEMS OF VALOR

These magic items help a knight to act valorously, often by balancing the odds between him and a superior opponent.

WEAPON SPECIAL ABILITY: EQUALIZING

This power can only be enchanted into a melee weapon.

If the wielder is fighting a creature with a Challenge Rating equal to or lower than his own, this power has no effect. If the wielder's opponent has a Challenge Rating higher than his own, each successful strike inflicts a temporary negative level. A strike is successful if it hits, even if it inflicts no damage due to the target's Damage Resistance or other factors. Treat the opponent's effective Challenge Rating as equal to its actual Challenge Rating – its current number of negative levels. Once the opponent's effective Challenge Rating equals that of the weapon's wielder, the weapon ceases to inflict negative levels.

The wielder gains no temporary hit points from the energy drain, and the negative levels inflicted by such a weapon can never result in permanent level loss. They all disappear as soon as the weapon's wielder is defeated in combat, or after 24 hours if the victim successfully flees.

Strong necromancy; CL 17th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *energy drain*; Price +4 bonus

WEAPON SPECIAL ABILITY: RETRIBUTION

This power can only be enchanted into a melee weapon. Every time the wielder is wounded in combat, the enhancement bonus of the weapon increases by one against the opponent causing the wound, for the duration of the combat. The enhancement bonus of the weapon only increases against one opponent at a time. If the wielder is wounded by a second opponent, he may choose to start increasing the weapon's enhancement bonus against the new opponent. In this case, any bonuses against the first opponent are lost. The weapon may increase to a limit of +5.

A combat ends when either the wielder or his opponent is killed or rendered unconscious, or when one of them surrenders or successfully flees. As a guideline, if the GM stops measuring time in rounds, the combat is over. If the wielder later engages in combat with the same opponent, there is no special bonus from this power at the beginning of the combat.

Strong transmutation; CL 18th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *limited wish*; Price +1 bonus

POTION: POTION OF SURVIVAL

The user of this potion gains 3d8+5 temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last indefinitely, but overlap (do not stack) with temporary hit points from other sources, including further doses of this potion. If a second source does grant temporary hit points, the user has the higher of the temporary hit points remaining from the potion or the number granted by the new source. Thus, the user never loses temporary hit points in response to something granting them, and always has at least as many as would have been granted by the second source. As normal temporary hit points they're lost first, and once they're lost they can't be regained.

Faint conjuration (healing); CL 5th; Brew Potion, *cure serious wounds*; Price 300 gp

POTION: POTION OF VALOR

This potion lasts for 1d6 hours and gives the user a +6 morale bonus to all saves against fear. It also fills him with mundane courage, so that he can overcome purely natural fear.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Brew Potion, *remove fear*; Price 300 gp

MAJOR ARTIFACT: THE SWORD OF DEEDS

The Sword of Deeds was created by a goddess of the sun to encourage mortals to undertake great tasks that would serve as examples to others. It appears to be a +5 *holy brilliant energy longsword*, and functions as such in combat. Despite being both a brilliant energy weapon and a slashing weapon, it also has the *disruption* special ability, and deals damage to undead normally even if they make the save to avoid destruction. Any evil character who wields the sword gains two

negative levels. Although these negative levels never result in actual level loss, they can't be removed by any means, even a *restoration* spell, as long as the sword is owned. They are removed as soon as the character gives up the sword.

The major power of the sword concerns the performance of great deeds. If the sword's possessor swears on the sword to complete some great task, he can't die as long as he has the sword and the task remains uncompleted.

This doesn't mean that the wielder becomes immune to all damage, although the character does not lose consciousness until he reaches -10 hit points. Instead, if he is reduced to -10 hit points, the sword immediately restores him to full health. This doesn't count as *resurrection*, so the character doesn't lose a level. Similarly, if he fails his save against any deadly effect, the sword counters the effect so that the character survives. However, you should keep track of the number of times that the character would have died if not for the sword. In addition, the character stops aging.

If the character turns aside from pursuing the deed, he gains one negative level every day. These negative levels never result in permanent level loss, but they can't be removed by any means until the character turns back to the completion of the task.

There are two ways that the character can be released from the task: he can either complete it or the task can become impossible. If the character completes the task, he immediately loses one level for every time he would have died but for the sword, just as if he had died and been *resurrected*. If this takes him below 1st level, he loses one Constitution point for every further averted death. If this reduces his Constitution to 0, he dies. In addition, the character instantly ages all the years held in abeyance while he completed the task. This also may result in his death.

A task only becomes impossible if the character is logically incapable of completing it. Thus, it's impossible to kill the Lich-Tyrant if someone else already has. It's not impossible if he has merely become a god — gods

can still die, after all. If the task becomes impossible, the character immediately knows it and has a choice. He can choose a new task and continue to benefit from the sword's protection, or he can lay down the burden and be affected as if the task was completed. If he chooses a new task and completes that one, he loses a level for every time that he would have died in the pursuit of both tasks.

If a character loses the sword before completing the task, he loses its protection; in this case, he doesn't suffer the effects of completing the task, but also doesn't benefit further from the sword's positive effects. If he turns aside from the task he set himself, other than to recover the sword, he suffers from the negative levels. It is, of course, possible for a character to die attempting to complete a task after he has lost the sword.

If a character succeeds in a task using the sword, every bard in the world knows of his success and much of the story behind it. This is one of the sword's powers, so it happens even if the character tries to keep the whole struggle completely secret and there were no witnesses to his success. The bards are not sure how they know, but they are positive that they heard it from a reliable source. Because the sword is famous, and figures in the legend, bards who check with each other usually figure out what happened.

A great task is one that's worthy of being told by all the bards across the world. Destroying a powerful tyrant would count, as would slaying the eldest and most evil of the dragons. Rescuing a princess would only count if the princess were of world-wide significance.



INTIMIDATE CHECK:

VALOROUS CHALLENGES

Any character who identifies himself as being a knight may challenge a single opponent to a duel and, by sheer force of conviction, prevent any of the opponent's allies from interfering in the duel as long as the knight's allies behave similarly.

Check for Valorous Challenges: The knight must choose an opponent. If the knight appears stronger than the chosen opponent, it's harder to start a duel. Conversely, if the knight appears weaker, it's easier. The knight makes an Intimidate check against a DC equal to 10 + the hit dice of each opponent. The DC is modified based on the apparent relative power of the knight versus the chosen opponent. Record the result of the check.

KNIGHT APPEARS ...	MODIFIER
Much weaker than opponent	-5
Weaker than opponent	-2
Evenly matched with opponent	0
Stronger than opponent	+2
Much stronger than opponent	+5

If the Intimidate check succeeds, the chosen opponent accepts the challenge and his allies don't involve themselves in the combat. If the chosen opponent's allies wish to join the combat later, they must each make a Will save against a DC equal to the result of the knight's Intimidate check. The save result is modified based on the apparent relative abilities of the knight and the chosen opponent. This need not be the same number as the modifier to the knight's Intimidate check, as the knight may appear more or less powerful after combat has begun. Any character who succeeds at the Will save may enter the combat, while those who fail may not.

If the knight's allies are NPCs, they must make the same Will save in order to join in the combat. Player characters may simply choose whether or not to get involved. If any allies, from either side, become involved in the combat, then the effect of the knight's challenge expires and anyone may fight as of the following round.

HUMAN KNIGHTHOOD

Humans regard valor as the most important virtue of knighthood. A disloyal knight is a bad knight, but still a knight; a coward is no knight at all. This means that

the military aspect of knighthood comes to the fore, and that, among the humans, very few knights are not fighters, rangers, or paladins.

The other three virtues are not completely neglected, but knights are expected to display them through their valor. Thus, a human knight is expected to fight for his beloved, king, and country. Human knights are found leading armies, serving as champions, and defending holy places. Valor is even expected to over-rule the other virtues, so that a knight who ignores a command to retreat before a weaker foe will not be too poorly thought of. Indeed, if he were to retreat, even in response to a direct order, many human knights would feel that he had sullied his knighthood.

As most readers of this book are probably human, this variety of knighthood needs little explanation: it's what you think of when you think of a knight.

HUMAN ORDER OF CHIVALRY:

THE KNIGHTS OF THE SLIPPER

The Knights of the Slipper are the personal guards and champions of the queen. The queen herself is a sorcerer of considerable power, and her knights are her most loyal servants.

Requirements: Member of a knightly prestige class, human, alignment within one step of neutral good, loyal to and in love with the queen. The queen also requires that her knights be male, handsome, and courtly, which in game terms means that they should have a positive Charisma modifier.

Symbols: When a new knight is admitted to the order, the queen gives him one of the slippers she's wearing. He's required to keep that slipper as a symbol of his lady's favor; the other is placed behind crystal above the knight's seat in the queen's audience chamber. The knights include a stylized image of that slipper in their armorial bearings.

Origin: The queen established the knights on the day of her accession to the throne. The first knight was a young warrior who was rumored to have been her lover while she was still crown princess. He was joined by others, and the rumors attached to them, as well. However, they were all doughty warriors, and proved their mettle and loyalty repeatedly on the field of battle.

Organization: The queen is the head of the order, although she is not, strictly speaking, a member. The first knight is the highest-ranking member, and he is an 8th-level fighter/9th-level valorous knight. The other members are not required to obey him, but they normally do.

The organization of the order is quite informal as it has only a dozen or so members and the queen normally issues her orders directly. New members are selected and admitted by the queen, at her sole discretion.

Activities: The Knights of the Slipper serve their queen in any way she sees fit. At any one time, about half of them are at court serving as guards and commanders, and the other half are traveling through the kingdom and beyond on missions for her.

The knights are very sensitive to insults against their queen, and to any slurs on her honor or capacity. If anyone suggests, in the hearing of a member of the Knights of the Slipper, that the queen is not running the country in the best way possible, the knight will challenge him to a duel. The duel may not be to the death, but if it is the knights are beyond the law in such matters. Repeating the rumor about the knights' other duties also provokes a duel. The truth of that rumor is up to the GM.

Campaign Integration: The name of the queen and her country are left open in this order for easy integration into your campaign world. The Knights of the Slipper are only suitable for player characters if the queen is a central figure in the campaign, however. Even then, the knight will lose a lot of freedom of action, although the other members of the party will

usually be welcome to tag along on his missions. If the players want a structured campaign, where they serve as the agents of a monarch, then the warriors among them may well join this order, or another like it.

The Knights of the Slipper can also be encountered as antagonists. Although the queen is neutral good, her goals will not necessarily match those of the player characters, or their superiors.

SPELLCASTING KNIGHTS

As the use of many spells is incompatible with valor, spellcasters who wish to be knights have some difficulties to overcome. Clerics and other divine spellcasters usually focus on piety, and thus will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Arcane spellcasters rarely have that option, and so must face the problems raised by their magic head-on.

Arcane spellcasters rarely become knights among humans, as humans value valor so highly. It's not completely unknown, but such a knight is treated with suspicion by his peers and finds it difficult to get a positive reputation. Among the other races, things are somewhat easier, especially among the elves, who regard valor as the least important of the four virtues and hold arcane magic in high regard.

Even then, difficulties remain. First, there are many spells available to arcane spellcasters that should not be used by an honorable knight. Second, arcane spellcasters are weak in physical combat, and valor requires them to put themselves in such danger quite frequently.



The use of spells is perhaps the simpler issue. A knight should only use spells that inflict close-combat damage as a melee weapon does. Most of these spells function as touch attacks, and the fact that they do more damage than most weapons is balanced by the fact that they can't be used repeatedly. Knights may use any spells outside of combat without

impugning their valor, though, and may even use other kinds of attack spells under certain circumstances. For example, if a knight is faced with large numbers of weaker foes, it would be acceptable to use area-effect spells to clear a path to a worthy adversary. It would not be acceptable to use ranged spells to “soften up” that same adversary before advancing to the fight.

Knights should also avoid using magic that weakens an opponent in ways other than the simple inflicting of damage. This is the biggest problem arcane knights have with the way that others perceive them. Because such weakening magics are hard to detect, people often claim that such a knight “cheated,” and innocence of these charges is hard to prove. The frequency of such accusations varies with the culture: among most humans they are all but inevitable, while the elves would not sully the honor of a knight with such a base calumny unless there was solid evidence.



The dangers of physical combat pose a more complex problem. One possibility is for arcane knights to multiclass as fighters, or another fighting class. This is the simplest, and most common, solution, but it does not suit everyone. There are characters as committed to arcane magic as they are to chivalry, who wouldn’t want to restrict their magical power in this way. Some are willing to enter the arcane knight prestige class described below, as that requires only a small sacrifice of magical power.

The other option is to use magic to increase one’s own abilities in combat. This is a gray area. On the one hand, it doesn’t use magic to weaken your opponent. On the other, it could be seen as interfering with a fair contest. Opinions on this differ across cultures and races. Humans, again at one extreme, tend to regard any such magical assistance as unvalorous. Elves, again at the other side of the argument, tend to believe that any magic that affects only the knight is legitimate. For those in the middle, it depends on the magic. Spells or items that make the knight complete-

ly immune to his opponent’s blows would be regarded as unvalorous — at the very least, they mean that the knight’s opponent is not worthy. Spells that merely enhance the knight’s natural aptitudes might be thought of as legitimate, as the knight is simply using his abilities in the fight. Any arcane knight taking this route must tread carefully, and constantly watch his reputation.



PRESTIGE CLASS:

THE ARCANES KNIGHT

Arcane knights are dedicated spellcasters who also want to follow the path of chivalry. The special abilities of the class concentrate on helping the knight to survive in combat, as this is likely to be his weakest point.

Hit Die: d4

REQUIREMENTS

Base Attack Bonus: +3

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

Feats: Combat Casting

Special: Membership in an arcane order of chivalry.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for the arcane knight (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the arcane knight prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: The arcane knight gains no weapon or armor proficiencies.

Spellcasting: Every level of arcane knight counts as one level of an arcane spellcasting class for the purposes of calculating caster level, spells per day, and, if applicable, spells known. No other abilities of the spellcasting class, such as bonus feats, are gained.

Spell Healing: An arcane knight may choose to use a prepared spell to heal himself, rather than casting the spell. The knight regains hit points equal to the level of the spell, and the spell is lost. At 1st level, this is a standard action. At 5th level, it only takes a move action, and at 10th level it's a free action. At 10th level the knight may convert all his spells to healing in a single round, if he so wishes. The arcane knight can't use this ability to heal anyone else.

Quicken Spell: At 2nd level the arcane knight gains Quicken Spell as a bonus feat.

Concentration Bonus: At 3rd level the arcane knight gains a +4 bonus to all Concentration rolls to cast a spell despite distraction. This bonus stacks with

any other bonuses, including the bonus from the Combat Casting feat. At 6th level the bonus increases to +8, and at 9th level it increases to +12.

Improved Quicken Spell: From 7th level on the arcane knight may Quicken spells using a spell slot only three levels higher than the spell, rather than the normal four.

ARCANES ORDER OF CHIVALRY: THE ORDER OF THE HAWTHORN

The Order of the Hawthorn is a group of elven and half-elven arcane knights dedicated to demonstrating that arcane spellcasters are just as valorous as fighters and paladins.

Requirements: Arcane knight prestige class, elf or half-elf, proficient with longsword.

Symbols: A sprig of hawthorn, bearing both thorns and brilliant white flowers. The flowers are taken to symbolize the glories of magic, while the thorns symbolize the courage of the knights.

Each knight also carries, but does not use, a longsword. He keeps the sword in good condition, and he is capable of using it. He does not do so, however,

THE ARCANES KNIGHT

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	+1 level spellcasting, Spell Healing (standard)
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	+1 level spellcasting, Quicken Spell
3	+1	+3	+1	+3	+1 level spellcasting, Concentration +4
4	+2	+4	+1	+4	+1 level spellcasting
5	+2	+4	+1	+4	+1 level spellcasting, Spell Healing (move)
6	+3	+5	+2	+5	+1 level spellcasting, Concentration +8
7	+3	+5	+2	+5	+1 level spellcasting, Improved Quicken Spell
8	+4	+6	+2	+6	+1 level spellcasting
9	+4	+6	+3	+6	+1 level spellcasting, Concentration +12
10	+5	+7	+3	+7	+1 level spellcasting, Spell Healing (free)



to demonstrate that his use of magic is by choice, not necessity. Elves appreciate the symbolism, while humans tend to think that it merely demonstrates the fundamental cowardice of the order — if they were really brave, they would use the swords.

Origin: The order's origin tale claims that, when the elves first encountered humans, the humans mocked the elves for their cowardice in relying on magic. Some elves wanted to annihilate the humans for their impudence, but calmer counsels prevailed, and the Order of the Hawthorn was founded to demonstrate that magicians are not necessarily cowards.

Organization: As elves tend towards chaos, the order is rather loosely organized. Prospective members can be admitted by any two knights, who then have some responsibility for informing the other knights of the new member's status. All knights are expected to uphold the order's aims, and can be cast out by the agreement of five knights. Such outcasts can be readmitted by any two knights, however, which has occa-

sionally led to slightly farcical situations. Knights are rarely cast out for trivial reasons, though, so it's normally extremely difficult to find sponsors for readmission.

The Order of the Hawthorn investigates the activities of anyone who claims to be a member of the order but isn't, and challenges those who bring it into disrepute. Anyone who qualifies for membership and is acting as the order would wish is likely to find that the pretense has been made real, as the order's statutes do not strictly require the consent of the candidate for admission.

Activities: The main aim of the order is to demonstrate the ideal of valor. This means getting involved in a lot of dangerous fights, so the order has a high rate of death in battle. Thus, a secondary aim of the order is to find the bodies of fallen comrades, and arrange for them to be raised from the dead. Since the fallen knights were killed by worthy opponents, retrieving the bodies is usually a dangerous, and

hence valorous as well as loyal, task. The elves have a noble ballad recounting one occasion on which a knight was slain by a demon, and more than a dozen knights were slain trying to retrieve the bodies of their predecessors, before a great hero defeated the demon and retrieved them all. The humans have a satirical, and rather bawdy, song about a bunch of stupid elven knights who kept trooping off to be killed by a demon. The human version doesn't mention the great hero.

Knights of the order have beloveds, just like any other elven knight. However, they always choose someone who is in danger, and likely to need rescuing, preferably repeatedly. Some noble elven families treat this almost as a babysitting service for their more headstrong offspring, and, again, there are satirical songs circulating among humans as well as noble ones among the elves. Even the Knights of the Hawthorn, however, eventually become exasperated with particularly suicidal beloveds, and may settle for loyally tending the beloved's grave.

Campaign Integration: The Order of the Hawthorn would be a good organization for an unconventional spellcaster to join, as it imposes few requirements and has the major benefit that, if the character dies, a powerful group tries very hard to have him raised. The knight's search for the corpses of other members and his protection of his beloved also provide excellent adventure hooks.

A knight of this order could also choose a player character as his beloved. Player characters are almost ideal from the point of view of the Knights of the Hawthorn, after all: they often go into danger, but they're not positively idiotic about it. (Really.) This could be played several ways. The knight might generally keep his distance, and only ride to the rescue if the player characters are in serious danger. Alternatively, he might restrict himself to retrieving the beloved's corpse when the occasion warrants. He could also be portrayed as a well-meaning pest.

Indeed, the whole order can be played for laughs. Its knights do tend to get themselves killed even more often than most knights, and they often find them-

selves trying to defend people with no sense of self-preservation at all. This should be handled carefully, however, as all the knights are spellcasters of significant power, and many take poorly to being openly mocked.

FEATS OF ARCANE VALOR

The following feats are designed to aid arcane knights, in particular.

DAMAGING SPELL [METAMAGIC]

You may cast or prepare a spell so that it's easier to avoid, but does more damage if it takes effect.

Benefit: For every two points by which you reduce the save DC of the spell, it does damage as if you were one level higher. This bonus damage may increase the damage of the spell above its normal maximum amount. For example, a 10th-level caster prepares a *fireball* spell with -4 to its save DC. The spell will do 12d6 damage. This feat can only be used on spells that allow a save to reduce or ignore the damage, and which deal damage depending on the caster's level. Spellcasters who prepare spells must choose the reduction to the save DC at the time of preparation.

A spell modified by this feat occupies a slot of its normal level.

PAIN CONTROL [GENERAL]

You are particularly good at ignoring pain while you cast spells.

Benefit: If you're injured while casting a spell, you must make a Concentration check against a DC of 10 + half damage dealt + spell level. If you fail the check, you lose the spell. If you're taking continuous damage,

the DC is 10 + quarter continuous damage last dealt + spell level.

Normal: The DCs are 10 + damage dealt + spell level and 10 + half continuous damage last dealt + spell level, respectively.

SPELL CLEAVE [GENERAL]

You can follow through on powerful spells.

Prerequisite: Damaging Spell feat

Benefit: If you reduce an opponent to 0 hit points or kill him by using a touch range spell, you may immediately cast a touch-range spell as a free action against another creature in the area that you threaten. You may not take a 5-foot step before casting this extra spell. You may use this ability once per round, and the spell you cast using this feat may not have a casting time of more than one standard action.

This feat does not grant extra spells per day, but rather allows you to cast the spells you have more quickly.

SPELL OF OPPORTUNITY [GENERAL]

You can cast spells at characters who leave themselves open to you.

Prerequisite: Combat Casting feat

Benefit: If a creature provokes an attack of opportunity from you, you may choose to cast a spell at that creature instead of making the attack of opportunity. The spell must target the creature provoking the attack of opportunity, although it may affect other creatures as well. The spell comes from your normal daily allowance, but does not prevent you from casting other spells in the same round. The spell of opportunity may not have a casting time greater than one standard action.

You may only cast one spell of opportunity per round, even if you have the Combat Reflexes feat.

TOUCH SPELL [METAMAGIC]

You can prepare and cast ranged spells as touch spells.

Benefit: A spell prepared or cast with this feat has a touch range, and the charge can be held as for any other spell with that range. The spell takes up a slot one level lower than its normal slot, but not lower than 0 level. This feat can only be used with spells that have a range greater than touch.

If the spell has an area effect, like *fireball*, then the caster is within the area and is affected by the spell when it's cast; the caster does get a saving throw if one is normally permitted. Depending on the circumstances, this can seem particularly brave and self-sacrificing, or incredibly dumb.



SPELLS OF ARCANE VALOR

The following spells may also be of use to the arcane knight.

FOES' MEASURE

Divination

Level: Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: Creatures in a 30-ft.-radius burst.

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

The caster learns the power of all affected creatures, relative to himself. Creatures with a Challenge Rating

two or more lower than the character's level register as "weak," those with a Challenge Rating within one step of the character's level register as "worthy," and those with a Challenge Rating two or more higher than the character's level register as "powerful." The spell grants no information as to why a creature has a certain power level, and can't take account of exceptional circumstances, such as a 1st-level orc who has just picked up a +5 *vorpal* axe.

PATH OF VALOR

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5ft./2 levels)

Target: Special

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex halves

Spell Resistance: Yes

Path of valor creates a wave of force twenty feet wide that starts at the caster's location and moves in one direction out to the range of the spell. All creatures in the area of effect take 1d8 nonlethal damage per caster level (maximum of 10d8). Arcane knights use this spell to create a path through lesser enemies to a worthy opponent. As the spellcaster does not put himself at risk, the use of nonlethal damage is regarded as more valorous since the unconscious opponents could wake up and attack the knight.

Material Component: A sap.

WARRIOR'S INSIGHT

Divination

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round/level

You gain a temporary, intuitive insight into the vagaries of combat. You receive a +10 insight bonus to every melee attack you make while the spell is in effect. Additionally, you are not subject to the miss chance that applies to a concealed or invisible target.

TOURNAMENTS

Tournaments are gatherings of knights, and their main purpose is to allow the knights to publicly demonstrate their valor. Other things go on, of course, but they're secondary to the two paramount events: the melee and the joust.

The melee is a mock battle during which teams of knights fight against one another, again usually with blunted weapons. The joust pairs knights off, then lets them charge at each other with blunted lances while on horseback. The victor is usually the one who knocks his opponent to the ground while remaining mounted himself, although some jousts continue with a duel on foot. Tournaments are not supposed to be fatal, but casualties are fairly common.

All tournaments have a sponsor. This is usually a great lord or a major temple of a martial deity, but lesser lords can and do sponsor smaller tournaments. The main limitation is that sponsorship is expensive — the sponsor is expected to provide staff and feasts. Knights are often expected to attend tournaments sponsored by their lord, or by the temple of their god, but they are usually free to attend other tournaments as well.



All tournament combat uses blunted weapons. A blunted weapon deals nonlethal damage, although it can be used to deal normal damage if the wielder takes a –4 penalty to his attack roll. Dealing normal damage during a tournament is both dishonorable and unvalorous, so most knights avoid it.

Taking an unblunted weapon into the melee is a serious offense, and is treated as attempted murder by

most lords. NPCs in a tournament only try to deal deadly damage if this is important for the GM's plot — it's not something that happens by pure chance. If a player character decides to deal real damage, that automatically creates a plot.



Using magic during tournament combat is usually frowned upon, as magic rarely deals nonlethal damage. Arcane knights sometimes invent or seek out spells that deal nonlethal damage so that they can participate in tournaments, but this is rare. Magic armor might be acceptable, but most knights who own such items feel that the risk of losing it (see below) is too great.

THE MELEE

Tournament melees look a great deal like normal battles, but they're governed by many rules. The most important is the requirement to use blunted weapons.



The game rules for the melee are exactly the same as the rules for normal combat, save that everyone is dealing nonlethal damage. Normal experience is gained for knocking opponents unconscious (dealing nonlethal damage exceeding your opponent's current hit points), as this does, in context, count as overcoming them.

In addition, the melee is normally confined to a marked area. The boundary of this area is indicated with nothing more than a rope, but anyone who crosses the boundary is disqualified from the melee. The marked area is normally a field, but some lords choose more interesting terrain in the hope of inspiring a more interesting combat.

There are sometimes safe areas marked at the edge of the melee field. A knight who enters one of these areas must not be attacked, and must not attack others. It's rather difficult to rest long enough to recover from injury, but it does give the combatants the chance to re-arm and reconsider their strategy.

All tournaments have rules for what happens to a knight knocked unconscious in the melee. The most common rule is that the knight who defeated him gets his horse, weapons, and armor. Thus, it's possible for skilled knights to make a living at tournaments. Some tournaments grant these goods to the victor only if he can get his victim out of the melee, at least into one of the safe areas. Even if this isn't a rule, most knights try to do so anyway, in part to make their claim clear, but also because lying unconscious in the middle of a melee is rather dangerous.

Most tournaments have teams, often local knights against visiting knights. For a tournament sponsored by a lord, this means the lord's knights fight against all comers; for a tournament sponsored by a temple, the divide would be along religious lines. If there are a lot of visitors, they might be split into several teams themselves. It's usually important to all concerned that the teams be fair.

Not all melees have a final goal. In some, the knights fight all day and the team with the most men still standing at nightfall wins. Tournaments among races with good night vision don't always stop at sunset, either. However, it's more common for there to be some goal. One team might have to capture a model castle, or each team could have a flag that the other team tries to take out of the melee area. The possible goals are limited only by the imagination of the sponsor.

Melees rarely have prizes as such; the gear of the fallen knights is considered sufficient. However, knights who do well can get a great deal of honor and a fine reputation. The outstanding historical example is William Marshal, an Englishman of the twelfth century who started as a penniless knight wandering from one tournament to another and finished as regent of England.

THE JOUST

Jousts often have elaborate rules for the participants, covering everything from the style of armor and the

color of horses to the way of determining the ultimate victor. It's most common to run the joust as a number of rounds during which the victors of the previous round fight in the next until there's a single victor. These are often knockout contests, but sometimes there may be a round-robin stage. Particularly confident knights may challenge all comers at a tournament to joust with them, but while this is allowed it's not an official part of the tournament.

In a joust, two knights armed with lances ride directly toward each other. As they pass each other, each knight tries to strike the other's shield with his lance. The lances are made to shatter when they make contact, so they're unlikely to do actual damage. If the knight strikes the opponent's body or shield, however, the impact may knock the opponent off his horse.



Characters involved in a pass make simultaneous attack rolls. If an attack roll succeeds, then the character who was hit must make a Ride check. (Both characters can be hit at the same time.) Unless the result of the target's Ride check is greater than the result of the attacker's attack roll, the target is unhorsed and suffers 1d6 normal damage from the fall.

Any character who doesn't have the Mounted Combat feat suffers a -2 penalty to his attack rolls and Ride checks in a joust. A critical hit automatically knocks the target off his horse.

If neither or both of the knights are knocked off their horses, the knights make another pass. If only one knight falls, that knight has lost the pass. Many tournaments involve three passes between each pair. Draws are possible, though some knights will insist on continuing until there's a clear winner.

Some jousts continue with a duel on foot after one knight is unhorsed. In that case, the duel should be conducted using the normal combat rules, but with blunted weapons. If the joust continues in this way, the winner of the duel wins even if he was the knight originally unhorsed.

The winner of the joust usually does receive a prize, which is often of a horse, armor, or weapons. This is because the victor of a joust isn't normally allowed to claim his opponent's arms and armor. The winner of the joust also garners a great deal of prestige.



At the GM's option, the winner of a tournament (or a particularly spectacular joust) may gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Charisma-based skill checks for the next 1d4 days.

Jousts are generally regarded as more civilized than the melee, but some knights think they're too artificial, and thus not proper entertainment for a serious fighter. Spellcasting knights also tend to dislike them, as it's all but impossible to joust fairly using magic.

For more on conducting jousts, see *Atlas Games' Dynasties and Demagogues*.



JOUSTING ITEMS

The following is a necessity for any knight engaging in a joust.

MEDIUM ARMOR: JOUSTING ARMOR

Cost: 1,500 gp; Armor Bonus: +4; Maximum Dex Bonus: +1; Armor Check Penalty: -5; Arcane Spell Failure Chance: 35%; Speed: (30 ft.) 20 ft. (20 ft.) 15ft.; Weight: 30 lb.

Jousting armor appears to be very elaborate full plate armor. It's made of very thin metal, because it doesn't have to defend the wearer from real attacks, and as a result it's fairly light. However, the many metal plates restrict the wearer's movement almost as much as any heavy armor. Jousting armor serves two purposes. First, its decoration proclaims the knight's status. Second, it gives a +2 bonus to any Ride checks to remain mounted.

VISITING TOURNAMENTS

Most knights will want to visit tournaments at least occasionally. One problem for player character knights is finding something for the other characters to do. Fortunately, tournaments are gatherings of large numbers of people, so plenty happens apart from the melee and the joust. Political intrigue, thefts, attempts at magical interference, terrorist plots, and romantic trysts are all possible plots for a tournament. Even so, if the knight is competing in the combats, the party will still get separated.

This means that tournaments are an ideal place to use troupe-style play, as described in the Introduction. While the knight is competing in the melee and joust, the other players can take the roles of his opponents. If the other characters are off investigating something, the knight's player can take the roles of various NPCs. When the party comes back together to deal with the GM's big plot, everyone has in this way contributed, and everyone knows what's going on.

SPONSORING

TOURNAMENTS

A player knight may wish to sponsor a tournament of his own, particularly if he's just been granted a fief or some other honor. While the sponsor may get fewer opportunities for combat, there are many chances for roleplaying. The knight must find a location, arrange his staff, set up at least some pavilions for entertainment, and provide food. He also needs to decide on the structure of the tournament, and on the prizes for various events.

Of course, player characters are trouble magnets, so it's unlikely that a tournament sponsored by a player character will go off smoothly. Some knights might try to cheat, subtly, using magic. Others might try

to kill a long-standing enemy during the melee. Thieves might use the tournament as cover for a major heist. A powerful monster might decide that having all these people in one place is very convenient, and attack. The sponsor would be expected to deal with all these sorts of problems, and help from his friends would doubtless be very useful.

Alternatively, the tournament could go smoothly, and be used simply as an opportunity to play up the knight's role in society, or to introduce new plot threads or recurring NPCs.



CHARACTER CONCEPTS

Valorous knights are not all the same. While all of them focus on honorable physical combat, different knights have different fighting styles, different preferred enemies, and different preferred battles. In addition, not every knight devotes his life to the ideals of valor, even among those who rank it highly amongst the virtues. This section provides some character concepts to serve as a springboard for your imagination. These concepts are not mutually exclusive, in most cases, although conflicting requirements make some combinations difficult.

STYLES OF FIGHTING

All valorous knights fight fairly and honorably, as that is essential to valor. However, there are still many choices. It's possible to be valorous without buckling on plate armor and swinging a sword.

UNTOUCHABLE KNIGHT

This knight concentrates on avoiding damage in battle.



A high Dexterity is good for his Armor Class bonus, and the knight should consider his type of armor carefully. For example, if the knight has a Dexterity of 16 or higher, half-plate gives him a worse Armor Class than a breastplate does. If his Dexterity is 26 or higher (due to magical enhancement), leather armor is as good as full plate. Dodge and Combat Expertise are good feats to take, and he should certainly use a shield.

FAST-KILL KNIGHT

Like the untouchable knight, this knight relies on his quickness in battle.



Fast killers need a high Dexterity to act quickly in combat, and Improved Initiative and Combat Reflexes are both good feats to take. On the other hand, he also wants to kill opponents quickly, so a high Strength and the feats Power Attack, Cleave, and Great Cleave are also useful. Taking Two-Weapon Fighting is also a possibility, as this gives more attacks and thus more chance of dealing damage. Rangers pursuing this style should certainly use two weapons. High Spot and Listen skills, and the Alertness feat, also help the knight to avoid being taken by surprise. Of course, valorous knights never take their opponents by surprise.

ONE-MAN ARMY

While it's not valorous for a knight to fight individuals who are much weaker than he is, fighting large numbers of them is both honorable and fair.



Cleave and Great Cleave are the obvious feats here, but Combat Reflexes is also useful if the enemy might try to get past the knight in a mad rush.

This concept combines well with the killing blow fighting style, as the weaker opponents will find it hard to hit the knight unless given multiple opportunities, so killing them as quickly as possible can be the best strategy.

Also see the "Faceless Hordes" combat rules in *Burning Shaolin*, published by Atlas Games, which are designed to let your character bowl quickly through large groups of opponents. Or, try using the mass combat rules in Atlas' *Last Hero in Scandinavia*, which simplify the die-rolling and bookkeeping involved in combating hordes of foes.

TAUNTING KNIGHT

This knight does not kill his opponents, but rather teaches them lessons in humility. He disarms and subdues, but, of course, never takes advantage of an opponent's weakness to finish him off.



Improved Disarm and Improved Sunder are extremely useful feats for this concept. The knight should also have some skill with unarmed combat, because if a disarmed opponent refuses to quit, the knight must, in honor, cast aside his own weapons. Improved Unarmed Strike is a prudent feat, in case an opponent turns out to have a hidden weapon after all. A knight can't always rely on his opponents being honorable.

KILLING-BLOW KNIGHT

This knight concentrates on dispatching his foes as quickly as possible.



A high Strength score is very useful, and the knight should use a two-handed weapon to get the 50% increase in his damage bonus. Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, and Warrior's Path are the most obvious feats, but Weapon Focus, Improved Critical, and Weapon Specialization (for fighters) are also very appropriate. The knight should probably wear heavy armor, as he can't use a shield.

MOUNTED KNIGHT

The word "chivalry" comes from the Old French term for a mounted warrior, so the mounted valorous knight is an obvious concept.



Mounted Combat, Trample, and Spirited Charge are all suitable feats, and the Ride skill is essential. Ride-By Attack is not appropriate, as the point of the feat is to

get the character out of range before the enemy can counter-attack. This is not valorous, as the knight is not risking injury in the proper fashion.

The mounted knight also needs to be careful that his mount, which elevates him and can, in some cases, fight for him, does not make a duel unfair.

CHOSEN-FOE KNIGHT

This knight prefers to fight a particular kind of enemy, often a species of monster.



This is particularly appropriate for rangers, who have Favored Enemy as a class feature. All knights following this concept should take the Known Opponent feat. *Bane* weapons are a favored enchanted item. The preferred enemy should be something that comes in differing levels of power, such as dragons, or any monster that can progress in a class, so that the knight can find worthy opponents at all levels. Taking a good-aligned race as a preferred enemy is a sign of an evil knight.

WEAPON MASTER

This knight is supremely skilled with one kind of weapon.



The bastard sword is a good choice, although it takes a feat slot to gain proficiency. Medium characters could use a bastard sword in each hand, with the relevant feats, although since the off-hand weapon is not light the penalty will always be at least -4. Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus, Improved Critical, and Weapon Specialization are the core feats for this concept.

THE OTHER VIRTUES

Knights who emphasize valor generally choose one of the other virtues as their secondary aim, or as the one that they care the least about. This choice can significantly alter a character's behavior.

LOYALTY

Valorous knights who choose loyalty as their second virtue are perhaps the commonest kind. They serve a lord by fighting in his battles, and don't disobey his orders because of danger. However, valor is more important to them than loyalty, so they do refuse orders to slaughter captives, or to fight against an obviously weaker foe. Lords generally prefer servants who rank loyalty above all other virtues, but these knights are a good second choice.

Such characters are inappropriate for many campaigns, as the high value that they place on loyalty means that they're inclined to wait for a lord's command. However, if the lord is integrated into the campaign, this concept is a good choice for someone who wants to play the "standard" knight. The character is valorous and loyal, but occasionally violates his loyalty in favor of valor, thus providing useful hooks for roleplaying and further adventures as the knight tries to regain his lord's favor.

On the other hand, valorous knights who rank loyalty last are suited to almost any campaign. Valor, love, and piety can easily draw them off on adventures that their lord hasn't sanctioned, but because they do still value loyalty, they'll always want to return to their lord's favor. This tension provides lots of potential for roleplaying, particularly as the knight becomes more powerful. While the lord might, at first, be inclined to punish the character, this becomes more difficult when the knight can defeat armies single-handed. A powerful knight is a very valuable servant, but can also do a lot of damage if he goes off by himself, so the lord will try to find subtle ways to manage the knight, all of which have the potential to lead into new adventures.

PIETY

A knight who ranks piety just under valor serves his god by fighting, and wants to do so even if the god doesn't always approve of violence — even fair, honorable violence. This isn't appropriate for someone who serves a pacifist deity, as piety is still the second most important virtue, but it is appropriate for worshippers of deities who have non-militant or war-oriented aspects. This is also a very good combination for paladins.

Unlike the valor and loyalty combination, the valor and piety combination poses few problems for adventurers. Deities rarely want their servants to stand castle duty, and, in most worlds, you don't need to stay in one place to serve a god.

A knight who ranks piety far below valor is likely to get in trouble with most good deities for excessive use of violence. Valorous knights are happy to fight opponents who aren't evil, as long as the fight is fair and honorable, so even good deities who approve of the sword as an instrument against evil are likely to become annoyed. Since the character is still pious, he'll find himself going on atoning quests, which can be an excellent hook for more adventures.

LOVE

If love is a knight's second most important virtue, he fights eagerly on his beloved's behalf and tries to win her favor through his valor. This is an excellent combination for an adventurer, as the beloved can't actually command the knight but can inspire him to take part in all sorts of endeavors. Further, the knight can get himself into trouble by trying to defeat ever more glorious opponents for the sake of his beloved.

Love is very important to such characters, so the GM should describe the beloved in some detail, and both player and GM must be willing to roleplay at least the occasional romantic scene. If the players aren't comfortable with this, it's probably best for love to be less important.

A valorous knight who ranks love last may find that he fights more than his beloved would like, and thus has to take risks to win back her favor. More seriously, valor may lead him to fight someone else his beloved cares for, typically a relative rather than a romantic rival, and possibly even kill him. Similarly, valor may not allow the knight to directly defend his beloved from a threat which, while serious to her, is very minor to him. If he ranks valor as much more important than love, he may refuse aid with possibly serious consequences.

UNIMPORTANT VALOR

Knights who, while they still respect valor, hold the other virtues to be much more important, have certain sorts of behavior in common. Most significantly, they're prepared to act in an unvalorous manner if their lord, god, or beloved is at risk. Such knights will use missile weapons, strike from ambush, or attack weaker foes — but only on behalf of one of their other virtues. Similarly, such a knight will retreat before a worthy opponent if his lord commands, or if his beloved would prefer him not to fight.

When left to his own devices, however, the knight still prefers to be valorous. He will not train specifically with missile weapons. He doesn't retreat to preserve his own skin, and doesn't fight weak opponents simply for the sake of it.

Such a knight also feels somewhat guilty when he fails in valor for the sake of one of his other virtues. This may provoke simple soul-searching, or alternatively may send him out to seek opportunities to be valorous. Since valor rarely shapes his behavior to a great extent, this provides a good reason to play the character slightly differently for a while, which can be a lot of fun.

VALOROUS ADVENTURES

Knights, on the whole, want to perform deeds of valor. Players, on the whole, want to participate in an evening's game. This section deals with ways to reconcile the two, so that your knight can be valorous while still going along on the current adventure.

VALOR IN THE COURSE OF DUTY

It's easy to be valorous on most adventures — simply step forward to fight the monsters, ensuring that you do it in a valorous fashion. Valor is not the same as bloodthirsty stupidity, so there's no need to fight when the current scene involves negotiation. If you're playing an arcane spellcaster as a knight, this is enough to set him apart from most of his class, but it does little to distinguish a knight from any other sort of fighter.

One way to do that is to concentrate on fighting fairly and honorably. Refuse to set ambushes, allow the enemy time to arm, wake the sleeping dragon with a formal challenge, and so on. If these actions would be really dangerous, the other members of the party might manage to convince the knight that discretion really is the better part of valor, but they should not always do so. If the other members of the party set an ambush, a knight should disapprove but need not abandon the group. After all, the other party members are not knights, and thus aren't held to the same standards. You know that you've succeeded in this portrayal of your character when the other players include your knight's distaste for missile weapons and ambushes in their planning, either by setting out to work around him or by trying to convince him to make an exception.

Another way to emphasize the difference between knights and other fighters is to play up your reluctance to fight inferior foes. Your knight might refuse to get

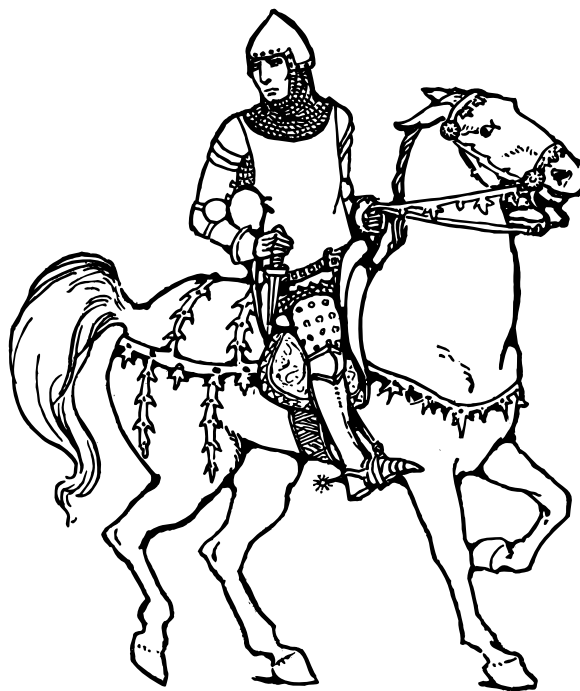
involved in a fight with a small group of goblins, for example, or decide to fight unarmed in order to even things up if he can't avoid the battle.

Finally, a knight might see himself as the natural defender of the “weaker” members of the party — even if they don't see themselves as needing any sort of defense. This can produce entertaining roleplaying within the party, but needs to be handled carefully. A low level of tension and bickering between player characters is a lot of fun and can be the most memorable and enjoyable part of a game, but if it becomes more serious it can ruin everything. So, a knight who insists that he must defend a female rogue, who tries to stand between her and danger, and who lectures her about risks whenever she gets back from a scouting mission is probably fine and entertaining. One who refuses to let the rogue go off by herself at all is just annoying, and will spoil everyone's fun. It's a good idea to check, out of character, that the player isn't annoyed even though her character is.

LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

A knight can also, and sometimes should, look for opportunities to be valorous. The standard literary trope has the knight going off alone to prove his valor, but this fits less well into most roleplaying groups since the other players would probably like to have something to do, as well. On the other hand, leading the entire group into danger raises its own problems.

In all these cases, the cooperation of the GM is essential. You should talk to him in advance, and let him know that you'd be interested in a certain sort of adventure, should the opportunity arise. Most GMs are glad to have suggestions from the players, as it guarantees that at least one character will be interested in the adventure.



GOING IT ALONE

The obvious opportunity for a knight to go off alone to seek adventure arises when only his player and the GM can make it to a particular session. If the previous session ended with everyone in a town or other place of safety, it makes perfect sense for the knight to go off and look for adventure while the other characters recover, study, or pray.

This is, however, not impossible even if the previous session ended in the middle of a fight deep within a dungeon. The player and GM simply stipulate that the knight's adventure actually happened before the current adventure for the group. The knight shouldn't go up a level before the group adventure restarts, but may “hold over” the experience points from the solo adventure if they would have raised him a level. Of course, the knight must ultimately survive the solo adventure in this case, which might reduce the tension. If he does die, he must be raised, and the adventures necessary to get the money to pay for the spell, and to regain the lost experience, can be played out as future solo adventures, or simply glossed over.

Alternatively, the knight could go on a solo adventure even though all the other players are present. In order to avoid bored players, this should be handled through troupe-style play, as described in the Introduction.

One potential problem with such solo adventures is that one character may get significantly ahead of the others. For troupe-style adventures, this isn't a problem, as the GM should just ensure that each character gets an equal number of opportunities to gain experience. For adventures where only one player shows up, it shouldn't be a problem, since forced absences should be evenly distributed among the players as time goes on.

So, there are ways for a knight to go on solo adventures even when part of a gaming group. But what sort of adventures should he go on?

A classic of chivalric literature is the knight who sets up at a remote bridge, ford, or crossroads, and challenges every worthy opponent who passes. This can be an excellent opportunity for a GM to throw some unusual encounters at the knight, as just about anything could be traveling along that road. This option works well for troupe-style play, as well.

Another obvious possibility is for the knight to ride out to fight some renowned opponent. This covers both going off to slay the dragon, and challenging the most famous knight in the country. This sort of adventure is likely to be a fairly straightforward combat, although there's no guarantee that the knight will be superior to his enemy.

Finally, the knight could go and join in a war. Again, this is a perfect opportunity for troupe-style play, as the other players can take on the roles of members of the army. This works less well as a solo adventure when no one else shows up, unless the war in question is already part of the campaign background.

ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL

There are a number of reasons why a knight might want to take his friends along when he heads off to prove his valor. The simplest is that he wants to fight an enemy stronger than he is, so the fight is only fair if he has assistance. Alternatively, he might need the talents of some or all of his friends in order to get to the opponent he wishes to face; although he wants to fight alone, he needs his allies to help him on the way. Finally, he might simply not want to be away from the other characters, and so brings them along. In this case, he might well feel guilty about leading them into danger, even though they show every sign of enthusiasm.

On the other hand, the knight might want to set off alone, but finds that his friends won't let him. There are two distinct ways to play this. First, the rest of the party can simply tag along, refusing to stay behind at inns and keep out of danger. Second, the rest of the party can let the knight *think* that he's off by himself, but secretly follow him to make sure he hasn't overreached himself. In the second case, it will likely be very hard to keep the presence of the other characters secret from the knight's player, but she should try to avoid having the knight act on that knowledge. Both of these options rely on tension between player characters for their entertainment value, so both need to be handled somewhat carefully.

One possible problem is that the other players may resent their characters being dragged along on the knight's dangerous adventures. It doesn't matter what the characters think about it, as long as the players are happy. (Indeed, happy players and miserable characters could be a lot of fun.) One way to limit disgruntlement is to make sure that every player character has the chance to lead the whole party off on some errand of interest to him. Another is to give every character something to do, even though the knight is the main focus.

Another potentially serious problem with these sorts of adventures arises from the nature of valor. The knight is going to want to take on opponents who are

slightly too strong for him, and possibly for the whole party. Thus, there is a risk that everyone will be killed. The primary problem is that it's likely to seem inappropriate for everyone to die on the knight's errand. The only solution here is for the GM to plan ahead, and have in mind some way to raise the party from the dead. If the knight is a member of the Order of the Hawthorn, or some other order with a similar attitude towards finding the corpses of dead colleagues, then this is relatively easy. The important thing is that the GM thinks about it in advance, so that the solution doesn't appear too arbitrary if it's needed.

GAME-MASTERING VALOR

Valorous knights present few problems for the GM, as you just need to give them things to fight. However, a little thought can make the knight's valor a more important part of the game.

Try to arrange the occasional set-piece duel, where the other player characters are doing something else and so can't interfere. Also, very simple plots, where the knight must merely fight his way through "overwhelming odds" to rescue someone or stop some evil, are highly appropriate for this sort of knight. You should, effectively, ensure that a player who wants to play a valorous knight gets plenty of opportunities to fight, but that's the normal requirement of giving the players what they want.

There are also more subtle ways to bring valor into play. Try to set up situations in which adhering to

valor disadvantages the character, but not so much that he has no chance of winning. On the flip side, situations where an unvalorous approach, such as an ambush or the use of missile weapons, would be highly advantageous can have the same effect, as long as the knight can realistically hope to win a fair fight. Both situations require the character to make a choice between his values and practical advantage, and that makes for good roleplaying.

The potential problem with valorous knights is that they tend to bite off more than they can chew, and thus get killed a lot. It might be wise to set up relatively easy access to a means of resurrection quite early in the campaign. You might also find it necessary to give the knight a discount or credit on the spellcasting cost, which is easier if he's also pious. Another issue is that the level loss incurred by being raised from the dead may put the knight behind the other characters. Troupe-style solo adventures may be the best way to bring the knight back up to an even footing, as long as the knight doesn't get killed too often.

You may also have to rein in knights who are a bit *too* suicidal. A low-level knight doesn't have to go around fighting great wyrms if he wants to be thought of as valorous. Possibly the best way to make this clear is to have the knight's deity give him a stern talking to while he's dead, as this turns what would otherwise be a metagame concern into an important part of the character's background.

These are, however, minor issues. Brave fighters are generally not a problem in heroic fantasy.

LOYALTY

King, your widespread fame has brought me to your court to serve and honor you; and, if you approve my service, I should like to stay here until I'm made a new knight by your hand and no other; for unless it is through you, I shall never be called knight. If you appreciate my service enough to wish to knight me, then keep me with you, noble king, and also my companions here.

— Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligés*

DEFINING LOYALTY

Loyalty is the virtue of putting your lord's interests before your own. The simplest manifestation of loyalty is obedience. An obedient knight waits for his lord's commands, and then carries them out to the best of his ability. When he completes one task, he waits for a new instruction. This sort of loyalty can be characterized as doing what the lord wants. But even in this simple case, there are degrees of loyalty. Any loyal knight will risk his life to save his lord's life, but some might be reluctant to risk death on a mere whim of their lord, and more might be reluctant to act against their ethics on their lord's command.

Loyalty can also be much more complex than mere obedience. A loyal knight might seek to defend his lord's interests even if the lord instructs him otherwise. For example, the knight's lord might be enchanted or otherwise deceived. In this case, a loyal knight would try to free his lord, even if the lord didn't believe that he needed freeing. More radically, a knight might believe that he knows his lord's interests better than the lord himself does, and thus be willing to go against the lord's commands when he thinks that they're foolish. Such a knight is unlikely to be popular with his lord, so he had better be right. In these cases, the

knight is doing what the lord needs, rather than what he wants.

It's also possible to be loyal without putting much emphasis on being obedient. This requires that the knight not see his lord much, because it's rather difficult to be loyal and disobey direct orders on a regular basis. However, a knight can operate independently, looking for threats to his lord and dealing with them on his own. Servants of this sort can be very useful to a lord, because he can honestly deny any knowledge of what they were doing, should they violate a treaty or engage in less-than-reputable activities. On the other hand, incompetent and careless servants of this sort are a serious liability, and are reined in very quickly. Some lords dislike such servants even if they are competent, as they prefer to have full control over their subjects, but sometimes the servant is so powerful that it's less trouble to let him do what he wants. These knights do what the lord needs, but may also concentrate on what he would want, if he knew of the situation. That is, they may take actions that go against what they see as the lord's best interests, because they're sure that the lord would want them to act that way.

Loyalty is the virtue that causes the most trouble for knights. Valor is fairly straightforward, and gods don't make mistakes, so piety causes few problems. Love causes nothing but problems, but they are generally of a limited kind. Loyalty, by contrast, can cause enormous problems with no good solution. One of the worst cases is when a lord turns to evil. The knights who swore fealty to him while he was good are now bound to serve an evil master, and breaking away from him violates their sense of loyalty. A lord who goes insane, or who turns out to be incompetent, provides similar problems, but on a slightly reduced scale. In these cases, the knight faces a conflict between loyalty and his other virtues, with no good way out.



The difference between what a lord wants and what he needs is most marked if he's incompetent, but it's also a source of trouble at other times, particularly if the knight has information that the lord lacks. There's no simple solution to such problems: every knight must simply rely on his conscience, and then try to convince everyone else that he made the right decision.



PRESTIGE CLASS:

THE LOYAL KNIGHT

Loyal knights choose another individual as their lord, and regard their duty to him as the most important aspect of chivalry. This individual is always a mortal, not a deity, as service to a deity is what distinguishes a pious knight. However, the individual that a knight serves need not be a knight. The individual should also not be the knight's beloved, as service to the beloved distinguishes the amorous knight. The knight's lord should be the lord of a realm, although he may be temporarily deprived of rulership.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a loyal knight, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +7

Feats: Faithful

Special: Join a loyal order of chivalry, and choose a lord.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for the loyal knight prestige class (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft

(Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the loyal knight prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: The loyal knight is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all types of armor, and shields.

True Heart (Ex): Beginning at 1st level, the loyal knight is immune to any magic that would turn him against his lord. He can still be deceived, by mundane or magical means, as to the best interests of his lord, but magic can't drive him to act against what he believes to be his lord's best interests.

Power of Service (Ex): From 2nd level, the loyal knight gets a bonus to his activities when operating on his lord's behalf. The bonus applies to one of either attack rolls, damage rolls, or Armor Class, or to any two skills. The type of roll to which the bonus applies must be chosen at the beginning of an activity, and can't be changed until the loyal knight starts a new activity.

A single activity is a fairly lengthy undertaking; far more than a single combat. In general, one activity corresponds to one order from the knight's lord. Thus, fighting in a war is a single activity, as is bringing back the lord's betrothed from a distant castle, or negotiating peace with one of his enemies.

The activity must also be clearly undertaken on the lord's behalf. If the knight is ordered to do something by the lord, this normally qualifies. However, if the lord is just being helpful and ordering the knight to do something for his own benefit, the bonus doesn't apply. The bonus may apply in the absence of an order, if the lord's interests are clearly at stake. For example, a loyal knight could claim the bonus when

setting out to rescue his lord from prison, or when racing to him with the message that his enemy is invading.

If the knight deliberately ceases to act in his lord's interest, the bonus no longer applies. This includes becoming distracted from the task at hand, as well as deliberately acting against the lord. Returning to the task doesn't restore the bonus.

The applicability of the bonus is always at the GM's discretion. Players should not be allowed to abuse this ability to get bonuses to whatever they happen to be doing.

The bonus is +1 from 2nd level, rising to +2 at 4th level, +3 at 7th level, and +4 at 10th level.

Loyalty's Insight (Su): From 5th level, the loyal knight can't be deceived as to the instructions and desires of his lord. No matter how convincing a deception is, the loyal knight can see through it. Note that the knight doesn't necessarily know what his lord does want, only whether the orders conveyed are genuine. Further, if the lord changes his mind between the dispatch of the order and the knight's receiving it, the knight knows that this isn't what his lord wants him to do. This may cause conflict with the messenger, who naturally believes that the order is genuine.

Loyalty's Aim (Su): From 8th level, the loyal knight has supernatural insight into that area in which his lord wants him to act. He knows what his lord wants him to do, and whether that action would serve his lord's interests in the relevant area. This latter sense takes no account of conflicts of interest within the lord's wider concerns, so that if the lord has decided to sacrifice a remote border keep in order to retain his whole kingdom, a high-level loyal knight in charge of that keep would get the sense that the lord's orders were not in the lord's interests, although he would know that the orders were genuine.

Further, this ability only works if the knight is responsible for a limited part of his lord's responsibilities. The knight must be acting as a servant of his lord, and the lord himself must still be setting overall policy. Thus, while knights with this ability are very valuable counselors, they aren't perfect. They have no special ability to weigh up conflicting demands, and no way of telling which of a lord's concerns is the most important. Further, they can't provide an assessment of a course of action that the lord doesn't consider.

This can trigger adventures when nothing seems to be in a lord's interests, and he sends his knights out to find out what he's missing. Similarly, a knight who knows that the orders he has been given run strongly against his lord's interests may decide not to act on them.

THE LOYAL KNIGHT

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	True Heart
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Power of Service +1
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Power of Service +2
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Loyalty's Insight
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Power of Service +3
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Loyalty's Aim
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Power of Service +4



LOYAL ORDER OF CHIVALRY: THE KNIGHTS OF THE FOUNTAIN

The Knights of the Fountain serve the king-in-exile of a mountain kingdom. This kingdom was over-run by goblinoids more than a century ago, but some of the knights of the order managed to get the king's grandson out of the country, and have defended his line ever since while seeking ways to restore the royal family to its throne.

Requirements: Loyal knight prestige class, no goblinoid blood, loyal to the king-in-exile. All alignments are accepted, as the order has come to believe that their ends justify any means.

Symbols: The Knights of the Fountain wear a badge bearing an image of a fountain pouring into a stone basin. Originally this was on a green background, but contemporary members of the Knights of the Fountain wear it on red, to symbolize the blood shed during the conquest of the kingdom.

Origin: The Knights of the Fountain were founded almost a thousand years ago, shortly after the first king established his rule over the mountains. They were created to serve and defend the royal family first and the country second, and for centuries they filled this role with honor.

Things changed when goblinoid hordes invaded the country. The king at the time refused to retreat and insisted on leading his armies personally. The Knights of the Fountain went with him, and most died around him in the final battle. The king's final command to his loyal servants was to return to the palace and take his infant grandson out of the country, so that the boy could reclaim his birthright when he came of age.

The surviving knights fled the battle, and took the king's grandson out of the mountains, just ahead of the pursuing goblinoids. They planned to gather refugees and build an army for the young king to command, but the goblinoid invasion was brutally thorough, and few escaped. The young king grew to adult-

hood, guarded by the knights, but they were still far too few to plan a reconquest. Thus, the order went into its long exile.

Organization: The king-in-exile is the head of the order. In the past, this has been largely titular, but the current king takes his duties seriously and leads the order in person. Below the king are the masters of the order, appointed at the king's discretion. They command captains, and the captains command knights.

The order's ancient headquarters were in the Court of the Fountain in the royal palace. This is now a ruin, haunted by goblinoids and more terrible monsters, and the order makes its home wherever the king is.

The admission ceremony for the order is less elaborate than it used to be. The candidate must first impress the king with his loyalty and fighting prowess. The king then grants the privilege of membership in the order. The knight-elect appears before the king at dawn, and surrenders his weapon. The prospective knight then spends a day and a night meditating on his duty to his king and country, dressed in a simple white robe. At dawn, one of the masters leads him, still wearing the robe, into the king's presence. The king returns his weapon to him, and announces that he is a member of the Knights of the Fountain. The other members present then kiss the new knight in turn, to bid him welcome.

Activities: Ultimately, the order aims to lead the reconquest of its king's country. To that end, its members undertake scouting missions into the mountains, and attempt to take bridgeheads within the realm. So far, these attempts have all failed.

The king is aware that he needs more resources if his attempts to reconquer his homeland are to be successful, and has started hiring his knights out as mercenaries. As he's interested only in the return of his own country, many lords are happy to hire his servants since there's little conflict of interest. Some knights are advocating a policy of raiding and, effectively, banditry, but the king is, at present, resisting this, as he doesn't want to make more enemies.

Campaign Integration: The type of goblinoids involved here and the name of the country they've over-run are left to the GM to determine based on his campaign setting. Player character members of the order are expected to serve the king's ends, so the order only integrates well if the whole campaign is structured around the Order of the Fountain and its reconquest of the king's country. On the other hand, the order may make a fine antagonist. The king might turn to banditry, and his knights can be hired by rather unsavory characters.



LOYAL ORDER OF CHIVALRY:

THE ORDER OF NAUSSHABEN

The Knights of Nauss haben are all loyal servants of the king of the country where their headquarters is found. However, they're not the sorts of people who meticulously follow orders, preferring to act in the king's interests, but on their own initiative.

Requirements: Loyal knight prestige class, non-lawful alignment, loyal to the king.

Symbols: The symbol of the order is a spectacular waterfall, usually modeled on Nauss haben Falls. On coats of arms, this is stylized and appears as a vertical white band on a green background. The knights of the order work this into their arms. The order also uses a white cat as a secondary symbol, to indicate both loyalty and independence.

Origins: The great-grandfather of the current king was extremely lawful, and became concerned that the powerful chaotic individuals among his subjects might turn out to be a dangerous enemy within. Although they protested their loyalty, the king slowly moved towards driving them out of the country. Some responded by leaving, others by plotting to overthrow the tyrant. Sir Adolph, a mighty knight, responded by founding the Order of Nauss haben.

Nauss haben Falls lay within Sir Adolph's ancestral fief, and the crag overlooking it was eminently defen-

sible. His family had fortified it in the distant past, and Sir Adolph expanded and strengthened Nauss haben Castle while inviting all those non-lawful knights who were loyal to the king to join his order. The nascent order gathered in Nauss haben Castle to debate its next move, and was promptly besieged by the king.

The knights refused to take any hostile action against their lord, but equally refused to open the gates and surrender to him. The king would have won, except that rebels took the opportunity offered by the siege to attack his forces. At the height of the battle, the order sallied forth from the castle and fell upon the king's enemies, granting him victory.

The king recognized his error, and granted liberties and official sanction to the Order of Nauss haben. The order has defended the king, in its own way, ever since.

Organization: The order is led by a grand master, who has, so far, always been Sir Adolph's heir. The other members of the order are all knights, as it has little in the way of hierarchy. Indeed, the grand master's duties are almost purely ceremonial, which is one reason why the members of the order have allowed the position to be passed to Sir Adolph's heirs. Another reason is that, so far, Sir Adolph's line has consisted of respected and honorable knights. The current grand master is Sir Otto, and his son and heir, Robert, is a sorcerer who shows little interest in chivalry. Sir Otto's younger daughter, Emmeline, is a renowned knight and warrior, and many members of the order support her.

Knights ask to join the order, rather than being invited, and the grand master then sends them on quests to prove both their competence and their loyalty. If the candidate satisfies the grand master, he's admitted to the order. As many knights as possible assemble at Nauss haben for the ceremony, and symbolically besiege the castle. The candidate waits inside the castle until the grand master arrives to "attack" the besiegers from behind. He then walks out through the assembled knights, who pretend to attack him, and strikes the grand master once. The ceremony obvi-

ously recapitulates the order's foundation, and the grand master's role is to remind the candidate that his loyalty is to the king, not to the grand master.

Activities: Knights of this order spend most of their time looking for and dealing with threats to the kingdom and its king. Some, particularly the highest-level members, offer the king unsolicited advice, and try to deal with "bad advisors." The knights are generally left to their own devices, although a knight who encounters a particularly dangerous threat may issue a request for help, and it's considered good form for other members to provide assistance.

The order has a very ambiguous relationship with its kingdom. On the one hand, the knights' loyalty is unquestioned, and the order has served the kingdom well over the years, defending it from many threats. On the other, they're definitely a disruptive influence, and their immunities and privileges make it difficult for the king's officials to deal with them. The fact that the knights don't feel that they need be loyal to the king's *officers* does not help. The king finds it necessary to summon knights of the order to appear before him and explain themselves on a distressingly frequent basis. The knights' explanations are usually good, as they *are* loyal to the king and the nation, but they are no more inclined to obey the king if they think that he has made a mistake than they are to obey his officers under normal circumstances. The king's counselors often try to convince the king to abolish the order. On one occasion, about fifty years ago, when they nearly succeeded, the country was invaded by undead troops under the command of an evil priest, and the order was central to their defeat. The idea that it should be abolished was quietly dropped.

Campaign Integration: This is a good order for player characters, as it leaves them with a lot of freedom, and also provides ways for the GM to send PCs towards his latest adventure. It can be adapted to any kingdom very easily, although the symbols might have to be changed for a desert realm.

The order also works well as an antagonist for loyal and conventional servants of the king. Although the

knights would be on the same side as the PCs, they are capable of causing large amounts of trouble. The order could also serve as antagonists for a more standard group if their king were evil. In that case, some of its members might also prove to be unexpected allies, as they try to "free the king from the evil enchantment." Whether there actually is an enchantment would be up to the GM.



FEATS OF LOYALTY

Feats centering on loyalty can help a knight fulfil his obligation to his lord.

BODYGUARD [GENERAL]

You may engage with anyone who tries to attack the ally you're protecting.

Benefit: Choose one ally who's position you threaten, and designate her as your charge. You now threaten any enemy that you threaten from your actual position, or would threaten if you were in the same position as your charge. You may change the ally you're guarding once per round, on your action. Your increased threat radius allows you to Aid Another against further enemies, make normal attacks, and make attacks of opportunity.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

DEFEND OTHER [GENERAL]

You can fight defensively to protect another character.

Prerequisite: Bodyguard feat

Benefit: When you take the full attack action and fight defensively, your charge gains the dodge bonus to Armor Class instead of you. Normally, this means that you get a -4 penalty to your attack rolls and your

charge gets a +2 dodge bonus to her Armor Class. If you have the Combat Expertise feat, you may instead take a penalty of up to -5 to your attack rolls, and your charge gains a matching dodge bonus to her Armor Class. This bonus may not exceed your Base Attack Bonus.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

DOUBLE AID [GENERAL]

Your assistance helps your allies more broadly than normal.

Benefit: When you Aid Another in combat, your ally gains a +2 circumstance bonus to *both* attack rolls and Armor Class.

Normal: Aid Another gives a +2 circumstance bonus to *either* attack rolls or Armor Class.

Special: A fighter may choose this feat as one of her bonus feats. A character with this feat and the Improved Aid feat may grant a +4 bonus to one of either attack rolls or Armor Class, and a +2 bonus to the other.

FAITHFUL [GENERAL]

You are known to be particularly loyal to your lord.

Prerequisite: You must designate a single character as your lord.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to all Diplomacy checks when dealing with other allies and servants of your lord. You also gain a +2 bonus to all Sense Motive checks to determine whether someone really is acting on behalf of your lord.

GENERAL AID [GENERAL]

You can help an ally against more than one opponent.

Benefit: When you Aid Another in combat, your ally gains the aid bonus against *all* opponents that you threaten. You designate your ally in the same way as for the normal use of Aid Another.

Normal: Aid Another only gives your ally a bonus against one opponent.

Special: A fighter may choose this feat as one of her bonus feats.

IMPROVED AID [GENERAL]

You can give more aid to your allies in combat.

Benefit: When you Aid Another against an enemy you threaten, your ally gains either a +4 circumstance bonus to attack rolls or a +4 circumstance bonus to Armor Class against that enemy.

Normal: Aid Another grants a +2 circumstance bonus to either attack rolls or Armor Class.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

INSTANT AID [GENERAL]

In combat, you may Aid Another without being distracted from your own combat.

Prerequisite: Quickened Aid feat

Benefit: You may Aid Another as a free action.

Normal: Aid Another is a standard action.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

INTERPOSE [GENERAL]

You may throw yourself in front of an attack aimed at someone you're guarding.

Prerequisite: Bodyguard feat

Benefit: If your charge is successfully attacked, you may make a Reflex save against a DC of 10 to put yourself between her and the attack. If the save succeeds, the attack automatically strikes you, dealing damage, and does not strike your charge. The attack doesn't deal a critical hit, even if it would have done so against your charge, because it wasn't lined up against a vulnerable location on you. Using Interpose is a free action.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

QUICKENED AID [GENERAL]

You can aid others in combat with less distraction from your own activities.

Benefit: In combat, you may Aid Another as a move action. This means that you may Aid Another and attack, or Aid more than one ally in a single round. The normal rules for Aid Another apply otherwise.

Normal: Aid Another is a standard action.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

UNIT TRAINING [GENERAL]

You fight more effectively in a small group with whom you have trained.

Benefit: If you're fighting in a small group with whom you have trained, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls and Armor Class. You gain the benefit even if other members of the group don't have

this feat. A small group contains at least three members, and no more than twelve.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

VAVASOUR [GENERAL]

Your lord has placed some of his followers under your command.

Prerequisite: Faithful feat

Benefit: You gain followers, but not cohorts, as if you had the Leadership feat. Your effective Leadership score is calculated by adding together your character level, your Charisma bonus, and your lord's character level. These followers are in addition to any you gain if you also have the Leadership feat. Followers gained from the Vavasour feat are ultimately loyal to your lord, not to you, but will obey you unless they have reason to believe that you're betraying your lord.



ITEMS OF LOYALTY

Loyal items may inspire loyalty in a knight, or help him to serve his lord rather than himself.

ARMOR SPECIAL ABILITY: DEFENDING

This effect must be enchanted into two suits of armor simultaneously. The two suits need not be of the same kind, so that one could, for example, be leather and the other full plate. At the time of creation, one suit is designated the master suit and the other the servant; this designation can't be changed. When both suits are worn by living creatures, any damage dealt to the wearer of the master suit is taken by the wearer of the servant suit. It's not possible to create these suits of armor in sets of more than two.

Note that this is not a cursed item. An unwilling wearer of the servant suit can remove it unless restrained some other way.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *shield other*; Price +1 bonus (for each set of armor)

SHIELD SPECIAL ABILITY:

BODYGUARD'S SHIELD

This effect can only be enchanted into a shield. The wielder of the shield can choose to have the shield's Armor Class bonus — both its armor bonus and any enhancement bonus — apply to another character. This character must be in the area threatened by the shield's wielder. The wielder can also choose to have the bonuses apply to his own Armor Class. The wielder can change the character who gets the bonus as a free action on the wielder's turn.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *shield other*; Price +1 bonus

WEAPON SPECIAL ABILITY: LOYAL

A loyal weapon is attuned to a particular person at the time of enchantment. Thereafter, the weapon can't do damage to him or to anyone who is loyal to the chosen person. If it's used to strike such a person, the wielder must make a Strength check against a DC of 20 or drop the weapon, as it tries to leap from his hand. Even if the wielder retains his grip on the weapon, no attack using it does any damage to the designated person or those loyal to him.

Weapons without an enhancement bonus can be enchanted in this way, although the enchanted weapon must still be a masterwork weapon. If the weapon does have an enhancement bonus, this enchantment costs no more to create, and does not increase the cost of further enhancement bonuses in the same weapon.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Magical Arms and Armor, *sanctuary*; Price 500 gp

POTION: POTION OF LOYALTY

This potion is much like a *potion of love*, except that it instills loyal rather than amorous feelings. The character drinking it becomes devoted to the first person he sees after consuming it; this effect has the same limits as *charm person*, in that the drinker must be humanoid and Medium or smaller, and gets a Will save DC 14 to resist. "Devotion" means that the drinker will obey that person's orders to the best of his ability, almost without regard for personal risk. Suicidal orders will be obeyed if the benefit to the object of devotion is apparent. This devotion lasts for 1d3 hours.

Faint enchantment (charm); CL 2nd; Brew Potion, *charm person*; Price 150 gp

MAJOR ARTIFACT: THE LOYAL SHIELD

The Loyal Shield is a very old and battered large steel shield that functions as a +5 *shield of bodyguarding*. It has never, however, been enchanted. Instead, it has been carried by a long line of extremely loyal servants of great lords, who performed deeds of loyalty that are remembered in song and story. The shield gathered power from these incidents, so that now it's a great artifact.

The shield only works for characters who are loyal to some mortal lord. Characters who are disloyal or simply independent find that it feels awkward, always shifting at the wrong moment, and have no access to its powers. Such characters are treated as if they were not proficient with the shield, and gain no Armor Class bonus from the shield's enhancement bonus.

Characters who are loyal to a lord find that the shield assists them in their loyalty. First, the shield can help them to know their lord's best interests. Once per day, the character may ask a number of yes or no questions

concerning his lord's interests, and get accurate answers. The number of questions is equal to the character's level. The questions may be about particular courses of action — "Would it be in my lord's interests to sign this treaty?" — or about people or situations — "Can my lord trust his vizier?" The answers are always correct, and always take the longest possible view. Thus, sometimes they may lead to short-term loss because the lord can gain greatly in the long term. A character who asks whether something is the best option for his lord almost always gets the answer "no," even for very good plans — there is almost invariably something better that could be done, after all.

Once per year, the character can ask a specific question and get a more informative response. The question is "What deed that I could carry out this year would bring my lord the greatest benefit?" Upon asking this question, the character knows the answer and has a general idea of how to go about performing this deed. There is no guarantee that the character will survive its execution, though, nor that it will be obvious how this deed would benefit his lord.

The shield not only tells loyal characters what to do, it can help them to do it. At any point in a task, the character may call upon the shield to assist him. He immediately gets a bonus equal to his character level, which is distributed among the statistics that most need it in this task. The bonus can be to attacks, AC, any one saving throw, any one skill, or to character level checks in one context. The character may also gain 5 temporary hit points per point of bonus. At the end of the task, the character loses the bonus and one character level. This level is lost before any experience points for the task are gained. In this context, a task is roughly equal to a single adventure.

For example, a 12th-level character calls on the shield before entering a dungeon to retrieve a magic item for his lord. The GM knows that the character will have to fight a number of undead, and that his combat statistics and Fortitude save are good enough to deal with that. However, two monsters will try to *charm* him, and his Will save isn't that good. Further, he'll have to

decipher an inscription in an unknown language before he can get the item. The character thus finds that he has a +4 bonus to his Will saves, and a +8 bonus to Decipher Script, which allows him to use the skill. The character is a little puzzled, but everything becomes clear during the adventure. At the end, he loses one level, falling to 11th level, but gains enough experience from the adventure to immediately rise to 12th level again.

DWARVEN KNIGHTHOOD

Dwarves hold loyalty to be the highest of the chivalric virtues, with valor fairly close behind. Dwarven knights, therefore, are quite similar to human knights, which tends to make the very real differences even more striking. One simple difference is that dwarves regard the concept of a knight errant — a knight who travels in search of adventures — as something of a contradiction in terms. All dwarven knights have a lord, and their service to that lord is more important than any possible quest for glory. Thus, many dwarven knights find it hard to regard human knights errant as real knights. On the other hand, some dwarven knights have little or nothing to do with combat, but their loyalty, piety, and amour are strong enough for the dwarves to respect them. Outright cowardice is almost always a fatal flaw in a dwarven knight, but courage combined with a desire to fight only when your lord's interest absolutely demands it could be seen as a virtue. Among humans, nobody who tries to avoid battle can be a real knight.

Obedience tends to be emphasized as the proper form of loyalty. There are some dwarves who believe in acting loyally but on their own initiative, but most regard them as very eccentric, and harbor doubts about the extent of their loyalty. This isn't to say that dwarven knights never show initiative. On the contrary, it's common for lords to give their knights goals rather than step-by-step instructions, and expect the knights to find their own way. A dwarven lord is more likely to



command a knight to defeat an evil wizard than to tell him to go to a certain town, gather forces, and return. Ideally, the level of initiative expected of a knight varies depending on how reliably he has acted in the past, but dwarves are not infallible in such judgments.

This emphasis on loyalty and obedience means that the knights of a dwarven lord form something very close to a disciplined army. Human knights generally do not, being too greedy for their own martial glory on the battlefield. An individual dwarven knight is, on the average, no match for an individual human knight, but battles between armies of human and dwarven knights have predominantly gone in favor of the dwarves.

As one would expect, dwarven tales of chivalry tend to focus on stirring acts of loyalty rather than on martial prowess. Indeed, a common trope is the knight who sacrifices opportunities to fight out of loyalty to his lord. While these knights are supposed to be somewhat tragic figures, they nonetheless retain the audience's admiration. Tales of self-sacri-

fice are very popular, as are stories in which the knight manages to obey apparently contradictory orders. Of course, tragedies in which the knight can't manage to satisfy both of a contradictory pair of orders are also popular.

Love is the least important of the chivalric virtues among dwarves. It's not neglected completely, but it isn't uncommon for a dwarf to spend many years searching for someone worthy to be his beloved. Some dwarven knights die without ever finding one, and it's not at all uncommon for a dwarf with a beloved to pay little more than lip service to the amorous ideals of his calling. Such behavior is not admired, as knights are supposed to be lovers, but it's not cause for strong censure.

The emphasis that dwarven knighthood places on obedience might seem to make this an unappealing character concept, but it need not be. First, a dwarven knight who values loyalty and obedience less than most of his kin is something of an outcast, and so has a good reason to go adventuring with a group of peo-

ple of different races. Alternatively, he might place a very high value on loyalty, but be looking for someone worthy of his troth. As he should eventually find someone, this concept would turn into one of the other character options.

A lord who gives the player character knight orders that are consistent with adventuring, and a lot of freedom in carrying them out, is another possibility. If taken to an extreme, this can mean that the dwarf effectively has no lord for some time, having been ordered to assist the other player characters. The lord could give other orders at a later stage, allowing the GM to change the pace of the campaign.

Finally, your character concept, and the campaign, might embrace the tendency to loyalty. This requires the cooperation of your GM, who has to play your lord, but it can provide very helpful structure in a campaign; you find your next adventure when the lord tells your knight what to do. Such a knight isn't immune to the conflicts imposed by loyalty, as outlined above, which could provide the basis for further adventures.

LOYAL ORDER OF CHIVALRY:

THE GRANITE WALL

The Granite Wall is a dwarven order of chivalry that serves to defend a mountain kingdom. It has a reputation for extreme discipline and effectiveness, as the kingdom in question has come under repeated attack from savage humanoids, particularly kobolds. Its members are often the heroes of local ballads and tales.

Requirements: Loyal knight prestige class, lawful good or lawful neutral alignment, swear loyalty to the king. There are no members who are not dwarves, but the order has no official racial requirements. It would be difficult for a non-dwarf to enter, but not impossible.

Symbols: A stone wall, carved with dwarves forming a shield wall. Such walls surround the headquarters of the order, and are found in a number of the outposts its knights defend. The local kobolds deface any such that they find. The knights of the order rarely carry any external indication of their status; the order has long believed that it is enough that they, and their lord, know of their loyalty.

Origins: The Granite Wall was founded centuries ago by the dwarves' king when his country was first threatened by attacks from savage humanoids. At the time, its focus was entirely on defense and loyalty to the king was secondary. The order was highly successful in its assigned role, and so survived and increased in prestige.

The order's change in focus came three hundred years ago, within living memory. The kingdom was under more vigorous attack than usual, and the king appeared to be failing. Instead of meeting the enemy on the frontiers, he fell back, letting the kobolds into more and more of the country. His subjects started to desert him, and although the king appealed for their trust and confidence, they continued to fall away. The Granite Wall remained completely loyal, however, trusting that the king knew best.

As it turned out, he did. The kobolds, scenting an easy victory, committed all of their forces to a last push. The king, supported by the Granite Wall, was able to cut off most of the invading army and pen them within the kingdom. With no means of escape, the invaders were annihilated, and the threat to the kingdom was exterminated for many years. The king took back those of his subjects who professed their loyalty anew, but his greater rewards were reserved for those who continued to serve him, particularly the member of the Granite Wall. Its leaders took the lesson of the episode to heart, and from then on the order was defined by its total loyalty to the king.

Organization: The Granite Wall is strictly organized. The king is the head of the order, and his wishes are conveyed to two knights-master. Under them are the knights-captain, of whom there are usually

about half a dozen in total. The knights-captain command the banner knights, each of whom leads four or five ordinary knights. The banner knights and their followers form groups called banners, which are the main active unit of the order.

All members of the order are expected to obey orders issued by higher members without question. Few members are inclined to question even the strangest of orders, as all the knights know the story of the order's foundation.

The headquarters of the order is built of granite, and stands next to the royal palace. Knights of the order are the only people allowed to appear armed and armored in the king's presence off the battlefield, and they are also exempt from standard justice. Instead, offenses are judged by other members of the order. People can apply to join the order, and anyone who seems plausible is accepted as a probationary member, called a sergeant. Sergeants are assigned to a banner, and are observed carefully as they are given dangerous and unpleasant orders. Those who show the necessary combination of obedience, initiative, and loyalty to the king are then recommended for admission.

In the admission ceremony, the king invites the successful candidate to sit on his throne, and then washes the new knight's feet. This symbolizes the fact that the king actually serves everyone who serves him. Those knights who are at the headquarters celebrate the new admission with a feast, which tends to be extremely rowdy.

Activities: The order does whatever the king asks it to. Most of the time this involves guarding the borders of the kingdom against raiders or more-organized attempts at invasion. Some groups are sent on other missions. These tasks almost always require martial ability, as that tends to be the strength of the knights, but beyond that they cover the whole gamut of things that the king wants done, particularly if he doesn't wish anyone else to know about it.

Campaign Integration: Player characters are only likely to join this order in a campaign centered on the defense of the dwarven kingdom in question, which can be placed in the game world by the GM as he sees fit. The Granite Wall doesn't look kindly on its members heading off to have adventures. However, such a campaign could be a lot of fun, especially if the player characters form a single banner that's chosen to carry out more-delicate missions. For such a campaign, the GM might want to relax the requirement that all members of the order be members of the loyal knight prestige class, and require merely that they be loyal to the king and of an appropriate alignment.

NPC banners entrusted with sensitive missions work well as antagonists or plot hooks, as well. They can be asked to do anything, and are allowed to use their discretion in how they carry out missions. Thus, player characters might be hired to assist, or could find themselves trying to stop the dwarves from achieving their mission. This doesn't require evil characters; while the king was right three hundred years ago, he's not infallible. It might be best for everyone that the dwarves fail in their mission, but the characters might not want to kill a group of good NPCs.

KNIGHTS WITHOUT FEUDALISM

The virtue of knightly loyalty was originally articulated within the feudal political system, and that's where it fits most easily. In the feudal system, everyone pledges personal loyalty to someone above him in the system. Thus, peasants pledge loyalty to the lord of the manor, who might be a knight. The knight in turn pledges loyalty to a baron, and the baron to the king. The king pledges loyalty to no one. A realm structured feudally is called a feodality. Lords are supposed to be responsible for the welfare of their subjects, but the emphasis is always on the subjects' duty of loyalty.

Loyalty fits into this system easily for two reasons. First, the whole structure is designed around personal

loyalty, so knights have an obvious place. Second, there are many lords to whom a knight can swear loyalty. This gives you a bit more choice when designing your character's background. However, not all states are feudal, and you might want to play a knight from one of your other choices, which are discussed here.

After feudalism, absolute monarchy accommodates loyalty the most easily. In this case, the knight must swear loyalty to the monarch, but this is still personal loyalty, so everything else about the virtue can work as it does in feudalism. This applies to any system that requires loyalty to the person of the leader, whatever the leader is called. Dictatorships usually qualify, as might some nominal republics and democracies.

Theocracies may also have a clear place for loyalty. Knights are expected to be pious, so as long as they worship the governing deity they should fit well into the system. If the deity has a system of priests or other individual representatives, the knight can swear loyalty to one of them much as he would to a lord in a feudal society. Other religious structures might be less accommodating, in which case you should consider the advice given below for other societies and see which fits best.

OLIGARCHIES

An oligarchy is a state where power is shared between a few people, all of whom are roughly equal to one another. Possible examples include a city-state run by the richest and most powerful merchants, or a state controlled by the most powerful wizards and sorcerers. Oligarchies pose a problem for chivalric loyalty because there is no individual who represents the state, and no way for personal loyalty to fit into the system.

One possibility is to swear loyalty to one of the oligarchs. This works, in many ways, just as does loyalty in a feudal society. The difference is that the knight is loyal to one faction within the state, rather than to the state as a whole. Others will look on him as a mere defender of his lord's interests, not a defender of the

whole polity. This is certainly a possible form of knighthood, although it is rather different from the conventional image. Such a knight would not have the social privileges that knights in feudal societies obtain. For example, in a feudal state knights often have some degree of immunity from the normal legal processes. In an oligarchy, a knight who is loyal to one of the oligarchs has no special immunities and may indeed be targeted by the magistrates as a potentially destabilizing factor.

The obvious alternative is to swear loyalty to the state as a whole. The principal problem with this is that the state is not a person, and knightly loyalty is traditionally personal loyalty. A knight who swears loyalty to an abstraction will never gain the esteem of his lord, because his lord isn't the sort of thing that can esteem people. Further, he might gain the hostility of all the oligarchs as he becomes a complicating factor in the state's politics, and someone who might undermine their plans. This could be a good thing from your point of view: a knight trying to defend an oligarchy from the machinations of the oligarchs has the opportunity to get involved in many adventures, after all.

Finally, the knight might swear personal loyalty to an oligarch with the intention of turning the state into a feodality headed by that oligarch. In this case, things work just as they do under feudalism because, as far as the knight's concerned, that's the system he's working under.

TRIBES

For the purposes of this discussion, a tribal system is a particular political system. The political unit consists of a group of people bound together by blood ties or, more broadly, ethnicity, so that you don't really have a choice as to whether you belong. One example of this could even be a society of sorcerers, where anyone who has the capacity for sorcery is bound by the group's rules. There is a leader, but he is, to a certain extent, subject to a council of elders, particularly on the issue of the bounds of his authority. Members of

the tribe are supposed to be loyal to the tribe, rather than to individual members of it.

The problem for knights in a tribe is the expectation that the character's loyalty will be to the tribe rather than an individual. In this sort of society, there's a reasonable chance that the leader and the elders — the obvious candidates for personal loyalty — would not accept a knight, as they would see it as undermining the tribe. A knight in such a society has little choice beyond being loyal to the tribe as a whole.

This would mean that his activities would be somewhat different, but it can still work. In a tribe, there's rather more in the way of personal contact between the members and the leadership, and everyone is supposed to be looking after the tribe's best interests. Thus, a knight could become a valued defender of the whole tribe, with the chief calling on him to undertake difficult tasks, and the elders relying on him for advice in trying situations. A knight who is loyal to a tribe has rather more freedom of action than a conventional knight, because the tribe as such isn't in a position to issue orders. The chief and elders might do so, but it's not a violation of the knight's loyalty, in any way, to ignore those orders if he thinks that they're against the best interests of the tribe.

The tribal system is also, traditionally, the context in which barbarians find themselves. There's nothing to stop a barbarian from being a knight, as valor, loyalty, piety, and love are still open to him. He's likely to have a less-refined approach to the topics than the conventional knight, and is unlikely to write poetry to his beloved, but he can still uphold all the chivalric virtues.

DEMOCRACIES

For the purposes of this discussion, the scope of a democracy is rather broader than it normally is. It refers to any political system in which power is held by a small number of people who are chosen from an eligible group by the votes of that group. Thus, not every member of the society may be allowed to vote, but

everyone who can vote is eligible for office. The elected ruling group holds more power than the electorate except when an election is in progress, which distinguishes this from an oligarchy, and the vote is the only legitimate source of power, which distinguishes it from a tribe. A magocracy could be a democracy in this sense, if the ruling mages were elected by the vote of all the mages, and all mages could vote, but only the small elected group held governing power.

A democracy is a difficult society in which to be a knight. The governing personnel tend to change fairly rapidly, and loyalty to a private individual doesn't really fit with knighthood. Besides, the state would almost certainly frown upon any of its members building up a private army. On the other hand, loyalty to the state is difficult, as there are few people who can serve as its focus and give the knight the sort of personal contact vital to knightly loyalty.

One possibility is for the knight to run for office. As a governor of the state, he could effectively demonstrate his loyalty to the state, while having sufficiently close access to the other rulers to build personal relationships. This would only be appropriate in some types of democracy, of course, but it could make for an interestingly different knight.

Another possibility is for the knight to treat loyalty as completely impersonal, and to defend the state regardless of who is in charge. This might be difficult if the knight can vote, and someone he voted against, and strongly disagrees with, comes to power. Of course, that could also provide good adventure potential. In this case, however, loyalty and piety will become very similar, with the state serving as a sort of secular deity. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, although it does draw the character away from classic conceptions of knighthood. Still, in a democracy that's inevitable.

A form of government closely related to democracy is what could be called Athenian democracy, in which all the voters vote on every issue of importance, and the state's officers are chosen randomly. It's even harder to be a knight in this sort of society, as it isn't

possible to run for office and as power goes to the best public speakers, a talent that's rarely important to knights. Loyalty to the state is really the only option, which could produce serious tensions between the knight and popular demagogues, who need not have the state's best interests at heart.

ANARCHY

If democracy is difficult for knights, anarchy is almost impossible. In an anarchy, there's no recognized authority at all, and thus nothing and nobody for the knight to pledge loyalty to. There are two primary types of anarchy, stable and unstable. An unstable anarchy arises from the breakdown of law and authority, and is characterized by many groups trying to gain power. In such a society, the knight can choose a group, pledge loyalty to it, and help it turn the anarchy into a stable feudal state.

Stable anarchies are really difficult. In these societies there are no laws and no authorities, but everyone gets along anyway. Humans have never managed such a society, but elves, for example, might. It really isn't possible to be a knight and remain part of such a society. If the knight does pledge loyalty to someone, he has effectively chosen to try to overthrow the society. It would be possible to be a variant knight (see Chapter Seven: Variants) who didn't believe that loyalty was a valuable virtue, but that's about as close as a character could come.

GOING TO WAR

In most feudal systems, a knight is committed to fight for his lord for a certain number of days every year. Historically, forty was the usual number. He's also required to provide a number of other warriors — usually just a handful, unless he's the lord of a significant area in his own right. This feudal levy formed the backbone of most medieval armies, but these fighters really did go home after their time was up. This was a

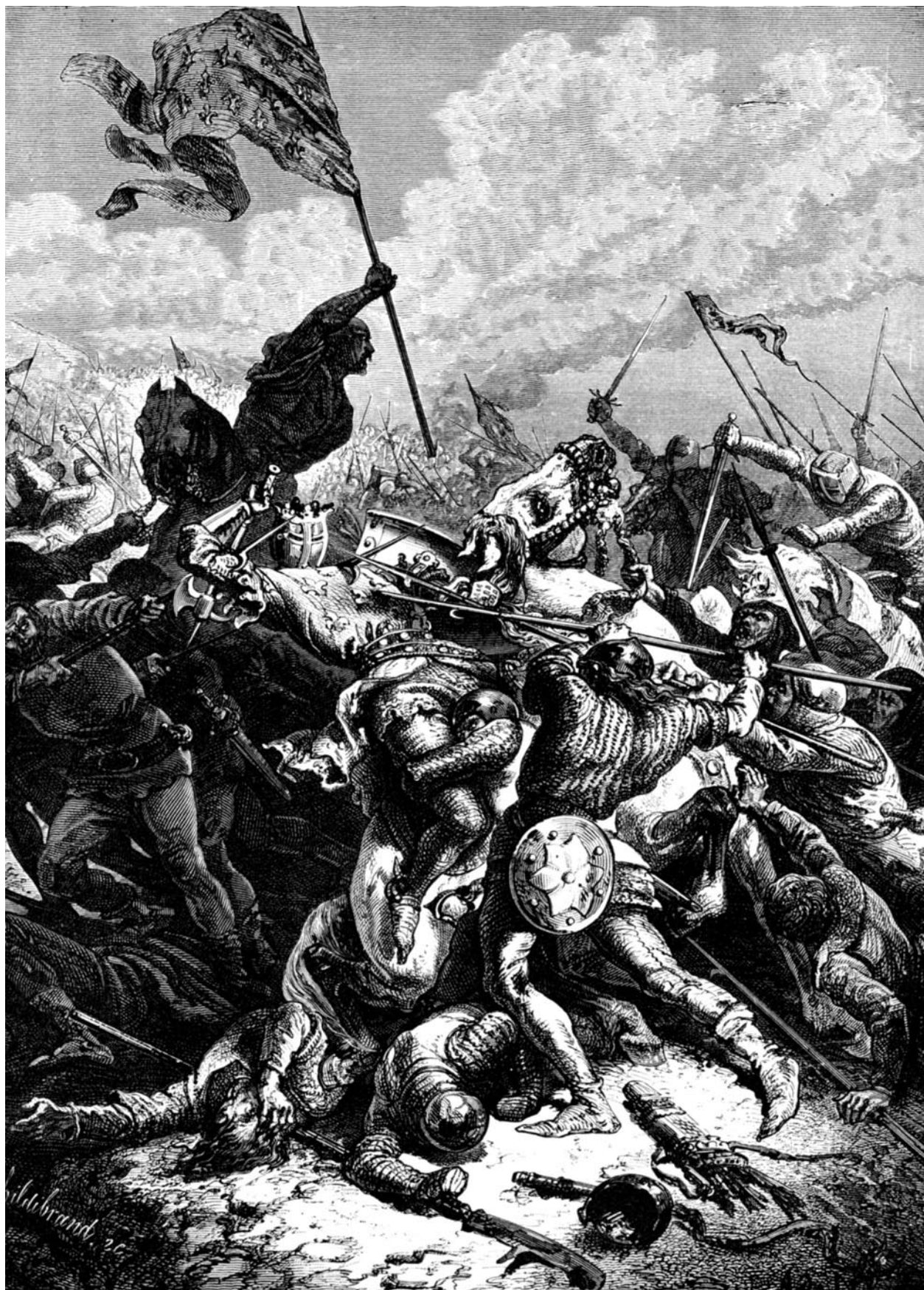
significant problem for medieval monarchs, and led them to hire mercenaries and pay a standing army.

Most PC knights are loyal warriors, so it's very common for their lords to ask them to fight in battles. It would be possible to play a knight who was never called up for war, but it might strain credibility, and would, in any case, neglect a fine opportunity for adventures. The lord will assume that his knight will serve out of simple loyalty. He may also assume that the other members of the party will do likewise. He may be wrong in that assumption, and negotiating for compensation with a lord who really wants your services, but believes that you should want to offer them for nothing, should be an entertaining roleplaying experience. Note that a knight demanding further compensation would be showing a failure of loyalty to his lord.

FIGHTING AS A PARTY

Player character knights are just as subject to the feudal levy as anyone else, at least in theory. In practice, it may be difficult for a lord to compel a high-level character to serve, but a loyal knight should be willing to do so anyway. It would be convenient if the knight's obligation to provide further soldiers exactly matched the number of characters in the party, so that, in his case, being called into the levy effectively means taking the party along to war. Characters who wouldn't serve voluntarily might well serve to keep a friend out of trouble.

Player character groups tend to have unusual, and militarily valuable, collections of skills. If the party includes a knight, and the other members are, at least, not opposed to the knight's lord, then the lord may well ask all the characters to assist him in his battles as a group. The lord may choose to treat such a group as a special forces unit, in which case the feudal levy is merely a way to send the party on missions that are standard adventures; this aspect of war serves to provide another way to send the party down the GM's latest dungeon.



Alternatively, the knight's lord may choose to use the party as an elite group on the battlefield. Feudal levies don't make for very organized armies, as few of the members have fought together in the past. They tend to be organized into groups that know each other, and then given general tasks for the battle at hand. A group of player characters could be charged with capturing the leaders of the opposing army, for example, as they're likely to be able to fight their way through an army composed of a peasant militia without taking many casualties.

An adventure on a battlefield would make an interesting change. The opposition need not be easily distinguishable from the troops on the characters' own side, and finding the target of their mission in the chaos of war would be an additional challenge. Safe areas to rest and heal would also be in short supply. Also, it was traditional in medieval warfare for high-ranking warriors to keep any booty they managed to seize. Thus, the player characters could even retain the treasure they find.

FIGHTING AS AN INDIVIDUAL

It's also possible that the other player characters simply don't want to join an army. In this case, the best option is probably to make use of troupe-style roleplaying. The knight still has to provide the rest of his feudal levy obligation, and if it's been set equal to the normal strength of the party, there will still be one character for each player. This would give everyone the chance to play a warrior of some kind, which could make for an interesting change of pace.

If the knight turns up with a normal levy, the chances are that he will be expected to serve as part of the standard army rather than as an elite unit. If he's of high level, he might be given command of a larger section of the army than his own levy. In this case, the members of the levy would serve as his bodyguards and assistants.

Medieval levies were not, as noted above, very well organized. Thus, a knight who simply joins the bulk of

the levy has a lot of freedom of action once the battle is joined. He will be expected to attack when he's told to, but after that he's very unlikely to receive any further orders. Knights are expected to undertake acts of personal heroism, so if he chooses to lead his levy through the fighting to seize the enemy command post, that's fine. As long as he concentrates on fighting the enemy rather than looting bodies, baggage trains, or cities, his lord will be pleased with him.

If the knight is placed in command of a larger section of the army, this disorganization becomes one of his main challenges. Obviously, an organized division of the army has the chance to have a far greater impact than might be expected. However, the knight would face considerable resistance to imposing that organization. Some protests would come from knights who simply didn't want to be told what to do during a battle. Dealing with them would require roleplaying before the battle, and at that time it might be best to have the other players controlling the recalcitrant knights. The main resistance would be practical, however. It's simply difficult to keep track of what's happening on a medieval battlefield, and even harder to get orders to the relevant people. Without magical assistance, it's almost certainly impossible. A knight who chooses the members of his feudal levy carefully might be able to impose a surprising amount of organization. If he uses his division intelligently, his actions could prove crucial in a great victory, which is just the sort of thing that makes a lord very pleased with his knight.

A STANDING ARMY

As mentioned above, some lords hire mercenaries or maintain a standing army in order to get around the problems posed when the feudal levy decides to go home in the middle of a campaign. Player character knights may choose to be part of such an army. This only really works as a campaign concept when all the players want to play members of an army, because soldiers have little free time for going on adventures.

Such a campaign concept doesn't require everyone to play warrior types, though. Magic is very useful in battle, healing magic particularly so, and every army needs scouts. The player characters could form a permanent elite unit under the nominal command of the knight, although in practice he's likely to be equal to the others. As noted above, such an elite unit should be sent on a wide range of missions so that the campaign doesn't become stale.

It's worth bearing in mind that every member of such a military party could be a knight, even if some are mages or priests. They're constantly displaying loyalty, they often require valor, and piety and love can be cultivated in an army just as easily as elsewhere.



SENSE MOTIVE CHECK:

LOYAL DISCERNMENT

A loyal knight wants to act in the best interests of his lord, and most also want to obey genuine commands from their lords, while avoiding obedience to false commands. The Sense Motive skill can be used to learn such things.

CHECK FOR FAKE ORDERS

If an NPC knowingly lies about the lord's commands, the knight may use Sense Motive normally against the liar's Bluff check.



LOYAL DISCERNMENT: "CHECK FOR FAKE ORDERS" TABLES

DC MODIFIERS

FAKE COMMAND IS ...	MODIFIER
Utterly opposed to the lord's beliefs and prior activities.	-20
Apparently opposed to the lord's beliefs and plans, but claiming to be part of a larger scheme.	-10
Very out of character for the lord, but with some justification for the aberration.	-5
Not particularly related to the lord's normal plans, but not opposed to his beliefs.	+0
Apparently advancing the lord's previous plans and interests.	+5
Confirmation of a command for which the character was waiting.	+10
Written by someone with 5 to 9 ranks in Bluff.	+2
Written by someone with 10 to 14 ranks in Bluff.	+4
Written by someone with 15 to 19 ranks in Bluff.	+6
Written by someone with 20 or more ranks in Bluff.	+8

SKILL MODIFIERS

CIRCUMSTANCES	MODIFIER
The character has only just taken service with the lord.	-5
Penalty for every step by which the character's alignment differs from the lord's.	-2
The character has been serving the lord, and receiving genuine orders, for more than one year, but less than five.	+2
The character has been serving the lord, and receiving genuine orders, for five years or more.	+5

Things are a little more difficult if the messenger conveying the lord's command doesn't know that the command is false. In that case, a simple use of Sense Motive will show that the messenger believes that he's telling the truth. In this case, the knight may use Sense Motive to get a hunch as to whether the command is genuine. The base DC for this test is 20, modified according to the following table.

The character also gets modifiers to his roll based on his knowledge of his lord, and how closely the character's interests match those of his lord. If you follow someone without accepting all his values, it's harder to see that something violates that person's beliefs.

All applicable modifiers stack. If the roll fails, the character thinks that a fake order is genuine.

If the character suspects a genuine order of being fake, invert the DC modifiers, so that the base DC for assessing a genuine order that seems to be opposed to the lord's beliefs and plans, but claims to be part of a wider scheme, is 30. The modifiers for the Bluff skill of the author do not apply, as the lord is not trying to bluff. The skill modifiers apply as normal. If the roll fails, the character thinks that the order is fake. If it succeeds, he thinks it's genuine.

These Sense Motive checks are only made if the player asks for them, and the rolls should be made in secret so that the player doesn't know whether the character thinks an order is genuine because he failed

to spot a fake, or because he correctly discerned that something was, surprisingly, genuine.

The character may not take 10 or take 20 on these checks.

CHECK THE LORD'S INTERESTS

knight may also wish to discern his lord's true interests in a situation. This is rather more difficult than discerning fake orders, and much less specific in its results. As an example, the knight might want to know whether it's in his lord's best interests to attend a peace conference, or whether he should go to war instead.

The knight can only attempt the roll if he's in a position to know his lord's best interests. In the example given, he needs experience with the enemy, both in combat and negotiation, so that he can assess the relative merits of the paths. A player may simply make a roll against a base DC of 20 to get a general feeling. A success tells him which plan is better; on a failure, he still doesn't know.

If the knight spends a day investigating the options, he may take 10 on the roll. A week's dedicated investigation allows him to take 20.

The base DC is modified depending on various features of the options.



LOYAL DISCERNMENT: "CHECK THE LORD'S INTERESTS" TABLE

SITUATION	MODIFIER
One option is vastly better than the others.	-10
One option is much better than the others.	-5
One option is better than the other.	+0
The better options are almost equally good.	+5
The better options are almost equally good, and the difference is made by long-term consequences.	+10
There are obscure or secret circumstances with a bearing on the quality of the options.	-5
All the circumstances bearing on the quality of the options are readily apparent.	+5

If there are several options, some of which are clearly worse while others are hard to distinguish, the character's result should be compared to the DC required to distinguish the worse ones first. If they're correctly rejected, compare the same result to the DC required to distinguish the better options to see if the character correctly discerns the best path.

In general, the interests of a lord and the interests of his realm coincide. If they don't, the knight must choose which he wishes to further. A Sense Motive check against a DC of 20 reveals whether the two sets of interests conflict, assuming that it's not obvious.

CHARACTER CONCEPTS

Loyalty influences your character concept in three principal ways: It determines to whom you choose to be loyal, how you choose to be loyal, and the relationship between loyalty and the other chivalric virtues. This section provides suggestions for how you can design a character for whom loyalty is important.

YOUR LORD

His lord's personality and demands will obviously play a large role in determining the actions of a loyal knight. However, as a PC knight's lord is usually an NPC, you should discuss your choice of lord with your GM. A good GM will provide the sort of lord that you want, to the extent that it fits his plans for the campaign — you can't play the last survivor of the elven race if the elves are doing very nicely in your GM's world, after all, and the same kinds of restrictions apply to your choice of lord.

When you're deciding on your lord's personality, you should remember that situations that are

unpleasant for your character are often the most fun to play. Thus, a lord who will occasionally make demands on the character is usually better than one who doesn't mind what your knight does. On the other hand, the relationship between your character and an NPC can't be allowed to completely dominate the campaign, so your lord must give at least some discretion. Some suggestions for concepts for your lord are given below.

CAPTAIN LORD

The captain gives orders, in some detail, and expects them to be obeyed. This is the sort of lord who orders you to clear the orcs out of a nearby dungeon, or to rescue the kidnapped ambassador. This allows the GM to send your character off on the adventures he has planned, and is a good choice if you aren't entirely sure how you want your character to fit into the game world. As you become more confident and want to carry out your own plans, your lord can also change to allow you more initiative. The captain lord works best if the other player characters also have some reason to do what he wants.

DAREDEVIL LORD

Daredevil lords do not believe in having their servants do anything that they themselves are unwilling to do. As a result, they often get themselves into trouble, and need to be helped or rescued. Loyalty to such a lord often requires the knight to ignore direct orders not to help, and provides many, many opportunities for adventure. The GM needs to exercise some care in this, however, so that it doesn't take over the campaign, and so that you, and your knight, don't get sick of rescuing your idiot lord *again*.

DELEGATOR LORD

The delegator trusts his underlings' judgment, and so hands them large tasks and expects them to get on with it. Thus, a knight might be asked to pacify monster-infested mountains, or to protect a border province threatened by raiders, or to conclude an alliance with a distant and semi-legendary kingdom. Within that task, the knight has complete freedom of action. This can work very well, because the other player characters could well have their own reasons for wanting the same thing as the knight's lord, without having to be too closely tied to him.

DISINHERITED LORD

The disinherited lord is the rightful ruler of a realm, but has been deprived of his station by hostile forces. This may be a recent thing, or the disinherited lord might be the scion of a long line of disinherited lords. In either case, the primary aim of his knights is restoring him to power. Your character could be last knight loyal to him, or one of a select band. The lord's lands could be well known and ruled by usurpers, or his entire country could be lost somehow. This provides many opportunities for adventure.

INCOMPETENT LORD

An incompetent lord is no good at ruling. Knights often find that they have to ignore his orders, because his orders are stupid, and the most difficult thing can be convincing the lord that the really good plan that saved the day was actually his idea.

Loyalty to an incompetent lord can be difficult to sustain. Thus, it's best if there's some good, and temporary, reason for the incompetence. Such reasons include illness, enchantment, or extreme youth. The traditions of the realm might not allow a formal guardian, so that in theory the lord's orders must still be obeyed. Part of the knight's

task, then, is to make sure that the lord still has a realm when he recovers or grows up.

INSPIRATIONAL LORD

Inspirational lords are great leaders, and superb at what they do. However, they don't issue many orders. Instead, they expect those who are loyal to them to emulate them, and carry out great deeds. These lords have preferences among bold actions, and there are usually some things of which they don't approve at all. However, within that limitation the knight has a great deal of freedom of action. Inspirational lords rarely issue orders, but when they do the orders are of great importance. This is a good concept if the other characters don't want to be tied at all closely to the lord, as it gives your knight a great deal of freedom, along with occasional plot hooks.

PLAYER CHARACTER LORD

Another possibility is to take another player character as your character's lord. You should only do this if you trust the player not to take advantage of the situation, as, in character, you really ought to obey her character's orders. This only really works with daredevil, disinherited, or similar kinds of lords, because the other player character will want to go along on adventures. However, it does remove most of the disadvantages of the daredevil lord, particularly as another player character should be quite competent, and thus is unlikely to need rescuing too often.

Obviously, you must discuss this concept with the other players as well as the GM. If the GM and players are happy to have one of the PCs be a lord or the heir to a lost kingdom, then the dynamics of the relationship between your knight and his lord could provide a very interesting twist to the campaign.

PATHS OF LOYALTY

There are different ways in which a knight can be loyal to his lord. To a certain extent, these are independent of the lord's personality, although some are more appropriate for one kind of lord than another. In this matter, you have a much freer choice.

BARON KNIGHT

You are the lord of a smaller domain for which you owe fealty to your lord. You command troops and servants of your own, and most of the time your loyalty involves nothing more than running your lands well and paying your taxes on time. However, if your lord does need support, you're expected to play a major role in return for the benefits he has conferred upon you.

This concept isn't really appropriate in a standard campaign, as it ties the knight to his land. However, if all the player characters have reasons to want to defend that land and make it prosperous, it can form the basis of a very interesting campaign in which the problems come to the characters, rather than vice versa. While the concept might seem more appropriate to experienced characters, a new character could inherit a fief at a relatively young age. Young heirs tend to be faced with many problems as others try to take advantage of perceived weakness, so this could provide an exciting start to a campaign.

BODYGUARD KNIGHT

You're concerned with protecting your lord from harm. You fight alongside him, ward off attacks, and foil plotted assassinations. You may also find yourself protecting your lord from himself. This concept works best with player character lords, as otherwise you would have to leave the lord to go on adventures, which wouldn't fit the concept. However, you could change the concept slightly, so

that your knight protects the lord on the rare occasions on which he leaves his castle, in which case you can go on other adventures in between his excursions.

COUNSELOR KNIGHT

You advise your lord, helping him to make wise decisions. The counselor is a good concept for non-military knights, as it doesn't necessarily involve lots of fighting. This concept is also particularly suitable if your group is planning a political campaign, but it can be used more generally. A counselor needs accurate information if he's to offer good advice, and some information might be best gained on an adventure. Indeed, a counselor might go to investigate a little-known region on his lord's behalf, return to advise on the best way to deal with it, and then lead the force that implements the lord's will. Such a sequence would fit well into a campaign.

You could also mix elements of the counselor and the bodyguard, and play a knight who tries to protect his lord from the wiles of evil advisers. This would fit best with the incompetent lord, but could fit many of the others as well.

SOLDIER KNIGHT

Knights are warriors, and loyal knights fight for their lords. The soldier molds his loyalty around this concept, fighting in his lord's battles at every opportunity. He may choose to join the lord's army (as discussed above), or may fight his enemies alone or with a small group. However pursues it, combat is at the center of his conception of loyalty.

THE OTHER VIRTUES

A knight who emphasizes loyalty must still have an attitude towards the other chivalric virtues. This section discusses the consequences of putting the

various other virtues second or last in order of importance.

VALOR

A knight who ranks valor second after loyalty is likely to be a favored servant of his lord. He is most likely a skilled warrior, and he's willing to use that skill in the service of his lord. However, he doesn't usually let concerns about valor get in the way of obeying his lord's commands. Such knights will set ambushes if their lords so command, and will retreat if that best serves their lord's interests. They won't like doing so, and may try to prove their valor afterwards, but that merely provides material for entertaining roleplaying.

A loyal knight who regards valor as the least important virtue is likely to drift into the post of counselor or baron, supporting his lord at some distance from the battlefield. Since valor is still important to him, however, he will also try to maintain his reputation, which may involve taking the field himself on some occasions, particularly if a notoriously powerful enemy is involved. This provides a good in-character motivation for an experienced knight to engage in politics most of the time, but to go into battle when the GM brings particularly powerful opponents in for a showpiece combat.

PIETY

A knight who chooses piety as the second most important virtue after loyalty is in for a lot of trouble. As this means a lot of entertaining roleplaying, it's an excellent choice for a player character. Unless the knight's lord is a paragon of virtue in the eyes of the knight's deity, there will be conflicts between the lord's interests and those of the deity. Even if the lord is such a paragon, the knight might still see his duty to his deity in different terms from his lord. Since loyalty is more important to this knight, he will usually serve his lord rather than his god, but he would be keen to redeem himself in his

deity's eyes afterwards; he might ask his god's priests to send him on a quest to atone, for example. Sometimes, of course, he would decide that his lord wants him to go more against his god than he can justify, in which case the knight finds himself in a difficult conflict with a lord to whom he is highly loyal.

If piety is the least important of the virtues, the knight will have few constraints on the ways in which he serves his lord. As long as he can be valorous and need not harm or shame his beloved, the knight will take his lord's commands over those of his deity. He may try to mollify his god by going on quests, but he's unlikely to be in high favor with the deity unless his lord is particularly pious.

LOVE

As with piety, love can cause problems if it's ranked just under loyalty. While a knight's obligations to his beloved are rather different from those to his lord (see Chapter Five: Love), the two sets of requirements can still conflict. Since these knights do hold loyalty to be more important, they risk offending their beloved to satisfy their lord. A knight's beloved is likely to be more fickle than his deity, and so the knight could find himself rejected on account of his loyalty to his lord. As this is a very serious problem from the perspective of love, becoming reconciled with the beloved might take precedence, for a time, over the demands of loyalty — which could lead to the knight falling out of favor with his lord, and thus generate further problems and potential adventures.

A loyal knight who regards love as the least important virtue is likely to seek a nominal beloved among his lord's relatives, so that he can keep up appearances without endangering his loyalty. The lord's sister or daughter are the obvious choices, but given the way that courtly love is supposed to work, the lord's wife is not an impossible choice. Of course, all of these choices have the potential to

cause problems if love becomes more important for either the knight or his beloved.

UNIMPORTANT LOYALTY

Knights who regard loyalty as unimportant may not, in fact, have a lord. While to claim that none is needed would be to reject loyalty entirely, a knight could claim that he's looking for someone worthy of his loyalty. Alternatively, he could declare that he was loyal to the true king of some nation whose royal family was lost years ago, although in that case there's always the risk that the true king will pop up and claim the knight's allegiance. Either of these situations would be ideal for a knight errant.

If such a knight does have a lord, there are two primary possibilities. The first is that the lord gives his knights a lot of freedom of action, so that the knight can claim to be loyal to his lord without it having too much influence on his daily actions. Alternatively, the knight could be constantly getting into trouble with a more demanding lord. While the knight is unlikely to enjoy this, it could be a great deal of fun to play.

Remember that knights who regard loyalty as the least of the virtues are still, in general, loyal to their lords, and if the lord is in serious trouble or danger, they will help. Thus, this attitude provides the GM with a hook to drag you into occasional adventures, but if it's over-used it's entirely in character for your knight to refuse to help yet again.

LOYAL ADVENTURES

Many loyal adventures involve the knight responding to the requests of his lord. This is simply the nature of loyalty. However, loyalty isn't a purely reactive virtue, so there are still some opportunities for the knight to take the initiative, and for loyalty to influence his normal behavior.

LOYALTY IN THE COURSE OF DUTY

Sometimes your knight will be on an adventure in obedience to his lord's instructions. In that case, simply doing whatever is necessary to succeed is a display of loyalty. However, this would not distinguish the knight from the other characters, and not all adventures will be undertaken at the lord's behest. How can you display your knight's loyalty in play?

In general, loyalty is shown by basing your decisions on your lord's interests rather than your own. In an adventure, this might manifest in choosing to take prisoners rather than fighting to the death, and then trying to return those prisoners to your lord for questioning. Alternatively, you might be reluctant to complete an adventure because it would go against your lord's interests. In this case, the other player characters will probably have to persuade you. Your negotiations with defeated enemies should include conditions that benefit your lord as well as yourself, as well, so if you're hired to drive a band of orcs out of a region that isn't ruled by your lord, you should require that they not enter your lord's lands as well.

A good way to display your loyalty is through gifts. Rather than keeping all the treasure for yourself, you should give some to your lord. These gifts should be impressive single items rather than piles of money; jewelry and magic items are particularly appropriate, but your lord may have his own preferences. If the rest of the party is not particularly loyal to your lord, these gifts have to come out of your share. In the long run, however, this should not be to your disadvantage, because your lord should give you gifts of approximately equal value. Thus, the long-term effect could well be that you trade items you can't use for items you can, but because you do it through an exchange of gifts with your lord it serves to make your loyalty prominent in play.

ACTIVE LOYALTY

There may be tasks which, while dangerous, would be greatly to your lord's benefit if successfully completed. Indeed, it would be wise for the GM to design the game world so that there are chances like this. Fortunately, most adventuring worlds naturally produce such opportunities, so the GM won't need to work very hard. A loyal knight might well decide to attempt such a task on his own initiative.

Unlike valor, loyalty isn't enhanced by doing things alone. On the contrary, it's a strong manifestation of loyalty if you maximize your chances of success by taking all your allies along. Thus, there are fewer problems from party splitting than are presented by valorous adventures.

The knight still needs to convince the other player characters that they want to help out, though. Ideally, the other player characters shouldn't be actively hostile toward the knight's lord, as that's likely to cause major problems. However, they don't need to be particularly loyal to him, either, so the knight's persuasive task might not be easy. Roleplaying the knight's attempt to convince the other characters should be fun, even (or perhaps particularly) if he doesn't succeed. Even if all the players want to go on the adventure, it might be amusing to have their characters be reluctant, so that they eventually agree to go just to stop the knight from pestering them.

GAME MASTERING LOYALTY

Loyalty is a real boon to the GM, as it provides an obvious hook for getting the character involved in the adventure you've designed — simply have the knight's lord ask him to go. You do, however, need to be careful not to over-use this device, as the player may get sick of having his character ordered around, and the other players might not want their characters to spend their whole lives obeying the knight's lord.

You should also try to bear the relationship between the knight and his lord in mind when designing adventures. Provide opportunities for the knight to act loyally, and also set up situations where there's some conflict between loyalty and self-interest. It's good to occasionally include a surprising opportunity to act in the knight's lord's interests in an adventure that appeared to be unrelated, in part because it makes your adventures seem connected to their wider world, but also because such events can provide an in-character justification for the most loyal knight to go on adventures that don't appear to serve his lord's interests.

As long as the knight is loyal to an NPC lord, which is the usual case, loyalty presents few problems for the GM, who controls the dominant partner in the relationship. You should treat the knight's lord as a tool to be used, in moderation, to guide the campaign and increase everyone's enjoyment.

PIETY

You must place your trust in the clergy. Nothing you see on earth is like a priest. His lips pronounce the Passion that nullifies our damnation. ... When a priest so guards his conduct that he can perform his office chastely, how could he lead a life more holy?

— Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, Chapter 9

DEFINING PIETY

Piety is the virtue of devotion to your deity. As such, many of its details depend on the deity your knight chooses to worship, but there are still some general things that can be said.

In many respects, piety is very similar to loyalty, with the deity in the role of the lord. One major difference is that deities rarely issue specific orders, even in fantasy games, so that piety is much more concerned with living the kind of life of which the deity approves than it is with particular acts of obedience. Piety tends to guide a knight's general behavior, rather than the details of particular actions.

Another general aspect of piety is respect for priests of your deity. This doesn't necessarily imply obedience, particularly not obedience to commands that go beyond the god's guidelines, but it does mean that a pious knight will not attack priests of his deity, and will treat them politely when they meet. Priests usually have considerable influence with pious knights; while the knight might not obey their commands, he will certainly listen to their advice.

Respect for priests extends to respect for the deity's temples and other holy items, as well. Pious knights willingly defend such locations, or go on quests to free them from hostile occupation.

Beyond these generalizations, the actions encouraged by piety depend entirely on the deity in question. Because of this, this chapter will use two sample deities — the nature god Pandril and the sun goddess Asron — to illustrate the points made.

It's also worth remembering that a knight's piety need not be restricted to a single deity. If a group of deities works closely together in the game world, as in a pantheon, the knight could choose to serve the group rather than an individual deity within it. This makes little difference to game play, so the rest of this chapter will only explicitly consider the case of a single deity.



PRESTIGE CLASS:

THE PIOUS KNIGHT

Pious knights serve their deity faithfully and well, putting service to their god above the other virtues of chivalry. The nature of a pious knight varies a great deal depending on the nature of his deity, and the abilities of the prestige class depend on the domains of the deity in question.

Hit Die: d10

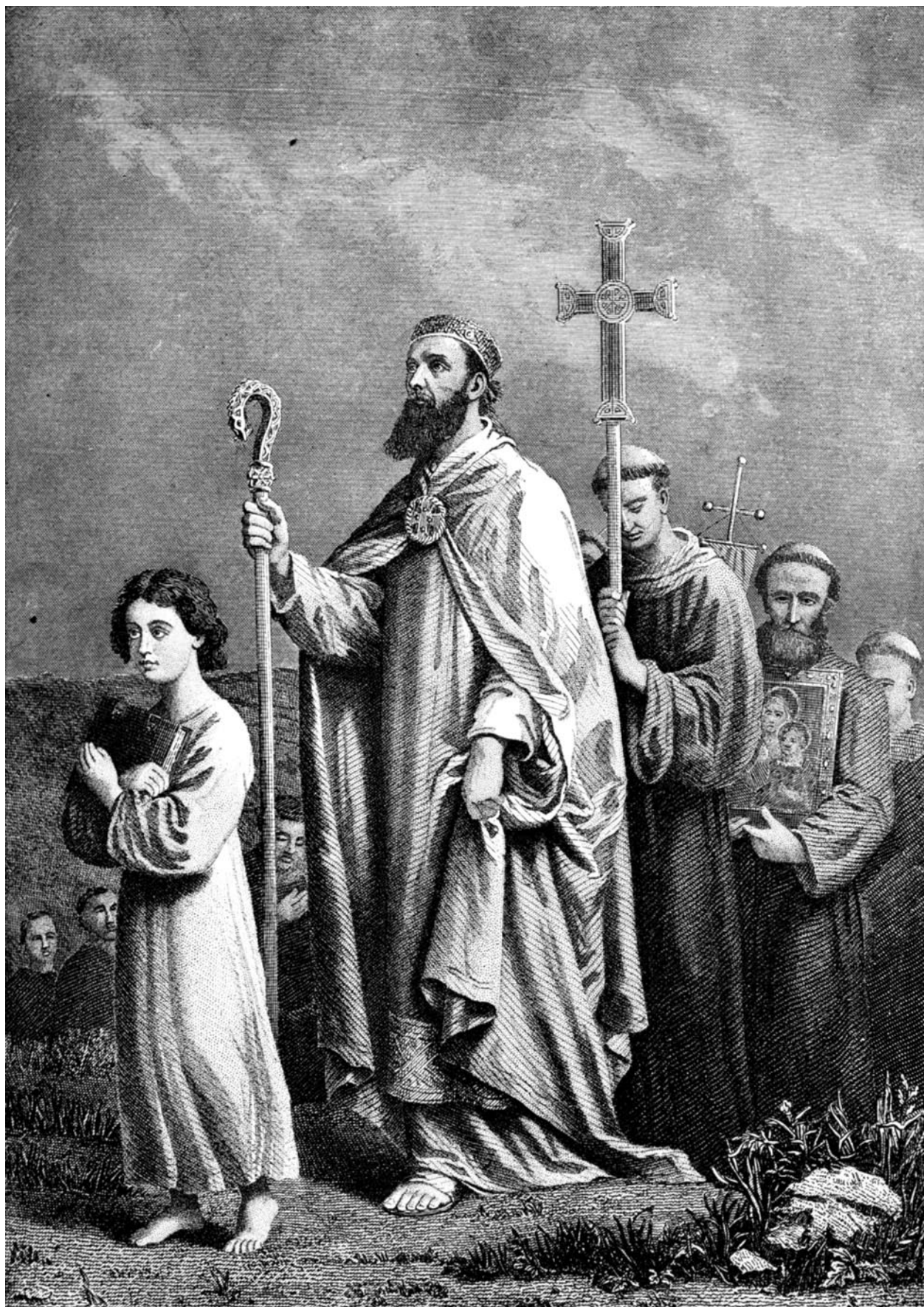
REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a pious knight, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +7

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 3 ranks

Alignment: Within one step of the deity.



Special: Choose a deity to follow. Meet the requirements of your two chosen Domain Abilities, as listed under the Pious Knight Domain Abilities section. Also, join a pious order of chivalry.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for the pious knight prestige class (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the pious knight prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: The pious knight is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all types of armor, and shields.

Domain Abilities: Pious knights get special abilities based on the domains of their deity. Each pious knight must choose two of his deity's domains, just as a cleric must, and must meet the requirements for those domains before entering the prestige class. The pious

knight gains a single domain ability at each of 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th levels. The first ability of a domain must be taken before the second, and the first two before the third. The pious knight can only choose abilities from two domains, and these domains are fixed when the knight enters the class. Pious knights do not gain the Granted Power of the domain, nor do they gain any spellcasting ability.

PIOUS KNIGHT DOMAIN ABILITIES

The following abilities are available to pious knights.

AIR DOMAIN

Requirement: Acrobatic feat

First Ability (Ex): Armor Check Penalty does not apply to Jump checks. All Jump DCs are halved, so that the DC for a running long jump is equal to half the distance jumped, in feet, while the DC for a standing jump is equal to the distance jumped in feet. The DC for a running high jump is equal to twice the height reached, while that for a standing high jump is equal to four times the height reached. The DC to hop up is 5.

THE PIOUS KNIGHT

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Domain Ability
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Domain Ability
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	Domain Ability
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Domain Ability
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Domain Ability

Second Ability (Su): Twice per day the knight can fly, as if under the influence of a *fly* spell cast by a wizard of twice his pious knight prestige class level. Starting flight is a free action.

Third Ability (Su): Once per day the knight can assume the form of a Small, Medium, or Large air elemental as if using the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 1 hour per character level, or until he changes back. Changing form is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The new form's Hit Dice can't exceed the knight's character level. The knight gains all the elemental's extraordinary, supernatural, and spell-like abilities, and its feats, but retains his own creature type. The knight can also fly, as the second Air Domain Ability, four times per day.

ANIMAL DOMAIN

Requirement: Animal Affinity feat

First Ability (Ex): The knight can use Wild Empathy as the ranger special ability. Levels in the pious knight prestige class stack with levels of other classes granting this ability.

Second Ability (Sp): The knight gains the ability to summon a Special Mount. This works exactly as for a paladin of the knight's character level.

Third Ability (Su): The knight can take the form of a Tiny, Small, Medium, Large, or Huge animal as if using the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 1 hour per character level, or until he changes back. Changing form is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The new form's Hit Dice can't exceed the knight's character level. The form must be that of an animal with which the knight is familiar. The knight loses the ability to speak while in animal form, though he can communicate with animals of the same general grouping as his new form.

CHAOS DOMAIN

Requirement: Chaotic alignment, Lightning Reflexes feat

First Ability (Su): The knight can invoke the *protection from law* spell as a free action. This spell acts as if cast by a cleric of the knight's character level, and may be invoked a number of times per day equal to his pious knight prestige class level. For example, a 7th-level fighter/3rd-level pious knight with this ability may invoke *protection from law* three times per day, and each invocation lasts for ten minutes.

Second Ability (Su): Twice per day the knight can blink, as if under the influence of a *blink* spell cast by a wizard of his character level. Starting the blink period is a free action.

Third Ability (Sp/Su): Once per day the knight may shapechange, as if under the influence of a *shapechange* spell cast by a wizard of his character level. In addition, the knight may use the *blink* effect four times per day.

CHIVALRY DOMAIN

Requirement: One of the feats of chivalry listed in this book. That is, any feat listed under Feats of Valor (Chapter Two), Feats of Loyalty (Chapter Three), Feats of Piety (Chapter Four), or Feats of Love (Chapter Five).

First Ability: The character takes one of the feats of chivalry listed in this book as a bonus feat.

Second Ability: The character takes one of the feats of chivalry listed in this book as a bonus feat.

Third Ability: The character takes two of the feats of chivalry listed in this book as bonus feats.

DEATH DOMAIN

Requirement: Cleave feat

First Ability (Su): Once per day, the knight can attempt to Smite a living creature with a melee attack. He adds twice his Strength modifier, if positive, to the attack roll, and if the attack hits it deals 2 extra hit points of damage for every pious knight prestige class level. For example, a 10th-level fighter/6th-level pious knight armed with a longsword would do 1d8+12 points of damage, plus any additional bonuses for high Strength or magical effects that would normally apply. Undead and constructs are not living creatures.

Second Ability (Su): Whenever the knight kills an opponent, he gains temporary hit points equal to the damage he dealt with the killing blow. These hit points last for one hour, or until the knight next kills an opponent, whichever is shorter. It's possible for the knight's current temporary hit points to drop when he kills his next opponent.

Third Ability (Su): Three times per day the knight can declare a successful melee critical hit against a living opponent to be a Death Strike. The opponent dies instantly, with no saving throw. Spell Resistance does apply; use the knight's character level for the caster level check. The knight declares the Death Strike as a free action after the critical hit succeeds.

DESTRUCTION DOMAIN

Requirement: Improved Sunder feat

First Ability (Ex): Any damage the knight deals to an object, after Hardness is taken into account, is doubled.

Second Ability (Su): Once per day the knight may choose to have a successful melee attack act as a *disintegrate* spell cast by a wizard of the knight's character level, targeted on the creature or thing struck. The decision is a free action.

Third Ability (Sp): Once per day the knight may cause an earthquake, as by an *earthquake* spell cast by a cleric of the knight's character level.

EARTH DOMAIN

Requirement: Endurance feat

First Ability: The knight gains Stonecunning as the dwarven racial ability, but granting insight bonuses. If the knight is a dwarf, the bonuses to Search checks stack, and he can notice unusual stonework if he comes within 20 feet of it.

Second Ability (Su): The knight can have *stoneskin*, as the spell, for a certain amount of time per day. He can summon and dismiss the protection as free actions, and the total time he can remain protected in one day is equal to ten minutes per character level. The *stoneskin* can absorb a maximum of 10 hit points per character level per day, with an absolute maximum of 150 hit points. The knight knows how long the *stoneskin* has been active, and how much damage it has absorbed.

Third Ability (Su): **Third Ability (Su):** Once per day the knight can assume the form of a Small, Medium, or Large earth elemental as if using the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 1 hour per character level, or until he changes back. Changing form is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The new form's Hit Dice can't exceed the knight's character level. The knight gains all the elemental's extraordinary, supernatural, and spell-like abilities, and its feats, but retains his own creature type.

EVIL DOMAIN

Requirement: Evil alignment, Persuasive feat

First Ability (Su): The knight can invoke the *protection from good* spell as a free action. This spell acts as if cast by a cleric of the knight's character level, and may be invoked a number of times per day equal to the knight's pious knight prestige class level. For example, a 7th-level fighter/3rd-level pious knight with this ability may invoke *protection from good* three times per day, and each invocation lasts for ten minutes.

Second Ability (Su): Once per day the knight can inspire fear in all who see him. Those who see the knight must make a Will save against a DC of 10 + pious knight class level + knight's Charisma modifier. The effect depends on the result of the save and the relative power of the knight and subject. The fear effect lasts for ten minutes per pious knight prestige class level.

RELATIVE POWER	SAVE FAILED	SAVE MADE
Victim's HD less than half knight's character level	Panicked	Frightened
Victim's HD from half to equal to the knight's character level	Frightened	Shaken
Victim's HD greater than knight's character level	Shaken	No Effect

Third Ability (Sp): The knight can cast *unholy aura* once per day as a cleric of his character level, without the need for a focus.

FIRE DOMAIN

Requirement: Combat Reflexes feat

First Ability (Ex): The knight gains Fire Resistance 5. The first five points of fire damage that he takes from fire in any round are negated. This also means that the knight takes no nonlethal damage from high temperatures.

Second Ability (Su): The knight can sheathe his melee weapon in flames at will. These flames do +1d8 fire damage to anyone struck by the weapon, and can inflict up to 10 hit points per pious knight prestige class level in a single day. Once the flames have inflicted their maximum damage, the knight can no longer summon them until the next day.

Third Ability (Su): Once per day the knight can assume the form of a Small, Medium, or Large fire ele-

mental as if using the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 1 hour per character level, or until he changes back. Changing form is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The new form's Hit Dice can't exceed the knight's character level. The knight gains all the elemental's extraordinary, supernatural, and spell-like abilities, and its feats, but retains his own creature type.

GOOD DOMAIN

Requirement: Good alignment, Negotiator feat

First Ability (Su): The knight can invoke the *protection from evil* spell as a free action. This spell acts as if cast by a cleric of the knight's character level, and may be invoked a number of times per day equal to the knight's pious knight prestige class level. For example, a 7th-level fighter/3rd-level pious knight with this ability may invoke *protection from evil* three times per day, and each invocation lasts for ten minutes.

Second Ability (Sp): Twice per day the knight may cast *prayer* as if it were cast by a cleric of the knight's character level.

Third Ability (Su): The knight can Turn any evil creatures, just as a good cleric may Turn undead. The knight may make a number of Turning attempts equal to 3 + Charisma modifier per day, and Turns as a cleric of twice his pious knight prestige class level.

HEALING DOMAIN

Requirement: Skill Focus (Heal) feat

First Ability (Su): The knight can heal damage as a paladin's Lay on Hands ability, except that he can heal a total number of points equal to 2 x his pious knight level x his Constitution bonus.

Second Ability (Su): The knight can heal any damage he has inflicted in melee as a free action, as long as the damage has not killed the target. He may do this an unlimited number of times per day.

Third Ability (Sp): Once per day the knight can cast *true resurrection* as if it was cast by a cleric of the knight's character level.

KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN

Requirement: Skill Focus (any Knowledge) feat

First Ability: All Knowledge skills are class skills for the character. He immediately gains 20 skill points which must be put into Knowledge skills, and from this point on gains 2 additional skill points per level, which must be spent on Knowledges.

Second Ability (Sp): The knight can cast *commune* once per day, as a cleric of the knight's character level.

Third Ability (Sp): The knight can cast *legend lore* up to twice per day, without the need for a focus or material components. If one casting of *legend lore* takes more than a day, the knight may cast the spell again, with a different subject, without interrupting the first spell.

LAW DOMAIN

Requirement: Lawful alignment, Iron Will feat

First Ability (Su): The knight can invoke the *protection from chaos* spell as a free action. This spell acts as if cast by a cleric of the knight's character level, and may be invoked a number of times per day equal to the knight's pious knight prestige class level. For example, a 7th-level fighter/3rd-level pious knight with this ability may invoke *protection from chaos* three times per day, and each invocation lasts for ten minutes.

Second Ability (Sp): The knight can cast *dictum* once per day as a cleric of his character level.

Third Ability (Sp): The knight can cast *shield of law* once per day as a cleric of his character level, without the need for a focus.

LUCK DOMAIN

Requirement: Improved Critical feat

First Ability (Ex): Once per day you may reroll a die roll before the GM says whether it's a success or failure. You must take the second roll, even if it's worse than the first. This is the same effect as the Granted Power for clerics with this domain.

Second Ability (Su): Once per day you can reroll a failure. Unlike the first Luck Domain ability, you choose to make the reroll after the GM has announced that the result is a failure. You must take the result of the second roll, even if it's worse than the first.

Third Ability (Ex): Once per day you may roll three sets of dice for one roll, and take the best result.

MAGIC DOMAIN

Requirement: Magical Affinity feat

First Ability: The knight can prepare spells as a wizard. He needs a spellbook, and must make Spellcraft rolls as a wizard in order to learn spells in the first place. He can prepare a number of spells with total levels not exceeding his character level, and no spell may be greater than 2nd level. The knight casts the spells in exactly the same manner as a wizard, including the arcane spell failure chance for wearing armor or using a shield. Note that Spellcraft is not necessarily a class skill for the knight. If the knight already has levels of an arcane spellcasting class, these abilities are separate. Spells that a wizard/pious knight already knows may be prepared by using either wizard abilities or pious knight abilities.

Second Ability: The knight can prepare total levels of spells up to twice his character level, and no spell may exceed 5th level.

Third Ability: The knight can prepare total levels of spells up to three times his character level, and no spell may exceed 7th level.

PLANT DOMAIN

Requirement: Self-Sufficient feat

First Ability: The knight can move unhindered through any sort of undergrowth, as for a druid using Woodland Stride. In addition, he gets a +10 insight bonus to any skill checks involving plants.

Second Ability (Su): The knight can invoke *barkskin* to give him +5 to his natural armor. The effect can be invoked and dismissed as a free action, but can't be in effect for more than 10 minutes per character level in a single day.

Third Ability (Su): Once per day the knight can assume the form of a Tiny, Small, Medium, Large, or Huge plant creature as if using the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 1 hour per character level, or until he changes back. Changing form is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The new form's Hit Dice can't exceed the knight's character level.

PROTECTION DOMAIN

Requirement: Dodge feat

First Ability (Ex): The knight gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC.

Second Ability (Ex): The knight gains Resistance to natural attacks and mundane weapons equal to half his pious knight prestige class level. He ignores his Resistance level in hit points each time he takes damage from a natural attack or mundane weapon.

Third Ability (Su): The knight gains Spell Resistance equal to 15 + his pious knight prestige class level.

STRENGTH DOMAIN

Requirement: Power Attack feat

First Ability (Su): Once per day the knight can gain an enhancement bonus to Strength equal to twice his pious knight prestige class level. This bonus lasts for a single round.

Second Ability: Once per day the knight can automatically succeed at a Strength-based task, without the need to roll. A Strength-based task is one in which the relevant roll is modified by the Strength modifier. This only applies to tasks that succeed or fail, so it does apply to melee attacks and does not apply to damage rolls. The success is treated as the bare minimum, and doesn't threaten a critical on a combat roll, even if the character could only hit on a 20. The task must be one that the character could conceivably do, although it may be realistically impossible for him. The DC must not be more than 30 greater than the character's bonus to the roll. Thus, a knight with +15 to hit could use this ability to hit a creature with an AC of 45 once.

Third Ability: The knight's Strength score increases by 4 points. This is simple increase, like the increase from gaining levels, and thus stacks with everything.

SUN DOMAIN

Requirement: Alertness feat

First Ability (Su): The knight can Turn undead as a cleric of twice his pious knight prestige class level.

Second Ability (Ex): The knight can't be surprised or caught flat-footed while he's in sunlight. In addition, he can't be dazzled, overheated, or otherwise harmed by sunlight, including *sunbeam*, *sunburst*, and similar spells.

Third Ability (Sp): Once per day the knight can cast *sunburst* as a cleric of his character level.

TRAVEL DOMAIN

Requirement: Run feat



First Ability (Ex): The knight's movement speed is not reduced by any mundane hindrances, such as encumbrance, heavy armor, difficult terrain, or poor weather. Magical hindrances still have their normal effects.

Second Ability (Sp): The knight can cast *find the path* once per day, as a cleric of his character level.

Third Ability (Sp): The knight can cast *greater teleport* three times per day, as a wizard of his character level.

TRICKERY DOMAIN

Requirement: Deceitful feat

First Ability (Su): The knight gains a +10 competence bonus to all Bluff, Disguise, and Forgery checks. Any Sense Motive checks made concerning the knight suffer a -10 penalty unless they're opposed by the knight's Bluff check (in which case the +10 bonus to the knight's Bluff ability has the same effect). The knight has Spell Resistance of 10 + character level against spells that try to penetrate his deceptions.

Second Ability (Su): The knight can change his appearance at will, as through the *alter self* spell. Magical attempts to pierce his disguise are countered by the Spell Resistance granted by the first Trickery Domain Ability.

Third Ability (Sp): Once per day the knight may shapechange, as if under the influence of a *shapechange* spell cast by a wizard of his character level.

WAR DOMAIN

Requirement: Weapon Focus feat

First Ability: The character gains a bonus feat, chosen from the list of fighter bonus feats.

Second Ability: The character gains a bonus feat, chosen from the list of fighter bonus feats.

Third Ability: The character gains two bonus feats, chosen from the list of fighter bonus feats.

WATER DOMAIN

Requirement: Skill Focus (Swim) feat

First Ability (Ex): The knight can breathe normally under water.

Second Ability (Su): While under water, the knight can move as if under the influence of a *fly* spell, with same speed and maneuverability as the *fly* spell grants in the air. This allows the knight to walk on water, as well.

Third Ability (Su): Once per day the knight can assume the form of a Small, Medium, or Large water elemental as if using the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 1 hour per character level, or until he changes back. Changing form is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The new form's Hit Dice can't exceed the knight's character level. The knight gains all the elemental's extraordinary, supernatural, and spell-like abilities, and its feats, but retains his own creature type.

PANDRIL'S KNIGHTS

Pious followers of the nature god Pandril rank loyalty as the lowest of the chivalric virtues, almost without exception. Loyalty ties you into the structures of civilized society, and takes you away from the rhythms of nature. As his knights can't ignore loyalty altogether, they swear fealty to lords who roam the wilderness or live as much in harmony with it as possible. Even then, their lord's commands are given less weight than most knights would think proper.

Love tends to be the second most important virtue, as love is a part of nature, and the powerful tides of passion are, in many ways, like the storms and currents of the natural world. The loves of a Pandrillar knight are

stormy affairs, unpredictable and passionately lived. This makes them fine subjects for knightly tales, and so most hear of Pandrillar knights in the context of love.

The knights' attitude to valor is rather ambivalent. On the one hand, courage is very important, as is fighting without concern for personal safety. On the other, nature doesn't always play fair. Thus, Pandrillar knights are usually valiant, but their lapses from this virtue can be spectacular, including the use of poisoned weapons, traps, and assassination.

Pandrillar knights rarely use the quarterstaff as their primary weapon, as it requires two hands and thus precludes a shield. They also rarely wear shiny plate armor, preferring not to clean the effects of natural hazards off too quickly. Nevertheless, they care properly for both armor and weapons, as they are not generally stupid.

Pandrill's priests are often druids, and usually wander rather than having a fixed temple. His knights are not expected to show particular loyalty to the god's agents, although they are expected to show respect, even if through respectful disagreement. Just as parts of nature don't always agree with one another, so the servants of Pandril have their conflicts.

As might be expected, rangers are very common among Pandril's knights. Paladins are rare, as their commitment to transcendent goodness doesn't fit well with the nature deity's emphases.



PIOUS ORDER OF CHIVALRY: GOD'S STORM

God's Storm gathers all of Pandril's pious knights into a loose organization, to better serve Pandril. It's held together purely by the charisma of its current leader, Senlas Soforen, and it's unclear what will happen when he dies. Since he's an elf, this event is not thought to be imminent.

Requirements: Pious knight prestige class, worshiper of the nature god Pandril.

Symbols: The head of a stag, or a leaping stag silhouetted against the rising or setting sun. Sometimes, a forest in a storm, but this is generally believed to be the symbol of an earlier organization called the Windthorns, and Senlas discourages its use.

Origins: God's Storm was founded about a century ago. Senlas Soforen, one of the most powerful of Pandril's knights, began traveling the world, urging all the other pious knights to join a single organization which, he said, would be the god's own storm. Many were convinced by Senlas' piety, conviction, and rhetoric. Others were convinced by his offer to fight them to the death if they wouldn't join. A few were killed when they refused and chose to fight. These stories spread, and the knights interpreted them as signs that Pandril had blessed Senlas' plans.

The order is now at least eighty years old, as that was when the last independent pious knight of Pandril died, and most people date its foundation to one hundred and three years ago, when Senlas first gathered the whole of God's Storm in one place, to defeat an incursion of outsiders who were taking over a forest. A few insist that the order began a hundred and fifty years ago, when Pandril first spoke to Senlas and commanded him to gather his knights together.

Organization: The organization of God's Storm is very loose, as storms are not known for their strict hierarchies. However, it seems that Senlas' mount can empathically link with any and every other Pandrillar knight's mount, and thus convey orders. This is taken as a further sign of Pandril's blessing, and the general belief that the god would not allow such a power to be abused means that those orders are obeyed. They are rare, however.

Activities: Most of the time, the members of God's Storm are left to their own devices. This means that they defend the wilderness from the encroachments of civilization and agriculture. The knights work closely

with druids of Pandril, although the lawful druids find them somewhat difficult to tolerate.

Very occasionally, a knight receives an order from Senlas, which should be treated as if it came directly from the god Pandril.

Campaign Integration: God's Storm can be included in a campaign in many different ways. First, it's very suitable for player character knights. As they're free to act as they choose much of the time, it won't interfere with the party's other activities. God's Storm also works well as an opponent. Some of the members are chaotic evil, after all. In addition, the player characters might well want to help an outpost of civilization that's under attack from wilderness creatures, and such places are often the target of the knights.

All members of God's Storm assume that Senlas is gathering them together for a reason, and most assume that Pandril will have need of an army sometime soon. If this is right, then there's an epic conflict in the making, in which the player characters can become involved. One possibility is that Pandril intends to rally his forces and wipe civilization from a whole continent. In that case, the player characters are likely to be against the group. Alternatively, a powerful fiend could be scheming to lay the world to waste, and Pandril is preparing the defense. In that case, the player characters will most likely fight with God's Storm.

An alternative possibility is that Senlas is a fake. While he is highly charismatic, he may not be backed by the god and could be organizing the knights for his own ends. This probably works best if a player character knight is a member of the order, and thus has to find out that Senlas is not what he claims, discover his true goals, and, most likely, stop him.

ASRON'S KNIGHTS

Pious knights who worship the sun god Asron almost always hold valor to be the second most important virtue. Just as the sun acts openly, and is never afraid to appear, so must these knights fight fairly and never retreat. Given Asron's opposition to the undead, her knights often concentrate on eliminating those monsters, and the most respected hunters of the undead are found among them. They may not be the most effective undead hunters, as they refuse to employ unvalorous methods, but this merely better their reputation.

Loyalty and love tend to be of roughly equal importance, as in both cases the relationship between the knight and the other, either the lord or the beloved, can be likened to the relationship between the sun and the world. The knights do tend to see the relationship in these terms, which means that they are very obedient and subservient. Combined with the



DEITY: PANDRIL, GOD OF NATURE

Symbol: A noble wolf with bloodied jaws

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Air, Animal, Earth, Fire, Plant, Water

Typical Worshipers: Rangers, druids, people who live in wild places or earn their livings from them.

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff

Nature is glorious and inspiring. Nature is uncaring and devastating. Nature provides the food we eat, and the poisons that kill us. Pandril combines these contradictions, and protects the wild areas that have not yet been tamed by intelligent creatures. His followers defend the wilderness against the advance of civilization, and glory in the splendor of nature as it finds its way even into the hearts of cities.

good reputation that Asron has among most peoples, and the goddess' liking for knights, this makes followers of Asron very popular among those who seek knights as servants.

It's not uncommon for Asron's knights to wield the mace, and such weapons are often decorated so that the mace head represents the sun. However, many knights prefer swords, as they are slightly more effective as weapons. Polished plate armor is extremely popular with Asron's knights, and enchantments to make it literally shining are sought by those who can afford them.

Asron's temples are largely independent of one another, but knights are expected to obey any high priestess, no matter where they hail from. As noted below, members of the Order of Lightbringers are attached to a particular temple and are expected to obey their high priestess before all others, but Asronic knights who aren't part of the order aren't required to stay in one place, and aren't expected to give the commands of one high priestess priority over those of others.

Paladins are very common among Asron's knights, particularly among those who hunt the undead. Rangers, on the other hand, are far rarer.



PIOUS ORDER OF CHIVALRY:

THE ORDER OF LIGHTBRINGERS

All of Asron's pious knight are members of a single order, stretching across the world. The knights are expected to aid one another, and the goddess sometimes commands the whole order to fight a particularly dangerous foe. This is very rare; most human Lightbringers do not see it in their lifetimes.

Requirements: Pious knight prestige class, worshiper of the sun goddess Asron.

Symbols: A sword on a sun disk. Also a sun disk on a shield, and a *helm of brilliance*.

Origins: Official Asronic doctrine claims that the Lightbringers came into existence with the first sentient creature to look at the sun. Historians, and the memories of some ancient elves, conclusively demonstrate that they were founded a little over six hundred years ago at a particular temple of the sun goddess. However, there is substantial evidence that there were other orders of chivalry serving the goddess back to the limits of history and even of myth, and some speculate that the goddess allows the orders to set and rise again, in imitation of her own bright orb. There can be no doubt that the order enjoys the favor of the goddess, and is sustained by her at present.

Organization: The order has no earthly head, answering only to Asron herself. However, individual knights are attached to a particular temple of the deity, and required to obey the direct orders of that temple's high priestess. Most knights endeavor to attach themselves to a temple with a sympathetic leader, and on the whole the followers of Asron allow such "shopping around." The goddess certainly does not appear to disapprove.

Lightbringers are expected to treat the high priestess of their temple as their earthly lord, and to swear loyalty to no other person. They are also expected to choose a beloved who will not cause problems; another devout follower of the goddess is the usual choice.

Each temple organizes its group of knights, known as a chapter, differently. In part, this depends on the number of knights, which in turn depends on the size of the temple. High priestesses with a single knight simply give him instructions as necessary, while lawful high priestesses commanding a few dozen knights generally institute a chain of command. There is very little coordination between the chapters, except when Asron informs all of her high priests of specific orders for her knights.

Activities: Most members of the Lightbringers spend their time hunting down and destroying undead monsters. They're also expected to defend temples of Asron, but as the sun goddess is generally popular this is rarely an onerous duty. The order exists to enforce

the will of the goddess, so on occasion its members can be found doing other things to advance her plans. The high priestesses who command the knights also give them specific commands from time to time, but this depends strongly on the priestess in question.

Campaign Integration: The Lightbringers are eminently suitable as a group for player character knights to join. Loyalty to a good temple will rarely conflict with adventuring, and a general expectation that they should fight undead should sit well with most parties.

As NPCs, the Lightbringers work best as allies. Player characters are likely to be sympathetic to Asron, and thus happy to work with her knights. The Lightbringers only really work as enemies if the player characters are evil.



SPELLS OF PIETY

The following spells are at the service of spellcasters who have access to the Chivalry domain.

LOVER'S SERVICE

Transmutation

Level: Chivalry 7

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: One task (see below)

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)



DEITY: ASRON, GODDESS OF THE SUN

Symbol: The sun's disk

Alignment: Neutral Good

Domains: Chivalry, Destruction, Good, Healing, Sun

Typical Worshipers: Anyone who works out of doors, knights

Favored Weapon: Mace

The sun is a beneficent power, but not a safe one. While its light and warmth allow growth and healing, its heat can also destroy. The light of the sun is particularly dangerous to the undead, and Asron's followers are the enemies of all undead creatures. Asron also takes good knights under her care, as they are the moral lights in the world much as the sun is the literal light. Asron's Chivalry domain is detailed below.

NEW DOMAIN: CHIVALRY

Granted Power: You can perform astounding feats of chivalry. Once per day, you may, as an extraordinary ability, add a bonus of +4 to any single roll to

carry out a chivalric act. You may also use this ability for actions that don't require a die roll, in which case you automatically perform the action well and nobly.

CHIVALRY DOMAIN SPELLS

- 1 **Magic Weapon:** Weapon gains +1 bonus.
- 2 **Shield Other:** You take half of subject's damage.
- 3 **Magic Vestment:** Armor or shield gains +1 enhancement per four levels.
- 4 **Greater Magic Weapon:** +1 bonus/four levels (max +5)
- 5 **Righteous Might:** Your size increases, and you gain combat bonuses.
- 6 **Refuge:** Alters item to transport its possessor to you.
- 7 **Lover's Service:** You perform a single task on behalf of the spell's target. New spell.
- 8 **Loyal Support:** You lend your abilities to the target. New spell.
- 9 **Love Bond:** You magically bind two creatures together with an emotional bond. New spell.

You can perform a single task on behalf of the spell's target. This task must be one that the target wants to perform, or have performed. The single task must also have a clearly defined end point. This may be a simple time limit, or clear criteria of both success and failure. The task cannot take longer than one month, in any event.

This spell ensures that you know exactly what the target would do at any point during the completion of the task, no matter what the distance or planes of existence between you, and also allows you to do things that the target would normally have to do for himself. For example, you can, under the influence of this spell, study for the target, and the target learns the information instead of you. The target gains any benefits from the task at the same time you would if you were doing the task for yourself, while you receive no benefits, even if this involves the spontaneous *teleportation* of items to the target at the completion of the task.

This spell does not grant you any additional abilities, magical or otherwise. If your task is to travel across a continent on behalf of the target, then you must complete the journey using your normal abilities. The spell then *teleports* the target to the specified end point, so that he gains the benefit of the journey, and *teleports* you back to the starting point, so that you do not. You can only *teleport* on the journey itself if you can do so using other magic.

There is little point using the spell to carry out tasks such as "Kill the dragon for me;" in such cases this spell usually works as nothing more than a limited form of mind-reading. It's most used in doing things that people normally have to do for themselves, such as study or travel.

LOYAL SUPPORT

Transmutation

Level: Chivalry 8

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5ft./2 levels)

Target: Living creature

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The caster of this spell lends his abilities to the target. Whenever the target tries to do something, he uses whichever of his or the caster's abilities is better. In compensation, the caster must use whichever is worse. Abilities, skills, feats, and class abilities are all shared by this spell, and the target learns what his new abilities are when the spell is cast. If the caster has an ability that the target doesn't, the target can use that ability but the caster can't. The caster also becomes aware of which abilities are no longer available to him.

Increases gained through this spell are not bonuses to abilities, but rather new values for the abilities. Thus, any increase gained stacks with all other bonuses. Abilities gained from magic items are not shared, unless the caster gives the magic item to the target.

LOVE BOND

Transmutation

Level: Chivalry 9

Components: V, S, DF, XP

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Target: Two living creatures

Duration: Permanent (see below)

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell binds together two creatures, one of whom may, but need not, be the caster. The two creatures must feel genuine romantic love for each other, or the spell fails automatically. (If the spell fails because the targets don't love one another, the caster doesn't lose any XP.) The spell is permanent, but fails if either of the targets ceases to romantically love the other. Note that it's possible to romantically love someone without being passionately in love with him, and eminently possible to romantically love someone with whom you're very annoyed at present. The spell only fails if

the targets' deep emotions change, not in response to temporary mood shifts.

The spell grants a number of benefits.

- Both targets gain Spell Resistance equal to 18 + caster level against any magical effects that would alter their feelings towards their beloved, or force any kind of betrayal.
- The two lovers can always recognize each other, despite any disguise or changes, whether mundane or magical. Further, each always knows where the other is, and they can communicate telepathically as long as they're on the same plane of existence. If they're on different planes, each knows which plane the other is on, but no more than that.
- The two lovers gain great insight into each other. They automatically get a success on any Sense Motive check made against the other. This is not quite the ability to read minds, but it can look very similar. The lovers can't learn anything that could not, in principle, be learned from body language and previous knowledge, but they get everything that could be learned that way right.
- Each knows when the other is injured in any way, and the sort of injury. If desired, each may take an injury to the other on himself as a free action, as long as the injury would not kill him. If one of the lovers is immune to a particular sort of affliction, she doesn't suffer any ill effects even if taking it from her beloved. This effect only works if both lovers are on the same plane.
- Once per month either lover may *teleport* to the side of the other as per the spell. (This ability may be used once per month by each lover.) The effect transports only the lover and any carried equipment (up to 50 lbs/level), and the lover's familiar if it's touching him.

XP Cost: 1,000 XP



FEATS OF PIETY

Feats of piety either reward the character for serving his deity, or enable him to serve better.

ARMOR OF GOD [GENERAL]

The favor of your god protects you from harm in battle.

Prerequisite: Holy Warrior feat, devout follower of a particular deity

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to Armor Class. You don't lose this bonus if you would lose your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class, for example because you're caught flat-footed.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.

DIVINE ENDURANCE [GENERAL]

Your god fills you with power, enabling you to shrug off damage.

Prerequisite: Armor of God feat, devout follower of a particular deity

Benefit: You may invoke this feat once per day. When you do so, you gain three temporary hit points per character level. These temporary points last for ten minutes if not removed by injury before then. At the end of ten minutes, you take nonlethal damage equal to the number of temporary hit points you gained.

Special: A character may take this feat more than once. Each time it's taken, the temporary hit points may be gained once more per day.

DIVINE INSIGHT [GENERAL]

Your god speaks to you in the quiet of your heart, telling you whether an action is right or wrong.

Prerequisite: Character level 5+

Benefit: At will, you can ask whether a particular action is right or wrong, and your god tells you. There are a few limits on this. First, you must ask; the player should ask the GM. Second, the action under discussion must be one that you believe you're capable of taking immediately. You can't ask what would be the right thing to do if you were in a different situation. Third, you can only ask whether an action is right or wrong. You can't learn facts this way, nor can you ask what the right thing to do might be. However, the answer is based on the actual facts of the situation, not what you believe. Thus, if you think you've caught an assassin, but actually you've caught a charmed and magically disguised innocent, if you ask your god if you should imprison her you'll be told that it would be wrong to do so.

Asking a question of your deity is a standard action, and provokes an attack of opportunity. At the GM's discretion, if you're about to do something utterly disastrous from your deity's perspective, you may get a warning without asking.

It's important to be aware that this ability lets you learn whether something is ethically right or wrong, from the perspective of your deity, not whether it's a good plan, likely to succeed, or even something that the character could survive. A "right" action is something it's permissible for the character to do, so in many circumstances there will be a large number of right actions.

DIVINE WRATH [GENERAL]

You can call upon your god's anger to defeat the enemies of your faith.

Prerequisites: Divine Endurance feat, Divine Insight feat

Benefit: You may call on your deity once per day, when fighting an enemy of your god. An opponent is only an enemy of the god if he aims to oppose that deity and that deity's aims. An opponent who simply

has goals that conflict with your deity's plans doesn't count as an enemy of the god. The GM makes the final decision on this.

When you call upon your deity, you're filled with divine power. You can't die until your current opponent is dead. You take damage as normal, and may drop dead at the same moment as your opponent, but you will not die first. If you stop fighting your current opponent, the effect ends. You can call on this feat even if you're unable to harm your opponent, but you're not granted any other special abilities for the combat.

HOLY WARRIOR [GENERAL]

You're particularly effective when fighting the enemies of your god.

Prerequisite: Devout follower of a particular deity

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls when fighting enemies of your god. An opponent is only an enemy of the god if he aims to oppose that deity and that deity's aims. An opponent who simply has goals that conflict with your deity's plans doesn't count as an enemy of the god. The GM makes the final decision on this.

Special: A fighter may take this feat as one of her bonus feats.



ITEMS OF PIETY

Pious magic items grant bonuses based on the sponsoring deity's power. In the descriptions below, these are referred to as "divine bonuses." If the deity in question is good or neutral, a divine bonus is a sacred bonus, and doesn't stack with other sacred bonuses. If the deity in question is evil, a divine bonus is a profane bonus, and doesn't stack with other profane bonuses.

WEAPON SPECIAL ABILITY: DEVOTED

A devoted weapon is blessed and dedicated to a particular deity. It deals +2d6 of damage against enemies of that deity.

An opponent is only an enemy of the deity if he deliberately intends to oppose the plans of the deity. Thus, a healer isn't necessarily an enemy of a god of disease; only a healer who specifically wants to thwart the disease god's plans counts.

Faint evocation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *holy smite*, creator must be a worshiper of the deity in question; Price +1 bonus

WONDROUS ITEM: RELIC

A holy relic is built into the hilt or haft of a weapon. The weapon itself need not be enchanted or a masterwork item, as the power resides in the relic rather than the weapon, but it usually is. Further, the relic may be removed from this weapon and placed in another. The relic only has an effect if it's built into a weapon of some sort, though.

The weapon gets a +1 divine bonus to attack rolls and to damage. It bestows one negative level on any creature attempting to wield it, unless the wielder is a worshiper of the deity to whom the relic is sacred. The negative level remains as long as the weapon is in hand, and disappears when the weapon is no longer wielded. This negative level never results in actual level loss, but it can't be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while the weapon is wielded.

Note that the divine bonus to attack rolls and to damage stacks with enhancement bonuses. The divine bonus from a relic applies against all enemies.

Relics can't be created by mortal means, but only by the direct intervention of a deity. They may take many forms, from the body parts of a saint to a miraculously imprinted rock.

Strong transmutation; CL 20th; Craft Wondrous Item, must be a deity; Price 3,000 gp

WONDROUS ITEM: RELIQUARY

A reliquary is a small item, usually quite elaborate, which contains a holy relic. The wearer of the reliquary gains a divine bonus to all saving throws or to Armor Class. One relic grants only one bonus, but different relics may grant different bonuses.

The reliquary bestows one negative level on any creature wearing it, unless the wearer is a worshiper of the deity to whom the relic is sacred. The negative level remains as long as the reliquary is in worn and disappears when the reliquary is laid aside. This negative level never results in actual level loss, but it can't be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while the reliquary is worn.

Most reliquaries are designed in the form of an amulet, and thus take up that slot. However, a relic may be incorporated into any item, even a magic item. Relics can't be created by mortal means, but only by the direct intervention of a deity. They may take many forms, from the body parts of a saint to a miraculously imprinted rock.

Strong transmutation; CL 20th; Craft Wondrous Item, must be a deity; Price 1,500 gp (+1), 6,000 gp (+2), 13,500 gp (+3), 24,000 gp (+4), 37,500 gp (+5), 54,000 gp (+6), 73,500 gp (+7), 86,000 gp (+8)

MAJOR ARTIFACT:

THE CUP OF COMMUNION

The Cup of Communion was forged centuries ago by Peredur, one of the greatest human sorcerers. Peredur specialized in the study of the planes of existence and their inhabitants, and was rumored to speak with lesser deities as equals. He has not been seen on the Material Plane for over two hundred years, at least not by anyone reliable, but the wise think that he passed beyond the possibility of mere death, and that

unless some great power has annihilated him, he may yet return.

Peredur created this cup for others to use, as he was able to duplicate its powers through his own abilities. He also enchanted it to pass from one owner to another at frequent intervals, so that no one person could hoard it. As a result, the cup has traveled around the world several times, and its current location is unknown.

The cup appears as a stemmed goblet fashioned of pure gold. It is undecorated, but its shape and finish are both extremely beautiful. It's a little small for a Medium creature and a little large for a Small one, but it can be used without trouble by either.

Anyone who drinks from the cup is immediately brought into full mental contact with his deity. What happens next depends on the drinker and the deity. A pious servant of a god can usually expect advice, or even direct aid, and clarifications regarding the deity's will can be had for the asking. A rather casual follower might be scolded by his god, and set a quest to atone, but might still get assistance. The cup is, of course, more dangerous to the followers of chaotic and evil deities than to those of lawful and good ones.

It appears that the deity is compelled to listen to what the drinker has to say, but is not compelled to do anything, or to reply. The drinker knows when his deity is "there," and when the connection has been broken. Drinking again restores the connection, but doing so immediately is a good way to annoy even the most tolerant deity — a god who has decided that a conversation is over expects his worshipers to respect that decision.

If a character who worships no deity drinks from the cup, he's put in communion with the deity most suited to his ideals and actions, even if that deity has been forgotten or has turned its back on the world. Such a drinker could bring a forgotten deity back.

The contact between the drinker and the deity is much closer than that provided by a *commune* spell,

in that there is no limit on the questions the drinker can ask other than that set by the tolerance of the deity in question.

The cup also wants to be lost. Every week the possessor, or possessors, of the cup must make a Will save against a DC equal to the number of weeks that the cup has been his. If the save is failed, the possessor mislays the cup, or fails to properly close the wards guarding it, or absent-mindedly opens wards that should have been left closed. The cup arranges chance so that it's found by someone else once it's lost. It's not really intelligent, and doesn't care who finds it.

The cup can't be removed from the Material Plane, apparently not even by divine power. If someone tries to take it to another plane, it simply gets left behind. At that point, it's generally found by someone else.

GNOMISH KNIGHTHOOD

Knighthood wouldn't seem to sit naturally with the gnomes. Jokes and curiosity don't fit well with the four virtues of chivalry, after all. Nevertheless, there is a strong tradition of chivalry among the gnomish people, and it focuses on the virtue of piety. Gnomish knights see themselves primarily as fighters for their deity. In general, they regard loyalty as the least important of the virtues, and love and valor as of about equal significance.

This means that, while gnomes and dwarves generally get along well, their knights often clash over whether the other race's knights are truly knights at all. The dwarves don't deny that the gnomes are fighters, but they do hold that they can't truly be knights since they neglect loyalty to a shameful degree. In return, the gnomes often claim that dwarf knights are nothing more than soldiers.

Gnomish knights see their choice of deity as the most important decision, and in their own culture often



refer to “a knight of so-and-so deity,” rather than simply to a knight. Knights who follow the same god tend to gather together and form separate units in large battles, regardless of the mundane lords of the knights involved. Indeed, it’s usual for the link between a gnomish knight and his lord to be very loose, as all gnomes know that a knight will place all the other virtues before service to his lord. This often causes problems when gnomish knights take service with lords of other races.

The gnomes, in general, take piety to require respect for all deities, and firm service to one. This means that, in gnomish lands, it’s traditional for traveling knights to lodge in temples. On the whole, any temple will do, although there are a few obvious hostilities between deities that over-ride this. Visiting knights may occasionally be asked to perform some service for the deity of that temple, but unless the knight serves that particular deity this will be a minor request.

The devotion of gnomish knights to their deities means that tales of chivalry are an explicitly religious

genre. They tend to find the tales of knights of other races slightly shocking, as the gods seem to have far too little importance. Gnomish tales place great emphasis on the honor in fighting for your deity, and on the rewards that accrue as a result. The tragedies often involve the fall from grace of a knight, in response to some great temptation, followed by heroic efforts to regain his deity’s favor. These usually succeed only with the knight’s death.

Knighthood doesn’t erase the basic personality of the race, so while gnomish knights are more serious than their peers, they’re still very fond of jokes. This most often manifests in the gnomish attitude toward love, which may be displayed by playing practical jokes on the beloved’s rivals, or on one’s own rivals for the beloved. Gnomes sometimes play jokes on their beloved, but these are always (supposed to be) the kind that doesn’t embarrass. Thus, it’s not uncommon for a gnomish knight to offer a poor and insulting gift, before offering the more valuable item he always intended to give. More daring exploits include promising to attend a tournament, and then fighting

the whole thing in disguise, so that the beloved, and the other spectators, only know that he was present at the very end.

The natural curiosity of the race, combined with the minimal emphasis placed on loyalty, means that gnomish knights are very prone to going off on quests. Divinely sanctioned quests are, of course, the best, but any opportunity to display knightly virtues and see something new is welcomed with open arms. Thus, the other races see many more of gnomish knights than might be expected. This leads to the general impression that they are more common than is actually the case.

PALADINS AS KNIGHTS

Paladins are obvious candidates for knighthood. Indeed, the name is taken from the title given to Charlemagne's greatest knights. With their devotion to a deity, paladin knights usually emphasize piety as a virtue. There are two things that need to be considered when comparing paladins with knights, however. First, how do paladins — upholders of law and virtue — handle the chivalric virtue of love? Second, how can you play a paladin so that he *isn't* a knight?

PALADINS AND LOVE

The main problem for paladins is that knightly, courtly love is usually centered on someone else's wife. Obviously, paladins don't generally go around committing adultery. Fortunately, knights aren't really supposed to do so either. Paladins merely need to emphasize the chaste side of the virtue.

A paladin doesn't actually want to win his beloved's favors. Instead, he wants her to remain pure and faithful to her husband. Thus, he doesn't try to meet her in private, and ensures that all gifts he makes are public, and approved by the beloved's husband. This has a more general influence on a paladin's activities, as well. While most knights act so as to convince their

beloveds that they, the knights, are particularly wonderful, a paladin is more concerned with convincing the rest of the world that his beloved is wonderful. He's more likely to challenge those who dispute his beloved's pre-eminence than he is to engage in spectacular acts to win her attention.

It's usual for love to be a less-important virtue for a paladin, and such a choice makes things easier. However, it might be more interesting to play a paladin who holds love to be the highest virtue. A paladin who worships a deity of love would be particularly appropriate for this. Such a paladin would struggle to hold his beloved in high honor, while also maintaining the standards demanded by his calling.

NON-KNIGHTLY PALADINS

Paladins and chivalry seem so closely linked that it might be hard to see how a paladin could be played as anything *but* a knight. This limits your options somewhat, so this section considers characters you could play as a contrast to the standard chivalrous paladin.

A paladin really has to subscribe to the virtue of piety, at least to some extent. A paladin must serve a deity. Also, paladins really have to be brave fighters. Since they are also required to keep their promises and any oaths of loyalty, the options might seem rather constrained.

Creating a paladin who doesn't worry about love is fairly easy, since, as noted above, it can be a little difficult to fit love into the standard paladin's activities anyway. However, since love isn't a very important virtue for human knights, such a paladin will probably still feel rather like a knight.

Loyalty provides a more interesting possible distinction. Knights must be loyal to some mundane lord; paladins are under no such requirement. A paladin who simply happened to be a free agent would be distinguished from the norm, but that may not be enough. Consider, then, a paladin who actively avoids loyalty to any earthly power, feeling that he must

remain free to pursue the dictates of virtue and justice, no matter what other powers they bring him into conflict with. If the paladin often acted against lords who had a claim on his loyalty, on the grounds that they were acting against virtue and justice, he would be acting nothing like a knight. Indeed, he would be more like a guerilla freedom fighter.

Finally, although paladins must be brave fighters, they need not be strictly valorous. Valor requires that the knight fight fairly against all opponents, and not run away from even vastly superior foes. The paladin is not so bound. While he must be dedicated to fighting evil, he could certainly choose to do so in the most efficient way possible. A paladin would not actually lie, but he might well strike from ambush, use missile weapons, and avoid fighting enemies he believed to be too strong for him. Such a sneaky and pragmatic approach is a long way from knighthood, but the character could still be a very convincing champion of the good.

CLERICS AS KNIGHTS

It's possible for clerics to follow the path of chivalry. Indeed, it's not even particularly difficult. Piety comes naturally to them (or at least it should), and there's nothing to stop most clerics from being loyal to a mundane lord as well as serving their deity. They are quite competent fighters, and so can act valorously more easily than arcane spellcasters. Love causes no more problems for them than for anyone else. Thus, knight is a perfectly possible character concept for a cleric. There are, however, a few issues that need to be considered.

First, the cleric has little choice but to rank piety first among the virtues. This means that his deity really has to be favorable to martial and chivalric pursuits. It also tends to shape the cleric's style of knighthood, along the lines discussed in this chapter.

Second, clerics, as spellcasters, have some of the same problems with valor as arcane spellcasters, as dis-

cussed in Chapter Two. The cleric's problems are less severe, for two reasons. First, clerics can wear armor and wield weapons with a fair degree of competence, so they can fight physically without putting themselves at great risk. Second, divine spells are less biased toward attack than are arcane spells. This means that people are less likely to suspect them of cheating.

However, divine spellcasters *can* cheat using their magic, and, just as arcane spellcasters must, they need to make sure that they don't give in to this temptation if they're also knights. Spells shouldn't be used to get an unfair advantage, rather they should be used only as another weapon in the fight. Defeating a pack of skeletons by driving them off with divine magic is not particularly valorous, but neither is it generally regarded as dishonorable, since the undead are not themselves honorable opponents. No clerical knight would rely on magic all the time, but could use it to clear lesser undead from an area without risking his reputation.

This conflict means that it's not uncommon for clerical knights to enter the pious knight prestige class. However, as this class doesn't improve the cleric's spellcasting abilities, many chivalric clerics prefer to not take the prestige class at all. Not all deities have chivalric orders for their clergy, either, and in those cases the clerics often remain pure clerics.

Finally, the style of a cleric's chivalry will be strongly shaped by the nature of his deity, even going beyond the implications of putting piety first among the virtues. His chosen opponents, his relations with his lord, and his attitude to his beloved are all shaped by the fact that he is a priest of his god. It's true that all pious knights are shaped in this way to some extent, but for a cleric the pressure is even stronger. This means that there's even less that can be said in general about clerical knights than about pious knights. Accordingly, this section will focus on two examples, clerics of Asron and Pandril.

CLERICAL KNIGHTS OF ASRON

The sun goddess Asron encourages her clergy to adopt at least some elements of the chivalric attitude, and so knights are particularly common among her clerics. Those who intend to follow the knightly path take Chivalry as one of their domains.

Asron's clerical knights are expected to remain part of the church, and not to become entangled in secular politics. Accordingly, they're all but required to take high priestesses of the goddess as their mundane lords.

Since chivalry is an ideology of service, Asron's clerical knights never become high priestesses themselves. They do, however, become direct servants of the goddess at high level, at which time they may choose not to have a mundane lord; their loyalty and piety are both directed at the goddess, and she gives them direct orders.



As a rule, this direct relationship with Asron happens shortly after a knightly cleric reaches 16th level.

There are far fewer constraints on the knights' choice of beloved. As long as she's not opposed to the goddess, Asron seems to have no problem with a free choice. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of clerical knights choose another worshiper of the goddess, and most choose another cleric.

Valor is very important to Asronic clerical knights, and the idea of fighting fairly is often extended to cover not hiding one's identity under any circumstances. Asron's worshipers dislike lies in any case, but her clerical knights see telling the truth whenever asked as part of valor, since it denotes courage in the face of possible consequences.

CLERICAL KNIGHTS OF PANDRIL

Pandril is a nature god and knights are inescapably part of civilization. Accordingly, knights are rare among his priests, but not unheard of. Piety is invari-

ably the most important virtue, as they remain priests of the god, and their attitudes to love and valor tend to match those of other knights who follow Pandril. Their attitude to loyalty sets them apart, though; most clerical knights of Pandril take the god as their lord as well. Loyalty to an ordinary lord would bind them to civilization, after all, and loyalty to another priest would be inappropriate.

This double commitment to Pandril means that their valor is directed against those who damage the wilderness, and is unsoftened except by love. As a result they are fierce warriors, and are usually seen as enemies by civilized nations.



It's rare for Pandril's clerical knights to be good in alignment, as they're required to act against sentient beings more often than not. Neutral alignment is more common than evil, however.

In common with the rest of Pandril's priests, the knights are usually druids, and it's not uncommon for them to multiclass as rangers.

CHARACTER CONCEPTS

Your character's actions should be strongly influenced by his choice of deity. This means that you should normally decide on the character first, and then choose a deity to fit. Naturally, you must choose from among the deities available in your campaign, which makes specific advice difficult to give here. There remain some general points for consideration, though.

DIVINE INFLUENCE

It might not be obvious how your choice of deity should influence your character. First, the choice should affect your character's ranking of the other chivalric virtues. Second, your deity might have your character engage in specific sorts of activity. Third,

your character's relationship to the deity's priests depends on your god.

CHIVALRIC VIRTUES

Since a knight's ordering of the virtues has a strong influence on the kind of knight he is, this is a good place to start looking for ways to give his deity a role. A pious knight following a god of love should rank love highly, while one following a war god will have valor as an important virtue. In some cases, you'll have to think a bit more, however.

For example, a knight following a nature deity, such as Pandril, might rank loyalty quite low, as his lord isn't part of the natural world. A knight serving Asron might rank valor high, for just as the sun is not afraid to show itself, so should her servants show similar courage. A knight following a god of love might rank loyalty, which is a kind of love, over valor, or might rank loyalty very low, because loyalty could conflict with love. Decisions of that sort depend on the details of the deity.

Your knight's deity can have this sort of influence even if you don't take piety as the most important virtue. A knight serving a war god might rank valor over piety, but it would be very strange for a knight in service to a god of love to do so.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

The activities you engage in as a pious knight depend on the deities available in your campaign world. Your GM will probably assume that you're interested in having your knight serve the deity you pick, so pick one devoted to the destruction of the undead if you fancy fighting a lot of undead. It's also worth considering the sorts of adventures that a deity would disapprove of. A knight who served the nature god Pandril shouldn't be willing to get involved in establishing a new village out on the edge of the wilderness, for example. You should discuss these decisions with the other players, to make sure that no character is going to prevent the others from having the sorts of adventures they want.

DEALING WITH PRIESTS

The initial temptation is to choose a deity whose priests can't order your knight around. It's worth thinking about this some more, though. The priests are NPCs, and so are not going to consistently order your knight to do things that spoil your fun and the campaign unless your GM is dimwitted. If your GM is dimwitted, picking a deity who doesn't give orders won't help you.

The main advantage of having priests who don't give orders is that your character is free to pursue his own agenda. Thus, if you have definite plans for your character's activities, it might be best to make sure that the priests don't interfere. On the other hand, if there's nothing particular that you want to do, it might be helpful to have someone else give your character direction.

THE OTHER VIRTUES

Pious knights still uphold the other virtues, even if their attitude to them is likely to be shaped by their deity. This section discusses the possible consequences of putting each of the other virtues second or last.

VALOR

A pious knight who puts valor second is the archetypal holy warrior, always ready to fight for his deity. Because valor is ranked after piety, he'll only fight when it's for his deity, and will not (or at least not often) go against his deity's commands to find martial glory. Since most pious knights will only rank valor second if they serve a martial deity, this is unlikely to be a problem. It would be interesting, however, to serve a deity with strong interests outside war, but no particular concern for combat one way or another. In this case, the knight would often want to fight, but would pick his fights in an unusual way that's strongly constrained by his deity. A pious knight following a race-oriented deity, for example, might never fight members of his own race, while being eager for combat with others.

If the knight's deity is somewhat opposed to war, it's natural to rank valor last. Since a knight must hold valor to be important to some extent, pacifist deities are inappropriate, but deities who govern activities that are only possible in peacetime are possible. In this case, the knight would be willing to fight, and fight valorously, to defend his god's interests, but otherwise would be reluctant to enter battle because that tends to undermine his deity's sphere of influence.

LOYALTY

Placing loyalty second after piety creates the possibility of many conflicts, as noted in Chapter Three's discussion of placing piety second after loyalty. Conflicts within the character can make for exciting roleplaying, so this is worth considering. As loyalty is second to piety, the knight's lord must be, at the very least, sympathetic to his deity, but the lord may still have his own agenda. The knight might well come to believe that he must guide his lord back to the path of righteousness, for example.

Pious knights who place loyalty last are not that uncommon. This expresses the attitude that earthly duties are far below heavenly ones in importance, and that the knight must always follow his god, even if that goes against the lord's interests. If the knight's god is widely respected, his lord might not feel able to punish him for his disobedience, as the knight's service to his deity will gain approval by many people. This could well lead to the lord sending the knight off on difficult, and distant, missions, which are just the sorts of things guaranteed to appeal to adventurers.

LOVE

A knight who places love under piety is the quintessential worshiper. First he worships his god in heaven, then he worships his lady on earth. Such a knight needs to choose a lady at least somewhat consistent with his religious commitments, but he is most likely to be content to love her from a distance. This sort of knight is even more keen on

their being obstacles between him and his love than most.

On the other hand, a pious knight who places love last may be expressing the belief that nothing earthly should be allowed to distract from divine contemplation. Loyalty is duty, and thus a virtue, but love is an indulgence of sorts, and so should be held in less regard. These knights might even change their beloved somewhat frequently, refusing to love anyone who doesn't devotedly worship the knight's god, and rejecting his beloved if she makes the slightest slip.

UNIMPORTANT PIETY

There are three paramount ways in which piety may find itself at the bottom of the list of chivalric virtues. First, a knight may be truly devoted to a deity who encourages chivalry, but simply value the other virtues more highly. This provides the opportunity for many internal conflicts when the other virtues win out over piety, and such a knight will often be trying to atone for deeds of which his god does not approve. However, he will go against the god's wishes again, because loyalty and love are both more important to him than the god's approval.

The second possibility is a knight who doesn't care much for gods, but recognizes that he needs to display some degree of piety in order to be a knight. This can easily be played for occasional laughs, by having your character largely ignore his deity most of the time, but dash to temples when he's in town in order to pay his respects. Alternatively, you can simply push his deity into the background, and assume that he does worship at least as much as is necessary to keep up appearances.

The final possibility is a knight who's devoted to a deity who doesn't really approve of chivalry. His devotion is important to him, but it must be less important than the other virtues, or he would abandon chivalry at his god's behest. This will generate a lot of conflict within the character, and

gives him a diverse range of motives for action. He will, occasionally, do things that are not typical of knights in order to maintain his devotion to his deity. A careful choice of deity could allow you to create a complex and unusual character this way.

As always, it's important to remember that piety is still important to the knight, even if it's less important than the other virtues. This means that there will be situations where the offense to his deity would be so great that the knight is willing to go against the other virtues, and feel very guilty afterwards.

PIOUS ADVENTURES

Piety is, in some ways, similar to loyalty, and so pious knights will sometimes venture out at the behest of their god. However, gods give direct orders less often than mortal lords, and generally require more of their servants in daily life.

PIETY IN THE COURSE OF DUTY

The virtue of piety is very easy to overplay, so that you end up merely annoying the other players rather than making your character interesting. A pious knight doesn't have to try to convert everyone he meets to his religion, and certainly doesn't need to do so at the point of his sword. As a rule of thumb, if the knight lets his piety guide his own actions, without worrying too much about what other characters do, then he will avoid being annoying.

Of course, as with all rules of thumb, this can be taken too far. A knight devoted to a deity who's a bitter foe of all undead can't stand by and allow other player characters to ally with a powerful undead monster, even if their religions allow them to do so. As with all conflicts between player characters, these issues can be a great deal of fun to play as long as they're not allowed to get out of hand.

The details of a pious knight's behavior depend on his deity, but it should be clear to the other characters that the god's commands are an important factor in the knight's daily decisions. This might be something as simple as the knight always seeking a temple as soon as the party gets back to town, or always taking time to pray immediately after combat. At a minimum, a knight should show respect for the clergy of his deity, even if particular priests aren't very impressive.

A pious knight might give gifts to the temples of his deity, as well. If he does, he should receive balancing gifts at a later time, as discussed in Chapter Three for knights who give gifts to their lords. If a pious knight does follow this route, it's worth making the presentation of the gifts from the temple into a major event in the campaign; the knight might be summoned to a large service, and be presented with the gift amid much fanfare and glorification of his god.

QUESTS

Strictly speaking, a quest is an adventure during which the knight tries to find something or someone. True quests are usually associated with a deity, the classic example being the quest for the Holy Grail. As an expression of piety, quests have the major advantage that it's likely to be easy to convince the other characters to come along. Noble quests are, after all, just the sort of thing that heroes do.

Although a deity will sometimes demand that a knight go on a quest, it's also possible for the knight to decide to take one up voluntarily. It may be that there's an obvious thing to quest for within your religion — some vital artifact that's been lost for centuries, perhaps, or even the sleeping body of the god himself. In this case, the knight can simply decide to try to find the thing. This need not take over the campaign right away, as the knight can gather clues in the course of other adventures, but in the end the knight should convince the other members of the party to set off with him.

An alternative is for the knight to pray for guidance as to the quest he should undertake. While this involves less initiative on your part, it does give the GM an extremely convenient way to supply a hook for his next adventure. This shouldn't be over-used, but occasional quests of this nature do help to emphasize your knight's devotion to his deity.

HOLY WAR

On occasion, deities gather all of their followers and launch a war. These wars can have many purposes: to defeat an ancient enemy of the god, to suppress heretical followers of the same deity, to recapture holy sites, to recover an important relic, or to spread belief in the god to a new area. A god's pious knights are ideally suited to such undertakings, and will be expected to take part.

Fighting in a holy war is, in practical terms, little different from fighting in a normal war, so the notes on war given in Chapter Three apply just as much to this situation. One difference is that the overall strategy may include greater risks, and if a knight falls in battle he's guaranteed a warm reception in the court of his deity.

Pious knights may also find themselves called on to oppose a holy war. An enemy of the knight's god may launch a war against the followers of the knight's deity, thus provoking a defensive holy war. In such situations there's even more of a role for independent agents than in a normal holy war, so this can be a good way to use holy war in a campaign. It also avoids the moral problems involved in having the player characters on the side of the aggressors. Of course, you might not want to avoid those problems.



RULES FOR QUESTS

It's not uncommon for knights to go on quests. A chivalric quest must be difficult, and there must be an element of seeking the unknown. Thus, a mission to rescue a princess from her prison is not a quest if the location of the prison is known. On the other hand, if the princess must first be found, then the mission does qualify as a quest. Normally, however, the object of a quest is something that will be, at least, life-changing for the questing knight. The classic example is the quest for the Holy Grail. Lost artifacts, such as those described in this book, are always suitable targets for a quest.

A knight can undertake a quest without any special rules applying. However, some pious knights seek the blessing of their deity, and dedicate themselves to completing the quest. The quest must be in line with the deity's interests, and the knight must spend some time in prayer and consultation with the deity's priests to ensure that his god approves. If the GM doesn't want the

character to devote himself to this quest, he can say that the god doesn't approve, in this case.

If the god does approve, the knight must seek out a high priest and have the *geas/quest* spell cast on him voluntarily as part of a dedication ritual. The spell has its normal effects, but is strengthened in two ways. First, it doesn't expire until the quest is completed. Second, it can only be dispelled by *miracle* and *wish* spells, or by direct divine intervention. No lesser power suffices.

The ritual does have benefits. The knight gains bonuses as if under the influence of a *divine favor* spell cast by a cleric with a caster level equal to the knight's character level. If the knight's level increases before the quest is completed, the bonus increases as well. In addition, the knight may ask his deity a number of questions equal to his character level every month, as if using a *commune* spell. These questions must relate to the completion of the knight's quest.



One issue with holy war is that it really has to be GM-led. Even if your knight would like to start a holy war, he can't do so without the approval of his deity, which means that the GM must cooperate. Still, if you'd like to have your knight fight in such a cause, it doesn't hurt to let your GM know that.

GAME MASTERING PIETY

A pious knight can present problems for the GM. Unless you make a habit of having deities appear in person and hand out instructions — something that would cause problems for most campaigns — the knight must interpret his deity's wishes and then act on them. This might mean that the knight refuses to go on your latest adventure because his deity wouldn't approve, or that he insists on doing other things that disrupt your plans.

To a great extent, you can anticipate these problems. A pious knight who follows a deity dedicated to the annihilation of orcs and their kin is not going to accept a mission to rescue a kidnapped half-orc, and is virtually certain to fight rather than negotiate. Even when you can't predict them, unanticipated problems can add to the fun.

However, if the player consistently causes difficulties through his interpretation of the knight's faith, it's best to talk to him about how to tone it down. In-game support, in the form of priests of the god preaching weirdly appropriate sermons, should be provided to give the knight an in-character reason to change, as well. This is, however, primarily a meta-game issue, and needs to be dealt with as such.

You do need to consider how the pious knight is going to fit in with the other player characters. The pious knight of the orc-hating deity won't work well with a half-orc player character, and a pious follower of a deity radically opposed to deception and theft might have trouble with a rogue companion. It need not be the knight who changes, though; that must be negotiated with the players.

Finally, you should be careful in handling the interaction between the knight and members of other religions. No pious knight should be allowed to be a religious bigot. In most standard campaigns, he must be able to get along with the worshipers of other deities. On the other hand, it's unreasonable to expect him to tolerate worshipers of deities explicitly opposed to his own, and you should take that into account in adventure design.

Piety is not all problems, however. It gives a character a motive that goes beyond personal aggrandizement, and an altruistic hook into adventures. Further, if you use direct divine commands very rarely, the character will be willing to drop everything and obey when one *does* come — it could be a life-defining moment for him.

You can also use priests of the knight's deity to gently nudge him in the direction you want him to go. The advantage this has over using a knight's mundane lord is that priests and temples are found in many places, so you don't have to justify the appearance of messengers from the knight's lord in distant parts of the world.

LOVE

The effect of love is that no greed can cheapen the true lover. Love makes the hirsute barbarian as handsome as can be; it can even enrich the lowest-born with nobility of manners; usually it even endows with humility the arrogant. A person in love grows to the practice of performing numerous services becomingly to all. What a remarkable thing is love, for it invests a man with such shining virtues, and there is no-one whom it does not instruct to have these great and good habits in plenty!

— Andreas Capellanus, *On Love*, Book One, Chapter Four

DEFINING LOVE

The chivalric virtue of love is not just any kind of love, for just any sort of person. It is highly specific and somewhat artificial, so that it is almost never the natural expression of a knight's emotions. In some cases, it can have nothing to do with what he actually feels. Even then, it can still guide his actions, and lead him to do extremely dangerous things for the sake of the one he loves.

Chivalric, or courtly, love is always romantic love, and the erotic component is very important. The knight is expected to claim that his beloved is the most beautiful woman in the world, so it helps if she is at least attractive. The goal of his love, at least in principle, is to obtain her sexual favors. Knights are expected to be somewhat subtle about expressing this, but they should make it clear that this is their ultimate goal.

The beloved is also supposed to be inaccessible in some way, so that the knight can't easily obtain her favors; this means the beloved can't be married to the knight. The favored form of inaccessibility varies from one culture to another, but it's common for the

beloved to already be married to someone else. The beloved may also have taken religious vows of chastity, or be physically confined somewhere. In principle, she may have been dead for centuries, and in worlds where such dead people can be raised that might be a popular option.

Two or more knights can compete for the attentions of the same beloved, and she may choose the most chivalrous among them as her acknowledged lover. There is, however, a big difference between choosing an acknowledged lover and actually allowing the knight to sleep with her. The beloved is expected to make things difficult, requiring the knight to undertake quests to prove himself, and to display all the virtues of chivalry in an exemplary manner. Knights are often set apparently impossible tasks by their beloveds, and even then they're expected to attempt them.

Some knights set themselves tasks to prove their worth, and spend little time in the presence of their beloved. Indeed, some knights choose their beloved on the basis of reputation, and might never actually meet her, instead communicating by letter and messenger. As this takes the inaccessibility of the beloved to great heights, it's generally approved of. This may also be the safest approach for a knight who is actually married. Pursuing a dead beloved is the most extreme form of this approach, although in that case the knight must at least appear to be trying to have the beloved raised from death. If the beloved is alive but distant, the knight need not even try to meet her.

Knights are expected to impress their beloveds through acts of chivalry, and through acts of courtliness. Courtliness includes polite and elegant behavior in company, and the careful preservation of the knight's honor. It also includes the composition of poetry praising the beloved, and may include certain kinds of music, dancing, and careful choice of dress.



The beloved need not see any of this in person, but she should be in a position to hear about it. Knights are not expected to keep their deeds secret.

Nor are they expected to conceal the identity of their beloveds. This may seem slightly surprising, if the beloved is married to someone important, but the conventional implication is that the knight is so carried away by passion that he doesn't care what people think. Of course, since courtly love is a formalized part of chivalry, people think that he's behaving exactly as he should.

As well as undertaking great deeds to prove that he's worthy of his beloved, the knight is expected to champion her in all contexts. He must never allow any other woman to claim to be more beautiful than her, nor may he allow any other knight to claim that his beloved is better. The response often takes the form of a challenge to a duel, although it is, in most cultures, bad form for this to be a duel to the death. If someone directly insults his beloved, a knight is expected to do whatever is necessary to avenge the insult and uphold his beloved's honor. This may mean getting everyone to deny something they all know to be true. For example, if the knight's beloved is an ostensibly chaste priestess, but becomes pregnant, he's expected to make everyone deny that she has broken her vows, perhaps by accepting a magical explanation for the pregnancy.

The beloved is expected to be largely passive in all this. Indeed, she need not like the knight at all, in which case keeping him at a distance may be a good idea. However, if the beloved accepts a knight as her champion, she is expected to grant him an audience if he requests it; open audiences should always take place in the presence of witnesses, however, so that people can be sure that the beloved didn't grant the knight her favors.

An accepted knight may be given a token by his beloved, such as a glove or scarf, which he is then expected to carry everywhere, even into battle, as a badge of his devotion. Ladies may sometimes give a knight a token in the hope of convincing him to take

them as his beloved, but this is usually regarded as somewhat forward. Indeed, just as knights may compete for one beloved, so too may ladies compete for one knight. The ladies are required to be subtle about it, as they are expected to be passive, but it can be very good for a knight's reputation to have many ladies after him, particularly if they're beautiful or powerful. The knight is, however, expected to pick one and remain loyal to her.

If a beloved does wish to grant her knight all the favors of her body, she can't do so openly. She's supposed to be inaccessible, and a knight who is openly sleeping with his beloved is as unacceptable as one who is married to her. Thus, the affair must be managed in secret, so that it's difficult for people to find out.

This doesn't mean that the affair actually has to be secret. As with almost everything else about courtly love, this is a convention. As long as the knight and his lady take steps apparently designed to preserve secrecy, and which make the consummation of their love a more difficult matter, it doesn't matter that everyone knows what's going on. They're expected to pretend that they don't, but it's not necessarily any reflection on the knight or his lady.

The expectation that the love is likely to be consummated eventually is one of the factors that determines the kinds of inaccessibility that a culture deems most appropriate. If it would be truly shocking were the love to be consummated, then choosing such a beloved is inappropriate. Thus, among dwarves it's inappropriate for the beloved to be married, while among humans she should not be vowed to any god that requires chastity.

A knight is expected to remain faithful to one beloved, even after she has granted him all her favors. Unfaithful knights make good stories, but not usually good knights. The one exception to this is if the knight marries his beloved. That is an acceptable termination of a love affair, and the knight is then expected to find a new beloved to inspire him to great deeds. Those who truly love their wives often choose some-

one entirely inaccessible and distant as a second beloved, and sometimes take real pains never to meet their new beloved. This, again, is perfectly acceptable behavior. A knight might even have a fictional beloved who is a cover for his continuing devotion to his wife; the acceptability of this is highly dependent on the culture.

Although a knight is required to be faithful to his beloved, this doesn't rule out marriage or other affairs. The knight's beloved fills a very particular role in his life, and a wife or lover can fill a very different one. There is no necessary contradiction in an openly homosexual knight having a male lover, whom everyone knows about, and a female beloved. While most people will realize that the knight's courtly love is highly conventional, this doesn't necessarily make it unchivalrous.

It might seem from all this that courtly love is a matter of making things as difficult for yourself as possible. This isn't far from the truth. Courtly love is supposed to be a form of devotion to a high and difficult ideal, and few ladies fulfill that requirement naturally. The conventions have thus grown up to ensure that love is difficult for knights, so that they can display their chivalry as they work it out.



PRESTIGE CLASS:

THE AMOROUS KNIGHT

Some knights focus primarily on the pursuit of courtly love. This is rare among humans, who rank love as the least of the chivalric virtues, but much more common among other races, particularly the elves. Some such knights form themselves into orders, devoted either to a single beloved or to a particular kind of love.

The amorous knight lives to exalt his beloved, and to prove himself worthy of her ultimate favors. He may well be a brave and skilled warrior, loyal to his lord and faithful to his god, but his service to his beloved takes precedence over all of these.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an amorous knight, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +7

Feats: Courtly Lover

Skills: Diplomacy 3 ranks, Perform 4 ranks

Special: Member of an amorous order of chivalry, and choose an appropriate beloved.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for the amorous knight prestige class (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis) and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the amorous knight prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: The amorous knight is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all types of armor, and shields.

Love's Inspiration (Ex): When acting in the presence of his beloved, the amorous knight is inspired to perform beyond his normal capacities. He may add a +1 inspiration bonus to any one total, including skill totals, attack bonus, Armor Class, and saving throws. Thus, if the character normally has an AC of 16, he has an AC of 17 while under the influence of this ability. This bonus applies until the end of the knight's current activity. One activity might be fighting a single opponent, composing a single poem, or making his

way through a long feast without making a single slip of etiquette. Once the activity has finished, the knight may apply the bonus to another total, as long as his beloved is still present.

The knight's beloved must be present and able to notice the knight's activities for this ability to work. She need not be paying attention to him; the key factor is that the knight must know that she could notice him. If she's watching secretly, the knight can't invoke this ability. If she's not watching, but the knight genuinely believes that she is, the ability does work. In this case, the bonus vanishes as soon as the knight realizes that his beloved is not able to see him.

If the knight spends more than a day in his beloved's presence, he becomes used to it and it ceases to inspire him. He must spend at least as much time away from his beloved as he spent with her to recover the bonus. If the knight's beloved is a player character, or otherwise always present, the GM may rule that this ability can be invoked once per day at 1st level, twice at 4th level, three times at 7th level, and four times at 10th level.

The bonus increases to +2 at 4th level, to +3 at 7th level, and to +4 at 10th level.

Love's Messenger (Su): At 2nd level, the knight can send a message to his beloved and be sure that it will get to her. He must create a message that could reach the beloved by mundane means, such as a letter, and then start it on its journey in some way. Giving it to a random stranger and asking him to deliver it to the most beautiful woman in the world would work, as would tying it to the leg of a wild bird and releasing the animal.

The message makes its way to the lady through a series of coincidences, traveling as quickly as it would have if carried by an efficient, but mundane, messenger capable of traversing the distance. For example, the bird might be shot for the lady's dinner, or the stranger might show the letter to someone who recognizes the addressee.

This ability doesn't guarantee that no one will read the message, but it does prevent anyone from destroying or delaying the message. If someone tries to do this, they must make a Will save against a DC of 15 + amorous knight class level, or the attempt fails.

This ability only works if the knight and his beloved are on the same plane of existence.

Distant Inspiration (Ex): The knight may call on love's inspiration once per day when his beloved isn't

THE AMOROUS KNIGHT

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Love's Inspiration +1
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Love's Messenger
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Distant Inspiration (1/day)
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Love's Inspiration +2
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Lover's Sense
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	Distant Inspiration (2/day)
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Love's Inspiration +3
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Love's Interplanar Messenger
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	Distant Inspiration (3/day)
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Love's Inspiration +4

present, but could come to hear about the knight's actions. This ability otherwise functions as Love's Inspiration.

From 6th level the knight may call on love's inspiration twice per day when his beloved isn't present, and three times per day from 9th level.

Lover's Sense (Su): This ability lets the knight know whenever his beloved is in danger. He learns the type of danger, in general terms — for example “danger of kidnapping” but not “danger of kidnapping by the evil Duke” — and has a sense of how serious the danger is. This ability does detect non-physical dangers, such as the danger of being deceived, but only detects those that are fairly serious. The knight isn't constantly bothered by knowing that his beloved is in danger of being overcharged at the market, for example. This ability doesn't tell the knight where his beloved is, nor does it tell him the precise source of the danger.

Love's Interplanar Messenger (Su): From 8th level the amorous knight's Love's Messenger ability works even if the knight and his beloved are on different planes of existence.



AMOROUS ORDER OF CHIVALRY: IPHIGENIA'S DEVOTED

Iphigenia's Devoted is an order of knights who all hold the same halfling woman as their beloved. Iphigenia lived two hundred years ago, and was abducted by a powerful outsider. She was renowned for her beauty and courtesy, and had many knights while she lived. When she was taken, they swore to get her back. The order continues this quest today.

Requirements: Amorous knight prestige class, the halfling Iphigenia as beloved.

Special: Knowledge (the planes) is a class skill for members of this order.

Symbols: A green glove or a red scarf, both halfling-sized. Iphigenia gave a green glove and a red scarf as favors to the two knights she chose from those devoted to her. The one to whom she gave the glove, Quansik, was killed fighting a dragon, so that symbol is normally carried when going into danger. The one to whom she gave the scarf, Yrando, is still the leader of the order today, so that symbol is worn to mark patience and devotion.

Origins: Iphigenia may truly have been the most beautiful woman of her time. The daughter of a halfling noble, she was also famed for her courtliness, her talent at poetry, and her refusal to take a husband. She cultivated an aloof attitude that made her all but irresistible to knights in search of a beloved. All these characteristics combined to make her the most loved woman in the world. Some poets claimed that a thousand thousand knights pined for a simple smile, and while that was certainly an exaggeration, it's not impossible that a thousand knights took her as their beloved at some point or other.

Iphigenia did choose favored knights from among those who waited on her. The first, Quansik, was a half-orc, and her choice surprised many. Time justified her, though, as Quansik proved to be a paragon of the chivalric virtues. His valor and love were particularly noted, and he died, at last, fighting a dragon on Iphigenia's behalf. The lady mourned him for two years, and refused to ever wear green thereafter, as that was the color of the glove she had given him as a favor.

Her second choice, Yrando, was an elf, and caused far fewer comments, as his elegance and courtesy were well known. The existence of an acknowledged favorite who, rumor had it, was allowed to kiss the tips of her fingers, did not put other knights off from devoting themselves to Iphigenia, however. They swarmed around her father's court, and he found the presence of a large volunteer army quite useful on occasion.

Everything changed a couple of centuries ago. A powerful evil outsider took an interest in Iphigenia, and

abducted her to its home plane. Her knights immediately resolved to get her back, but when this proved difficult many turned to other ladies. Some did not, and there were enough to form the core of an order of chivalry. Their devotion, and Iphigenia's reputation, led other knights to join them over the years, and Iphigenia's Devoted today has around fifty members.

Organization: Yrando, as Iphigenia's chosen, is the undisputed leader of the order. He has six lieutenants, of whom at least one is always a half-orc in memory of Quansik. All members of the order are assigned to one of these lieutenants, and are expected to obey his commands. Yrando and the lieutenants each hold a castle, usually a small one, and the knights gather at these locations as necessary.

Most of the time, however, the knights are allowed to do as they please. The organization exists purely to enable the order to act as one whenever some clue that might lead to Iphigenia's return is found.

It's quite easy to join the order. A knight of some renown need only take Iphigenia as his beloved, and start proclaiming her virtues and defending her to other knights. Before long, a knight of Iphigenia's Devoted will hear of this, and will contact the knight to offer him membership in the order. All candidates must meet Yrando and declare their devotion to the lady, but there is no formal admission ceremony other than that.

Activities: Iphigenia's Devoted spend their time trying to return Iphigenia to the Material Plane. They believe that she isn't dead, as those of the order who have Lover's Sense say that she's still in danger. Yrando and the higher members of the order use Love's Interplanar Messenger to send her assurances that help is on the way, while searching for any information they can on how to rescue her.

This has proved far more difficult than was expected, as her abductor seems to be using powerful magic to hide. Even inquiries made of the gods have failed to provide a useful answer. As a result, the knights spend much time searching for clues to Iphigenia's whereabouts, and the order has made an extensive study of the planes.

Most of the time the knights of the order wander the world, listening for rumors and performing deeds of chivalry. Occasionally, when they hear something promising, they follow up on them, often with the help of other members of the order. Most outside the order see them as devoted to a hopeless cause, which can be viewed as admirable or ridiculous, depending on temperament.

Campaign Integration: The order should fit easily into any campaign, and is a good order for player character knights. Since the beloved is never actually present, you won't have to roleplay any romance, which may well be a good thing. However, the knight can still proclaim his devotion and do all the daft things that knights normally do on behalf of their beloveds.

The quest to rescue Iphigenia could be a good structure for a whole campaign, in which case there should be some chance of success. Alternatively, possible leads might give rise to occasional adventures, while the campaign as a whole takes a different route. In this case, there need not be any possibility of rescuing Iphigenia.

If no player characters want to join the order, it can still be involved in the campaign. The knights have an obvious interest in anyone with experience with other planes, and player characters often fall into this category. Thus, they might find themselves asked for advice, or even hired to go along on an adventure to free Iphigenia. Alternatively, the characters might find Iphigenia, discover that she's perfectly happy where she is, and be commanded to tell the knights to stop looking for her. This is unlikely to be popular with people who have devoted their entire lives to the task, of course.

AMOROUS ORDER OF CHIVALRY: THE HAUNTERS OF TEMPLES

The Hunters of Temples are amorous knights who have all taken priestesses as their beloveds. They don't all love priestesses of the same deity, but they are united in their ambivalent attitude to the deities who keep them from their beloveds.

Requirements: Amorous knight prestige class, beloved is a priestess.

Special: Knowledge (religion) is a class skill for members of this order.

Symbols: The symbol of the deity worshiped by the knight's beloved, superimposed on a chained heart.

Origins: The Hunters of Temples are an ancient order, featuring in legends going back thousands of years. According to the order's own foundation myths, they began when goddesses walked the Material Plane in person. At that time, many knights professed their love for a goddess, as mortal women could not be more fair, or more courtly. The goddesses, of course, scorned to acknowledge the love of mortals, and the stricken knights gathered together to find what comfort they could in sharing their grief.

The goddesses chose to gather priestesses to themselves, and the knights saw in this a new way to come close to their beloveds. They turned to the priestesses, seeking their aid and intercession with their mistresses. As time passed, the deities withdrew fully from the world, leaving their clergy to carry out their will. As the knights were accustomed to paying court to the priestesses, and some of those mortals chose to reward the knights' efforts, the order began to falter from its initial purpose.

These lapses promoted dissension within the order, and there was for a time a real danger of war between the different members. The leaders of the order gathered them together at the Temple of Lastathar Lost, and in a great council they chose their future path. They swore to renounce all love for the goddesses who had spurned them, and instead to seek to win their priestesses from them. And thus the path of the order was fixed.

Organization: The Hunters of Temples have a surprisingly elaborate organization. At the head of the order are the three phieldrin, equal to one another and responsible for making all decisions

about the future of the order. Below them is the Council of Seventeen, whose members are also known as the desastra, which decides on admissions and expulsions. It can even, by a simple majority vote, expel one of the phieldrin. The remaining two then choose his successor, and must do so before the desastra can expel another.

The Hunters of Temples are further divided into lanthirs, which are membership units that cover particular regions of the world. Each is headed by a lanphieldrin, who has two lieutenants. The lanphieldrin presents candidates for admission to the desastra, and also takes notice of expulsion to those who are cast out. Cutting across the lanthirs are groups made up of knights who love priestesses of the same deity.

The phieldrin and desastra meet at the Temple of Lastathar Lost, a castle complex deep in the wilderness, which is built around the ruins of an ancient structure. This structure certainly appears to have been a temple, but the knights know nothing about it, nor about the identity of Lastathar (or Lastathar Lost, as they don't know whether "Lost" is actually a descriptive term or a name that happens to be homophonous with "lost"). New members of the order are admitted at this temple, in an elaborate ceremony performed largely in an ancient language that none can now understand, even with magical aid.

Despite this elaborate structure, the Hunters of Temples require nothing from their members. In most areas, it's nothing more than a dining club, and the lanphieldrin's highest duty is providing feasts. The history of the order alludes to wars against the gods, in which these organizational structures turned the knights into an army, but whatever happened, people seem to have been reluctant to write it down. These days, most members just enjoy the ceremonies without worrying about what they mean.

Activities: Individual knights of the Hunters of Temples carry on their lives and chivalric activities

much as normal, and the order as a whole does nothing beyond maintaining its properties, particularly the Temple of Lastathar Lost. The attitude of the order does influence the behavior of individual members, however. The legend that the order dedicated itself to stealing priestesses away from their deities still shapes the behavior of most members.

This would seem to conflict with piety, but knights of the order circumnavigate this problem by choosing as their beloved priestesses of deities opposed to their own. Thus, the worshipers of good deities often choose to love the priestesses of evil ones. The conflict need not be so overt, though, so that a worshiper of a city god choosing to pursue the priestess of a nature god would also work.

As their attitude is well known, knights of the Hunters of Temples usually find that their beloveds will not receive them, and do much to discourage them. This, of course, fits perfectly with the ideals of chivalric love, and simply inspires the knights to try harder.

Campaign Integration: This is an order that's generally suitable for player character knights, as it doesn't place many constraints on their actions. In addition, a plot thread wherein a paladin tries to win the love of an evil priestess, and thus redeem her, has a great deal of potential for melodramatic roleplaying.

Another possibility, if one of the player characters is a female cleric, is for a member of the order to choose her as his beloved and devote his efforts to winning her devotion away from her deity. This would create an interesting conflict, as the knight would be an ally of the party in one sense, but an opponent in the other.

Finally, it's clear to everyone that there's something in the past of the order that is no longer well understood. Perhaps Lastathar is using the order as a tool in some subtle scheme, or maybe she was a deity who was lost, but may still be rediscovered and returned to the world. Or, someone could simply be trying to manipulate the order through the mysteries of its past.



FEATS OF LOVE

The following feats can improve any amorous character.

COURTLY LOVER [GENERAL]

You are a refined and courtly lover, skilled in poetry and the courtesy necessary to win a lady's heart.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus to Diplomacy and Perform.

DEEP COMMITMENT [GENERAL]

You are truly committed to a particular cause or person, and this shows in your speech and actions.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to Bluff and Diplomacy checks related to the subject of your deep commitment. In the case of a person, this covers talking to her or about her. In the case of a cause, it covers talking about it or engaging in activities that directly promote it.

Special: You may take this feat more than once. Its effects do not stack. Instead, each time you take it you become committed to another cause or person.

With the GM's approval, you may change the subject of your commitment if campaign events make it appropriate. For example, if you were committed to restoring a king to his throne, you could change to being committed to serving him once you succeed.

PASSIONATE SPEECH [GENERAL]

You can pour all of your passion and feeling into a single speech and really make it count.

Benefit: Once per day, you may take 20 on a single Bluff or Diplomacy check without having to spend extra time or be in a relaxed situation. You take the action as normal, and the result is treated as if you had rolled a twenty.

Special: You may take this feat more than once. Its effects do not stack. Every time you take it you may use it an additional time per day.



ITEMS OF LOVE

Items devoted to chivalric love often help the lover to find his way through the hazards of courtly life. Knights are, after all, generally more skilled at handling monsters than dinner parties.

POTION: POTION OF ETIQUETTE

This potion grants the imbiber an intuitive knowledge of the right things to do and say in any context. It grants a +10 competence bonus to all Diplomacy checks for a period of one hour.

Faint transmutation; CL 2nd; Brew Potion, spellcaster level 6th+; Price 150 gp

RING: RING OF TRUTH

The wearer of this plain silver ring is supernaturally attuned to the truth of the things he's told. If he's told a deliberate lie, he knows it immediately. He doesn't know what the truth is, but he does know that it's false and the speaker knows it to be false. In addition, he gets a +10 competence bonus to Sense Motive checks to detect more subtle forms of deception, such as when the statement is strictly true but misleading. (For example, it is true that "there isn't a single orc in the dungeon" when there are over a hundred, but it's a highly misleading thing to say.)

Moderate divination, CL 10th; Forge Ring, *detect thoughts* or *discern lies*; Price 82,000 gp

WONDROUS ITEM:

CAPE OF COURTLINESS

This tasteful and fashionable cape grants the wearer a +10 competence bonus to all Diplomacy checks. The appearance of the cape magically shifts so that it's always fashionable for the context in which it's worn.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have five ranks of the Diplomacy skill; Price 2,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

WONDROUS ITEM: PEN OF THE POETS

When used, this ornate pen grants the wielder a +10 competence bonus to all Perform checks involved with the composition and recitation of poetry. If it's used to write a poem down, it also grants a +10 bonus to Craft (calligraphy) checks to determine the beauty of the script.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have five ranks of the Perform skill; Price 2,000 gp

MAJOR ARTIFACT: THE AMOROUS WAND

The Amorous Wand was created by Lemphaerin, a great elven wizard. He had intended to create a cursed item that would embarrass his opponents, but something happened during the creation process that took the results completely out of his hands. The wand still has the effects that Lemphaerin intended, but it is far more powerful than he ever dreamed.

The wand is a thin baton of oak with an acorn carved on one end. It's normally about six inches long and a quarter of an inch thick, but in the presence of attractive women it grows to be twelve inches long and an inch thick. This growth has no effect on its powers.

If the wand is picked up by a female character, she gains a negative level that remains as long as she owns the wand. While this negative level never results in permanent level loss, it can't be removed by any

means as long as she has the wand. In addition, every day she must make a Fortitude save against a DC equal to the number of days she has owned the wand. If she fails, she becomes a man and loses the negative level. The change can be reversed if the character gives up the wand, which requires a *remove curse* spell, and then is the beneficiary of a second *remove curse* spell. The change can't be reversed as long as the character retains the wand. Female characters are immune to the wand's other effects, and can't use any of its other powers.

A male character who has the wand is prone to falling in love with almost every woman he meets. If he meets an individual woman, he must make a Will save against a DC of 25, or become *charmed* as if affected by a *charm person* spell. This effect lasts for 24 hours, or until the man meets a more beautiful woman. Assume that characters with higher Charisma are more beautiful than those with lower, unless something in the description of either character contradicts this. The man also becomes infatuated with the woman, and tries to seduce her. Even with the aid of the *charm* effect, the woman will have to be very clever to convince him to leave her alone, as that counts as something that the man would not normally do. The man does not become infatuated with the same woman twice in succession, although careful planning could lead him to alternate between two women in his obsession. A man can only give up the wand if he is the beneficiary of a *remove curse* spell cast to this end.

These were the effects that Lemphaerin intended. The wand's other abilities were not planned, and are far beyond his powers.

First, a male owner gets a +20 bonus to all Diplomacy and Bluff checks when he's using the skills on a woman in the hope of making her think favorably of him.

Second, the owner may avoid the repeated *charm* effects by taking "the most beautiful woman in the land" as his beloved. The target of his amour need not *actually* be the most beautiful woman in the land, but

she must be sufficiently beautiful for the lover's claim to be convincing. The lover is then *charmed* by that woman, and remains so as long as he doesn't consummate his love. If the man is deliberately trying to avoid doing so, he can resist temptation.

Once the lover has a single beloved, the wand's other abilities become available to him. The lover is always aware of his beloved's general state — her health and emotions, and whether she's in danger. This means that he does know if she is in love with someone else, but while this is suitably tragic it has no effect on the lover's abilities. The lover also knows which way to go to reach his beloved as quickly as possible. The route need not be completely safe, but the dangers will always be such as he could overcome.

In addition, the lover gains the ability to give his beloved literally anything that he possesses. He may give her his levels, years of his life, or his memories. The lover may not raise his beloved's level above his own in this way, because he doesn't have so high a level to give. He may, however, make her level equal to his own. If he gives her years of his life, he ages that many years and she stops aging for the same length of time. If he gives memories, he loses them and she gains them. Other such gifts should be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis by the GM.

ELVEN KNIGHTS

The elves have a strong and ancient tradition of chivalry. Humans, however, are often reluctant to acknowledge this, as the elves hold love to be the most important virtue, followed by piety, then loyalty, and finally valor. This inverts the normal order of the virtues among humans, and means that elven knights behave quite differently from their human counterparts.

One striking difference is that elven knights are drawn from a much wider range of classes than is normal for human knights. Arcane spellcasters are often knights, and more bards than fighters are found among their

number. Rogues are still uncommon, as the openness required by valor, which is still important to elven knights, conflicts with the normal attitudes of the class.



While bards fit elven knighthood very well, it might be even more interesting to play a fighter. The emphasis on social activities requires a good Charisma score, and serves to distinguish this fighter from the stereotype.

This affects the standard image of the knight. In human cultures, the typical knight is heavily armored and mounted on a horse, and can usually be found on the field of battle. In elven cultures, the typical knight is unarmored, and singing in a garden while gazing at his lady. The elven knight is willing to fight valorously for his lady, deity, or lord, but he rarely seeks out opportunities to do so. Vigorous service, in elven eyes, produces quite enough reasons for battle.

Elves are not naturally inclined to obedience, which is one reason why loyalty is ranked quite low among the chivalric virtues. Elven loyalty normally takes the form of acting in what the knight believes to be his lord's best interests, often at some distance from the lord, and usually independent of any actual commands. Elven knights do esteem valor, so this service is often military, but they also have a clearer vision of the importance of other kinds of service than most human knights.

Elven chivalric epics sound more like melodramatic romances to human ears. It's not that uncommon for them not to feature combat at all, although most do describe fighting, and they almost invariably revolve around the tortured relationship between a knight and his lady. As the love in question is chivalric, mere separation isn't enough to turn the stories into tragedies, and the motif of the knight who remains loyal to his lady beyond death is both common and popular. In the tragedies, however, the knight always betrays, or is betrayed by, his lady.

Elven knights make good player characters. They aren't tied to a single location, and have a great deal of freedom of action, but can still easily be motivated by requests from the beloved. Further, the distance between elven knighthood and the human conception of chivalry makes the character inherently interesting.



AMOROUS ORDER OF CHIVALRY: THE ORDER OF THE NIGHTINGALE

The Order of the Nightingale is an organization of amorous knights centered on the elven queen. She created the order to bring beauty and love to her court, rather than as a fighting force, but the knights have proved themselves to be surprisingly adept in the military defense of her realm.

Requirements: Amorous knight prestige class, full-blooded elf, loyal to the queen. Beloved must be a member of the queen's immediate circle, but must not be the queen herself. Her sisters, daughters, and maids of honor are all suitable choices.

Symbols: A nightingale. Wizards and sorcerers of the order often take a nightingale as their familiar. (A nightingale has the same game statistics as a raven, but the master of a nightingale familiar gains a +3 bonus on Perform checks.)

Origins: The elven queen succeeded her mother two centuries ago, and founded the Order of the Nightingale on the day she took the throne. Her mother had required that the knights of her court fix all their devotion on her, but the new queen found the resulting court life sterile and obsessive. With everyone competing for the attention of the queen, every elf regarded every other as a competitor. The court was torn into factions, held together only by old queen's force of personality.

The new queen wasn't sure that she could repeat her mother's feat, and was sure that she didn't want to. Thus, she founded an order that required that the knights choose a beloved from the other ladies of the



court. She also made it known that she wasn't interested in having a knightly lover herself. Of course, this provoked many knights to declare their love for her, but she refused to show those knights any favor at all, and banished them from the court. A few remain to this day, but most of the courtiers took the hint and fastened their affections on other members of the queen's entourage.

Organization: At its founding, the order had no structure at all. To join, a knight merely presented himself to the queen and declared the identity of his beloved. If he was of sufficiently good repute, the queen accepted him. Within two decades, the Order of the Nightingale was comprised of most of the knights of the court, and the queen decided that it would be useful to have a bit more structure. Accordingly, she appointed a grand master and five knights commander.

The grand master and one knight commander reside at the court, and deal with daily administration. The other four knights commander are assigned to govern

the four border castles of the queen's realm. Their function is not purely, or even primarily, military. They're required to establish and maintain elegant courts in the castles, to which visitors from other lands are made welcome. No outsider is allowed to penetrate further into the elven realm without the permission of its queen, so the border castles are the realm's public face.

The knights of the order are expected to visit the queen's court at least once per year, and to visit a knight commander at least once per season. It's become traditional for knights to attend court at mid-winter if at all possible, but this isn't a requirement. If the queen has urgent need of her knights, a message is sent out to the knights commander, who then pass it on to all the knights that they see over the next three months. Elves have a long-term view of "urgent."

Activities: The knights are expected to embellish the queen's court, filling it with poetry, courtesy, and elegance. They are also expected to serve loyally, and devote themselves to winning the esteem of their

beloveds. As far as possible, the knights should choose to love different women, so that they are not in direct competition. This is not universally possible, of course, but the queen's guidance has encouraged a fairly broad choice. These days new members of the order take younger members of the queen's entourage as their ladies.

The knights are occasionally gathered together to fight against some threat to the realm; this has happened twice in the queen's reign. Otherwise, they're allowed and expected to go their own way, serving the queen as they see fit, and acting as cultural ambassadors for her realm.

Uesar, the current grand master, has an additional agenda, which he keeps secret from the queen. The queen will not live for ever, and her heir shows strong signs of being unsuitable as a ruler. Uesar suspects that she's actually evil, but is hiding it as well as she can. The queen seems blind to her daughter's faults, so Uesar believes that he must act to preserve the realm.

He's not willing to prevent the crown princess' accession to the throne, as the descent of elven queens goes back unbroken for millennia. Instead, he's trying to build up customs and lines of loyalty within the court that will make it all but impossible for her to enact evil commands. He encourages the attachment of knights to noble ladies who are of good character, and is also channeling resources to the courts of the knights commander, so that they'll be able to resist evil commands issuing from the next queen. Ideally, he'd like to see the crown princess turn to good, but he hasn't been able to find a way to effect that. The queen has discouraged knights from loving the crown princess almost as strongly as she has discouraged them from loving herself, so none of the Order of the Nightingale is close to the crown princess.

Campaign Integration: The Order of the Nightingale is very well suited for player character knights, as it places no restrictions on their adventuring. Since the knights are expected to act as cultural ambassadors for the elven realm — which remains

nameless so as to fit easily into the game world — they can go anywhere, and do anything heroic.

The same features make the order useful as a group of NPCs. They're more likely to be allies of the player characters than opponents, however. Player characters who need the help of the elves might well find themselves at one of the castles controlled by the knights commander of the order, and would need to impress the knights to get the assistance they desire.

Uesar's schemes to neutralize the crown princess are another obvious way to get the player characters involved, either as members of the order helping him, or as independent agents hired by the crown princess to foil the conspiracy against her. Although Uesar honestly believes her to be evil, he might be wrong.

RULES OF THE COURT

Knights spend much of their time proving their courtliness and winning the hearts of reluctant women. While rules for combat are standard, rules for charm and verbal fencing are not, so this section provides them. In addition, we also give rules for creating poetry and winning the love of one's beloved.



DIPLOMACY/BLUFF CHECK:

COURTLY CHARM

A noble lover must be courteous and charming at all times. This is represented by a Diplomacy check if the knight is sincere, or a Bluff check if he's merely pretending to be nice.

Check for Courtly Charm: A success against a DC of 15 indicates that he has done well enough to avoid embarrassment, while a success against a DC of 25 indicates that he has been notably charming.

If he doesn't succeed against a DC of 5, he has committed some horrible social blunder, and must take a

penalty of -2 to all social interaction tests for the next week.

Special: A knight may usually take 10 on courtliness checks, but may not take 20.



PERFORM CHECK:

COMPOSING POETRY

Courtly lovers must compose poetry to their beloveds, which is covered by the Perform skill. Some types of poems are designed to be sung; composing such a poem includes creating or adapting a tune with the Perform (sing) skill. A knight may also write sonnets to his beloved, which are designed to be spoken aloud using the Perform (oratory) skill.

Check to Compose Poetry: When composing a poem, you first choose a DC. This determines how good the poem will be, according to the table below. Your knight then spends a day working on the poem. Check his Perform (sing) or Perform (oratory) skill, and record the number of points by which the check exceeds the DC chosen. If the check exceeds the DC by more than the DC, the poem is complete. Otherwise, make another check the following day, and add the points by which the check exceeds the DC to the total from the previous day. Repeat until the running total exceeds the DC, at which point the poem is complete.

If the check fails, the knight makes no progress on the poem that day, and adds nothing to the total. If you roll a natural 20 on your check, roll again, and if the second roll is a success, you have been struck by inspiration. The poem is immediately completed, and is



PERFORM CHECK: COMPOSING POETRY TABLE

DC	POETIC QUALITY
10	Pedestrian verse. The poem shows that the knight is willing to try, but nothing more.
15	Commendable performance. The verse has some sparks of originality and creativity.
20	Fine verse. The poem is good enough for other people to steal it and try to pass it off as their own. If you read, sing, or send it to your beloved, you get a +2 circumstance bonus to social interactions with her for the rest of the week. You only get this bonus the first time you tell her the poem.
25	Classic verse. People include the poem in collections of fine love poetry, and lines are quoted by most lovers. Stealing it is pointless, as everyone knows who wrote it. If you read, sing, or send it to your beloved, you get a +5 circumstance bonus to social interactions with her for the rest of the week. You only get this bonus the first time you tell her the poem.
30	Eternal verse. "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" The poem is destined to be one of the eternal classics of amorous verse. If you read, sing, or send it to your beloved, you get a +10 circumstance bonus to social interactions with her for the rest of the week, and a permanent +1 circumstance bonus.

treated as three levels better on the table. It isn't possible to get an effective DC of more than 30.

A character may take 10 when composing poetry, but may not take 20, no matter how much time he has available.

For example, Sir Andurin wants to write a poem for his beloved. He needs it by tomorrow, or she will be disappointed, and his Perform (oratory) total is 6. He chooses to write merely pedestrian verse, so that he can write the poem in one day if he rolls a 14 or higher. His player rolls a 15, and the poem is written. His beloved is somewhat mollified, but the poem does not put her in a good mood.

Determined to improve her opinion of him, Sir Andurin decides to write a better poem, spending as long as it takes. He aims for fine verse (DC 20), so that he makes no progress unless he rolls a 15 or higher.

The first day, he rolls a 17 for a total of 23. He gains 3 points towards writing the poem, and needs another 17. On the second day, he rolls an 8, and makes no progress. On the third day, he rolls a 20, but the re-roll is only a 6, so inspiration doesn't strike. Nevertheless, he gains 6 points, for a total of 9, with 11 still needed. On the fourth day, he rolls a 20 again, this time followed by a 15. Inspiration strikes, and the poem is completed! It's a work of brilliance, as if he had aimed at a DC of 30, and when he recites it to his beloved, she smiles dazzlingly at him.

DIPLOMACY CHECK: WINNING BELOVED'S LOVE OR FAVORS

Ideally, the relationship between the knight and his beloved should be roleplayed. Love is, however, easily the most difficult situation to handle in a roleplaying

WINNING BELOVED'S LOVE OR FAVORS: RELUCTANCE

RELUCTANCE	SITUATION
10	Base reluctance, where everyone starts.
+2	Beloved is of high status in her society.
+3	Beloved is of very high status in her society.
-2	Beloved is of lower status than the knight.
+2	Beloved is of higher status than the knight.
+3	Beloved is of far higher status than the knight.
+2	Beloved finds knight unattractive.
-2	Beloved finds knight attractive.
+2	For every step of difference in alignment. (For example, lawful good to lawful neutral is one step, chaotic neutral to lawful good is three steps.)
+5	Beloved already has an accepted knight.
+5	Beloved believes that she should be independent and rely on her own resources.
+5	Beloved is a knight herself. (This always stacks with the addition from believing that she should be independent.)
+2	Beloved and knight are of different races.
+3	Beloved and knight are of mutually hostile races.
+2	Beloved and knight have different ultimate lords (for example, they are loyal to different kings).
+3	Beloved and knight have hostile ultimate lords.
+1	Beloved and knight worship different deities.
+4	Beloved and knight worship hostile deities.

game, so these rules allow you to abstract romantic scenes. While it might be difficult to roleplay love, it can be a lot of fun, so there are some suggestions later in this chapter for how you might do that, instead.

Check to Win Beloved's Love or Favors: The beloved's attitude to the knight *as a person* may be completely different from her attitude to him *as a lover*. While a beloved who was hostile toward the knight as a person and accepting of him as her lover would be unusual, it's not an impossible situation, and one that does appear in literature. For this reason, a separate series of Diplomacy checks is necessary for a knight to either become the lady's accepted courtly love, or to win her bodily favors. An honorable knight normally attempts the first and then the second, but this isn't a requirement. In fact, some knights, particularly paladins, are content with the first. The rules for the two are the same, however.

In general, a beloved will be at least Friendly to her knight once she has accepted him as such, and should be Helpful before the knight even starts trying to win her love or favors. Use the standard d20 System rules for influencing NPC attitudes with the Diplomacy skill to determine the beloved's feelings; these rules

determine the relative positions of the two in the elaborate game of courtly love.

Reluctance: First, determine the beloved's reluctance to accept the knight. This is a number determined by the table below, and by the GM's judgment. The table should cover most situations, but the GM might want to adjust the number by a point or two to reflect special circumstances. All applicable modifiers to the beloved's reluctance stack, so a beloved who has very high status in her society adds 5 to the base reluctance — +2 from having high status and another +3 from having very high status — for example.

Approaches: The knight pursues his beloved by making approaches to her. The most obvious way to make an approach is to visit the beloved and put his case in person. However, letters, messengers, and simply sending a spectacular gift can all qualify. When a knight makes an approach to his beloved, he makes a Diplomacy check against a DC equal to her reluctance. If this check succeeds, his beloved's reluctance is reduced by 1.

A knight can't make more than one approach per week, and must always have some grounds for the

WINNING BELOVED'S LOVE OR FAVORS: GIFTS & DEEDS

GIFTS TABLE

BONUS	GIFT
+5	Significant gift, suitable to beloved.
+8	Very significant gift (twice the value of significant gift), suitable to beloved.
+8	Significant gift, very suitable to beloved*.
+10	Very significant gift, very suitable to beloved*.

*A gift is very suitable to the beloved if it fits particularly well with her interests and needs. The knight must learn quite a bit about his beloved before he can determine what such a gift should be.

DEEDS TABLE

BONUS	DEED	EXAMPLE
+2	Ordinary deed, little chance of failure.	Fighting opponent with CR far below knight's level.
+5	Significant deed, significant chance of failing.	Fighting opponent 1 or 2 CR below knight's level.
+10	Spectacular deed, even chance of failing.	Fighting opponent with CR equal to knight's level.

approach. These may be very simple, such as having composed a poem or a brought a gift of a flower. More elaborate grounds give the knight a bonus to his Diplomacy check.

If the knight uses a poem that is fine verse or better as part of the approach, the bonus to social interactions applies to the roll to see if the approach was successful. Bonuses from multiple poems used in one approach don't stack, with the exception of the permanent bonus from eternal verse.

A gift grants a bonus if it's significant to both the knight and the beloved. As a rule of thumb, a gift that's worth one tenth of the treasure that the knight would expect to gain from an adventure at his current level is significant to the knight. For a 1st-level knight, this means a gift worth 90 gp, while for a 10th-level knight it means one worth 1,700 gp. A gift is significant to the beloved if she likes it, and doesn't feel like she's being bought. A gift of money is almost never appropriate in this situation. Bonuses from multiple gifts brought in the same approach don't stack; only the best applies.

The knight may also use a deed of chivalry as the grounds for an approach. The deed must have been done in the name of the beloved, which means that its primary component must have been valor, although the knight must not have actually violated either his loyalty or his piety in the process.

Bonuses from multiple deeds of chivalry do not stack, and should be saved for separate approaches. A knight may "save" a deed by not claiming credit for it when he approaches his beloved. He may then claim credit the following week, or at any later time.

Bonuses from poems, gifts, and deeds of chivalry *do* stack with one another, so that in the most favorable circumstances a knight could get a +30 bonus to his Diplomacy check. As the beloved's reluctance could be as high as 50, the knight might need these bonuses.

Success: Once the beloved's reluctance is reduced to zero, she either accepts the knight as her courtly love or grants him her favors, depending on which the knight was aiming for.



DIPLOMACY CHECK:

BATTLE OF WITS

Sometimes a knight will face enemies in the court who want to undermine his social standing, but not his physical health. These battles are fought with carefully chosen words. For rules on conducting political debates, see *Atlas Games' Dynasties and Demagogues*.

Check for Battle of Wits: The battling characters must all be at the same social event, and must speak a language spoken by most of the other attendees. Otherwise, they need not be particularly close to one another. A rumor dropped at one end of a hall can strike at someone at the other, after all.

There are two principal ways in which a battle of wits can be used. The first is for general verbal and social contests between people. In this case, there's no particular end in view and the goal is simply to establish social ascendancy. The second is to simulate a debate about a course of action, where different groups are putting forward different options. The rules are the same in both cases, as the context of the contest merely determines the effects of winning and losing.

Reputation Points: Every character has a number of reputation points (RP) equal to his Charisma score + his character level. This represents how well people think of him, and thus how hard it is to harm him through innuendo and verbal strikes.

Barbed Words: The words you use to wound another must be chosen to fit the situation. This requires a Knowledge (local) check. The effectiveness of the words depends on the DC you beat. You may take 10 on this roll, but you can't roll more than once in a single day.

DC	VERBAL DAMAGE
Under 5	0
5	1
10	1d3
15	1d4
20	1d6
25	1d8
30	1d10

Note down your verbal damage for the day.

Social Poise: You can avoid damage from comments directed at you by virtue of your social poise (SP), which is the target number that any verbal attack against you must beat to be successful. For instance, a high social poise may mean that no one believes scurrilous suggestions about you, or that you respond perfectly to a verbal trap. Your social poise is equal to the result of taking ten on a Sense Motive check. That is, it equals your rank in Sense Motive + your Wisdom bonus + 10.

Verbal Attack: Your ability to attack with your words depends on your Diplomacy total. To make a verbal attack, make a Diplomacy check and compare the result to your target's social poise. If you equal or exceed the target's social poise, your words have hit home and you damage his social standing. Roll your verbal damage and subtract that many points from the target's reputation points.

If you roll a 1, your verbal attack automatically misses. If you roll a 20, it automatically hits, and may be a telling hit. Roll again, and if the second check is also a success you do double damage.

A character is normally aware of a verbal attack, unless the attacker has a feat that says otherwise.

Options: You may approach verbal battles in a number of ways.

Defensive Response: If you take a defensive response, you may not attack anyone this turn. However, you may roll your Sense Motive total every time you're attacked. If the result is higher than your normal

social poise, treat the check as your social poise against this attack. You may decide to make a defensive response as soon as you become aware of an attack; doing so costs you your *next* attack.

Cutting Riposte: If someone rolls a 1 on a verbal attack, or takes a telling hit, you may immediately make a verbal attack against him. This is in addition to your normal attacks, and independent of your position relative to them. The victim of such circumstances is extremely vulnerable.

Aid Another: You may choose to aid an ally rather than attacking yourself. Make a verbal attack roll against a social poise of 10. If it succeeds, your ally gains a +2 circumstance bonus to verbal attacks or to social poise, at your discretion.

Rounds of Battle: Verbal battles are normally initiated by a surprise attack. This doesn't put the defender at a disadvantage beyond that of not being able to get his insinuations in first. After the first attack, everyone involved must make a Knowledge (local) check. Every combatant then gets to act, in the order of the check results, from highest to lowest. Most people can take only one verbal action on their turn. Once everyone has acted, start again from the highest number.

Other people may join the fight at any point. They must make a Knowledge (local) check, and can then act the next time that number comes around.

Rounds of a verbal battle take a variable amount of time. In general, each round is at least a minute, as it must be long enough for someone to make a pointed comment, listen to the response, and then back it up. However, if the attack involves spreading a scurrilous rumor, a single round might take up to half an hour. In general, if the roleplay of the scene involves a dialog or formal debate each round is about one minute of game time, while if the roleplay involves talking to many people each round takes longer.

Clearly, an entire physical combat scene could take place within one round of a verbal combat. Normally,

the instigation of combat would distract the verbal combatants and end the battle of wits ...

Losing the Contest: If verbal attacks reduce your reputation points to zero, you're in trouble. You may not roll for any social checks for the rest of the day, and so must use your roll bonus as the check result as if you had rolled a zero. People snub you, or even laugh at you, and your beloved will refuse to have anything to do with you.

If the battle of wits concerned a particular point, you have also lost the argument.

Recovery: You regain reputation points equal to your Charisma bonus every day, until they have returned to their maximum. If you gain a level while your reputation points are depleted, they immediately increase by 1 point.

EXAMPLE

Sir Andurin faces his arch-rival Bessamon the Bard across a formal dinner table. Andurin would like the dinner to pass quietly, but Bessamon has other ideas.

Andurin has a Diplomacy total of +9, a Sense Motive total of +5, and a Knowledge (local) total of +5. He is 6th level, and has a Charisma score of 13. Thus, he has an RP of 19 and an SP of 15.

Bessamon is 3rd level, and has a Charisma score of 16. His Diplomacy total is +9, his Sense Motive total is +5, and his Knowledge (local) total is +8. Thus, he also has a 19 RP and an SP of 15. The rivals are closely matched.

First Sally: Bessamon decides to launch a general verbal assault against Andurin. He checks his Knowledge (local) score to see how much damage he can do with his words, and gets a result of 16 for 1d4 damage per hit. He realizes that referring to Andurin's habit of eating at a campfire while he's on adventures will work against him at a formal dinner, and decides to draw on that.

"Good sir knight, I am impressed that you know how to use proper cutlery. I presume that you eat with your fingers in the wilderness," he says.

Bessamon rolls a 9, for a verbal attack total of 18. This exceeds Andurin's SP, so he does damage. He rolls 1d4 and gets a 4, so Andurin is down to 15 RP.

Order of Action: Both Andurin and Bessamon must make Knowledge (local) checks to determine who acts first in future rounds. Andurin rolls a 20, for a result of 25, while Bessamon rolls a 10, for a result of 18. Andurin gets to act first.

Andurin wants to counter-attack, so he rolls on his Knowledge (local) to see how effective his words will be. He rolls a 3, for a total of 8. He will do 1 point of damage every time he strikes Bessamon, because the best response he can manage is to emphasize his heroic deeds.

First Normal Round: "At least I spend time in the wilderness, fighting monsters," Andurin replies. A roll of 15 gives him a verbal attack total of 24, so Bessamon takes 1 point of verbal damage and is down to 18 RP.

"And it seems that you learn your manners from those same monsters," Bessamon shoots back. He hits, and Andurin takes another 3 points of damage, dropping him to 12 RP.

Second Normal Round: "Better than learning them from an ill-mannered bard like you," Andurin retorts. Andurin rolls a 1; this sally fails badly, as Bessamon is renowned for his courtly ways. The bard seizes the opportunity to make an additional strike.

"You seem to have spent so much time with monsters that you can't recognize true courtesy when you see it," Bessamon counters. Another hit, for another 3 points of damage. Now Bessamon can take his normal attack for the round.

"Perhaps you should take some lessons in etiquette before entering polite society." Bessamon rolls a 20,

threatening a telling blow. He rolls again, and his second roll is also a hit. Double damage! He rolls a 4, doubled to 8, taking Andurin down to 1 RP.

At this point the wizard Caestia, Andurin's friend and patron, decides to defend him. She has a Knowledge (local) total of +13, and rolls an 18. She can act first in the next round.

Third Normal Round: "True nobility is found in actions, not words, Bessamon," Caestia says. She rolls a 7 to determine her damage type, so she does 1d6 damage whenever she hits. Unfortunately, she has no Diplomacy skill, and must rely on her Charisma bonus of +1. She rolls a 13, but that isn't quite good enough. Bessamon is untouched.

"And your actions speak for you, bard," Andurin follows up, hitting again. Bessamon takes another 1 point of damage.

"But your actions, Sir Andurin, are only suited to dealing with orcs, and we are civilized people," Bessamon concludes. Another hit, and Sir Andurin is down. A ripple of laughter passes around the table, and Andurin finds that he's shunned for the rest of the evening. Bessamon and Caestia decide not to continue their contest, Caestia because she thinks she will lose and Bessamon because he thinks Caestia will turn him into a frog.



FEATS OF WIT

The following feats are only useful during battles of wits, as described above. You should check with your GM that such battles will be a significant part of the campaign before taking any of them for your character. Note that feats such as Skill Focus, which give you a bonus to the relevant skills, will also help you in these circumstances, and have more general application.

BITING SATIRE [GENERAL]

Your words strike harder than most people's, making you a force to be feared at court.

Benefit: Add your Charisma or Intelligence bonus, whichever is higher, to your verbal damage. If your highest bonus becomes negative due to magic or disease, you may choose not to add it to your damage.

GOOD REPUTATION [GENERAL]

People think well of you, and it's much harder to damage your social standing with innuendo and criticism.

Benefit: Double your reputation points. Further, you have a particularly good reputation with most people in your social circle. Decide what it is in regard to by consulting with your GM, as it may give you some incidental benefits.

Special: You may take this feat more than once. Each time you do, the multiplier for your reputation points increases by 1, and your good reputation gets even better. Thus, if you take this feat three times, your reputation points are equal to 4 x Charisma score + character level.

QUICK WIT [GENERAL]

You can strike repeatedly with your barbed comments while your enemies try to get a single word in.

Benefit: You gain an additional verbal attack every round, at a -5 penalty to your normal Diplomacy total.

Special: You may take this feat more than once. Each time you take it, it gives you an additional attack at a further -5 penalty. Thus, your third attack is at a -10 penalty, your fourth at a -15 penalty, and so on. There is no limit, other than the number of feats you have available, to the number of attacks you can gain this way.

SLY INNUENDO [GENERAL]

You're very slippery in conversation, ensuring that nothing you say can come back to hurt you.

Benefit: If you verbally attack someone, they don't know who has attacked them. If the attack is unsuccessful, they don't even realize that an attack was made. In addition, you're immune to cutting ripostes if you roll a 1 on a verbal attack roll. You're still vulnerable if someone else scores a telling hit against you. You also gain a bonus of +5 to your social poise due to your expertise in avoiding censure.



SPELLS OF WIT

These spells are only useful in battles of wits, as described above. While a wizard might keep them in his spellbook on the off chance that they might be useful, bards and sorcerers should only learn them if battles of wits are an important part of the campaign. Check with your GM in advance.

Attitudes to the use of spells and magic items in a battle of wits vary. Some people — particularly those who don't have access to such spell — regard it as cheating. On the whole, however, it's regarded as a sensible employment of the resources available to a character, and the magic user is judged according to the ends for which he uses the magic. A bard who uses spells to hound a rival will be looked down on in the same way as someone who does this without magic, while the same bard using the same spells to respond to a rival's attacks will not gain enemies.

BARBED TONGUE

Transmutation

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 10 verbal combat rounds

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The words of the target fly like arrows and pierce like needles. The target adds a +1 enhancement bonus per two caster levels (maximum +5) to all his verbal damage for the duration of the spell.

ENDURE SCORN

Abjuration

Level: Brd 0, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 hour

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell gives the creature touched limited protection from verbal assault. Each verbal combat round, the spell absorbs the first five points of verbal damage the target would otherwise take from verbal attacks.

Note that *endure scorn* overlaps (and does not stack with) *resist scorn* and *protection from scorn*. If a character is warded by *protection from scorn* and one or both of the other spells, the *protection* spell absorbs verbal damage until it's exhausted. If a character is warded by *resist scorn* and *endure scorn* at the same time, the *resist* spell absorbs verbal damage but the *endure* spell does not.

MEND REPUTATION

Conjuration

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will halves (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell heals verbal damage to the target's reputation. The target recovers 2d8 reputation points, plus 1 reputation point per caster level (maximum of +20). This spell doesn't undo a lost contest, but it can be cast during a contest to give one contestant's retorts a new vigor.

PROTECTION FROM SCORN

Abjuration

Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Duration: 10 minutes/level, or until discharged

As *endure scorn*, but *protection from scorn* grants temporary invulnerability from verbal attack. When the spell absorbs 12 points per caster level of verbal damage, it's discharged.

Note that *protection from scorn* overlaps (and does not stack with) *resist scorn* and *endure scorn*. If a character is ward by *protection from scorn* and one or both of the other spells, the *protection* spell absorbs verbal damage until it's exhausted. If a character is ward by *resist scorn* and *endure scorn* at the same time, the *resist* spell absorbs verbal damage but the *endure* spell does not.

RESIST SCORN

Abjuration

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Duration: 10 verbal rounds/level

As *endure scorn*, except *resist scorn* absorbs the first 12 points of verbal damage each round.

Note that *resist scorn* overlaps (and does not stack with) *protection from scorn* and *endure scorn*. If a character is ward by *protection from scorn* and one or both of the other spells, the *protection* spell absorbs verbal damage until it's exhausted. If a character is ward by *resist scorn* and *endure scorn* at the same time, the *resist* spell absorbs verbal damage but the *endure* spell does not.

STINGING WORDS

Evocation

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Anyone at the same social event

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates a whisper that travels around a room or event space, telling everyone present exactly that thing that would most harm the target. Everyone who hears the whisper can identify the caster, and the caster knows what his spell has said.

The target takes 1d8 verbal damage per two caster levels (maximum 5d8).



ITEMS OF WIT

As for the feats and spells above, these items are only useful if battles of wits are a prominent feature of the campaign. GMs should not make them available unless they intend to include battles of wits.

POTION: POTION OF SATIRE

A *potion of satire* gives the imbibor a +5 enhancement bonus to all verbal damage for a period of one hour.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Brew Potion, *barbed tongue*; Price 150 gp

WONDROUS ITEM: AMULET OF RESPECT

As long as you wear this amulet, you are immune to all non-magical verbal damage. Verbal damage due to, or enhanced by, a spell or magic item affects you normally.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *resist scorn*; Price 2,000 gp

WONDROUS ITEM: VIPER STUD

This item takes the form of a tongue stud. Its magic allows it to pierce the tongue without causing pain, and it can similarly be removed without causing scarring. The stud is usually decorated to resemble a snake. As long as it pierces someone's tongue, the wearer gets a +5 enhancement bonus to all verbal damage.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *barbed tongue*; Price 1,000 gp

FEMALE KNIGHTS

The knights portrayed in literature and legend are usually male, and this book has so far assumed that knights will be male in the game as well. There is, however, no overwhelming reason not to have female knights. Women can follow the ideals of chivalry just as well as men can.

In a true medieval culture, there would be social problems inherent in this situation. Women weren't expected to fight, and those who did would be regarded as criminal rather than admirable. Game world cultures, on the other hand, tend to be rather more egalitarian than historical cultures, so female knights face fewer obstacles. They can display valor, be loyal, and serve their gods with exemplary piety.

The only chivalric virtue that could potentially cause problems is that of love. This is because courtly love was developed in a society where women were expected to be passive, and men had to take the initiative. It positively requires the beloved to take a less-active role than the lover,

and works best in a society where the whole group of potential beloveds is passive.

Female knights would work well in a society where women were active and men passive, but such a culture would have trouble accommodating male knights. You could get round that problem by having two cultures near enough to the location of the adventures that one could provide the game's male knights and the other the female. As people from one culture would believe that men had a duty to protect women, and those from the other that women had a duty to protect men, this could lead to entertaining disagreements between knights. If you want to play a female

knight, it might be worth suggesting to your GM that he include such a culture in the game world.

Another possibility, and standard literary figure, is the woman disguised as a man. This only really makes sense in a culture where women aren't expected to be knights. Such a woman would have to take another woman as her beloved. Since courtly love doesn't require actual sexual contact, the sexuality of the knight is irrelevant. Indeed, since any sexual contact would reveal the knight's secret, she might prefer to love from a distance.

Yet another solution is to introduce an erotically passive subculture that includes members of both sexes. This expectation need not bear much relation to reality, given that societal expectations of women often haven't in the real world. It would also help if the group was expected to be militarily weaker, and thus to be in need of protection by knights. There are a number of candidates for such a role. Scholarly characters, even mages, might fit the bill.



Such a change would create a society that felt very different from ours, though. It's up to you to decide how much you want those differences to figure in the campaign; if your knight spends almost all of her time in dungeons, they might have next to no impact. But even then, the standard rescue scenario would have been "rescue the scholar" instead of "rescue the princess," as princesses would be expected to look after themselves.

It might also be fun to play a female knight who's quite open about taking on the role of a knight in a society where women aren't supposed to be passive. The standard image is best reversed if she has a male beloved, who is likely to be quite embarrassed by the attention. Such a knight might also have problems with finding a lord to accept her loyalty, and will probably have to settle for acting in a lord's best interests rather than for actual obedience. The knight would have trouble being taken seriously, or accepted into an order of chivalry, but her great deeds should ultimately clear the path.

CHARACTER CONCEPTS

A knight's behavior is influenced both by the nature of his beloved, and by his attitude towards her. A knight who makes love the most important of the virtues will also love in different ways depending on the importance of the other virtues.

YOUR BELOVED

In most cases, your knight's beloved will be an NPC. Even so, you should have a lot of influence in creating her. Your knight, after all, will have chosen someone apparently suited to his goals. Your GM may throw you some surprises, but he should normally be willing to accept the character outline you present. This means that you need to design your knight's beloved based on the sorts of adventures in which you want to be involved.

BARONESS BELOVED

This type of beloved is the lady of a domain some distance from the center of civilization. The tides of politics tend to pass her by, but her lands and her very life are often under threat from the monsters that live in the wilderness. A beloved of this sort is likely to inspire very straightforward adventures.

COURTIER BELOVED

If your beloved is a prominent figure at a royal court, your knight's love is almost certain to draw him into politics. In most cases, he will be frequently at court, and thus have to deal with the lady's enemies and allies. This political involvement could be low-key, and not go much beyond providing the motivation for conventional adventures, but if you, or your GM, don't want to worry about politics at all, another choice of beloved might be more appropriate. *Dynasties and Demagogues*, also published by Atlas Games, provides rules for this kind of politics-oriented roleplaying.

ENEMY BELOVED

Love doesn't have to be rational. The knight's beloved might be an enemy, either of the knight himself or of his lord. The beloved's attitude to the knight might be ambiguous or one of simple enmity, but the knight must balance conflicting desires. This choice will make for a lot of complications, and is likely to involve the knight in political adventures with no clearly right or wrong outcomes. It's also likely to provoke serious conflicts between the chivalric virtues.

PRIESTESS BELOVED

Some knights might choose a priestess as their beloved. This inevitably involves him in religious activities, but need not dictate his attitude. It's perfectly possible for the knight to dislike the beloved's god, and to seek to win her away. It's equally plausible for him to choose to love a priestess precisely because of his reverence for her god. Clearly, these different attitudes lead to very different approaches to love.

SECRET BELOVED

The identity of your knight's beloved might be a genuine secret. This is rare, although it's quite common for people to pretend that they don't know who a knight's beloved is. There should be some good reason for keeping it secret, but this might be as simple as a command from the lady. The need to keep his beloved's identity secret will force the knight to be more careful in how he proclaims his love.

UNATTAINABLE BELOVED

Your knight's beloved might be completely unattainable for some reason. She might live in a distant land, or be of a radically different race, or even be long dead. In some campaigns, she might not even be born yet, merely prophesied. A beloved of this sort is likely to lead the knight into epic quests, either to raise his beloved from dead, to travel to her country, or to find some way for them to be together.

Alternatively, this beloved may have next to no influence on the campaign, as she never turns up in person. These radically different approaches can be combined, by having the beloved in the background for the first part of the campaign, and then bringing her forward later, when an epic quest is wanted.

YOUR BELOVED'S ATTITUDE

The beloved can have a range of attitudes to the knight, each causing its own problems.



These romantic attitudes should not be confused with the more general attitudes that all NPCs have, such as Hostile, Indifferent, or Friendly. Aloof and uncaring beloveds are consistent with any general attitude, but enthusiastic ones really require a positive attitude and malicious beloveds a negative one. An aloof but

Helpful beloved will aid the knight in his endeavors, but will not get involved in any romantic activities, while an uncaring but Hostile beloved tries to harm the knight, but completely ignores his attempts at romance.

ALOOF BELOVED

The beloved believes that she is far superior to the knight, and barely condescends to talk to him. This is a classic attitude for the beloved to take, as it provides many obstacles without resorting to outright hostility. If you don't have strong feelings about what the beloved's attitude should be, this is probably the best choice.

ENTHUSIASTIC BELOVED

The beloved is very happy to have the knight as a lover, and would gladly grant him all of her favors right now. Of course, this is inappropriate, as the knight is supposed to struggle to win the love of his lady. This attitude is best played for comedy, as the knight tries to put obstacles between himself and a lady who wants no obstacles at all. Because love is only a small part of the knight's life, there is at least a chance of avoiding running the joke into the ground.

MALICIOUS BELOVED

The beloved hates the knight, and wants to see him dead, or at least humiliated. This can actually be a highly productive attitude for the game, as the beloved will send the knight on extremely difficult missions, which make good adventures. Hatred on the beloved's part is also the ultimate obstacle for a lover to overcome, and so this is highly appropriate within chivalry.

UNCARING BELOVED

The beloved doesn't really care whether she has a lover or not. She might be more interested in something else, in which case the knight can try to gain her interest through that, or simply utterly

unimpressed by the knight. A dead beloved pretty much has to have this attitude. The main problem for the knight is getting the beloved to recognize his existence. Even straight rejection is better than indifference, as it provides a clear obstacle that must be overcome.

YOUR KNIGHT'S ATTITUDE

You must also decide on your knight's approach to his beloved. It goes without saying that he loves her and that she is the fairest and most wonderful among women, but there is still the question of how, exactly, he puts that into practice.

COURTIER KNIGHT

The knight writes poetry, sings songs, and throws elegant parties in honor of his beloved. Fighting is not so important to him; he wants to win his beloved's love through his courtesy and style, not through brute violence.

HEROIC KNIGHT

The knight spends little time with his beloved, instead riding across the world seeking monsters and villains to fight in her name, so that his glory will reflect on her. This is a good attitude if you want to take part in conventional adventures, as the knight expresses his love by killing monsters and taking their stuff.

WOOING KNIGHT

The knight actually wants to win and marry his beloved. (This shouldn't be combined with an enthusiastic beloved, or things will move a bit too quickly.) This is not usual for chivalric love, where the pursuit is regarded as the important thing. The knight's actions will be directed towards bringing him and the beloved together as quickly as possible, and he will want to spend as much time in her presence as he can. The relationship is a genuine

love affair, at least on his side, as well as a chivalric fiction.

WORSHIPING KNIGHT

The knight doesn't feel that he's worthy to appear in his beloved's presence, much less speak to her. He's determined to prove his worth so that he can look her in the face and declare his love with honor. This is another good attitude for inspiring standard adventures, as someone who has slain a dragon can look most potential beloveds in the face with pride.

THE OTHER VIRTUES

The relative attitudes of the knight to love and the other virtues have a strong influence on his personality and activity. This section discusses the possibilities.

VALOR

A knight who ranks valor second under love tries to prove his love through his valorous deeds. This fits well with the heroic or worshiping knight concepts discussed above, as it drives him to carry out brave deeds and head off on adventures. However, because love is more important, the knight won't let his adventures estrange him from his beloved, and may even be reluctant to be separated from her for too long.

A knight who ranks love first and valor last is likely to be a courtier, spending much of his time in the social circle around his beloved. He tries to win her affection with poetry and wit, and only occasional heroic deeds. Ideally, the knight's lord would be in the same place as the beloved, so that he could attend on both of them at the same time.

LOYALTY

Since loyalty and love are usually directed at different people, ranking both of them high is a recipe

for conflict, no matter which way they're ordered. As conflict makes for exciting roleplaying, this isn't necessarily a bad idea. When love is on top, the knight is prone to disobey his lord at his lady's command, or to neglect his lord's interests to win his lady's love. Since loyalty is still important to him, however, he will occasionally over-react in the other direction to prove that his loyalty is true, which could then lead to spectacular efforts to regain his beloved.

If loyalty is ranked last, the knight will seem to be ruled by his lady, as he will rarely let his lord's commands interfere with his amorous adventures. He might even be persuaded to fight against his lord on his lady's behalf. Alternatively, he may swear loyalty to someone close to his lady, so that his duty of loyalty will not often cut against the actions enjoined by love. If this means swearing loyalty to his lady's husband, the knight may be setting up a serious conflict for the future, if he ever wins his lady's favors.

PIETY

A knight who ranks piety just under love will shape his love according to the commands of his deity. This is most interesting if his deity has an ideology that seems to conflict with courtly love, without directly forbidding it. Then the knight must find a way to convince himself, and his god, that his love really doesn't violate that doctrine. Because he regards love as more important than piety, he will go against his god's commands if they really do seem to forbid his love. Thus, a deity who is clearly and unequivocally opposed to courtly love isn't suitable as a deity for someone who has this attitude.

On the other hand, if piety is unimportant the knight might see his worship of his god as an extension of his attitude to his beloved. Alternatively, he might be pursuing love while maintaining nominal devotion to a deity who really does not approve, or who would rather he concentrated on other acts of chivalry.

UNIMPORTANT LOVE

Because love is difficult to roleplay, it's tempting to create a knight who doesn't place much emphasis on that virtue. Such a knight should choose a beloved who will make few demands of him. A dead beloved, or one in a very distant country, is an ideal choice for these purposes. An alternative is to choose someone who has many knights vying for her attention, and simply not try very hard. Under those circumstances, the knight is unlikely to become the lady's accepted knight, and thus is unlikely to have many demands placed on him. The risk is that, as player characters tend to become the most visible and famed members of a community, the lady may decide that she wants to make more of the knight's professed devotion. Even then, you may be able to avoid actually roleplaying love, instead treating the relationship purely as a conventional requirement of the knight's position and a source of adventure ideas.

This isn't the only reason to create a knight who treats love as unimportant. If you'd like to roleplay a romantic relationship, but the other players don't want that sort of activity to dominate the campaign, you can choose to make love unimportant. The knight will constantly be drawn away from his beloved by the demands of the other virtues, and thus will romance her intensely when he does see her, in an attempt to make up for neglect. In this way you get the chance to play out your romance, but it comes in controlled doses, possibly when the other players are absent.

AMOROUS ADVENTURES

Love can be the hardest of the chivalric virtues to work into adventures, because many people are uncomfortable roleplaying romance. Further, romantic situations are notoriously ill-suited to a group approach. This section suggests ways you

can work around these problems or tackle them head-on.

LOVE IN THE COURSE OF DUTY

Love is somewhat harder to work into conventional adventures than the other virtues. In the chivalric sagas, knights are sometimes transfixed for hours by the sight of something that reminds them of their beloved, but that would merely be annoying in a game. Similarly, a lovesick knight might go on about his beloved and constantly try to compose poems for her, but playing this out is likely to merely annoy the other players unless you're a comic genius.

So, what can you do? Giving gifts to your beloved is one possibility, as noted above. The problem here is that lords and gods traditionally give gifts back to their loyal knights, but beloveds generally do not, nor do they often have the resources to do so. This means that while such gifts would be wholly in character, they would weaken your character. If your beloved is a powerful wizard, or a lord in her own right, she may be able to make return gifts once you're her accepted knight, and thus prevent you from falling behind. Also, if your GM takes pity on you, you may find that you discover more treasure than the other characters as compensation, but this could provoke resentment.

There is one gift that you can give that's highly traditional in the literature and doesn't cost you a single gold piece, though. Whenever your knight per-

forms a heroic deed, he can send the defeated opponents (if they're honorable) to his beloved, to declare that they were vanquished on her behalf. Rescued prisoners can be sent on a similar pilgrimage. This doesn't need to have any impact on the game, beyond making your knight's devotion to his beloved apparent.



Beyond that, you should make it clear that your knight never forgets about his beloved. If he has a favor to carry, you should be explicit about where it is whenever the GM checks what you're carrying. The knight should write letters to his beloved when he has the opportunity, and you may occasionally roleplay the search for a messenger to carry the missive. Small, occasional activities that remind the other players of your knight's love and show that it's important to him are enough to establish the concept.

ADVENTURES FOR LOVE'S SAKE

There is one extremely straightforward kind of adventure that the knight can undertake for love's sake. The beloved might be threatened, kidnapped, or poisoned, and the knight has to rescue her or find a cure for her before it's too late. The other characters are likely to be willing to go along on such an adventure as well, as it's a fairly standard kind of heroism.

Almost as straightforward is an adventure at the beloved's command. The knight may, however, have a little more trouble persuading his compan-

ions to go along on such missions. These plots are more flexible than kidnapping the beloved, as the adventure itself can be anything at all, as long as the beloved could have some reason for wanting to see it completed.

These sorts of adventures don't directly involve love, and this may be a desirable feature of them. Your knight might also want to go on adventures that do revolve around love, though, so the rest of this section will provide some guidance.

ROLEPLAYING ROMANCE

You might want to actually roleplay the romantic relationship between your knight and his beloved. This, unfortunately, really has to be done as a one-on-one session between you and the GM, and thus is best saved for an occasion when the other players can't make it to the game. Even then, you should check that the GM is happy with roleplaying such situations. A short romantic interlude might be played while the other players watch, but that might be even more embarrassing than playing it out alone.

Maintaining a firm grip on the distinction between the player and the character is particularly important when playing out romance between characters, although this may be made easier if the GM is both male and, to put it tactfully, not the most beautiful person in the world. Even with this distinction in mind, attempting to roleplay actively sexual situations is almost certainly a mistake. It's very hard to describe sex without becoming ridiculous, and that's most certainly not the point of chivalric love. Thus, it's best to restrict yourself to romantic language, and draw a discreet veil over what it leads to.

In order to play out a romantic encounter, you need a very good idea of why, exactly, your knight loves his lady, and the GM needs to know exactly what she thinks of the knight. This means that playing such a scene can greatly deepen your

knowledge of the character, and make his motivations much more real to you.

You might find that, although you want to make love an important part of your knight's career, and are perfectly happy roleplaying all the other aspects of that, you simply can't handle playing romance out. In that case, you can fall back on the rules for winning love presented earlier. You only need to describe your knight's actions in general terms, and a die roll takes care of the details. Indeed, you might want to use those rules even if you do roleplay everything out in full.

A KNIGHT AT COURT

Knights often spend time at the court where their ladies live, whether their beloved is the lady of the court or merely one who attends it. This is a correct venue for poetry and displays of good breeding, and also the ideal place to politically undermine any rivals. Visits to court should be played out if at all possible, because they need not involve explicit romance and provide opportunities for all the players to get involved.

A visit to court is an ideal time to use troupe-style play. It's quite likely that some of the characters will want to do other things while the knight romances his beloved, so the other players can take on the roles of other characters at court. This allows a genuine social dynamic to develop, rather than resting everything on the GM's shoulders. A session spent at court can be a pleasant change of pace from dungeon delving, as no one is at risk of death or serious bodily injury, and you may not have a single physical combat. However, the rules for battles of wits in this chapter may come into play, and the knight can still gain and lose a great deal.

A plot is not absolutely necessary for a court-based adventure. You can have hours of entertaining roleplaying simply by putting a group of characters in the same place and letting them interact. However, plots do keep things from getting boring,

and they need not all be of the GM's making. You might decide that your knight wants something particular to happen, and tell the GM roughly what you're planning to do. He can then choose characters for the other players who will have interesting reactions to your plans, and let you try to carry them out.

If your knight returns to the same court many times, the other players may be given secondary characters who live at court, and nearly always play the same people. These don't have to be opponents for the knight, but they also don't need to be as closely allied as the other player characters are. Over time, this can make the court seem like a real place, even if the knight only visits occasionally.

One problem with such a situation is the assignment of experience. The knight is taking real risks and overcoming real obstacles, so he deserves experience awards from the situation. The problem is what to do about the other players and their characters. The best option is probably for the GM to give out experience awards that match the gains that the knight makes, adjusted slightly depending on the contribution that player made to the evening's entertainment. Since the knight gets fewer experience points for overcoming easier obstacles, this encourages the other players to make things difficult, but not impossible.

GAME MASTERING LOVE

Love is probably the hardest of the chivalric virtues for the GM to handle. By its very nature it tends to exclude the other players, and roleplaying romance can, as noted above, be very awkward indeed. It's not, however, without its uses. The beloved can get into all sorts of trouble that the knight must fix, and can command him to go on various sorts of adventures. This gives you yet another hook for your adventures, and reduces the risk that the players will become sick of the local tavern where all plots seem to begin.

Love also gives you an opportunity to run adventures that don't involve combat and treasure, and the chance to develop a really different session can be a good way to refresh your creativity during a long campaign.

Beyond that, the normal considerations apply. You should give the knight opportunities to act on his love, and present situations where he must choose between upholding the virtue and some immediate benefit.

There is one obvious challenge for an amorous knight that's very hard to pull off in roleplaying, though. This is the temptation to infidelity while away from one's beloved. The problem is that no matter how beautiful you say the new woman is, no matter how persuasive you say she is, the player isn't tempted in the same way as the character, and can always choose to resist. Forcing the player to act on temptation based on die rolls is a very bad solution, as tends to lead to player resentment.

One way to handle this is to have the second lady be rather subtle and cunning. Have her start by asking for entirely innocent favors and services that any knight should be willing to grant. If the knight complies, she rewards him well. Then she asks for a slightly more significant service, but one only a shade less innocent than the earlier ones. If the knight isn't careful, he'll find that he has already compromised himself by the time he wants to refuse his service. The lady threatens to reveal his infidelity, and the knight has a difficult decision. From the player's perspective, however, it's a win-win situation, because either way there's plenty of opportunity for roleplaying, and both possibilities generate lots of adventure hooks. Of course, for this to work there must also occasionally be ladies who make genuinely innocent requests of the knight, otherwise the cautious player will simply turn everyone down except his beloved.

PERCEPTIONS

*And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys;
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
In all his lyf unto no manner wight.
He was a verray, parfit gentil knyght.*

— Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue

PERCEPTIONS OF KNIGHTHOOD

Anyone who follows the four virtues of chivalry is a knight. However, if no one knows that someone is following the path of chivalry, his knightly status will have little effect on interactions with others. Not all perceptions are fair, and the knight's perception of his own chivalry is at least as important as anyone else's. Knights also have a defined place in most societies, which grants many privileges and obligations. These perceptions and social positions are the subject of this chapter.

HONOR

Honor is a knight's own perception of how well he's living up to the ideals of chivalry. Every knight is concerned with keeping his honor bright, because a failure here means that he's failing to be a knight. Earlier chapters discussed different approaches that knights could take to the four chivalric virtues, and those differences carry over into different approaches to honor. Honor, however, tends to go beyond the virtues to cover other aspects of behavior.

In general, knights believe that certain sorts of behavior, while not violating the virtues themselves, are signs that they don't take the virtues seriously. Thus, failing in these other ways counts as a failure of honor, just as failing to maintain the virtue itself does. In some cases, other people agree with the knight, and see those failures as important. In others, only the knight believes that he's shamed. Some examples of the sorts of failures associated with the various virtues follow. Some of them contradict one another, so no knight follows all of them, or even most.

VALOR

As discussed in Chapter Two, valor is physical courage in the face of the enemy and involves bravely engaging in battle on a frequent basis. The prohibitions discussed below apply to valor.

WEAPONS AND ARMOR

A number of restrictions regarding the knight's weapons and armor are popular, as these are the tools of valor and dishonoring them can be seen as dishonoring valor.

- Allowing your weapons or armor to become, or remain, dirty.
- Using your weapons or armor for any purpose other than battle. For example, using a war axe to cut down a tree.
- Allowing any other person to touch your primary weapon.
- Drawing your weapon for any purpose other than battle or training.



- Sheathing your weapon in public.
- Decorating your weapon, for example with a gem on the pommel or runes on the blade.
- Using any weapon other than the one you inherited from your ancestors.

OTHER BEHAVIOR

Rules on other behavior arising from valor tend to be based on extending valorous conduct in battle to other areas of life. So, just as a knight must always fight fairly, many knights believe that they must never knowingly mislead others.

- Always tell the truth.
- Always make your identity clear.
- Never refuse a challenge, of any sort, that is itself honorable.
- Never ride in a cart; only the wounded and non-combatants ride in carts at a battle.

LOYALTY

Chapter Three defines loyalty as the virtue of putting your lord's interests before your own, either through simple obedience or by otherwise defending your lord even if instructed otherwise. The following restrictions apply to loyalty.

YOUR LORD

Many points of honor concern the way you should deal with your lord. These go beyond loyalty itself, but still include treating your lord well.

- Never turn your back on your lord in a peaceful situation. Obviously, it's all right to

turn your back if you're standing in front of him and defending him from a monster.

- Never interrupt your lord.
- Never contradict your lord, even when he's wrong.
- Never sit in the presence of your lord.
- Never position yourself so that your head is higher than your lord's. This is easy for halflings with a human lord, but rather harder in the reverse situation.
- Never look your lord in the eye.

OTHER PEOPLE

Some points of honor connected to loyalty extend to people other than your lord. The idea here is that the knight sees himself, to a certain extent, as everyone's servant, and thus must treat others with respect.

- Never break a promise.
- Never criticize someone to his face.
- Never criticize someone behind his back.
- Never make a promise to anyone except your lord, since the requirements of loyalty might force you to break it.

PIETY

A knight's devotion to his deity was discussed in Chapter Four. In many, if not most, religions there is a tension between public and private piety, which results in two sets of points of honor arising from piety. Most knights pick one kind of piety to emphasize, as described below, since trying to do both can get very confusing.

PUBLIC PIETY

It's important to publicly show that you follow your god and are ready to obey him.

- Always display the holy symbol of your deity.
- Always attend divine services. This may apply only to a fraction of the services, if the deity is worshiped many times every day. It always requires attendance at a temple at least once per week.
- Always mention your deference to your god's will when you speak. This means adding "So-and-so willing" when you make plans, for example. Most religions have their own rules for this.
- Never take the name of your deity in vain.
- Perform a public act that follows your deity's commandments, but which is looked down on by society, at least once per week. This combines the benefits of public and private piety, and can also provide opportunities for valor when people try to persecute you for your faith.

PRIVATE PIETY

At the same time, you shouldn't engage in virtuous actions merely to receive praise from those around you, so many of your acts of piety should be secrets between you and your deity.

- Keep all of your pious acts secret.
- Only attend divine service in disguise.
- Never mention your god in conversation.
- Always carry your deity's holy symbol, but keep it hidden.

- At least once per week, perform a pious act in such a way that no one knows you were responsible.

LOVE

As discussed in Chapter Five, courtly love is always romantic love for one's beloved, and the erotic component is very important. The requirements below apply to love.

YOUR BELOVED

When interacting with your beloved, the following guidelines come into play.

- Never look at any part of your beloved's body other than her face.
- Never look in your beloved's eyes.
- Don't look upon your beloved unless she says that you may.
- Never stand or sit in the presence of your beloved. Kneeling is the normal alternative.
- Don't speak your beloved's name to uncouth people.
- Never lose or use anything that your beloved has given you.

OTHER WOMEN

Points of honor arising from love dictate the ways in which a knight must interact with all women, or with members of the beloved's social class if a beloved other than a woman is chosen.

- Never be discourteous to a woman.
- Never suggest that any woman is not a paragon of virtue. This can be difficult

when your enemy is an evil high priestess, of course.

- Always defend a woman against a man in an argument.
- Always defend a woman against physical attack.
- Never attack a woman.

REGAINING HONOR

Almost all knights violate their own sense of honor at some point, because honor is a very demanding master. This doesn't mean that they're doomed to eternal dishonor, as it's possible to regain honor. The basic procedure for atonement is to perform a particularly impressive deed embodying the virtue that the knight violated.

Often, the impressive deed is one that makes amends for the violation of honor. So, if a knight turned his back on his lord, he might take on a particularly important and dangerous mission. It's important to note that the deed that restores honor doesn't necessarily have to make amends to the person who suffered from the dishonorable deed, as that might conflict with one of the virtues. If the knight was rude to a woman, for example, he might write a fine poem praising his beloved, as praising another woman would go against love.

Sometimes it's not possible to make amends for a deed, such as if a knight were to ride in a cart. In that case, any spectacular deed associated with the relevant virtue will do. This deed must, of course, be carried out without violating the knight's honor. This may still present a problem if the knight holds to secret piety and needs to make amends for a slip there, for example, as a spectacularly pious action will be hard to keep secret.



FEATS OF HONOR

The following feat can be used to enhance any knight's sense of honor.

HONORABLE KNIGHT [GENERAL]

While all knights are concerned about their honor, some make it a central part of their activities. Honorable knights can be found within every class that aspires to knighthood. They're individuals with such a strong commitment to their honor that it has a measurable effect on their abilities.

Prerequisite: Any chivalric knight prestige class.

Benefit: An honorable knight must hold to the four chivalric virtues, and must decide on their order of importance. He then chooses a number of points of honor: four related to the most important virtue, three to the second, two to the third, and one to the least important. These points of honor may be chosen from the lists given above, or made up by the player with the GM's approval. In general, it's better to select points of honor that require action rather than those which forbid it, as additional spurs to action get you more involved in the game.

Honorable knights are always either honorable or dishonored, and each of these states has a different game effect.

Honorable: The knight is at peace with his life and adherence to the chivalric virtues. This confidence grants a +1 morale bonus to all attack and damage rolls, and to all skill totals.

Dishonored: The knight feels that he has fallen short of his chivalric ideals, and this failure torments him. He suffers a -2 morale penalty to all attack and damage rolls, and to all skill totals.

Honorable knights start in the honorable state upon taking this feat, as their new resolution gives them

confidence. They become dishonored when they fail in their chivalry. First, if the knight violates any of the selected points of honor, he immediately becomes dishonored. Second, if the knight violates one of the chivalric virtues, and this violation isn't justified by the demands of a virtue that the knight ranks more highly, then he becomes dishonored. Violating a point of honor results in dishonor even if the violation is justified by the highest of the chivalric virtues. The GM's decision on whether a virtue or point of honor has been violated is final, but he should always warn you that you're about to do something that will dishonor your knight, as honorable knights always know what their honor demands. It's possible to find yourself in a situation where two points of honor conflict, or a point of honor conflicts with a virtue, so that you can't avoid becoming dishonored. This is the price you pay for getting a bonus to everything much of the time.

It's easy to become dishonored, but harder to become honorable again. As described above, the knight must perform some spectacular act emphasizing the relevant virtue while suffering from the penalty for dishonor. To become honorable, you should suggest a spectacular act to your GM, who must approve it and run the necessary adventure. You should choose something that fits with the campaign. The spectacular action doesn't always have to be chosen by the knight, though, so the GM might provide an opportunity to redeem your knight immediately after placing you in a no-win situation.

A character may decide to stop being an honorable knight. This decision can only be taken while the knight is honorable, and it immediately makes him dishonored, as his conscience reproaches him for abandoning the noble path. If the knight undertakes a quest to redeem himself, he is deemed to have chosen to remain an honorable knight, and thus he becomes honorable again. If the knight doesn't undertake a quest, he remains dishonored until the next time he levels up, at which point he loses the feat.



ITEMS OF HONOR

The following item can aid the honorable knight.

WONDROUS ITEM: BELT OF HONOR

This military belt can only be worn by an honorable knight, as described above. It immediately falls off any character who doesn't have the Honorable Knight feat, and comes off of an honorable knight as soon as he becomes dishonored. While worn, it grants a +2 morale bonus to Armor Class.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have the Honorable Knight feat and be honorable, creator's caster level 6th+; Price 8,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

RENOWN

If honor measures what a knight thinks of himself, renown measures what the rest of the world believes. The most honorable knight might have no renown if he performs his acts of chivalry in secret, and the most famous knight might have no honor, but extremely good public relations. Nevertheless, there is a correlation between honor and renown, because it's hard to deceive large numbers of people for long periods of time.

Many knights seek renown, although most of these claim that they're not interested in fame. A select few have renown thrust upon them; after all, it's hard to avoid becoming famous if you single-handedly slay a dragon outside the capital city of a large nation, in full view of a watching army. Most knights, however, must take steps if they wish to be famous.

For most player characters, the essential first step will be performing great deeds of chivalry so that the knight deserves renown. The second step is making

sure that people know of your deeds, and know that you performed them.

Chivalry provides three obvious ways to start this process. The knight is expected to tell his lord, his god, and his beloved what he has done. Telling his lord during a full court is acceptable, even encouraged, while presenting a gift, with explanation, to the high priest during a full service in the temple is equally reasonable. In both cases, many people will hear the story and see whatever evidence the knight presents. The knight should probably tell his beloved in private, but it wouldn't be unreasonable to do so in a poem, which could then, if it was good enough, circulate around the court.

While these steps get things started, a knight really wants people to keep telling his stories if he seeks widespread renown. This means that someone else must be interested in praising the knight's exploits. There are a few ways to manage this. One is to become friendly with bards, and give them gifts when they tell fine stories about you. It was traditional to be generous to wandering storytellers, in large part to ensure that the stories they told about the giver were favorable. However, overdoing this leads to suspicion that there's no substance to the stories.

Another way to gain fame is to ensure that the tale of your knight's heroism also reflects well on someone else, but that the heroism can't reasonably be left out of the tale. Thus, if the knight's lord gives him a gift as a reward, the knight might convince a bard to start a story praising the gift as a fine reward for the knight's actions. The lord is interested in spreading this story, but he can't reasonably leave the knight's heroism out, as that's what provides the justification for the gift. A similar strategy can be used to make the knight's deeds reflect well on his god.

A final obvious source of ongoing favorable publicity is the beneficiaries of the knight's actions. If his heroism involved rescuing people, the rescued are likely to tell their story repeatedly, and the knight will figure prominently. So the knight who seeks renown should

make sure that the people he rescues know who he is, and can report his deeds accurately.

While it's fun to play out such public relations activities from time to time, it's unlikely that you would choose to play a knight if that was your main concern. For this reason, we provide rules to allow you to treat renown in a more abstract manner.



RULES FOR RENOWN

Renown determines whether other characters have heard of your knight. Knowing about a starting knight who has done nothing particularly remarkable requires a Knowledge (local) check against a DC of 30, or a Knowledge (nobility) check if the knight is a member of the noble classes. At that point, all that a successful check reveals is that the character exists, and is a knight.

As a knight grows in renown, the DC for the Knowledge check is reduced. Record a Renown score for your knight, and subtract that score from the DC for the Knowledge check. Thus, if the knight has a Renown of 13, the Knowledge check DC is 17.

A knight's base Renown is equal to his character level. So, with a DC of 10 almost everyone has heard of any 20th-level character who lives in the area. But the DC to know about a 1st-level character is 29; simply following an adventuring path gives you some notoriety, but not much. Members of NPC classes should use their Challenge Rating, rather than their character level, to determine their base renown. Every time a character rises in level, his Renown score increases by one point.

If the knight performs a notable deed, and takes steps to ensure that the story spreads, the GM may increase his Renown by one point. A knight can't have a Renown greater than twice his character level, no matter how many great deeds he performs. Further, not every adventure counts as a notable deed. Simply defeating the monsters living in a local dungeon and plundering their lairs doesn't qualify. However,

defeating the monsters, plundering their lairs, *and* rescuing the villagers held prisoner there would.

As a rule of thumb, a notable deed either confers a great benefit on someone outside of the adventuring party, or involves the defeat of a notorious evil. Or both. A knight can gain Renown by doing the deeds that everyone is talking about but no one else has dared to do. You may ask the GM in advance whether the adventure you're going on would count as a notable deed, but the answer will only tell you what your knight thinks, based on all the information available to him. If the adventure turns out to be different from his expectations, his assessment of its notability may also prove to be wrong.

You may also choose a reputation for your knight, although the GM has a veto over it. If your knight never visits the temples of his god, he'll have trouble gaining a reputation for piety. Your knight's reputation can consist of one word for every point of Renown he has, but it can also be shorter. Don't count words that add nothing substantial to the content, like "of," "the," and "is." In addition to adding words to the knight's reputation with each point of Renown he gains, you can also replace them to make the reputation more specific, or shift its emphasis. However, you can't completely change the reputation at once; instead, you must introduce a new element, and then shift the balance to that new element over two or three levels.

For example, Sir Andurin starts at 1st level with the reputation "knight." He carries out a notable deed, and the GM rules that his Renown has increased to 2. It can't go any higher, now, until he rises in level. Sir Andurin's player chooses the reputation "valiant knight." When Sir Andurin reaches 2nd level, his Renown increases to 3. His player remembers that the knight has killed a lot of orcs who were raiding the lands around his village, and chooses the reputation "knight who slays orcs." "Who" is a free word, and this reputation is a refinement of his previous reputation, so this is fine.

At 3rd level, after another notable deed, Sir Andurin has the reputation "knight who valiantly defends our lands from invaders;" "who," "our," and "from" are all free words. However, his player is turning Sir Andurin more towards his deity, and when he reaches 4th level and a Renown of 6 he wants to change the reputation to "knight who piously serves Asron with valor and might." The GM vetoes this change, saying that it's too much of an alteration. Previously, Sir Andurin's reputation centered on his valor, and this one centers on his piety. The player concedes, and suggests



“Pious knight of Asron who valiantly defends our lands.” The GM agrees that this is more balanced, and allows the change.

Characters other than knights can also seek Renown, using the same rules, although most likely they’ll focus on very different reputations.

COMPLICATIONS

Some characters may wish to be less well known, so that they can go about their business in peace. If a character takes steps to keep his actions from being traced back to him, then the player may choose not to increase his Renown when he goes up a level.

Not every character who has heard of a knight will be able to recognize him, either. Unless the knight’s reputation includes a description of the knight or his shield, most people will not recognize him in the street. However, the knight’s name is always attached to the reputation, so when he introduces himself they’ll know who he is. A character’s name, for these purposes, is whatever he chooses to call himself while performing heroic deeds. Using different names at different times would be part of the process of reducing Renown, as noted above.

Base Renown allows someone with Knowledge (local) to have heard about the knight. If the knight is a member of the nobility, Knowledge (nobility) will also work. A knight who has undertaken appropriate notable deeds may extend his reputation to another area of knowledge, as well, though this requires the forfeit Renown points. For example, a knight who goes on a great quest for his church may either increase his Renown by 1, or leave his Renown the same and have it also apply to Knowledge (religion). The first time a character forgoes an increase in this manner, the DC to know about him through the other knowledge is 30 – half the character’s Renown. Forgoing a second point of increase reduces the DC to 30 – the character’s Renown.

If a character succeeds at the Knowledge (local) check against a DC of 30 – Renown, he knows the knight’s reputation. If he beats the DC by more than 5 points, he knows more about the knight, at the GM’s discretion. On a natural roll of 20 he has either taken a particular interest in the knight, or happens to have come across a good source of information and knows a great deal, possibly including things that the knight would rather he didn’t know.

HALFLING KNIGHTS

There are knights among the halflings, and their deeds are recounted in taverns and noble halls across the world. Halflings are remarkably adept at seeing ways to make their way in a world dominated by larger folk, and they have made chivalry into such a pursuit. Instead of pursuing the virtues for their own sake, halflings seek renown.

This attitude does lead the knights of some other races to look down upon them, believing that they don’t truly hold to the attitudes of chivalry. This is a simplistic attitude, however, as the halflings aren’t concerned simply with popularity. Rather, they want to make a mark on the world, and to be remembered as someone who mattered. Thus, halfling knights are perfectly willing — eager, even — to hold fast to the chivalric virtues in the face of opposition.

The desire for renown does shape the halfling attitude toward knighthood. Most races favor one of the chivalric virtues. The halflings favor favoring one of them, but have no preference as to which. That is, a halfling knight is expected to choose one of the four virtues and uphold it beyond the others, becoming famous as an embodiment of that virtue, but different halfling knights choose different virtues to uphold, and there is no overall racial preference.

The reasoning behind the halfling lack of preference is solid. Specialists tend to have greater renown than generalists, as they’re better in their

area of concentration than anyone else. A knight who devotes all of his efforts to gaining a reputation for valor can gain much greater renown than a knight who splits his efforts between all four virtues, the argument goes.

This means that halfling knights have but one thing in common: they're all keen to be recognized for what they do. Halfling knights don't act secretly, but accept quests in front of as many people as possible, and announce their success equally publicly. They favor heroic deeds that have witnesses, such as rescues or leading troops in battle, and avoid quests that send them off by themselves. They usually work well with a party of adventurers, since they want the other members of the group to remember and report on their deeds.

Because halfling knights seek out renown, most people think that there are more of them than there really are. Almost everyone knows a story of a halfling knight, and most have heard of one who's active in their area. The truth, however, is that they're rather rare, as most halflings favor more practical approaches to the problems of life.

There are no tragic chivalric tales among the halflings. Any knight who has a tale written about him has succeeded.

HALFLING ORDER OF CHIVALRY:

THE ORDER OF THE SUN

The Order of the Sun is an organization of halfling knights, set up to spread the fame of its members' deeds and, particularly, the deeds of its founder. Its members are expected to perform great acts of chivalry, and few members of the order can resist a request for help with a prominent quest. Thus, the order has a good reputation in many lands.

Requirements: Any knightly prestige class, halfling, Renown of 6 or higher, or character level of 6th or higher if you aren't using the Renown rules.

Special: Perform is a class skill for members of this order.

Symbols: The Sun. Everyone can see the sun, everyone knows what it does, and everyone thinks it's important. Members of the Order of the Sun incorporate the sun's disk into their coat of arms.

Origins: The Order of the Sun was founded just under four hundred years ago by Sir Sandam Thistledown, a halfling knight with even more talent for self-promotion than most. He had a remarkable knack for winning bards over to his cause, and excellent judgment when choosing his quests. As a result, he was possibly the most famous knight in the world, and renowned equally for his valor and his love, oddly enough for a halfling. His lady, the Witch-Queen of Fulmar, was possibly the most powerful individual in the world, and famous for her cold heart. No credited account suggest that Sir Sandam ever actually met her, but the stories of his attempts to win her love are told everywhere, as he intended.

Sir Sandam set about founding the order when he felt old age beginning to wear on him. He realized that he would soon be unable to ride about the world performing great deeds, and he devised the order as the best way of sending his legend out into the future. He promptly seized the castle of Cruelspire from its dreaded lich-lord, and set about transforming it into the Castle of the Sun, a center of goodness and succor. He then sent out messengers inviting all halfling chivalric knights to join with him in spreading the tales of their deeds. So great was his fame that most answered, knowing that associating with him would increase the prominence of their own legends.

Halfling knights may be rare, but they aren't that rare. Sir Sandam found himself faced with more applicants than he had dreamed. He was reluctant to turn anyone away, because that would create people who felt ill-will towards his order. Instead, he quickly invented some entry requirements, and used them to select only those halflings who would

most aid him, while offering the promise of future membership to the others once they had sufficiently established themselves.

Organization: The Order of the Sun is still nominally headed by Sir Sandam, although he's been dead for centuries. At meetings of the order's council a seat is left for him, with his coat of arms propped up in it. A book recounting his deeds is placed on the table in front of the seat, and if a decision is difficult the members of the Council consult it, looking for inspiration. All official pronouncements of the council are issued "from the council of the Order of the Sun, on behalf of Sir Sandam Thistledown," and all requests to it are addressed to Sir Sandam, care of the council. This serves to keep the founder's name at the front of everyone's mind, though all actual decisions are taken by the council's seven members.

The councilors are elected from among the general membership of the order, and election is for life. No campaigning is allowed. Instead, on the death of one councilor, a message is sent to all members of the order asking for their vote for the replacement. The belief is that if a knight isn't already famous enough that everyone knows about him, he's not suitable for membership on the council.

In order to join the order, a knight must learn the identities and deeds of the seven councilors, draw the attention of the councilors by praising their deeds and those of Sir Sandam, and then wait for each of the councilors to contact him. This means that the knight has to become quite famous to be considered. The council does pay attention to knights doing this, and a knight who really wants to join soon gets an invitation, if he qualifies.

Sir Sandam's original requirements were designed to ensure that the halflings who joined were already renowned, without making that an explicit condition of membership. He wrote statutes for the order giving the council a significant amount of discretion in admitting new knights, and the main criteria for membership now are that the council member have

heard of you, have heard that you want to join, and haven't heard that you're a villain.

Activities: The Order of the Sun rarely acts as a unit. Instead, its members seek their own fame and glory, and that glory reflects back onto the order. As the different knights in the order pursue different virtues, their activities are extremely diverse.

All members of the order are, however, required to promote the fame and glory of other members, and of the order as a whole. This requirement is the key to the order's success, as it relieves the members of the entire duty of blowing their own trumpets while still spreading the fame of their deeds far and wide. There are no rules governing this, as they would be all but impossible to enforce. Instead, the order has customs, and members who seem to be violating those customs are first warned, and then expelled once some noble pretext can be found. Members with an unimpeachable reputation are safe from expulsion even if they violate the customs, because their membership in the order contributes to the fame of all other members.

There are two principal customs. The first is that knights of the order should introduce themselves as members of the order, and mention two other prominent members. One of the two is usually Sir Sandam, so that the halfling doesn't have to share the limelight too much, but the second should be living. Thus, a knight of the order might introduce himself as follows: "I am Sir Densha of the Order of the Sun, founded by Sir Sandam and enhanced by the deeds of Sir Lemmas." Many people ask questions about the other knights mentioned, which provides an opportunity to recount tales of their great deeds.

The second custom is that knights of the order always tell tales about other members of the order when an opportunity arises. This might be when the knight is a guest at feast held in his honor, or when he and his companions are gathered round a campfire. Fortunately, there have been many spectacular deeds performed by knights of the order, and members are

expected to know a lot of them, so that they can generally produce new ones if the audience has heard a particular story before.

Knights can be expelled from the order for persistent violation of the customs, as noted above. They are also expelled if their reputation becomes evil, or reflects badly on the order. In such cases, other members of the order are expected to hunt the offender down, so that others will know that the Order of Sun deals with corruption in its own ranks. Such corruption is, fortunately, fairly rare.

Campaign Integration: The Order of the Sun is ideally suited for player character halfling knights, as it increases their renown without placing any major demands on them.

It's also a good organization for an NPC rival of the player characters, although not for an enemy. If the player characters are competing with a knight of this order, they will hear tales of his deeds almost everywhere they go, which will help to stoke their rivalry. If they act against the knight, tales of that will also be spread, so unless the rival turns to evil (which he shouldn't do), the characters will have to compete by doing greater and greater deeds.

One of the tales of the Order of the Sun says that Sir Sandam will return in the world's time of greatest need, and lead his knights in a glorious battle against the enemy. Most people, even most members of the order, discount this as merely a variation on a fairly standard heroic legend. If Sir Sandam were to return, however, it would cause great consternation, particularly if he didn't know *why* he had been sent back into the world.

LINEAGE

In most cultures, a knight is expected to have knightly ancestors and, conversely, the scion of a chivalric family is expected to become a knight. While these expectations have no influence on

game mechanics, they do provide good opportunities for roleplaying, so you should think about the ways in which they relate to your character. In most cases, your GM will let you choose whether or not your ancestors were also knights.

It's important to remember that not all knights are wealthy, so your chivalric ancestors might well have sent you forth with no more equipment than the son of peasants. Conversely, even if they are wealthy they might have decided that you should make your own way in the world. In general, you can't give your knight a wealthy family that showers him with gifts, as that would give your character an unfair advantage over the others. There is a possible exception, though, which you must discuss with your GM beforehand. As noted in the discussions of the chivalric virtues above, it's traditional for the knight to give gifts to his beloved, his god, and his lord, which are often reciprocated. If it suits your knight's background, his family can also engage in equal gift-giving, thus allowing your knight a wealthy family but keeping him on a level playing field with the other player characters.

If your knight's family does have a long tradition of chivalry, there will be heavy expectations placed on your knight. This works best as a minor aspect of the campaign, with letters of congratulation and encouragement arriving when the knight performs some notable feat, and letters of criticism marking his apparent failures or lapses from chivalric virtue. Your knight should visit his family occasionally, and the reception he gets should depend on how well he has done. Your knight could also believe that he has a duty to live up to the deeds of his ancestors, and might constantly compare himself to them. If you choose this path, you need to outline the ancestral deeds he needs to match. They should be impressive, but not legendary, so that your knight does have a chance of becoming greater than them.

Looking a little further afield, a chivalric family would be an interesting bit of background for a character who was not a knight. His family would

still expect him to uphold the chivalric virtues, and would be disappointed in him despite his heroic activities. In time, it might be possible for him to gain their respect by becoming a heroic mage or spy, but even then his family is likely to compare his deeds to chivalric standards before they can accept that he's worthy of praise.

If your knight's ancestors are not knights, he will have problems becoming accepted by other knights. This applies even if his family is extremely rich — from a merchant dynasty, for example — as wealth and chivalry are very different. The knight's family might be very supportive of his goals, and a wealthy family can still reciprocate the gifts a knight gives even if they aren't chivalric themselves. A base-born knight might even have problems from the enthusiasm of his family, as they make their pride a little too obvious and embarrass him in front of other knights.

Indeed, while a base-born individual can certainly follow the code of chivalry, and even become an honorable knight, he will have trouble gaining the acceptance of other knights. They may accept that he's a brave, pious, loyal, and amorous person, but they will deny that he's a knight, claiming that he doesn't have the inborn sense of honor that true knighthood requires. This snobbish attitude is fun if it's encountered only occasionally, and doesn't seriously interfere with the campaign. It could mean, for example, that an NPC knight treats the party's rogue and wizard better than the knight, because he believes that the knight has ambitions above his station, while the rogue and wizard are admirable for what they are.

It's possible for a base-born knight to gain the acceptance of other knights, eventually. The events necessary change depending on the cultural context, however. In some cultures, a knight who seizes land and becomes a lord is accepted, while in others the potential knight must be accepted by the king. In still others the required sanction is religious. A base-born knight most likely wants to achieve whatever is necessary to have his status recognized, so the GM should choose

something that helps to advance the campaign. Once a character is accepted as a knight, his children will have no problems, as they are the offspring of a knight.

Note that even a base-born character can have a reputation as a knight, according to the rules for gaining renown given earlier. Other knights may grumble that the reputation is undeserved and that the character is a social climber, but most people are not so sensitive to the requirements of lineage, and believe that someone who acts like a knight is a knight.

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

In most cultures, knights hold a privileged status. While this grants them respect, it also carries with it certain expectations. The obligations described in this section are commonly associated with chivalry, but which ones actually apply is dependent on one's culture. You should consult your GM to learn which obligations knights face in your campaign world. These obligations also serve as ways for the GM to drop your character into adventures.

GENEROSITY

Knights are expected to give generous gifts to those around them, both above and below them in social status. This includes charity, as well as presents of a more personal kind. Giving gifts to one's lord, deity, and beloved has already been discussed, but generosity is broader than this. The knight is expected to give gifts to his friends, unexpected visitors, and the poor, as well.

Gifts to friends and visitors should be balanced by reciprocal gifts, and indeed the knight might be able to effectively trade things of little use to him for more personally valuable items. Charity to the poor is potentially more of a problem, as the poor can't gen-

erally give gifts in return. The best option is for the GM to balance charity with gifts from other sources.

Generosity can be used to drive adventures in two ways. First, the knight might be given a gift that leads to an adventure. The adventure might be concerned with destroying the item, returning it to its rightful owner, or following up on the clue that the item presents. The second route to adventure arises from gift giving. The knight might need a gift of a certain kind to fulfill his obligations to a superior, and have to go on an adventure to find that gift. A gift that has been won by the knight's valor is, of course, especially suitable and valuable.

HOSPITALITY

Knights who have a home that can receive visitors are expected to welcome guests, even if those guests weren't previously known to the knight. This obligation applies primarily to knights who live in castles or manors, but also pertains to a group camped around a fire in the wilderness. In principle, this hospitality should be offered indefinitely, but in practice it's perfectly acceptable to start dropping heavy hints after two or three days.

Adventures arise from hospitality when the guest brings problems. This can happen in several ways. First, the guest might be fleeing from someone, and seek the knight's protection. As hospitality carries an obligation to protect your guests, the knight is obliged to help, at least at first. The guest might be an innocent pursued by evil creatures, in which case the protection will be simple and the lead-in to an adventure is obvious. Alternatively, the guest might be guilty and pursued by the forces of good, in which case the knight's obligation to protect her lands him in a moral quandary.

Second, the guest might not be what she initially appears. The most obvious option is that she's a disguised monster who causes trouble and then flees, drawing the knight into an adventure. Alternatively, she might be one of the knight's enemies, and could

reveal her true identity only after she has been accepted as a guest, so that the knight can't harm her. This provides an opportunity for roleplaying polite contact between the knight and his enemies, which can add depth to a campaign.

Finally, the guest might be expected, exactly what she appears, and still cause problems. Visits from powerful figures fall into this category. The first difficulty is that the knight must find and pay for entertainment suitable to his guest's station. This can lead to adventure all by itself. Once the guest arrives, she's likely to bring political intrigue with her. As the host, it would be the knight's duty to foil plots against his guest, such as attempts to kidnap or assassinate her, and to deal with the consequences should one of those schemes be successful.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

In many cultures knights have a law enforcement role. This may include an obligation to capture criminals or act as an arbiter of disputes, for example. If knights are expected to help catch criminals, the potential for adventure is clear. If the role is judicial, the potential is, perhaps, even greater if less obvious.

First, roleplaying a court session would make an interesting change of pace. This situation would be ideally suited to troupe-style play, with the other players taking on the roles of the accused, victims, and witnesses. The knight would have to reach verdicts and hand out punishments. The circumstances of the cases should be made interesting, and could also be used to foreshadow events planned for later in the campaign.

Second, a court case might simply be very difficult, with no obvious right or wrong. One of the best examples of this is when one person has clearly suffered a serious injury, but it isn't clear that anyone is directly responsible. The knight might be put into a position where his sense of right conflicts with his chivalric virtues in a case like this, and be forced to find a solution to the problem on his own.



Third, a court case can be an immediate adventure hook. A crime has been committed, and the locals think that they've caught the perpetrator, but in the course of the case it becomes obvious that the accused is innocent. Someone still committed the crime, and he's a real threat to the community while still at large.

Finally, a court case might be highly emotive, with the mob baying for blood. The knight might choose to give it to them, but then must face continuing hysteria and a developing witch-hunt that could tear the community apart.

For further ideas regarding adventures in law enforcement, see *Crime and Punishment*, also published by Atlas Games.

DEFENSE

Defense is the most basic of the social obligations that knighthood imposes on a character. Knights are supposed to be brave and effective fighters, loyal to their lords and thus the first line of defense for a community against external threats.

This means that the local population comes to the knight with any problems that seem to need a military solution. While people occasionally lose perspective — “My lord, stop my neighbor from playing his trumpet in the evenings!” — the threats are usually genuine. This is, obviously, an easy way to hook the knight into standard adventures. From the GM's perspective, an appeal from peasants to the knight who lives nearby has the advantage that the knight can't reasonably ignore it.



FOUNDING AN ORDER OF CHIVALRY

Your knight might want to found an order of chivalry when he reaches a fairly high level. This section gives some guidelines on doing so.

IMAGINING THE ORDER

Your first task is to design your order. Choose a focus for the order and write up a two- or three-sentence summary of what its goals are. Then define the sorts of pursuits and attitudes that your knight wants to encourage, following the examples given in this book; you'll want to specify what the order's symbol is and why, describe its origin story, decide on the structural organization for the group, and describe the activities that knights of the order generally pursue. There are no rules for this part; let your creativity work freely. Lastly, decide what requirements there are for membership. For example, there should be a specific prestige class associated with the order, and you may also want to require that members have a certain race, alignment, ability score, feat, skill, weapon proficiency, or other special ability like spellcasting, or that they commit to an in-game circumstance like a beloved, lord, or god. You may also want to devise an admission ceremony of some kind.

After you've described the order, discuss it with your GM. She might not want your knight to have dozens of fanatically loyal followers who are willing to die at his command, after all, and so might ask you to modify the structure of the order a bit. Essentially, the order should be something that your knight would have been willing to join had it existed when he was about half his current level.

DESIGNING THE PRESTIGE CLASS

The next stage is to either choose the prestige class associated with the order from one of those presented in this book, or to design a new one. There are some points you should bear in mind when creating a new

chivalric prestige class, and some requirements on the knight creating the class.

First, try to balance the prestige class against other classes. Prestige classes should be slightly more powerful than core classes, but significantly more specialized. The class' specialization should match the purpose of your chivalric order, so that they fit together well. Add the lowest level at which a character could qualify for the prestige class to the level of the prestige class to get the equivalent level of a core class, and assign abilities appropriately. On the whole, class abilities should be about as powerful as a feat, or very slightly more powerful. If the prestige class level is equivalent to a high character level, the class abilities may match feats with a number of prerequisites. Don't give the class too many abilities at low levels, and make sure that it still gains interesting abilities at its upper levels. There should be a good reason to take every level in the prestige class.

The requirements should make sense for the class, and should also fix a minimum level of at least 5th for anyone trying to enter it. Remember that requiring at least 8 ranks in any skill is a good way to force characters to rise to 5th level before entering the class, but also consider that fighters don't have many skill points, so requiring multiple skills may effectively make it impossible to enter the class until later.

Your knight must meet all the requirements for the class. In addition, his character level must be at least twice as high as the lowest character level that could qualify for the prestige class. Your knight is not merely entering the prestige class, he's creating it, so the requirements are higher.

Once you've designed the class, look at it as a whole. Do you want your knight to join that prestige class? The answer should be yes; if not, change the design. The next question is just as important. What sorts of knights would *not* want to enter the prestige class? You should be able to come up with several examples very quickly. If everyone would want to join the class, it's probably too powerful. The third question is also important. What does a character *lose* when he

changes from a core class to the prestige class? If the answer is "nothing," you need to think very hard about the design of the prestige class, because it's probably too powerful.

Next, consult with your GM. If she thinks that the class is too powerful, you'll need to redesign it until she's happy. The GM gets the final word on whether anything gets into her campaign, and that applies particularly to prestige classes designed by players. Your GM should, however, work with you to create a version of the class that matches your initial vision as closely as possible.

Once you have a version of the prestige class that both you and your GM are happy with, it can enter play. You should be ready, however, to revise it in the future if problems turn up, and they probably will. Professional game design generally includes playtesting, where new rules are used in play for a while to find problems that the designer missed. You probably can't retain playtesters, so this testing has to be done in the campaign. If your GM does rule, later on, that the class needs to be toned down somewhat, try to be gracious about it. The acid test is whether everyone, including the GM and the other players, is still having fun and isn't bothered by the class. If so, then the class is probably good. If not, then it may need to be changed.

Don't get too stressed out about this, though. Remember that the d20 System was playtested by dozens of people for months before it was released, but people still found enough problems to warrant a revision. Remember also that lots of people had lots of fun playing d20 games before the revision came out.

ENTERING THE PRESTIGE CLASS

Once the class is designed, your knight can enter it. He already qualifies to take it as his next character level, and you probably want him to do so. However, because it's a new class, he must take a 10 percent experience point penalty to do so, just as if he had non-favored multiclassed more than a level apart. If he

does have such multiclassed, the total penalty is 20 percent.

Reduce your knight's experience point total by 10 percent. If this would mean that he would lose a level, he doesn't, but must still earn those experience points back before advancing to a new level. All experience points that the knight gains until he has taken all levels of the prestige class are also reduced by 10 percent. This penalty reflects the fact that he's the first person to follow the route of his prestige class.

RECRUITING FOR THE ORDER

Once your knight has taken one level in his prestige class, the order of chivalry has been created and knights start to come to join it. You should have designed the admission ceremony when you were creating the order, so you know what they have to do.

The number of qualified candidates who present themselves for admission is determined by the following table. Unqualified candidates appear at the GM's discretion. The knight can tell whether someone is qualified; this is an extraordinary ability and can't be blocked by any means. This only applies to characters who seek to join the order, however, and tells the knight nothing beyond whether they do qualify. No one may have a higher class level in the prestige class than its creator does. This shouldn't be a problem, though, as most of the members of the order will be NPCs, and probably won't go on quite as many adventures as their player character leader.

Members of the order aren't necessarily cohorts for their leader. Indeed, given that knights are committed to valor it's unlikely that more than a couple would feel it was appropriate to accompany him on adventures. However, the leader does have whatever authority the order gives him over its members. Just as with the prestige class, your GM may ask for changes in play if it seems that the order is giving your character too many advantages.

QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

ORDER'S APPEAL*	QUALIFIED CANDIDATES
0 or less	0
1	1
2	3
3	6
4	10
5	15
6	20
7	25
Each additional +1	+5

* Order's Appeal = leader's Charisma bonus + leader's class level in order's prestige class

THE ORDER AS A SOURCE OF ADVENTURE

The members of the order will look to your knight for whatever leadership the head of the order is supposed to provide. Unless you enjoy roleplaying day-to-day administrative work (and your GM and the other players also enjoy it), you should design an order that allows your knight to delegate that sort of thing. More serious issues, however, will still come to him as opportunities for roleplaying. The management of the order is an excellent context for troupe-style roleplay, with the other players taking on the roles of lower-ranking members to give the order more of a personality.

You may have created the order to help your knight on some great quest. In that case, it will quickly be drawn into adventures. The existence of the order also presents some possibilities for other adventures, since as the order grows it will develop internal politics that may require your knight's attention. It could draw the attention of hostile forces, which must be defeated. It may also attract unfriendly notice from the knight's allies, who might not be happy about the power he's gathering. This last problem is hard to deal with, because you probably want your knight to keep his allies.

EXAMPLE: SIR ANDURIN'S ORDER OF CHIVALRY

David's knight character, Sir Andurin, has reached 10th level, and now David wants to form an order of chivalry around him. His first thought is to make an order of knights fanatically devoted to Sir Andurin's well-being. His next thought is that such knights would never let Sir Andurin go off on adventures by himself, and that he wouldn't have much fun playing the knight if other characters constantly tried to do everything for him.

David's thoughts turn to Sir Andurin's goals. He's spent a lot of time in the campaign trying to establish a civilized nation in the currently orc-infested mountains. He recently established a stronghold in the mountains, and defending it from the orcs and their sorcerer-queen is one of the main campaign threads. He decides to create an order dedicated to defending the stronghold. Before going any further, he checks this concept with Taehee, his GM. She says no, she wants the player characters to defend that stronghold, so she won't allow the order.

Stymied again, David comes up with a third concept. The knights of the order will establish their own strongholds throughout the mountains, which will work together with Sir Andurin's to pacify and civilize the region. He checks this with Taehee, and she says that's fine, thinking of the adventures she can run revolving around the relief of an isolated stronghold.

Now that he has the basic concept, David needs a structure for the order. He doesn't want to design an elaborate organization, so he keeps it simple. Sir Andurin is, of course, the leader of the order. Under him, the members of the order form a feudal hierarchy with individual knights controlling the largest strongholds directly under Sir Andurin. Admission to the order involves a ceremony during which Sir Andurin and the knight stand in the knight's future stronghold, and Sir Andurin hands over a shield to represent defense, a clod of earth to represent the land, and a book to represent civilization. David decides to write down the whole ceremony later, but for now this will do.

Looking at the current state of the order, it seems to be centered on a country, although that country doesn't yet exist, and Sir Andurin is going to be its king. David decides to keep this focus. The order is also more concerned with the defense of strongholds and the protection of the people than with going out and performing quests. Thus, it will emphasize the virtues of loyalty and valor.

PRESTIGE CLASS:

SIR ANDURIN'S KNIGHT

The next stage is to design the prestige class. It's a fighting class, so it gets d10 for its hit die, and its Base Attack Bonus increases by 1 point per level. David makes the good saves Fortitude and Will, as that fits the concept of defenders. He also gives it 4 + Int modifier skill points per level, to represent its link to civilizing the region.

As the order is connected to defending strongholds, it makes sense to require the Leadership feat as a prerequisite. That, by itself, guarantees that qualified candidates will be 6th level, so David decides to leave it at that for game mechanics. Since the order has to be loyal to Sir Andurin, he makes it a requirement for the prestige class that the knight swear an oath of fealty to the future king.

Next, the prestige class needs some special abilities. A bonus to the Leadership score seems useful, so that the knights will have more troops to man their castles. David grants a bonus of +1 per level to the Leadership score, so that his knights get a total of 2 points for every level gained in the class. That isn't very exciting, though, so he decides to add some more abilities.

Since the knights are supposed to defend the land, he gives them Favored Enemies, like rangers, at 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th levels. The knights gain a new favored enemy at each of those levels, and a further +2 bonus to add against one of their favored enemies.

As they're supposed to be defenders, he gives them a "home ground" bonus of +1 to attacks, damage, and

armor class at 1st level, increasing to +2 at 4th level and +3 at 8th level. Also, he gives the 1st-level ability to instinctively know if the area under the knight's control is in danger. At 6th level, the knight knows the nature of the threat, and at 10th level he knows how best to counter it. David writes up the class and shows it to Taehee.

When she stops laughing, Taehee suggests that he tone things down a bit. Her first suggestion is dropping the Favored Enemy ability altogether. It doesn't really suit the class concept, and it's rather more powerful than the ranger's version. She also thinks that the class gains too many bonuses at 1st level, and is far too easy to enter. She asks David for some suggestions. He thinks a bit, and then suggests a +6 Base Attack Bonus. Taehee just looks at him until he gives up pretending that that adds anything. He then suggests requiring another non-fighter feat. That seems more reasonable, although Taehee would also like to see some skill requirements. As the knights are rulers, she suggests nine ranks in Sense Motive. David reminds her that Sense Motive is a cross-class skill for fighters, and she drops the requirement to three ranks.

They then have to pick the other feat. Nothing looks suitable, so David decides to make up a new feat, which he calls Ruler's Insight. Sir Andurin doesn't have it yet, but he'll need to reach 12th level before he can create the prestige class anyway (because normally a character can enter the class at 6th level), so he can take the feat before then.

NEW FEAT: RULER'S INSIGHT [GENERAL]

You have an uncanny insight into the needs and motivations of your subjects.

Prerequisite: Leadership

Benefits: You gain a +3 insight bonus to all Gather Information and Sense Motive checks performed on your subjects or realm. In the case of Gather Information, this only applies if you are gathering information about your realm. The Sense Motive bonus only applies to people who acknowledge you as

their lord, or who used to so acknowledge you and have not been released from their loyalty by you.

Special: This feat is no use unless the character rules an area.

Taehee decides that the feat is balanced. It grants a +3 bonus to two skills, but only in limited circumstances. She also feels that it's suitable as a prerequisite for the prestige class. The prerequisites for the class are now:

REQUIREMENTS

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Feats: Leadership, Ruler's Insight

Skills: 3 ranks in Sense Motive

Special: Swear an oath of fealty to Sir Andurin and join Sir Andurin's order of chivalry.

Taehee and David both think this looks reasonable, so they turn their attention to arguing over the class's special abilities. David wants to add Sense Motive and Gather Information to the class skill list, and Taehee readily agrees. However, she says that the class should only get the normal fighter allowance of skill points. David counters that the class is more like a barbarian or ranger than a straight fighter, and so should get a higher skill allowance. Taehee concedes the point, and the class remains with 4 + Int modifier skill points per level. There's no argument over the use of a d10 as the Hit Die.

Hit Die: d10

CLASS SKILLS

Class Skills: Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Swim (Str)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

Looking at the class' other abilities, David thinks that it's balanced once the Favored Enemy ability is dropped. Taehee isn't so sure, and she still thinks that there are too many abilities at 1st level. She thinks that a bonus to the Leadership score, a home ground advantage, and a sense of the needs of the realm are all highly appropriate types of abilities, but she wants to change the details a little.

First, she doesn't like the 10th-level ability, which tells the knight how best to counter a threat, at all. She insists that it must be dropped entirely. That leaves two abilities concerned with sensing danger to the knight's realm, and she's fairly happy with their rules, although she wants them to be introduced at higher levels.

Taehee also thinks that the home ground bonus is too big. A bonus to attacks, AC, and damage is rather overwhelming. Since a knight on his home ground is defending, she suggests that the bonus apply only to AC, and that it should be a morale bonus. David argues for a while, but Taehee isn't shifting, so in the end he concedes. Taehee also wants to reduce the maximum bonus to +2, and David can't convince her otherwise.

Taehee wants to scale the Leadership bonus back a bit, too. A bonus of +1 per level strikes her as too high, so she suggests reducing it to 1 per two levels. She points out that a score of 26 or higher gives no benefit anyway, and that even with +1 per 2 levels a 16th-level member of the class would have a Leadership bonus of 21 + Charisma modifier. David gives in.

At this point, David notes that the class has nine special bonuses: five to Leadership, two home ground bonuses, and two intuitive sense abilities. He points out that, if the home ground bonus were allowed to reach +3, there would be ten, which could be assigned at one per level. Taehee decides to let him get away with it. Assigning the abilities to levels isn't too difficult, and so the level table and abilities for the class look like this:

CLASS FEATURES

Leadership Bonus (Ex): This bonus is added to the character's Leadership score for the purpose of determining the permissible level of a cohort and the number and levels of followers attracted. The level of a cohort still can't exceed the character's level. This bonus stacks with other bonuses to the Leadership score, but the bonuses from higher levels in this class overlap (do not stack) with the bonuses from lower levels.

Sense Threat (Su): If there's a threat to the character's realm, he becomes aware of it. He doesn't learn any details of the threat, but merely that some threat exists. This ability doesn't count threats. The warning is the same if there is one threat or twenty.

The threat must be a real threat to the realm, not merely to a few individuals within it. As the character is the ruler, any direct threat to his life automatically threatens the realm. A single, average orc is not a threat to most realms, but a single dragon often will be. Similarly, one disaffected citizen is not a threat,

SIR ANDURIN'S KNIGHTS

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Leadership Bonus +1
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Sense Threat
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Leadership Bonus +2
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Home Ground Advantage +1
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Leadership Bonus +3
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	Home Ground Advantage +2
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Leadership Bonus +4
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Sense Nature of Threat
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	Leadership Bonus +5
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Home Ground Advantage +3

unless he's a powerful wizard or similarly dangerous, but if a quarter of the citizens are considering rebellion, that is a threat.

Home Ground Advantage (Ex): The character gains a morale bonus to Armor Class as long as he's within his realm. The bonuses from higher levels in this class overlap (do not stack) with those from lower levels.

Sense Nature of Threat (Su): When the character becomes aware of a threat to his realm, he also becomes aware of the nature of the threat. This is fairly general, such as "an army of orcs," "a dragon," or "rebellious citizens." The character still has to use other means to find out exactly what the threat is, but he does know what he's looking for.

If there's more than one threat, the character becomes aware of the nature of each threat separately. If there are two armies of orcs, he knows that there are two armies, for example.

David decides that he likes the class, and wants Sir Andurin to join it. His character needs to gain another couple of levels first, but he takes the 10 percent experience point penalty now, because it doesn't really matter when he takes it.

Time passes, and Sir Andurin takes the 1st level of the prestige class as his 13th character level. Sir Andurin has a Charisma bonus of +1, so three qualified candidates come and ask to join his new order. He welcomes them enthusiastically, helps them establish strongholds, and then performs the ceremony. The campaign continues, with battles with the orcs to establish the mountain kingdom as a major feature. By the time Sir Andurin reaches 18th level, and 6th level in the prestige class, he has managed to increase his Charisma bonus to +4, and thus there are forty knights in his order.

This has had some consequences that Taehee didn't anticipate. First, the extra strongholds, each manned by a knight leading a substantial number of warriors, have expanded Sir Andurin's realm rather more quickly than she thought. However, she decides that

this isn't a problem. There are still plenty of adventure possibilities, and the challenges within the adventures are as strong as ever, because the knights tend to stay in their castles.

However, with Sir Andurin focusing, quite reasonably, on the defense of his realm, he almost never leaves it. That means that the Home Ground Advantage ability always applies, and Taehee isn't happy with such a constant bonus to Armor Class. She suggests to David that Home Ground Advantage should be more tightly defined, perhaps applying only to the knight's own stronghold, for example.

David isn't too happy about that, but he has his own complaint about the class' abilities. He's found that Sense Threat is almost useless, as if there's more than one threat at once it doesn't really tell you about the second threat until you've dealt with the first, by which time it can be almost too late. He says that he's willing to restrict the Home Ground Advantage bonus if Taehee will allow Sense Threat to reveal the number of separate threats. She decides that that's reasonable. She had been worried that Sense Threat would undermine a lot of adventure ideas, but it has turned out to be simply a good way to get Sir Andurin involved.

Taehee then asks John, Michelle, and Will, the other players, if they're happy with the way the order is working. They each have primary characters, but also play one of the knights. They say that they're generally happy, but Michelle says that she'd like her cleric's divine quest to get a bit more attention in the near future. The other players agree that the conquest of the mountains, which John and Will's characters have been equally involved in, has been the focus for long enough, and that it's time for another plot thread. David complains that Sir Andurin will now be leaving the realm anyway, so could he have the broader Home Ground Advantage bonus back, please. Taehee dings him with a d12, and the argument is over.

VARIATIONS

But Reason, who is at odds with Love, tells him to avoid getting in, warning and instructing him to do and engage in nothing that might bring him shame or reproach. Reason, who dares tell him this, is not in the heart but the mouth; but Love, who bids and urges him to climb quickly into the cart, is enclosed within his heart. It being Love's wish, he jumps in regardless of the shame, since Love commands and wills it.

— Chretien de Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart*

VARIATIONS ON KNIGHTHOOD

The earlier chapters of this book described genuine chivalry, and showed how, even within that, there is much possible variation. This chapter looks at variants of chivalry — ways of living that aren't quite chivalry, for whatever reason, but which are quite close to the life of a knight.

THREE VIRTUES

The most straightforward variations on standard chivalry are those that drop one of the four virtues. The three remaining virtues suffice to give these ideals significant kinship with knighthood, but the complete absence of one of the virtues marks a substantial difference. This goes beyond the discussion of knights who don't hold one of the virtues in great esteem. A knight who regards valor as unimportant is willing to act in unvalorous ways to further the other virtues, but he still believes that it's important to fight, and to fight fairly. A character who doesn't believe in valor at all might believe that fighting, under any circumstances, is wrong, or that fighting fairly is for idiots and the doomed. No one with such an atti-

tude to combat could be a knight, but he could still uphold the virtues of loyalty, piety, and love, and so his behavior would be similar in many ways to that of a knight.

WITHOUT VALOR

Characters who reject valor either deny the importance of fighting, or question the importance of fighting fairly. These result in two very different kinds of character when combined with the other chivalric virtues.

Those who reject fighting altogether tend to be courtiers of one sort or another. They still believe that serving a lord is important, and also want to magnify the virtues of their beloved. This tends to drive them to courts, and their stance against fighting leads them into civilian activities.

Such courtiers can have two reasons for rejecting fighting. The first is simple lack of courage. Such characters see nothing wrong with other people fighting, but don't think that everyone must, and would rather that they themselves never did. The second reason is a moral opposition to fighting of any kind. Such characters would be a bad choice as player characters in most campaigns, but they make interesting NPCs, particularly as it's not hard to make a convincing argument for their position. It doesn't hurt for the characters to think about the justifications behind their characters' actions from time to time.

Characters who reject the idea of fighting fairly can, again, do so in two general ways. The first type of character believes that any action is permissible in battle, as long as it gives you the advantage. "All's fair in love and war," as they say. Such characters could well be extremely brave in melee combat, and more than willing to enter it. They would, however, believe in the value of ambushes, poisoned weapons, and tricks to weaken the enemy.



The second type of character has standards in battle, believing that some forms of attack are unethical. These standards simply differ radically from those upheld by knights. The character might believe that physical combat is demeaning, and rely entirely on magic, or believe that only missile combat shows true skill, and so refuse to get involved in melee.

Characters who are willing to fight, but not on the terms imposed by valor, don't have to be courtiers; they could just be part of an army, for example. Indeed, their commitment to loyalty might often lead them into military service. However, even in combat they look very different from knights, to human eyes.

The courtier's approach would suit bards, sorcerers, and wizards very well. There's no reason why such characters can't be loyal, amorous, and pious, after all. Sorcerers and wizards also work well as characters who take a different approach to valor, as they could easily believe that there's nothing at all wrong with relying on magic, and rejecting physical combat is an easy choice when you're really bad at it.

Characters of this sort are very common among the elves, and are regarded by their own people as little different from knights, particularly those who fight but not according to the rules of valor. They are also found among humans, but there they are regarded as completely different from knights, and knights often look down on them for aping the chivalric virtues. For this reason, humans rarely choose to uphold just these three virtues. Dwarves are somewhere in between; since these characters are still loyal, a dwarf can see how they could claim to be like knights, but the differences remain important.

WITHOUT LOYALTY

Characters upholding all of the chivalric virtues but loyalty tend to be noble and courteous, but outside the law. Actually rejecting loyalty as a virtue means that the character doesn't think that he should obey any mortal superior, unless he feels like it. He may enter into a temporary agreement to get something done, and he may feel an obligation, even a strong obligation, to help his friends, but he does not allow any mortal the right to command him.

As with piety, a character may reject loyalty on temporary grounds, because the lords in his home culture are evil or otherwise unworthy of respect, for example. Such a character could take on a role like that of Robin Hood, fighting to overthrow his oppressors and establish lords worthy of loyalty. Such a character could also believe that loyalty is important, but just not have found someone to whom he can be loyal. Gnomish knights are often in such a situation. Loyalty could even be very important to such a character, but in the absence of anyone to whom he feels any loyalty, his behavior would be indistinguishable from someone who really didn't believe in loyalty at all.

A more fundamental rejection of loyalty would be the refusal of the whole concept. A character might believe that no mortal should have authority over another, even though one mortal might choose to devote himself to the service of another, as with love. Such a character would have a chaotic personality, and would naturally

fall into the role of freedom fighter. He could work well with a party of equals, and even take individual missions from employers, but he would not be willing to accept a permanent superior, and would obey the laws of a nation only so long as they went along with his inclinations, or the commands of his god.

An alternative approach is to parallel one of the ways in which a character might reject love. A character might see his service to his god as so central that no mortal lord could be allowed to come between them. Alternatively, he might hold that his beloved is the only mortal to whom he can show deference, as admitting any lord would diminish her glory.

This combination of virtues would suit many barbarians, rangers, and the more-martial bards. Rogues could also find this combination appealing. Love fits perfectly well with the roguish style, and piety, if directed towards a god of trickery or theft, is no problem. Valor is the main sticking point, and the rogue would have to develop his own interpretation of this.



A rogue might consider Sneak Attacks perfectly valorous, as the rogue is, after the attack, fairly close to an angered opponent, and only lightly armored. Fighting knights might disagree, but the rogue could be confident, in his own mind, that he was acting valorously.

Gnomes are particularly prone to this combination of virtues, and it's not uncommon among elves. Humans often reject loyalty, but such characters aren't regarded as being very similar to knights. Dwarves very rarely reject loyalty, and those who do are regarded as utterly different from knights, and often pushed out of dwarven society altogether.

WITHOUT PIETY

A character who doesn't regard piety as a virtue would, perhaps, not look very different from the standard contemporary image of a knight, as piety tends to be downplayed in modern society. But in a standard fantasy game world it's rather hard to sustain impiety. The gods

are clearly real, their clerics can do magic, and atheists are delusional. If your campaign world is rather non-standard, this might be less of a problem. But in general, the character must have a really good reason for rejecting the gods, which is likely to be the central part of his character concept. Since he has also chosen to espouse valor, loyalty, and love, one obvious possibility is that he feels that the gods have betrayed him, his loved ones, and his country in the face of peril. A character from a country that has recently been overrun by the forces of evil would probably have such a background. As the character becomes more important, the gods might become interested in winning back his respect, which would make an interesting plot thread.

Alternatively, the character could have grown up in a culture where the only known gods were cowardly, selfish, and evil, and thus, given his devotion to valor, loyalty, and love, he has rejected all of them. Piety might become important to such a character if he were to discover more congenial gods, which, again, would make an interesting part of the campaign.

Another possibility is that the character thinks that the mortal races should stand on their own efforts, and not rely on the good offices of the deities. Such a character would have nothing against gods in general, but would think that their help was actually holding mortals back from reaching their full potential. Such an attitude might go naturally with magical ability, but a fighter-type holding that sort of view would be interesting.

The details of your campaign and character might bring other possibilities to mind, but this is a decision that needs to be well justified. When clerics are doing miracles every day, you need a really good reason to have nothing to do with gods.

WITHOUT LOVE

A character devoted to valor, loyalty, and piety, without concern for love, is a focused warrior in the service of his lord. Japanese samurai are generally portrayed as something like this. These characters still seem quite a lot like

knights to us, so it might be best to play the rejection of love up a bit.

One way to do this is to have the character thoroughly disapprove of courtly love. This isn't hard to manage. Courtly love is often adulterous, and frequently insincere. It isn't really concerned with the well-being of the beloved, but only with the public perception of the knight's attitude towards her. Forcing your attentions on someone who doesn't want them is positively encouraged, as reluctance on the part of the beloved is a very respectable obstacle. A character could be seriously bothered by any of these points, and thus opposed to courtly love.

Another possibility is to treat the rejection of love as a way around the problems noted for female knights. A female character might embrace all the virtues of chivalry apart from love because she can't see a way to pursue courtly love in her society.

Still another way to handle the rejection of love is to make the character extremely devoted to his lord. He sees his lord as the voice on earth of his god, and can't allow loyalty to any other mortal to interfere with his duty to serve his lord in every way possible. This is close to the samurai ethic, and is a good choice if you want to play a very straightforward fighter with just a bit of added depth, as it's love that tends to draw characters into political roleplaying. A character with such absolute devotion to his lord would generally be outside politics, or at least beyond having to worry about it, as his lord would simply give him orders.

This combination of virtues works well for monks as well as fighters. Love would be inappropriate for cenobitic ascetics — monks who live in groups (cenobitic) and avoid sensual pleasures (ascetic) — but loyalty to their monastery and piety towards their guiding deity are highly appropriate. Valor also fits quite well with monks, although their abilities mean that they have a different idea of what constitutes fighting fairly.

Among the standard races, this combination of virtues is common for dwarves and humans. Indeed, it's more common among dwarves than standard chivalry, as

they normally look slightly askance at the extent to which love draws one's devotion from one's lord. It's very rare among elves, though not unknown, as they regard love as very important; the elves those who follow this path are regarded as unusually focused warriors, rather than as variants on a knight. For elves, such characters bear very little resemblance to those who follow chivalry.

VARIETIES OF VIRTUE

Another way to create a variant of chivalry is to take one of the four virtues and change the way in which it's interpreted. The following character concepts are examples of such changes, one for each chivalric virtue.

VALOR VARIANT: DAREDEVILS

Daredevils change valor into simple physical courage. They hold that it's virtuous to face any sort of physical danger, on any terms. Of course, if you take so many precautions that a situation ceases to be dangerous, it's no longer virtuous, either. Most daredevils extend that principle and believe that courage is more virtuous the greater the danger.

Daredevils aren't suicidal, nor are they pure gamblers, although many people hold both opinions. Daredevils believe that it's virtuous to face danger that you have a chance of overcoming, and whether or not you overcome the hazard depends more on your skill than on pure luck. Thus, a daredevil fighter might charge into battle against a horde of orcs, but not against a horde of dragons, while another daredevil might try to swim a raging river, but not a river of lava.

Battle is popular with daredevils, as it's unquestionably dangerous and the combatant's skill plays a large role. Daredevils do not, however, believe in fighting fairly for the sake of it. If there's risk in setting an ambush, then that's courageous. If challenging an enemy openly would be suicidal, then an ambush might be the only virtuous way to initiate the battle.

Physical danger other than combat is also popular. Climbing mountains, exploring unknown lands, and swimming dangerous rivers are all common daredevil activities. Climbing buildings and running across their roofs, juggling flaming torches, and juggling flaming torches while running across roofs are also suitable. There doesn't need to be any greater point to the daring action; facing physical danger is enough in itself.

The level of physical danger is assessed in two ways. The first consideration is the difficulty of the task. How skilled would the daredevil need to be to succeed? Walking a tightrope is difficult, but walking it while juggling is more difficult, and thus more dangerous. The second consideration is the seriousness of the consequences of failure. If the tightrope is two inches from the ground, there's no danger even if the daredevil is trying to juggle twelve balls at the same time. If, on the other hand, it's suspended above a river of lava, then even simply walking it is dangerous for most people. Both the difficulty and the danger are assessed relative to the person undertaking the task. A tightrope over lava might be suicidal for some people, and thus not virtuous, but completely safe for a skilled tightrope walker who was immune to fire, and thus not virtuous for him, either.

The ethos of the daredevil drives him to seek out danger. He does nothing safely if he can reasonably make it dangerous. This leads many people to think that daredevils are suicidal, and indeed they don't have very long lives in most cases. Normal adventuring qualifies as seeking out danger in this sense, but then most people think that adventurers are suicidal, too.

A player character daredevil should emphasize his love of danger, volunteering for risky jobs and being eager to take dangerous-sounding missions. The character should not, however, take many completely pointless risks. If the character plans to fight, he should wear armor, just like a normal person. On the other hand, he should prefer fighting to negotiation, because negotiation carries no physical risk.

Because daredevils still believe in the other three chivalric virtues, they often take risks on behalf of others. If courage is not the most important of their virtues, they

are also willing to decline taking a risk because it might harm someone to whom they owe something.

Daredevil fighters are, perhaps, not terribly interesting, particularly if they take their risks by going into combat. You could emphasize the other virtues, and this might be suitable if you wanted to play a fighter who was a lot like a knight, but much happier to use sneaky combat techniques. Your character still won't engage in battles where he completely overwhelms the opponents, because that entails no risk and thus is not dangerous or virtuous.

Other classes make much more interesting daredevils. Rogues are almost perfectly suited to this style of near-chivalry, as long as they're loyal to someone who approves of roguish activities. Breaking into houses and stealing things is normally physically dangerous, and disarming traps always is. Rogues also tend to climb high places without adequate safety gear, and sneak into locations they shouldn't to gather information. A daredevil would, overall, make an excellent concept for a spy. Monks are almost as suitable for this concept as rogues, although the kind of courage espoused by daredevils does have chaotic tendencies.



Wizards and sorcerers also make good daredevils, as their lack of combat abilities and limited number of spells means that they're almost always in danger if they leave their home base behind. A wizard or sorcerer who liked to use touch spells in combat would certainly qualify as engaging in physical courage, and there's no reason why these classes can't uphold the other chivalric virtues.

The only class that really doesn't suit this concept is the bard. Bards are oriented much more towards social interaction, and while there is a great deal of risk in such activities, it's not physical risk. Daredevils don't see any virtue in trying to negotiate your way through a tense situation. A bard could be a daredevil, as the class is as capable of taking physical risks as anyone else, but the combination of class and concept is a bit awkward.

Among the standard races, this approach suits gnomes and halflings best. Dwarves are a bit too staid and sensible, and elves aren't inclined to take pointless risks. Humans and half-humans are also inclined towards the ideals of the daredevil.

LOYALTY VARIANT: GUARDIANS

Most knights believe that obedience is a very important part of loyalty. Guardians do not. For them, loyalty consists in putting the interests of your lord before your own, and doing everything in your power to promote those interests. Guardians are concerned with what is actually good for their lords, not what their lords think is good, so they sometimes go against their lords' expressed wishes.

The most common kind of guardian is someone placed in charge of a lord who is unable to manage his own lands because of illness or youth. These sometimes try to retain power after the lord comes of age, but this is rarely successful. Such characters are not particularly well suited to being player characters, as the GM might be reluctant to put your character in charge of a country.

More interesting are those guardians who take it upon themselves to look after the interests of a fully adult lord. In many respects they're like knights, and if the lord and guardian are both notably wise they might be indistinguishable. Guardians aren't opposed to obeying orders from their lord, after all; they simply do so only if they judge that the orders are in the lord's best interests, and that there's nothing more useful that they could be doing.

In most cases, of course, the lord and the guardian will often disagree about the lord's best interests. It's even possible for them to disagree all the time, particularly if the lord's main aim in life is something of which the guardian disapproves. Guardians can even find themselves working secretly against the lord's plans, because they think that putting those plans into operation would be a big mistake.

Such guardians make a very appealing concept for player characters. The character has strong ties to another individual, which helps the GM to introduce plots that will appeal to the character. A guardian has to act if his lord is kidnapped, even if their politics don't normally agree. On the other hand, the character is prone to ignoring any orders he's given if he doesn't like them, and to setting in motion his own plans and schemes in order to do what's best for his lord. This means that the character has a great deal of freedom of action, and a steady source of self-motivated plots.

While the near-knight version of this concept is best suited to fighters, this kind of loyalty might work for many classes. It may be particularly well-suited to divine spellcasters, who have a god's sanction for guiding their lords onto the path of righteousness, whether they want to walk there or not.

PIETY VARIANT: GODSEEKERS

Piety is the most varied of the chivalric virtues, as it can give rise to almost any behavior, depending on the god concerned. The only common factor is devotion to a deity, and it might be hard to see how there could be any version of piety that doesn't attend upon a deity. The Godseekers, however, have such a virtue.

The Godseekers are people devoted to a deity who they know doesn't exist. They receive no divine aid in their daily lives, and there are no miracles to comfort them. This seems to make the position of the Godseekers rather difficult. Why would anyone devote their lives to a deity that they know doesn't exist?

Some remain loyal only for a brief time to a god who has died. For most, this loyalty is nothing more than a pious memory, and they quickly offer their service to a sympathetic new deity who they see as their fallen god's true heir; such individuals are not Godseekers. Others hold fast to their fallen deity, and seek to bring him back into existence. These are true Godseekers.

A deity can't, of course, be restored to life by a simple spell or miracle, so the Godseekers spend their lives

searching for secrets deeper than those proper to mortals — secrets that allow the resurrection of a god. The search can take many lifetimes, and may indeed be utterly futile, as not all gods can be restored. The quest is high and noble, however, and so can itself serve to inspire many individuals. The fallen god likely had a code of ethics, and those who seek him can follow that just as well as they could when he yet lived. Because of this, pious groups of Godseekers can persist for centuries. Sometimes they even succeed in their quest, and the rewards that the restored deity bestows on the mortals who raised him are often far beyond even the most fevered imagination. But once they've succeeded they are, of course, no longer Godseekers.

Other groups of Godseekers are devoted to deities who do not yet exist. These fall into two groups, those who look for a prophesied deity who will come into being without their assistance, and those who seek to create a god.

Those following a prophecy don't need to look for secrets, as they believe that their god is definitely coming. They tend, therefore, to be somewhat passive, and if they find themselves persecuted they often come to believe that their god will, when he comes, wreak terrible vengeance on all who have harmed them. This form of piety doesn't fit very well with the other chivalric virtues, as it's rather too fatalistic.

If they're lucky, those trying to create a god will have a prophecy to guide them, and so at least have an idea of what they need to do to bring their god into the world. These tasks are often very difficult, even apparently impossible. Those seeking a god of peace, for example, might be required to bring peace to the entire world before he can come into being. These quests are good motivations for a player character. In addition, the prophecy normally describes the sort of behavior of which the god approves, and thus provides the Godseekers with some ethical guidance. Apart from the absence of miracles, such a religion is very little different from one that actually has a god.

Godseekers who aim to create a god in the absence of a prophecy often seem positively arrogant, even if they aren't actually delusional. Essentially, someone decided

that a god of a certain sort was needed, and found that none of the existing gods fitted the bill. Accordingly, they decided that it was necessary to invent him.

Making a god is not an easy task. The first step is to design the god, which is generally done by those who start the seeking. Because there's no greater power behind the Godseekers, however, this design is open to dispute and may change over the years. The design of the god might slowly evolve, or transform rapidly as powerful personalities with their own agendas take over the movement.

Once a concept for the god exists, the Godseekers must find a way to create that being. Most groups believe that powerful magic will be involved, normally combined with the devotion of a large number of followers. The details of the magic are, of course, unknown, so the Godseekers investigate any legends that hint at the possibility of creating powers beyond those available to mortals. A nature deity might have to be grown, a fertility deity conceived in a grand orgy, and a deity of knowledge proved into existence, for example.

This sort of Godseeker works well as a player character, and as a near-knight. The quests for knowledge can involve non-spellcasters, and for some deities it might be very doubtful whether magic could really be involved in their creation. This would be the case for deities hostile to magic, or concerned entirely with things completely removed from it. The player character is likely to become an important member of the seeking organization, and so will have a say in the details of the god sought.

A final type of Godseeker follows a deity who doesn't exist in their world, but who has, they claim, total power over it. All the deities exist purely at her whim, and she can change the past as well as the present. Nothing is impossible for her, and nothing is true unless she knows it. These characters are particularly odd because they're right; that is, after all, a description of the GM. It might, therefore, be best to leave such characters out of the game, as players are likely to look askance at the creation of a sect of people devoted to the GM's worship.

There is an obvious question that the GM must face if there are player character Godseekers in the campaign. Can they succeed, and if so, what will happen? While deciding that they're doomed to fail is certainly the easiest option, the GM should make this clear to the players in advance, as they might not want to embark on a futile quest.

Deciding that they might succeed provides a major arc for the campaign. As long as all the players are interested in the resurrection or creation of a god, this can drive any number of plots, and the final result is both spectacular and creative: instead of defeating the Dark Lord, the characters resurrect their god. Since the god should, in all fairness, grant spectacular powers to those who raised him, this might be a good place to end the campaign, as the player characters are likely to be demigods themselves at this point. On the other hand, a newly-risen god seeking to re-establish his church would face a number of interesting problems that couldn't be overcome by force alone.



VARIANT ORDER OF CHIVALRY: THE FOLLOWERS OF SEITHAUR

The Followers of Seithaur honor a god of chivalry who was destroyed over a millennium ago. Its members have come to believe that shards of the god rest in the bodies of the greatest mortal knights, and that when they're gathered in one place Seithaur will rise again.

Requirements: Member of a knightly prestige class, worshiper of Seithaur. There is no pious knight prestige class associated with this order, as such a class would depend on Seithaur's power, and a dead god can't grant abilities.

Symbols: Seithaur's symbol was an upright sword gripped in a mailed fist. This symbol is still worn by most of his followers. The order itself is symbolized by either the pieces of a shattered sword representing the god's broken state, or a hammer and anvil that indicates the efforts of the order to reforge their deity.

Origins: A thousand years ago Seithaur was the shining god of chivalry, and led all the knights of the world by example if not by their devotion. While he accepted the homage even of knights devoted to other deities, the Swordknights were his most faithful servants. He blessed them with great powers to enhance their chivalry, and they repaid him by leading his armies into battle against the enemies of justice.

Once such enemy was the Venom Queen, a dark deity who enforced her will through poisons of both body and mind. It was said that one word from her could kill a grown man, or so wrack him with envy and hatred that he would wish he were dead. Her servants crept into the secret councils of nations, and spread mistrust. They entered the bedchambers of wise rulers, and left death. They skulked through fertile fields, and cultivated only a trail of blight. Always they sought to avoid a direct confrontation with Seithaur and his Swordknights, for they knew that they couldn't succeed in such a test.

At length, however, the Swordknights forced a battle. The Venom Queen herself joined the struggle, only to be faced by Seithaur in person. The gods struggled as beneath them their armies waged war, and the Swordknights drove back the children of poison. In the realm of the gods, Seithaur was also prevailing against the Venom Queen, and there was a moment when it seemed that both he and his knights had won.

But the Venom Queen had left her poison in Seithaur's veins, and with scarcely time to savor victory he was struck down and destroyed. The Swordknights were consumed by grief in what should have been a time of victory, and many were scattered by the battle. Those who remained called themselves the Followers of Seithaur, so that none would forget where their loyalties lay.

For centuries they treasured the memory and ideals of their god, and sought a way to bring him back. At last Sir Badvorsen uncovered the secret. Seithaur could not be truly destroyed, even by a divine poison, but his essence was shattered. The shards, while remembering his ideals, had only the barest fraction of his power, and none of his personality. These shards had been scattered

throughout the mortal races on his defeat, and inspired those who held them to become great knights.

The shards were, however, separate from the knights' souls, and remained with their bodies when the souls departed. Thus, if the bodies of the greatest knights could be gathered, the essence of Seithaur would also be brought together. When his whole essence was in one place, Sir Badvorsen believed that the god would be born again to lead all knights once more. Sir Badvorsen therefore founded a great necropolis, and set the Followers of Seithaur to gathering the corpses of the greatest mortal knights since the shattering of Seithaur. That has been their task ever since.

Organization: The Swordknights were under the direct control of Seithaur, and the Followers of Seithaur respect this tradition by having no leader. Under the god, however, the Swordknights formed a highly disciplined army, and that structure has been retained. The highest authorities are the lieutenants, of whom there are normally between five and twelve. Each is subject only to Seithaur's authority, and so is now independent in theory. In practice, the lieutenants consult with each other and coordinate the actions of the order, with only occasional disputes. While they're trying to restore their god, most other issues seem petty, and so can usually be put aside until their prime task is resolved.

The Swordknights had seven lower ranks, each named after a kind of sword. The loss of their deity has reduced the number of recruits, and now the Followers of Seithaur only use the top three ranks. The justification is that simply joining shows immense devotion to Seithaur, and thus warrants a higher rank. The lowest rank in use is *seaxna*, named after a heavy single-bladed slashing weapon, the next *rasic*, named after a barbed thrusting weapon, and the highest *kalnare*, after an immense two-handed sword. These weapons are little used today, although members of each rank occasionally carry the eponymous sword as a badge.

In principle, all members of lower ranks must obey the commands of members of higher ranks. In practice, individual Followers of Seithaur are sent off on independent missions rather than being instructed on day-

to-day activities. They're required to take the missions they're given, but are allowed to use their own discretion in carrying them out.

To accomplish their goal, the order must remain aware of the greatest knights of the world so that its members can be sure to gather all the fragments of their god. This involves both mundane and magical information gathering, and is generally entrusted to those bards associated with the order.

The headquarters of the order is at the necropolis founded by Sir Badvorsen. Every knight's body that has been gathered is entombed in a stone sarcophagus carved with his name and dates. Some are decorated with sculptures placed by the knight's relatives; the order doesn't have sufficient resources to commission these itself.

Activities: Gathering the bodies of knights might not seem particularly exciting, and indeed usually it's quite simple. Members of the order turn up at the funeral of a great knight, and announce that he housed a shard of Seithaur. After the ceremonies, they take the body back to the necropolis. In most countries, this is the greatest posthumous honor a knight can receive.

However, sometimes the order must recover the bodies of knights whose families or nations don't want to give them up. Some degree of stealth is permissible, but the Followers of Seithaur are always ready to fight if necessary. They believe that each body contains part of their god, so there's nothing that can be offered to change their minds, and no risk is too great to take to secure it.

The order must also find and recover lost remains. Some knights die far from home, while others died long before Sir Badvorsen worked out what was going on, and some are killed in ways that scatter and conceal their remains. Recovering such bodies is often dangerous, and frequently requires long quests into unknown lands.

Finally, the members of the order strive to be great knights themselves, to prove that they have a shard of the god within themselves and are worthy of burial in the necropolis. This goal produces a tension within the

order. Most members believe that a shard enters a body at birth, in which case no one can do anything to “earn” a shard; being a great knight is just evidence that you have one, and falling from chivalry is evidence that you don’t. Others believe that the shards are attracted to those who walk the path of chivalry, and that the greater you are, the more chance you have of attracting one. Since this difference makes no difference to the behavior of the knights, the order has decided to tolerate this difference of opinion.

Campaign Integration: The Followers of Seithaur are suitable for player character members, as long as the players don’t mind being told which adventures they’re going on. Since they’re allowed to do other things on the way, this might be acceptable even to players who don’t want their characters to join. The order is also suitable as background color, and a player character knight might be claimed by its members after a final death.

If player characters join the order, there’s the question of whether Seithaur can be revived to consider. Maybe Sir Badvorsen was right and the god will be spontaneously reborn when the body containing the last of the shards is entombed, or perhaps a great ritual will still need to be performed over the bodies. It could also be that Sir Badvorsen was right but for the wrong reasons, so that the necropolis, which is devoted to the greatest knights, will recreate Seithaur, but not because it houses any fragments of the god. The return of an ancient deity will, as noted above, have a major impact on a campaign. And, of course, if Seithaur can come back, so can the Venom Queen.



ITEMS OF THE GODSEEKER

The following weapons are used by the Godseekers in their search to resurrect their god Seithaur.

MARTIAL WEAPON: SAEXNA

Two-handed martial melee weapon; Cost: 12 gp; Damage: 1d6 (S), 1d8 (M); Critical: x3; Range Increment: — ; Weight: 6 lb.; Type: Slashing.

The saexna looks rather like a square falchion, and is sharp on only one edge. It’s quite heavy for a sword, and so critical hits are rarer but more damaging when they occur.

EXOTIC WEAPON: RASIC

One-handed exotic melee weapon; Cost: 40 gp; Damage: 1d4 (S), 1d6 (special) (M); Critical: 18–20/x2 (special); Range Increment: — ; Weight: 4 lb.; Type: Piercing

The rasic looks a lot like a longsword with a barbed tip. The tip is thrust into the opponent, and can become stuck. On a critical threat, whether or not the hit is actually a critical hit, the barbed tip becomes lodged in the opponent. Withdrawing the sword takes another attack, but automatically deals another 1d4 (S) or 1d6 (M) damage. If the threat becomes an actual critical, both the initial strike and the withdrawal do double damage.

The creature in which a rasic is lodged takes 1 point of damage every time it attacks, and has a –2 penalty to all actions involving movement. The victim can pull itself off the sword as a standard action, taking 1d6 damage. This damage is doubled if the initial hit was a critical.

EXOTIC WEAPON: KALNARE

Two-handed exotic melee weapon; Cost: 100 gp; Damage: 2d6 (S), 2d8 (M); Critical: 19–20/x2; Range Increment: — ; Weight: 30 lb.; Type: Slashing

A kalnare is simply a very large greatsword. It can be used two-handed by a Large creature as a martial weapon, but Medium and smaller creatures need special training to handle it properly.

LOVE VARIANT: LOVER PAIRS

Chivalric love dictates that the beloved be passive, and that the knight seek to win her favors through his great deeds. But this isn’t the only kind of love possible, of course, and lover pairs hold another kind to be an

important virtue. They maintain the other three chivalric virtues in the same form as knights, though, so they appear very similar to knights.

Lover pairs hold that the best love is that between equals, or near equals. Valor calls to valor, loyalty to loyalty, piety to piety, and love to love. When someone who holds this view finds a lover to support it, they bind themselves firmly together, swearing to help one another through all the trials of life.

The members of lover pairs are female as often as male, but the couples are almost exclusively homosexual. This is because raising a family doesn't fit well with the other virtues of the couple, and because the welfare of potential children might interfere with passion and the search for ever-greater virtue. Those heterosexual lover pairs that do exist are almost always composed of two races that can't interbreed, as that has much the same effect.

This love is valuable in two ways. First, it's a means to the end of maintaining the chivalric virtues. Each of the pair is himself valorous, pious, and loyal, so he's well able to distinguish these virtues in his lover, and notice when he falls short. Since each holds the other's opinion in high regard, this motivates them both to excel in upholding the virtues.

Second, the love is also an end in itself. The lovers believe that having this sort of love for a virtuous equal is the highest state of the mortal soul.

Just as with chivalric love, the love between a lover pair is always erotic. Sexual desire must be part of the bond between the pair, because otherwise an important part of the soul would be pulling the couple apart. The ideal is that this passion lasts forever, and burns ever stronger. Of course, the reality is often different; lover pairs are no more immune to infatuation with others than married couples, and sexual jealousy causes them just as many problems.

The attitudes of the members of a lover pair toward each other are very different from those of a chivalric knight and his beloved, though. Even the erotic component is distinct, because lover pairs are expected to be engaged in

a sexual relationship, while the chivalric knight seeks that as the final, possibly unattainable, goal of his devotion.

Each member of a lover pair is supposed to aim to make his beloved into a better person by encouraging the growth of his skills and virtues. This encouragement should take several forms. First, the lover should strive to be the best example of the virtues that he can. Second, he should draw attention to his lover's failings, so that he can address them. Finally, when appropriate he should actively aid his lover in the development of his skills.

Each members of a lover pair would rather see his lover dead than dishonored or shorn of virtue. On the other hand, each would willingly die to save the other if he could do so without abandoning virtue. Equally, each would seek to raise the other from the dead if that was at all possible, even if the death was dishonorable. A dead lover can't, after all, try to overcome his weakness and find his way back to virtue.

Because lover pairs are equals, and both are valorous, they almost invariably fight together and serve their lord as a pair rather than as individuals. It's all but unknown for them to serve different lords or different deities, as such divided loyalties would tend to pull the couple apart rather than binding them together.

PRESTIGE CLASS: LOVER PAIRS

Lover pairs live for each other, the over-riding goal of each being his lover's virtue and improvement. The lover of such a character is almost invariably also a member of this prestige class, and the devotion between the two pushes all other commitments into a distant second place.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become one of a lover pair, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Feats: Bodyguard, any two feats improving Aid Another.

Special: Take a lover who qualifies for this prestige class, and become a member of an order of lover pairs.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for the lover pair prestige class (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the lover pair prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: The lover pair is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all types of armor, and shields.

Lover's Link (Su): The two members of a lover pair are mystically linked. The abilities granted by the prestige class flow in one direction only — the ability's user gains information about his lover, but not the reverse — though both members of the pair are normally members of the class. The link strengthens as levels are gained. Every feature of Lover's Link is a supernatural ability, and can be used at will as a free action.

Emotional Bond: The character is constantly aware of his lover's stronger emotions. This includes fear, joy, pain, and love. The character also knows if his lover is asleep, unconscious, or dead, and can distinguish between those states.

Love's Location: The character knows the direction and distance to his lover, as long as his lover is on the same plane. This ability guides the character to his lover's corpse if his lover is dead, although the other abilities of the class, apart from Interplanar Location, are lost until the lover is somehow raised.

Diverted Damage: The character can choose to take upon himself some of the damage his lover would suffer when attacked, so that the lover isn't affected by it. At 2nd level, the character can take 1 hit point of damage from each injuring attack. At 4th level, the character can take up to 5 hit points from each attack. At 6th level, he can take up to half the damage, or up to 5 hit points if that's more. At 8th level, he can take all of the damage. The character knows how much damage his lover would take, and doesn't need to take the maximum permissible. It is possible for a character to take enough damage to kill him through this link. When two characters who both have this prestige class are linked to each other in this way, one can't use this link to take part of the damage that the other character is already taking through the use of this ability. Thus, if character A uses this ability to take 5 hit points which would otherwise have affected character B, character B can't use this ability to take those 5 hit points back.

Telepathy: From 3rd level, the character can read his lover's thoughts. Surface thoughts — the ones that are almost spoken — can be read quickly, but the character can read his lover's whole mind given time. If the lover wishes to block this ability, he can make a Will save against a DC of 10 + the character's character level + the lover's level in this prestige class. The stronger the lover's link to the character, the harder it is for him to shield his mind.

Interplanar Location: From 4th level, the character knows which plane his lover is on at all times. If they are on the same plane, he also knows the distance and direction to his lover, or his lover's corpse.

Borrow Senses: From 5th level, the character can borrow his lover's senses. This means that he sees, hears, smells, tastes, and feels the things that his lover does. While he's using this ability, the character isn't aware of the input from his own senses, but his lover can still make full use of his own senses. The character has no control over his lover, and is merely a passenger. The lover may resist this, making a Will save against DC 10 + the character's character level + the lover's level in this prestige class.

Share Senses: From 7th level, the character can borrow his lover's senses without losing the input from his own. The double senses don't confuse the character, and he can react equally well to things picked up by either sense, as long as he's in an appropriate location. The lover can resist this ability as for Borrow Senses, above.

Teleport: From 7th level, the character can teleport to his lover's side as per *greater teleport*, as long as he and his lover are on the same plane. This effect always puts the character as close as possible to his lover while keeping him safe. "Safe" depends on the protections that the character has available; a character with fire resistance could appear in molten lava.

Share Abilities: From 9th level, the character can use his lover's statistics in addition to his own. This covers skills, feats, and class abilities. However, only one of the two can use an ability at a time (or during the same round), and the lover's use of his own statistics automatically takes precedence. This ability can't be resisted, other than by using the ability that the character wants to borrow. At this level, it's impossible for the lover to have secrets from the character, as all of the lover's memories are as available to the character as his own. This doesn't lead to any confusion or psychological problems in itself, although certain revelations could certainly cause such problems.

Interplanar Teleport: From 10th level, the Teleport ability works even across the planes.



VARIANT ORDER OF CHIVALRY: THE ORDER OF GUIDES

The Order of Guides is composed entirely of lover pairs. The name refers to the order's belief that each lover guides the other to greater power and virtue in this life, and over a series of future lives. The order is dedicated to seeking out the mysteries of self-improvement.

Requirements: Both members of a lover pair must seek out and join the order together. The couple must be of one sex and race, and both must be members of the lover pair prestige class.

Symbols: A snake biting its own tail. Also two snakes coiled in a double helix about a sword, similar to Mercury's caduceus but with a sword rather than a winged rod in the center. The first symbol is normally used to represent the order as a whole, and appears on its seal and flags at the castles it controls. The second is used to represent individual couples within the order, and each couple customizes the snakes to represent themselves. These devices are normally worked into the coats of arms of members.

Origins: The order claims that it has not yet been founded. The central myth of the order explains this as follows.

At some point in the future, maybe far in the future, members of the Order of Guides will discover the final mysteries of mortal improvement, and become masters



LOVER PAIRS

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK	FORT SAVE	REF SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Lover's Link (Emotional Bond, Love's Location)
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Lover's Link (Diverted Damage 1)
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Lover's Link (Telepathy)
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Lover's Link (Diverted Damage 5, Interplanar Location)
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Lover's Link (Borrow Senses)
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	Lover's Link (Diverted Damage 1/2)
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Lover's Link (Share senses, Teleport)
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Lover's Link (Diverted Damage full)
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	Lover's Link (Share Mind)
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Lover's Link (Interplanar Teleport)



of time, space, and the planes. They will then travel into the distant past, where they have continued training members of the order. Alas, these students were not yet refined enough to learn all that the order could teach, so their students were far weaker than the trainers will be. The students trained students in turn, and the order must continue seeking through time so that the circle closes, otherwise the universe will vanish like a snake devouring its own tail.

Others in the order suggest that the truth is even more complicated than this legend suggests. They say that some members of the Order of Guides discover the secrets of time travel, and then return to the past to train others. These students discover greater secrets, and travel back in time themselves to train further apprentices. Every group travels further back in time, so that the future of the order extends its history. Thus, the origins of the order are found further back than the most ancient records, because the order's members from the far future have traveled back to the distant past. Those who believe this also hold that there will come a time when the time travelers meet themselves, and that these

travelers are the first of the order in causation, although they are its mid-point in time.

Still others say that this is all a bunch of mumbo-jumbo designed to make the order sound mysterious. Nevertheless, there are no concrete traces of an origin for the order; it seems to have existed forever with its current structure.

Organization: The order is composed of a large number of independent cells. The members of a cell know each other, and recruit and train new members. As a general rule, a cell is centered on a castle controlled by one of its pairs, and it may retain control of that castle after the death or disappearance of that pair, passing control onto another pair.

Established members of the order can join a new cell at will. There are secret passwords and codes known only to members of the order that can be used to establish the identity of newcomers. By ancient tradition, no further questions are asked. Some members, particularly the younger ones, point out that this means that travelers from the future could already have joined the order. The older members tend to discount these ideas, but the truly paranoid say that this is because they *know* that the time travelers are here.

All members of the order are pairs of the same race and sex as each other, although all races and both men and women are represented in the order. There are no rules preventing the admission of mixed couples, but circumstances always conspire to keep them out. Some members of the order are prejudiced, and refuse to sponsor such couples. Others are willing, but events intervene and make it impossible for them to do so. Still more refuse to attempt the sponsorship on the grounds that something will happen to prevent it, as something always does.

Pairs who qualify need merely be sponsored by a pair that is already in the order. The applicants must declare their commitment to seeking greater perfection for mortals of all kinds, and their devotion to each other. Admission is normally little more than a formality.

Activities: The order spends much of its effort gathering information on how mortals can advance both spiritually and in power. It has a bias against magical and psionic power, seeing them as working against the requirements of valor, so there are few spellcasters or psions in its ranks. Instead, it seeks information about gaining extraordinary or supernatural abilities, which can be used to aid in the pursuit of power.

Pairs are also expected to serve their lords and deities well, as growing in virtue is as important as growing in power. There is a general belief that greater power comes with greater virtue, and that the discovery made by the future members who traveled into the past was as much to do with the perfect manifestation of the four virtues as it was to do with simple power.

Campaign Integration: The Order of Guides works well as a somewhat mysterious background organization that spends much of its time looking for hidden lore. Because it has evil members it can serve as an antagonist on occasion, while its good and neutral members might ally with the player characters.

Obviously, player characters can only join if they form a lover pair. A character might form such a pair with a cohort, although a standard cohort would not be of high enough level to count as an equal. If two player characters do join, the order's quest for the secrets of power can drive many adventures.

The mystery of the order's origin can also be a source of adventure. If it really is created and sustained by time travelers, they might also be the source of amazingly accurate prophecies, or try to push the player characters into carrying out actions that feature in the legends of the travelers' original time. The player characters might also have their own uses for time travel, and so seek out members of the order who might know the secret.



ITEMS OF LOVER PAIRS

Lover pairs can use the following weapons to enhance their quest for power and virtue.

WEAPON SPECIAL ABILITY: PAIRED WEAPONS

This power must be enchanted into two weapons simultaneously, and both weapons must be melee weapons. They need not be of the same type, however.

This power has no effect unless both weapons are being used in the same melee. Further, the wielders of the two weapons must be capable of using the aid another action to help each other. The weapons shine when these conditions are met, and the enhancement bonus of each weapon increases by +1 for the duration of the melee as long as the two fighters could use aid another to assist each other.

If one character actually uses the aid another action to aid the wielder of the other weapon, the enhancement bonus of each weapon increases by +2. If both characters use the aid another action to aid each other (see new feats in Chapter Three for examples of when this can be worth doing), the enhancement bonus of each weapon increases by +4. The maximum total enhancement bonus that a magic weapon can have is +5, and bonuses resulting from this special ability that are higher than +1 apply only in the rounds during which aid another is used.

Strong abjuration; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *shield other*; Price +1 bonus on each weapon

EVIL KNIGHTS

Mortal nature being what it is, there are, of course, evil knights. Evil knights are not, however, simple thugs in armor, nor are they individuals who merely fail to live up to the standards of chivalry. Instead, they're characters who maintain a warped version of the chivalric virtues. Each chivalric virtue has its dark and twisted, but still recognizable, reflection in the virtues of the dark knights.

DARK VALOR

The dark version of valor is remarkably similar to the chivalric virtue — distressingly so for some knights, who

would like to think that there was more difference. Dark valor requires the dark knight to avoid poisons, ambushes, and missile weapons, and to fight fairly against worthy opponents. Physical courage in battle is just as important to dark knights as to their good brothers. Thus, if a dark knight came across an enemy of approximately equal power who was naked and asleep in bed, he would wake him and allow him to arm and armor himself before starting the combat. Taking advantage of a worthy opponent's weakened state would be unvalorous.

There are two differences to his approach, however. First, dark knights don't see themselves as obliged to fight opponents much more powerful than themselves. If there's virtually no chance of victory, a dark knight can leave the field of battle with a clear conscience. Similarly, although they may not use ambushes and poisons, dark knights will take advantage of a situation to strike a more-powerful opponent while he's weakened. A dark knight who found an enemy more powerful than himself naked and in bed would wake his foe before attacking, but would see no need to let him arm and armor. A true knight would allow his enemy to arm, even though that might give him little chance of victory.

The second difference is that dark knights don't see themselves as having any duty to those weaker than them. Their valor allows them to crush the weak with physical force, particularly if the weak are annoying the dark knight in some way. Dark knights aren't required to give them a fair fight, and can even murder them in their sleep. Since the opponent would present no challenge even if he was awake, killing him while he sleeps doesn't damage the dark knight's honor.

This means that dark knights are permitted to use their martial prowess to threaten and intimidate others, and most of them do. Dark knights extend courtesy only to power, but they truly do extend courtesy, and not merely the homage of fear.

DARK LOYALTY

Dark loyalty is much more different from its true counterpart than is dark valor. A dark knight is loyal to his

evil vision of the world around him, and this shapes his attitude to those above and below him.

If a dark knight has subjects, he demands absolute and unquestioning obedience from them. A chaotically inclined knight demands absolute obedience to his whims, rather than his laws, but he still demands that obedience. The slightest infraction can be punished with death or maiming, and the dark knight has the personal power necessary to inflict such punishments. His subjects as a whole are guided to support the knight's dark vision, as well. He often forces them to work building his fortresses and castles, or drafts them into his army. He may set some to control and torment others, and promise positions of authority in newly conquered lands to those currently at the bottom.

It's important to recognize that dark knights don't necessarily drive their subjects to satisfy the knight's personal desires. Many have broader goals for which they would, often, be prepared to die themselves, and for which they are certainly willing to see their, or another nation's, citizens die. Dark knights are not selfish, but rather devoted to an evil end.

This is equally, or perhaps even more, clear in the case of dark knights who have a superior. That superior is almost invariably evil himself, and so demands absolute loyalty and utter obedience. Nevertheless, an important part of dark loyalty is that the knight must strive to keep his lord true to a dark vision. If the lord is caught up in selfish goals, the knight must try to correct him, even at the risk of his own life. Overthrowing the lord and taking his place is not an option for a dark knight, as that would betray his loyalty. Undermining the lord's actions if they don't aid the cause of the greater evil, however, is quite common. There are many true knights who, while they can't approve of the dark knight's ends in his dealings with his lord, can certainly applaud the means, as they are also used by chivalric knights when their lords falter.

DARK PIETY

Dark piety is the simplest of the dark virtues. The dark knight simply follows an evil god, but he follows him

with the same sincerity and devotion as true knights bring to their deities.

Further, not all evil deities are suitable gods for a dark knight. Gods of poison, trickery, and betrayal are all inappropriate, as the dark knight holds to standards that conflict with their goals. Still, there are many evil deities who are suitable, and dark knights serve them as well as true knights serve more beneficent powers.

DARK LOVE

Of all the virtues, love differs most between its dark and true versions. Dark love is intimately concerned with the ruin of the beloved, with seduction, and with betrayal. It shares with true chivalric love the belief that overcoming obstacles makes love more worthwhile. A lady chosen as the beloved of a dark knight must either have him killed or maintain the greatest wisdom and strength of will if she is to avoid being destroyed.

A dark knight chooses a lady who's remarkable for many fine qualities. These always include beauty and virtue, and also as many of wealth, power, fame, and skill as can be managed. The knight then aims to strip her of everything, before she finally commits suicide in despair at the depth of her fall. Dark knights rarely announce their intentions at the outset.

Courtship starts much as it would for a true knight, with the dark knight professing undying passion and doing great deeds on his lady's behalf. Even here, the process of destruction starts, as the knight will do deeds that are ethically dubious and trumpet their devotion to his lady. If she accepts them, he performs acts that are slightly more evil, but sufficiently like the earlier acts that it's hard for her to repudiate them. Eventually, he performs atrocities on her behalf, and everyone believes that she approves.

The gifts that he sends are also such as to tempt her to evil. He might start with an enchanted item that allows the lady to make her rivals look foolish and ugly, and then give her items that inflict pain, items that bind the wills of others, and slaves. As she uses his gifts, the lady slips further into evil.

The knight also seeks the favors of the lady's body. Unlike the true knight, this is not his final goal. The dark knight always chooses a lady who should not grant him those favors, so that once she has, he has a hold over her. Ultimately, through his gifts and protestations, he aims to drive the lady to leave her position in order to become his acknowledged lover.

Once the lady is under the knight's control, her degradation becomes more rapid. She is compelled to give all her goods to the knight, to grant the favor of her body to anyone the knight chooses, and to assist the knight in winning the favor of a new love. She is beaten and maimed, so that ultimately she is but a shadow of her former self. At this point, she is given the opportunity to kill herself, and most take it.

It's fortunate that successfully completing such a task requires great skill and guile, so that most dark knights fail at an early stage. Their ladies are certainly injured by their attentions, but they can escape before they're utterly destroyed.



ITEMS OF EVIL

The following artifact makes a powerful item of contention between the forces of good and evil.

MAJOR ARTIFACT: THE HELM OF MASTERY

The Helm of Mastery is new as major artifacts go, having been created only two centuries ago by the clerics and fiendish servants of an evil deity. It was made to assist the deity's martial champion in his bid to conquer the world and bring it all under darkness, but the champion was defeated in battle by a great paladin, and the helm removed from his corpse. The paladin sought to destroy the evil item, but the means of its destruction was not at hand, and she was killed in the course of her quest. The helm was lost with her.

The helm does not have a visor, but it does have guards for the wearer's neck and nose. It's made of dark steel,

and as the light catches it there seems to be swirling patterns in the metal that make good-aligned characters uneasy. Otherwise, it's quite plain. It changes size magically to fit any character who attempts to put it on. The helm radiates overwhelming magic and evil.

A good character who dons the helm is immediately overcome with shooting pains. Unless he makes a Fortitude save against a DC of 16, he passes out, regaining consciousness in an hour. If the character does go unconscious, he suffers a –6 penalty to all rolls and totals as long as he wears the helm. Removing it is no harder than removing any other helm, however.

A neutral character gains the following bonuses while wearing the helm:

- +10 competence bonus to Spot and Listen checks
- +4 bonus to Initiative totals
- +1 luck bonus to attack rolls.

However, it also makes the neutral character ill-disposed toward all other characters. The wearer starts with an Unfriendly attitude to most people, and characters who try to improve his attitude suffer a –20 penalty to their rolls. The character also always judges other people's attitudes to be one step worse than they really are. If the wearer is a player character, the GM should describe NPCs as suspicious or even hostile, and point out that they're insulting the player character in subtle ways. The character also becomes very protective of the helm, and reluctant to remove it. Given its bonuses, this is a natural attitude, so player characters only need to be informed of the influence if they seem willing to leave the helm behind. Anyone who suggests that the character should abandon the helm automatically seems hostile to the wearer, and the wearer suspects him of wanting the helm for himself. Over time, these influences on the wearer push him towards an evil alignment.

An evil character of 10th level or lower experiences the same effects as a neutral character. An evil character of 11th level or higher is strong enough to activate the full

powers of the helm while wearing it, and to draw the attention of its maker. Such a character gains the following bonuses:

- Half his character level (rounded up) is added to his base attack bonus. This bonus stacks with all others. This bonus also grants additional attacks, so that a 20th-level fighter wearing the helm would get 6 attacks from a full attack action.
- His character level is added to his Charisma score. This bonus stacks with all others.
- The character can damage any creature with any weapon, regardless of its Damage Reduction or any Resistances.
- If the character strikes, in melee, a creature that has fewer than half as many hit dice as the character, the victim must make a Fortitude save against a DC of 10 + half the wearer's character level, or die instantly.
- The character's initiative in combat is calculated by adding 1 to the highest total initiative of any other combatant. Thus, the wearer of the helm always acts first in melee.
- The character automatically succeeds at all Listen, Sense Motive, and Spot checks, as long as success is at all possible.

The character also draws the immediate attention of the deity who created the helm, and he sends emissaries in an attempt to win the wearer over to his cause. Any character who can wield the full power of the helm is suitable as a champion for the evil deity, and so the initial approach is friendly. If the character refuses the deity's offer, servants are sent to retrieve the helm. This isn't usually easy, as the character still gets the full benefit of the helm.

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PENUMBRA

LOVE AND WAR



VALOROUS AND LOYAL ...

... serving his god, his lord, and his lady, the knight is the archetypal hero. Not for him cunning words or tricks, nor disguises and ambushes. The knight faces his enemies boldly on the field of combat. The life of a knight is full of quests, tournaments, and epic battles recounted in poems for the pleasure of his lady-love. The classic image of a knight is a paladin in shining plate armor, mounted on a warhorse. But knights can range far from this stereotype; members of any character class, social class, race, or sex can follow the path of chivalry.

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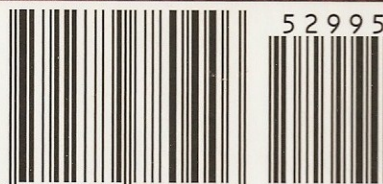
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