The Riddle of Steel™

Roleplaying with an Edge

Since the dawning of time, when Triumph the Forger-God pounded out the world from the mists and ores of heaven, men have sought the Riddle of Steel

Few have found it.

What is it?

It is invincibility—to strike with all and to be struck by none.

It is understanding—to ask questions and to know the answers.

It is peace—to walk without fear, to know that the end is in your own hands.

It is skill—to feel the elegance found in violence, and to know the beauty found in stillness.

It is Spirit—to gaze into the face of your God and to know him before he comes for you

What is the Riddle of Steel? Where is it found?

That is the question with no answer

ROLEPLAYING WITH AN EDGE

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In the End, there is only Steel.

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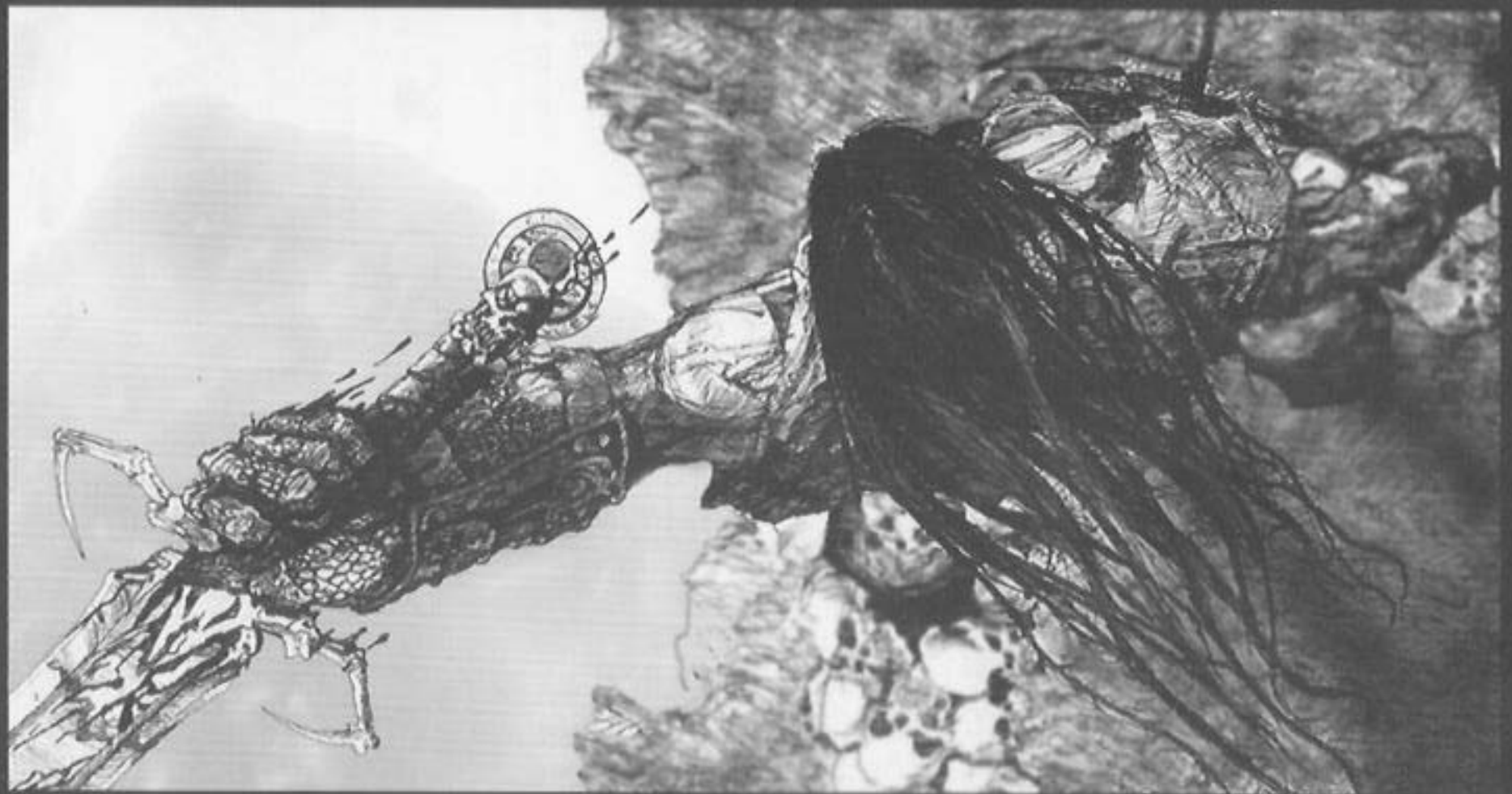

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The Riddle of Steel Book One: In the Beginning

The Magistrate leaned back in his chair. His dark blue robes fit snug over his large body. His hand mechanically stroked his pointed beard. "What should I do with you two? Every time you come into my town, trouble seems to follow. And what happened last night is unforgivable! I find it odd that the best tavern in town burns to the ground and you two are found at the scene of the crime. Please indulge me on why I should not lock you away forever."

The two mercenaries looked at each other. "Sir, we had just stepped in da place when the fight broke out and da latern got knocked over. We had nuttin' to do wit it."

The Magistrate closed his eyes and sighed. " You know, I hold your future in the palm of my hand... and that's the best story you can give me? I'm afraid your careers as caravan guards and general troublemakers is about to come to an end. Your future will be to keep the rats occupied in a deep, dark dungeon under his lordship's castle."

The large man paused for a moment, then a thin smile crossed his face. He looked back and forth between the two mercenaries." That is... unless you can do a small favor for me."

"Hurry Dyrek, I think I hear them coming"

The light from the half full moon lit the alleyway as two figures crouched against the wall. One hunched over, his full attention on the door ahead of him. In his hands he delicately manipulated two long steel lockpicks. A soft click sounded inside the lock, but the door remained closed.

Frustrated, he sneered at his partner. " If you think you can do any better you're welcome to try, if not, leave me be to do my work." His attention shifted back to the lock. The taller companion edged down the wall and peeked around the corner. The shimmering of torchlight could be seen down the street. Not waiting to see the source of the light he moved back down the alleyway. Moments seemed to drag to minutes and minutes to hours. Sweat dripped freely from each of the men's brows. Dyrek's hands moved as skillfully as those of a surgeon. Another soft click and the door shifted slightly.

Torchlight filled the empty alleyway.

"What is it Sargent?"

A scruffy old man, clad in chainmail and the tabard of the city guard, pulled his torch back. "Nothing private, just thought I heard something down there. Let's continue on." The small group of guards marched further down the street and around a corner.

The light from the half moon lit the empty alleyway as a door softly clicked shut.

Balor's breathing caused small puffs of steam to rise up through the vents in the front of his helmet. The joints of his armor creaked in protest as he marched down the snow, covered path. News of barbarian raiders had caused the clan to organize this group of men to go eliminate the problem. For three days they had marched

through unrelenting weather, the snow and cold more dangerous than any bandits they could imagine.

A soft sound in the woods, nothing more than a whisper, but it was enough to break Balor's train of thought. The leader of the war party held up his hand to halt. A dead silence filled the area, a silence that Balor knew too well. He reached down and unclasped the warhammer from his belt. At once, as if the forest itself had come alive, large dark figures came crashing out of the underbrush and surrounding woods. Balor had barely enough time to raise his shield as a large axe sliced down, intent on splitting his head. The axe lodged in the shield and Balor swung his hammer around hitting the attacker in the left shoulder. The attacker, dressed in leather and furs, stumbled backwards, his war painted face going slack for an instant from the pain. Another swing from the warhammer and the bandit fell to the snowy ground, never to rise again.

Balor turned to see many of the other barbarians had suffered the same fate as his attacker. Some of his clan had joined them, their body's contorted in different poses of death. The white ground was now stained red in many places.

The small battle had started quickly, and had ended even quicker.

On the edge of a busy marketplace, two boys sat playing a game involving smoothed circular rocks and and small square of black fabric. One boy threw down three rocks, two of them landing on the fabric. He looked over at his friend and smiled.

"Ya know, when I grow up I want take care of Lord Harland's horses like my 'pa."

The other boy, his clothes not quite as nice and his hair matted and dirty, glanced up. "I suppose I'll just be a farmer like my dad, but at least I'll be able to come to the marketplace allot, I like it here."

Both boys fell quiet for a while, intent on their game. Nearby a young man, barely past being called a boy himself, walked by catching the attention of both children. A roughly woven cloak billowed out behind this stranger. At his waist hung a large broadsword, its sheath as battered as the leather breastplate he wore, but both gleamed with oil and were obviously well cared for.

Both boys stared at the stranger in silence, then one spoke again. " I think I want to be a swordsman when I grow up."

"Me too."

The stranger looked down at the two boys as he passed by. With a wide grin, he nodded at the two and then turned in towards the crowd and disappeared.

What is a Roleplaying Game?

A Roleplaying Game, RPG for short, is a system of rules that define the way a player may interact with an imaginary world. Roleplaying is nothing more than the art of pretending, though some refer to it as acting. Games such as this one allow the player to experience scenarios, morality, and experiences otherwise unavailable. Like all games, roleplaying is meant to be fun, and accomplishes this with the stimulation of the imagination in the company of friends through the use of strategy and storytelling.

In this game, the storyteller and guide, referred to as the **Seneschal**, uses the rules contained here-in to create an interactive story-line for the players' characters to explore. The Seneschal verbally paints a picture of the world in which the characters are immersed, and creates events to challenge the players' wits, acting skill, patience, and luck. While the player controls a character's actions, the accomplishment of these actions is left to fate. Gamers use dice to attempt to successfully achieve a character's physical actions, but must rely on their brains to solve

mysteries and their wits to avoid dangerous situations. The point? To have fun. Roleplaying is like reading an unpredictable book, where you are writing the story, but have no idea what will occur next. Unlike video games, RPGs force you to interact with actual people! People who are unpredictable, often hilarious, and a hopefully a lot more interesting than a glowing box.

Like all games and many RPGs, *The Riddle of Steel* involves elements of chance, skill, and strategy—the three are, in fact, tightly related. Chance is represented by the use of special dice (discussed below) while strategy is found in *how* and *when* you use those dice. Skill is learned over time, as not only the character, but the player also improves. To start the game you will need to acquire pencils, paper, a copy of this book, and dice.

What kind of RPG is The Riddle of Steel?

The Riddle of Steel involves elements of fantasy familiar to most gamers—magic, swordplay, intrigue, war, and adventure. What makes the game special—and unusual—is its approach to these "traditional" elements. Roleplaying games have always seemed to seek some form of balance in play, found in characters with "levels," "classes," and extremely limited choices in sorcery and combat. Things are different here. Magic is deadly and powerful—even the weakest sorcerer is a lethal threat. Swordplay is fast, dynamic, and ends in blood—choose your battles wisely. The world that *The Riddle of Steel* brings you to is more real, more dangerous, and more exciting, than perhaps what you'll find in any other RPG…at least we'd like to think so. You'll have to play it to be sure.

Players take on the roles of *people*. These people, so their players hope, may one day become heroes, legends, kings, or will discover the answer to the Riddle of Steel. They may not be famous yet, but they are already mighty, powerful, dangerous, crafty, or talented. They are *not* "average" at all. Player characters are, by definition, exceptional people in a very real, very harsh world. Not one of mythical deserts and castle-laden clouds, or orcs and dragons around every corner, but one of greedy men seeking power, hungry villagers after food and ransom, wandering swordsmen with an eye on conflict, death, and the Riddle, and millions of other people just trying to see tomorrow. This is a game about personal conflict, moral dilemma, the brevity of life, and the search for answers.

Now the only question is, how—and where—do we begin…

Basic Rules and Game Mechanics

I. Dice

The Riddle of Steel uses two kinds of dice to resolve situations where chance is involved: several ten sided dice (referred to as 1d, 2d, 3d, or 1d10, 2d10, etc.), and one six-sided die (1d6 or d6). Any time a reference is made to

"dice" without stating *d6* or *d10*, assume the reference applies to d10's. Most players will need one d6 and 10 or more d10's (d10's may be purchased at any gaming store and most comic stores). We also recommend that at least one of those dice be red and another white, and that each player have a small bowl or two to keep his own dice in on the gaming table.

II. The Major Rolls and Tests (Rolling Dice)

Five different kinds of rolls are made during the course of play, most of which are very similar.

1. *Attribute Tests* are made by rolling a number of dice against a *Target Number* (TN) based on the difficulty of the task at hand. The TNs for Attribute Tests are set by the Seneschal, based on standard TNs in Table 1.1. Target Numbers range from 2 (foolproof) to 12 (very difficult) or higher (nearly impossible). Every individual die that equals or beats that TN is kept as a *success*; the rest are thrown away. Target Numbers over 10 may be achieved by re-rolling any roll of 10 and adding it to the original roll. This process is called *Stacking*; any given die may continue to Stack so long as a 10 is rolled each time. Usually only one success is necessary for an action to be successful, though some may require more. Likewise, the quantity of successes indicates an action's degree of success: one is just enough, while four or five are nearly flawless (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.1: Target Numbers

2	Foolproof
4	Easy
6	**Average**
8	Challenging
10	Difficult
12	Very Difficult
14	Amazing
16	Heroic
20	Nearly Impossible
22	The Unbelievable

Occasionally circumstances make executing a given task easier or more difficult than it would normally be on its own. Penalties or bonuses to your Attributes may be applied in any such situation, reducing or increasing the available number of dice to be rolled.

Table 1.2: Degrees of Success

# Margin of Success	*Result*
Zero	Failure
(Ties)	Result Varies
One	Narrow Success
Two	Comfortable
Three	Room to spare
Four	Expertly done
Five	Flawless

Cameron, a young Stahlnish knight, has just rescued his one and only true love from his own wicked lord. As he flees from the dungeon (with a maiden over his shoulder!) the walls begin to collapse around him. Hoping to avoid being crushed by a falling slab of rock and debris, Cameron leaps through the dungeon entrance. The Seneschal calls for a Test of Agility and assigns Cameron a TN of 9 (he considers this to be fairly challenging, as the rock is falling pretty fast). Additionally, the Seneschal notes, Cameron has a girl over his shoulder. Because Cameron is rather strong (and his fair maiden is rather thin) the Seneschal only imposes a –1 die penalty to Cameron's Agility. Cameron's player now rolls Agility (in this case 4 dice, 5 – 1, for the penalty). He rolls 4, 6, 7, 9...one success! He narrowly escapes the falling dungeon walls. Had Cameron not been carrying his dearest love he would have had 5 dice, not 4, to roll.

2. *Skill Tests* are a specialized kind of Attribute Test. Skill checks are made by rolling an appropriate Attribute Test against the Skill Rating (SR) of that skill. The Skill Rating thus acts as a Target Number. Lower SRs are better than higher, as they allow more possible successes. See Table 1.3 for a generic listing of Skill Ratings.

   As with Attribute Tests, die modifiers may be applied to any roll should the task at hand be easier or more difficult than "average."

3. *Proficiency Tests*, or tests made from a *Pool*, are made by rolling any number of dice from the appropriate Pool (Combat Pool, Missile Pool, or Sorcery Pool) against Target Numbers based on the difficulty of using the weapon or magic at hand. Sample Target

Table 1.3: Skill Ratings	
3	**Master**; well known and sought after
5	**Adept**; a skilled and respected veteran
7	**Proficient**; a trained professional
9	**Some Training**; a good beginner
10	**Beginners**; most students; some defaults
13	Default for **untrained** characters

Numbers will be found in **Book Three: Training** and **Book Six: Sorcery.**

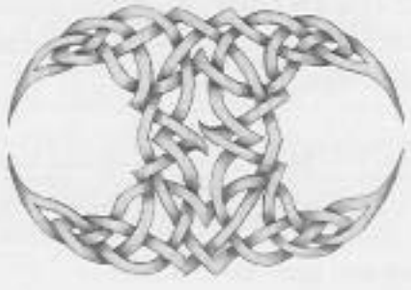
4. *Contested Rolls* ("*Contests of _____*") are made whenever two characters or forces are competing for precedence. Examples include trying to defend yourself from an attacker, sneaking past a guard (or listening for such), and arm wrestling. Any of the above tests may be contested against any other: one player might roll a Skill Test while the second might roll an Attribute Test in opposition. In such instances both parties roll against their own Target Numbers as determined by the individual circumstances of their given Test. Successes are then tallied up; he with the most successes is the winner—the other is the loser. The loser's successes are taken away from the winner's, leaving the winner's *Margin of Success* as an indication of how well he did. An example is provided below:

Mik, a Siehe roguish fellow, is trying to sneak past a royal guard on duty. The Seneschal asks Mik to make a contested Stealth roll (a Skill Test) against the Guard's Perception (PER). Mik rolls 6 dice—his Agility (AG)—against his Skill Rating of 6 (Mik's done this sort of thing before). He rolls 2, 2, 7, 8, 0, and 0 (Zeros are always read as 10's): four successes! The Seneschal simultaneously rolls the Guard's Perception (PER) —an Attribute Test— 4 dice against a TN of 7 (average difficulty, determined by the environment that the guard is listening in). The Guard gets 2, 5, 9, and 9: two successes. So Mik wins by two (a comfortable margin) and sneaks on by the guard...

Ties may be resolved in a number of ways—the details are left open, so as to leave the Seneschal as much freedom of interpretation as possible. Ties may be re-rolled or resolved by a new test of WP at a TN set by the Seneschal. Some tests (such as attacking and defending in combat) have predetermined results for ties as well.

5. *Extended* rolls can be any of the four types listed above. These rolls are made when attempting to produce some kind of final product (such as making a sword or researching a spell) or to complete some lengthy task (such as climbing a tall cliff-face). Each Extended Roll has a number of successes that must be met *over the course of any number of rolls.* Generally each roll represents the passage of some length of time. Such rolls may take as long as time allows or until a Fumble is rolled, after which the rolls must start over from scratch.

Mik is weaving a basket for his friend and traveling companion Geralt. As a basket is a simple item the Seneschal requires Mik's player to roll an Extended Skill Test of AG/Craft Skill (in Mik's case, 9) until he gets 4 successes. The Seneschal also informs Mik's player that each roll represents the passage of one hour. Mik rolls his AG (6) against his Craft Skill (SR 9), and gets 1 success...he rolls again: no successes! And again: 1 success...and again: 2 successes! After 4 hours Mik assembles the basket. The Seneschal may now call for him to roll again to assess the beauty of the new basket (Per/Craft Skill), but that's another story!



6. *Hit Location* rolls are made by rolling one (just one!) d6 and referring to the appropriate tables (see **Book Four: The Codex of Battle**).

7. **Fumbling**

Sometimes Tests don't just fail, they're completely botched. This is called botching or fumbling, and happens

any time you fail a roll *and* have two or more "1's" showing on any die. The Seneschal will generally determine what the effect of any given fumbled roll is, though some situations, like combat, have pre-figured results. The only real guideline for fumbles is that they should be *worse* than a regular failure.

Mik, our little Siehe friend, is trying to convince a merchant that he didn't steal anything. The Seneschal asks Mik's player to roll Test of Soc/TN 8. *Mik rolls 4 dice—his Soc Attribute—and gets* 1, 1, 6, 7…*no success and* two 1's—*a fumble! The merchant is going to react very poorly indeed…*

IV. Attributes Described

Each character in *The Riddle of Steel* possesses a number of *Attributes*. Attributes represent basic natural and developed traits or aspects of your character, such as how strong he is, how well he gets along with other people, and what drives him to live and die. These important traits are divided into four groups: Temporal, Mental, Spiritual, and Derived.

1. Temporal

Temporal Attributes deal with the tangible, physical realm. An average human's ability is ranked at 4, while 10 is the maximum degree attainable.

Strength (ST) is a measure of physical power and brawn, and has a great influence on damage dealt in combat, as well as some physical feats.

Agility (AG) is a measure of nimbleness, dexterity, speed, and hand-eye coordination. Agility is a key element in all physically active characters such as warriors, thieves, and some entertainers.

Toughness (TO) is a measure of physical grit and hardiness. A high Toughness protects characters from bodily harm.

Endurance (EN) is a measure of general "fitness," and plays a large roll in any long-term physical activity.

Health (HT) is a measure of one's immune system and healing capabilities.

2. Mental

Mental Attributes deal with the mind and thought processes. An average human's ability is ranked at 4, while 10 is the maximum degree attainable.

Will Power (WP) is a measure of mental endurance and determination. This extremely useful virtue often means the difference in tight spots. This kind of personal determination and grit is best found in hardened soldiers and those fiercely dedicated to their causes.

Wit (Wit) is a measure of mental reflex and sharpness, best exhibited in comedians and fencers. This trait is key element for both good fighters and those that deal in the cutthroat intrigue of Weyrth's royal courts and palaces.

Mental Aptitude (MA) is a measure of how quickly one learns and how much they retain, exemplified by scholars, know-it-alls, and the finest pupils. This is *not* a measure of intelligence or cleverness—that's up to the player, not the character sheet! This trait has a great effect on skill advancement. This Attribute is especially important for Skill-based characters such as courtiers, thieves, and academics.

Social (Soc) is a measure of how charismatic, empathetic, and culturally adept your character is. This is a crucial ability for entertainers, courtiers, leaders, wheelers, and dealers.

Perception (Per) is a measure of alertness and awareness to one's surroundings. This attribute can warn your group of an impending ambush or a nighttime attacker, or help you find the keys to the king's secret passage… Woodsmen and rogues are often noted for their keen senses and Perception.

3. Spiritual

Spiritual Attributes differ from other attributes in many ways. There are no averages. These traits fluctuate often during a character's lifetime. Unlike other Attributes, Tests with Spiritual Traits are highly uncommon; rather each trait is used in a slightly different manner, as outlined below. The Spiritual Attributes are also important because of the role they take in your character's life and progression—beyond the advantages each presents below, points from your Spiritual Attributes may be spent to improve your character over time (this is discussed further in **Book Five: The Laws of Nature**). Unless modified by nationality or other circumstances, Spriritual Attributes cannot be raised above 5.

Lastly, each Spiritual Attribute must be individually chosen and defined for each character, resulting in a unique combination of beliefs, values, and motivations in everyone. The exceptions are Luck and Conscience, which need not be defined (although defining what kind of luck you have or what the cause of your Concience is should be discussed). See **Book Two: The Birth of a Legend?** and **Book Three: Training** for more on choosing and using Spiritual Attributes.

Conscience refers to one's desire to do the "right thing," be it compassion, heroism, or any one of a thousand manifestations of "right and wrong." It is a common quality of determined men, heroes, small talking crickets, and others that struggle with the difference between good and evil. *This attribute represents dice that may be added to any roll that supports your character in doing what he should instead of what might be more fun, more profitable, less dangerous, or just make more sense.*

Destiny signifies a higher calling—perhaps to become king by your own hand, or to bring down a great empire, or even just to be killed by a man "not of woman born." Whatever it is, chances are the destined character is aware of his Destiny, but may be denying it. Destiny creates special characters with an added depth, but difficult to play. Most great historical and prophesied religious figures, Shakespeare's King MacBeth, and most all of Arthur's Round Table are examples of people with a special Destiny. *Any time an important event in the character's destiny comes to a head, these dice may be divvied up and added to any number rolls, refreshing every round, as long as the Seneschal says so. These events should be rare, important, and short-lived (unless the event is the grand climax of the Destiny).*

Drive defines an extra level of determination and a powerful sense of purpose. Someone with Drive has a worthy cause that they would die for (and probably will). Examples include the zeal of freedom fighters and patriots like William Wallace, or those that serve great and noble causes or ideals at great personal cost. *These dice may be added to any rolls that defend or*

further the character's cause, as often as the Seneschal deems it appropriate.

Faith reflects the bond between man and deity. Belief is an important issue in Weyrth, for a man without beliefs is not a man. Any character may posses a degree of Faith—even atheists, if they hold strongly to their atheism. *These dice may be used in one of two ways: (1) they may be added to any roll that significantly furthers or defends the belief, faith or religion involved, or (2) they may be added to any roll that defends or protects the truly faithful (Seneschal's discretion).*

Luck is a reflection of fate's tendency to smile on you. Arrows narrowly miss, archenemies leave their grunts to "finish the job," and the cute barmaid across the room notices you instead of your manlier traveling companion. *These dice may be added to any of your rolls—all at once or bit by bit—during the course of a game session. When used up they're gone until next session, although generous Seneschals may allow refills during longer sessions. A point may be spent permanently to afford an instant success in any matter normally out of your hands—like a hay cart at the bottom of the castle tower you just fell out of (no matter what the TN!).*

Passion entails a specific love, hate, or loyalty—to a single person or entity—that occupies your character's thoughts and actions constantly. This trait adds life and vibrance to your characters, and is perhaps the most fun to play. Good examples include Lancelot and his loyalty to King Arthur (later overcome by his love—and competing Passion—for Queen

Guenevere), Romeo and Juliet, or the Count of Monte Cristo (who spent a good part of his life seeking revenge on his best friend who had horribly betrayed him). *This attribute represents dice which may be added to any roll that directly affects the object of Passion, such as killing your hated enemy, rescuing your dearest love, or defending the name of your lord and king. These dice may be used as many times per game as the Seneshcal deems appropriate.*

An example of a Spiritual Attribute in use:

Cameron, the young Stahlnish Knight from an earlier example, loves the maiden that he's trying to rescue from the collapsing dungeon. When the Seneschal asks Cameron's player to roll a Test of Agility, *Cameron requests that his* Passion *of 3 (specified as love for his fair maiden) be added to the roll. The Seneschal grants his request, and Cameron now rolls 7 dice (his original 4 plus 3 from his Passion). He rolls against a* TN *of 9, as set by the Seneschal in the previous example:* 4, 6, 7, 7, 9, 9, *and* 10... *three successes this time!*

4. Derived Attributes

Derived Attributes, as their name suggests, come from a combination of other Attributes. These traits are used primarily in special situations, such as combat and sorcery.

Reflex is a combination of Agility and Wit, and determines how quickly a character may physically react to external stimulus. Average Reflex is 4.

Aim, extracted from Perception and Agility, quantify one's natural ability to hit a target over distances.

Knockdown is a measure of how solid and balanced one remains after taking a blow. Average Knockdown is 4.

Knockout is a measure of how hard it is to knock a character unconscious, based on Toughness and Will Power. Average Knockout is 6.

Move is a measure of how much distance—in yards—one can cover on foot in approximately 1 or 2 seconds (one combat round). Average Move is 6.

A special set of Derived Attributes for Sorcerers is addressed in Book Six: Sorcery.

The Riddle of Steel Book Two: The Birth of a Legend?

RAIN POURED THROUGH THE GAPING HOLE in the stone roof, wetting the unconscious man's face. Jequies slowly began to stir. With a groan he rolled onto his side and tried to push himself to his feet. He made it to his knees before he collapsed again. He looked around from his prostrate position, trying hard to focus his eyes on something familiar.

In the corner lay a man with extremely long fingernails desperately in need of a beard trimming and a haircut. The man seemed vaguely familiar, but didn't quite look right.

Jequies shook his head and raised himself again to his knees. He noticed that the rest of the room was dry, so he dragged himself out of the rain. He looked up and saw that the stone of the roof directly over where he had been lying was charred and jagged around the hole as if recently struck and shattered.

The man in the corner stirred. Jequies grabbed at the large oak table behind him for support and stood. Near the door he saw his broad brimmed hat hanging on a hood above his rapier, propped against the wall. He staggered over to the door, pulled on his hat and strapped his sword back on.

He turned to survey the room once more and gawked directly into the eyes of the man with the fingernails, now wrapped in his deep black cloak. Jaquies reached for his sword, but the man lashed out with his hand. The cut on Jaquies's left forearm was too clean and too deep for fingernails. The man held a dagger, clenched awkwardly in an inhibited right hand.

Jaquies leapt to his right, turned and drew his rapier. Only a shadow of the man remained. Jaquies hesitated as the shadow lunged forward, then lashed across his body in a defensive parry. Steel smacked into flesh. A dagger clattered to the stone floor as the shadow spun off and ducked behind the large oak table.

Jaquies pressed his left arm against his right sleeve to stop his oozing wound. His years of training in the Geluroise army were finally paying off. "Wizard," he yelled, "What business have you with me?"

No answer.

Jaquies slowly circled back around the room, placing the column of rain between him and where he last saw the belligerent shadow. As he approached the door he focused intently on the spot just behind the table where the shadow seemed just a little deeper than it should be. If he could just take the mage alive, he might find the secret to the Riddle.

The shadow flinched. Jaquies fumbled with the latch behind him with his injured hand, all the while keeping his eyes locked on his opponent. The shadow grew. The darkness lessened, and a misty, over-grown face appeared near the ceiling.

"It is a shame Jaquies," the wizard hissed. "Your future could hold the power to overthrow the Emperor. Unfortunate that I must now alter your destiny."

The shadow advanced. Jaquies waited, watching for the moment the rain hit the wizard from above.

"I seek no power," Jaquies called back, "Just the answer to the Riddle."

"Fool," the wizard scoffed, "You are not worthy of the Riddle."

Just then the shadowy illusion melted under the rain. Jaquies lunged toward the now distinct form of the wizard, thrusting fiercely with his sword...

1. Character Concept

Decide who and what you want to play. This first decision will be the most important you make throughout all of the character creation process. Formulate a concept, personality, belief system, and background for your hero-in-the-making. As you do so, consult heavily with the Seneschal and any other players that will be joining your group or party. Decide on relationships between the characters before you start creating them, as *The Riddle of Steel* is a deadly game in a deadly world—your characters will be mortal, though your obstacles may not be. A unified and complementary group spells life or death for each of your characters in the game, and how much fun you have as a player.

A hero's concept and background are tightly related. Some examples are presented below. Choose from the concepts and backgrounds below, or create your own.

1. Concepts

A character concept is something between a personal mission statement and an occupation.

Academics devote their lives to learning and study, whether doing research in the field or in a university.

Bladeslingers are wandering swordsmen and fighters, seeking answers to all the mysteries of life and to the elusive Riddle of Steel. They go wherever instinct leads them, always looking to improve their skill, defeat a new opponent, or escape the innumerable enemies that their previous travels have brought them.

Bounty Hunters track down fugitives and other wanted persons, dead or alive.

Brigands, robbers, and *bandits* steal with the strong-arm. Most are former soldiers or mercenaries w piecemeal weapons and armor who terrorize the s counties they grew up in.

Chosen Ones are oracles and visionaries, consta receiving insight to the past, present, and future fr gods or spirits. Some are the real thing, some are f (but which ones?). The most powerful of oracles beco prophets and religious revolutionaries.

Commoners include peasants, farmers, and labor Many such folk leave their homesteads early in life search of something better.

Crusaders seek to further the causes of their fa and gods. Some roam the land in armies, striking do the heathen, others fulfill the roll of monk and defen of the faith.

Druids are "heathen" priests (and often sorcere seeking to protect the Fey from the world, and the wo from the Fey. Druids are always highly revered among their believers, who benefit from druidic blessings an herbal remedies.

Duelists seek personal combat wherever they can fi it, acting as champions in trials-by-combat and daylig assassins for those that can pay it.

Entertainers travel from city to city, lord to lord, in to inn searching for a paying audience. The desire to s new places, learn new songs and stories, and flee fro offended lords keeps them moving.

Gamblers and *con-men* live for the thrill (and pa off) of living with risk. Most rely on wits and deceptio to get ahead in the world. By nature they are forced t constantly travel—angry men and marshals in tow—i search of the next sucker.

Knights-errant are those armored sword-carryi members of the higher classes that have left behind a li of comfort and wealth to serve their goals, their god their people, or to seek out honor, fame, or enlightenmen

Priests, Monks, Nuns, and other people "of the cloth spread their faith amongst the people, acting as leade and advisors to king and peasant both.

Roadwardens and *Marshals* are the long-arm of th law, patrolling borders and keeping the peace. They ma be called upon to quell a minor rebellion, or hunt dow a notorious criminal.

Scouts and *woodsmen* are most at home in the wil

spaces of nature. They may be pioneers, guides, freelance explorers, soldiers, or fugitives.

Soldiers and *mercenaries* fight in armies for pay, and may be driven by a desire for wealth, travel, fame, or bloodshed.

Street Thieves, urchins and *burglars* live by theft and wits, stealing from anyone and everyone in an attempt to eke out an existence. Most are small-time, but all are searching for that "big score" that will allow them to retire for good.

This list is by no means complete—if you don't see one you like, or want to combine a few, then make up your own! Once you've developed a concept for your new hero, take a quick moment to figure out his past, and how he became who he is. Write these things down in the "Concept" and "Background" spaces on your Character Sheet.

2. Philosophies

Everyone has a different approach to life. Some are aggressive, others passive. Some believe that the strong should defend the weak; others that the strong should rule them. Your character's personal philosophy, when combined with his concept and background history, will largely determine what kind of experience you have as a player in *The Riddle of Steel*. Your hero's philosophy will be the most rewarding if it is one that you have created on your own. Nonetheless a short list of sample philosophies is provided.

"Kill them all, let the gods sort them out."
"All for one and one for all."
"Turn the other cheek, do good unto those that harm you."
"Life is a journey. Wherever you go, there you are."
"If you don't watch your own back and look out for your own interests, who will?"
"The gods gave us strength and ability that we might serve and protect."
"Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."
"All things are in the hands of the gods."
"All things are in my own hands."
"He that knows he knows nothing knows much."
"One should never give up until the end."
"Let no man make laws for me."
"We must build order out of chaos."
"Stand and fight."
"Run and live tomorrow."
"Honor is the gift man gives to himself."
"Rule your own destiny. Gain wisdom from failure."
"Do what you love, love what you do."
"Memories are permanent."

Proverb books and other sources of pithy sayings are a good start for developing your character's own approach to life. Be creative—if you are an old-time gamer look for something that you haven't tried before. If you are new to roleplaying choose a philosophy that you will enjoy acting-out. Lastly, be sure that your philosophy gels well with those of the other players in your group.

II. Priorities, Priorities...

Your new hero, as great as he or she is, can't do everything...at least not yet! Using your character's concept and personal philosophy as a guideline, arrange the following categories into priorities A-F (A being the highest priority, F the lowest, least important aspect of your character). The categories are *Race and Sorcery, Social*

Class, Attributes, Skills, Proficiencies, and *Gifts and Flaws.* Each of these categories, and the results of placing them in various priorities, is explained in detail below. Following these explanations, Table 2.1 provides a summary.

1. Race

There are a multitude of races and nationalities inhabiting the face of Weyrth. Most characters are humans, brought up in any one of many unique nations and cultures. If you plan on playing a non-sorcerer human character (which we very strongly recommend—especially for your first character in *The Riddle of Steel*) simply put "Race" into Priority F (the lowest priority). Record "human" on your Character Sheet next to "Race." Then choose a nationality that fits your concept, background, and philosophy (remember to talk your nationality over with your other players and the Seneschal) from **Book Seven: The World of Weyrth.**

Players that wish to play one of the "Gifted," a human with magical talent, must place Race into Priority "B." The Gifted are few and far between.

Even rarer than the Gifted are the Siehe: Elves and the Fey, dwarves, faeries, sprites, troll-spawn, etc. Players may choose to play one of these mysterious races wi permission from the Seneschal. Detailed informati about playing Siehe, the Fey, and Halflings can be foun in **Book Seven.**

The Fey, the oldest and noblest of the Siehe elves, a an ancient, enchanted, and secretive people. Few men ha seen them, and fewer still have survived the experienc They avoid contact with mankind preferring their ow ethereal courts, palaces, and groves. Many people dou their existence—others believe in them the same as the believe in any other superstition. Being immortal (as t natural death), they are calm and relaxed, and never hur except in the greatest need. They are slow learners wit long memories, for their ability to learn is curbed by the great life span and overly calm approach to all. Physicall they are tall and somber looking, though they have smil like sparkling pools. They find sleep unnecessary (o perhaps impossible?), and prefer to sit and think durin rest periods. The Fey derive their name from their ow word for "magic." Each and every one of these elves i gifted with the ability to form sorcery.

Players wishing to run Fey characters must place Rac into Priority A.

The Seelie and *Unseelie* are the smaller, mor troublesome variety of the Siehe. Such frequently serv the Fey as subjects, being weaker and not always able t wield magic They vary widely in color, shape, size, an behavior...no two are really alike. The Seelie ar mischievous, though not necessarily cruel. Sprite dwarves, and most faeries are commonly know examples. The Unseelie are wicked creatures, causing pai suffering, and other troubles. Goblins, trolls, black elve and blacker dwarves are all named amongst the Unseeli Both kinds are commonly blamed for lost keys, missin children, and other mischief of all proportions; they' very often guilty.

Rock Dwarfs, a specific group of Siehe (provided fo example), hide far away in their own deep cavern amongst their own people. They know almos nothing of the outside world, which believes in them as it believes in legends. They are gruff and given t

arguing, fighting, and sleeping. They are greedy and wicked natured, and do things out of spite to everyone; they love to complain. They mock laziness, but hate to work long hours, opting to rest and work all day without any given nighttime. Dwarfs may be either Seelie or Unseelie, according to disposition.

Players wishing to play minor Siehe characters (Seelie or Unseelie) should determine what exactly their particular elf or faerie looks like before going further. Seelie characters who cast spells and weave enchantments require Race to be placed in Priority A. Others, such as dwarves and most trolls and goblins who cannot use sorcery require only Priority B.

Halflings provide an alternative to playing humans or Siehe. A halfling is the child of one human parent, and one Siehe parent (they are *not* three-foot-tall-hairy-footed farmers that live in holes). They are even rarer than the mighty Fey. Some are magical, others are not. Those gifted with sorcery must be placed into Priority B; those without take Priority C.

Man-elves of "Fey" stock are the result of a tragic love affair, usually between a human man and an elf maid. They inherit many of their mother's strengths, but also cursed with weakness not found in either parent. They are sharp learners, strong-willed, and beautiful, but the Elvish desire for evenness and calm results in a slow wit and low constitution. They are often raised amongst the elves for a season, then enter the world of men as cast-outs. Many hold prominent positions in folk tales and legends.

Man-elves of lesser Siehe stock are another story entirely. They are often comical in appearance (some are blue), small (sometimes mistaken for dwarfs), still given to tricks, and make good thieves and urchins. They make fine companions (although they'll often be more trouble than they are worth), and are loyal friends. As to where they come from...it happens!

Other races may be created with the Seneschal's permission and guidance.

Whatever race or nationality you choose, refer to **Book Seven: The World of Weyrth** for a detailed description of cultures and statistical modifiers (such as Attribute bonuses).

2. Social Class

The peoples of Weyrth divide themselves into numerous social classes. These benchmarks of socioeconomic status hold an immense deal of importance. Besides determining wealth and possession, one's social class determines legal rights and privileges. All following descriptions refer to human societies. If your character isn't human note that both the Fey and the Siehe judge social standing differently than men. For them this category covers only worldly wealth.

Lords, or landed nobility (Priority A) possess a sizable manor, a monthly income of 3d10 x 10 Imperial Golden Standard from lands, taxes, and other sources, in addition to a starting wealth of 250 Golden Standard. You are assumed to have about 10 immediate servants, several hundred serfs, and a small garrison (1d10 + 2 soldiers). This income requires at least a few weeks at home every year to maintain, and some decision making. Little else is required, though the local ruler is sure to be aware of any Landed Nobility in his province, and may call upon them. Lords possess all possible rights and privileges offered by society.

The Gentry, or minor nobility (Priority B), own little or no land (beginning characters are assumed to be the latter). They instead receive income as soldiers, courtiers, or freelances. Many become swordsmen and adventurers, seeking their fortunes at the tip of a blade. They begin with 100 Golden Standard and no monthly income unless employed (Seneschal's and Player's discretion). Average monthly pay for bachelor knights and freelances is 1d10 x 10 Golden Standard, whereas courtiers live on gifts from their superiors. The gentry have the right to bear all arms and armors, own land, and enforce their lord's laws. Their names are prefaced with "sir" or "lady."

High Freemen (Priority C) are merchants, clerks, well-to-do farmers and artisans, soldiers, and mercenaries. Most adventurers and wanderers come from this class, as well as many clergymen and courtesans. T are sometimes educated in either a school or milit academy, and may possess their own horse and weapo High Freemen begin with 50 Golden Standard, a employment—if available—for 4d10 Gold Standard month. Freemen may bear arms and wear non-ma armors (unless their lord dictates otherwise), but may own more land than their lord allows.

Low Freemen (Priority D) are the poorer equivale of High Freemen—they are indentured to no one, b likely work for someone. They may also be merchan clergy, or even soldiers and mercenaries (probably infan or archers); many sailors and pirates come from this cla They begin with 15 Golden Standard and a month wage of 1d6 Gold Standard (at Seneschal discretion They may own weapons (if they can afford it), but horse is usually out of their means. Their rights are identi to those of High Freemen.

Peasants or *Serfs* (Priority E) may not own weapo legally in most lands (that means swords and other forg weapons—no law about staves or bows), though mu steal them and become bandits or brigands. In times need they may be called upon to fight as extras or infant in their lord's army, though this is rare. Most of the cannot afford anything but the clothes on their back a perhaps a mule or other semi-valuable (to them) item They begin play with 5 Golden Standard to spend, well as a monthly wage of poor food to eat and a leak roof over their heads. Once or twice a year they can mak an additional 1d10 Silver Shillings at harvest time selling excess and stolen goods at the market. Peasants a little more than property, and may not leave their lord land without his permission. In practice few lords w actually pursue any that run off.

Prisoners and *Slaves* (Priority F) begin with nothi other than the tattered rags on their backs. In addition that they either spend their days in a dungeon or at har labor. Living conditions are extremely poor, and lif expectancy is very short. Some slaves, such as truste servants or concubines may have better—even excellent conditions. Still being slaves, however, they should ow

nothing, but have some privileges instead. See the Seneschal with any questions on beginning with this social class or resource level.

3. Attributes

Determining one's beginning attributes is a crucial part of building a character. Each player is given a number of points to distribute amongst the 10 Temporal and Mental Attributes. This quantity of points is determined by Priority level. Priority A affords 47 points; B 43; C, 39; D 35; E 31; F 27. These points may be distributed freely, with a few limitations and restrictions. First, all players must nominate one of their attributes as "high." No other attribute may be equal to or exceed the "high" at this stage of character creation. No attribute may be higher than 7 or lower than 2 prior to racial and national modifiers. The example of Character Creation, below, provides well thought-out options for allocating points to Temporal and Mental Attributes.

Additionally many characters' attributes may be affected by their race or nationality. All such modifiers are found in the description of the appropriate race or nationality in **Book Seven: The World of Weyrth.** *These modifiers, while optional for human characters, are an absolute* must *for Fey, Siebe, and Halfling characters.*

Now choose any *five* of the *six* available **Spiritual Attributes** (Conscience, Destiny, Drive, Faith, Luck, Passion) and fill them in on the back of your character sheet. The only Spiritual Attribute that may be taken twice is Passion, so long as the focus of each Passion is different. All other Spiritual Attributes are limited to one instance each. *Thus Lancelot, the famous Arthurian Knight, had* Passion *(Love of Gwenevere) and* Passion *(Loyalty to Arthur) in addition to 3 other passions (maybe* Conscience, Faith, *and* Drive*...).* Beginning Spiritual Attribute Points are the same for each beginning character: 7 points to be distributed amongst 5 attributes. Though no more than 5 points may be placed in any one area, the minimum is zero; your hero could start play with a Passion of 5, a Drive of 2, and Faith, Destiny, and Luck at 0.

When choosing Spiritual Attributes don't forget to specify each one that you put points into (except for Luck). This may require you to choose a religion, invent a destiny, or outline some grand cause. Write your specific focus next to each Attribute.

Derived Attributes are calculated from combinations of existing attributes. These traits should be figured *after* any changes (such as racial adjustmensts) are made to Temporal and Mental Attributes. All figures are rounded down.

- Reflex = (AG + Wit)/2
- Aim = (AG + Per)/2
- Knockdown = (ST + AG)/2
- Knockout = TO + ½WP
- Move = (ST + AG + EN)/2

Sorcery also has its own set of Derived Attributes (for the Gifted and the Fey), found in **Book Six: Sorcery.**

Record your Attributes in the appropriate columns of your Character Sheet.

4. Skills

Each new character begins play with two "Skill Packets," described fully in **Book Three: Training.** These groups of skills should follow the precedent set forth by concept, background, and philosophy—indeed, the skills in these packets are a product of a character's history, upbringing, and life experience.

Priority A allows for both beginning Skill Packets to begin at a Skill Rating (SR) of 6. Priority B starts one packet at 6, the other at 7. Priority C grants two packets at 7. Priority D: two packets at 8, and Priority E: two packets at 9. Priority F is the exception, granting only one packet at a paltry SR of 9. As stated in **Book One**, a lower SR signifies greater skill.

Once Priority has been assigned and Skill Packets have been chosen, write each individual skill and apply any individual SR adjustments (as outlined in **Book Three**). Each character gains an additional skill, language, or –1

TABLE 2.1: PRIORITIZATION						
Priority	*Race and Sorcery*	*Social Class*	*Attributes*	*Skills*	*Proficiencies (& Vagaries)*	*Gifts and Flaws*
A	Fey or Sorcery-using Siche or	Landed Nobility 250	47	6/6	14	2 major gift
B	Non-magical Siche, Gifted Human or Gifted Halfling	Landless Nobility 100	43	6/7	9	1 major gift
C	Non-magical Halfling	High Freeman 50	39	7/7	6	1 major gift, 1 minor flaw
D	Human	Low Freeman 15	35	8/8	4	1 minor gift and flaw (or none)
E	Human	Peasant 5	31	9/9	2	1 major flaw 1 minor gift
F	Human	Prisoner or Slave 0	27	9	0	1 major flaw 1 minor flaw

SR adjustment to any one skill for each point in his Mental Aptitude (MA). A new hero with MA 5, for example, could have 5 additional skills (each one must be approved by the Seneschal), speak 5 languages other than his native tongue, lower the SR of 5 individual skills, or take any combination thereof. New skills bought in this way begin with the same SR as your highest packet. For a complete listing of skills, see **Book Three: Training**.

Write your skills, along with SRs and applicable Attributes, in the "Skills" section of your Character Sheet.

5. Proficiencies (and Vagaries)

Proficiencies refer to weapons training. Each Proficiency covers one style of combat or weapon group. Priority A grants 14 points that may be spread amongst any number of Proficiencies so long as none exceeds 8. Priorities B-F limit maximum beginning Proficiency 7, and allow the following quantities of points distribution: Priority B 9; C 6; D 4; E 2; F 0. Al because some weapons resemble others in use and fo ability in one weapon may grant free points in anot (allowing you to train "from defaults," elaborated up in **Book Three**).

The same rules apply for the Nine Vagaries, detai in **Book Six: Sorcery**. Proficiency points may be pla in any combination of Vagaries or Proficiencies, assumi magical ability (as found in the Gifted and the Fey).

Once you have your Proficiencies (and Powers) re jot down any pertinent maneuvers or spells (found **Books Three** and **Six** respectively). Write them down the "Proficiencies/Vagaries" and the "Maneuvers/Spe portions of your Character Sheet.

6. Gifts and Flaws

These are special abilities—or problems—that each person possesses. These unique quirks come in two varieties: major and minor. When choosing Gifts and Flaws (see **Book Three: Training**) one major Gift or Flaw is equal to two minor ones. Any Gifts or Flaws chosen should reflect the kind of character that you, the player, wish to bring to life.

Priority A allows 2 major Gifts. Priority B: 1 major Gift. C: 1 major gift, 1 minor flaw. D: 1 minor gift, 1 minor flaw (or, at player's option, no Gifts or Flaws at all). E: 1 major flaw, 1 minor gift. F: 1 major flaw, 1 minor flaw.

Write these down under "Gifts and Flaws" on your Character Sheet.

III. Other Details

Fill in any other spaces on your Character Sheet, such as Movement and Encumbrance (see **Book Five: The Laws of Nature**) and any Equipment (see **Book Seven: The World of Weyrth**) that your character owns (bought with moneys from his Social Class). Other useful items include your hero's appearance, with age, hair and eye color, and height and weight. Tables 2.2 and 2.3 provide an optional way of determining the latter. Calculate any Pools (such as Combat, Missile, or Sorcery Pools) at this time as well.

- **Combat Pool:** Reflex + Weapon Proficiency
- **Missile Pool:** Aim + Missile Weapon Proficiency
- Information on the **Sorcery Pool** is found in **Book Six.**

IV. An Example of Character Creation (with Advice)

Before the first ringing blow of hammer and chisel smiting stone, the unseen form of the sculpture is already chosen and set in the mind of the artist; so too must the player choose the type of legend he or she wishes to play. Of paramount importance to the creation process is the character's Philosophy on life. All other aspects of the character will but serve to bolster, arm and cement the fictional persona into an enjoyable, death-dealing adventurer.

Once a Philosophy has been selected or created, the player must decide how that Philosophy will manifest in the character. This, entwined with logic, will dictate the selection of Priorities that follow. In example…

Nick has decided that he really wants to play a Knight. He decides his Philosophy is "Defend the weak and innocent, uphold truth and honor, grant those worthy of it devout obedience, and send thy enemies to hell before thee." *It's a bit long and more a code than a philosophy, but it's a start none the less. After reading through* ***Book Seven: The World of Weyrth****, he concludes he wants his character,* ***Vhord von Dreider****, to be from Stahl.*

Gazing at Table 2.1, some decisions are quickly made. Both a Fey race and the ability to use sorcery are of little interest to this character, paring down the choices for Priority A. In the end, his selections are:

Priority A: Attributes
Priority B: Social Class
Priority C: Proficiencies
Priority D: Gifts and Flaws
Priority E: Skills
Priority F: Race

Landed nobility looked fitting, but he'd rather have his knight be statistically well endowed. So he decides to select Attributes first, (He knows that high "stats" are usually best for melee prone characters) and has 47 points to divide between 10 attributes. Nick assigns the scores to the statistic boxes on the Character Reference Sheet, based on his blueprint for the character. Vhord is to be strong, resilient, dexterous, and well liked by the people. Nick is attempting to create a well-rounded (yet dangerous) character, and so distributes his points as on the Character Sheet. Originating from Stahl grants the following Bonuses (see Book Seven): +1 TO, -1 Soc, 1 extra point for weapon proficiencies, the right to bear weapons and light armors, and one trained Shire Horse. His attribute scores are demarcated as:

TABLE 2.2: HEIGHT (IN INCHES)						
(ST + TO) – (AG + EN)	Human	Elf, Fey	Siehe*	Siehe, Dwarf	Halfling, Fey	Halfling, Siehe
	62 + 1d10"	70 + 1d10"	8d10"	45 + 1d10"	64 + 1d10"	30 + 2d10"
–8 to –12	–5	–3	–2d10	–5	–5	–3d6
–4 to –7	–3	–2	–1d10	–3	–3	–2d6
–1 to –3	–1	–1	–1d6	–1	–1	–1d6
0						
+1 to +3	+1	+1	+1d10	+1	+1	+1d6
+4 to +7	+3	+2	+2d10	+3	+3	+2d6
+8 to +12	+5	+3	+3d10	+5	+5	+3d6
Nationality†	+/– 4	+/– 4	—	+/– 3	+/– 4	+/– 3
Female††	– 1d6	—	—	+ 1d6	– 1d6	– 1d6

* Siehe vary drastically in size; this provides a possible sample.
† See **Book Nine: The World of Weyrth** for possible modifiers due to nationality.
†† All numbers are assumed for masculine characters; this row is for the fairer sex.

ST 5, AG 5, TO 4 (3+1), **EN 4, HT 4**
WP 5, WT 6, MA 5, Soc 4 (5-1), **Per 5**
Passion 1 (Undying loyalty to his king), **Drive 2** (to "defend the weak and innocent"), **Faith 1** ("There's no such thing as Magic or Gods"), **Destiny 2** (to be sung of as a hero in his homeland), **Conscience 1**(defend the weak, uphold truth and honor, etc.)

From those scores all other "Derived Statistics" are tallied, resulting in

Reflex 5, Aim 5, Knockdown 5, Knockout 6, Move 7

None too wretched. He decides that resources and social status are of secondary importance to his character he wants to be a knight, after all), and selects them as Priority B—giving him the status of "landless nobility" and a 67 marks' initial wealth (the Stahlnish equivalent of 100 Golden Standard. That will be of importance when he begins to purchase equipment. Being Stahlnish, he already has a horse.) Intending to purchase supplies later on, he jots down his money, and presses on with the rest of the sheet.

Next he selects Proficiencies as Priority C (6 points), as th are essential to any prowess in combat. He selects Swor and Shield at level 6 (5+1 for being Stahlnish…), an Bow at level 1. This allows his various Pools to be calculate (all except the Sorcery Pool, which he has no need of):

Combat Pool = 11 **Missile Pool = 6**

Combat Pool: Reflex + Weapon Proficiency
Missile Pool: Aim + Missile Weapon Proficiency

He may also now note the maneuvers—based on his Swor and Shield Proficiency—that his character is capable o transcribing in brief the effect and cost of all desired to th character sheet for ease of reference.

Desiring a gift and a flaw, though minor, to enliven th character, he selects Gifts and Flaws as Priority D, leavi Skills for Priority E and Race as Priority F (because h human). He chooses a minor Good Reputation as his Gif and Lecherousness as his flaw.
Such a low priority selection for skills gives Vhord two packe with a Skill Rating of 9. Nick chooses the KNIGHT an COURTIER Skill Packets from Book Three and receive

additional skills/languages/SR points due to his Mental Aptitude.
Nick devotes 2 of his bonus skills to additional languages, 1 to improving his acumen in Diplomacy (making it a 9), and acquires Leadership and Orate (both at SR 9) for one point apiece.

After deciding on Vhord's personal appearance and rolling (or just choosing) his height and weight, Nick uses those 66 Golden Marks (converted to Stahlnish Marks from 100 Golden Standard;see ***Book Seven****)to buy the rest of his equipment. After he's spent some of his money, it will be . He is now ready to play.*

About Vhord's Spiritual Attributes

Nick now has a character, Vhord, made mostly of numbers. So he's a decent fighter and has a lot of stuff…so what! The most important part of Vhord's Character Sheet for both Nick and his Seneschal are the *Spiritual Attributes*. Defined earlier in **Book One**, carefully defining one's Spiritual Attributes allows the Seneschal to tailor-make each story or adventure to the players. When choosing Spiritual Attributes make sure to chose ones that (a) you want to play and that (b) are not only compatible with, but actually co-orchestrate with those of the other players in your group and your Seneschal's plans.

What kind of adventures or stories can Nick look forward to playing with Vhord? We know that he is tremendously loyal to his king and that he wishes to protect the weak and innocent like a true chivalrous type. What happens when the king he loves orders him to oppress the weak and innocent? Perhaps that could be tied into his destiny as he becomes a hero of the people (see examples of this sort of thing in the *Adventure Seeds*

TABLE 2.3: WEIGHT (IN POUNDS)

Endurance (EN)	Human	Elf, Fey	Siehe†	Dwarf, Rock	Halfling, Elder	Halfling, Siehe
	65" 150 lbs.	75" 175 lbs.	40" 80 lbs.	50" 150 lbs.	67" 150 lbs.	40" 75 lbs.
1*	+ 100 – 50	+ 30 – 30	+ 100 – 30	+ 150 – 75	+ 100 – 50	+ 60 – 25
2*	+ 50 – 30	+ 20 – 20	+ 50 – 20	+ 75 – 35	+ 50 – 30	+ 30 – 15
3*	+ 25 –15	+ 20 – 10	+ 25 – 10	+ 30 – 20	+ 25 –15	+ 15 – 5
4	----------No Modifiers----------					
5 +	– 1d10	– 1d10	—	– 1d10	– 1d10	– 1d6
Every inch under norm	– 5	– 5	– 1d6	– 2d6	– 5	– 1d6
Every inch over norm	+ 5	+ 5	+ 1d6	+ 1d10	+ 5	+ 1d6
Female††	– 25	– 25	—	—	– 25	– 15

* Choose between too skinny (lower #s) or too fat (higher #s).
† Siehe vary drastically in size; this provides a possible sample.
†† All numbers are assumed for masculine characters; this row is for the fairer sex.

Knight (9)
Riding –1…8
First aid –1…8
Hunting…9
Heraldry –1…8
Strategy…9
Tactics +1…10
Etiquette (Tourney) –1…8
Battle –1…8

Courtier (9)
Etiquette (Court) –2…7
Persuasion +1…10
Ridicule…9
Games –1…8
Dancing…9
Diplomacy +1…10
Read/write –1…8
Intrigue…9
Law +1…10
Sincerity –1…8

Temporal

Strength (ST)	5
Agility (AG)	5
Toughness (TO)	4
Endurance (EN)	4
Health (HT)	4

Mental

Will Powers (WP)	5
Wit (Wit)	6
Mental Aptitude (MA)	5
Social (Soc)	4
Perception (Per)	6

Stuff

	Location
Horse (Stahln. Destr)	under butt
Saddlebags and Tack	horse
Travel Gear	saddle bags
Clothes (gentry: court)	home
Clothes (gentry: daily)	sad. bags
Packhorse ("Sarah")	
Arms & Armor	Sarah

Money (Stahlnish; Heavy-weight)	
golden marks: 6	pouch
silver funten: 12	pouch
copper pfennigs: 6	pouch

THE RIDDLE OF STEEL

NAME: **Vhord Von Drieder**

Player's Name: Nick
Philosophy: Defend the weak and innocent, uphold truth and honor, grant those worthy of it devout obedience...
Faith/Creed: Stahlnish Atheism
Personality: Noble, outgoing, a tad romantic

Gifts: Good reputation (minor); Known to be a local patriot and do-gooder.
Flaws: Lecherousness (minor)

Allies: None yet.
Enemies: Let's go make some...

Background & Notes: My squire, Froederick, is 14 yrs old.

Race: Human
Social Class: Gentry (landless noble)
Nationality: Stahlnish
Concept: Knight-errant
Age: 23 Sex: male Height: 5'8" Weight: 165 lbs
Eyes: blue Hair: blond Skin: white/Mainlander
Appearance: Mildly handsome with moderate build. Hair worn short, cut to fit the helmet he is always carrying. Prefers fine clothes in in house colors of blue and gold.

Skills

	SR	TS	
Knight Packet			
Riding	8		
First Aid	8		
Hunting	9		
Heraldry	8		
Strategy	9		
Tactics	10		
Etiquite (tourney)	8		
Battle	8		
Courtier Packet			
Ettiq. (court)	7		
Persuasion	10		
Ridicule	11		
Games	8		
Dancing	9		
Diplomacy	9		
Read/Write	9		
Intrigue	9		
Law	10		
Sincerity	8		
Leadership	9		
Orate	9		
Languages			
Stahlnish	NATIVE		
Imperial	9		
Cyrinthmeiran	9		

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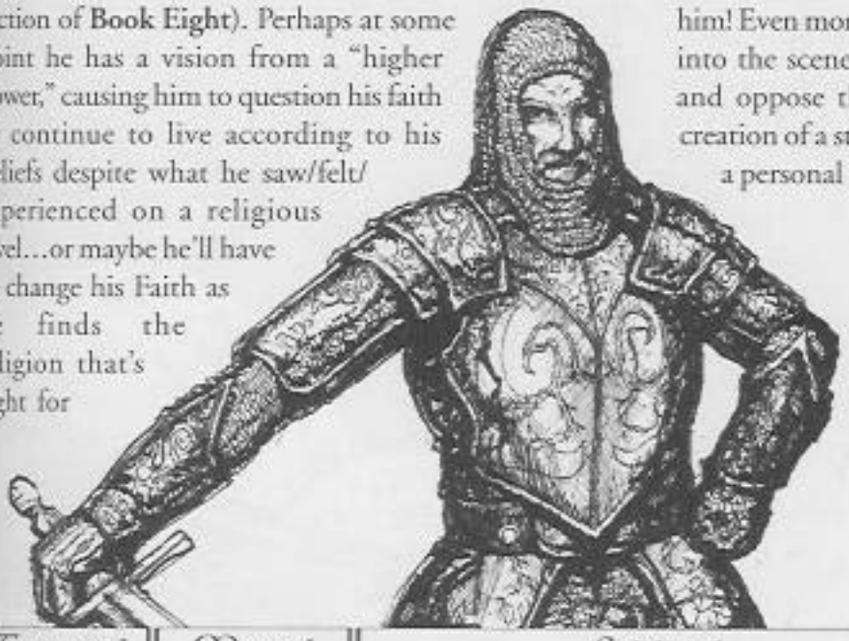
section of **Book Eight**). Perhaps at some point he has a vision from a "higher power," causing him to question his faith or continue to live according to his beliefs despite what he saw/felt/experienced on a religious level...or maybe he'll have to change his Faith as he finds the religion that's right for him! Even more options exist when more characters enter into the scene, allowing the Seneschal to mix, match, and oppose their various Spiritual Attributes in the creation of a story that the players helped write and have a personal investment in.



Temporal	
(SC)	5
(AC)	5
(CO)	4
(CN)	4
(FC)	4

Mental	
(WP)	5
(Wit)	6
(CDA)	5
(Soc)	4
(Dex)	5

Spiritual		
Passion	Loyalty to King	1
Drive	"to defend the weak and innocent"	2
Faith	"no such thing as magic or gods"	1
Destiny	to be sung of as a hero in homeland	2
Conscience		1

Derived	
Reflex	5
Aim	5
Knockdown	5
Knockout	6
Move	7

Insight Points: 0

Proficiencies	
Sword/Shield	6
Bow	1
Dagger (def)	5

Pools

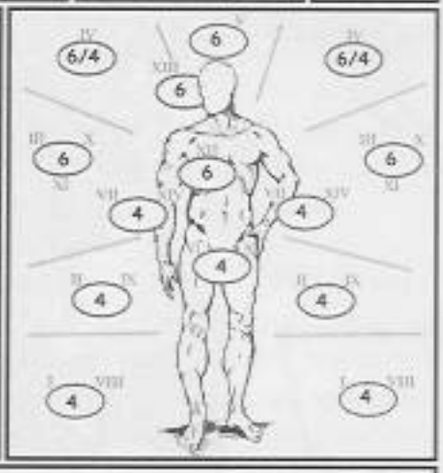
- Combat: 12/7 in full armor
- Missile: 6
- Combat (dagger): 10

Armor	AV	cpm	other mod.
Full Chain	4	-2	-1 mv
Breast Plate	6	-1	
Full Helm	6	-2	-2 Per

Wounds

Locale	Type	Level

Fatigue | Pain | Bloodloss



Offensive Maneuvers	cost
Bind and Strike	0
Cut	0
Thrust	0
Evasive Attack	0
Feint	var
Simultaneous Block/Strike	0

Defensive Maneuvers	cost
Block Open and Strike	2
Block	0
Counter	3/2
Parry	1/0

Melee Weapons

	Lth	Cutting ACN	Cutting damage	Thrusting ACN	Thrusting damage	DCN
Arming Sword	med	6	ST+1	7	ST	6
Rondell Dagger	hand	8	ST-2	7	ST	9

Missile Weapons

	Prep Time	ACN	Range	Effective SC/ Damage
Short Bow	2-4 rnds	6	+1/10 yds	4+1=5

The Riddle of Steel Book Three: Training

"The child is to be born thus, in the falling rain?" Snowden asked.

His teacher, a grizzled man in a druid's robes, paused and replied, "It is their way. She must give birth in the open air, or the infant will be unholy. Remember, she is *Fey*, and understanding them is as understanding the gods—worth a lifetime, but vanity in the end."

The rain grew more violent, and the elf-woman's labor-born screams were drowned in it. One of the acolytes at her side marveled at the oddness of it all—the Fey were said to give birth painlessly, yet this mother-to-be cried out with agony in her voice…and such rains were unheard of in Farrenshire this time of year. Behind him a tree fell, only to crash against one of the standing stones of the surrounding henge and rest there. Strange things, indeed.

Snowden, himself little more than an acolyte of the Druids of Angharad, turned to the fallen trunk and tried in vain to lift it. From beneath the pelting rains a pair of figures emerged, both clad in dark, earthy tones with wet black hair framing their pale-gray skinned faces—men of Fahal. One, a heavily built man, put himself under the fallen tree beside Snowden and proceeded to aid in lifting. The second, a smaller man, went to the Elf's side, where her wailing had suddenly ceased.

The young acolyte handed the newborn to her mother, who lay exhausted in the soaking grass.

"A girl," one druid said.

"But look," said another. "Not an Elf, but a Halfling child is this."

"No matter," said the smaller of the Fahalanim, "the child has white eyes. The Prophecy is fulfilled."

'White eyes' was all the mother heard, though. "I will name it *Gwenllygad*."

Snowden marveled at the look in the Fahalan's gray eyes, for they seemed to get a joke that no one else did.

Christophe was disappointed in his first campaign; the lack of combat, which is what he was trained for, was not to his liking. He wanted to taste the thrill of battle, brush of death. He didn't realize how soon he would be getting his chance at his wish. The end of his first campaign brought him back home to the Sword-Arms mercenary chapter house in Reshknig.

His time there was short, as within a week he was caught causing trouble and sent abroad, guarding a caravan heading east into Sarmatov, its final destination being the Sarmatovian capital of Stolitza, accompanied by Sir Konigstrausse.

The first week of travel through Stahl brought little of the excitement Christophe hoped for. Dawning the third night of the second week, a small fire broke out in one of the caravan wagons. The fourth night brought the caravan a day's ride into Sarmatov, and when a wandering thief was caught in the foodstuffs, he was executed on the spot. Midway through the fifth night Christophe was awakened by his mentor, Sir

Konigstrausse.

"Bandits," Konigstrausse whispered gruffly in Stahlnish "Three, two on the north side, and one to the south." He pointed as he spoke. Christophe was fully awake by the middle of Konigstrausse's words, and on his feet, drawing his long-sword by the end of them. "Time for all of that training to get useful, boy."

TUCK KNELT DOWN in the snow. "These tracks are easy to follow. They're not more than a day ahead, now, and if we skip sleep this evening we should be able to over take them—maybe even cut them down before they're awake."

"There's no honor in that," Marek scoffed.

"There's no honor in getting killed by traitors to the king, either. We take them in their sleep. This isn't a bard's tale, son. Heroes in the real world use ambushes and kill the enemy in his sleep. No shame in it. The story just gets told different, is all."

"It isn't fair, Tuck."

"It's not supposed to be, Marek. It never was, and anybody who thinks otherwise doesn't play the game too long. Sooner or later Mistress Death comes for us all…I choose later, and that means we kill the bastards as they lie." At the last of it he spat into the snow.

Marek spat, too, though not for the same reason.

Skill Packets: Warrior/Military

Swordsman	Soldier
Combat/weapon art –1 First aid –1 Body Language (read) +3 Style analysis +2 Etiquette (School) –1	Leadership Intimidate Riding Heraldry Strategy Tactics +1 Battle –1 First aid –1
Woodsman/Ranger	**Warrior (Clan or Tribe)**
Hunting –1 Tracking +1 Survival Scrounging Animal guise Herbalist +1 Orienteering –1 Sneak +1 Camouflage Climbing +1 Swimming –1	Battle Hunting –1 First aid –1 Etiquette (Clan) –1 Sneak +1 Leadership +1 Intimidate Gambling +1 Boating –1
Knight	
Riding –1 First aid –1 Hunting Heraldry –1 Strategy Tactics +1 Etiquette (Tourney)	

I. Skills

In *The Riddle of Steel*, Skills refer to those learne abilities that each person has. Warriors know how to repa their weapons and gauge the talent of opponent woodsmen can hunt and track, and peasants and stre performers know the tenants of their trade. Each of the is represented by Skills. Groups of Skills acquired throug education, training, or life experience are called *Ski*

Packets. Where Skills cover items like hunting, acting, or first aid, skill Packets are collections of Skills that one has learned in the course of life and employment.

Every time a Skill Test is passed under duress (to be judged by player and Seneschal both) a check is placed in one of the small boxes next to each skill on the Character Sheet. This mark—called a "Skill Check"—is crucial to your character's advancement, and is described later in this Book.

1. Skill Packets

Most characters begin with two Skill Packets, each of which contains a number of skills. These skills are based on an average difficulty, determined by the amount of training and practice that each skill has undergone—for beginning characters this is determined by Prioritization. Some skills are harder than others as well, and are therefore more or less difficult than the average. As skill increases, the difficulty to perform a task goes down. This difficulty rating—which acts as a Target Number in all Skill Tests—is called the Skill Rating (SR). Easy Skills usually start out at –1 SR, hard at a +1, and average at no modifier from a Packet's base SR (as determined by Priority during Character Creation in **Book Two**). See **Book One: In the Beginning** for more information on Skill Tests. After choosing Skill Packets be sure to adjust all Skill Ratings appropriately, and to buy any new Skills (see **Book Two: The Birth of a Legend**). If both of your chosen packets have the same skill, take the better SR of the two and drop it by one.

Always choose Packets with a specific combination in mind. A brigand could be

Skill Packets: Other

Sailor	Peasant or Craftsman	Clergyman
Navigation	1 or more Trade skills	Etiquette (Court,
Swimming –1	(smith, weaver…)	church) –1
Sailing	(varies)	Meditation
Gambling +1	First aid –1	Leadership
Artillery +1	Stewardship +1	Orate
Climbing	Folk lore –1	Law +1
Boating –1	Animal handling,	Read & write –1
Tactics (Sea) +1	Herding	Theology
Heraldry (Flags) –1	Survival +1	Ancient Languages
Streetwise –1	Farming, or Boatman	Stewardship
Astronomy +1	and Fishing –2	Diplomacy +1
	Hunting or Trapping	First Aid *or*
	Teamster –1	Surgery –1/+1
Druid or Ritualist	**Academic**	**Laborer**
Meditation	Ancient Languages	Teamster –1
Sneak +1	Read & write –1	Streetwise –1
Arcane theory +1	Orate	Intimidate
Ritual Magic +1	Research	Gambling +1
Symbol Drawing –1	Etiquette –1	Any one craft skill
Herbalist +1	Up to 4 knowledge,	(varies)
Astronomy +1	language, or lore skills	Mining,
Surgery +1		shipbuilding, or
Secret Languages –1		similar
		construction skills

Skill Packets: Urban

Courtier	Entertainer	Thief
Etiquette (Court) –2	Ridicule	Panhandling –1
Persuasion +1	Dancing –1	Traps
Ridicule	Intrigue +1	Streetwise –1
Games –1	Orate	Scrounging
Dancing	Musical Instrument	Sneak
Diplomacy +1	Juggling –1	Pick Pocket +1
Read/write –1	Games –1	Lock Picking +1
Intrigue	Acrobatics +1	Climbing +1
Law +1	Acting	Gambling +1
Sincerity –1	Disguise	B & E
	Singing –1	

Soldier + Thief or even Soldier + Farmer. Those creepy cultists at the university could be Ritualist + Academic, while a regular thug would be composed of Laborer and Thief. Although it is possible to double-up on one single packet, most characters will be created using a combination of two skill packets, which reflect the character's background and training. Some sample combinations:

- Scout or Hunter: Woodsman + Warrior or Soldier
- Knight: Knight + Courtier
- Duelist: Swordsman + Courtier
- Rogue: Entertainer + Thief
- Wizard or Sorcerer: Academic or Clergyman + Druid or Ritualist

Other Packets not found here may be designed by the Seneschal or by players (with the Seneschal's approval). General guidelines are thus: Skill Packets have a minimum of 5 skills, maximum 15. Difficult skills should be at +1, easy at –1, and average at no change from the beginning SR. Packets should be patterned after actual possibilities and backgrounds. If you wish to create a variation on any of these packets (with your Seneschal's permission, of course), then go ahead.

2. Skill Tests

Skill Tests—whether contested or otherwise—are made by rolling an *appropriate Attribute* against the Skill Rating. In extreme circumstances, these rolls may be modified (by adding or subtracting dice), or certain numbers of successes may be required to complete the action at hand (sometimes "good enough" isn't). Those tasks that take time may be rolled over an extended check: if five total successes are necessary (five is just an example), then any number of rolls may be made until the total number of successes is five; each roll simply requires time. In these ways both natural talent (the attribute) and training (the Skill Rating) are represented in tests of skill.

3. Languages and Knowledge and Lore Skills

Weyrth is a big place, and for the travel-oriented adventurer the ability to communicate in many languages

is very important. A character may buy any language Skill (at SR +1) that he has a reasonable explanation for. The tongues of neighboring countries are the most likely (and most useful).

Several Packets refer to "Knowledge" or "Lore" Skills. These Skills are meant to be defined by each player. Examples might include: "Imperial History," "Stahlnish Literature," "Folk Tales of Angharad," "the Ecology of the Fey," and so on.

4. Defaulting (Using Skills that You Don't Have)

Sometimes a character needs to use a skill that he doesn't have. This is covered by defaults. The default Skill Rating for any skill unknown to a given character is given in the last line of the following skill descriptions. There are three kinds of defaults. *Generic Defaults* are the same for everybody that doesn't have the skill in question. *Defaults from related Skills* simply add to the difficulty of a similar skill by adding to its Skill Rating. Finally, some skills simply have *no default*, and must be learned to be used.

5. Quick-Reference Skill List

This list serves as a reference for choosing additional Skills upon Character Creation.

Acrobatics
Acting
Ancient Languages
Animal Guise
Animal Handling, Herding
Arcane Theory
Artillery
Astronomy
Battle
Boating
Body Language
Breaking and Entering
Camouflage
Climbing
Combat/Weapon Art
Craft/Trade
Dancing
Diplomacy
Disguise
Etiquette
Farming
First Aid
Folk Lore
Gambling
Games
Heraldry
Herbalist
Hunting or Trapping
Intimidate
Intrigue
Juggling
Law
Leadership
Lock Picking
Meditation
Musical Instrument
Navigation
Orate
Orienteering
Panhandling
Persuasion
Pickpocket
Read & Write
Research
Ridicule
Riding
Ritual Magic
Sailing
Scrounging
Secret Languages
Sincerity
Singing
Sneak
Stewardship
Strategy
Streetwise
Style Analysis
Surgery
Survival
Swimming
Symbol Drawing
Tactics
Teamster
Theology
Tracking
Traps

6. Skills Described

The skills below are roughly outlined as to usefulness and game mechanics. Attributes suggested for tests and rolls are simply suggested, and are not the only possibilities. A fine example is MA, which may be used with any skill when attempting to pull raw information, as opposed to execution of the skill itself.

- Acrobatics

This skill allows a character to spin, flip, leap, and execute other like maneuvers. It is usually found only amongst shorter, lighter people. Heavier or even average sized people will suffer serious penalties in dice. Successful acrobatic rolls can be used to entertain (and earn some money), impress, and even evade.

An unarmored, unencumbered character may roll Reflex/acrobatics prior to any full evasion (see dodging, **Book Four**) to whirl out of the way. Every success grants an additional CP die for the following evasion roll only. Failure or fumble on the acrobatics roll is equivalent to a failed dodge—all of the attacker's successes count! The same roll may be made for partial evasions (at –1 die for the skill check) or ducking and weaving (at –2 dice).

No default.

- Acting

Characters who act may either entertain or deceive. Entertainment usually requires an uncontested roll: more successes equal more entertainment (and probably profits). The trait used depends on the kind of performance. Improvisation or comedy is certainly Wits; staged combat or physical comedy would be Agility, and serious drama—Perception.

When used for deception, acting is made as a contested roll (usually with Social, Wit, or Per), against the opponent's Perception (at a TN determined by situation).

Default: TN 13.

- Ancient Languages

This skill provides the ability to read (and perhaps speak) any one of the world's dead languages. Optionally one may have a lesser knowledge of two languages instead of a good understanding of just one.

Default: Similar language +6 TN.

- Animal Guise

This is camouflage used for hiding from animals. Characters with this skill may successfully hide their appearance and scent from nearby animals. Movement is still governed by the "sneak" skill. Usually a contested roll of Per/Animal guise is made against the animal's Per (TN by situation, average 6).

Default: any animal-related skill +5.

- Animal Handling, Herding

This covers knowledge concerning how animals behave when in and out of groups, as well as how to handle them (whether in herds or not). This roll is usually made with either Per or WP, either as an uncontested, contested, or extended roll.

Default: Any animal skill, such as riding, +3.

- Arcane Theory

Used for the creation of new spells based on research and experience, this skill's use is more fully realized in **Book Five: Sorcery**.

No default.

- Artillery

This covers the use of heavy weapons such as catap arbalests, and (later on) canons. This is an exceptio combat (it's a skill, not a proficiency). This skill co not only the upkeep and packing/unpacking of s weapons, but also their use. Because these weapons usually used against stationary or slow-moving tar (such as boats, buildings, walls, and large ranks of infan each success determines the effectiveness of the wea at hand. This will be further discussed in fut supplements to *The Riddle of Steel*.

No default.

- Astronomy

This skill covers knowledge of the heavens: the mo stars, and turning of the constellations. It is usu possessed by sailors, wanderers, and practitioners of occult. Used in conjunction with Per or MA, astrono

may be used to read omens, navigate one's way, guess at oncoming weather, or even know the date or season.

Default: Navigation +2

- Battle

Possessed of soldiers, warriors, and anybody else that is led in battle, this skill covers the execution of commands (whether given by voice, trumpet, drum, or whatever). It can also be used to survive the rigors and chaos of battle should you be separated from your unit, so that you can re-group or whatnot. Most appropriately used with Wit, Per, or EN.

Default: 13, or Tactics +2.

- Boating

Small sailboats (one or two man), rowboats, canoes, and rafts are controlled by this skill. This is usually an uncontested roll (except maybe in a race or in harsh weather), used with ST, Per, AG, or EN most frequently.

Default: 10, or sailing +1.

- Body Language

Many swordsmen are accredited with the ability to read their opponent's movements a moment before they are made. This skill allows a swordsman to read the tiny indicators of intent in his opponent's movements and eyes.

In combat this skill can be especially useful. When defending, by spending 2 CP dice at any time *before* the attacker throws his dice, you may roll Per/Body Language. Each success adds one die to your own CP for the purpose of reacting to the incoming maneuver or attack. Dice not used immediately are lost. Failure implies that you read the wrong signs, and an additional CP die is lost.

This skill is both potent and risky (especially for less experienced types), and should be used when you guess a tricky maneuver is coming (or has come, such as a declared feint).

No default.

- Breaking and Entering

This skill covers know-how and knowledge concerned with forced or semi-forceful entry. It includes things like quietly breaking glass, forcing open doors and windows, and general knowledge about the locals' security habits. It will usually be made as an extended roll, in combination with MA, Per, AG, or ST (all depending on the exact circumstances and place/manner of entry). This skill does not cover lock picking or traps, which have their own skills.

Default: 13.

TABLE 3.1: *PER* TNS FOR THOSE SEARCHING OUT CAMOFLAGED CHARACTERS.

Day	4
Dusk/Dawn	7
Night	10
No cover	–2
Light cover	—
Heavy cover	+2

- Camouflage

Hiding under cover of brush, black face paint, or any number of techniques exist in the interest of staying unseen, even when in plain sight. When using this skill it is assumed that a character is properly covered in some fashion, and is remaining still or using the "sneak" skill simultaneously.

Hiding requires a contested EN/Camouflage roll against the onlooker's Per (refer to Table 3.1 for TNs). Characters with ample preparation (black paint, proper clothing, etc.) gain +1 die for the roll; those with some preparation roll at no modifier, and those with no preparation at –1 die. Size counts as well, and smaller characters may also receive a bonus die, while large characters may lose one.

Default: 10

- Climbing

Used by thieves, sailors, and many others, climbing is the skill of going up or down vertical and semi-vertical inclines. Slope and handholds all determine modifiers to climbs. Easy climbs (many kinds of trees, ropes, or sloped rocky crags) are at +1 die; average climbs (most other trees, rock walls, etc.) are at no modifier; hard climbs (reasonably flat surfaces with few or no handholds) are at –1 die or worse. Most climbing checks are extended rolls, where each success brings the climber closer to his goal.

Failure results in a standstill or even lost ground, and a fumble means a fall. More information falling can be found in **Book Five: The Laws of Nature**.

Default: 10

- **Combat/Weapon Art**

This skill covers rehearsed movements and forms attached to various weapons by their schools (not unlike the *kata* of many eastern martial arts schools). These forms are used in tests, performances, and in everyday practice. Generally an uncontested or extended roll (in conjunction with AG, ST, EN, or even MA) is called for when using this skill. More successes, for example, may mean greater control and beauty of movement—useful for entertainment or tests of skill.

No default.

- **Craft/Trade**

Whether blacksmithing, carpentry, basket weaving, sculpture, or painting, craft and trade skills are widely varied and very useful. More successes mean a final product of greater quality, endurance, or beauty. This is often an uncontested (or more rarely an extended) roll using Per, AG, or MA.

Each craft/trade skill must be specified. Average time for completion of a product is varied by craft, from a few hours (a basket or woodcarving) to many days or weeks (furniture, weapons).

Default: varies from 13 to none.

- **Dancing**

This skill covers street and other spectacle-related dances, folk dances, and the formal dances of a noble's court. *Specification is necessary*. Dancing usually calls for an uncontested roll of AG/Dancing, though other traits may be appropriate at other times.

Default: 13, or any other Dance +2.

- **Diplomacy**

This skill covers both knowledge concerning politi relations as well as how to handle them. This is usual made as a contested roll of Soc/Diplomacy against W Diplomacy. Knowledge concerning political matters MA/Diplomacy.

Default: 13, or Etiquette (Court) +3

- **Disguise**

Costumes, masks, or Glamour magic make this sk a reality, deceiving others in plain sight throu appearance. A good disguise is necessary (and may acquired through purchase or scrounging, or homemade). Poor disguises give a –1 die penalty, a excellent disguises add +1 die. Characters with the disgu skill may disguise others or themselves by rolling a conte of Per/Disguise versus Per of the onlooker (TN var by how suspicious the onlooker is).

Default: 13 or acting +2

- **Etiquette (Church, Clan, Court, Schoo Tourney)**

This skill allows characters to blend in a act their station when in most settings. Th Court Etiquette covers how to act in any stati when at court, and in your own station wh elsewhere. Proper behavior, greetings, traditio and so on are all covered by this skill. Generall an uncontested roll is made using Soc/Etiquet Failures are embarrassing, while a fumble m seriously offend someone. Specification required.

Default: 13, or similar Etiquette skill at +

- **Farming**

Farming is the daily work of raising fo (usually fruit, vegetables, and grains). It thankless and hard work, and usually the solita domain of serfs, peasants, and poorer freem or gentry. Generally an uncontested EN/Farmi roll is used to raise crops, while Per/Farming m be used to gain information about soil, crops, other farm-related matters.

No default.

- First Aid

Short-term medical care is extremely important, and most soldiers and mothers know at least a little. Roll an uncontested Per/First Aid roll for treatment, and MA/First Aid for information checks. See **Book Five: The Laws of Nature** for more.

Default: 13, or Surgery +1

- Folk Lore

Legends abound in every region, and those that know them know the heart of a people. Generally used for accessing information, an uncontested MA/Folk Lore roll is usually enough.

Default: 10 for locals, none for outlanders.

- Gambling

The hard way to make easy money is an honored skill in some cultures, despised in others. Gambling encompasses bluffing, rules for most all local games, and the ability to beat the odds through guessing. This skill is only useful in games that require *some* skill. Generally a contested roll is made of Per/Gambling against Per/Gambling. One hand or game may be rolled that way, where the winner takes the pot. Over an extended time (usually one hour) one roll may be made. Margin of success defines how much money is gained (# of successes multiplied by the average bet for the hour), while margin of loss defines how much money is lost (# of opponent's successes multiplied by the average bet for the hour).

Default: 13 or Games +3

- Games

This skill covers both knowledge of most popular games, but also how to win them. Generally a contested roll is made of Per/Games against Per/Games.

Default: 10

- Heraldry (Land and Sea)

This skill is especially useful both in battle and when attempting to recognize any unknown party bearing a flag, standard, crest, or similar device. Generally an uncontested roll of Per or MA/Heraldry is necessary to recognize all but the most familiar devices. Generally one success is enough for common symbols, but less influential, foreign, or more obscure standards may require more.

Default: 13 or other Heraldry skill +3

- Herbalist

Roots, herbs, and the concoctions thereof can form life-saving elixirs or deadly poisons. Generally an uncontested or extended roll is necessary to acquire herbs and ingredients necessary for any given potion, depending on the rarity of the sought-after ingredients. Actually constructing the potion takes another uncontested or (more rarely) extended roll. More successes = more potency.

Default: None, or Farmer +5.

- Hunting or Trapping

These are actually two separate but related skills, both used for catching animals for food. To hunt game roll

Per/Hunting against the prey's Per/Evasion (a statistic possessed by game animals. For those without it, use Per at a TN of 7). It's a *contested and extended* roll. When the hunter gains 5 successes (calculated from the margin of success, of course) then the prey is caught—kill it using regular combat rules. During the hunt each roll is made about every three hours. Should the prey gain five successes over the hunter, then it has successfully evaded and may not be found again that day. Dogs and hunting parties may add dice to a hunter's pool, though never more than +3.

For quicker resolution, hunting may be rolled uncontested, where more successes mean a bigger catch. One might be a rabbit, while three could be a deer and five a large boar. Only one such roll may be made in a day, and the whole day is assumed to be spent in the process (though successes may be traded in to lessen the time at the expense of a bigger catch). Modifiers for dogs and the like still apply.

Trapping works similar to the quick hunting rules above, except that traps are laid in the evening or night and recovered the next morning. Bait can be laid out to target specific catches (meat for wolves, for example). Number and quality of traps effects the number of dice rolled by +/–1, though it is assumed that all traps be of average quality and about 5 or ten in number. Each success lands a smaller animal or two successes a slightly larger specimen, determined by the Seneschal (randomly or at will).

Hunting default: 13, Trapping +3, or Tracking +3

Trapping default: Hunting +3, Tracking +3

- Intimidate:

This skill covers everything from staring somebody down (WP) to the veiled threats of the Empire's courts (Soc). Generally a contested roll of WP or Soc/Intimidate is made against the target's WP/Intimidate. Failure means that you may have offended someone that you didn't want to, or that your threat was simply hollow. Future attempts to intimidate will be at –1 die. Success causes the target of the intimidation to give in some way. One success may be a flinch or soft concessio while five calls for a change of pant Those in no position to intimida (peasants in the face of royalty i the palace, paraplegics, etc.) w suffer die penalties, at th Seneschal's option. Other factors, such size, magic, or obvious superiority i strength, power, social standing or whatev may grant additional dice or lower Targe Numbers.

The exact effects of intimidation are up to th Seneschal, though penalties to dice pools and attribut may be appropriate in many situations.

Default: 10

- Intrigue

Gossiping has been a past time since the first grou of people got together. This skill allows one to pry th minds and lips of others for gossip, dirt, and the late "word," straight from the horse's mouth. All courtie practice this one with another, some using it to gai information; others to lay out their own falsified rumo and plans. This is done in an uncontested roll when us for general gossip and news. When trying to pry suc information out of someone a contested roll is called fo Use Soc/Intrigue against Soc/Intrigue (or at times, WP Intrigue), with the winner pulling information out the other. As always, more successes mean bett information.

Default: 13, or Diplomacy +3

- Juggling

This is an entertainment skill, used by performers t earn money in the circus or on the street. Roll a uncontested AG/Juggling roll. More successes lead t more spectacular results (and more appreciation fro onlookers).

No default.

- Law

This skill covers the knowledge and practice of la in either the Empire or another locality. Informatio checks are uncontested, but actual debates and practi

of law (such as in a court) require contested Soc/Law rolls. External factors, such as convincing evidence or bribery may give bonus dice.

Default: 13 or none.

· Leadership

Masses of people can breed chaos unless properly directed. Those with the Leadership skill know how to keep things running smoothly and effectively. Leadership is a key skill in getting others (especially the masses) to listen to what you have to say and then to actually carry it out. This skill is used whenever a character is directing others, whether at manual labor, in council, or on the battlefield. Most rolls are uncontested rolls of WP or Soc/Leadership, depending on the situation. Whenever another attempts to take power, or a significant distraction to your lead comes up, a contested roll may be called for.

Default: 10

· Lock Picking

Most every thief prides himself on his ability to pick locks quickly, quietly, and effectively. Lock-picking rolls are made uncontested using either Per/Lock-picking or AG/Lock-picking, depending on the kind of lock (Seneschal's discretion). Fine tools add 1 or 2 dice to the roll, while inferior tools subtract dice. Lock quality determines the number of successes necessary to open the lock. Cheap locks require one success, most average locks three, and fine locks five or more. Each attempt assumes five minutes of work at the lock—extra successes reduce time by one minute each.

No default.

· Meditation

Meditation has many forms, whether cross-legged chanting, a worshipper's prayer, or deep, quiet contemplation. This skill may be used to by those with great faith to contact deity, by sorcerers to replenish lost energy, and by others to recover from fatigue. Meditation improves healing and aids in clearing the mind when necessary. Rolls may be contested, uncontested, or extended, depending on desired effect. EN, WP, and Per are the most appropriate attributes, although Faith or other Spiritual Attributes may come into play as well. See **Book Six: Sorcery** for more uses of the Meditation skill.

Default: 13

· Musical Instrument

The ability to gracefully play a musical instrument—whether the peasant's flute or the noble's harp—is greatly valued in every culture. This skill covers any one musical instrument, though other, similar instruments may be easily defaulted. Each success represents a greater deal of skill and beauty, whether in composition or in performance. Some more difficult pieces may require more successes just to play at all. Rehearsed pieces are rolled using AG/Musical Instrument or MA/Musical Instrument. Attempting to recreate a piece requires Per/Musical Instrument, and writing original material calls for MA or Per/Musical Instrument.

Default: Any similar instrument +1 or 2; dissimilar instrument +3 or more.

· Navigation

This skill is useful on land, but indispensable at sea. Navigation covers basic astronomy, especially the constellations, and how it all relates to where you are and where you're going. Navigators know how to read navigational charts and maps, and many become cartographers. Roll MA/Navigation when charting a course, and Per/Navigation to stay on it. Success gets you to your

destination (more successes = less time); failure gets you lost. Cartography (map-making) checks require Per/Navigation checks at –1 die.

Default: 13

· Orate

This skill covers the rules and practice of rhetoric, story telling, and other forms of spoken discourse. Those with the Orate skill are often gifted speakers, able to convince men with words of motivation or tell a rousing or moving tale. A simple speech calls for an uncontested roll of Soc, WP, or Per/Orate (depending on the circumstances and subject matter). Debate and other spontaneous discourse require WP or Wit/Orate, and are usually contested rolls. Failures simply convince no one (and probably make you look silly), and fumbles cause the opposite effect of whatever you were going for.

Default: 10

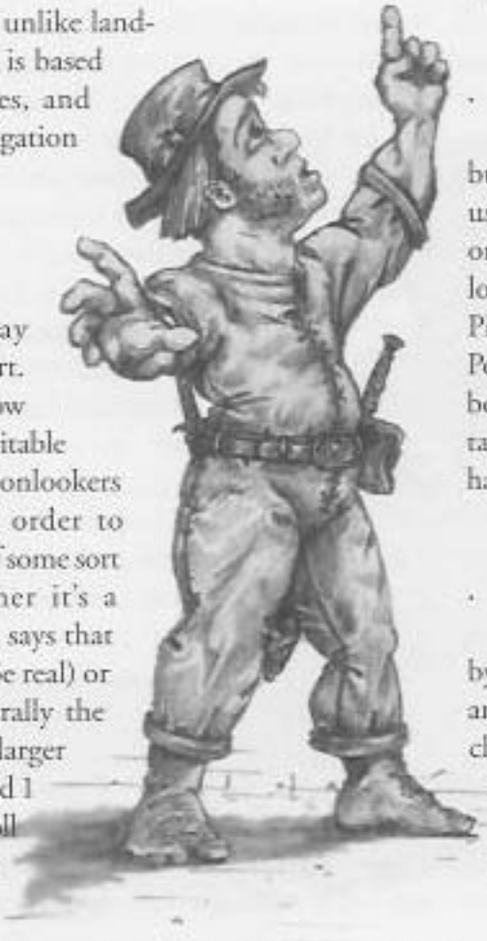
· Orienteering

This skill is not unlike land-based navigation. It is based on landmarks, paces, and trail signs. See Navigation for mechanics.

Default: 13

· Panhandling

Some would say that begging is an art. Panhandlers know how to get the largest charitable contributions from onlookers and passers-by. In order to panhandle, a show of some sort is required, whether it's a crippled leg (no one says that the injury needs to be real) or a street show. Generally the better the show, the larger the contributions (add 1 die to Panhandling roll for every success over one on any entertainment skill... no show? Subtract 2 dice). Most rolls will be uncontested Soc/Panhandling. Each success brings in more cash.



As a side note, many local authorities don't appreciate panhandlers or street entertainers...but that's anoth problem.

Default: 10

TABLE 3.2: PICKPOCKET VS. *PER* TARGET NUMBERS

Out in the open	3
Moderate crowd	6
Heavy crowd or good distraction	9
Proximity to body	+/–2

· Persuasion

This is a specialized form of oration which relies o moving argument. Generally a contested roll is made Wit/Persuasion against WP/Persuasion.

Default: 11

· Pickpocket

Most theft isn't at the hands of brigands or robbe but by petty thieves and cutpurses. This skill may used to pull an object out of someone's pockets, cut or other open place, or to cut a pouch or similar it loose. Picking someone's pocket requires a contested Pickpocket roll against the target's Per (see Table 3.2 Per TNs). Success means that the sought-after item been secured, ties mean that the item is secured, but t target felt it. Failure means you've been caught witho having taken the item.

Default: 13

· Read & Write

Literacy beyond a rudimentary level is hard to co by in most of the known world, possessed by the educa and wealthy. Roll and uncontested MA/Read & W check to comprehend or correctly write anything. M successes imply greater beauty or grace of writing deeper comprehension when reading. A roll is necess for everything more complicated than road signs.

- Ridicule

Everyone knows how to taunt to some degree or another—others have made an art out of it. Ridiculing someone calls for a contested roll of Wit/Ridicule (although in some contexts Soc may be more appropriate) against WP/TN 7. Success means that you've successfully offended and angered the target; more successes equals greater offence. Offended people tend to think less rationally, and are likely to act aggressively and impulsively. While no exact dice penalties are applied to the target, the offended character (whether controlled by the Seneschal or a player) should act accordingly.

When taunting (see **Book Four: The Codex of Battle**) an opponent into attacking first, this skill (and the above mechanics) should be used for goading an opponent on.

Default: 10

- Riding

Horsemanship is indispensable to many cultures and professions. Those with the Riding skill know not only how to simply ride a horse, but how to control the animal in a myriad of situations. This skill is necessary for all those who wish to gallop or fight from horseback, as well as to execute jumps and other tricks.

There are many ways to use Riding; for example:

Racing: Contested rolls of Reflex/Riding (short distance) or EN/Riding (long distance).

Jumping and trick riding: Uncontested AG/Riding. Number of required successes depends on difficulty of the jump or trick.

Default: 13

- Ritual Magic

This skill covers the ability to use rituals and ceremonies to create and channel magical energies. At least one person in the ritual must possess sorcerous blood. See **Book Six: Sorcery** for more.

- Sailing

This skill covers the many tasks necessary for sailing vessels of all sizes. Most ships require many sailors (all with this skill) to operate. Those with the sailing skill are expert knot-tiers, know how to run and care for sails, rigging, and so on. Usually an uncontested roll will suffice, though the attribute used varies heavily, depending on the task at hand.

No default.

- Scrounging

Resourcefulness can get some a long way. Scroungers know how and where to look for useful junk, and can build almost anything at sub-standard quality from objects in their surroundings. Sample items include furniture, crude weapons, disguises and clothing, tools, and other things. Roll Per/Scrounging; the complexity and quality of an item determines how many successes are necessary.

Default: 10

- Secret Languages

Many guilds, societies, and factions have invented their own code-languages for communication within the group. These languages are usually easy to learn, and may be based on slang or bits and pieces of other languages. They are never taught to outsiders. Roll MA/Secret Language to successfully communicate. The complexity of the idea determines how many successes are necessary

(though one or two is usually plenty).

No default.

· Sincerity

The Imperials believe that perception is more important than reality. Sincerity is the epitome of this belief, and is used to lie in such a way that there is no doubt as to the earnestness of the speaker's words. In short, this is the skill of lying. Roll Soc/Sincerity against Per/TN 8.

TABLE 3.3: SNEAK VS. *PER* TARGET NUMBERS (BASED ON SURROUNDINGS)

Quiet	5
Mild noise (edge of camp)	8
Loud noise (crowds)	12
Degree of alertness	+/–2

· Singing

This skill may be used to woo, entertain, or just to pass the time. Those with the Singing skill have honed their natural talents to do just that. Most singing rolls are uncontested, using Soc/Singing. More successes mean more beauty and elegance. Failure means several off notes, and fumbles...howling with the dogs. Practiced and familiar pieces grant +1 die.

Default: 10

· Sneak

Moving silently has many uses, from sneaking past guards to sneaking up behind them. When used in conjunction with camouflage, stealthy persons are as good as invisible. Roll AG/Sneak against Per (see Table 3.3 for TNs, based on environment and background noise). Light, everyday clothing is assumed. Those in heavy clothing are at –1 die, those in chain mail or similar at –2 or –3 dice, and those in plate are at –4 dice.

Default: 10

· Stewardship

This skill covers basic management and economic skill, and is best exemplified by stewards, castellans, landlords, and overseers. Rolls are made every month to see if any profit or loss has come onto the land at question. Generally one or two successes imply that no loss or gain has taken place, three means profits, and five means big profits. Failure means loss, and fumbles can incur financial ruin. Use MA/Stewardship most rolls.

Default: 13

· Strategy

Strategy covers the theory a practice of war from the general's seat. T greatest strategists are often the grea generals (particularly those that kn how to plan the attack *and* lead it!). contested Wit/Strategy roll may reso mass combat between equal forc (though Per is often a passable attribute well). More details will be found future supplements and sourcebooks.

Default: 13

· Streetwise

This skill covers the general etiquette of the stre and underworld. Characters with Streetwise can loc thieves' guilds, important contacts, and get other usef information. The streetwise know with whom to talk find almost anything (on the black market, of cours Additionally, this skill covers how to act in the compa of the dangerous and the slimy. Use WP, MA, Soc, or to locate people, equipment, or information (exa attribute depends on situation); most rolls will b uncontested.

Default: 13

· Style Analysis

Every swordsman's school has its own strengths a weaknesses. This skill allows an observer to catch t patterns present in each fighter, as a by-product of t school at which he studied. Some time is necessary judge, and a single duel is rarely enough time—at le several minutes of combat or practice must be observ before a roll can be made. Each success on an uncontes roll of Per/Style Analysis gives a little more informati about what maneuvers the subjects school prefer teaches. Five successes reveal which school the subj attended. More than five might betray details such who the subjects teacher was (assuming you'd know Alternatively, three successes will tell the viewer exac

how many dice the subject has in his combat pool.

No default.

- Surgery

Sometimes first aid isn't enough. Surgery (also called Chirugery) is necessary for serious medical care, whether it be leeches and bleeding, amputation, or stitches. Most cases can be handled with an uncontested Per/Surgery roll (although having a very low AG could cause problems in some operations). Some operations and wounds require multiple successes to treat; more can be found in **Book Five: The Laws of Nature.**

No default.

- Survival

Finding water, shelter, and gathering enough food to survive (not necessarily good food...) are all elements of the Survival skill. This skill may be used in any climate or surrounding that the character is familiar with; less familiar territories may incur die penalties of −1 or more. Most rolls will be uncontested Per/Survival rolls (in the short term) or EN/Survival rolls (in the long term).

Default: 13

- Swimming

This skill allows for movement through and buoyancy in water. Except in the case of races or other contests, an uncontested roll of ST or AG/Swimming (for maneuvering or complex actions in water) or EN/Swimming (for any kind of distance swimming or deep swimming). Most clothing costs one die, and heavy clothing or armor may cost several dice (even making swimming impossible). Failure or Fumble may cause sinking, drowning, and so on.

Default: 10 or none

- Symbol Drawing

Many approaches to magic call for complex and detailed symbols, glyphs, runes, and diagrams to be drawn on or around the place of conjuring. To correctly draw out these symbols roll Per/Symbol Drawing uncontested. More complex diagrams may require multiple successes (but rarely so). See **Book Six: Sorcery** for more uses of Symbol Drawing.

No default.

- Tactics (Land or Sea)

While Strategy plans out the big battles, Tactics handles the details (often with little or no planning). This skill is used both in planning and executing conflicts on small scales such as raids, ambushes, and the management of individual units on the battlefield. Generally Per/Tactics is rolled, though the roll itself is often contested against another tactician.

Default: 13

- Teamster

This skill covers the care and driving of carriages, wagons, teams, and the like. Most rolls (other than races and whatnot) will be uncontested AG, Per, or EN/Teamster.

Default: Riding +3 or 13.

- Theology

This skill covers advanced knowledge of one's own faith, detailed knowledge of similar or related denominations, and basic knowledge of most other religions. In addition to simple knowledge, those with the Theology skill can argue their own philosophical points and beliefs based on scripture and the precedence of other, past great theologians. Use Wit, MA, Per, or Soc/Theology in a contested or uncontested roll (all based on circumstances).

Default: 13

- Tracking

The ability to successfully track and follow animals and people is one greatly sought after by many. Good trackers can follow solitary creatures across plains, rocks, and other places with little difficulty. Most of them can track unsuspecting targets almost anywhere outside of cities and other urbanized areas. Tracking an unsuspecting target calls for an uncontested Per/Tracking roll. Tracking someone or something that doesn't want to be followed calls for a contested roll of Per/Tracking (the followed party gets +2 dice). Terrain can add or take away from the tracker's pool of available dice. Muddy terrain might add 2 dice, while rocky terrain might subtract 2 or more. Likewise, trackers must move slowly—movement must be reduced to half or less (going full speed costs 3 dice!).

No default.

- Traps

This skill allows a character to spot, make, and remove traps of the "booby" variety—poisoned needles in locks, trap doors, and just about anything else with a readily available mechanism. Even those that can't get to the mechanism or disarm the trap should be able to spot and avoid it most of the time. Roll this skill anytime you're making or disarming a trap. Characters with this skill can spot traps most people wouldn't see (make a Per/Traps roll), and have a better chance at seeing ones that aren't as hard to see (make a Per/Traps roll in addition to any other Per rolls that may be made). Spotting traps is usually Per/Traps, and disarming them is usually Per/Traps or AG/Traps, depending on the trap.

Default: 13

7. Other Skills (The List Isn't Complete)

Other skills are available as well. If you want it, make it up using existing skills as a basis (most "lore" skills would follow the pattern of Theology or Folklore, for example). As always, consult the Seneschal.

II. Gifts and Flaws

Gifts and flaws represent the more unique aspects of your character—his reputation, how attractive he appears, permanent wounds or disabilities, and other such odds and ends. Most characters begin play with a few Gifts (or boons to your character) and/or a few Flaws (or disadvantages that your character has in relation to others). Gifts and Flaws may be attained (or lost) after character creation in a number of ways, the most common of which is through role-playing and the experiences of your character.

Gifts and Flaws are divided into two main categories, major and minor. Major Gifts and Flaws are significant advantages or disadvantages, and are generally rare among "average" people. Minor Gifts and Flaws are much more common—almost everybody has one or two. Many Gifts and Flaws are available in both major and minor incarnations, depending on severity. During Character Creation, two minor Gifts orFlaws are equal to one major.

1. Gifts Described

The following list is but a sample of Gifts—major and minor—that one may have. Many more are possible, assuming that they are comparable with those outlined

below.

- Absolute Direction (minor)

Those with the Gift of Absolute Direction are never lost. They always know which way is north, and which way is up or down. Assuming they've been conscious they can guess the amount of distance they've traveled within a few miles, and which direction they've been going *even if they are in a wagon or coach and can't see the road.*

- Accuracy (major or minor)

In the whirl of combat one rarely strikes the exact location that one aims for—you swing for the head and hit the shoulder, you thrust for the body and strike the groin...the examples are endless. Those with the Gift of Accuracy have an uncanny ability to predict the subtle movements of their opponent and cater their weapon attacks so that the desired target is struck.

The minor version of this Gift allows the attacker to modify their d6 Hit Location roll (see **Book Four: The Codex of Battle**) by 1 point up or down. It applies only to stable hand-held weapons (not bows or flails).

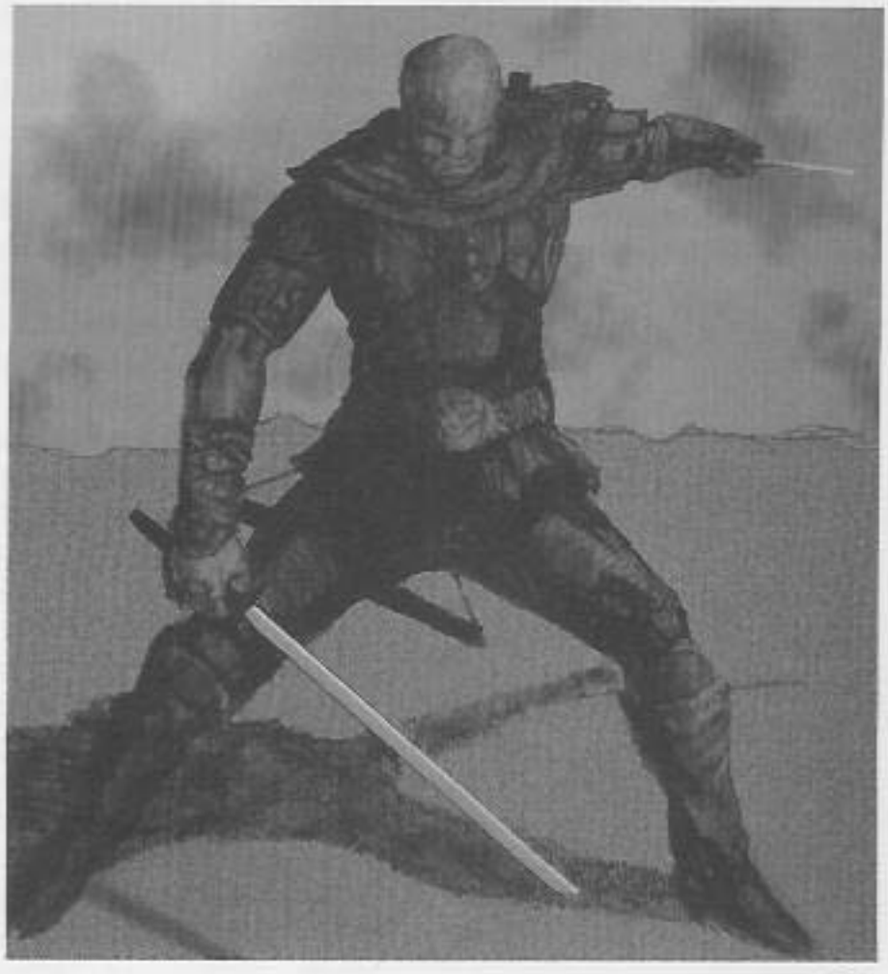
The major version of this Gift allows the attacker to modify their d6 Hit Location roll by 1 point up or down with missile weapons, flails, and other less accurate or unstable weapons. Hit Location rolls made with other weapons may be modified by 3 points up or down.

- Allies (major or minor)

Some say it's not what you know—it's who. Allies are those that are willing to help you out, sometimes even at the cost of their own skin. Minor allies are either average people who are willing to go a long way to help you out from time to time, or exceptional or important people who might offer some help (though not too much) should their own circumstances allow it. Major allies are also exceptional or important people who gladly offer their help (often at personal sacrifice) from time to time. An example of a minor ally might be a local shopkeeper who supplies your group with supplies and information at great risk to himself or a great duke that likes you and helps out when it's convenient. An example of a major ally is that same duke, except that this time he's willing to risk his own neck to help you out.

- Ambidexterity (major)

Those born with the Gift of Ambidexterity are neither left-handed nor right handed, and may use either hand as if it were their main hand. This is not the ability to fight well with a weapon in each hand (you have to train and go to school for that), but an ambidextrous person may fight freely with either hand. This provides a +1 die advantage when attacking with a one handed weapon in the left hand in duel-like situations (it just



doesn't make a big difference on the battlefield). Additionally, should one arm be wounded, the other may be used at no penalty. Other uses for this Gift are outlined in the Schools section in **Book Four: Combat**.

- Animal Kin (major or minor)

This gift creates a meaningful bond with animals of all types. Those who possess this gift are not likely to be attacked by animals, are gifted trainers, and can gain the trust of an animal in very little time.

The minor version of this gift adds two dice to any roll that involves communication or interaction with domesticated animals, and one die when dealing with wolves, bears, etc. The major version adds three dice to rolls with both wild and domestic animals. Appropriate uses include training, calming, and even riding animal

- Area Knowledge (minor)

While everybody knows the land that they grew in (usually their own domain or the domain of their lord those with the Gift of Area Knowledge are intimat familiar with the local country-sized region. Additional they are quite familiar with the next several countries kingdoms (or equivalent). Any knowledge (MA) inqui rolls are made at TNs of 3, 6, and 9, depending familiarity.

- Beauty of Legends (major or minor)

Most characters are assumed to be somewh unattractive, average, or slightly attractive-looking peop others are born with the Gift of "Beauty of Legend This gift is available to members of both sexes (just repla the word "Beautiful" with "Handsome" or "Dashing"

The minor version of this gift applies to those th are markedly beautiful or handsome—such as stick o in a crowd and nearly always attract members of t opposite sex. Any rolls that are directly effected by beau (many social or entertainment skill, for example) are ma with +1 die.

Those with the major version of this gift a stunning—songs are written about them, members the opposite sex often become irrationally enamored, a they stick out in a crowd of beautiful people. All die ro that are directly effected by appearance are modified b +3 dice.

In addition to any "game mechanics," beautiful peop are simply treated better by everybody. Many of t advantages of such beauty are to be seen only in roleplayi and common sense. There is a dark side to this gift a well—beautiful people often attract too much attentio and can even evoke to jealousy and enmity of othe (remember *Snow White*?).

- Good Reputation (major or minor)

A man's reputation is a funny thing—everybody wan a good one, but few actually enjoy the fame and trouble it can bring; it's hard to gain a good reputation, but ea to lose it. Minor reputations are less impressive and le well known, while major reputations are very impressi

and often very well known. Both garner the attention of those who are aware of your reputation (for better or worse).

Those with minor reputations may add one die to any roll that directly involves their reputation (particularly Social-based rolls). Additionally locals will buy them drinks and generally do nice things for people that they respect. Recognizing someone with a minor reputation requires a MA/TN 7 roll (each success brings more information regarding that person's reputation).

Those with major reputations may add three dice to such reputation-effected rolls, and are likely to be recognized (either by appearance or by name) by almost everybody (MA/TN 4).

These bonuses are not cumulative with other such bonuses (such as those attained through the Gifts of True Leadership or Beauty).

- Intuition (minor)

Some people are lucky—others just know how to guess. Intuition is the innate ability to guess right. Any time a character with Intuition guesses as to the solution to a problem, what door to take, or any other decision that involves essentially nothing other than chance or guessing, their chance of success is increased by 50% of their original chance. Thus a character randomly choosing between two doors would have a 75% chance of guessing the right one; when choosing between three doors his chance would be 49% (33% + 16%...half of 33, rounded down).

When the result would be determined not by percentages, but by an attribute or skill roll, simply add half again to the dice pool being rolled. If a character was rolling an uncontested MA/Etiquette check (trying to guess what the best way to handle a certain breach of manners, for example), and this character had an MA of 6, then the Seneschal would roll 9 dice (6 + 3) against the player's skill rating. It is important to note that this *does not* replace normal skill checks for information—those should usually be made first, rolled by the player. Should a normal skill check fail the character simply realizes that he doesn't know the needed information (except in the case of a fumble, which gives the character wrong information). Intuition rolls, on the other hand, are made by the Seneschal on behalf of the character. The Seneschal keeps the actual result secret, simply giving the character the needed information. Thus a character must have faith in his own intuition, as he never actually sees the rolls—only the conclusion that his intuition has led him to.

- Linguist (minor)

You have an intuition and talent for language. You automatically begin play with one additional language (remember to explain how/where you learned it!). In addition, new languages may be learned in half the time *and* at –1 to your beginning Skill Rating.

- Patron (major or minor)

You, like many artists, explorers, and swordsmen, are in the general employ of someone more powerful than you are. In return for your occasional services they see to it that you eat, are sheltered, and have other resources. Major Patrons are often powerful nobility or groups with a great deal of money to burn. Minor Patrons are usually lesser nobility or groups, or powerful but stingy nobility. While having a patron is usually a great asset financially, there is often a duty attached. Another version on patrons is the feudal system—most all knights are indebted through a kind of patronage to their lords.

- Quick Healing (major)

This Gift facilitates very quick recovery from wounds, doubling the number of dice rolled when healing or recovering from sickness. See **Book Five: The Laws of Nature** for more.

- True Leadership (major)

While most anyone can *learn* to lead, others are born with the *power* to lead. Such people in our own world have been George Washington, Alexander the Great, Jan Sobieski, and even Adolf Hitler. Those with this gift invariably find themselves in positions of leadership, and almost automatically gain the trust and support of those that they lead. In game terms all rolls that concern leadership or follower loyalty are made at + 4 dice (!!!).

2. Flaws Described

The following list is but a sample of Flaws—major and minor—that one may have. Many more are possible, assuming that they are comparable with those outlined below.

- Addiction (minor)

You have to get a daily fix of whatever it is that you're addicted to, whether it's alcohol, gambling, or some other drug. As long as the daily dose is not too much, no major negative effects take place upon or following consumption (use common sense to determine what "too much" is). Failure to get you're daily dose incurs a –1 die penalty to ALL rolls until you get it. After a week penalty increases to –2 dice, after two weeks to –3 dice. The penalty stays at –3 dice until the fourth week, after which the penalty lowers by one die every week. If this process of withdrawal and rehabilitation is successful then the addiction lies dormant, and will only return if the addiction is re-indulged. At any time, before, during, or after withdrawal, if the object of addiction is offered or made newly available, roll WP/TN 9 to resist.

These are generic rules, and may be modified depending on the specific addiction. Is should also be noted that no major addiction is offered as a flaw due to the dehabilitating (and therefore unplayable) nature of such hard addictions.

- Amputee (major or minor)

One of your limbs is badly deformed or missing all together. The minor flaw refers to a missing hand, where the major version includes the whole arm and any portion of a leg. A missing hand restricts weapon choices to those things that may be strapped on (flails and maces at –2 CP) and some shields. Lack of a whole arm precludes the use of that arm entirely (of course!), and causes a –1 to AG. Missing leg parts are extremely difficult to deal with (especially for combat-related characters), limiting character movement to crutches in some places, a wooden leg. As a general rule, a deformed or amputated leg causes a negative die modifier of half the Combat Pool, assuming a peg le or cane.

- Bad Luck (major)

Be careful with this one—it could get you kill No points may ever be put into the Luck Attribu Additionally, once per game, something bad (thou usually embarrassing—never fatal) will just happen to yo character. The Seneschal gets to be creative with this m

- Bad Reputation (major or minor)

It's hard to gain a good reputation—but gettin bad reputation is easy. The hard part is staying alive wi that kind of a name. Those with a bad reputation may may not have earned it—either way they're not s popular. Such infamous characters, while feared, are oft hunted by the law, those they've wronged, or tho wishing to prove themselves.

The minor version of this Flaw costs two dice to a roll that the character's negative reputation might effe (mostly social rolls and other interaction rolls). On t up side any roll that relies on fear or intimidation of othe brings +2 dice. This flaw is best exemplified in well-know brigands and other baddies. Most people will recogni you or your name with an MA/TN 7 roll.

The major version of this Flaw is reserved for t truly frightening and despicable. Good people abhor su people, and many fear them. Subtract 4 dice from a roll that reputation might effect; add 3 dice to any s where such a reputation might be used to one's advanta (again, fear and intimidation). Most people will recogni you or your name with an MA/TN 3 roll.

Exact details are left up to the exact reputation a the Seneschal. No one will ever be terribly friendly helpful to such a person except for fear. Those that a more powerful than you will show nothing but contem and disrespect, and may even prove dangerous.

- Bloodlust/Troublemaker (major or minor)

Instead of avoiding trouble, you look for it; instead of sneaking past the enemy, you do anything you can to hurt them as you pass. The minor version of this Flaw could easily be called "troublemaker:" you like to get into and cause trouble—especially fights. You never forget an enemy and find it hard to forgive those that cross you. This is a common Flaw amongst thugs and some Blade-Singers. The major version of this Flaw is much more serious: you have the same trouble-making tendencies and unforgiving spirit as above, but you go for the kill. You fight to kill, you never let an enemy live (not if you can help it!), and have little respect for human life. It's important to note that this doesn't mean that you're an unkind person—you probably still love your family and friends…you just have a big problem with your enemies (both making them and dealing with them).

If you ever need to resist an urge to start trouble, kill an enemy, etc., roll WP/TN 8 (for minor) or WP/TN 12 (for major). Multiple successes may be required where more serious enemies are involved.

- Chicken (major)

Gutless yellowbelly momma's boy coward… At the first sign of trouble you either run or wet yourself. You can't handle torture or even threats, and give in easily. Even trying to be a little brave calls for a roll at WP/ TN 10 (but we'd prefer that you just role-play it).

- Greed (major)

"The love of money is the root of all evil." You love money, wealth, power, or some other brand of personal gain. This love and obsession is often overpowering, leading you to cross even those that you love or fear in search for glory, recognition, or cash. Any time you are offered money, power, or whatever your obsession desires roll WP. The TN varies, depending on the amount of risk and the amount of reward involved. This holds true both for offers of money and wealth "out in the open," be it in your friend's bag or a dragon's lair.

- Lecherousness (minor)

Some have a problem with gambling, others with drink; you're problem is women (or men, depending on your own gender or preference…). Examples abound in literature of men easily seduced or distracted by beautiful members of the opposite sex (a certain British super-spy is the classic example). Any time someone of your gender preference makes a pass, no matter how subtle or aggressive, roll WP; the TN is determined by how attractive this person is, but may be effected by things such as how long since your last score and how aggressive

the pass is. Resisting someone with the "Ugly" Flaw is easy: TN 3; "average" people: TN 6; those with a minor Gift of Beauty: 9; those with a major Gift of Beauty: 13.

- Little (minor)

Some Siche, such as dwarves, are smaller than most people are. This makes it difficult to blend in within most social circles, and limits many physical activities. Dwarf-sized characters (around 3 or 4 feet tall) fight as if their weapon was 2 length categories shorter (including their fists!) when fighting larger persons. Even smaller characters, like sprites and pixies, are unable to even engage in combat with larger opponents (though that kind of size has its advantages).

- Obese (major or minor)

Those weighing significantly more than "average" for their height are constantly burdened by additional encumbrance. *See* **Book Five: The Laws of Nature** to determine just *how* permanently encumbered a character is.

- Overconfident (major or minor)

Some people don't know when they're outclassed—others don't care; both suffer from the Overconfident Flaw. Characters with Overconfidence have a bit too much self-esteem—big britches, as it were. This Flaw may be either major or minor at Seneschal's option; it simply depends on what the players are like. Many players, whether they have this Flaw or not, will exhibit a good deal of overconfidence—it's a minor Flaw for them. Others are a bit more prudent and must work to be overconfident—it's a major Flaw for them. Either way this Flaw must be role-played to the hilt. If a roll is ever called for (and we don't encourage it, but sometimes you have to), roll WP/TN 10. One success is enough to stand down or humble a little. Be careful with this one—this particular fl isn't too safe...

- Phobia (major or minor)

Some people, no matter how tough they seem, a deathly afraid of some things. Whether it's closed spa open spaces, the darkness, light, snakes, rats, the sigh blood, the sight of weapons, or magic (a dehabilitat degree of superstition), something causes your charac to go weak in the knees, faint, or puke. When combi with Rage, this Flaw can create substantial problems.

The minor form of this Flaw causes people to irrationally, suffer from sickness and weakness, and in a –1 die penalty to most all rolls (at Senesch discretion). The major version is simply wo causing -3 dice to appropriate rolls.

- Rage/Bad Temper (major or mino

The Flaw of Rage make difficult for one to control his actions when frustrated or un pressure. Such people of "explode" and go berserk, lash out physically or verbally anyone or anything.

In its minor incarna Rage forces one to act against the source of frustra in some way or another, b physically, verbally, or s subtly—it need not be loud even violent (though it usu is), but it must be immedi Those wishing to keep th cool must roll WP/TN alternatively one m simply walk out or in so other way distan themselves from t source of frustration rolling WP/TN 7.

The major versio

Rage forces the character to immediately and violently act out against the source of frustration. Such characters enter a berserk rage, attacking and perhaps killing anything that gets in their path. Berserk characters may come out of the rage only by rolling five successes in an extended WP/TN 6 roll. Those wishing to keep their cool must roll WP/TN 15; alternatively one may simply walk out or in some other way distance themselves from the source of frustration by rolling WP/TN 10.

Being in a state of Berserk (available only in the major version) does have its advantages: ST and TO both increase by one for the duration of the berserk. On the downside you must always press the advantage and take the roll of aggressor whenever possible and all CP dice must be spent every round.

- Sleep Disorder (minor or major)

You have a problem with sleeping. Either you sleep deep and long, needing about 12 hours of sleep a day to feel comfortable (minor Flaw), or you have difficulty sleeping. Light sleepers (major Flaw) make good guards (they'll wake up at the slightest hint of trouble), but often suffer from severe fatigue. Light sleepers should roll Per every night. TN is determined by how much noise is in their environment. Most nights in a building are TN 13, most camps are TN 7, and noisy areas are TN 4 or worse. Succeeding this roll causes –1 die to every roll the next day. These penalties apply until one full night of good sleep. Failure means a night of tolerable rest, and fumbling means sound, baby-like sleep.

- Tormented (major or minor)

Every person has his own "demons;" you haven't come to terms with yours. What's more, is that they haunt you regularly. You suffer from "flashbacks," nightmares, and constant guilt. Your combined Passion and Drive Attributes can never exceed 7 points total in minor variations, and are limited at 3 in major variations of this Flaw.

- Ugly (major or minor)

Something about you just bothers people: your face. This Flaw is always taken in relation to those that you are with—it is assumed to be relative to humans first, other races second. Thus a troll would almost definitely have this Flaw when in contact with humans, but it would probably not be a problem with other trolls.

The minor version of this Flaw causes a one die negative penalty to any roll (particularly social rolls) that involve appearance. The major version inflicts a three-die penalty.

- Vows (minor)

Many people have undertaken vows—such vows can be of abstinence from sexual relations, alcohol, violence, or speaking. For the most part these vows are considered minor Flaws (though some really impressive ones, or combinations, might be worth a major—consult your Seneschal). If a vow is violated no Insight Points may be earned until proper penance, retribution, or repentance is made, or until the Flaw is bought off. This Flaw does not generally cover vows such as "I will kill the man that killed my father," that falls under the Drive Attribute.

If ever seriously tempted to break your vow roll WP/TN (varies by difficulty). Failure means violation, with all the effects above.

3. Sorcerous Gifts and Flaws

Gifts and Flaws for the Gifted and the Fey are found in **Book Six: Sorcery**.

III. Proficiencies

Proficiencies, where combat is concerned, measure the amount of training, practice, and familiarity a character has with a given brand of weapon or fighting style. Proficiency covers the basic tenants of how such a weapon or combination is used, and what its effects are. Proficiencies represent relatively loose categories—a short club, for example, can be used with sword-related proficiency, based on weight and method of use. This assumes that the two items (swords and short clubs) are

used similarly; it is conceivable that another proficiency could cover the club, or any weapon. What is important is *how* that weapon is being used—not necessarily *what* the weapon is. Use common sense and remember that the Seneschal has the final say.

The following descriptions cover most every weapon that a character may use or come in contact with in the course of play. Each entry consists of a description of what falls under that fighting style's "domain," followed by *optional* rules for using those weapons.

Maneuvers, listed under each Proficiency, are specialized uses of each given proficiency. Some maneuvers—such as most basic attacks—are automatic to anyone possessing even one point in the proficiency in question. Many maneuvers also have an "activation cost," paid from the Combat pool and found in parentheses to the right of each maneuver listed under a given Proficiency. Others must be learned through play—most of these are even then only available at certain levels of proficiency. Unless otherwise noted one may attempt any maneuver with some knowledge of the principles behind it. Maneuvers may be attempted at default for a penalty of 2 CP or more over the maneuver's original cost. In addition, many maneuvers work for different kinds of weapons (many sword maneuvers transfer easily to mass and pole weapons. The Seneschal has final say over any crossed-over maneuvers.

Defaults are similar to those in Skills. Some fighting styles are very similar to others, and each Proficiency lists what other styles are closely related. Defaults are signified with a negative Proficiency modifier based on which Proficiency the default originates from. Defaulted Profiencies may never exceed 6 without formal training (after which its no longer a defaulted Proficiency). Most maneuvers, unless very similar to those in the original Proficiency, are assumed unusable through Default. Defaults listed in the follow section follow the weapon they originate from. Thus, if need to find your default for Doppelhanders when primary weapon proficiency is "Sword and Shield" loo the end of the Sword and Shield proficiency wh Doppelhander is listed as -4 (meaning your Def Dopplehander proficiency is 4 less than your normal Sword and Shield Proficiency).

1. Sword and Shield

As long as the sword has been in use, the shield has been present to support it. This is one of the oldest fighting styles found in Weyrth, and is still taught in many schools. Throughout the world Gentry and Nobility are particularly fond of the sword and shield, finding it the perfect combination for knights both mounted and on foot.

This Proficiency assumes any one-handed sword and a medium sized shield (at least 18" across, but usually over 2'). Primary advantages of the shield are its ease of effective use

and its strong defense (allowing the sword to deliver a strong offence). This proficiency may also be used without a shield at no penalty, but any shield-based maneuvers are also impossible.

Offensive Maneuvers:
- Bind and Strike (0)
- Cut (0)
- Feint (variable)
- Simultaneous Block/Strike (0)
- Thrust (0)

Defensive Maneuvers:
- Block Open and Strike (2)
- Block (0)
- Counter (3, 2 w/o shield)
- Parry (1, 0 w/o shield)

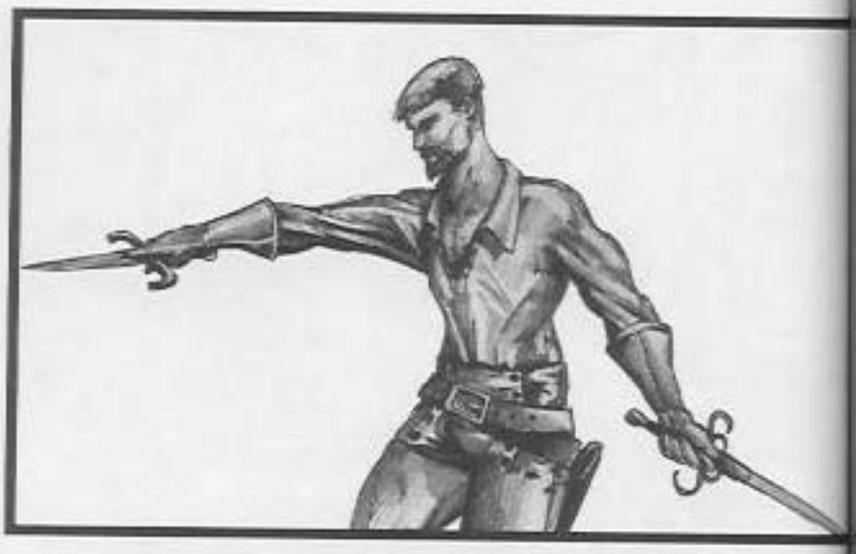
Defaults:
- Case of Rapiers –4
- Cut & Thrust –2
- Dagger –2
- Doppelhander –4
- Greatsword –2
- Mass-weapon and Shield –1
- Pole-arms –4
- Pole-axe –4
- Pugilism/Brawling –4
- Rapier –4
- Wrestling –4

2. Greatsword/Longsword

As better armors came into use warriors began discarding shields in favor of larger swords. These longer blades have gained great popularity in Cyrinthmeir, Stahl, Oustenriech, and Xanarium over the last 200 years. They are elegant weapons, capable of cutting and thrusting and complicated maneuvering and countering. Greatswords, longswords, and bastard swords are effective weapons both in personal duel and on the battlefield.

The Greatsword Proficiency covers greatswords (roughly 4' 6" to 5' long), longswords (about 4' long), bastard swords (about 4' long, with a hard tapering blade)

and estocs (4' long, unedged for half-swording), along with any other two-handed or hand-and-a-half variety. Primary advantages of these weapons include a long range, lots of cutting power, and a plethora of maneuvers.



Offensive Maneuvers:
- Beat (0)
- Cut (0)
- Evasive Attack (1)
- Feint (variable)
- Half-sword (variable)
- Stop Short (0)
- Thrust (0)

Defensive Maneuvers:
- Counter (2)
- Expulsion (2)
- Grapple (2)
- Half-sword (variable)
- Parry (0)

Defaults:
- Case of Rapiers –4
- Cut & Thrust –3
- Dagger –2
- Doppelhander –2
- Mass-weapon and Shield –3
- Pole-arms –2
- Pole-axe –2
- Pugilism/Brawling –4
- Rapier –3
- Sword and Shield –2
- Wrestling –3

3. Cut and Thrust

As longbows, crossbows, and primitive firearms began to make plate armor less practical a new form of combat evolved. This fighting style, the predecessor to the rapier, consists of a somewhat lighter version of the old-fashioned knightly sword, with a new emphasis on thrusting in addition to cutting. A companion weapon, such as a buckler, dagger, or arming glove usually complements this quick and deadly weapon. This style is popular in Gelure, Fauth, and—recently—Cyrinthmeir, the Empire (Xanarium), and parts of St and Sarmatov (with sabers especially).

This school covers all lighter one-handed swords su as basket-hilted broadswords, backswords, most sab sword-rapiers, and so on. The primary sword is alm always accompanied by a buckler, poniard/dagger, arming glove (a leather and chain gauntlet for grasp and deflecting blades).

Offensive Maneuvers:
- Beat (0)
- Bind and Strike (0)
- Cut (0)
- Double Strike (0)
- Feint (variable)
- Simultaneous Block/Strike (0)
- Stop Short (0)
- Thrust (0)
- Toss (0)

Defensive Maneuvers:
- Block (with bucklers) (0)
- Counter (2)
- Expulsion (2)
- Grapple (2)
- Parry (0)

Defaults:
- Case of Rapiers –3
- Dagger –2

Doppelhander –4
Greatsword –3
Mass-weapon and Shield –2
Pole-arms –3
Pole-axe –4
Pugilism/Brawling –2
Rapier –2
Sword and Shield –2
Wrestling –3

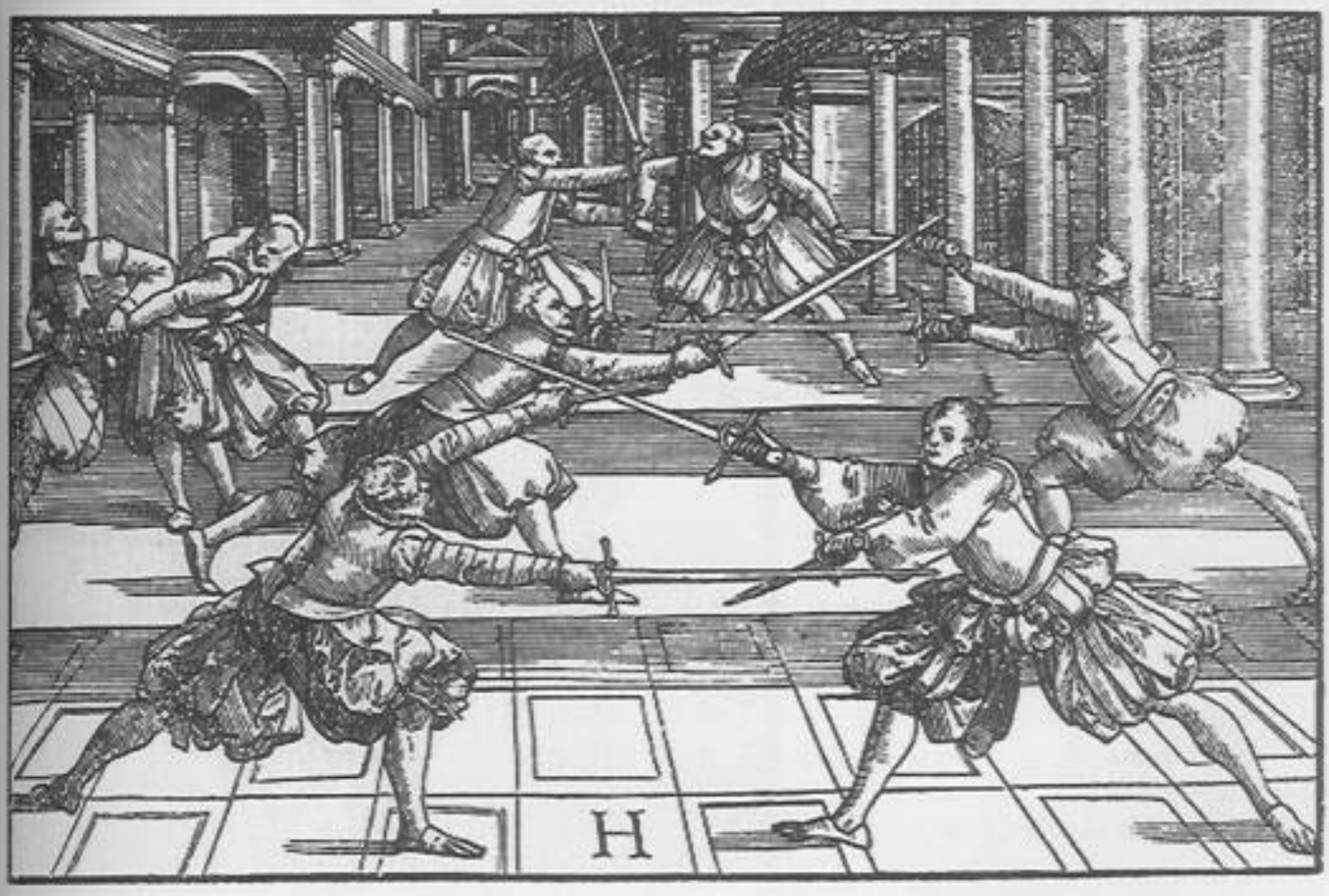
4. Rapier

The newfangled rapier is an urban descendent of the Cut-and-Thrust style, focusing entirely on the *thrust* aspect. This new weapon has just begun to gain popularity in upper circles of Xanarium, parts of Gelure, and in Fauth. There is a hot (and bloody) debate between those that prefer the more traditional longsword or cut and thrust swords, but the rapier is steadily growing in popularity as a civilian dueling weapon. It is relatively useless on the battlefield.

Rapiers are long, with blades sometimes reaching 4 feet. Despite their weight, superior balance makes them quick and deceptively deadly thrusting weapons. They are almost always used along with a companion weapon such as a cloak, a poniard/dagger, or an arming glove.

Offensive Maneuvers:
- Beat (0)
- Bind and Strike (0)
- Double Strike (0)
- Feint (1, may be performed from a thrust)
- Simultaneous Block/Strike (0)
- Stop Short (0)
- Thrust (0)
- Toss (0)

Defensive Maneuvers:
- Block (with bucklers) (0)
- Counter (3, vs. thrusts and for thrusting only)
- Expulsion (2)
- Grapple (2)



Parry (0)
Defaults:
Case of Rapiers –1
Cut & Thrust –2
Dagger –2
Doppelhander –4
Greatsword –4
Mass-weapon and Shield –4
Pole-arms –3
Pole-axe –4
Pugilism/Brawling –2
Sword and Shield –3
Wrestling –3

5. A Case of Rapiers

The capital city of Xanarium, the Seat of the Empire, recently developed this unusual style. A case of rapiers consists of one full-size rapier in each hand. Popularity for this style is beginning to grow.

This school's primary advantage is the extended range of both weapons—possible only due to the thrusting-only attack line of a rapier. On the downside, a swordsman is left without a smaller weapon in the case of suddenly-closing range.

Offensive Maneuvers:
Beat (1)
Bind and Strike (1)
Double Strike (1)
Feint (1)
Simultaneous Block/Strike (1)
Thrust (0)
Defensive Maneuvers:
Expulsion (3)
Parry (0)
Defaults:
Cut & Thrust –2
Dagger –4
Doppelhander –4
Greatsword –4
Mass-weapon and Shield –4
Pole-arms –3
Pole-axe –4
Pugilism/Brawling –2
Rapier –1
Sword and Shield –3
Wrestling –3

6. Doppelhander

The true two-handed sword, an enoumous wea
of Stahlnish origin (the name means "double-hande
is the latest addition to the battlefield. Meant for cut
down pike formations and other pole-armed infan
this weapon resembles a spear more than a sword in ac

use. It is popular in some Stahlnish armies, Gelure, and Ouestenriech.

Doppelhanders are generally about 6 feet long or more, with an 18" grip and a second cross-guard about 10" up from the first. They are fearsome weapons with great range, but easily overcome by any fighter quick enough to close range.

Offensive Maneuvers:
- Beat (0)
- Cut (1)
- Feint (variable)
- Half-sword (variable)
- Stop Short (0)
- Thrust (0)

Defensive Maneuvers:
- Half-sword (variable)
- Parry (0)

Defaults:
- Case of Rapiers –4
- Cut & Thrust –4
- Dagger –4
- Greatsword –2
- Mass-weapon and Shield –3
- Pole-arms –2
- Pole-axe –2
- Pugilism/Brawling –4
- Rapier –4
- Sword and Shield –3
- Wrestling –4

7. Pole-axe

This ancient weapon has proven effective and valuable throughout history. The pole-axe's primary purpose is cleaving through armor and shields, providing a powerful blow. Most knights and infantry have trained with this weapon. It is popular in every corner of the world in some form.

Pole-axes are generally 4 feet long, with a hardwood haft and a reinforced steel head. They are often adorned with a spike or hammerhead on the back or top or both. The pole-axe is especially useful against armored opponents. Because it requires the use of both hands, no shield is possible.

Offensive Maneuvers:
- Beat (2)
- Cut (0)
- Hook (1)
- Thrust (1)

Defensive Maneuvers:
- Counter (3)
- Grapple (2)
- Parry (0)

Defaults:
- Case of Rapiers –4
- Cut & Thrust –4
- Dagger –4
- Doppelhander –3
- Greatsword –2
- Mass-weapon and Shield –3
- Pole-arms –2
- Pugilism/Brawling –4
- Rapier –4
- Sword and Shield –3
- Wrestling –4

8. Pole-arms

This wide grouping of weapons encompasses items as ancient as the spear, as new as the pike, and as everlasting as the quarterstaff. Different forms are popular in different places—pikes in Ouestenriech, Gelure, and the Empire, halberds in Stahl, bills in Farrenshire, and spears and staves worldwide.

This school includes all staff or pole-mounted weapons over 6 feet long, though most range anywhere from 8 feet (spears and staves) to 14 feet (pikes). They have the advantage of range and (often) speed, but are hard to transport.

Available maneuvers vary greatly due to the design of each individual weapon. Use discretion and common sense.

Offensive Maneuvers:
- Bash (0)
- Beat (0)

Cut (0)
Feint (variable)
Hook (1)
Stop Short (0)
Thrust (0)
Defensive Maneuvers:
Counter (4)
Parry (0)
Defaults:
Case of Rapiers –4
Cut & Thrust –4
Dagger –4
Doppelhander –2
Greatsword –3
Mass-weapon and Shield –3
Pole-axe –2
Pugilism/Brawling –3
Rapier –3
Sword and Shield –3
Wrestling –4

9. Mass Weapon and Shield

Since the earliest clubs mass weapons have fou their place in warfare. With the advent of better a better armors clubs and farming tools were transform into battle-axes, picks, flails, morning stars, and mac These weapons are in use the world-over, holdi particular popularity with the peasant infantrym (these weapons are cheap) and the armored gentry (the weapons are especially effective against plate armou

Mass weapons include any single-handed (a occasionally two-handed) weapon that is particula heavy on the business end. Axes, maces, flails, and pi are good examples. These weapons' balance mak parrying especially difficult, and forces the use constant evasion or—more commonly—shield Additionally most axes and hammers are outfitted wi a secondary spike or hammer on the back and/or to To flip the weapon over spend 1 CP *if done during round*. As with Pole-arms, exact maneuvers a dependent on the weapon at hand. Use discretion a common sense. This proficiency may also be us

without a shield at no penalty, but any shield-based maneuvers are also impossible.

Offensive Maneuvers:
- Bash (0)
- Bind and Strike (0)
- Cut (0)
- Hook (1)
- Simultaneous Block/Strike (0)
- Thrust (1)

Defensive Maneuvers:
- Block Open and Strike (2)
- Block (0)
- Parry (1)

Defaults:
- Case of Rapiers –4
- Cut & Thrust –3
- Dagger –3
- Doppelhander –4
- Greatsword –3
- Pole-arms –4
- Pole-axe –2
- Pugilism/Brawling –4
- Rapier –4
- Sword and Shield –2
- Wrestling –4

10. Dagger

This small, easily hidden weapon comes in many forms. Found in every place in the world, daggers and knives are used as tools and instruments of death. Daggers are extremely popular civilian weapons, and are carried by almost everyone.

This Proficiency covers stilettos, poniards, rondels, and all manners of short stabbing and slicing blades. This Proficiency is directly attached to street brawling and wrestling due to the short range of daggers and the like.

Offensive Maneuvers:
- Cut (0)
- Grapple (2 or 4)
- Kick (2)
- Punch (1)
- Thrust (0)

Defensive Maneuvers:
- Grapple (2)
- Parry (0)

Defaults:
- Case of Rapiers –4
- Cut & Thrust –4
- Doppelhander –4
- Greatsword –4
- Mass-weapon and Shield –4
- Pole-arms –4
- Pole-axe –4
- Pugilism/Brawling –1
- Rapier –3
- Sword and Shield –4
- Wrestling –1

11. Pugilism/Brawling

The one weapon everyone has is his or her own body. Variations of unarmed combat exist all over the world. This version is popular throughout the western half.

Pugilism and Brawling consist of punching, kicking, grappling, and dirty tricks. These weapons are infinitely portable, but ineffective when compared to a "real weapon."

Offensive Maneuvers:
- Grapple (2 or 4)
- Kick (1)
- Punch (0)

Defensive Maneuvers:
- Grapple (2)
- Parry (0)

Defaults:
- Case of Rapiers –4
- Cut & Thrust –4
- Dagger –1
- Doppelhander –4
- Greatsword –4
- Mass-weapon and Shield –3
- Pole-arms –4
- Pole-axe –4
- Rapier –3
- Sword and Shield –4
- Wrestling –1

12. Wrestling

Wrestling, though popular as a sport, is really the most desperate of all battles. As with Pugilism and Brawling, Wrestling is always an option for the unarmed character. Aditionally, many fighters find themselves unarmed on the ground in the course of battle or a duel (the Dagger, Greatsword, and Pole-axe schools are particularly fond of this).

The following maneuvers are by-products of training as a wrestler. They are generally used to enter a wrestling situation, not used during.

Offensive Maneuvers:
- Grapple (1 or 3)
- Punch (1)
- Kick (2)

Defensive Manuevers:
- Grapple (1)

Wrestling, in addition to maneuvers, has special
once combatants hit the ground. When wrestlers hi
ground both are assumed to be "Free," meaning that
have use of most of their body. Both contestants
divide their Combat Pool (derived from Wrestlin
course) into *offense* and *defense*. Any dice not allott
one category or the other are lost. Both players th
their *offense* in a contested roll against the other's *de*

against a Target Number equal to the opponent's ST +1/10lbs over your weight. Thus if wrestler A has ST 5, and weighs 180lbs, and wrestler B has ST 4 and weighs 250lbs, then wrestler A's TN is 11 (4 + 70/10) and wrestler B's TN is just 5.

If you win both contests, then your opponent becomes "held" (or pinned if he's already held) and loses ¼ (¾ if pinned) of his total CP. Alternatively you may improve your own condition (from pinned to held, from held to free) instead of making your opponent's worse. If you win one contest, then your opponent remains free, as do you. If you lose both contests, then you are now held (if free) or pinned (if held). Only one character may be pinned at any given time. If you successfully pin whomever is pinning you, then you become held and he becomes pinned.

These rolls are made every round until one opponent is killed or yields. Small weapons (including punches and kicks) may be used by any free character out of the Wrestling Combat Pool. Any such attacks are made *after* the two contests are rolled with remaining dice from the original pool.

13. Lances

As fighting from horseback became more and more practical, efficient, and popular, heavy cavalry came into being. Their weapon of choice for the opening charge is the lance. This weapon is found anywhere knights or heavy cavalry are.

Lances range from 8' to 14' in length, depending on the technological advancement of any given area. They are usually butted under the right arm and used with a shield. Lances, though made of wood, are usually capped with a long steel or iron point. A sporting version, the jousting lance, has a blunted tip for tournaments. The primary advantages to a lance are its range and power in a charge, where it uses the mount's ST, not the rider's.

Offensive Maneuvers:

Simultaneous Block/Strike (0) used in a charge (mount's ST)

Thrust (1) used when stationary (rider's ST)

Defensive Maneuvers:

Block (0)

14. Missile Weapon Proficiencies

Missile Weapon Proficiencies are not nearly as complicated as hand-to-hand Weapon Proficiencies. These Proficiencies go towards building the Missile Pool (see **Book Four**). There are no attached maneuvers, though each has a few defaults. These Proficiencies are:

- Bow (including long and short varieties; defaults to crossbow at –3)
- Crossbow (all sizes; defaults to Bow at –4)
- Darts (defaults to Javelin –3)
- Slings
- Spear/Javelin (defaults *from* Polearm –3)
- Thrown Knives
- Thrown Axes, etc.
- Thrown Rocks/irregularly shaped objects (defaults *from* any other Missile Proficiency at –3)

IV. Maneuvers

Maneuvers are listed together in a lump sum. Each maneuver has an *Activation Cost* which is outlined under Proficiencies, above. What follows are mechanics for using offensive and defensive maneuvers in the course of a bout or battle. Much of the information below will be difficult to use and understand without having first read **Book Five: The Codex of Battle**. This information is included here instead for ease of reference.

1. Offensive Maneuvers Described

Offensive maneuvers are those initiated from the aggressor side of any Exchange (see **Book Four: The Codex of Battle**). Most maneuvers may be combined for a greater effect, so long as all Activation Costs are paid. All offensive maneuvers, unless otherwise stated, use a weapon's Attack Target Number (ATN) for all Tests.

Bash: This is the standard attack for all swung blunt weapons, learned immediately. Extra power may be added to a bash by expending one (and only one) extra CP die prior to rolling and adding 1 to damage

in the event of a successful hit. All blunt weapons have an Attack Target Number (ATN) for bashing. All beginning fighters—and most people in general—know how to bash.

Beat: The beat is an attack upon an opponent's weapon or shield in attempt to temporarily remove it from the equation. Beats may only be performed at the start of a bout or following a "pause," as described in **Book Four**. This sudden, brutal, and effective maneuver is executed by declaring "Beat" as your offensive maneuver, along with the dice allotted to the attack. The defender assigns defense dice to a defensive maneuver (parry, dodge, block, etc.) and the contest is rolled normally. If the attacker wins the beat, then the defenders weapon (or whatever else was being "beaten") is knocked aside and cannot be used in defense on the following exchange. Additionally, every success in the attacker's margin costs the defender 2 CP (this functions similarly to Shock, described under Damage in Book Four). If the defender wins then the round is resolved normally and initiative changes over.

Using a Beat is an excellent way to handle opponents with longer weapons as well: all range penalties are cut in half (round down) when beating.

Mik, our short half-siehe friend, has been caught in a back-street brawl with a footpad (that's a "thug" for us Americans). Both parties are armed with short swords. Mik decides to poke the thug as fast as he can so that he can get out of there. When initiative is thrown, Mik's die is red; the thug's is white. Mik leaps forward, attempting to pull a beat with 5 dice. The footpad responds with a 3-die parry (he's been caught off guard a little). Mik rolls 4, 6, 7, 0…three successes (TN 6); the footpad rolls 5, 6, 0…one success (TN 7). The Footpad's sword is knocked to the side (he can't use it to defend on this exchange) and he loses 4 CP (2 CP each for Mik's two successes in the margin)! Mik decides to thrust in and finish the thug with his remaining 4 dice at the footpad's belly. He rolls 3, 6, 9, 0…three successes (TN 6, unmodified); the footpad goes for a full dodge with his remaining one die (he had five, but lost 4 from the beat), and rolls a 5…one succes hits with two successes.

The beat maneuver is available at proficiency level 4.

Bind and Strike: This maneuver uses off-hand we (shields, poniards, etc.) to bind or pin do opponent's weapon, opening up a clean foll attack. On one Exchange roll attack as norm the off-hand weapon/shield (use the D an ATN for shields). If this at successful your opponent loses for every Success in the Margin on the next Exchange. Thus beat your opponent by 4 suc his defense on the next exc would be reduced by 4 d

Cut: This is the standard for all edged wea learned immediately power may be adde slash by expendi (and only one) ex die prior to rollin adding 1 to dam the event of a suc hit. All edged we have an Attack T Number (ATN) slashing and cutting. All beginning figh and most peopl general—know how

Double Attack: Attackin two weapons at once is a thing. Divide your dice on this in any proportion between both we (remember weapon length penalties) and attack opponent may defend by (a) evading (b) bl and parrying or parrying with both of his weap once (c) party one of the attacks (his choice) an

the other doesn't land or (d) pre-empt (buy initiative).

Evasive attack: This is a defensive measure that takes place during an attack (thus it counts as an offensive maneuver). In principle the attacker cuts with his weapon while simultaneously leaping backward so as to evade an opponent's attack. This maneuver requires a great deal of skill, but is indispensable to those who often find themselves in quick-draw style duels where both opponents go straight for the attack.

To execute this maneuver one attacks as normal, spending an additional die to activate the maneuver. Once the maneuver is activated any number of additional dice may be spent to raise your opponent's attack TN by one per additional die spent. On the downside, your own attack TN also raises, though only by one for every two additional dice spent (it's hard to hit a guy when you're going the other way…). As stated above, this maneuver is activated with any slash or slash-like maneuver; it is relatively impossible in conjunction with any thrust-based maneuver.

This maneuver is available at proficiency level 6.

Feints fall into two categories: Feint-and-cut and Feint-and-thrust.

Feint-and-Cut: This is the first "trick" that most swordsmen know, consisting of slashing at one region of the body, then changing direction mid-swing in an effort to pass the defender's defenses entirely. This is relatively difficult and slow, with a high Activation Cost.

Once the Activation Cost is paid any number of dice may be added to the attacker's hand, at a cost of 1 CP for every additional die rolled in the attack. A feint is always declared *after* the defender declares defense but *before* dice are rolled.

It's important to note that a feinted attack lands in a different spot than originally declared. The attacker must also state the new location of attack (usually within one or two areas of the original attack—more exotic feints may be performed at a greater execution cost).

An example is provided:

Geralt (CP 15) is facing off with Stefan's third cousin, Simon. After several minutes of attacks and parries Geralt decides to finish the duel. He declares a low slash from his own right side (zone II) for 8 CP dice. Simon declares a block with 7 dice (he's feeling pretty safe behind that shield). Geralt, spending 1 more CP die and laughing heartily, announces a feint-and-slash to zone IV. Geralt throws three dice away and puts his last three dice into his hand (8+1+3+3=15…his whole pool). Geralt rolls his attack with 11 dice against Simon's measly 7: Geralt gets 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 9, 9, 0, 0, 0…nine successes (at Geralt's ATN of 5, a really lucky roll). Simon's defense roll is 1, 2, 6, 7, 6, 9, 0, 0…five successes (at his DTN of 6, also a good roll, just not good enough).

Feints have a tendency to lose their novel effect after a while when used against the same opponent. Each repeated *identical* feint against a single opponent (over any number or duels—not just one!) costs an extra CP die to execute.

The feint-and-slash is available at proficiency level 5.

Feint-and-thrust: This is a more practical feint, as easily performed with long swords and broadswords as with shorter weapons. Like the feint-and-slash it begins with a false slash—usually overhand or across (zones III, IV and V), but finishes with a thrust to the head, neck, or torso.

This maneuver is executed almost identically to the feint-and-slash. When attempting a feint-and-thrust the attacker declares a *slashing* attack (rapiers are the exception, and may feint from a thrust), complete with location and CP dice expenditure. The defender then declares his own defense—unlike the feint-and-slash this maneuver is good against *parries only*. The attacker now states that he is feinting and thrusting and adds any number of CP dice to his pool at a cost of one CP die thrown away for every one added to the attacking hand (as per feinting-and-slashing, above).

Feints do have a tendency to lose their novel effect after a while when used against the same

opponent. Each repeated identical feint against a single opponent (over any number or duels—not just one!) costs an extra CP die to execute.

The feint-and-thrust is available at proficiency level 3.

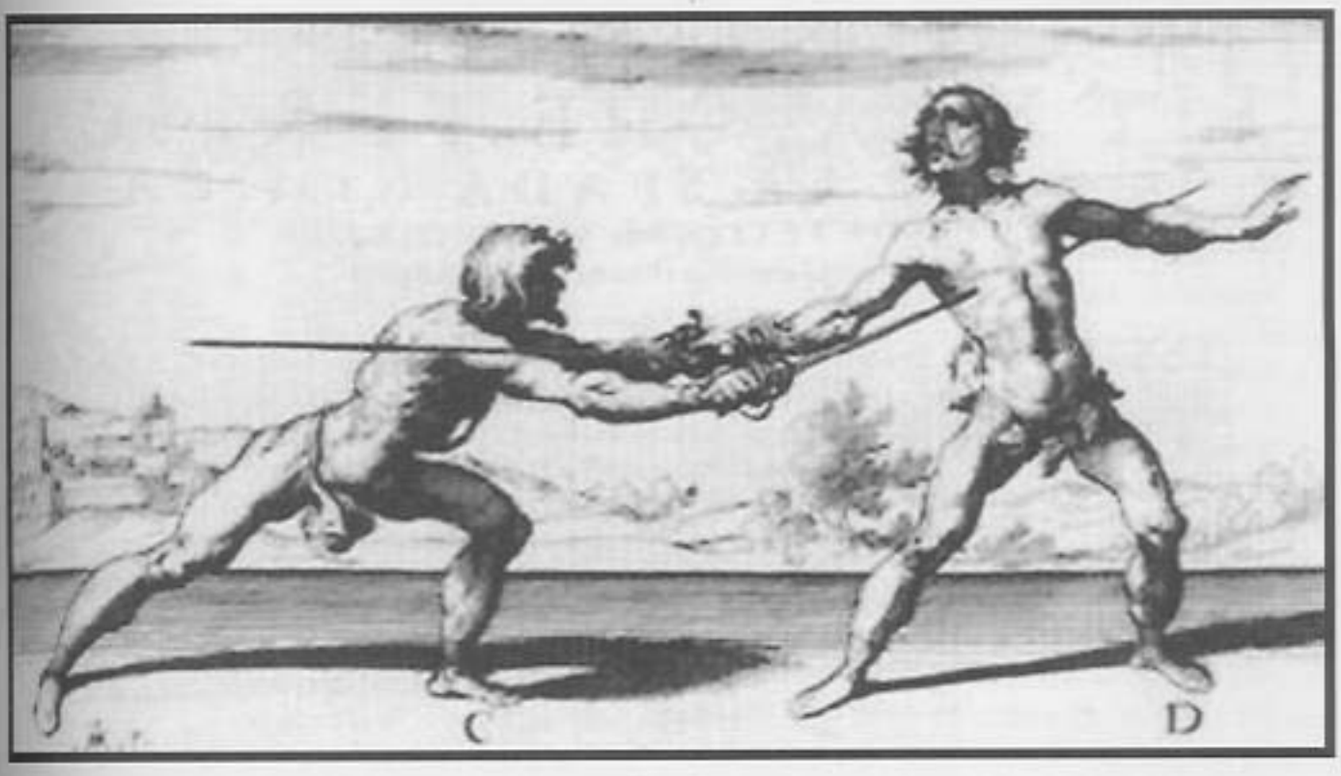
Grapple: Offensive grappling comes in two forms—A set-up grapple, and a straight grapple. Set-up grapples are easier to do. To "set up" your opponent you attack during one Exchange—this attack does no damage, and needs only to tie or win. On the following exchange, you may attack again to attempt a grapple with no activation cost (but don't forget range penalties). Without the set-up the activation cost (usually 2 dice) must first be paid. If this attack is successful you may either (a) toss your opponent or (b) pin him down. For tosses you may either deal damage to him by putting him down *hard* (DR: ST+1b for most surfaces, randomly distributed like a fall in **Book Five**) or you can send him rolling or flying away. Compare the Margin of Successes to the chart below:

0-at your feet	3-ST +1' away
1-ST –1' away	4-ST +2' away
2-ST' away	5-ST +3' away

Pinning your opponent down or wrapping them up reduces their total CP by ¾ in the case of 4-5 successes in the Margin. 1-3 successes render them "held" (-½ CP). A tie or failure leads to Wrestling, as per the Wrestling Proficiency.

Half-sword: This is one of the few practical ways to kill an armored opponent in full harness (full plate) with a sword. Used with long swords, bastard swords, and other longer weapons, the half-sword technique is performed by grasping the blade of the sword with the off (usually left) hand in order to use the sword as a short spear or pole-weapon. T technique is particularly useful in close-quarter well, when swinging a long weapon may impractical. Half-swording reduces a swords effe length by one or two steps from long to mediu short, at player's discretion; note that the half-sw may be released into a one-handed attack at any ti nullifying any half-sword bonuses, but gaining rea and provides +3 damage when thrusting agai armors. The Attack Target Number (ATN) wh half-swording is 5, and the Defensive Target Numb (DTN) is 6.

One can shift from normal grip to the half-sw at any time, though doing so during an Excha (shifting suddenly into or out of the half-sword order to execute a particular counter, for examp costs 1 CP and requires a Reflex/TN 6 roll.



Hook: Many pole-arms and axes are capable of hooking an opponent's limb or head. This maneuver is executed like a thrust that intentionally misses, and then the shaft is pressed against the target and pulled. This maneuver is particularly effective on the legs, causing one's opponent to fall and become prone. After spending the Activation Cost (usually 1) allot dice for a regular thrust-like attack. Every success in the Margin of Success lowers the target's Knockdown Attribute by one die. The hooked party then rolls Knockdown/TN 8. Failure drops him to the ground (-½ total CP for lying prone). Fumbling causes damage as a 6' fall (see **Book Five: The Laws of Nature**). The attacker still retains initiative.

Simultaneous Block/Strike: This gutsy maneuver is not unlike the Bind and Strike maneuver, except that it all happens in the course of one Exchange. To perform this maneuver, divide your CP between attack and defense (remember that you'll still need dice for the next Exchange). Either attack or defense must be half as large as the other (thus you could divide 9 dice into 6 and 3, or 3 and 6, but not 2 and 7). The defense is then rolled against your opponents attack, and your offense against his defense (if any). This maneuver is obviously only useful in situations where both you *and* your opponent are attacking at once. All attacks are resolved normally.

Stop Short: This maneuver consists of leaping or stomping at an opponent and then halting suddenly to throw your opponent off guard.

The maneuver's cost is variable. Roll a contest of the attacker's WP against the defender's Reflex. The attacker's TN is equal to his opponent's Per. The defender's TN is equal to 7 plus the number of dice that the attacker spent in executing the maneuver. This counts as an attack. If the defender wins, then he may take initiative normally. If the attacker wins, then his opponent loses a number of dice from his CP equal to the attacker's margin of success. This maneuver is really only effective once. Every additional attempt (whether the first was successful or not) cumulatively costs 1 extra CP die to the attacker

This maneuver is available at proficiency level 3.

Thrust: All thrusting-capable weapons have an ATN for thrusting. Some weapons are better suited to this form of attack, as reflected in the ATN. Thrusts are also notoriously fast—act as if the thrusting party's Reflex was 1 higher, should initiative tie (as when both sides declare aggression simultaneously. Should two parties with equal Reflex thrust at the same time both attacks are rolled at once—it was not uncommon for two fencers to die upon one another's blade after such a mistake.

All fighters know this maneuver.

TABLE 3.4:
EFFECTS OF *COUNTERS*

Roll (d6) Half-sword*	Roll (d10) Normal	Effect
	1	Slash at I
	2	Slash at II
1	3	Slash at III
	4	Slash at IV
	5	Slash at V
2	6	Pommel to XIII (DR=ST bludgeoning)
3	7	Thrust to face (XIII)
4	8	Thrust to body (XI or XII)
5	9	Grapple **
6	10	Disarm***

Notes:
*Roll on this column when half-swording.
**See the Grappling Maneuver. Note that no Activation cost is necessary for this Grapple.
***Success results in no damage, but rather one's opponent loses his weapon. One or two successes result in the weapon landing within 3 feet, three to four successes send the weapon flying in a random direction 1d6+1 yards, five successes put the weapon in *your* hand, if you want it (otherwise it flies 1d10 yards in a random direction).

Toss: Distraction has always been an important part of dueling and combat. This maneuver allows you to toss a hat, glove, sidearm, or other object into your opponent's face, thereby distracting him (and causing him to lose CP dice). To execute this maneuver simply allot dice as for a normal attack. The ATN is assumed to be 7 for most hand-held objects such as a fist of sand, a glove, hat, or dagger. Your opponent may dodge this object at DTN 7 (like a partial evasion in **Book Four**). If you win each success in the Margin causes him to lose 1 CP on the following Exchange (not unlike a Bind-and-Strike). Additionally, you retain initiative.

2. Defensive Maneuvers Described

Defensive maneuvers are those actions used on the defensive side of a combat Exchange. Most can be combined with others for greater effect. All Tests are assumed to be made against the Defense Target Numb (DTN) of the weapon at hand unless otherwise stat

Block: This is the most basic of defenses, halting deflecting incoming attacks. Where game mecha are concerned, blocking works essentially the same any parry, except that it uses the shield's DTN. **Book Four: The Codex of Battle** for more on ha defenses.

This maneuver is available at all Proficiency lev

Block Open and Strike: This maneuver consists of blocki or parrying an incoming attack wide open, then usi a second (usually primary) weapon to attack the at opening. During one Exchange defend, according the Block or Parry maneuver, but with the additio Activation Cost (usually 2 dice). Assuming successful defense, the follow-up attack may then

made with one additional die for every success in the previous Exchange's Margin.

This maneuver is available at Proficiency level 6.

Counter: Though primarily an offensive action, counters are initiated by the defender. Sometimes called a riposte, a counter relies on receiving an opponent's attack, then using it against him. There are literally hundreds or even thousands of counters, designed to deal with most any attack from most any direction. Counters generally prove weak only against feints.

When a defender declares "counter" as his chosen defense he must spend an execution cost of 2 CP. Dice are then allocated as in any standard parry. If the defender loses then the 2 CP he spent on the counter are lost and he is hit. If the parry is successful, then every successful die *the attacker* rolled becomes one extra die that the countering party may add to his next attack.

Additionally, due to the myriad nature of counters, the countering party should roll on table 3.4 to find out the exact effect of his counter (note that counters with rapiers and the like will be different: use the Half-sword collumn, ignoring rols of 1). Those with the "Accuracy" Gift may modify their rolls on this chart as if it were a Hit Location chart; others may spend an additional 2 CP to modify their roll (up or down) by 1 or 2. This roll is made prior to rolling any attack dice.

Counters may also be performed when half-swording (see below).

Expulsion: This maneuver is not dissimilar to the offensive beat, but is initiated from the defender's side. This maneuver is only effective against thrusts and thrust-based attacks, or against slash-based attacks made with 4 dice or less.

To execute an expulsion, simply declare "expulsion" alongside the standard parry. Dice are allocated to the parry as usual, usually along with a two-die execution cost. The effects are nearly identical to those of an offensive beat. If the parry fails, then the round is resolved normally. If the parry is effective, then each die in the defender's success margin causes a –1 CP penalty against *thrusting* attacks to the defender in the following exchange. See offensive beats, above, for an example.

This maneuver is available at Proficiency Level 5.

Grapple: Defensive Grappling appears in three forms—grappling to trap, grappling to pin, and grappling to throw. The Activation Cost is the same for each.

Grappling to Trap: This is the most common form of grappling amongst swordsmen and others that use grappling when armed. It leads to a quick and effective strike or limb-break. While holding an opponent is possible from this position, it is largely impractical.

Every winning success in the Margin of Success adds one die to the following attack (in the next Exchange) in the case of a punch, kick, or pommel strike. Attempts to hold lead to Wrestling (see the Wrestling Proficiency), also with an initial die bonus (+1 per Success) for the first round.

Grappling to Throw: For throws you may either deal damage to your opponent by putting him down *hard* (DR: ST+1b for most surfaces, randomly distributed like a fall in **Book Five**) or you can send him rolling or flying away. Failure results in nothing other than

turning initiative over to your opponent. Compare the Margin of Successes (assuming a successful defense) to the chart below:

0-at your feet
1-ST –1' away
2-ST' away
3-ST +1' away
4-ST +2' away
5-ST +3' away

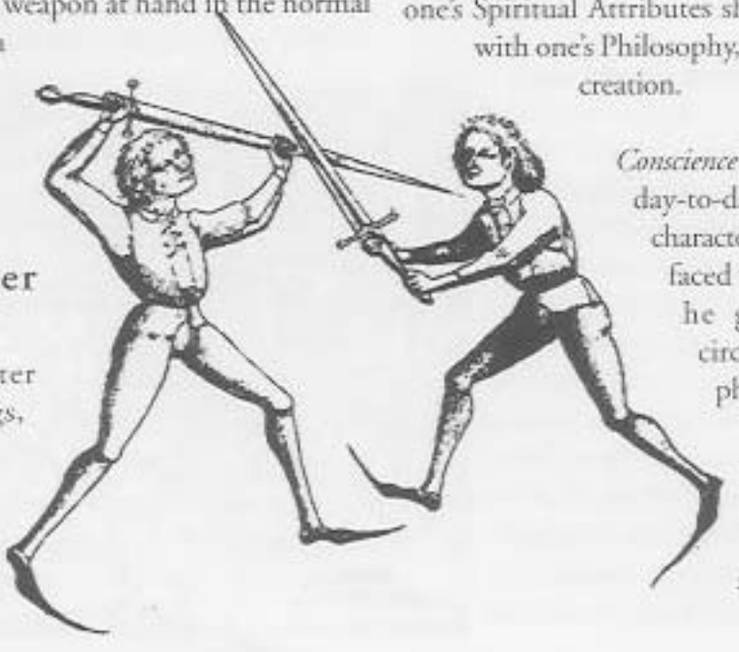
Grappling to Pin: Pinning your opponent down or wrapping them up reduces their total CP by ¾ in the case of 4-5 successes in the Margin, 1-3 successes render them "held" (-½ CP). A tie or failure leads to Wrestling, as per the Wrestling Proficiency.

Grappling may be preformed at Proficiency level 3.

Half-sword: This technique has fine defensive properties as well. See *Half-Sword* as an offensive maneuver, above, and *Counters*, also above.

Parry: This maneuver is the basis for all non-shield non-dodging defenses. It consists primarily of using one's own weapon to *deflect*—not halt—an incoming attack. Parries are performed by simply rolling defense with the DTN of the weapon at hand in the normal Contested Roll of a combat Exchange.

This maneuver is available at all Proficiency levels.



V. Character Progression

As your character experiences new things, furthers his own goals, beliefs, and personal philosophies, he will also improve in many ways. Instead of character "levels" each trait grows independently, allow the entire character to grow and change according to player's wishes. All advancement comes from two sour (a) constant use of a given skill and (b) constant effor playing out and furthering one's Spiritual Attributes. E major aspect of your character, and how to advanc that area, is discussed below.

1. Spiritual Attributes

The Spiritual Attributes define those things that most important to a character—his loves and hates, dreams, his faith, and his destiny. It should be a prim goal of each player to uphold and develop these tr throughout play, for it is through these attributes tha other traits rise and improve (we think about 3 to 5 r points gained in the course of a night's play is pretty goo Each Spiritual Attribute has its own rules of advancem

Should a player ever wish to change the focus o Spiritual Attribute (such as a change in religion, lov or ideals) that Attribute *and any one other Spiritu Attribute* must be dropped to zero and the focus written. It may then progress as normal. An even ra and more dramatic event is when a Spiritual Attrib changes entirely (e.g. replacing "Destiny" with "Passion"). This is only possible if (1) the Senesc approves it and if (2) 10 Spirit Points (explained belo are spent to facilitate the change-over. Whatever happe one's Spiritual Attributes should always be compar with one's Philosophy, as set forth during charac creation.

Conscience is effected by your charact day-to-day actions. Every time yo character does the "right thing" wh faced with any kind of opposit he gains a point. Extrem circumstances—such as seriou physical danger—may warra two points. A point Conscience may be l whenever one goes agai his good-natured instinc acting out of selfishness

cowardice that brings harm to others. This trait, when combined with Faith can lead to a truly good person or legendary hero. When mixed with Greed or many other Flaws, it creates a tragic but lifelike character.

Destiny grows every time you act in accordance with the path that fate has chosen for you. If you have any points in this Attribute to begin with you should decide (or find out) what your Destiny is as soon as possible (just finding out would be worth a few points). Rewards vary from 1 point (minor steps) to 3 points (large steps toward fulfillment of prophecy). Fighting one's Destiny is a natural thing to do, and incurs no loss of points. Remember also that any existing Destiny points may come to bear during any Destiny-dependent crossroads, increasing one's chances for a favorable outcome.

A second source of Destiny comes from your character's adventures, whether related to one's destiny or not. Particularly long, harrowing, difficult, or otherwise strenuous sessions are worth an extra point of Destiny at your Seneschal's discretion. Accomplishing any major goal (such as the grand finale of a short adventure or major turning point in a drawn-out campaign) is also worth a point of Destiny to those players that have this Attribute.

Drive, being that one higher purpose that drives you ever onward, may increase any time you place yourself at risk in the name of that higher purpose. If your undertaking is successful you gain two points. If you fail—but really tried—you gain one. If you don't even try, given the proper opportunity, then you lose one point. Remember also that any existing Drive points may come to bear during any such situation, increasing one's chances for a favorable outcome.

Faith works much in the same way as Drive, growing by one point every time you act on Faith or because of your Faith. Denying what you believe in causes one point to be lost, while supporting or defending your Faith in the face of danger brings two points, not one. Remember also that any existing Faith points may come to bear during any such situation, increasing one's chances for a favorable outcome.

Luck is the great wild card of the Spiritual Attributes. One point of Luck may be gained through any of three ways. First, any time you make the whole group laugh or impress them with a fine plan, idea, or dramatic piece of roleplaying you gain one point. Second, whichever player had the highest single die roll through the course of one session gains one point at the close of that session. Lastly, whoever rolled the worst overall during the session gets a "consolation point" with a wish of "better Luck next time!" No

more than 3 Luck points may be gained in any one session.

Passion, described as an intense personal loyalty, love, or hate—directed towards a specific person or entity—gains one point every time your character makes some sacrifice or undertakes some risk in the name of this Passion. Thus defending your love's name, or pounding down your archenemy's brother just because he's related would grant one point. That point is always gained *after* the event takes place. It is important to note that you needn't be successful in your endeavors—you just need to really try. Failure to act on such an opportunity may actually cause a *loss* of one point of passion, at the Seneschal's discretion. Remember also that any existing Passion points may come to bear during any such situation, increasing one's chances for a favorable outcome.

TABLE 3.5: INSIGHT REWARDS

Insight	Bonus Priorities
1-15	E
16-30	D
31-45	C
46-60	B
61-75	A
76-90	A, C
91-105	A, B
106-125	A, A
126-150	A, A, C
156-200	A, A, B
201 +	A, A, A

2. Spending Spiritual Attribute Points vs. Using Them

Book One outlined a number of ways to *use* your Spiritual Attributes. Those points, though they have limited use during each session, are not lost. They return at the beginning of the next session in the same quantity that the last session ended with. *Spending* Spiritual Attribute points is different. All other traits, except Skills, increase by permanently spending Spiritual Attribute Points. These points, once spent, are lost—and may only be regained through play (as described above). When spending these points they may come in any quantity from any combination of the five Spiritual Attributes.

3. Insight

Another aspect of spending Spiritual Attribute points is *Insight*. One point of Insight is gained every time you spend one Spiritual Attribute point. These points come into play after your character dies or leaves the game, allowing you to build a stro new character. When you rolling a new character (whe the last one died or was sim "retired") compare the character's Insight to Table Higher Insight grants additi "priorities" (see **Book Two**) character creation. Thus inste one Priority A, B, C, and s you may begin with one Pri A, *two* Priority B's, one C, D, so on.

4. Temporal and Men Attributes

Any Attribute may be r by spending Spiritual Attribute points according to T 3.6, below. No Temporal or Mental Attribute ma increased by more than one point per session.

5. Proficiencies

These are easier to raise than Attributes, but req that a character either spend some time training u the Proficiency in the course of play. Not much trai is needed, assuming the character has an hour or so to spend practicing. To raise Proficiency by one simply spend a number of Spiritual Attribute points e to the current Proficiency level. Hence the cost to r the Greatsword Proficiency from 4 to 5 would Spiritual Attribute Points. As with Temporal and Me Attributes only one level increase per Proficiency is allo during any one game session.

Acquiring a new Proficiency requires a teacher Proficiency level 5 or better, and costs the same normal proficiency (minimum 1). Thus buying C Thrust would cost 1 point to begin at level 1, but if already were proficient in Greatsword (which defau Cut & Thrust at –3) you could buy the new Profici as if you were already at the same level as Greatswor

Vhord, our example from ***Book Two****, is proficient in Sw* and Shield *at level 7. He now wishes to learn to fight*

TABLE 3.6: RAISING ATTRIBUTES	
Current Attribute	Cost to raise Attribute to next level
1	1
2	2
3	4
4	7
5	10
6	13
7	16
8	19
9	22
10	25

Greatsword, which defaults from Sword and Shield at -2. His automatic default proficiency in Greatsword is therefore 5. For 5 Spiritual Attribute points *he can buy Greatsword as an independent Proficiency at level 6.*

6. Vagaries

Raising Sorcerous Vagaries works the same as Proficiencies, above, except at double price, plus one. Thus raising any given Power from 2 to 3 costs 5 points (2 x 2 +1 = 5). Buying a new power costs 1 point (2 x 0 +1 = 1). This cost is *doubled* for any trying to learn without the benefit of a master, large library, or similar resource.

7. Gifts and Flaws

Gifts and Flaws may be bought (or bought off) during play if your Seneschal allows. Minor Gifts cost 10 Spiritual Attribute points to buy; major Gifts cost 20. Minor Flaws may be bought off (and therefore removed) for 10 points; major Flaws go for 20. In addition, characters may acquire Gifts or Flaws during the course of play for no cost at all, should the Seneschal grant them (or punish with them). A fine example is the Amputee Flaw, which may be gained simply by losing an arm or hand…free of charge!

8. Skills

Skills generally do not increase through the use of Spiritual Attribute points. Instead, every time you successfully use a Skill under duress of any kind you place a check in one of the little boxes next to each Skill. When three checks are gained roll Mental Aptitude (MA) against a TN equal to 15 – (current Skill Rating). Thus if your current SR is 7, then your target number for this MA roll is 8 (15 – 7 = 8). If you succeed this roll your Skill Rating drops one point and you erase all checks. If you fail this roll you erase two checks, and your SR remains the same. If you fumble this roll you lose all three checks and your SR stays the same.

Skills may be improved during out-of-game training by spending 2 Spiritual Attribute points for an MA Test. If this Test is successful, then the SR drops. If this Test fails, then the SR remains the same, though the Spiritual Attribute points are still spent.

New Skills may be purchased for 2 Spiritual Attribute points at SR 9.

9. Wealth, Status, and Social Class

Alas, these things cannot be changed through training or the use of Spiritual Attribute Points. On the other hand, as your character's story progresses he may find opportunities to improve his station and standing in life. If this is important to your character consider making taking the Greedy Flaw, choosing an appropriate Destiny, or just talking to your Seneschal about it.

The Riddle of Steel Book Four: The Codex of Battle

ANGRILY HE YANKED THE REIGNS, wheeling the horse about; blood and spittle flying from the vicious square bit in the black steed's mouth. Mid-afternoon sun radiated the silent desert terrain casting a harsh black shadow below the charging destrier.

"Utter foolishness!" his fear screamed. "There are seven of them, hardened Kozaks with sharp eyes and swift bows!" Yet alive as his fear beat in his chest, his fury drowned it in wrath. A morning of hard flight for the three companions and their captive provided ample opportunity for searing rage to brew during a review of events resulting in this unfortunate end.

ORIGINALLY FOUR FRIENDS from New Cyrinthmeir City, the Conclave had recently accepted a "contract" from a Helenian merchant who had been set upon by *Marmaduke*s during a recent caravan to the east. While there, he had purchased a slave so bewitching that he had married her immediately following her first bedding. Taken along with numerous other wealth, she was lost to him a month prior during a night raid. Caring more for his money and his life, he continued onward, vowing to "Finance his loves rescue." Jeriah made use of his linguistic talents, and with a good deal of gold, charm, and threats, the four had located the raiders' camp. After hiring a team of horses and a wagon for a sizable fee, they separated and lured the Kozaks to the easy prey of the naked train with tempting plunder.

Remaining in hiding, the three other members had waited for the raiding party to leave, and then slunk into the complex of caves comprising the hordes' mesa base. There had been some killing and sneaking about, not to mention the looting and sabotage. Discovering and fleeing with their prize had been relatively easy. However, the Kozak raiders had taken it personally, and those who survived the poisoned wine gave chase. They had ridden throughout the night, tracking them; this very morning slaying Bintarnus with arrows when he attempted the same headstrong charge.

GALLEON SLUNG HIS SHIELD in front of him, slipped his right foot from the stirrup, and swung across the horse to rest the entirety of his weight on his left foot. He felt his weight slamming through his leg with every desperate footfall of the horse, the saddle slipping slightly under the lopsided strain. As foretold by his instinct, arrows hissed venomously from the sky in a brief long-range barrage. A swift kick to his horsess side renewed its full momentum, and thunderously they plunged down the hillside.

Though born to the saddle, the Kozaks nonetheless wrestled gravity on the steep embankment; their struggle

for balance weakened their aim, their sight already compromised by the position of the mid-afternoon sun.

Plummeting sideways behind his shield down the hillside, screaming at the top of his lungs, Galleon turned his horse, which with an extra burst of speed carried him well out of the path of death. A cracking snap of rock against rock and a swift shadow against the sun warned all too late of the oncoming danger. Screams and howls proved an ineffective defense against the avalanche of stone tailing the oncoming rider, and the Kozaks found themselves ground to butter.

I. Combat: Gritty Realism

Combat in *The Riddle of Steel* is unlike any combat system you've ever seen. There are no hit-points, no initiative rolls, and as little abstract thought as possible. Instead this system is based on years of hands-on martial research and training. Though still a game, it is closer to representing real fighting than *any RPG combat system ever written*. A few words of advice are then in order: (a) never get hit…ever! You probably won't recover. (b) Use your head. Here, as in the real world, fights are won very much through strategy, not just high "stats" or big swords. (c) Even the smallest weapon is deadly. Would *you* want to get stuck with a knife? Neither would your character. (d) Teamwork, teamwork, TEAMWORK!!!…need we say more? (e) There's a fine line between brave and stupid. Don't be stupid. (f) Have a back-up plan, or a good idea of what your next character should be like. It's up to you.

To illustrate, picture three new characters walking along the road. They hear some noise up ahead and see five burly troll-like guys (some folks call them gols…read about them in **Book Seven**). Should our three heroes charge them head on? **Not in *The Riddle of Steel!*** Five on three is bad odds (just think back to wrestling y friends as a kid). So instead our Heroes hide in the bu and concoct a *plan* (heaven forbid! A plan!). They de to rush out of the bushes as these trolls pass, stri three of them down before they even know wha them. That puts the odds at three on two in t favor…much better! Remember that it only takes hit to ruin your character's day…forever.

II. Melee Combat

Melee combat is often referred to as hand-to-h fighting. It involves swords, axes, fists, shields, footwork. All melee combat is based on one major s dice: the Combat Pool (each point in you Combat h equals one die). The Combat Pool (CP) is used to acti certain maneuvers, to attack, and to defend. Over course of a duel or bout you will divvy up and refill y pool several times. Factors such as wounding and exte circumstances will cause your pool to fluctuate. recommend using two small bowls to keep track of h many dice are in your Combat Pool at any given ti and how many have been spent.

1. The Flow of Time in Combat

Whenever a situation involving combat begin Seneschal declares that time is now measured in *Co Rounds*. A Round in *The Riddle of Steel* l approximately 1 or 2 seconds, during which attack made and other events take place. Each Round is t divided into two *Combat Exchanges* (sometimes c an "Exchange of Blows"). An Exchange, being ha Round, is roughly how much time it takes to attack w a weapon and begin to recover. A whole series of Rou constitutes a *Bout*, or a fight. Bouts occasionally und a pause, such as when opponents circle or break ap from one another. Though these pauses are still measu in Rounds, one may assume that these Rounds last m longer than 1 or 2 seconds.

2. The Order of a Round

The order of one melee combat round is summari in the following steps:

1. *Declare stance.*
2. *Establish aggressor and defender (initiative). Combat Pool fills or refreshes, with all Modifiers.*
3. *First half of the "Exchange of Blows;" aggressor attacks and defender defends.*
4. *Resolve damage and/or determine new attitude (aggressor or defender).*
5. *Second half of the "Exchange of Blows;" aggressor attacks and defender defends. These roles may have reversed since the first Exchange.*
6. *Resolve damage and/or determine new attitude (aggressor or defender).*

Steps 2-6 continue to repeat until the end of the Bout or the flow is interrupted (a pause). At the beginning of a new Bout (or following a pause) begin at step 1, then repeat 2-6 as normal.

3. Steps 1 & 2: Initiative

Very rarely do both opponents attack simultaneously—that kind of thing might look neat, but it's not for those who wish to live a long time. At the beginning of a melee, duel, Bout, or any kind of combat

mess each character must secretly decide whether they are going to attack (assuming the attitude of an "aggressor") at this time or hold back and see what their opponent plans (taking the roll of a "defender"). If enough time is present, both parties should declare a stance—this is done out loud, and should be done without hesitation (see **Stances**, below, for more). Now remember those red and white dice that we recommended in **Book One**? Here's where they really come in handy. When time slows to Combat Rounds each active character takes one red die and one white die into their hands. After stances are declared (if there's time), the Seneschal calls out "throw," and each combatant drops one of those two dice onto the table—a red die indicates aggression and a white die indicates

defense. If a combatant fails to throw any die down, that character has hesitated and may only defend one full Exchange (see **Surprise**, below).

Each *aggressor*, in order from *lowest* Reflex to *hig* now declares how many dice from his *Combat Pool* being spent on the attack, where the attack is aim and what maneuver—if any—is being used. Defen now—in response to their attackers—declare how m dice from their Combat Pool are going towards defe what kind of defense they're using, and what maneuv if any—is being used.

Matters grow especially messy should b combatants attack (throwing a red die). A contes Reflex (with the combattant's ATNs for Tar Numbers—see "Exchange of Blows" and the Appe for weapon ATNs) determines who's strike lands fi Remember that *no defense is possible in the middle o attack*, so the loser of this contest usually ends up di

This process (red ad white dice) is only used at beginning of a Bout or following a Pause (see bel

In all other rounds the winner of the previ exchange either takes or retains initiative.

Stances provide stronger attacks and defenses at cost of predictability and flexibility. While each sch has its own stances and positions that it claims are be three are universal (at least where game purposes involved—appearance or exact position may be m varied): Aggressive stances, Defensive stances, a Neutral stances.

Aggressive stances provide a bonus to attack wh making defense more difficult—the classic sam with katana raised high is a good example. Ag stances add 2 CP dice when attacking but incr the Activation cost for any Defensive Maneuve 2 CP.

Defensive stances provide a bonus to defense wh making attacking harder—most stances with blade or weapon head facing down are go examples. Such stances add 2 CP dice wh Defending but increase the Activation cost for Offensive Maneuver by 2 CP.

Table 4.1: Surprise and Hesitation Target Numbers	
5	Purposely standing with no stance (perhaps to invite an attacker...).
7	Aware of opponent — Victim of a cheap shot or you *hesitated*.
10	Unsuspecting or inattentive.
13	Blindsided!

Neutral stances allow a great deal of flexibility, and are favored by many schools. In a Neutral stance the sword (or other weapon) is positioned to allow a quick attack or defense. Such stances provide no bonuses to either attack or defense.

Stances only last until the first blow or movement—if a character's weapon moves, the stance is broken. Very few swordsmen can evade an attack and retain their stance. During the Bout itself the stances of both attacker and defender are considered to be neutral—no bonuses either way. A stance cannot be taken (or re-taken) until the combatants separate and cease swinging for a moment—the Bout must be interrupted by a full pause.

Surprise is a common event—even when one is aware of an enemy. Sometimes a character is unprepared for an incoming attack—perhaps they are surprised or *hesitated* (so you better throw a die at the beginning of the melee, huh...). To check for surprise or in a similar situation the unsuspecting character rolls Reflex against a TN based on how alert the character was. Table 4.1 suggests guidelines—the Seneschal has the final say. Failure indicates that no action can be taken until next round. Success—even one—means that you may defend (or attempt to buy initiative).

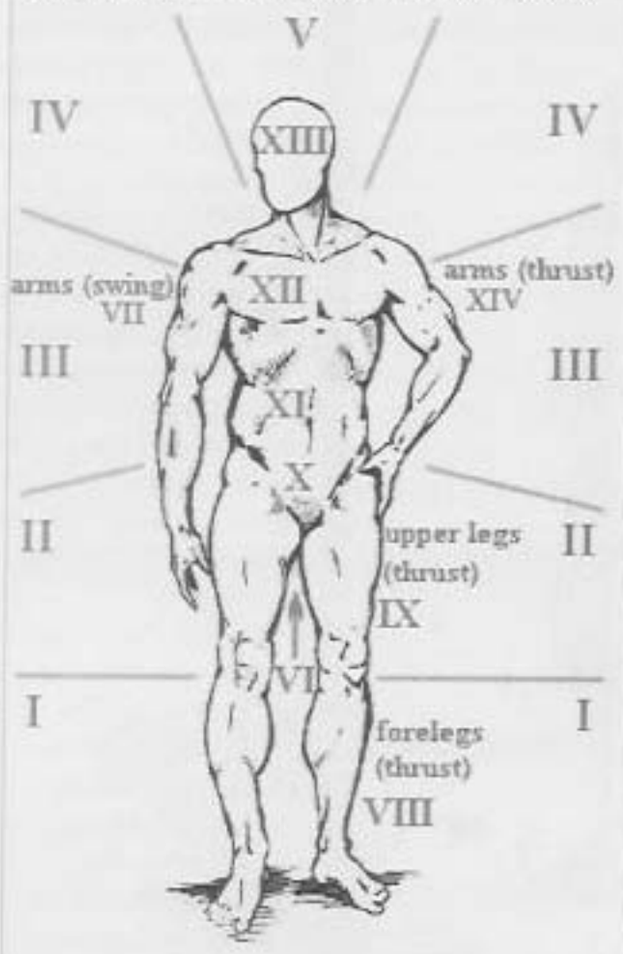
Buying initiative, or the preemptive strike, is the art of the samurai or the gunslinger (in our case, Bladeslinger)—waiting for your opponent to strike, then attempting to beat him to the blow. It's a risky move, used by the desperate, the quick, and the suicidal.

Initiative is usually bought in one of two circumstances. The first is when two combatants attack simultaneously. The loser of the previous contest for initiative may attempt to buy initiative by spending a number of dice equal to his opponent's Perception (Per). A contested roll is then made of the buyer's WP and his opponent's Wit, with both TN's being equal to the other's Reflex. The buyer (and only the buyer) may opt to raise his opponent's TN by one for every extra Combat Die spent, to a maximum bonus of his own Wit. The winner of the contest strikes first—the loser may strike second, assuming any dice remain in his Combat Pool.

The second situation where one may wish to buy initiative is when a character who has previously declared defense wishes to attack instead. The process is identical to that above.

In either case both attackers have committed themselves and may not withdraw, which may cause a real mess.

Table 4.2: Hit Location Zones



3. Steps 3 & 5: Exchange of Blows

Each Round—as discussed above—consists of "Exchanges." During each individual Exchange party gets one "action," meaning that one usually att and the other defends (usually…). Every attack mu directed at a specific location—numbered with Ro numerals I-XIV (see Table 4.2). I-VI are for swing attacks; VII-XIV are for thrusting or missile attacks not necessary for players to declare the exact num but the location and variety of attack (overhand c upper-hand slash, thrust for the face, &c.) *are compl necessary*—no one attacks randomly but those w hesitate! Maneuvers and targeted locations may cha difficulties for either the attacker or the defender.

Both combatants—aggressor and defender—r roll the allotted Combat Dice (from Step 2), with modifications from maneuvers, stances, or other fac

This is a normal contested roll, where the lo successes are subtracted from the winner's, leaving winner with the Margin of Success. All Target Num

Taunting is the last resort of a fighter who is tired of circling and circling (the effects of both sides throwing white dice and declaring "defender" for several rounds in a row). By taunting, one can force one's opponent into becoming the attacker. This is accomplished by trying the patience (WP) of your opponent through insults and the like. This is not possible until both opponents have circled for at least 5 rounds.

This effective tactic is handled with the "Ridicule" skill (see **Book Three: Training**), which may be defaulted for those without the skill.

Table 4.3: Terrain Modifiers					
Terrain	Stand/Crawl	Cautious	Normal	Hurried	Sprinting
Solid, flat	0	0	0	0	0
Narrow (ledges, walls, roofs)	1	2	3	5	7
Swampy or rocky	2	3	4	6	8
Ice/Slippery	2	4	6	8	10
Tight spaces (to get stuck)	2	3	4	5	6
2 opponents	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	5
3-5 opponents	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	6
5-10 opponents	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	7
10+ opponents	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	8

for this roll come from the ATN (Attack Target Number, used when attacking) or DTN (Defense Target Number, used when defending) listed with each weapon (see the Appendix). The winner, after damage is resolved, may press the advantage by taking or keeping initiative (i.e. the roll of aggressor) if he so chooses. If the defender successfully defends, then he may take the role of the aggressor. Ties, while no damage is dealt, are considered to go to the attacker for purposes of initiative. Such ties usually imply that the defender has just barely deflected the strike, and is still recovering from the momentum of the blow that he just blocked, parried, or dodged (see Defense, below).

Finally, should the loser wish to attack during the next Exchange (normally impossible), he has two choices. First, he may simply declare an attack. The winner attacks and resolves damage first; if the loser has any dice left, he can attack. This is a foolhardy maneuver. The second choice is to buy initiative, as per **Step 2**. This requires no additional rolls other than the standard process of buying initiative (see above).

Multiple opponents may be dealt with by simply dividing up one's Combat Pool between the two opponents in any proportion. Wise fighters will try to move around so that they only have to face one opponent at a time. Doing so acts as "Terrain" (below). Success in such a situation allows you to fight just one opponent at a time. Failure indicates that one more opponent has gotten through (forcing you to split your CP). Fumbling brings two more opponents on you (forcing you to split your CP three ways). No more than three opponents may engage a character at a time (just imagine six guys in a tight circle swinging sharp objects every which way trying to hit you but *not* their buddies). Exceptions to this rule include groups of spearmen and the like, who may gather tightly together and thrust, group chases (handled through the Terrain mechanic, below). Even two or three opponents will drain your Combat Pool *very* quickly. Encounters with odds like this should be avoided at all costs.

Terrain, or the ground that you're fighting on, has an immense effect during any melee encounter, whether it's a battle or a duel. Each terrain carries a TN, against which any number or CP dice may be allotted and rolled. This TN varies with how quickly one wishes to move. All characters engaged in combat are assumed to be "hurried" or even "sprinting" when attacking, and "normal" when defending. Characters not in combat may set their own pace, and make the rolls with AG instead of CP dice. Successful terrain rolls mean that the character's actions may go on unhindered. Failed rolls lead to disaster—a slip, a fall, a stuck weapon, resulting

in the loss of half of one's CP for the duration of the round. Fumbled rolls mean a nasty fall or other disaster, removing all CP dice and leaving one prone or otherwise momentarily disabled.

Visibility effects combat as well. In near-darkness (dusk) reduce all Combat Pools by 1. At night (just moonlight) reduce all Combat Pools by 1/4 total. In pitch darkness reduce all Combat Pools by half. These penalties obviously do not apply to those that can see just fine in the dark.

Higher Footing (such as stairs or horses) adds 2 CP at the beginning of the Round (Step 2). This also effects availability of targets for all involved combatants according to common sense.

Weapon Length, or reach, often means the difference between striking one's enemy and missing them entirely. Weapon length has been divided into six categories:

1. *Hand (fists, daggers, knee-strikes, grappling) less than 1' reach*
2. *Short (hatchets, short swords, long knives) less than 2' reach*
3. *Medium (arming swords, flails) less than 4' reach*
4. *Long (greatswords and bastard swords, spears) less than 6' reach*
5. *Very long (long spears, polearms) less than 8' reach*
6. *Extremely long (pikes, lances) everything over 8' reach*

Attacks against a longer weapon are made at –1 CP for each "step" (i.e.: Short to Medium, or Medium to Long) the attacker wishes to close—attacking a Pikeman with a dagger would cost 5 CP! This penalty holds until the shorter weapon makes a damaging strike, after which the penalty transfers to the longer weapon until he scores a damaging blow, when again the penalty goes to the shorter weapon. When the shorter weapon is out of range this penalty applies only to attacks; w the longer weapon is penalized, it applies to both of *and* defense.

Often the best course of action for long weapo to use a full evasion in the event of sudden close com or to drop weapons and wrestle! Certain maneuvers (as the Half-sword) are particularly effective in situations. Likewise, many weapons—such as spear other two-handed weapons—may shorten their rea

Fumbling (or "botching") results in failure to *anything* and allows the weapon's momentum to control. Botching on any attack may cause the wea to drop, break, or otherwise be rendered useless. Both

reduces your Combat Pool on the next exchange by half the number of dice you spent on the failed attack.

4. Steps 4 & 6: Damage

Should an attacker have one or more successes over his opponent then the attack has landed (see **Steps 3 & 5**), and a d6 is rolled to determine specific location within the targeted zone (i.e. I-XIV, as seen in Table 4.2). Generally speaking lower rolls mean lower hits, higher rolls mean higher hits. Exact location is important, as in *The Riddle of Steel* there are no hit-points or generic damage—every hit causes a very real wound. As such, the only way to kill a man is to deal a fatal blow or let him bleed to death. Wound tables are found in the Appendix.

Damage is determined by taking the number of final successes in the Margin and adding to that number the *Damage Rating* (DR) of the weapon being used. Most melee weapons have a DR of ST-2 to ST +3; other factors, such as sorcery, may affect this quantity as well. The defender—now struck—subtracts his own TO and Armor Value (if any, depending on location) from the attacker's total damage. The result is the *Wound Level*, which is cross-referenced on the Damage Tables (see Appendix) according to type (cutting, puncturing, or bludgeoning) and location (1d6 per zone…see above).

Armor, a rare and expensive commodity, only provides protection over those areas which it covers. Hence, if someone wearing a helmet is struck in zone IV (see Table 4.2), and the attacker rolls a 4, the neck (see Appendix), then that helmet provides no protection whatsoever! The following example should help:

Geralt, a well-practiced (but poor and unarmored) bladeslinger and swordsman, is dueling at swords with Felix, a lightly armored knight. Geralt has a ST of 5, TO of 4, and his Combat Pool is 15; Felix has a ST of 6, TO of 5,

and a Combat Pool of 12. Felix, having initiative from a successful parry, strikes at IV from his own right-hand side with 7 dice (an ambitious attack). Geralt, wisely knowing how important it is that he **not get hit**, *assigns 9 dice to his defense—a parry from below. Both combatants throw their allocated dice: Felix, the attacker, gets 4 successes; Geralt rolls 5 successes and parries the blow. Because of his successful defense Geralt now has initiative, and thus opts to attack area IV from his own left (notice the fluid motion from parry to attack—this is intentional!), spending his remaining 6 dice. Felix realizes his mistake, and throws the last 5 of his dice in for a parry from the side. Geralt scores 5 successes and Felix scores only one, leaving Geralt with a Margin of 4 (this looks really bad for old Felix). Geralt's weapon has a Damage Rating of ST +1, so the sub-total (or Wound Rating) is 10. Rolling location on a d6, Geralt scores a direct hit to the neck—Felix is unarmored there! Felix then subtracts only his TO (5) from the subtotal...10 – 5 = 5. A level 5 wound anywhere is nasty and usually fatal—in the neck it kills instantly (decapitation does that...).*

Wound levels are rated from 0 to 5. A 0-level wound is usually a bruise or scratch, with no notably adverse effects. Level one wounds are a tad bit worse, level threes are quite dangerous, and level fives are usually fatal or close to it. Location always makes a difference as well, as a level three to the head is a lot worse than to the shoulder. Wound levels are not cumulative (though the Seneschal may rule that several smaller wounds to the exact same location may add up in some way)—it takes a solid hit to do a man in. As is evident from the above example, only one solid hit is necessary for a kill—skill, luck, and strategy are all needed elements in the fight for survival...so choose your battles wisely.

Damage Types are an important part of the damage that a weapon does. Barring sorcery, fire, and other sources of damage, the most common are listed below.

Most melee and missile weapons are counted as of three types: those dealing cutting wounds, punc wounds, or blunt (or bludgeoning) wounds. Cu wounds are the most common (swords being what are), although the other types have certain advanta

Puncture wounds, caused by spears, arrows, sw points, and the like, do more internalized damage, are generally deadlier than cuts. They use the thru locations (XI-XIV). Bleeding from puncture woun harder to stop than from cuts, as much of it is usu internal.

Bludgeoning wounds, caused by hammers, cl pommels, quarterstaffs, and the like are the l damaging though still deadly. The primary advanta that when striking the shoulders or pelvic region t can get a kill with a level 5 wound, as crushed b severs arteries and other vessels. They also incite a h shock number (even against armored opponents— Knockout, below), representing the momentum of blow and blunt trauma. Bludgeoning attacks are usu targeted for the arced areas (I-VII), although weap such as a quarterstaff or fist may be targeted to "forwa or "thrusting," areas (VIII-XIV).

Finally, for fire, electricity, cold, and other m abstract forms of damage there is a "Generic Dam Table" (see **Appendix**).

Shock and **Pain** measure how badly a given wo immediately effects one's ability to fight and carry Every wound has its own rating for both.

Shock subtracts dice from *all* your dice pools (bo combat and sorcery related pools) immediately up receiving the blow. Should the Shock rating exceed t total current CP, the remainder of the penalty is appli at the beginning of the next round unless the "Pa penalty is greater. Shock is only applied once for ea wound, unless that same body part is struck a secon time.

Pain is subtracted from one's pools at the beginni of every Combat round. Where shock is a static numb one's WP can reduce the effects of pain. Pain is al important in figuring out healing times, as described **Book Five: The Laws of Nature**.

Shock and pain are cumulative as long as they a

applied to different zones. Should one attack the same area multiple times, the *highest* shock penalty—new or old—is applied (or re-applied) to the wounded party. It can be beneficial to attack a well-wounded area over-and-over, even with weak attacks—the original shock penalty will keep on returning to haunt the wounded!

When recording wounds on your character sheet, make a note of where the exact wound is and what effects it may have, such as shock, pain, and blood loss (BL). We use notation such as "level 3 cut, VI-4 left," meaning "level three cutting wound at zone VI, section 4—from the d6 roll—on the left side; or just write " lvl 3 cut left neck." Make sure to record the Pain rating as for each individual wound as well. Hopefully receiving a wound will be a rare occurrence, meaning that you won't need to write this information down too often.

Blood Loss (BL) covers the deterioration of one's health due to bleeding and internal damage. Each wound carries, alongside Shock and Pain, a Blood Loss Target Number. These numbers are cumulative—adding up to one big BL number—*so long as the wounds come from different parts of the body*. At the beginning of each Round all wounded characters must roll Endurance (EN) vs. Blood Loss. Whenever a roll is failed one point of Health (HT) is temporarily lost. When HT reaches 1 all Attributes and Pools are halved. When HT reaches zero (0), the character enters coma and dies. Assuming the wounded party lives, one point of HT is recovered for every day of rest.

Knockdown and **Knockout** are covered by the derived statistics of the same name.

Any time a character receives a blow that through pain or shock reduces his CP to *less* than zero he may be knocked down. In such an instance roll the *Knockdown* trait against a TN equal to twice the number of your attacker's Margin of Success (counting after your defense, but before armor); the TN is three times your attacker's

successes if struck with a mass weapon. Many blows to the head or legs may also call for Knockdown rolls (see **Appendix**). The TN for such rolls is equal to the Shock TN, without any WP modificaitons.

Knockout rolls are covered by the Knockout trait. Such rolls may be called for due to certain wounds (especially blows to the head—see **Appendix**) or under other circumstances under Seneschal discretion. Such rolls are made against a TN of 7, modified according to the severity of the wound (again, as outlined in the **Appendix**). Failure of one of these rolls results in 1d10 seconds of unconsciousness; fumbling such a knockout roll result in 1d10x10 minutes of unconsciousness.

Optionally, *Knockout* rolls are also called for every time a character receives a *blunt* blow to the head, whether armored or not at a TN of 10-AR (armor rating). Such blunt trauma causes a shock penalty equal to half of the attacker's damage (that's DR + attack successes).

Each success on this Knockout roll drops the Sho one die. This modifier is not in addition to normal s and pain modifiers inflicted by telling wounds. The result of failure is that the Shock value is not lessen one does not lose consciousness unless real dama dealt! This rule helps simulate both fist fighting an disorienting but not damaging blows that a helm combatant may receive to the head.

Fatigue is an optional rule that simulates the and exhaustion that comes from constant phy exertion. Those characters wearing heavy armors (r made of metal or that cover most of the body) lose every EN Rounds. Thus Sir Vhord, who has an E 4, loses 1 CP for every four uninterrupted Rounds fighting or otherwise physically active. Those per wearing little or no armor lose 1 CP every 2 x Rounds. Sir Vhord, fighting unarmored this time, loses 1 CP every 8 Rounds. These points ma recovered by taking a few seconds to rest and ro EN/TN 6. Each success reduces Fatigue by one p For more on Fatigue see **Book Five: The Laws of Na**

II. Missile Combat (Ranged Weapons)

Missile weapons—such as bows or thr weapons—work differently from melee weapons. W using a missile weapon all attacks are made from Missile Pool (MP), which refreshes and is used differe from the Combat Pool.

The Missile Pool refreshes—or fills up "segments" equal to a character's Wit score at a ra one "segment" every round. Naturally, refreshing be at zero. This represents how quickly the character process his surroundings before taking a shot. The time one has to aim and prepare, the more accurat shot is going to be. A pool can never refresh to a hi number than the pool's own maximum: if a charac MP is 9, it can only refresh up to a 9—any addit points or segments are lost. Once a shot is fired the re must begin anew, starting at zero.

MP refresh begins as soon as a weapon is in posi for arrows, that means as soon as they're knocked knives, as soon as they're blade-down in the thro

character's hand. Most weapons therefore require a small amount of preparation time (especially between shots) before they can be fired. This time may be lengthened or shortened by circumstances or by sheer haste or hesitation. Generally preparation time may be reduced by one round by spending dice from one's MP *and* making a successful Reflex test. MP costs and TNs for hasty preparation are found in a weapon's statistics.

Range is also an important factor when dealing with missile weapons. In *The Riddle of Steel* range is measured in increments. If a weapon has a Range Increment of "+1 per 10 yards," then the target number increases by one for every ten yards, rounding down. Thus all shots made at 0 to 9 yards are made at a weapon's base TN, all shots at 10 to 19 yards are at + 1, and so on.

The statistics for a missile weapon appear thus:

Standard Short Bow

- 2-4 rounds preparation time:
  Pull arrow: 0 (on ground), 2 (from quiver); knock and draw: 2
- Refresh begins with drawing the arrow.
- 2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one second at Reflex/TN of 8
- Attack Target Number (ATN): 6
- Effective ST: 4
- DR (damage rating): ST +1p (5 total)
- Range: +1 ATN per 10 yards

Common sense should always be a factor, especially when determining preparation time. A previously knocked arrow would have a *total* preparation time of 1 or even zero, while a character with his crossbow in his backpack would be *way* behind.

Most missile weapons will use the piercing tables and areas (VII – XIV. Damage Ratings are based on the strength of the user (knives, javelins), or a built-in strength (for bows and crossbows, called the "Effective ST"). Bows cannot be used by someone that lacks the strength to pull them.

Moving targets are especially troublesome. Any target that is moving erratically costs 3 MP to hit in addition to a normal attack. Those targets moving at any constant rate—no matter how fast—require the expenditure of only 2 extra MP dice.

Lira, a Dardanian freedom fighter (MP 12, Wit 6), has come to Otamarluk to assassinate the Sul'taan. Taking a perch on a rooftop across from the palace entrance (about 25 yards away), she prepares her short bow and sticks three arrows into the earthen roof. Some time later the Sul'taan himself exits the palace surrounded by guards. Lira immediately grabs an arrow and knocks it (2 rounds). Feeling that she has enough time she takes careful aim at the Sul'taan's chest, waiting 2 more rounds for her MP to fill to 12 (at 6 dice per round). She removes 2 dice from her MP (because the Sul'taan is walking, an example of "constant" movement) and uses the rest (10 dice) for her shot. Her ATN is 6 for the bow, plus 2 for the range (25 yards), for a final ATN of 8. She throws her dice: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 7, 8, 8, 8…three successes. Her damage level is 8 (5 for the bow, plus 3 for her successes), the poor unarmored Sul'taan's TO is 5, leaving him a level 3 wound in the torso as the arrow strikes him. Rolling a d6 on Zone XII Puncture Damage Chart (in the Appendix) she gets a 2—just below the ribs—which reads: BL: 10, Shock: 8, Pain: 10-WP, "Belly wound—internal bleeding is going to be a problem." *The Sul'taan reels back, spouting blood everywhere. Lira wants to see him dead, though, and reaches for another arrow. This time she's in a hurry as palace guards scatter to protect their liege. She opts to attempt reducing the preparation time by one second, and rolls Reflex/TN 8 (her reflex is 6, and she manages a lucky 3 successes). Reaching for the arrow sticking from the rooftop takes no time, and her haste has reduced knocking time from 2 rounds to 1. After a total prep time of only one round her pool begins refreshing. She holds her aim for one round (giving her 6 dice) and releases the second arrow at the bleeding Sul'taan's belly. 2 of her 6 dice are removed because of her hasty preparation, but none for movement (the Sul'taan isn't walking at present…he's just lying there). Lira's player rolls the remaining 4 dice (vs. TN 8): 4, 4, 6, 7…miss! Lira must now choose between firing that third arrow, or making her escape before the palace guards catch up to her.*

Table 4.4: Evasion Target Numbers	
4	Full evasion or retreat. No attack possible for either party on the next exchange. This pause in combat calls for a new initiative. Evasion may not be attempted on an exchange immediately following one's own attack.
7	Partial evasion. May take initiative as the aggressor on the next exchange by paying 2 CP dice, or if opponent fumbles or fails completely.
9	"Duck and weave." May attack on the next exchange as if opponent had botched his attack (he will be at a CP disadvantage).

III. Defense

Defense is the art of how not to get hit. Defense can be active—dodging and evading, parrying, or blocking, or it can be passive—hiding behind a tree or wearing armor.

1. Evasion (Dodging)

Evasion—also called voiding or dodging—is the most natural of all defenses. The advantage to dodging is that it leaves your weapon completely open for a strike as your opponent's is whistling through the air. The disadvantage is that it's difficult to actually pull off. Any quantity of Combat Dice may be spent in dodging; the TN depends on what the evasive party is exactly trying to pull off. Table 4.4 explains and provides TNs for three forms of dodging.

Two forms from Table 4.4 are particularly noteworthy: Full Evasion and the "Duck and Weave." Full Evasion brings the combat to a pause as combatants separate and must re-establish initiative. The "Duck and Weave" places the evading party in a prime place to attack from: shields and weapon-length bonuses are lost or rendered useless, allowing the dodger a clean shot that may only be parried or dodged.

Stances have no effect on the full evasion, but work normally with Partial Evasions and the "Duck and Weave."

Fumbling a dodge is bad news, sending you o stepping into the blow or tumbling to the ground. 2 levels to any damage done.

Dodging, using dice from the Combat Pool, also be used as a defense against incoming missile a *that you are aware of*. Unexpected attacks provid defense. When not engaged in hand-to-hand co use the Reflex Attribute for dodging.

2. Defensive Maneuvers

The foundations of all Defensive Maneuver described in **Book Three: Training**, are the Block the Parry. Most all other Defensive Maneuvers are dir related to these two.

Parrying is the chosen defense of duelists bladeslingers everywhere. It has the practicality of q transportability (no shield or armor to carry arou and effectiveness. Most swordsmen have a rudimen understanding of parrying; some choose to neglect favor of greater skill with a shield (such as knights

soldiers, for whom parrying is often less practical on the battlefield). Any quantity of Combat Dice may be spent on parrying when defending. The difficulty to parry with any given weapon is determined by that weapon's Defense Target Number (DTN).

Blocking is the reasonably unscientific action of imposing a foreign object (usually a shield) between an incoming attack and oneself. It lacks the grace of a well-performed parry, but is very effective. Many shields have the disadvantage of being cumbersome and slow; the advantage being a large area of efficient cover and that it's easy to learn.

As passive instruments, shields act as armor offering almost total protection to the off-hand front side of the body, generally providing between 4 and 10 points of protection to areas III, XI, and IV or more, on the shield-side (depending on the size and make of the shield).

Actively they can be used to deflect blows, similarly to a parry. Any number of dice can be spent on a block. A successful block deflects an incoming blow just as a parry would, lessening the attacker's number of successes. The Defensive Target Number depends on the kind of shield. See **Armor**, and Table 4.5, below.

TABLE 4.5: ARMOR AND SHIELDS

Type/description	Armor Value*	CP modifier	Other Mods
Leather Jack (w/ sleeves)	2		
Leather Jack (w/o sleeves)	2		
Chain shirt (light, w/ sleeves)	4		
Chain shirt (light, w/o sleeves)	4		
Chain (full suit)	4	–2	–1 Move
Piecemeal plating (sample pieces)	3-5	–0 to –2 ea.	Various
- Bracers or well-made gauntlets	3		
- Large shoulder cop	5	–1**	
- Shoulder and whole arm	4-5	–1/–2**	
- Knee cop	3-5	–1	
Breast Plate (front and back)	6	–1	
Plate (full suit, w/o helm)	6	–3	–2 Move
Chainmail coif	3	–1 or 0***	–1 Per
Pot helm	5	–1	–1 Per
Full helm	6	–2	–2 Per
Buckler shield (hand) (TN 6)	4		
Medium round shield (TN 5)	6		–1 Move
Medium "heater" shield (TN 5)	7	–1	–2 Move
Large "kite" shield (TN 5)	8	–3	–3 Move

* Applies only to covered and protected areas.
** Applies when protecting sword or weapon arm.
*** When worn under any kind of helmet.

3. Armor

Armor, as previously mentioned, reduces the damage done by successful attacks by deflecting blows and/or by absorbing them. Both of these qualities are represented by a piece's *Armor Value*. As seen above, AV is directly subtracted from the damage dealt by one's opponent. While armor can save one's life, most fighters can't afford it, don't like traveling with it, or simply find it too cumbersome. In addition to Armor Value, armor usually negatively affects the wearer's Combat Pool; thus a heavily armored figure is easier to strike, but harder to injure. Table 4.5 contains several examples of armor with their various modifiers. Various pieces of armor may affect other things as well, such as hearing, vision, or movement.

It is crucial to note that all modifiers from Table 4.5 are for well-fitted pieces of armor; any piece of plate armor not specifically tailored will have more severe modifiers (–1 or worse), as will any other non-plate armor that does not have a good, comfortable fit. By the same token, one cannot wear multiple suits of armor (though mixing-and-matching is acceptable). Shields, Helms and other headgear are the exception to this rule, and may be worn in addition to a full suit (or no suit) of armor. When wearing piecemeal armor, all negative modifiers are based on the highest modifier, +/– 1 for each additional piece. The maximum negative modifier (as long as the pieces fit well).

Other factors, such as being mounted, effect modifiers from armor substantially. Mounted combat may ignore one negative CP modifier as well as negative CP modifiers from leg-armor and shields. fully armored characters simply cut the total CP pen in half, rounding down.

4. Cover

Cover, such as hiding behind trees or ledges, simple matter. Those areas protected by cover may be hit, thus limiting your opponent's choice of tar This is most effective when used in ranged combat.

IV. Movement and Combat

As discussed in **Book Five: The Laws of Na** characters may cover distance equal to their Move s in yards each Round. During a combat Exchange number is reduced to their Move score in feet. Mov so far constitutes a "charge," which is treated a Offensive Stance (granting +2 CP for attacks, inflicting a –2 CP penalty for defense *for the whole rou* Even if not charging, one *must* move half as far (½ Ma during each Exchange (melee combat only). T movement may be forward, backward, or to the si We recommend using 25mm-scale miniatures on a grid. Turning and more complicated movemen covered in **Book Five.**

In order to fire a bow or use any other missile weap (except a javelin or similar instrument) one must standing still.

Movement also impacts Terrain Modifiers, abov

V. Mounted Combat

Fighting from horseback offers many advantages addition to increased speed and movement (wh mounted use the horse's Move score), mounted figh receive the following bonuses:

- *Height/reach advantage: +2CP*
- *Mounted Charge: +2 CP for the whole Round (at or defense)*

- *Armor: Ignore 1 CP loss due to armor, in addition to any modifiers from armored legs*
- *Terrain: No need to subtract dice from your CP! Roll a Riding Test instead*

There are a few drawbacks as well:

- *Evasion: no dodges other than "Duck and Weave" are available to your character (without falling off the horse, that is).*
- *Wounds: any time you or your mount is wounded, roll Riding or fall 6' to the ground.*
- *Knockdown/Knockout: if either of these things happen to you or your mount, treat it as a 6' fall*
- *Weapons: only one-handed weapons, spears, and lances may be used from horseback, though off-hand shields are fine*
- *Any complicated movement requires a Test of Riding. Failure means you don't move, fumble—you fall.*
- *Missile weapons: –1 MP when stationary, -2 when moving at a walk, -5 when galloping.*

See **Book Five: The Laws of Nature** for details on falling.

VI. An Example of Combat

Our hero Geralt has been called out on a duel by Felix' brother, Stefan. Geralt has a ST of 5, a TO of 4, a Reflex of 6, and his Combat Pool is 15. He is carrying a longsword and wearing no armor. Stefan has a ST of 5, a TO of 5, a Reflex of 4, and his Combat Pool is 13. He is wearing a full suit of chainmail, a pot-helmet, and carrying a heater shield; this reduces his CP to 9. They are fighting on foot.

Seneschal (controlling Stefan): Stefan salutes you and inches forward in a neutral stance.
Geralt: I set up in a defensive stance. This guy looks dangerous—and he's got a shield. I hate shields.
Seneschal: Declare attack or defense.

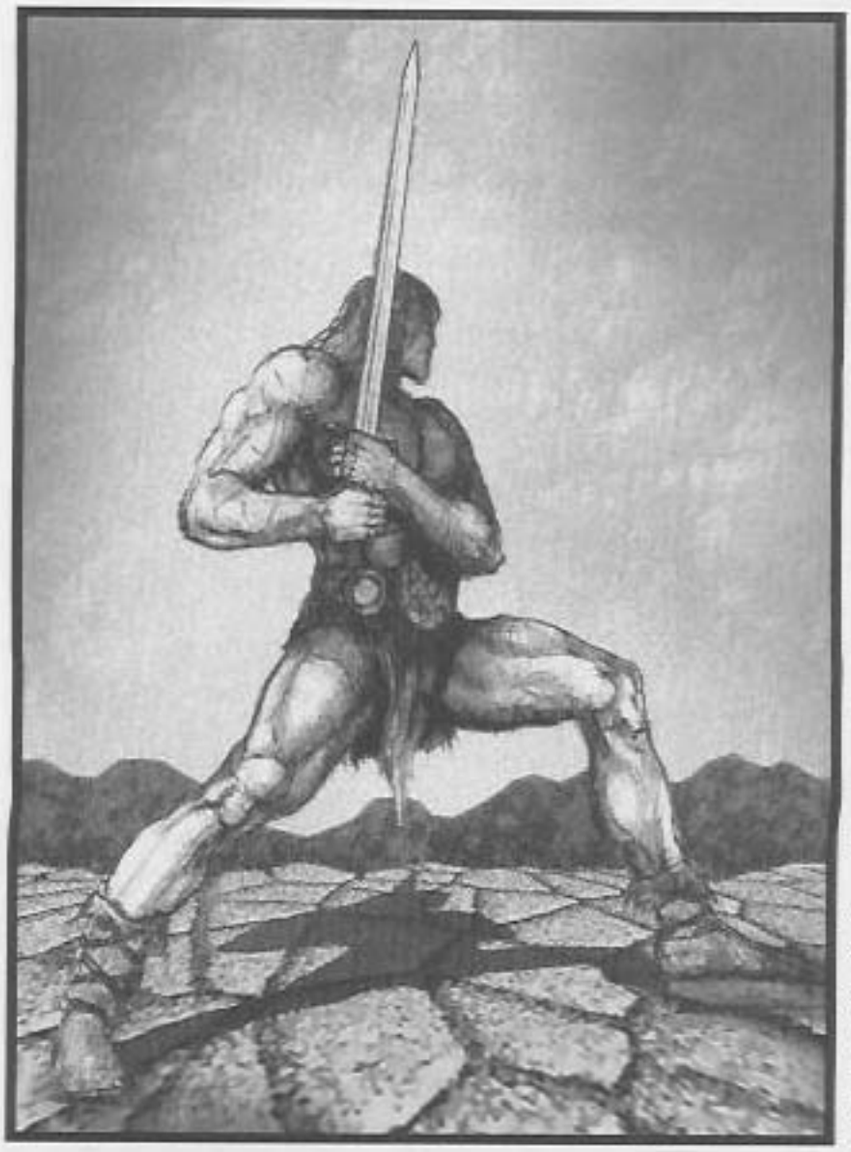
Both parties grab a red die and a white die and throw one simultaneously. Both throw white dice.

Seneschal: The two of you circle for a moment, sizing up your respective opponents. Throw again.

Both parties again grab a red die and a white die and throw one simultaneously. Both again throw white dice. After circling for a moment they both throw again and again.

Seneschal: Stefan, tired of circling, begins to taunt you, insulting your family and your skill.
Geralt: I'll return the favor. I say, "It's your brother whose

Example of Combat



head this inbred, unskilled blade-slinger tore from its shoulders. Perhaps you would like to join him in hell!"
Seneschal: Your insult seems to be really working him up. He changes to an aggressive stance and increases the ferocity of his insults. Throw initiative.

Again, both throw white dice.

Geralt: He wants me to attack first, but this just might work. I say, "Your brother never even put up a fight. I felt bad after I killed him—it was like slaying a handmaiden!"
Seneschal: It looks like that did it. Throw initiative.

This time Stefan throws a red die—he w taunted into it—while Geralt stays white as to benefit the most from his stance).

Seneschal: He comes in quickly, cutt sideways at your head, zone IV, from his rig He's spending 5 dice on that attack.
Geralt: It's about time! I'm going to duck a weave so that I can strike him from the s and get past that darn shield! I'm spendin dice.

They both roll. Stefan rolls 1, 2, 2, 4, 5, 9…even with the aggressive stance bonus of dice that's only two successes against his weap ATN of 6. Geralt rolls 2, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 7, 9, 0…three successes with the defensive ma bonus (+2 dice), beating Stefan by 1! It's ple and Stefan's sword goes whizzing harmle by—opening a big hole for Geralt to w through.

Seneschal: You've evaded his blow and m attack. He loses 3 CP because of the D and Weave.
Geralt: Excellent! It was close, but it worke I'm spending my remaining six dice tryi to hit his left side; that's zone III.
Seneschal: He's going to try and eva (partially), spending his last 4 dice.

Again, they roll. Geralt, the attacker, rolls 4, 5, 5, 7, 0…five successes at his weapon's ATN of 5 (it's a very s sword). Stefan rolls 1, 7, 8, 0…three success at his DTN 7 (due to partial evasion). That gives Geralt a margin of plus his sword's damage rating of 8 (ST +3, a greatsword for a subtotal of 10. He then rolls 1d6, getting a 3; accordi to the cutting damage tables (see Appendix) that's a blow Stefan's upper abdomen, just below the ribs. Stefan subtra his own toughness and armor rating (his chainmail cov that area), total 8, to finally receive a level two wound (1 – 8 = 2). That wound (again, see Appendix) reads: "De laceration, bleeding, and some torn muscle. BI. 5, Shock

Pain 6 – WP." Next exchange Stefan will have only 6 dice to work with, and only 7 dice every exchange thereafter.

Seneschal: You duck under his sword and land a solid blow to his side—were it not for his armor you would have killed him. Nonetheless your blow leaves him reeling somewhat, and you may attack again, though he is able to spin himself around for defense somewhat. We're beginning round two; pools refresh.
Geralt: Let's do that. I'll swing up from below at VI for 10 dice. I'm gonna gut this puppy.
Seneschal: He's going to attempt to block, using his shield, with 4 dice.

Geralt rolls 1, 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 7, 7, and 7… (bad luck!) only three successes against an ATN of 5. Stefan rolls 2, 3, 7, 9…two successes against a difficulty of 5 (shield's DTN). Geralt hits with a margin of one, plus weapon damage gives a subtotal of 9. Rolling location (see Appendix), Geralt's blow lands on Stefan's inner thigh. Stefan's armor and TO bring that down to zero (0), giving Stefan a level 0 wound to deal with—just a scratch.

Seneschal: You land a hit on the inside of his leg, but it fails to break Stefan's chainmail armor. You still have initiative, and may attack.
Geralt: You know it! I'm spending those last five dice to hit him in that same side again (zone III).
Seneschal: He's blocking with two (that's all he's got).

Geralt rolls 1, 2, 2, 4, 8…one success (ATN 5). Stefan rolls 7 and 9…two successes! He manages to block Geralt's attack (TN 7). Thus ends round two. As round three begins, the Seneschal rolls blood loss (TN 2) for Stefan. He rolls 2 successes, and Stefan is fine for now. The Seneschal also applies pain modifiers to Stefan's CP, leaving him with 7 dice.

Seneschal: This is round three; pools refresh. Stefan now has initiative and attacks your side, zone III, from his own right. He's spending five dice.
Geralt: No problem. I'll parry sideways with 8 dice.

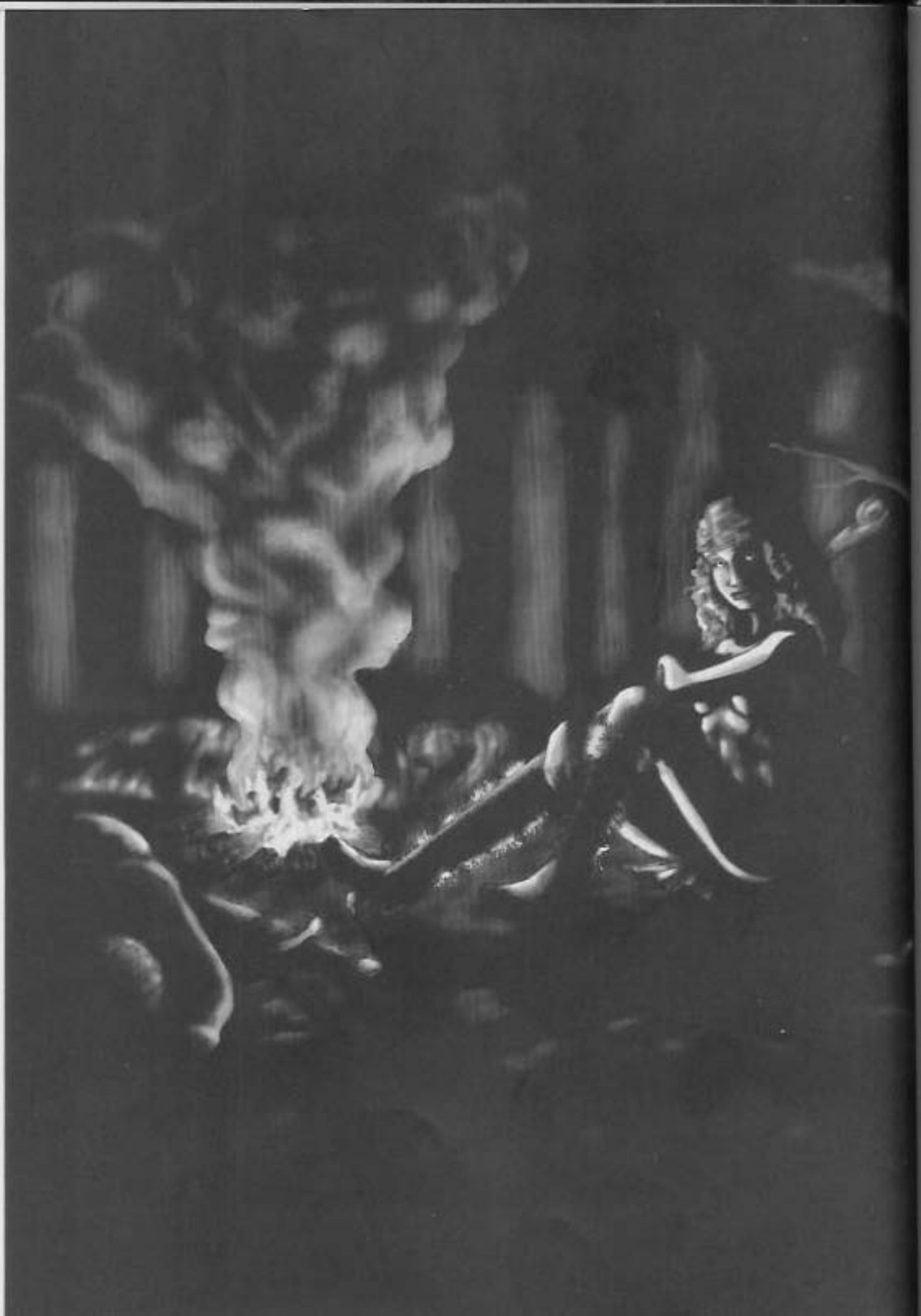
Stefan rolls 4, 5, 7, 7, 9…three successes (weapon ATN 6). Geralt parries, rolling 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 9, 0, 0…four successes (weapon DTN 6).

Seneschal: You just barely manage to knock his sword to the side, and may now attack.
Geralt: Time to finish this guy. Seven dice at IV from my left.
Seneschal: He's going to try a block again, for two dice.

Geralt rolls 2, 2, 3, 7, 7, 7, 8, 8…five successes. Stefan rolls 1 and 9…only one success. Geralt margin is 4, and rolling a d6 Geralt gets a 5—the blow lands on 5: the face! Geralt's blow does 12, minus Stefan's TO (5), but no armor. That's a level five wound! The damage table reads: "Death. Destruction of cerebellum. Really messy." And that ends the fight.

Seneschal: Blood spatters all over you as your opponent drops like a bag of sand. Now his retainers start advancing on you…
Geralt: Okay, time to get out of here…

And that's how combat works. Lots of freedom, but it was really that first hit that won the fight.



The Riddle of Steel
Book Five: The Laws of Nature

THE FIRE had started suddenly, without thought to warn the inn's few dozen patrons. At first Jeral, the barkeep, had seen and smelt a wisp of smoke from the back room. The flame must have hit the barrels of ale and barlywine then, because the entire back wall blew outward, sending shards of glass and pottery jugs in a burst throughout the common room. Snowden's first thought, after picking himself up, was to check on Sylpha the Fey.

"*Vestawai*," he told her to get up. The young Elf-mother did so carefully, before panic took her eyes.

"Gwenllygad! My child, Snowden—where's my child!" Frantically they both surveyed the hall, squinting from the bright flames. Here and there men dragged their companions from beneath burning rubble, all fleeing toward the crowded exit. All but two…

"HURRY DYREK!"

"I've got the kid, I've got the kid." The two thugs pushed against the panicked mob, rushing toward the doors. "Wait!" Dyrek and his accomplice froze in their tracks. The woman was up, and some man with her. And they were coming right toward Dyrek and the child, swords drawn.

"We're not gonna make it to the door…to the stairs, Dyrek, to the stairs." The pair wheeled around and mounted the staircase. Halfway up Dyrek's companion burst into flames, and rolled back off the stairs, wailing and thrashing about.

Setting the second thug aflame drained Snowden, sending him reeling to the floor with another inch of hair on his head and beard. In the rush to escape, no one noticed either that the thug had nearly exploded without touching any fire, the half-conscious man on the floor, or the furious woman stepping over the both of them toward the stairs.

DYREK'S LEGS couldn't carry him fast enough. The child's mother—what kind of mother carries a longsword, he mused—was right behind him. He ran to the edge of the rooftop—the inn wasn't as long as he'd have liked—and leapt. He managed to land on his feet without slipping on the slick tile of the next rooftop and resumed his flight. She made the leap right behind him, and seamlessly continued pursuit. Damn she ran fast, he thought.

I. Movement outside of Combat

Contrary to what some players believe, there *is* life outside of battle. Sometimes your character may end up in a race, fleeing danger (often a wise decision), or scurrying to help a companion.

1. Movement on Foot

All movement on foot is regulated by the EN and Move Attributes. Endurance quantifies *how long* a character can run, Move quantifies *how far*. Whenever your movement is important you must declare your speed. There are five speeds: crawling, cautious, normal, hurried, and sprinting.

Crawling characters are down hands and knees. A man-sized crawling character covers 1 foot per Round.

Cautious movement consists of careful, deliberate steps. Those sneaking or carefully searching are moving cautiously. A cautious character covers half of his Move score in feet every Round.

Normal walking is the most natural pace for most characters. Someone walking covers as many feet as their Move score every Round.

Hurried characters are jogging or moving in some other hasty fashion. Besides making a lot of noise, those moving at this pace cover twice their Move in feet every Round.

Sprinting characters are running with all they've go this speed one may cover four times their normal M score in feet every Round.

Speed, other than effecting how far one gets, has a large influence over Terrain Modifiers (see Fo **Four: Combat**) and turning. Those moving at nor or slower paces may turn any direction at any time dur their movement. Hurried characters may turn 60° the right or left for every yard they move. Those sprint may only turn 60° for every 2 yards they move. On hex-grid or hex-map (which we suggest using with 25m scale miniatures, available wherever you bought book) 60° is equal to one hex-face, and one hex equivalent to one yard.

Endurance determines how long a character c keep a certain speed up. Hurried characters must EN/TN 7 every 5 minutes. Those sprinting must every minute.

2. Racing and Chasing

Races and chases are generally won by the charac with the highest Move Attribute. In the case of eq Move scores, the character with the highest Endura Attribute wins (as his opponent tires and slows). Sho both Move and EN be equal, roll a contest of WP. T winner has the will to push on as he leaves his purs in the dust.

Table 5.1: Overland Travel (in miles per day)

Terrain	Move Score														
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Trail, path	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45	48
Poor road	9	13	18	22	27	31	36	40	45	49	54	58	63	67	72
Good road	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72	78	64	70	76
Open plain	5	7	10	12	15	17	20	22	25	27	30	32	35	37	40
Forest	3	4	6	8	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	19	21	22	24
Hills	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
Mountians	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

Unencumbered

Mildly Encumbered

Moderately Encumbered

Heavily Encumbered

3. Long-distance Travel

Terrain and Movement determine how far one may travel in a day's time. One day's travel assumes about 10 hours of walking or riding, including short breaks. Compare terrain and Move scores to Table 5.1 for overland travel. Remember also to apply any encumbrance or armor modifiers when calculating a day's movement.

II. Encumbrance

Determining one's encumbrance—or how weighed down and hindered one is—is a simple matter. There are five levels of encumbrance in *The Riddle of Steel*: **unencumbered, mildly encumbered, moderately encumbered, heavily encumbered,** and **overburdened.** Two major factors determine one's Encumbrance Level. First, one's own body weight; overweight or obese characters carry more than their frames were meant to

Table 5.2: Encumbrance Modifiers			
Encumbrance Level	Move Modifier	Combat Pool Modifier	Description
Unencumbered	0	0	Clothing, scabbard, light bag
Mildly Encumbered	-1	-1	Robes, pack, scabbard & bag
Moderately Encumbered	-1/4 total	-3	Several bags or weapons
Heavily Encumbered	-1/2 total	-6	Large bags, back-worn weapons
Overburdened	-3/4 total	-10	Lots of stuff...

Overburdened

bear. Second, what one is wearing and carrying; heavy objects, backpacks, cloaks, sheathes and extra weapons all interfere with motion. Instead of a complicated system of calculated weights and volumes, simply compare your character's trappings to the accompanying illustrations. Remember that though a scabbard or a light bag is considered "unencumbered," wearing both constitutes "mildly encumbered."

Each level of encumbrance beyond "unencumbered" imposes negative modifiers to movement and to the Combat Pool. It is wise to dispose of any extra burdens before engaging in combat or flight. Table 5.2 outlines these encumbrance-based penalties.

III. Lifting and Carrying

How much can your character lift? This abil based on the Strength (ST) Attribute. Attempts t great masses are ST Tests against a Target Numberh on weight. Table 5.3 sets forth these Target Numb The quantity of successes determines how far off t ground: 1-2 successes, just barely off the groun successes, to the chest; 4-5 successes, over the head

All characters also have an "auto-lift," or weigh they may automatically raise up as if they had rol successes (raising the object up to their chest). One de less (auto-lift –1) may be lifted over one's head, and degree more (auto-lift +1) may be automatically pulled up off of the ground. Auto-lift is equivalent to ST—thus someone with ST 4 has an auto-lift of 4 as well. Auto-lift is also found in Table 5.3.

Any great weight is considered moderate to heavy encumbrance for purposes of carrying it over ground.

Table 5.3: Liftin	
Weight (in lbs.)	TN/ Auto-lif
50	1
75	2
100	3
125	4
150	5
175	6
200	7
225	8
250	9
275	10
300	11
325	12
350	13
Every 25 lbs. more	+1

IV. Jumping, Leaping, Falling

From time to time your characters may

Jump Height (inches)	TN/Auto-Jump
1"	1
6"	2
12"	3
18"	4
24"	5
30"	6
36"	7
42"	8
48"	9
54"	10
60"	11
66"	12
72"	13
Each additional 6"	+1

TABLE 5.4: JUMPING

find themselves temporarily airborne. Without magic, however, they will soon come to the ground. How far are they from their original position and what happens when they get there?

1. Jumping

Jumping vertically, like lifting, is controlled by ST. Table 5.4 outlines jumping heights, quantified by how much space there is between the jumper and the ground. To calculate vertical reach add one's own height (and perhaps arm's length)—in inches and feet—to the figures in Table 5.4. To jump any given height simply roll ST against a TN from Table 5.4.

As with lifting, each character has an "auto-jump," or automatically successful jumping height. Based on ST (ST4 = auto-jump 4), auto-jump is found in the TN column of Table 5.4.

Encumbrance modifiers normally applied to the Move Attribute are applied to ST as well when jumping.

2. Leaping

Leaping is jumping horizontally. To figure how far a character may leap: add his height—inches and feet—to his "leap modifier" (based on the Move Attribute). This is his base standing leap (or auto-leap). Running—requiring at least three good steps (about 3 x one's height)—adds 3 feet to any leap. Attempts to leap farther call for a ST Test against Target Numbers from Table 5.5, as with lifting or jumping.

Move/Auto-leap/TN	Leap Modifier (feet)	
	Standing	Running
2	-4'	-1'
3	-3'	0'
4	-2'	+1'
5	-1'	+2'
6	0'	+3'
7	+1'	+4'
8	+2'	+5'
9	+3'	+6'
10	+4'	+7'
11	+5'	+8'
12	+6'	+9'
13	+7'	+10'
14	+8'	+11'
15	+9'	+12'

TABLE 5.5 LEAPING DISTANCES (ADDED TO HEIGHT)

Like jumping, any encumbrance modifiers normally applied to the Move Attribute are applied to ST as well when leaping.

3. Falling

Falling describes any uncontrolled descent from a high place to a lower one. It is the landing—not the fall—that causes injury. All damage from falling is based on two factors: how far and onto what. Any time a character falls from an elevated position (be it horse or cliff) consult Table 5.6.

All damage received from a fall is assumed to be Blunt or Bludgeoning damage. Each

Table 5.6: Falling	
Landing Surface	Damage Rating
Soft (hay, mattresses, water on a successful swimming roll)	1 per 10' fallen
Hard (ground, stone, armored people, water on a failed swimming roll)	1 per 2 feet fallen
Mixed (crowd of people, falling—not diving—into shallow water, muddy banks)	1 per 5' fallen

individual point of damage is randomly distributed to some part of the body, determined by Table 5.7. Damage to areas rolled more than once is cumulative and applied to *one* d6 roll on the Hit Location Charts (see **Appendix**).

Example: *Vhord is knocked from his horse during a battle. He falls 6' (sitting height on a Stahlnish Charger) onto the hard ground. Consulting Table 5.6, we see that that's 3 points of damage. Vhord's player rolls 3 times (once for each point of damage) on Table 5.7 to see where Vhord is wounded. He rolls 3, 4, and 7. He takes a level two bludgeoning wound to his upper leg (area II—he still needs to roll 1d6 to see exactly where on his upper leg) and a level one wound to his head. Now he has to get up…*

Table 5.7: Allocation of Falling Damage	
D10 roll	Location (see Table 4.2)
1-2	I
3-4	II
5	III
6	IV
7	V
8-9	VII
0	XII

V. Fire, Electricity, and Other Nasty Stuff

All damage that originates from fire, cold, electricity, and other elements or energy forms comes from the

"Generic Damage" chart in the **Appendix**. Such wo are calculated like damage from any other attack **Book Four: The Codex of Battle**. Damage from sources is usually applied randomly using Table 5.7 directed at a specific target (such as hitting someone a burning torch, where the fire damage is simply allo to the area struck).

VI. Fatigue and Rest

Fatigue—gained from combat, strenuous wor lack of sleep—can be removed by simply resting. Re for 30 minutes permanently reduces fatigue by one p The exception to this is lack of sleep. Sleeping les 4 hours a night causes 1 point of fatigue for the w day. Multiple nights with less than 5 hours compo up to 4 points of fatigue (and thus –4 CP, MP, and These points may only be regained by a full nigh hours) of sleep.

VII. Healing and Wound Recovery

Getting wounded in *The Riddle of Steel*, as explo in **Book Four**, is no light matter. While you should n

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be met. First
Second, for m
care.

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ever getting injured (don't you in the real world?), sometimes even the craftiest of characters take a hit. In order for healing to take place, certain conditions must be met. First, you must be resting or relatively passive. Second, for more serious wounds, you must have medical care.

Wounds can be treated on the spot by anyone with the First Aid Skill. Each wound must be treated seperately. A successful First Aid roll reduces Blood Loss by 3 for every success. A failed First Aid roll increases BL by 1, and a fumbled First Aid roll *doubles* any BL from the wound in question. HT points lost from Blood loss are regained at 1 per day, unless the character is still bleeding.

For the long-term healing of anything beyond a level two wound requires a character with the First Aid Skill to be present. Any wound beyond level three or four calls for a Chirurgeon (someone with the Surgery Skill). Less serious wounds may be cared for by someone with less training at Seneschal discretion. If no outside medical help is available, you can work on yourself using WP/First Aid or 1/3 WP/Surgery. At the end of each week spent resting roll HT (modified for any unrestored Blood Loss) against the raw Pain rating of each individual wound (where Pain functions as the TN; WP modifiers to Pain don not apply here). Each success lowers the Pain (and next week's healing TN) by 1.

This roll is modified by 2 things: medical care and

Table 5.8: Aging and Sickness TNs		
Character's Age	Age Category	Aging TN (vs. HT)
40-44	Mature	7
45-49	Early middle years	8
50-54	Late middle years	9
55-59	Silver	10
60+	Old timer	12
Sickness or Disease		**Sickness TN (vs. HT)**
Mild (Serious colds and the like		5
Moderate (Flu, mumps)		8
Serious (pneumonia, the plague)		13

damage type. The character providing First Aid or Sur may make a Skill Test at the end of the week, befor patient rolls. Each success in this Test adds +1 die t patient's HT rolls for that week. Failure adds not and fumbling causes a –2 die penalty. The very medical facilities grant an additional 1 or 2 dice to roll, and the worst remove 2 or 3 dice. Damage ty meaning cutting, piercing, or bludgeonin modifies this HT roll as well. Piercing wounds harder to heal, incurring a –1 die pen Bludgeoning wounds are easier to heal, grantin die to healing rolls. Cuts apply no modifier one or the other.

Failure to properly care for a wound will it from healing, but some activities can aggr a wound. Any strenuous activity (like figh

Table 5.9: Lost Attribute Points due to Aging or Sickness	
# of Successes	Lost Attribute Point
Fumble	10
Fail	5
1	4
2	3
3	2
4	1
5	0

CKNESS TNs	
	Aging TN (vs. HT)
	7
	8
	9
	10
	12
	Sickness TN (vs. HT)
	5
	8
	13

g First Aid or Surgery
the week, before the
st adds +1 die to the
ailure adds nothing,
alty. The very best
l 1 or 2 dice to this
ice. Damage type—
or bludgeoning—
Piercing wounds are
a –1 die penalty.
to heal, granting +1
no modifier one way

or a wound will keep
tivities can aggravate
ctivity (like fighting

ATTRIBUTE AGING OR SS
Attribute Points
10
5
4
3
2
1
0

or riding a horse faster than normal speed) re-opens old wounds on a failed HT/TN 10 roll. As with healing, roll for each wound individually. A re-opened wound is considered fresh (including a round of *Shock*), and must begin healing all over again.

TABLE 5.10: AGING BONUS DICE DUE TO RACE	
Race	Bonus Dice
Human	0
Fey	0 (ageless)
Lesser Siehe	+3
Dwarf (Siehe)	+4
Halfling	+2

Finally, some things just can't be healed. Dismemberment and death are permanent, although the first can be remedied through sorcery. Magic exists as an option for healing all manner of wounds (anything short of death). See **Book Six: Sorcery.**

VIII. Aging and Sickness

Everyone—except the Fey—grows old one day. Aging may be brought about naturally, as time passes, or through unnatural means such as casting spells or being cursed. After the age of 40 each character must roll on Table 5.8 once a year. Aging rolls are Tests of HT, but the Target Number varies with the character's age.

Each success on this HT roll reduces the number of points lost from amongst the 10 Temporal and Mental Attributes. Table 5.9 sets forth the quantity of points lost from these traits. Each point is individually subtracted from a randomly selected trait (roll 1d10, where 1=ST, 2=AG, 3=TO, 6=WP, 10=Per, etc...). If the same trait is re-rolled more than once the points lost are cumulative. When any Attribute finally reaches 0 due to aging, that character passes away from age or disease.

Additionally, some races age more slowly than others do. These characters roll at the same time as their human companions (once a year from age 40 on), but gain bonus dice to their aging rolls. These modifiers are found in Table 5.10.

Sicknesses and most diseases are handled as aging. Every week that a character has a serious illness roll HT against a Target Number based on that sickness. Examples are found below age categories on Table 5.8. Recovering from a sickness requires 5 success in a cumulative HT Test. These rolls may be made once a week. As with aging, failed HT rolls refer one to Table 5.9 to see how many Attribute points have been lost.

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already

The Riddle of Steel Book Six: Sorcery

KNOW ME AS OUJHA, the last of the Nine.

Here begins the era of my 10,000th year of life. The dawn burned the sky with colors and shone down on my humble abode. Thunder broke the sky later that afternoon. Dust speckled mud fled the sudden impact of the rain. A torrent raged that day, yet I found my mind at peace. Images swirled and formed in my mind a glittering black universe, in which…

Crashing lightning broke my mental reverie, timed in tune with the splintering door. The hallway swirled with darkness as torchlight projected his shadow amidst the splinters. The smell of heat was vanishing from the air. The torrent thundered on oblivious to my smashed door.

I looked impassively on whilst the hulking barbarian boldly strode into the room.

"WIZARD! I wesh ahn oudience witch yue. I kom doo see yue avoud ze Reddul! Vhat deez it, 'Longvhered'?" His accent was unbearable.

"And if I refuse to tell ye, cretin? Nehummhh?"

"Zhen yue DHIEH!" He grunted, hefting his blade.

"Go away, ye already have it." I dipped my pen, and returned to my scrolls.

"Vhat?"

"Fool, Ye lack insight."

"Tdl mi ore dhieh!"

I focused a fragment of my energy towards him.

"Vhh… Vhuttttttt? Eeeeeeee eeeeep!" screeched the small figure suddenly floating at the end of my fingertip. He flailed wildly about, desperately trying to land a killing blow to my outer cuticle. "Knowledge of the Riddle means ye are no longer afraid of death. Ye must already have this knowledge to be foolish enough to threaten me. Behold the error of thy thinking."

I placed my fingertip over the flickering candle atop its ancient wooden desk. The little fellow screamed a little scream as the fire ripped the flesh from his body. The smell of burning blood wafted up on black waxy smoke. The barbarian smoldered and sizzled away, dropping small chunks of burnt flesh into the wax.

As the candle hissed, a low voice slithered behind me.

"Yet I know the Riddle all too well. A pity, for now you die." An assassin, or an apprentice…either way not the first.

The intruder's sword passed cleanly through my neck, blood trickling down the blade.

"Indeed, it seems ye do. However ye know nothing of the Sorcerer's Rule," I noted unimpressed. "Thy next assassination shall fare better if ye don't speak."

My bloody illusion vanished, as well as the man's weapons. The assassin quickly glanced about, searching for me.

"Stay if ye like, I could use an apprentice. But thy attempt to slay me shall have to wait until thou hast better learned thy arts. Steel is no match against magic, only flesh."

The man stood there as if puzzled, considering my words.

His sword appeared at my neck, as his illusion vanished.

"Very well, Longbeard, but never underestimate me again." Power glowed from his blade as it sat frozen, flashing the candle's light.

I sent him to the kitchens… the fast way.

I. Magic with a Bite

In *The Riddle of Steel*, magic is unshackled. Sorcerers wield incredible power, and have the unmistakable ability to disrupt the balance of anything and everything. These are no mere mages, nor practitioners of "hedge magic" and simple incantations. These are the Gifted men and women that wield the power of the Fey. Such individuals are rare, secretive, patient and dangerous.

Each sorcerer learns and uses magic differently. Magic is a precious gift so rarely bestowed that only one in a many tens of thousands may wield it. For those Gifted few, only a handful of books on magic are available in the entire world, treasured and guarded in secret places by those who wish the knowledge kept secret. Most sorcerers must, therefore, be responsible for their own advancement and development.

Magic in *The Riddle of Steel* is both dangerous and powerful. In contrast to what many players are accustomed to, magic in this game can prove dangerous to a reckless user. Wasteful and thoughtless use of magic will inevitably cost the character his youth. Every spell has the potential to age the character, as well as knock the sorcerer unconscious from the str... Sorcerers must temper their actions with wisdom, patience and cunning in order to retain their vit... and often their lives. The payoff is unparalle... however, for there are no "weak" sorcer... Undoubtedly, all this is terrifying—or sho... be...really.

II. Mechanics of Magic

All Gifted (or Fey) characters create their ... spells using fast, accessible rules. These rules, howe... required a degree of interperetation. The prefer... and goals of your gaming group and the Seneс... will often determine how hard and how demandi... spell will be. Magic can be one of the most rewardi... elements of play in *The Riddle of Steel*, but onl... everyone is working under the same set... assumptions.

1. Derived Attributes for Sorcerers

Sorcerers, as stated in **Book Two: The Birth ... Legend**, have an additional set of Derived Attributes. T... are used in magic-related Tests and in formulating y... *Sorcery Pool*. After assignment of Priorities and Attribut... the character creation system (again, see **Book Two**), apt...

TABLE 6.1: DERIVED SORCERY ATTRIBUTES	
KAA	(TO + HT + WP) / 2. Kaa is the amount of raw energy a sorcerer is capable of producing from his body.
FORM	(WT + PER) / 2. Form stratifies a sorcerer's skill and ability to cast spells.
ART	(MA + EN) / 2. Art measures a sorcerer's competence at resisting the harmful effects of magic.
DISIPLINE	(WP + EN) / 2. How cautious and detailed a sorcerer is in performing rituals.
DRAW	(ST + WP) / 2. The rate at which a sorcerer can replenish his vagaries.

Table 6.2: The Sorcery Pool and its Bonuses
SORCERY POOL = KAA + FORM
Provided there is at least one die in the Sorcery Pool, additional bonus dice are added when casting either Spells of Three of Spells of Many:
Spells of One = Sorcery Pool Spells of Three = Sorcery Pool + Art Spells of Many = Sorcery Pool + Art + Discipline

must calculate their derived sorcery attributes based on the Table 6.1.

2. The Sorcery Pool

Just as bladeslingers have a Combat Pool and archers have a Missile Pool, sorcerers have a Sorcery Pool. Once proficiencies have been assigned, the Sorcery Pool (SP) must be tallied. Calculate your Sorcery Pool using Table 6.2. The Sorcery Pool represents the number of dice used when casting spells and resisting the harmful effects of magic (self inflicted or otherwise). The sorcery pool can also be modified based on the kind of spell being cast, but more on that will come later.

3. The Nine Vagaries of Magic (or Sorcerous Proficiencies)

Next the player assigns scores to Proficiencies in the magical arts. Henceforth referred to as the nine Vagaries, they represent facets of what can be done using magic. Up to three points may be placed in each Vagary; the number of points available is based on the Proficiency assignment in character creation. Remember that these points come from the same place as Weapon Proficiencies, and trying to put a lot in both weapons and magic will quickly deplete a character's available Proficiency points.

Vagaries should be selected on the basis of the type and manner of spells a player wishes to use. What are you as a player going to enjoy doing most with magic? How will your selection of Vagaries further the philosophy of the character? How do your Spiritual Attributes reflect upon your Vagary choices, and your Vagaries on your Spiritual Attributes? Deciding who and what you want your character to be should take priority in defining the style the character will inherit. Consider as well which Vagaries are compatible and might make an interesting or useful spell, as multiple Vagaries may be combined into a single spell. Table 6.3 lists the Nine Vagaries.

A word of advice when choosing Vagaries: Summoning is an important Vagary for all sorcerers, as the creation of a Constant Spell (explained below) requires its incorporation in order to be effective. The capability of refreshing a character's Sorcery Pool dice through the use of the Instant Spell "Mana" is an additional reason for the selection of Summoning.

The Rules of Three

The "Rules of Three" were discovered and codified by Xanar Stormbringer, said to be the first of the Gifted. They state that all concepts and energies of magic fit within a three-sided polyhedron. This is found in all aspects of the universe, and applies to gods, men, and the Siehe.

Following the Rules of Three, the Nine Vagaries of Sorcery produce thrice as many effects and are contained in three categories. Three are based in the Temporal (or physical) realm, three in the Mental, and three in the Spiritual. The number of Vagaries that may comprise a spell are varied according to the type of spell cast and the desired effect, although using more than three Vagaries requires the construction of a Ritual spell, described later on.

Table 6.3: The Nine Vagaries
Sculpture
Growth
Movement
Conquer
Glamour
Vision
Summoning
Banishing
Imprisoning

The Nine Vagaries Described

Vagaries have three levels of proficiency: **Novice (1) – Apprentice (2) – Master (3).** Each Vagary is broken down

into three effects, which in turn have three level-based characteristics. The more points placed in a Vagary (between 1 and 3), the greater the Level of Effect a sorcerer may use. Novice level (1) is a rudimentary familiarity with the vagary and its capabilities. Apprentice level (2) is most common. Spells generated by this proficiency level are generally the core of a sorcerer's repertoire. Mastering a Vagary (3) includes a number of benefits, especially when creating a Ritual Spell.

Both the Vagaries chosen by the character and the spells he selects define his role in the magical community. The player is responsible for creating all of his character's spells. Thus a sorcerer who wishes to be known as a necromancer would focus on creating spells that utilize spirits in some dark and spooky fashion; sorcerers going for the "battle-mage" approach should design spells that are best used in combat and war. If your campaign revolves around combating an advancing horde, your character may be essential in repelling them. Spells may be patterned after the example spells (at the end of Book Six), though a personal touch—in title or in function—should be added to each. As always the Seneschal has the final say in all spell creation.

Temporal realms are those that affect physical matter in some tangible fashion. They generally change, move, or alter the size of the target. As they may affect large areas as well, these spells are useful for both offense as well as defense.

SCULPTURE: Magic that changes the physical form or shape of matter.

The use of Sculpture assumes that the materials sculpted are already present. Miniscule/cellular uses of Sculpture require Vision3 (clairvoyance 3) to see the reduced area clearly. Some Seneschals may require the use of an Artistic Skill when using Sculpture for complicated shapes.

Intricacy is the level of detail that the sorcerer can the target into.

1) The sorcerer can create basic geometric s Pyramids, cubes and spheres, for instance.
2) This level of mastery allows complex polygo surface structures of inanimate objects.
3) A sorcerer can replicate the complex forms of things.

Composition defines the number and type of mate sorcerer may use to combine or separate.

1) Two types of materials may be joined or sepa affecting inanimate objects.
2) Ten different materials may be affected, inc plants and inanimate objects.
3) 100 various elements may be integrated i composition, finally effecting animals. This le skill allows a target to be disintegrated as well

Concept stratifies the complexity of the creation.

1) The sorcerer can duplicate something tha currently viewing.
2) The sorcerer is capable of duplicating somethi he or another has seen and described.
3) The sorcerer is able to create things fro imagination.

MOVEMENT: Magic that enables a target to Newton's laws (albeit Newton isn't around in this and animate things.

Movement spells may be the most useful and da all spells. The effects of rapid movement and accele realistically affect a target, including any harmful side from sudden acceleration/deceleration or being tossed like a doll.

Speed is how fast a target may be accelerated or decele and the maximum rate of movement it may achieve also includes the element of Lift, or how high a targ be moved from its current location.

1) A target combat decelera is 10 yar
2) A target 100 mp decelera yards.
3) A target open instantan A decele is 1 mile

Maneuverab direction in a

1) The targ one plan
2) The targ planes.
3) The targe course.

Animation movement of

1) Target ca
2) Target m human.
3) Target ca athlete or pre

GROWTH expanding a used. Affecti conjunctiona

Expanding o its size.

1) A sorcere to half.
2) The targe

1) A target may be pushed up to 10 yards per second/ combat round (About 20mph). Acceleration/ deceleration are 2x of the target's current speed. Lift is 10 yards.
2) A target can reach up to 50 yards per second (about 100 mph), or slowed to a crawl. Acceleration/ deceleration is 10x target's current speed. Lift is 100 yards.
3) A target may be instantaneously transmitted through open space. Acceleration/deceleration is instantaneous. (327,857,019 yd/s, the speed of light) A decelerated target is incapable of movement. Lift is 1 mile.

Maneuverability allows a sorcerer to manipulate the direction in which a target is moving.

1) The target may only make directional changes in one plane of direction (up/down or left/right).
2) The target may change direction swiftly in all three planes.
3) The target may change direction instantly and reverse course.

Animation controls fine manipulation and complex movement of the previously inanimate.

1) Target can walk at a shamble and extend limbs.
2) Target moves with the coordination of a normal human.
3) Target can move with the grace of a finely-tuned athlete or predatory cat.

GROWTH: Magic capable of regenerating or expanding a target. Lesser increments may always be used. Affecting any microscopic target demands the malfunctional use of Vision.

Expanding or contracting a target increases or decreases its size.

1) A sorcerer may double the target's size, or shrink it to half.
2) The target size is multiplied or divided by 10.

3) The target size is multiplied or divided by 100.

Maturing a target causes it to grow if it is living, decompose if dead, and corrodes (if possible) objects. (As time may not be reversed, making things younger is impossible.)

1) Target ages as though a month had passed.
2) Target ages as though a year had passed
3) Target ages as though a decade had passed.

Dividing a target causes it to reproduce a smaller, duplicate version of itself.

1) Divides an object on a chosen axis.
2) Divides a common group of cells, effectively causing them to reproduce themselves.
3) This level splits molecules into equally proportional divisions.

Mental realms are used to affect the minds of others. The sorcerer uses these vagaries to create illusions, dominate the wills of others and see what was, is and will be. The TN for the "Volume" variable of a mind-affecting spell is zero.

GLAMOUR: The magic of illusions.

Illusions must be programmed beforehand or actively controlled. Some Seneschals may optionally rule that truly realistic illusions must have a Vision 3 requirement.

Realism quantifies an illusion's duplication of reality

1) The illusion is shadowy and vague, or blurry, few details.
2) The illusion is recognizable but lacks sincerity
3) The illusion perfectly simulates reality.

Tangibility reflects how real the illusion feels to the re

1) The illusion has no form and can be passed thro

2) The illusion is solid and makes ghostly sounds, but has no thermal or real tactile components.
3) The illusion has thermal and audio components simulating reality.

Interactivity allows others to manipulate or experience the illusion.
1) The illusion cannot be moved or felt.
2) The illusion has to be interacted with in order to move.
3) The illusion is as animate as the target it is duplicating.

CONQUER: The use of magic to control or manipulate the mind of a target.

Implant means a sorcerer is capable of placing a thought, image or entity into the mind of another.
1) The sorcerer may place a short thought or simple image into the mind of the target.
2) The sorcerer may place an experience or emotion into the target.
3) The sorcerer may implant a SPIRIT, DEMON, or dormant spell into the target.

Control defines the sorcerer's ability to influence the actions of another being.
1) The sorcerer may coerce the target into performing a reasonably simple action. This action may not threaten in any manner the life of the target, nor may it be an action that the target would normally find offensive.
2) The sorcerer may manipulate the target's actions, forcing it to act as the sorcerer wishes. However, the target is aware and likely to resent this manipulation.
3) The target is completely dominated by the will of the sorcerer, happily acting according to the instructions it is given, regardless of the consequences and with no memory of the period spent under control.

Repress will eliminate some aspect of the target's memory.
1) The sorcerer causes the target to forget a recent occurrence. This can be no longer than a day past. The target may remember the experience as déjà vu.
2) The sorcerer may delete all information associated with a specific person, place, or event.
3) The sorcerer may completely wipe the mind of the target, reverting it to an infantile state.

VISION: This Vagary enables the sorcerer to see other places, other times, or into the minds of others.

***Divination** reveals the events of the past or possible events of the future. Divining the future only reveals the most probable event as the future is constantly rewritten. Vision heightens the mind's ability to represent or recreate reality through imagination. It does not alter the physiology of the eyes in any way. Vision is necessary in the creation of spells involving miniscule targets as well.*
1) The sorcerer is capable of seeing a day into future or past.
2) The sorcerer is able to see events that have occurred or that may occur within the time frame of a year.
3) The sorcerer may prophesy events as far reaching as his lifeline.

Clairvoyance allows the sorcerer to remotely view the events unfolding around him.
1) The sorcerer can see the events occurring within 1 mile of his position at a magnification of 10X if so desired.
2) The sorcerer may view events in the radius of 100 miles at a magnification of 100X.
3) The sorcerer may view any event anywhere in the world, providing he has some form of a link to the event.

***Telepathy** is used to read the minds of others. Time is often needed to find the information.*
1) The sorcerer may scan the surface thoughts of a target.

2) The sorcerer senses the needs and desires in addition to the surface thoughts of the target.
3) The sorcerer can dive into the mind of the target, experiencing any of its memories.

Spiritual realms tap into forces beyond the limits of human understanding. They deal with magic and beings thereof. Many spiritual Vagaries impose a cost for their use.

SUMMONING: Calling magical beings or forces (that contain their own magic) into the physical world, for a price. (This Vagary does only that, however, and controlling these beings is a whole other matter.) It is advised to select the Vagary of Summoning, as the creation of a Constant Spell—any spell with a duration longer than instantaneous—requires its incorporation in order to be effective.

Spirits are remnants of beings, the residual copy of a life force. Spirits must be seen through the use of Vision.
1) A sorcerer may summon a minor Spirit. Cost: A service to the spirit, such as a host body or other offering.
2) A sorcerer may summon a Spirit. Cost: An extensive service.
3) A sorcerer may summon a Greater Spirit. Cost: An epic quest.

Demons are magical beings generated by belief in Gods, and are either good or evil in nature. Conquer3 is needed to implant them into a living creature.
1) A sorcerer may summon a lesser Demon. Cost: 8 Spiritual Att. points.
2) A sorcerer may summon a Demon. Cost: 16 Spiritual Att. points.
3) A sorcerer may summon a greater Demon. Cost: 24 Spiritual Att. points.

Magic is life force without direction. It exists, nothing mo Raw magic must be summoned and imprisoned in orde enchant items, grant spells extended duration (i.e. to prod Constant Spells), and quickly refresh the Sorcery Pool.
1) A sorcerer may summon enough magic to sustain Novice level spell.
2) A sorcerer may summon enough magic to sustain Apprentice level spell.
3) A sorcerer may summon enough magic to sustain Master level spell.

BANISHMENT: Exiling unwanted magical creat or effects from the physical plane.

Spirits are beings created by the life force of living creatu
1) A sorcerer may banish a Minor Spirit.
2) A sorcerer may banish a Spirit.
3) A sorcerer may banish a Greater Spirit.

Demons are magical beings generated by belief in Gods, are either good or evil in nature.
1) A sorcerer may banish a Lesser Demon.
2) A sorcerer may banish a Demon.
3) A sorcerer may banish a Greater Demon.

Magic is life force without direction.
1) A sorcerer may banish the magic of a Novice level
2) A sorcerer may banish the magic of an Apprentic spell.
3) A sorcerer may banish the magic of a Master level

IMPRISONMENT: Trapping magical creatur forces in the physical plane. A focus (such as a talis must be created in order to bind the energy to the phy world.

Spirits are beings created by the life force of living creat
1) A sorcerer may imprison a Minor Spirit. Cost: 2 Pool dice (SP); this is not a permanent expend

and these dice refresh normally.

2) A sorcerer may imprison a Spirit. Cost: 5 SP; this is not a permanent expenditure, and these dice refresh normally.

3) A sorcerer may imprison a Greater Spirit. Cost: 10 SP; this is not a permanent expenditure, and these dice refresh normally.

Demons are magical beings generated by belief in Gods, and are either good or evil in nature.

1) A sorcerer may imprison a Lesser Demon. Cost: 7 Spiritual Attribute points for permanency.

2) A sorcerer may imprison a Demon. Cost: 13 Spiritual points for permanency.

3) A sorcerer may imprison a Greater Demon. Cost: 21 Spiritual points for permanency.

Magic is life force without direction.

1) A sorcerer may imprison the magic of a Novice level spell. One Sorcery Pool die is irrevocably lost if the imprisonment is to be made permanent.

2) A sorcerer may imprison the magic of an Apprentice level spell. Two Sorcery Pool dice are irrevocably lost if the imprisonment is to be made permanent.

3) A sorcerer may imprison the magic of a Master level spell. Three Sorcery Pool dice are irrevocably lost if the imprisonment is to be made permanent.

Limits in a Limitless World

Each Vagary has an endless—but not limitless—diversity of uses. Magic in The Riddle of Steel is based on the concept that sorcery can bend the laws of nature to an exorbitant degree, but completely breaking them is simply not possible. There are no fireballs or similar "comic book magic," as a general part of the "feel" of magic in The Riddle of Steel. A list of sample limitations follows: Your Seneschal may modify this list, adding to or taking from it, at will.

- Spells may not create matter from nothing.
- Spells may not give life to an object (though they may move and animate it, change its composition

and structure, or blow it to smithereens...).
- Life may not be restored to the dead.
- Time may not be reversed.
- Beings may not get younger. (Though they may appear as though they are...)
- Souls, Spirits, and Demons may not be destroyed (but may be banished or controlled).
- Fire may not suddenly appear and burn on nothing (but can be started on flammable material...).

As a general guideline sorcery is scientific in its application but not in its effect. Magic is still magic, weird and scary, but its practitioners (the players and Seneschal) are encouraged to use reality as a mitigating force in the application of its fiction. Within such guidelines, each player/character may create and cast *any number or variety of spells.*

Each time a spell is cast, a player must describe and justify how his energy alters reality, what sensations it causes, and any perceptible effects the magic creates. Emphasis should be placed on style and description... should never be as simple or basic as "I cast a 'Light... bolt.'"

III. Spells

1. Freedom & Power (the Diversity of Mag...

The whole concept of a "spell" in *The Riddle of S...* is a nebulous thing. Just as Combat is a fluid, cre... thing, so is magic. You don't need to have a spell wri... down in one of your character's spellbooks (in fact, y... don't even need a spellbook), though bonuses are gi... for having spells transcribed, as formalizing any pro... makes performing it easier. Instead, spells may be cre... on the fly utilizing whatever Vagaries you have cho... within the constraints of the Nine Vagaries and the s... creation rules that follow. The only exceptions are t... highly complex Ritual Spells, which must hav... documented pattern to follow. Even the weakest ma... user has a numberless selection of spells at his finger...

2. Spell Types and Casting Times

Following the Rules of Three, there are three ty... of spells: **Spells of One, Spells of Three, and Spells... Many.** Spells of Many, or "Ritual Spells" are the str... but at the cost of time; Spells of Three are general... spells—effective, timely, and low-risk; Spells of One... the fastest and riskiest kind of sorcery—are spontaneo... generated freeform magical effects. Spells of Many, ... "Formalized" Spells (which may either be Spells of O... or Spells of Three) are the transcribed results of perfe... experimentation. Unformalized Spells of One and ... Three are generated based solely on a character's ... individual Vagaries and his player's imagination.

"Spells of One:" Only one Vagary may be used wh... casting Spells of One. These spells render faster b... heavily draining effects. This is because the sorcerer la... both the peace and time needed to correctly draw ... shape the effects generated by this type of ma... Consequently, as the character is forced to draw on hi... reserves of energy (the Sorcery Pool), Instant Spells ca... to quickly deplete the characters supply of magic. ...

Table 6.4: The Five Main Variables in Calculating a CTN
T...Target
R...Range
V...Volume
D...Duration
L...the Level of Effect (1-2-3), or the minimum Vagary mastery level necessary to produce the desired effect

bonus dice are allotted when casting Instant Spells.

The casting time for "Spells of One" is the CTN of the spell in seconds.

"Spells of Three:" Allowing for the incorporation of up to three Vagaries in their composition, these spells are both versatile and advantageous to cast. Incorporating Vagaries takes time to be done correctly, but the strain on the character's magic reserves is not so great, because a slim portion of energy is gained while casting. When casting Spells of Three, the Sorcery Pool is increased by the ART attribute due to the additional mental preparation and time. These bonus dice are just that though, and there must be at least one die left in the Sorcery Pool in order to gain them.

The casting time for "Spells of Three" is 10 seconds per CTN of spell.

"Spells of Many," also called **Ritual Spells**, are feasible only in a laboratory, sacred place, or other undisturbed area. A sorcerer is capable of combining any Vagaries he knows in the creation of Ritual Spells. This is the safest and most powerful form of casting, granting the sorcerer a once-per-spell increase of ART + DISCIPLINE in dice to the Sorcery Pool. Again, these are only bonus dice and there must be at least one die in the Sorcery Pool in order to receive them. Also, because casting Ritual Magic takes so long, the sorcerer is able to refresh his Pool somewhat while casting. As the sorcery Pool refreshes at a rate of one dice per hour, at the end of the spell, the sorcerer gains as many dice as the TN of the spell he cast.

The casting time for Ritual Spells is one hour per CTN of the spell.

3. Calculating Spell Casting Target Numbers (CTNs)

The most important part of creating and casting a spell is its **Casting Target Number**, or CTN. This number must be matched or exceeded by the result of any roll of the Sorcery Pool dice. Likewise, its value denotes how many months of aging a character must resist when casting a spell.

The complexity of any given spell is represented by its CTN. High CTNs increase the likelihood of aging and unconsciousness dramatically, and wise sorcerers will seek ways to increase the number of dice available in their Sorcery Pool in order to offset these risks.

The highest Level of Effect (1-3) from each incorporated Vagary is added to the TARGET, the RANGE, the VOLUME, and the DURATION values (0-3) to create the Casting Target Number (CTN) of the spell. This sets the minimum CTN of a spell to 1,

Table 6.5: Spell Casting Target Numbers	
CTNs for...	CTN components
Spells of One	T + R + V + L
Formalized Spells of One	(T + R + V + D + L) – 2
Spells of Three	T + R + V + D + L (+ 1 per additional Vagary used)
Formalized Spells of Three	T + R + V + D + L
Spells of Many	T + R + V + D + L (+ 1 per additional Vagary used) –2

and the maximum CTN to 15 (Ritual Spells excluded). All Vagaries and Spell Types utilize the same tables in figuring Target, Range, Volume, and Duration (see Table 6.4). Table 6.5 presents the formulas for figuring CTNs for different types of spells and Table 6.6 outlines the Target, Range, Volume, and Duration Values used in those same calculations.

4. CTN Circumstantial Modifiers

CTNs may likewise be increased or decreased due to circumstantial modifiers. Many, such as meditation or using dialogue in casting, are done at the caster's option. Others, such as a disruptive environment or being wounded while casting a spell, are to be avoided because of possible adverse effects. Table 6.7 displays some fundamental CTN modifiers.

Positive Modifiers:

- **Dialogue** involves chanting, singing, or otherwise commanding the forces of magic with the aid of verbal component. Roll Form/Ritual Magic to chanting, Form/Singing to "sing" spells, Form/ Musical Instrument if playing them, etc. Unless Seneschal rules otherwise, Sorcerers must choose a form of "Dialogue" for casting all spells, and stick it throughout. A successful roll lowers the CTN by 1. This bonus does not apply to Ritual Spells (where dialogue is expected) or to those with

TABLE 6.6: CTN VARIABLES AND VALUES

Variable	Value
Targets: Multiple targets may be specified, provided they are within the concurrent volume constraint. Objects on someone other than an enchanted creature can be affected without a spell-resistance test. A player may split his targets in a number of ways equal to the characters MA.	(0) incorporeal (a "target" of zero is also possible if the spell affects the caster exclusively) (1) inanimate objects (2) plant life (3) animals (including humans)
Range: The caster must have access to vision to designate ranges beyond the line of sight.	(0) self (the spell effects the caster exclusively) (1) touch (2) line of sight (3) unlimited
Volume (or Size): Any value of a target's composition may not exceed any one of the three variables below by any amount without raising the TN.	(0) incorporeal (1) 3 gallons / 20 pounds / 1 yard (2) 30 gallons / 400 pounds / 10 yards (3) 300 gallons / 2000 pounds / 100 yards
Duration: This variable is only used when composing *Constant* spells (see **V. Spell Duration**). Every success in casting increases the duration; 3 successes with a Duration of 3 creates a spell that will last for 3 weeks. Remember that the effects of Instant spells may be lasting without the Duration Variable.	(0) instant (Instantaneous spells have a value of zero, even when constant) (1) one hour (2) one day (3) one week

A spell's variables are calculated independently of each other. For instance, a spell that directly effects an opponent requires a Target of "Animal" (3 points to the TN), but depending on the Vagary used, may have a Volume requirement of less than the targets weight. If the spell was comprised of the Conquer Vagary, and only affected the targets' mind, then the volume requirement would be 0. This is true for any of the above variables.

TABLE 6.7: CTN MODIFIERS

Event	Roll	If Successful	If Failed	Notes
Dialogue during casting	Form/Ritual Magic	-1 CTN	N/A	No bonus when used with Ritual Spells
Gestures during casting	Form/Ritual Magic	-1 CTN	N/A	
Meditation before casting	Discipline/Meditation	-1 CTN (-3 CTN with 5 successes)	N/A	Ritual spells only
Cooperation	See in-text description			Ritual Spells only
Symbol Drawing in the area of a Ritual Spell	Art/CTN	+1 Target's resistance TN	-1 target's resistance TN	Spells of Three and Ritual Spells only
Noisy environment	WP/Meditation	No change	+1 CTN	+3 CTN if fumbled
Interrupted	WP/CTN	No change	+2 CTN	+3 CTN if fumbled
Wounded	No roll	N/A	N/A	Apply shock and pain modifiers SP

"Dependent on Dialogue" Flaw (including most beginning Gifted).

Gestures involve physical movement associated with spell casting, through arm motions, dance, symbol drawing or similar means. Roll Form/Ritual Magic for "normal" wizardly gestures, or Form/dance, Form/Symbol Drawing, or Form/ (appropriate skill) for other forms of gestures. This bonus does not apply to Ritual Spells (where gestures are expected) or to those with the "Dependent on Gestures" Flaw (including most beginning Gifted).

Meditation is an option for casting Spells of Many (Rituals). To obtain the bonus for this option half the casting time of a spell must be spent in quiet meditation immediately prior to incanting the spell (roll Discipline/Meditation). Success lowers the CTN by 1; five or more successes lower the CTN by 3.

Symbol Drawing, in an advanced form, can be used to improve the effectiveness of a Ritual Spell on a target by raising its resistance TN by 1 for every success on an Art/Symbol Drawing roll. Failure on this test lowers the target's resistance TN by 2 (or 5 in the case of a botch).

Cooperation with other sorcerers can increase one's SP when casting Ritual Spells. Add the Discipline of the first additional wizard, plus one additional die for each additional sorcerer. As many other magicians may cooperate in a Ritual as the primary caster has WP. An extra die is added if the total number of sorcerers present in the circle is a multiple of 3. These dice are cumulative, but only if the total count is exactly a multiple of 3 (thus 9 wizards in a circle gain 3 bonus dice in addition to the second sorcerer's Discipline and the 7 dice from the other seven participants, but either 8 or 10 wizards in the circle would gain no bonus dice). All dice are given to the lead wizard casting the spell, who must decide how to divide those dice between casting and aging. Any and all aging incurred falls onto the lead wizard. If any wizard pulls his support or is removed before the aging roll is made, the dice that his presence provided are immediately lost, and the spell is considered "interrupted" (a roll must be made—see below). The danger of false friends using this against the lead wizard between casting and aging rolls is enough to ensure that most sorcerers only cooperate with those that they truly trust.

Formalization of Spells (see 5, below) is a valuable process allowing sorcerers to reduce the CTNs of commonly used spells with a great deal of preparation.

Negative Modifiers:

- **Noisy Environments**, or other significantly distracting surroundings, call for a WP/Meditation roll. Failure modifies the CTN by +1, a fumble by +3. Success allows the spell caster to continue unaffected.
- **Interruption**, causing the spell casting to break for even a moment, requires a WP/CTN roll. Failure modifies the CTN by +2, a fumble by +3. Success allows the spell caster to continue unaffected.
- **Wounding**, in addition to being considered an Interruption (above), also applies any *Shock* or *Pain* modifiers to the Spell Pool.

5. Formalization of Spells

Within the tomes of a sorcerer's notes and spell books are those spells that he has *Formalized*. The Formali of a Spell is a lengthy but valuable process, involving research, experimentation, and practice—all resulti transcribed spell.

Formalized Spells provide many advantages. The be passed on from one sorcerer to another so long spell is transcribed in a mutually understandable (many wizards invent their own secret cipher for w their spells so that they cannot be stolen). The Formali process also refines a spell, lowering its CTN w injuring its effectiveness. This bonus is found in Tabl above.

Both Spells of One and Spells of Three m Formalized by Extended Skill Tests of Form/Arcane T and (for Spells of Many only) Discipline/Ritual Mag as many success as the CTN of the unformalized spell roll takes one week to complete (thus Formalizing

can be a lengthy process). Once these Extended rolls are complete, a single Per/Read & Write Skill Test must be passed to write the spell down. All of this must be done in a library, laboratory, or other environment where experiments may be safely conducted. Especially fine facilities (such as giant libraries or laboratories) may provide bonus dice to the Extended rolls at the Seneschal's option. The difficulty of Formalizing a spell—due to time, expense, and lack of proper resources—often leads sorcerers on life-long quests to hunt down the notes and spell books of the ancients.

Any Spell of One or Spell of Three may be Formalized. Spells of Many, or Ritual Spells, are Formalized by definition as they cannot be cast without the aid of a transcription.

At the Seneschal's option a character may begin play with a number of Formalized Spells equal to the total number of points in their Beginning Vagaries. These spells are contained in the character's spell book, and may be any combination of Spells of One, Three, or Many. They must be composed of those Vagaries the character knows and at mastery levels that the character can cast.

Example of Spell Formalization: Omar the Cruel wishes to Formalize the following spell:

PAIN
Spell of One
CTN = 7 (casting time: 7 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Conquer 2
Effect(s): Implant 2
Instantaneous (but maintainable)

The target is wracked with pain, as if struck with a weapon with a DR of 7 (plus casting successes; use the "generic" damage table). The target may lower the level of pain by rolling its WP/TN 7. Each success lowers the number of SP dice lost by 1.

Having gained access to a laboratory, some "test subjects," and a few books on the subject of human anatomy and the physiology of pain, Omar begins rolling an Extended Form/Arcane Theory Test. Omar's Form is 8, and his Arcane Theory SR is 6 (he's done this before). At the end of the first week he rolls 1, 1, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5, 8…one success. Week two is better, as he rolls 1, 3, 5, 6, 6, 7, 8, 8, 0…six successes! After two weeks of intense study and experimentation the spell is ready for transcription. Omar rolls Per/Read & Write (Per 5/SR 8): 1, 3, 6, 0, 0…two successes and the spell is successfully Formalized and written into his spell book. If he had failed that Read & Write Test he would have had to tear out any used pages and start over; if he had fumbled he would have had to start the research all over again! Yikes!

Omar's new Formalized Spell now looks like this:

PAIN
Formalized Spell of One
CTN = 5 (casting time: 5 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 2 (-2 for Formalization)
Vagary(s): Conquer 2
Effect(s): Implant 2
Instantaneous (but maintainable)

The target is wracked with pain, as if struck with a weapon with a DR of 7 (plus casting successes; use the "generic" damage table). The target may lower the level of pain by rolling its WP/TN 7. Each success lowers number of Pool dice lost by 1.

6. Physical Damage Caused by Spells (if any)

Many spells are created with the purpose of harming others. Whenever magic takes the place of a conventional weapon (such as a rock, sword, or lightening blast) its DR is:

CTN of the spell cast + the number of casting successes.

The injured party's TO (and sometimes armor) is subtracted from this value, leaving the difference as the final Wound Level. For most wounds the standard Cutting/Piercing/Bludgeoning Damage tables, found in the Appendix, will do. For others (like electrical or fire-based damage) the Generic Damage charts will provide specific information regarding wounds. Shock and Pain affect Sorcerers as well, applying all negative Pool Modifiers to the Sorcery Pool.

IV. Using the Sorcery Pool

Three events are simultaneously resolved via Sorcery Pool dice: Casting the spell, avoiding aging, and resisting the adverse effects of any incoming spells.

1. Spell Casting

The Sorcery Pool's first use, casting spells, is accomplished by rolling an allotment of SP dice against the given spell's CTN. Any success from the SP, when rolling, allows the spell to function. Multiple successes can reduce spell maintenance costs, effect damage, or even allow spells to become Constant (self-sustaining). With some spells, the successes generated may increase the difficulty of resisting their effects.

Casting "Spells of One"

STEP 1

As soon as the CTN is calculated, the spell is ready to cast. The player decides how many dice from the character's Spell Pool will be devoted to casting the spell (making the spell take effect) and how many dice will be devoted to resisting the effects of aging (the character will age as many months as the CTN of the spell, minus the number of successes rolled to resist aging). Always consider devoting a large amount of dice for resisting aging. Reckless use of magic will transform your character into a prune in very little time…

STEP 2

The player then rolls the dice devoted to spell casting, attempting to meet or exceed the CTN of the spell with at least one die. Regardless of the Margin of Success in this roll, the player must then roll the dice allotted towards aging, and try again to meet or exceed the spell's CTN. If the character ages at all, a Knockout Roll must be made. The TN of the Knockout roll is 5 plus the number of months aged. Once again, a single success will allow the sorcerer to remain conscious. If the roll fails, then the sorcerer is rendered unconscious for 1d10 minutes or until revived by a friend's successful Per/First-Aid roll.

All Spells of One represent the sorcerer slamming against reality with all the force he can muster in a minute amount of time. Consequently, botches are devas… to the caster. The Seneschal may rule that any bot… fumble causes some unexpected catastrophe, incl… the possibility of the botched spell turning on its c… This effect is in addition to increasing the CTN f… spells (and aging) for the next spell cast by the nu… of botches rolled, regardless of the time elapsed.

Sample Spells of One:

DWARFING GIANT OBJECTS
Spell of One
CTN = 9 (casting time: 9 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 2 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Growth 2
Effect(s): Expanding 2
Instantaneous

The target object suddenly shrinks to one ten… its size, or grows to ten times its norm. At caster op… this spell may affects all items on or surroundin… target, provided they are within the limits of the sp… variables. This spell is useful for crushing opponen… their armor, or making their swords too large to sw…

FLIGHT
Spell of One
CTN = 5 (casting time: 5 seconds)
T) 0 R) 0 V) 2 D) 1 L) 2
Vagary(s): Movement 2
Effect(s): Speed 2, Maneuverability 2, Lift 2
Instantaneous (but maintainable)

The sorcerer is capable of flight. Flying faster t… 200 MPH is dangerous unless the sorcerer also elimin… the impact of the wind on his eyes and lungs, as wi… any loose gear.

Casting "Spells of Three"

Spells of Three are cast in the same manner as Sp… of One, except that the "Level" variable is ta… differently, increasing the CTN of the spell by 1 for e… Vagary beyond the first. This means that the L… variable for a Spell of Three is 2 to 5, instead of the … 3 of an Instant Spell.

Sample Spell of Three:

FLIGHT
Spell of Three
CTN = 6 (casting time: 60 seconds)
7) 0 R) 0 V) 2 D) 1 L) 3 (2 + 1)
Vagary(s): Movement 2, Summoning 1
Effect(s): Speed, Maneuverability 2, Lift 2, Magic 1
Constant Spell (Margin of Success x 1 hour duration)

The sorcerer is capable of sustained flight. Flying faster than 200 MPH is dangerous, unless the sorcerer also eliminates the impact of the wind on his eyes and lungs, as well as any loose items and gear.

Note that the only difference between the Spell of One version and the Spell of Three version of Flight is the inclusion of Summoning which allows flight for Constant Duration (in this case for a few hours). This has raised both the CTN and the casting time. Note also that only two Vagaries were used in the formulation of this spell—Spells of Three have up to three Vagaries involved, but are not required to.

Casting "Spells of Many" (Ritual Spells)

The dark laboratories of academic sorcerers and the ominous stones of Celtic Druids are home to the most powerful breed of magic—Rituals. The preparation involved and the sheer nature of such spells provides this strength. Though Spells of Many are best cast in the comfort of a sorcerer's home, he may cast Spells of Many anywhere that he is free to prepare the necessary arrangements undisturbed. Casting a Ritual Spell requires as many hours as the spell's CTN.

Beyond the large SP bonus added when casting Ritual Spells, Spells of Many have one other primary advantage: the ability to combine more than three Vagaries into a spell. Spells devised solely for use in rituals may incorporate any quantity of any Vagaries in which the sorcerer has a Master level of proficiency (although the Master Level of the Vagary need not be used—just available).

The sorcerer must have the spell intended for use in the ritual transcribed in some fashion, and must maintain ready access it. Preparation and research are crucial to casting such spells, which often have very high CTNs (and can therefore cause a lot of harmful aging to the caster). Generally a sorcerer should be well rested and fed, and at full health. A sorcerer should begin by spending half as many hours in meditation as the CTN of the spell.

After resting, the character must eliminate any form of corruptive intrusion from the immediate area. It must be quiet, calm, and peaceful in order to begin drawing the appropriate diagrams and ritualistic symbols. These actions allow the sorcerer to focus his mind completely. Any other preparations should be finalized before initialization of casting (e.g. in the case of a Summoning, a vessel must be prepared).

Immediately prior to casting the spell, the player tallies his character's Sorcery Pool + Art and Discipline Attributes (as per Table 6.2), and divides the dice in a desired fashion. One need not spend all his Sorcery Pool! It is wise, if summoning for example, to give thought to retaining dice for defense if necessary—one never knows how a summoned entity might react…it is best to be prepared. Following previous guidelines, notes and

research, the sorcerer then casts the spell. Successful spell casting is determined by meeting or exceeding the adjusted spell's CTN with a roll of allotted SP dice. Any successes past the first are only counted in a contest of opposing magics. Botching the ritual casting roll results in doubling the TN (and number of months) for the Aging roll.

Table 6.8: Aging and Overdraw Knockout TNs
SPELL CTN = AGING TN
AGING TN – # of successes = AGING in months. (Marked off on the boxes on the character sheet.)
KNOCKOUT TN = 5 + # of months aged. Failure results in 1D10 seconds of unconsciousness.

Example Ritual Spell

REGROWTH
Spell of Many
CTN = 11 (casting time: 11 hours)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 2 D) 0 L) 4 (3+1+1+1–2)
Vagary(s): Sculpture 3, Growth 3, Conquer 2, Vision 3
Effect(s): Composition 3, Intricacy 3, Concept 2, Division 2, Expanding 2, Maturing 2, Implant 2, Repress 1, Clairvoyance 3
Instantaneous (but with permanent effect)

Regenerates a severed limb, slowly and layer by layer. Without the use of Conquer the pain would be excruciating. The sorcerer must make a successful Per/Surgery Skill Test. The caster uses Vision to remotely view the individual division and growth of cells, using the Sculpture Vagary to align them correctly. The target loses 1 point of HT, as the matter needed to generate the appendage is mainly taken from existing tissue. Failure to cast this spell creates a useless appendage.

2. Aging Rolls and Overdraw Knockout

Secondly, a portion of Sorcery Pool dice is used to *resist aging*. Every time a sorcerer casts a spell, he is forced to exert his life energy in order to alter reality. This practice must be done perfectly, less the expenditure partially curtail the sorcerer's own life. The Aging TN is the same as the Spell's CTN. If the number of successes is equal or greater than the aging TN then any and all effects of aging are negated. If not, then the sorcerer ages a number of months equal to the aging TN minus the margin of success. Players are advised to devote a lot of dice to this if they wish their characters to live long. Table 6.8 outlines Ag and Overdraw TNs.

Suddenly aging even a month is a massive st on one's system. Each time the character ag Knockout Roll (an Attribute Test) at a base TN must be made. This TN is increased one point month aged. At least one success must be gener in order to remain conscious. *If a spell is succes cast, but the caster is then rendered unconscious, the is still considered to have "gone off" right before en of consciousness.* Maintaining spells when involunt knocked unconscious, however, is impossible.

3. Resisting Magical Attacks

Eventually most sorcerers end up at odds w other people. This often leads to one person thro a spell at another person and—if both partie wizards—the other person throwing back. Soon later resisting the harmful effects of an attacker's will come into play. The third use of the SP allo sorcerer to bolster a defense against magical at There are three ways to resist a spell.

The first is to get the heck out of the way. *Eve projectile, object, and energy-based magic may on dodged.* Such attacks might include magical projec explosions, and so on. Any "area of effect" spe any spell that requires use of the Missile Pool roll be dodged. Dodging is done through the use of Combat Pool or Reflex Attribute as discussed in B Four: The Codex of Battle. Using many instantan missile-based Spells of One is the same as firing a but without the weapon proficiency and again ATN assigned by the Seneschal on the basi difficulty. Spells of Three and Spells of Many a

enough time to ebb so that an attack roll is unnecessary.

Any spell that attacks a living target *internally* (mind control, disintegration, etc.) calls for a Contest based on the type of spell. Generally any spell that has a "target" variable of "animal" will allow an appropriate contest to defeat the spell. Resisting a spell in this manor is handled on a spell by spell basis. For example, the spell PAIN allows the opponent to Test WP with any successes lowering the spell's effect. This is the second way to resist a spell.

The third is available only to sorcerers and other Gifted or Magical beings, who may resist any spell with a Contest of Art plus any available SP dice spent against a TN (equal to the incoming spell's CTN) verses his opponent's number of successes from when he originally cast the spell. Nullification of the attacker's successes constitutes a resisted spell. If the spell is not resisted, sorcerers are still allowed any contest normally prescribed (such as the WP Test for the PAIN spell). Seneschals may allow other player characters to resist magic with their highest spiritual attribute (fate tends to step in for heroes, after all). (The target must generate as many successes as the caster in order to remain unaffected.) *This resistance applies only to the character. It does not aid in resisting physical attacks of any kind.*

Refreshing the Sorcery Pool

Normally the Sorcery Pool will refresh at the rate of one die per hour, or two per hour spent in meditation. In an emergency, however, a sorcerer may refresh his SP by Drawing in energy. This is done through the use of certain Spells of One called *Refreshing Spells*. Refreshing Spells are special instantaneous Spells of One that allow a character to replenish part of his Sorcery Pool very quickly for a high price.

Be sure to leave at least one die in your Sorcery Pool at all times. Without it, your character will be incapable of refreshing your SP on demand and may find himself in need of shovel and a headstone.

Refreshing Spells

MANA I
Spell of One
CTN = 1 (casting time: 1 second)
T) 0 R) 0 V) 0 D) 0 L) 1
Vagary(s): Summoning 1
Effect(s): Magic 1
Instantaneous

Increases the caster's Sorcery Pool by his DRAW attribute in SP dice. If unused after the sorcerer's EN in rounds, the summoned magic dissipates. *Casting this spell automatically ages the sorcerer one month in addition to any aging incurred in casting.*

MANA II
Spell of One
CTN = 2 (casting time: 2 seconds)
T) 0 R) 0 V) 0 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Summoning 2
Effect(s): Magic 2
Instantaneous

Increases the caster's Sorcery Pool by 2 x DRAW in SP dice. If unused for the sorcerer's EN in rounds, the summoned magic dissipates. *Casting this spell automatically ages the sorcerer two months in addition to any aging incurred in casting.*

MANA III
Spell of One
CTN = 3 (casting time: 3 seconds)
T) 0 R) 0 V) 0 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Summoning 3
Effect(s): Magic 3
Instantaneous

Increases the caster's Sorcery Pool by 3 x DRAW SP dice. If unused for the sorcerer's EN in rounds summoned magic dissipates. *Casting this automatically ages the sorcerer three months in addition any aging incurred in casting.*

The Sorcery Pool never exceed its maxim value through the use of spells or by normal refreshing.

V. Spell Duration

A spell's duration refers how long the spell lasts. Some spells need no duration their effect takes place the work is done. Other such as illusions—must kept up, or sustained, for length of time. All spells a duration that fits into of the following categories

- **Instantaneous** Spells have a duration of *zero*. The power comes and goes, leaving only its own after effects. Many (if not most) Instantaneous spells will have permanent effects, such as Instantaneous spell that dissolves a door—the door gone for good, but the execution of the spell was instant. Spells of One

always considered Instantaneous or Maintained due to their single-Vagary nature. All Instantaneous spells can be Maintained, however, as described below.

Maintained Spells are sustained with dice from the Sorcery Pool. To Maintain a spell a number of dice equal to the spell's CTN minus the number of casting successes must be set aside. These dice do not refresh into the Sorcery Pool, however, until the Maintained spell is released (after which they refresh at the normal rate). Other spells may still be cast while maintaining a spell and the sorcerer may undertake any actions normally allowed in the interim. Spells may not be maintained using the bonus dice granted for casting Spells of Three and Spells of Many. Maintained spells may be "dropped" at any time. Additionally, if a Sorcerer's SP is drops to zero through wounds or other outside influences, the Maintained spell breaks and drops.

Constant Spells have a definable duration. This duration is chosen as a variable *when creating the spell* and *through the use of the Vagary of Summoning*. Each success in casting allows the spell to function for the chosen time frame without concentration, essentially creating a self-sustaining spell. Because Constant spells are effectively "tied off," the sorcerer need not be conscious, healthy, or even alive to ensure their pre-established duration.

Dormant Spells are cast for another to use, or in the enchantment of talismans and other spell-casting items. They must be implanted via the Vagary of Conquer into the subject, in addition to successfully casting the spell (doing this as part of a Ritual spell will reduce the risk of aging considerably). When a spell is given to another, Sorcery Pool dice used in casting are transferred with it. Once a Dormant spell has been passed to a subject, the carrier may cast it using those SP dice passed along with the spell for casting and aging rolls. The subject only has the spell (not the Vagaries) to use, and must use all dice received in the casting. The spell-bearer must resist aging as though he or it was a sorcerer upon casting the spell, or suffer the consequences (in the case of talismans and other magical items, the item must make an aging roll. Seneschals should assign the number of months or years that an item can endure to "age" before it is destroyed or otherwise rendered useless, withering away or turning to dust—2 or 3 d10 months is a reasonable amount for most items). Once cast, the spell acts as normally as it would for the sorcerer. Though these dice remain in the carrier until the spell is cast, the sorcerer that imbued those dice originally refreshes his own SP normally. A sorcerer can only have as many Dormant spells "out" as he has dice in his full Spell Pool.

Example: Ghandul decides to implant "Regrowth," from the above example, as a dormant spell into his walking-stick. The spell remains unchanged, except that the Vagary of "Conquer 3" has now been added to the mix (raising the CTN by 1 to become 12). He spends the full 12 hours in Ritual, including 6 hours of pre-casting meditation and symbol drawing (-2 CTN, making the final CTN 10) and the cooperation of another sorcerer (who has a Discipline 5, or +5 SP for Ghandul when casting the spell). His SP for this is 28 (13 + Art 4 + Discipline 6 + 5). At the end of the ritual he rolls 10 dice to cast the spell (he rolls 1 success, a 13) and uses the other 18 dice to make his Aging Roll (He rolls 3 successes, a 10, 13, and 17). He ages 7 months (CTN/Aging TN = 10, minus 3 = 7), but has successfully imbued his staff with the Regrowth spell and 10 dice (at a CTN of 10, the same CTN used when casting the spell. When he uses the staff to re-attach an arm or leg (anyone's), he can choose how many of those 10 dice will go to casting the spell, and how many will go toward protecting the staff from aging. Either way the staff will be doing all the work next time. Note that he could have tried to implant a simple "Spell of One" or "Spell of Three" using a ritual spell as well (or in a pinch, without).

VI. Sorcerers and Sorcerous Characters

The Fey and the Gifted are challenges for even the most advanced gamer or RPG veteran. Beyond the mechanics inherent in a sorcery system that allows so much freedom and grants so much power is the issue of race, culture, balance, and tone. These items, along with direction and advice for creating a sorcerous character, are outlined below.

1. Race and the Gift

Three races allow player characters to wie
dreadful forces of Weyrth's most ancient power
Gifted, the Fey, and Faeries.

The Gifted are those humans born with the a
to channel, control, and direct the energies of m
Such power usually surfa
the time of puberty,
doesn't reach maturity
young adulthood.
human nations
superstitious and fearf
magic. Many religions
cultures hunt down those
have such power
inquisitions and purge
Gifted hide their co
"gift" with all that they
Though generally solita
the practice of magic,
of the Gifted have
networks across
homeland, passed on to
apprentice from his mas

The Gifted are magi
inferior to the Fey and
magic-using Siehe in one
all human sorcerers must
either the "Dependen
Gestures" or "Dependen
Dialogue" Flaw in its
version. This is in additi
any Flaws gained durin
Priority phase of Cha
Creation (see Book T
Training). Those G
willing to take the
version of either Flaw m
so if they please, counti
as a minor Flaw for
purpose of Priorities
character creation. This

may be bought off through Spiritual Attribute points later in play. This is due to the fragile bond between mortal man and the god-like power of sorcery.

The Fey are those ancient Siehe Elves that ruled the whole of Weyrth before the coming of man. They are revered in Celtic pagan circles, feared by commoners, and considered superstition by the wealthy and educated. Elves make powerful sorcerers, but are wary to use more power than they can handle. Unlike humans, the Fey have no life-span—they are immortal, except for the aging effects of magic (discussed below). Any aging that an Elf character undergoes affects him exactly as it would a human, causing the effects of age to plague the eternally young Fey. It is considered a sign of great power and wisdom (or foolhardiness) amongst the elves to be advanced in years, as only great (or foolish) elves channel so much magic as to endure sorcery's adverse effects.

Faeries are those lesser Siehe (be they Seelie or Unseelie) that can use magic. They are not uncommon amongst the Siehe, and are constantly by the side of the Fey. Most Faeries disdain and taunt those other Siehe that cannot wield sorcerous powers, considering them little little more than ugly humans or dwarfs. Due to their chaotic nature, most faeries may never take the "Mindful" Gift, though some wood-sprites may be exceptions.

Gifts and Flaws for Sorcerers

These Gifts and Flaws are available only to the Gifted, the Fey, and to Faeries. They apply to the realm of magic only. Rules for selecting them and buying the off are the same as for mundane Gifts and Flaws as found in **Book Three: Training.**

Sorcerous Gifts Described

Gift of the Ancients (major)

Every few decades one is born—descended from the Fey. The Gift is strong in such sorcerers, be they elf or man. Most destroy themselves and everyone around them as their power is too great for the untrained to control; the rest come to be feared and admired by the world. Sorcerers with the Gift of the Ancients gain three (3) extra dice in their Sorcery Pool, reflecting a natural acumen for magic.

- Mindful (major)

Those magic-wielders that survive to a ripe old age by natural means often write books of the deep sense of insight and enlightenment that their lives and journeys have brought them. Few actually attain this oneness of mind and body that the elders once possessed—some say it parallels the elusive Riddle of Steel. Characters with this Gift are on the brink of such enlightenment, having aligned their thoughts and consciousness with their physical form. All spell casting Target Numbers are reduced by one (1) point when the character is well rested.

- Sleepless (minor)

The unification of the corporeal, the mind, and the soul that sorcery creates allows the body to do fantastic things. This Gift has different effects for different races. The Fey (are considered to have this Gift automatically) never sleep at all unless they so choose. Some faeries (who must buy this Gift) are accredited with the same ability. Human and Halfling Gifted must enter a powerful and ancient form of meditation that allows them to remain conscious and aware (though in a meditative state) instead of sleeping.

- Weires and Familiars (minor)

Weires are those sorcerers bonded to a companion; familiars are the animals which act as that companion. Small creatures, such as ferrets, cats, hawks, bats, and rats are popular, though any kind of animal may be bonded. Characters with this Gift begin play with a familiar of their choice (assuming Seneschal approval).

The benefits of such an arrangement are many, though not without risk. The familiar grants the sorcerer one automatic success on all Aging rolls. The character's mind is linked to that of the animal, constantly sharing thoughts, sights and feelings. The sorcerer is effectively two beings, and may use either body as a vessel for his/their mind. Entering the mind of the animal deprives

the sorcerer of his own body, and for the duration it lies in a catatonic slumber. A Weire would be wise to take the necessary precautions....

- Talisman (major or minor)

Since the days of the ancients and of the elders, sorcerers have been looking for ways to increase and store power. Talismans, physical objects that contain their own magical energy, are the result. Though smaller, portable objects are most popular, any physical non-living thing may be a talisman. These powerful artifacts add bonus dice to any spell cast, not unlike the bonuses provided by non-instant spell casting.

A major Talisman provides two dice for use with the SP, while a minor talisman provides only one. Up to three talismans may be used at once, though finding or creating more than one may be impossible.

Sorcerous Flaws Described

- Dependence on Dialogue (major or minor)

This common disability amongst sorcerers forces them to speak aloud when weaving the threads of magic and sorcery. Each spell is performed by reciting ancient chants attached to the Vagaries that compose it. Spells must be enunciated properly, and may be uttered at any volume above a whisper. This allows other sorcerers to detect what Vagaries you are using and to determine the Casting TN of your spell as you cast it by rolling a successful MA/Arcane Theory Test.

The minor Dependence on Dialogue Flaw carries only the disadvantages listed above. The major version forbids the casting of any Spells of One as well.

- Dependence on Gestures (major or minor)

Focusing the random energies of magical power is a difficult thing to do for many sorcerers. Some, in compensation, have learned to use their hands as a method of visualizing these channeled energies through flashy movements. While enabling such weaker or less developed casters to wield magic, it comes with certain limitations. Sorcerers with this Flaw cannot cast any spell if their hands are bound or—worse yet—cut off.

The minor version of this Flaw allows sorcerers to magic with only their hands. The major version is more debilitating, requiring the use of both hands and and removing any possibility of casting any Spells of

- Impotent Blood (major)

Sometimes the Gift surfaces in generations that probably should have lain dormant. Characters born this Flaw loose two dice from their Sorcery Pool.

- Haunted (major or minor)

In their dealings with the "other world," many sor attract the attention of restless ghosts and spirits. These drifting souls plague the days and nights of any char with this Flaw. Sorcerers with the minor Flaw are n irritated and bothered by a single ghost or small g Such characters will often find it hard to sleep at nigh may face interference in daily matters. Those with the incarnation of Haunted are tormented almost cons by many spirits or by one very cranky troublemaker. sorcerers awaken each morning tormented and bleary and find it difficult to do anything about the "voices" the "visions" that seem to barrage them constantly. such persons are deemed mad.

- Tortuous Magic (major)

Some sorcerers' bodies don't take well to chann the forces of magic. For such characters casting any ages the caster by one month in addition to any agin might be received normally. Don't forget to roll One Knockout!

- Volatile Magic (major)

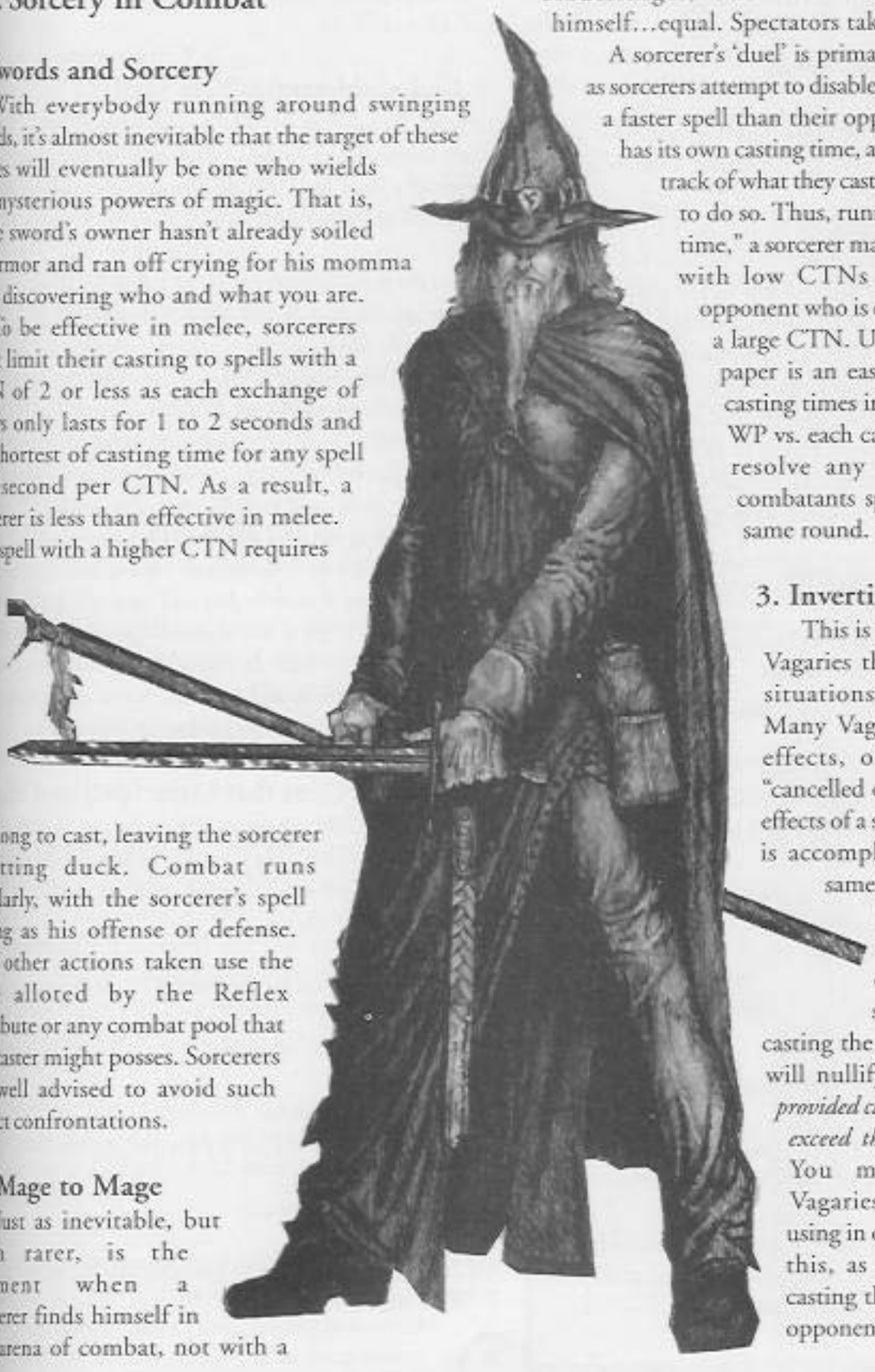
Sorcery is a fickle thing that both man and fa been trying to understand for thousands of years. methods for teaching and using sorcery exist, pass from master to student. Some of these methods are and undisciplined with deadly results for those that control over their powers. Magicians with the Volatile Flaw receive 1d10 – TO electrical Wounds (fro Generic Damage Table in the Appendix) whenev fumble or botch a casting roll. These Wounds are s randomly to the whole body as with a fall (see Book The Laws of Nature).

VII. Sorcery in Combat

1. Swords and Sorcery

With everybody running around swinging swords, it's almost inevitable that the target of these blades will eventually be one who wields the mysterious powers of magic. That is, if the sword's owner hasn't already soiled his armor and ran off crying for his momma after discovering who and what you are.

To be effective in melee, sorcerers must limit their casting to spells with a CTN of 2 or less as each exchange of blows only lasts for 1 to 2 seconds and the shortest of casting time for any spell is 1 second per CTN. As a result, a sorcerer is less than effective in melee. Any spell with a higher CTN requires too long to cast, leaving the sorcerer a sitting duck. Combat runs regularly, with the sorcerer's spell acting as his offense or defense. Any other actions taken use the dice alloted by the Reflex Attribute or any combat pool that the caster might posses. Sorcerers are well advised to avoid such direct confrontations.



2. Mage to Mage

Just as inevitable, but even rarer, is the moment when a sorcerer finds himself in the arena of combat, not with a bladeslinger, but with one who dares call himself...equal. Spectators take heed.

A sorcerer's 'duel' is primarily an issue of time, as sorcerers attempt to disable each other by casting a faster spell than their opponent. As each spell has its own casting time, all involved must keep track of what they cast and how long it takes to do so. Thus, running the duel in "real time," a sorcerer may cast multiple spells with low CTNs in contrast to an opponent who is casting one spell with a large CTN. Using a piece of graph paper is an easy way to chart spell casting times in a duel. A contest of WP vs. each caster's own CTN will resolve any ties, should both combatants spells "go off" in the same round.

3. Inverting Spells

This is an application of the Vagaries that applies to many situations, not just combat. Many Vagaries have opposite effects, or may at least be "cancelled out" by inverting the effects of a spell. Inverting a spell is accomplished by using the same Vagaries (at the same level of master or higher) as a deliberate counter to another spell. Thus, counter-casting the same spell in reverse will nullify the original spell, *provided casting successes equal or exceed those of the opponent.* You must know which Vagaries your opponent is using in order to effectively do this, as you are essentially casting the same spell as your opponent, only backwards.

VIII. Example Spell Casting Scenario

1. Ghandul Makes a Spell

Ghandul has written a spell (after making an Arcane Theory and Read & Write Skill Test). He decides to name the spell "FOLD."
He must have MOVEMENT master rank (3) in order to transmit his molecules instantly. The volume level is 2 (his weight), and the target value is zero (as the spell effects only the caster). The range of the MOVEMENT component is 0, but the range of the VISION vagary is 3. SCULPTING 3 is needed to prevent damage to him during transport, disintegrating him before travel, and reintegrating him afterward. Ghandul also incorporated VISION into the spell so that he could go anywhere his friends needed him. Master level is needed for a clairvoyant scan of the target area.

All this totals up to a spell with a TN of 8

+0 for Target – Animal (but in this case it's the caster)
+3 for Range – Linked to target.
+2 for Volume – 10 liters 77 kilos (his weight)
+0 for Duration
+3 for Level [the Vagary of MOVEMENT]
[+0 each for the Vagaries of VISION and SCULPTING because this is a Formalized Spell of Three]

TOTAL CTN of spell = 8 (A hard spell!)
AGING = 8 months maximum
KNOCKOUT = 5 + months aged, if any

FOLD
Formalized Spell of Three
CTN = 8 (casting time: 60 seconds)
T) 3 R) 0 V) 2 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Movement 3 Sculpting 3 Vision 3
Effect(s): Speed 3, Composition 3, Clairvoyance 3
Instantaneous
The sorcerer disintegrates his molecules and transports them to a preordained destination at the speed of light, reassembling them upon arrival.

Ghandul's available Sorcery Pool dice for this spell a (SP 13 + ART 4).

2. Ghandul Uses his New Spell

One day he needs to get into an enemy castle nine to away immediately or his friend will be beheaded hands of a mad king. He decides that the risk is suffi to use this newly written spell.

To cast the spell, Ghandul splits his whole Sorcery Pool for one die (so that he can use a Refresh Spell if thing ugly once he arrives at the mad king's castle). He decid use both Gestures and Dialogue to lower the CTN After successfully rolling an Attribute Test of Form (8 (the spell's CTN) for both Gestures and Dial Ghandul focuses his energy, takes one minute (60 sec to cast the spell, and rolls his dice. He devotes 7 SP towards casting the spell and 9 dice towards resisting a Fortune grants him 5 successes in casting and 6 in resi aging. He ages 2 months but still casts the spell. He Knockout/TN 7 (5 + the 2 months he aged) succeeds and remains conscious. He's now aged 2 months (and likely need a shave and a haircut), but is going to see the hell out of that evil king when he shows up.

3. Ghandul Casts that Same Spell in a Hur

Same spell, another situation. Ghandul does not have to waste. The ceiling of a cavern is collapsing around As he needs to get out quick he's going to cast FOLD series of Spells of One.

Ghandul's Spell Pool for this spell is 13, his unmodifie

FOLD (Vision Component)
Spell of One
CTN = 7 (casting time: 7 seconds)
T) 3 R) 3 V) 0 D) 0 L) 3 (-2 for Formalization)
Vagary(s): Vision 3
Effect(s): Clairvoyance 3
Instantaneous
The sorcerer's inner sight is instantly guided to the pe or place that is sought.

OLD (Sculpture Component)
pell of One
TN = 3 (casting time: 3 seconds)
T 0 R) 0 V) 2 D) 0 L) 3 (-2 for Formalization)
agary(s): Sculpting 3
ffect(s): Composition 3
stantaneous

The sorcerer disintegrates his molecules for a second, ter which they reintegrate

OLD (Movement Component)
pell of One
TN = 4 (casting time: 4 seconds)
T 0 R) 3 V) 0 D) 0 L) 3 (-2 for Formalization)
agary(s): Movement 3
ffect(s): Speed 3
stantaneous

The sorcerer transports his molecules to a ntained destination at the speed of light.

order to pull this off, he will have to cast all three parts of e spell separately. Each part of the spell must be Held ile the next is cast. It's going to be tricky to say the least.

ginning with the Vision portion of the spell, Ghandul splits s Spell Pool evenly, saving one die.

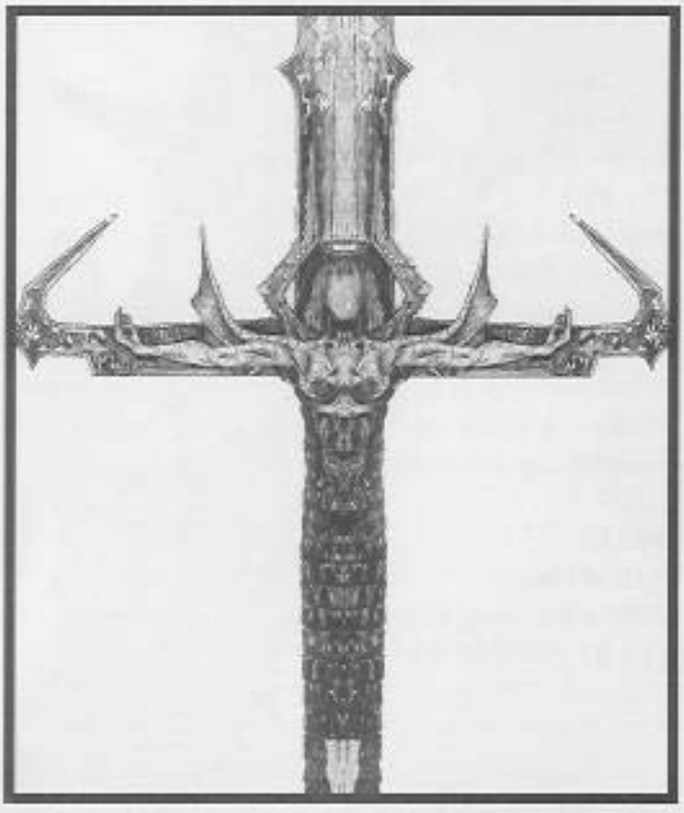
e flares up his energy, casts the spell, and rolls his dice. e first spell is the hardest, CTN of 7, so he devotes seven cast and five to aging: generating 2 casting and 3 aging ccesses (he ages 4 months). He rolls his Knockout vs. a N of 9, and passes. Ghandul is maintaining the spell with of his cast dice (CTN 7 - # of casting successes), so though s pool is 1 right now, it can only refresh up to 8.

ext Ghandul uses MANA III (TN of 1, he's Formalized). He gets 3 x Draw (4) dice—12 total—but as he's aintaining a spell with 5 SP dice, he only refreshes to a aximum of 8 SP.

e then casts the second part of the spell. The Sculpture rtion has a TN of 3, so he allots 3 SP to cast and three to sist aging, with 2 casting and 3 aging successes the result e doesn't age on this one!). He must devote 1 die to maintaining the spell (holding it for later), after which he refreshes his Spell pool again. This time he uses MANA II, as he won't need more than 8 dice (TN 0), and it goes off without a hitch. He now has a 7 die maximum in his Spell Pool (13 – 5 to maintain the first spell, – 1 to maintain the second = 7).

Again he splits his dice with one to spare. Using 3 dice to cast the Movement portion (CTN 4) and 3 to resist aging he rolls 2 successes for the spell and 3 against aging. He ages another month! He luckily passes his Overdraw Knockout Roll once again.

With the final component prepared he releases his maintained hold on the previous two spells and whoosh! Ghandul's body is immersed with energy, and time seems to stop. The pain he feel as his molecules are shredded asunder is exceeded only by the nausea caused by flying through space. White light blinds his mind for a split second, followed shortly by the buzzing feeling of reintegration. Gravity once more pulls him toward the earth as his senses return to their normal state.



In total he has aged 4 months from the first spell, 1 month from the third, and 5 months from using refresh spells, or 10 months in all. When he re-appears outside of the cave he'll have long hair and a wicked looking beard. On the other hand, it only took him 16 seconds to do what would have taken 60 if cast as a Spell of Three.

IX. Example Spells

These spells are only examples, so create your own! Any spell here can easily be modified for Range, Duration, or any other Target Variable for a variation on the stated effects.

1.Spells of One

SCULPTURE SPELLS

DESTRUCTION
Spell of One
CTN = 6 (casting time: 6 seconds)
T) 1 R) 1 V) 1 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Sculpture 3
Effect(s): Composition 3
Instantaneous

Disintegrates any object touched. Resistance is N/A unless the item is in the possession of an enchanted creature, in which case the creature has its ART score in dice plus any devoted SP dice to resist with.

WALL
Spell of One
CTN = 6 (casting time: 6 seconds)
T) 1 R) 1 V) 2 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Sculpture 2
Effect(s): Intricacy 2
Instantaneous

A 4" inch thick wall of earth or stone rises from ground, its mass detracting from the surface area and it.

MINE SHAFT
Spell of One
CTN = 8 (casting time: 8 seconds)
T) 1 R) 2 V) 3 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Sculpture 2
Effect(s): Composition 3
Instantaneous

Creates a pit in the earth 10 yards deep. If cast below someone, an Agility test against a TN 8 + successes is needed to avoid falling in.

RAPIERS OF BONE
Spell of One
CTN = 10 (casting time: 10 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 2 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Sculpture 3
Effect(s): Composition 3
Instantaneous

The target's bones project spurs through the causing DR 10 (+ casting successes, minus TO) to part of the body on the Generic damage table. The is excruciating and remains until the wounds heal (ex Pain values with Shock). If this spell is modifi become constant, no healing begins until afte duration of the spell.

MOVEMENT SPELLS

FLING
Spell of One
CTN = 4 (casting time: 4 seconds)
T) 1 R) 1 V) 1 D) 0 L) 1

Vagary(s): Movement 1
Effect(s): Speed 1, Lift 1
Instantaneous

The sorcerer upon touch causes an object of light weight to be flung into the air. Use the Missile Pool for attacks. Damage is 4 + casting successes. Damage type (cutting, piercing, bludgeoning) is determined by the object flung.

FROZEN
Spell of One
CTN = 7 (casting time: 7 seconds)
T) 1 R) 2 V) 1 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Movement 3
Effect(s): Speed 3
Instantaneous

This spell suspends the movement of the air around the target at a distance and depth of an inch. The air solidifies and arrests all movement of the target. The target may make an AG test at a TN of 7 + casting successes in order to escape an instant before being frozen. If caught the target is afforded an AR of 7 + casting successes against oncoming physical attacks, but is incapable of movement and cannot breath.

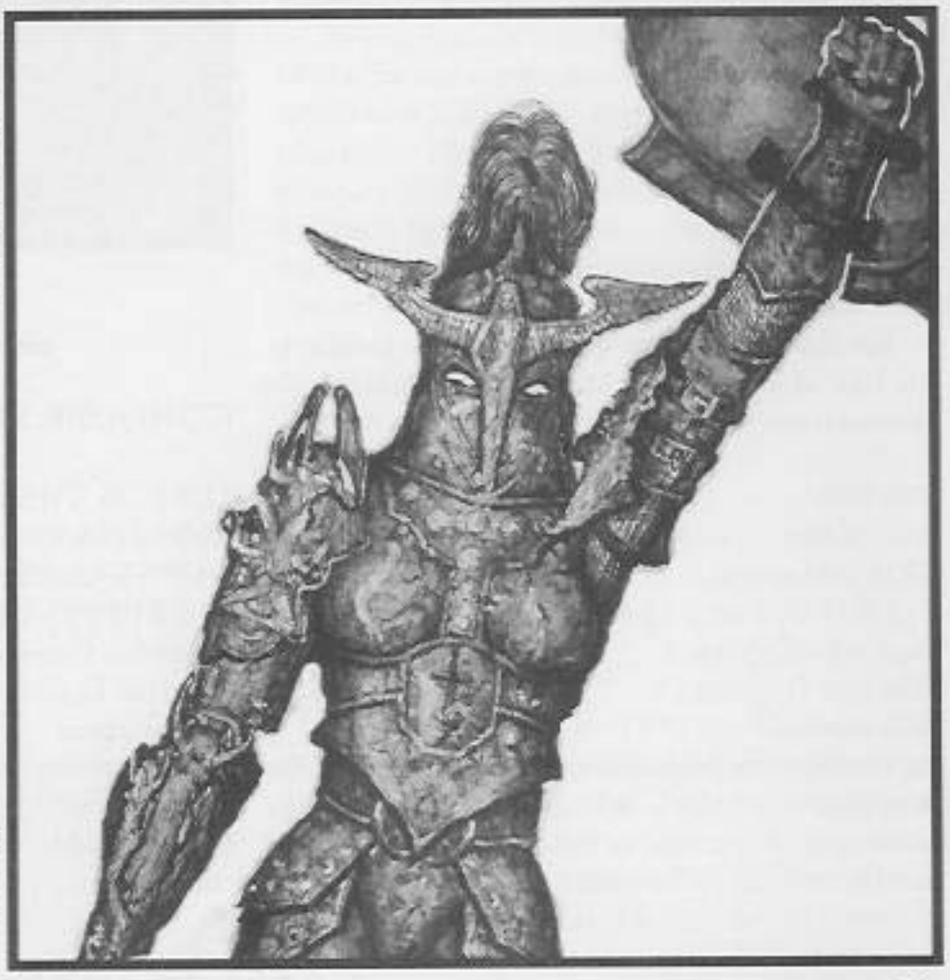
GROWTH SPELLS

CYCLE OF THE SUN
Spell of One
CTN = 9 (casting time: 9 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 2 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Growth 2
Effect(s): Maturing 2
Instantaneous

The target of this spell ages as though a year had passed. This spell forces two rolls for those with a Sorcery Pool, one for everyone else. The first roll allows the target of this spell to resist with dice from the SP. Any success cancel out one month of aging per success. The second roll is to remain conscious, and applies to any target of this spell. The victim uses his Knockout attribute to best a TN of 5 plus 1 per month aged. Note: canceling out all the months on the first roll negates the second one.

PLAGUE OF THE DWARF (OR GIANT)
Spell of One
CTN = 9 (casting time: 9 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 2 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Growth 2
Effect(s): Maturing 2
Instantaneous

The target suddenly shrinks to a tenth of its size (or grows to ten times its norm). The target looses one point



of ST and TO for each 30% of reduction in size; the target gains one point of ST and TO for every 50% increase in size. Resisting the spell is accomplished by nullifying all casting successes with a contest of TO against a TN of 9.

GLAMOUR SPELLS

SMOKE
Spell of One
CTN = 6 (casting time: 6 seconds)
T) 0 R) 2 V) 2 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Glamour 2
Effect(s): Realism 2
Instantaneous

A thick "smoke" obscures the area (up to 10 cubic yards). PER tests are penalized by 2/3.

DUPLICATE
Spell of One
CTN = 7 (casting time: 7 seconds)
T) 0 R) 2 V) 2 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Glamour 3
Effect(s): Tangibility 3
Instantaneous

An illusion of the sorcerer appears anywhere in the line of sight. Defeating this spell requires a successful contest of PER at a TN of 7.

VANISH
Spell of One
CTN = 7 (casting time: 7 seconds)
T) 1 R) 1 V) 2 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Glamour 3
Effect(s): Tangibility 3
Instantaneous

The sorcerer wraps the area directly around him in an illusion, effectively making him clear. Movement is not possible though, as the sorcerer will reappear outside the field of the spell.

CONQUER SPELLS

LURE OF THE GLASS
Spell of One
CTN = 6 (casting time: 6 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 1
Vagary(s): Conquer 1
Effect(s): Implant 2
Instantaneous

The victim believes and feels as though h
drunk. Resisting the spell requires a contest of
the caster adds any casting successes to those of
contest.

MESMERIZE
Spell of One
CTN = 6 (casting time: 6 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 1
Vagary(s): Conquer 2
Effect(s): Implant 2
Instantaneous

The sorcerer peers into the eyes of his victim, assuring the person that everything is fine and there is no cause for alarm. Resisting the spell requires a contest of WP; the caster adds any casting successes to those of the contest.

QUIVERING BOWELS
Spell of One
CTN = 7 (casting time: 7 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Conquer 2
Effect(s): Implant 2
Instantaneous

The victim of this spell suddenly needs to find a secluded area.... Resisting the spell requires a contest of WP; the caster adds any casting successes to those of the contest.

SUICIDE
Spell of One
CTN = 7 (casting time: 7 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Conquer 2
Effect(s): Control 2
Instantaneous

Unless the target resists the spell via a WP contest against a TN of 7 plus 1 per the caster's successes, it is forced kill itself in the swiftest manner possible.

TRANSFIXION
Spell of One
CTN = 8 (casting time: 8 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Conquer 3
Effect(s): Control 3
Instantaneous

The target's mind is blanked, causing it to do nothing but stand and stare blankly at the sorcerer. The target is granted a contest of WP against the TN of the spell, attempting to cancel out the sorcerer's casting successes.

VISION SPELLS

PROPHESY
Spell of One
CTN = 6 (casting time: 6 seconds)
T) 0 R) 2 V) 2 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Vision 2
Effect(s): Divination 2
Instantaneous

Peering into the intricate tapestry of time, a vision of the future solely dependent on overwhelming probability is unfurled, portraying the major events relevant to the sorcerer for the upcoming year. The accuracy of this spell is enhanced with an increased duration. Received as a sudden flash of images, events may be distorted, jumbled, merged, or completely obtuse. In reality, the Seneschal will only reveal events pertinent to the adventure, with a little flavor thrown in for drama.

MINDGATE
Spell of One
CTN = 8 (casting time: 8 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Vision 3
Effect(s): Telepathy 3
Instantaneous

The use of this spell allows the sorcerer to read the thoughts swirling through the mind of the target. An opponent may recognize his mind is being scanned if a PER test at a difficulty of 7+ casting successes is made. If the intrusion is detected, the target may willingly jumble his thoughts (successfully

accomplished or not at the discretion of the Seneschal, based an MA)

SUMMONING SPELLS

MANA I
Spell of One
CTN = 1 (casting time: 1 second)
T) 0 R) 0 V) 0 D) 0 L) 1
Vagary(s): Summoning 1
Effect(s): Magic 1
Instantaneous

Increases the caster's Sorcery Pool by his DRAW attribute in SP dice. If unused after the sorcerer's EN in rounds, the summoned magic dissipates. Casting this spell automatically ages the sorcerer one month in addition to any aging incurred in casting.

MANA II
Spell of One
CTN = 2 (casting time: 2 seconds)
T) 0 R) 0 V) 0 D) 0 L) 2
Vagary(s): Summoning 2
Effect(s): Magic 2
Instantaneous

Increases the caster's Sorcery Pool by 2 x DRAW in SP dice. If unused for the sorcerer's EN in rounds, the summoned magic dissipates. Casting this spell automatically ages the sorcerer two months in addition to any aging incurred in casting.

MANA III
Spell of One
CTN = 3 (casting time: 3 seconds)
T) 0 R) 0 V) 0 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Summoning 3
Effect(s): Magic 3
Instantaneous

Increases the caster's Sorcery Pool by 3 x DRAW in SP dice. If unused for the sorcerer's EN in rounds, the summoned magic dissipates. Casting this spell automatically ages the sorcerer three month addition to any aging incurred in casting.

The Sorcery Pool may never exceed its maxim value through the use of these spells or by me hourly refreshing.

BANISHMENT SPELLS

EVAPORATE
Spell of One
CTN = 3 (casting time: 3 seconds)
T) 0 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 1
Vagary(s): Banishment 1
Effect(s): Magic 1
Instantaneous

This spell reduces an opponent's spell pool b caster's Draw Statistic in dice.

VANQUISH
Spell of One
CTN = 3 (casting time: 3 seconds)
T) 0 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 1
Vagary(s): Banishment 1
Effect(s): Magic 1
Instantaneous

This spell disperses the sustaining dice of a sin spell of novice level. The spell attempts to matc number of dice sustaining the opposing spell

IMPRISONMENT SPELLS

CHAINS OF FATE
Spell of One
CTN = 5 (casting time: 5 seconds)
T) 0 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Imprisonment 3
Effect(s): Magic 3
Instantaneous

In the manner of a lightning rod, the sorcerer redirects incoming magic to its point of origin. The spell "sucks" the magic back at whatever source originated it, forcing said origin to become the target of the spell. This spell is spell sensitive, and must have both a visible source of origination as well as a magical emanation to redirect.

SEVER
Spell of One
CTN = 5 (casting time: 5 seconds)
T) 0 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) 3
Vagary(s): Imprisonment 3
Effect(s): Magic 3
Instantaneous

Successful use of this spell imprisons the opponent's magic inside of him. Best to cast with as many dice devoted towards casting as possible, an opponent has only his Art score and reserved SP dice to contest this spell with. Basically it either works or it doesn't. If the opponent's magic is imprisoned and is attempting to escape, he must invert the spell to break free. No other spell may be cast until the sever spell is inverted.

2 Spells of Three

LEVITATION
Spell of Three
CTN = 5 (casting time: 50 seconds)
T) 0 R) 0 V) 2 D) 1 L) 2 (1+1)
Vagary(s): Movement 1, Summoning 1
Effect(s): Speed 1, Lift 1, Magic 1
Constant (1 hour/success)

The sorcerer may float up to 10 yards off the ground and hover. Horizontal movement may be accomplished by the exertion of force in the desired direction. (The sorcerer must push himself along...)

BROOMSTICK
Spell of Three
CTN = 6 (casting time: 60 seconds)
T) 1 R) 1 V) 1 D) 1 L) 2 (1+1)
Vagary(s): Movement 1, Summoning 1
Effect(s): Speed 1, Maneuverability 1, Lift 1
Constant (1 hour/success)

A small object is used to bear the sorcerer a short distance above the ground. The sorcerer must concentrate on the direction he wishes to go, as well as the velocity. Inattention will allow the object to carry on in the direction and speed it was last oriented towards.

FLIGHT
Spell of Three
CTN = 6 (casting time: 60 seconds)
T) 0 R) 0 V) 2 D) 1 L) 3 (2+1)
Vagary(s): Movement 2 Summoning 2
Effect(s): Speed 2, Maneuverability 2, Lift 2, Magic 2
Constant (1 day/success)

The sorcerer is capable of sustained flight. The sorcerer may change directions at a bearing up to a ninety degree angle in a single motion. Danger to the sorcerer is based on the speed at which the sorcerer is traveling, forcing WP and EN rolls at a TN of 8+ based on the current circumstance. (Generally +1 to TN for each 50 MPH the sorcerer is traveling at). Flying faster than 200 MPH is dangerous, unless the sorcerer also eliminates the impact of the wind on his eyes and lungs, as well as any loose items and gear.

ANIMAL
Spell of Many
CTN = 7 (casting time: 70 seconds)
T) 3 R) 0 V) 2 D) 1 L) 4 (3+1+1+1-2)
Vagary(s): Sculpture 3, Growth 2, Vision 3, Summoning 3
Effect(s): Composition 3, Expand 2, Magic 3
Constant (1 week/success)

Transforms the caster into an animal of choice. While in the form, the sorcerer acquires all Temporal attributes

associated with the animal, as well as its method of attack. Familiarity with the form however, is learned only through practice. Speech is not possible unless the animal possesses the appropriate vocal chords. The Seneschal may require a MA or PER test at a difficulty of 9 in order to use the form correctly.

STAUNCH BLEEDING

Spell of Three
CTN = 7 (casting time: 70 seconds)
T) 3 R) 1 V) 1 D) 0 L) 2 (1+1)
Vagary(s): Growth 1, Conquer 1
Effect(s): Maturing 1, Repress 1
Instantaneous

Seals and eliminates the pain and blood loss of a single level 1 or 2 wound.

ARMOR OF AIR

Spell of Three
CTN = 8 (casting time: 80 seconds)
T) 1 R) 1 V) 1 D) 1 L) 4 (3+1)
Vagary(s): Movement 3, Summoning 3
Effect(s): Speed 3, Magic 3
Constant (1 week/success)

This spell suspends the movement of the air around the sorcerer at a distance and depth of an inch. The air solidifies and stops anything physical save the sorcerer that contacts it. This grants the sorcerer an AV of 8 + casting successes, without having to wear armor. This can be used in conjunction with normal armor.

DISAPPEAR

Spell of Three
CTN = 10 (casting time: 100 seconds)
T) 3 R) 0 V) 2 D) 1 L) 4 (3+1)
Vagary(s): Glamour 3, Summoning 3
Effect(s): Tangibility 3, Magic 3
Constant (1 week/success)

The sorcerer wraps himself in an illusion duplicating the space he is occupying, effectively making him d... An opponent is allowed a Perception test against sorcerers Wit to notice his presence. This test is modi... accordingly for any situation that would lend advantage to either contestant.

DOMINATE

Spell of Three
CTN = 10 (casting time: 100 seconds)
T) 3 R) 1 V) 0 D) 2 L) 4 (3+1)
Vagary(s): Conquer 3, Summoning 2
Effect(s): Control 3, Magic 2
Constant (1 day/success)

The target's will is suppressed, making the target... happy puppet of the sorcerer. The target may ... the sorcerer's will by rolling WP against a TN of 10... sorcerer does the same. The party with the most succ... emerges as the victor.

FOLD

Spell of Three
CTN = 10 (casting time: 100 seconds)
T) 0 R) 3 V) 2 D) 0 L) 5 (3+1+1)

Vagary(s): Movement 3, Sculpting 3, Vision 3
Effect(s): Speed 3, Composition 3, Clairvoyance 3
Instantaneous

The sorcerer disintegrates his molecules and transports them to a preordained destination at the speed of light, reassembling them upon arrival.

MINDSHAPE
Spell of Three
CTN = 10 (casting time: 100 seconds)
T) 0 R) 0 V) 2 D) 3 L) 5 (3+1+1)
Vagary(s): Movement 3, Glamour 3, Summoning 3
Effect(s): Speed 3, Tangibility 3, Magic 3
Constant (1 week/success)

The sorcerer appears as whatsoever he imagines for the duration of the spell.

REAL WOUND
Spell of Three
CTN = 10 (casting time: 100 seconds)
T) 3 R) 1 V) 1 D) 0 L) 5 (3+1+1)
Vagary(s): Sculpture 3, Growth 1, Conquer 1
Effect(s): Composition 3, Concept 1, Intricacy 1, Maturing 1, Growth 1, Repress 1
Instantaneous

Heals a deep slash, gash, or other trauma, eliminating the Pain, Shock, and BL of a level 3 or 4 wound

FEAR OF FIRE
Spell of Three
CTN = 11 (casting time: 110 seconds)
T) 3 R) 1 V) 0 D) 3 L) 4 (3+1)
Vagary(s): Conquer 3, Summoning 2
Effect(s): Control 3, Magic 2
Constant (1 day/success)

All living beings within 1 foot per casting success react to the target of this spell in the same manner as they would react to the existence of a large fire in their head. They are in no way harmed, but treat the target of the spell with the same manner of caution, apprehension and respect as that they would a raging inferno. The Seneschal may call for rolls of WP if a have individual attempts to close in on the target.

LUST
Spell of Three
CTN = 12 (casting time: 120 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 2 D) 2 L) 3 (2+1)
Vagary(s): Conquer 2, Summoning 2
Effect(s): Implant 2, Magic 2
Constant (1 day/success)

The target suddenly finds the sorcerer, another person, or another thing unbelievably attractive and covets attention, love and physical contact with him. The spell is resisted with a WP roll against a TN of 12 + casting successes.

SMITE
Spell of Three
CTN = 12 (casting time: 120 seconds)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 3 D) 0 L) 4 (3+1)
Vagary(s): Sculpture 3, Vision 3
Effect(s): Composition 3
Instantaneous

Disintegrates any target. Living targets are of course afforded the opportunity to resist. A contest is rolled by the defender using their highest spiritual attribute in dice against the TN of the spell. The defender attempts to generate more successes than the sorcerer had upon casting the spell. If successful, the target avoids being destroyed. All gear and items in the area of effect are obliterated unless the target is an enchanted creature and successfully resists for them.

3.Spells of Many (Rituals)

TRANSFORM
Spell of Many
CTN = 12 (casting time: 12 hours)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 3 D) 3 L) 4 (3+1+1+1-2)
Vagary(s): Sculpture 3, Growth 3, Vision 3, Summoning 3
Effect(s): Concept 3, Expand 3, Magic 3
Constant (1 week/success)

The target physcially becomes whatsoever the sorcerer imagines for the duration of the spell. The spell caster must make any skill the Seneschal deems necessary

to accomplish a successful form (Craft, Surgery). A favored spell to punish unruly opponents with, better an acquaintance's appearance, or make your allies into more formidable opponents. The form cannot be more than ten times the caster's size, but may be one hundred times smaller. Speech in the new form is only possible if the vocal chords of the form allow it. The Seneschal has the responsibility of adjudicating any changes to Attributes as they see fit within the scope and confines of their campaign.

Resisting the spell is accomplished by nullifying casting successes in a contest; wherein the target rolls his TO in dice against a TN of 12. As this is a ritual spell, the target may be afforded the opportunity to escape before the spell is completed.

REGROWTH
Spell of Many
CTN = 11 (casting time: 11 hours)
T) 3 R) 2 V) 2 D) 0 L) 4 (3+1+1+1–2)
Vagary(s): Sculpture 3, Growth 3, Conquer 2, Visi
Effect(s): Composition 3, Intricacy 3, Concep
Division 2, Expanding 2, Maturing 2, Implant 2, Rep
1, Clairvoyance 3
Instantaneous (but with permanent effect)

Regenerates a severed limb, slowly and layer by l
Without the use of Conquer the pain would
excruciating. The sorcerer must make a successful
Surgery Skill Test. The caster uses Vision to remo
view the individual division and growth of cells, u
the Sculpture Vagary to align them correctly. The ca

takes 1 point of HT, as the matter needed to generate the appendage is mainly taken from existing tissue. Failure to cast this spell creates a useless appendage.

4. Spells of None

Spells of None are not actually spells as they do not channel energy through the nine Vagaries, but rather they are fundamental uses of raw magical power. However, being an action which uses the power of magic, they function as such. The two below are the only known spells of exception. The existence of others is still debated in the dark corners of secret circles.

LIGHTNING OF THE SOUL

Spell of None
CTN = 2 (casting time: 2 seconds)
T) 0 R) 2 V) 0 D) 0 L) n/a
Vagary(s): n/a
Effect(s): n/a
Instantaneous

The last ditch spell of the sorcerer, lightning is only used when there is no course of action left. (i.e. A sorcerer is dropped into melee rounds with a warrior) This spell may only be accomplished by completely releasing the sorcerer's energy in a chosen direction. Lightning ensues, moving one foot per die released. Casting this spell releases all of the remaining dice from the Sorcery Pool, causing a level 2 (+ casting successes) electrical wound (use the Generic Damage Table). Only one target may be selected, and must be within the allotted range. As the SP is completely drained, resisting aging is not possible with this spell. The caster automatically ages two months, and is forced to roll knockout.

SPITE

Spell of None
CTN = 4 (casting time: 4 seconds)
T) 0 R) 2 V) 2 D) 0 L) n/a
Vagary(s): n/a
Effect(s): n/a
Instantaneous

Usually the last act of a dying wizard, this spell is often a final desperate act of vengeance. The sorcerer wishing to execute this spell begins to focus his remaining magical energy in upon its self over and over until a critical event is reached. When this happens, a spherical release of raw energy is emitted, dispersing the mage's atoms and annihilating everything in its wake. The sphere has a radius of 3 yards per casting success and causes 3 wound levels per casting success. Those Gifted and others with Spell Pools may resist the discharge with their ART attribute plus any SP dice designated for such a purpose against a TN of 4 with every success lowering the wound level by one. Armor and TO are factored normally.

Observations on Sorcerers in The Riddle of Steel

By Ron Edwards, author of the *Sorcerer* RPG, with some help from Christopher Kubasik

Look at those sorcery rules ... they seem pretty dangerous for traditional fantasy role-playing. If you allow a sorcerer character in your game, then blood, death, destruction, storm, and much more seem very likely to follow. The player has the ability to change so much, so fast - he can blow the head off of your favorite villain, he can bring a hurricane into the sky, he can stand your pre-planned scenario on its head. It seems like a Seneschal's nightmare. Or turn the issue around - the player might be a bit reluctant too, once he finds out that any spell, successful or not, might drain the character's very life away.

Does sorcery seem like a bad idea?

Here's a character to consider: Von Salm, a Stahlnish sorcerer. That might seem odd, since his culture rejects the possibility of such things ... except that it's easier to hide your sorcery when people are blind to it.

Who'd possibly let such a character loose in a traditional fantasy game? Von Salm is a Master of Movement, Summoning, and Conquer. He can reverse a sword in an opponent's hand and drive it through his body. He tell just about anyone to jump off a cliff, and they'd do it. Given time, he can conjure up a pterodactyl and ride it against his enemies.

Sorcery in The Riddle of Steel was not written with any sort of "game purpose" in mind. It's not an alternative way to "advance" on an equal par with "fighters." It's not a justification of any sort of technology or culture in the setting. It's not a disguised excuse to bring personal artillery into combat.

Instead, sorcery is designed as another, very dramatic means of getting Spiritual Attributes into play. Sorcerers are men and women working within the realm of these attributes. They will be casting magic for passionate reasons, and thus will have five seven more dice available, for those purposes, than immediately obvious from just looking at sorcery pools.

Just as fighting physically carries its risk of being maimed by one's opponent, spell-casting carries the of draining your life. Both of these things put life a limb at risk. Both of them are the only means, in a harsh and low-tech setting, of expressing one's will and values in a situation of crises. Both ask the question: "What is worth the harm that I can bring others, and the risk I incur for myself?"

Von Salm's Spiritual Attributes

Drive 1 - to bring peace to his home province

Passion 0 - hatred for the traditional feudal law of his home province

Passion 3 - love for his son

Faith 2 - Xanar is real, and his call is now - especially in Stahl

Luck 0

We're talking about a guy who is willing to stand against the official decrees of his culture in order to preserve his faith. Stahl is a warlike place, with lordlings riding against one another all the time, and he wants peace. He knows why he wants it, too -

because he loves his son, and even though sorcery may damn his soul according to his own faith, he's willing, if his son can know a future that's better than the present.

Look especially at the attributes' potential, regardless of their current values. His hatred slumbers, but it can fan into flame, as might his Drive, which is currently just being born.

One must ask, of a particular character, why is he or she a sorcerer at all? These men and women have devoted years of study to a secret and fearful profession that involves tapping strange forces that can literally kill them if used incorrectly. Why? What it is about magic that draws them? To what end? Just as a non-sorcerer player-character in this game must be more than merely a guy who can kill, let's assume that there's more to a sorcerer player-character than the ability to destroy a tower wall or take over someone's mind. He can do these things ... but for this particular character, at this particular time, the real question is why?

How are his Spiritual Attributes actually lined up? That will be what he's up to. And it isn't going to be the same-old fantasy-game thing, either. How many sorcerers have a Passion for Serving Military Big Wigs? How many of them have a Destiny to be a Court Monkey Boy? I suggest not many, if any at all. Real

sorcerers will have other goals, plans, Drives, and Destinies, much more personal ones. That's where their magic is going to go, and that's how they'll get tons of extra dice for their rolls - including age-resisting rolls.

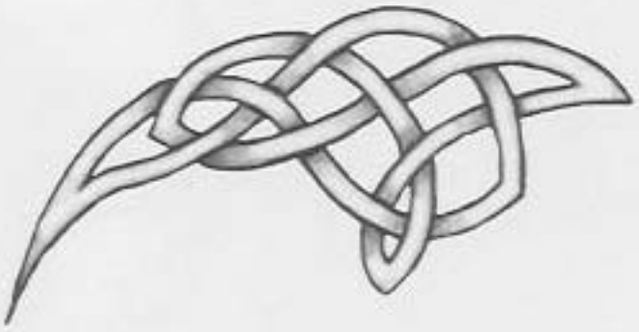
Much, much better: now it's not a question of "what Von Salm can do," in terms of disrupting pre-planned scenarios. The question is not the spell he casts, but what he casts it about. Is it about some footpad who comes at him with a knife? Is it about some yotz insulting him in a bar? Is it about a stranger who offers him a job?

No. When Von Salm casts a spell, I can tell you that it will be about the fate of his home province. It will be about peasants persecuted for their faith. It will be about his son's education. It will be about that Drive and that Hatred flaring into higher values. It will be personal.

A sorcerer, by definition, is someone with an agenda. This is another point where story kicks in, both for the player of that character, for the other players in the game, and for the Seneschal. How m that agenda be brought into full fruition? Alterna how may it be negotiated, altered into new paths, scattered?

Therefore, sorcery is about drama - passions i action, promises kept and betrayed, and all the tie family, friendship, loyalty, and ideals. It brings the things into play with all the chilling, dark power c can imagine, with no immediate restrictions beyon price. Sure, it's unbalanced - so is the human hear Sure, it's dangerous - so is the human mind. Sure i could well be the death of the one who uses it - s might a sword.

To sum it all up: *sorcery is steel too*. The Riddl resides there as well.



Character: _____

Player: _____

The Riddle of Steel™

Sorcerer's Reference Sheet

Character: _____

Player: _____

Sorcery Attributes

Kaa	
Form	
Art	
Discipline	
Draw	

Sorcerous Gifts & Flaws

_____

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_____

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_____

Vagaries

Sculpture	0 1 2 3
Movement	0 1 2 3
Growth	0 1 2 3
Glamour	0 1 2 3
Conquer	0 1 2 3
Vision	0 1 2 3
Summoning	0 1 2 3
Banishment	0 1 2 3
Imprisonment	0 1 2 3

Spell: _____
CTN ( )
T) R) V) D) L)
Vagaries:
Effects:
Duration:
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Spell: _____
CTN ( )
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The Riddle of Steel Book Seven: The World of Weyrth

LIRA PUSHED AHEAD of the group, just a little bit farther than she probably should have, and stopped. Pinpoints of light cut through the leafy canopy, surprisingly green for the time of year. Soon, from behind, approached the rest of her mix-matched band: Snowden—the Druid of Asgharad with sunken eyes and a longer beard than a man his age should have, Rentus Gwyndolyn—son of a baron of Farrenshire in his polished armor, Ahma ben Ki'Hamun—the dark-skinned, dark-eyed Thayerite they'd picked up in a prison-break in Gelure, and the two gray-skinned Fahalanim—Li'ed and Ka'ost. Only one was missing: Sylpha, the mother of that odd white-eyed child. That's how they'd ended up in the woods like this, with much more greenery than should be anywhere in the early winter.

She had run off right after the Inn caught fire. Lira had been outside tending the horses when the commotion started. After grabbing the others (and pulling the unconscious and strangely hairier Snowden from the floor) she had set off, trying to track the shadows that leapt from roof to roof. The chase had taken them here, into the woods, and the sun had just begun to rise.

"WHAT DO YOU SEEK?" a voice drifted to the party. *"Or WHO?"*

Lira halted first—Dardanri were known for their superstitious natures. The others stopped behind her.

"Who asks?" she replied. Somewhere, just outside the edges of her eyes, she saw movement on all sides, and heard the giggling of a thousand children.

"It is never the question that one needs, but the answer. These are our woods, and we give questions for free, but answers come with prices." The voice seemed to float, as loud as if it were near, but willowing as if it came from afar. Rentus crossed an "X" over his chest, and murmured to the Three. Ahma did the same, though to a different god.

"We seek a woman—a tall woman with a sword. She searches for a white-eyed child, and calls for it saying 'Gwenllygad.'"

"Ah…she is our sister. She is one of the old ones. We have her child. We took it from the panting man. She lies with us now, in halls you cannot see, singing to her child in words that you cannot hear. She is safe, and you may return the way you came; you are her friends, and it would not do to extinguish your short lives here. She will come to you before the sixth moon shines its light on your beds." The musical laughter rose to a chorus and was gone.

Looking about and crossing themselves again, the party returned the way it came. The leaves didn't seem so green on the way out.

SYLPHA, HAVING CALMED HER CHILD, set out before nightfall, having feasted with the Seelie for the first time in many decades. A pity that her child wouldn't have the chance when she was older, but that's the way things are

amongst the Siehe. Better, she mused, than her own people, the Fey. The Halfling child never would have even been rescued by such, but would have instead experienced the fate of her captor. Would her companions be so close now that they knew? She trusted Snowden...his fold worshiped her kind...but what of the others. Time alone would tell.

"And Triumph, the mighty forger of worlds, looked down upon what he had made and wept, for it must be passed on to another."

—The Book of the Ancients

I. The Gods Formed a World...

Weyrth is the official campaign world for *The Riddle of Steel*. She is not unlike our own world in many ways—many of her cultures will seem familiar to you; many others won't. That's intentional. Those lands and peoples that you recognize are to help introduce you to the world...to help you begin to feel "at home." The others are to explore.

Weyrth is roughly the same size as Earth, has 364 days in a year, and the same wide range of climates and peoples. Six moons—each one a different size and a different hue—orbit Weyrth in an elongated cluster. Their luminescence casts a many-colored filter over the night sky when most of them are full, and leaves a pale darkness when they wane as new moons. Though the ancients record that three suns once circled the heavens, only one now shines over Weyrth's forests, mountains, deserts, seas, and cities.

The known world consists of only one continent, simply called Weyrth, as most believe the world to end at its borders. Explorers claim to have seen other lands, but such places are yet counted mysteries to her inhabit This great continent is divided into three subconti Mainlund—the west, Tegaarn—the east, and Mara the south.

1. Mainlund

The sub-continent of Mainlund stretches fro Xanarian Peninsula to the icy northern shores of S and Stahl. Its western border is the Sea of Raiders a surrounding ocean; its eastern border extend Zaporozhya and Sarmatov. The climate is not u

arth's European continent—generally temperate, with colder temperatures in the icy north and Mediterranean temperatures in the south, generated by the Imperial Sea. Much of Mainlund is covered in mountains and forests, d while still retaining a very high population of both rban centers and rural estates. Most of Mainlund was ce under the control of the Old Empire of Xanarium nd bears deep cultural and religious ties to that heritage oday.

Most beginning *Riddle of Steel* campaigns take place n Mainlund.

2. Tegaarn

The largest of Weyrth's sub-continents begins roughly t the world's equator—near the southern borders of Chamarluk—and reaches all the way to the frozen seas orth of Zhibara and the Northern Wastes. Tegaarn is elatively flat, with very few mountain ranges except for n borders with the other two sub-continents. In the north nd west this featureless terrain appears as steppe and plains, dry in the summer and cold and wet in the winter, nhabited by hard people. Deserts and wastelands spot he middle and southern end of Tegaarn, with jungles nd dense rain forests padding the eastern oceans. A great ation once controlled much of the Tegaarn, based along the eastern shores of Vhedij and Tengoku. Centuries ago his was weakened by the incursion of Svarastran religious philosophy and practices, which in some form or another dominate the entire east. The western half of the sub-continent attributes major religious and cultural influences to the theologies of Mainlund, Ixliaph, and even Fahal.

3. Maraiah

The warm climate of Maraiah ranges from the far corners of Fauth to the savage jungles of Savari. The western reaches of Maraiah are covered with treacherous mountains that smooth out to flat plains and hilly woodlands, eventually drying up into the deserts of southern Tez'hamun and the east. As with Tegaarn, the eastern shores are thickly vegetated with harsh jungle badlands. Religiously and culturally Maraiah is the most diverse of Weyrth's three continents, despite its smaller land mass; western religion is common in the mountains, Svarastran philosophy in the middle and east, and countless indigenous and national cults and variations.

II. ...And Passed it on to Others.

The rest of **Book Seven** outlines the details of Weyrth—her peoples, religions, cultures, politics, and more. Everything below is *optional*. It's your game; it's your world. Mold and change it to fit what you want—more magic? You got it. No magic? You can do that too. Play in any part of the continent or sub-continents...or create your own! There's a wide world to explore and invent beyond the foaming shores of Mainlund, Tegaarn, and Maraiah. Between the many nations of Weyrth you will also find a number of unlabeled countries—places you can integrate from other campaigns or which you can use to personalize the rich world given to you.

Before you start tinkering with it all, though, we recommend that you try it out "as is" at least once. Weyrth is different than most fantasy gaming worlds that you may have found in other RPGs or read about in fantasy novels. Instead of thinking "big," try thinking "small," "practical," "real." Weyrth should feel like a place that really could exist—a place so close to our own world that it just might be here somewhere. Yes, there are elves and sorcery...or are there? Perhaps it's all just superstition... And if they *are* real...then what? As you roam Weyrth as a Seneschal or as a Player, put yourself into your characters' shoes, feel what they feel, fear what they fear, and gasp in wonder when they do. Go gritty. Go real. Try something different by returning to the roots of fantasy—to Malory's King Arthur, to the masterworks of J.R.R. Tolkien, to the darkly funny abnormality of the Brothers Grimm and other fairy tales... *This* is *The Riddle of Steel*.

Once you've done that once, your debt is filled. Change it around, add and take away. Have fun.

III. The Nations of Weyrth

The following entries contain details on most of Weyrth's many lands and peoples. Nationality Modifiers (discussed in **Book Two: The Birth of a Legend**) are contained at the tail end of each passage. All information assumes the year 1467 WEYR (see the Timeline, below, for more on years and calendars).

Angharad and Picti

(ahng-hahr-ahd, pick-tee)

Geography: The tall, green peaks of the westernmost installment of the Irontooth Mountains rise up from thick enchanted forests and groves. Frequent short rains summon up toadstool rings and sudden fogs. Wee villages surround tall many-spired castles and quaint fairgrounds. Everything about Angharad and the Picti shouts "Fey here!" and "Faeries there!" and the Picti and the Cymry (the Celtic inhabitants of Angharad) wouldn't have it any other way.

Religion: The inhabitants of the misty isles and Celtic peninsula worship spirits: wood spirits, tree spirits, the sun, the moon, the winds...and revere the Fey and the Siehe as an extension of it all. Druids—a combination medicine-man and bard—and Shamans officiate in rituals and rites, going from village to village leaving blessings and curses, and trying appease the often-temperamental denizens of other world. For the average Pict or Celt it's all a matter of superstition and fairy-story come true.

Politics/Military: The Highlanders raid the lowlands the lowlanders raid Stahl and Farrenshire, and the raid them all.

Warriors prefer the greatsword, called a *claidh mawr*, the long spear, and short javelins. Armor rare, though many better fighters have small he round shields, and hardened leather jacks.

Legal System: A combination of imported feudal prac and old-world Celtic traditions hold sway Angharad. Kings—any clan chief with armor, a a sword, and 50 men likewise armed—rule their little lands over each next hill or peak. Lesser l rule lesser lands in a vassal/protector relation

Other areas, particularly in the south, have successfully retained all of the old ways, and follow their chiefs and druids exclusively.

Picti, on the other hand, is a wild land with dozens of kings, though none claims so much as a horse. All legal matters are handled by Shamans, chiefs, and elders.

Economics: Wool trade is vital to those areas and "kingdoms" that actually engage in useful production. Farming is common in the lowlands, as are woodsmen's crafts. Though coinage is rare, gold and other precious metals do hold equivalent value.

Inhabitants/Culture: The Celts are dark haired and fair skinned, short, and blue-eyed. They favor plaids and other woolens in dress. Festivals are common, as they love revelry and music. The Picts are even shorter, with darker hair and dark eyes. They are savage and wild, and gain their name from tatooing and painting themselves with "magical" tatoos and paints. They wear woolens and leathers, though nakedness is preferred for battle.

They are generally mistrusted by more civilized folk, though their way of dress and many festivals have grown quite fashionable in Cyrinthmeir and several other parts of the west.

Places of Note: Mythic castles and floating cities are all over Angharad and Picti. Though no real full-size cities exist, there are probably thousands of holy sites, dragons lairs (abandoned, of course), barrow tombs, enchanted isles, and very real border castles in both the north and the south in an effort to contain the celts within the mountains. The Irontooth mountains are said to house whole armies of Gols, and the thick woods to the south are overrun with sprites and wood-faeries. Careless travelers may very well be captured by the gaze of a dryad, the song of a satyr, or the arrow of a watchful Fey Siehe.

Player Bonuses: Celts and Picts are short (–1d6 inches) and feisty (+1 AG, Wit, Soc; –1 TO, ST). Any coin remaining after buying initial trappings must be either Farrenshire or Stahlnish mint. Celt players should also specify if they're going for a "Scottish," "Irish" or "Welsh" theme.

Ahr

(are)

Geography: The southern shore touches the Vast Sea, with Yone and its towers to the west. To the north, the Ancients Spears thrust into the sky drawing an impenetrable border with a brush of mountains. To the east the marshes of Tez'hamun nestle Cairnesport and its pirates in the mires. Forests of jungle swallow most of the land, but in the north at the foot of the mountains rests the great plane of the Khamchack.

Religion: Citizens of Ahr bend a knee to the Imperial Warlocks who founded the nation long ago. Though none have been seen since the fall of Xanarium (the Old Empire), no legends recount their deaths, and it is common belief that they became Gods. Many other Gods are prayed to in secret however, and few of them are of the benevolent sort.

Politics/Military: Ahr has generally poor relations with all of its neighbors, who see it as a military and cultural threat. Unkind terrain has kept Ahr out of any major wars for many decades, however. Individually, warriors favor the short sword, *kopesh* (a curved sword of Tez'hamun), short bow, and long dagger.

Legal System: Each city-state in Ahr is ruled by an *Uv'Ahr*. The country has a rigid caste system, enforced by the Soldier caste. Supremacy is held by the Ruling Caste, followed by the Warriors, the Merchants' caste, and finally slaves. Each caste is broken down into four individual sub-castes: Ruling into Ruler or *Uv'Ahr*, Warlocks, Politicians, and Generals (who hold rank in two castes), Soldiers into Generals, Knights, Footmen, and Militia. Merchant's class is partitioned into Builders, Traders, Farmers, and Physicians. Each of these is subdivided into a respective "Guild of…" Slaves have no standing at all, and are branded with the mark of the City and owner. While they have no standing, they may eventually earn freedom through the whim of their masters.

Assassins take the place of policemen in Ahr. Anyone who feels they have been wronged may legally hire an assassin to eliminate the offender. One may generally do whatever one is capable of getting away with respect to ones caste and resources. Any belonging to a higher caste must be respected and

deferred to at all times. The Uv'Ahr alone is immune from summary execution by a caste member of greater standing. In Ahr one's caste is power, and depending on the offense, imposed slavery is the favored solution.

Economics: Each city has a barter system based on the weight of the stone it was founded with. Slavery is the mainstay of the economy, as trade relations with neighboring countries are nonexistent. The rulership of Ahr confiscates any and all goods and persons daring enough to attempt to infiltrate their borders.

Inhabitants/Culture: Harsh and cruel, majestic and deadly, fierce, self reliant and proud. The inhabitants value strength and honor, cunning and deceit as well. They love women, war, and wine. As the clime is generally warm, helms are favored while little or no armor is worn an everyday basis.

Places of Note: The capital of Ahr, Ahar, is renown for its pleasure slaves. If you can get in and bring enough money, you could have a really, really, really good time.

Player Bonuses: Ahrians bonuses are directly related to their caste and the Resource priority selected in character creation. Example: Warriors receive training in the short sword and bow for free (one point of proficiency). Politicians receive twice the monthly allotted gold. Assassins receive Herbalism and a +1 bonus to Perception. All people of Ahr are considered enemies by the remainder of the world. Nationality modifiers are –1 HT.

<u>Cyrinthmeir</u>

(**kihr**-enth-meer)

Geography: Cyrinthmeir is one of Weyrth's largest territories, extending from the Imperial Sea to the Iron-tooth Mountains, bordering Ouestenreich, Gelure, Stahl, Magyarföld, Zaporozhya, the White Sea, and other, smaller lands. To the south temperatures are moderate and coastal. In the north they are harsh and cold in the winter, and temperate through the bulk of the land. The capital city of Cyrinthmeir is located at the foot of Cyrin's Walk, a low mountain range. Cyrinthmeir is a rich land, full of forests, lakes, mountains and ore, and wide plains and farmland.

Religion: Over 70% of Cyrinthmeirans acknowl… the imperial Church of the Three-Gods-Becom… One, the most popular religion amongst nobilit… the far north many "heathen" faiths are practic… including variations on Savaxen religion, Stahl… Atheism, Thayr-worship, and others. Religion … matter of pride in the south, where the Imper… Church is a matter of a thousand years of tradit…

Politics/Military: Cyrinthmeir has been tightly allied w… the old Xanarian Empire since its fall. Thou… technically a free state, the Imperial Church ho… great power in Cyrinthmeir, acting as a key factor… nearly every political decision. Cyrinthmeir is n…

by the Gathering of Lords: wealthy lords and landowners from all over Cyrinthmeir. The King or Queen is the most powerful of these feudal landlords, holding the largest army and the most recourses. As such the Royal army is still only moderately sized, with the rest of Cyrinthmeir's military lying in the hands of various members of the Gathering of Lords. Cyrinthmeir's military exploits lead to very little expansion outside of her own borders, but a great deal of power struggle within. Neighboring lords war with one another for resources and political strength. The King allows such infighting so long as it does not grow too large, because it keeps those beneath him weakened. Should any one Duke or Lord grow strong enough to threaten the King's power, a civil war invariably erupts.

Cyrinthmeiran cavalry are amongst the best light cavalry in the world. The longsword and spear are the most popular personal military weapons.

Border raids and political tensions have led to a long-standing feud with Gelure. Cyrinthmeirans tolerate Stahhlners poorly, but have good relations with Ouestenreich.

Legal System: Cyrinthmeir runs according to feudal models. Each lord or landowner is responsible for law and order in his own fief. Appealed disputes go to the next lord up, all the way to the King. Generic punishments include fines, branding, and prison time for infractions by commoners against commoners, and prison time or (more likely) execution for crimes against lords or gentry by commoners. Freemen have more rights in Cyrinthmeir than nearly any other land, and are protected from execution by law except for more heinous crimes. The Church also runs its own courts and inquisitions, which are rarely challenged by any right-minded lord or magistrate.

Economics: Cyrinthmeir profits from expansive sea-trade in the south, amber trade to the east, lumber, livestock (especially sheep, cattle, and horses), and farming in the center, and game and mining to the north. Major exports include coal and iron to the north, and gold and silver from Cyrin's Walk. A great deal of trade, both coming and going to or from the east also passes through. Cyrinthmeir has some of the finest merchant roads in the known world.

Inhabitants/Culture: Most inhabitants are light complexioned, with all hues of hair and eyes. They are a stout people, hardened by war and weather, but blessed with a rich country. Cyrinthmeirans are generally easy-going, adaptable, and outspoken. They are proud of their long-standing unity to the Empire and its Church, and consider themselves the wealth of the old Empire.

The official language is Cyrinthmeiran, in the Cyrintho-Xanaric family of lanuages. Stahlnish and Gelurouis are popular second languages, in addition to the Imperial Tongue.

Cyrinthmeir is fully divided along class lines derived from the old Imperial model and the more recent feudal system. Slaves, imported from islands in the Imperial Sea are common in the south, as are native-born serfs in the rest of the country. Cities are generally populated with Freemen, who flaunt their rights as often as possible. The rural lands are ruled with an iron fist by various lords and Clergy, ranging from bannerets and knights to barons, dukes, and other lords.

Traditional dress is highly varied and based on climate. To the south linens and short robes are popular for men; light, flowing dresses for women. In the north Stahlnish fashion is popular, as are various wools, velvets, and other heavy textiles. Treated and dyed leather is especially popular throughout the country for those who can afford it (High Freemen and the Gentry). Hair is worn long by both men and women, and all manners of beards are common (though northerners tend towards thicker varieties).

Places of Note: Barameir, home of the old Imperial Library and powerful port-city. Cyrinthmeir City, the national capital and center of the world's gold and silver-smithing guilds. Cyrin's Walk, a gold-and-silver-heavy mountain range.

Player Bonuses: Natives of Cyrinthmeir are a trusting lot (-1 PER), but tough (+1 TO). They are generally well educated (free Skill-*Read/Write* for Freemen and up) and familiar with foreign languages (free Skill-*Imperial Tongue* in the south, *Stalnish Tongue* in the

north for freemen and gentry; may learn any language of the northern portion of the old Imperial territories at normal cost).

Dardanet
(dahr-**dahn**-et)

Geography: Sharp and cutting, rocky peaks cover the "Land of Eagles." From the lower costal ranges to the jagged cliffs of the north and east, Darndanet is a land of mountains and valleys. Goats and sheep dot those hillsides low enough for vegetation, always accompanied by a boy shepherd or a grizzled man accustomed to killing wolves bare-handed. Though her inhabitants might not agree, many call Dardanet a hard land.

Religion: The Dardanri are a divided people—it is said that if they are not fighting outsiders, they are fighting each other. Much of this is due to the land's religious history. Much of the coastal population prays to the Three Gods of the Imperial Church—much of the east pray in the name of the Prophet and his Seven Vows. Numerous other views, sects, and philosop have come as well, all compounding upon the an religion still followed by many in Helena. The universal amongst all these warring partie superstition—never eat from another person' (or you'll end up fighting with them), always put the right shoe first (it's just unlucky), and never a pan (or it'll rain on your wedding day).

Politics/Military: Once Dardanet protected Mari from Otamarluk and the Seven Vows. Under leadership of the great chief Scanderburg, Dard had been respected, if not truly powerful. Those are past. Dardanri see themselves as religious free fighters, mercenaries, or revolutionaries. A fe governments all proclaim authority over the oth and none has the strength to really win. In addi much of the country's rescources and manpower p to fighting Otamarluk and its hordes, as non Dardanet has any love for their eastern neighbor

Dardanri soldiers are particularly skilled ambushes and small-group and guerilla tactics. T are noted for their cruelty as well, and show no m or quarter to enemies. In battle they often carry l bows, curved swords, or spears. Armor, if worn, o resembles that of the Marluks of the east.

Legal System: Matters are settled by local clan di religious leaders, military figures, or nobi depending on who's in charge in any given a Punishments are generally severe, meant to las lasting mark and frighten others; thus in plac execution a murderer might lose his hands, one o both eyes, *and* part of his nose—the tongue rem so that the tale can be told.

Economics: On the coast trade is done in fish an cargo, inland trade consists primarily of wood some mining. The violent nature of life in Dard produces many mercenaries as well, many of wh fight abroad and send their profits to the family h home.

Inhabitants/Culture: Stubborn, superstitious, and qu witted, a Dardan can be the perfect ally or the per frustration. Skin colors range from light (in the so and to the sea) or rather dark (on eastern borde Hair is generally brown or black, with brown o

Clothing is intricate, with much lace, embroidery, and knot-work. Red, black, and white are popular colors, adorned with gold or brass whenever possible. Vests are common for men and women.

The Dardanri speak their own language, of which they are immensely proud. Most all of them speak either Marluk, Hellenic, or Imperial as well (if not all three).

Places of Note: Earta, "The Golden City," is the much fought-over capital.

Player Bonuses: +1 WP (stubborn), -1 MA (superstition), +1 EN (from those mountains). Free Skill: Language (Hellenic, Imperial, or Marluk).

Ehld

(ehld)

Geography: Oak shoots from the earth in all directions, breaking often into glades and valleys. Willow trees wind the rivers, and aspens stand guard about lakes and pools. In fall, the countryside blazes with a rustling fire as leaves kindle in the wind and burst into orange and red fire under the setting sun. Beneath the trees, brush of all kind flourishes, dipping in the shallow streams that lace the countryside.

Religion: Paganism is the core belief of most, who revere the Sun as the father creator, Weyrth as the mother, and the moons as his daughters. Animals have an important religious significance as well, and are believed to be the protectors of man. They are said to offer themselves as food and clothing, but in return must be thanked and not wasted or killed for sport. Druids wander the land protecting it from over development, planting orchards, and aiding the villagers. Preaching harmonious coexistence with nature, they warn of famine and plague as results of abusing the gifts given by the Gods.

Politics/Military: Ehld is comprised of city-states, much as Ahr. Each Protectorate as they are called, is guided by a Protector of unbroken lineage and proper schooling, who in turn is guided by a council of often mysterious Druids. Defenders assigned by the Protector maintain peace throughout the various sectors of the protectorate, and each defender maintains a garrison of Guardians according to the size and demand of their realm. All but the protector must abide by the words of the Druids, and the Druids maintain that they abide by the wishes of the land.

During times of war, men 16 to 27 are marshaled to form the army, known as the Shield. Every man is trained to use the bow and axe from birth, and any who have served as Guardians have training with the longsword and shield. However during times of peace, these accouterments are forbidden to all save the appointed.

Legal System: All crimes are judged by the Druids, who dispense punishment as they see fit. Murderers are fed alive to wolves. Miners, the despised robbers of the earth, are all convicted felons and thieves. Imprisonment is not common, but stoning by those wronged is.

Economics: Economically based on produce, any surplus is sold to neighboring countries (except Ahr).

Inhabitants/Culture: Superstitious and ceremonious, popular culture is a mix of isolationists and rangers. Many would rather stroll through the woods on cold winter day than curl up next to a warm fire. History is told in stories, as are moral lessons and justifications for actions. The fey are said to roam free through this land, remaining respectfully unmolested by the populace.

Places of Note: The great Forrest of Morning revered as a place of healing, and said to contain the greatest Circle

ever erected.

Player Bonuses: +2 Spiritual Attribute points upon character creation, -20% beginning wealth.

Fahal

(fah-**hahl**)

Geography: The western coast of Fahal is a low flatland between the Crescent Sea and the Mountains of the Children of the One God. Those same mountains make up most of the geography of this hard, bleak land, with scattered lakes and valleys and thousands of small creeks and shallow rivers. Farther to the east the mountains smooth out into volcanic plains and the dense woodlands on the edges of Krym-Khanan and Tzaul.

The most striking feature of this ancient land is how gray it is…granite and slate rise out of the volcanic rock, muddy water fills the streams and valleys. The sky is eternally overcast, with frequent rains and thrashing winds. Even the trees and grasses seem colorless, swaying in the breezes with a graphite-shaded hue.

Religion: The Fahalanim (the people of Fahal) worship one god: Fahal. Called Bha'al, and Vahal by some of the tribes, Fahal is the Great Gray One; "He is the Land, He is the people, He is the One God." Fahalanism has no organized clerics or leaders per se. From time to time, generation to generation, a champion or warrior-messiah will rise up to unite the tribes and drive out foreign threats. Other times a prophet who has "seen the face of Fahal" will come out of the mountains of *Khaizen Kaa'oud*, called the Fortress of Blood, to bring the words of the Gray Father to his Children. Littered throughout the Seven Tribes of Fahal are also secret groups of *Hanakim Kaa'oud*, or Blood Priests. These men kidnap unbelievers, taking them to ritual circles in caverns beneath rings of standing stones to sacrifice them to the Gray Father.

Basic Fahalan beliefs are simple: *"Fahal is God—this is the one great truth. Cities breed corruption—build none. The people of Fahal are His Children—Fahal is the Land, and the Land is Fahal—one day the blood of the Children will return unto the Land, for it was His, is His, will always be His. Life belongs to Fahal, to give and to take."* These simple sayings are taken with the utmost gravity by all Fahalanim.

The Fahalanim see all things as a matter of black and white—they respect those that stand up for what they believe in, and hold extreme contempt for those that believe in nothing. Better to believe in a false god than in none, better to believe a lie than to be a liar oneself. It can be dangerous to converse with a Fahalan on matters of religion, however, as a conversation could end up something like this:

Fahalan: *"I cannot trust you, my friend, for you call me a liar"*

Unbeliever: *"I do not! How so?"*

Fahalan: *"I tell you that Fahal is God, and you do not believe; I have given you my word, and you do not believe. You do not trust me; how, then, can I trust you?"*

Politics/Military: Because Fahal has no government, it likewise lacks significant politics. Most nations leave Fahal alone, since the mountainous terrain is economically worthless in the eyes of most. The Fahalanim rarely leave their own country except for occasional border raids. There have been a few invasions of Fahal in the past, but none have been very successful. Despite their religious vigor, the Fahalanim leave their nieghbors alone as well, not thinking of others as infidels or heathens, but as unbelievers outside of the protection and power of Fahal. No holy war has ever been waged beyond Fahal's borders, and all that have come to Fahal from outside have been crushed.

All Fahalan armies are mixed groups, including spearmen, archers, berserks, and "battle-champions." Calvary is rare given the rocky terrain, though the myth holds that all of Fahal's true champions—those sent by the Gray Father—will ride atop a black mount. Curved swords taken in ventures to the south are popular arms, in addition to all manners of straight blades taken from the west and north as mass-weapons. Armor is scarce, though most every warrior has a piece or two taken in previous battles.

Shields are more common, though all champions scoff at them, thinking them to be women's tools (there's a whole group of tough women in Fahal...). Such great warriors prefer greatswords and pole-axes.

Before battle a single ritual is observed, especially in those battles waged in matters of faith. The tribal chief or champion leads his army in a chanted prayer to Fahal, accompioned by drums and followed by absolute silence ("To hear His Voice"). Every fighter present then cuts himself—usually on the forearm—asking that Fahal drink these drops and be satiated, else "every drop must be taken."

Legal System: Every clan is governed by a chief, who is surrounded by at least one (but as many as seven) champion and as many *aksakulim*, or elders, as live within the camp. Any man who lives to the age of 40 is considered an elder, since life in Fahal is short and brutal. All decisions are made by the chief and his council (his champions and the *aksakulim*). Murder or theft within the tribe are the greatest of crimes, and are always settled through a duel.

Economics: Fahalanim live as hunters, gatherers, raiders, and shepherds. The last two methods are the most fruitful, though significant farms exist in the lowlands where the gray *hej*-grass is ground and baked into course bread. Goats and sheep provide most all dairy and meat, as well as leather and wool for clothing. The mountains are rich with coal and iron which is primarily mined by outlanders with enough military force to hold a mine against raiders for any length of time.

All trade is handled through barter or gift giving.

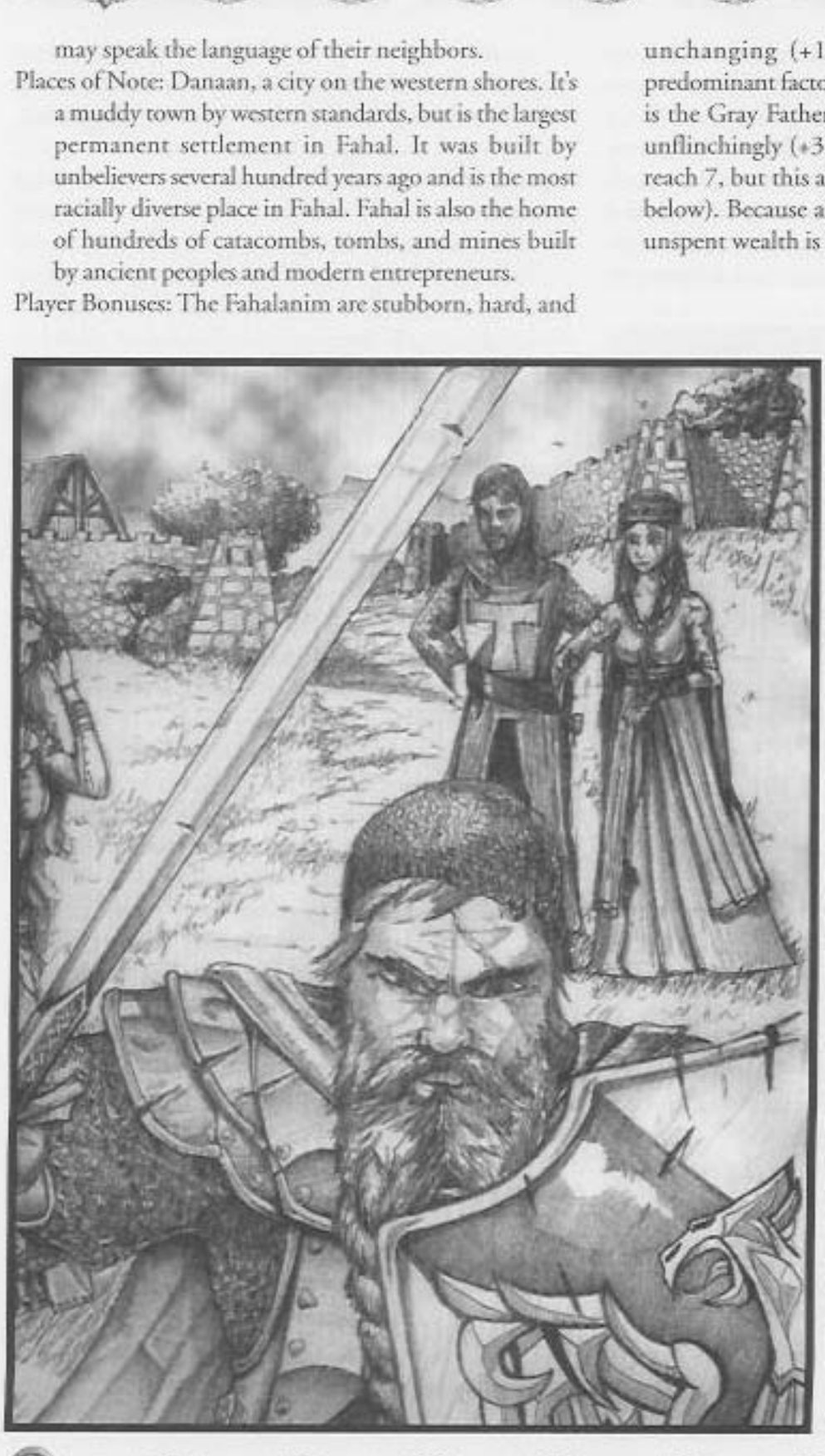
Inhabitants/Culture: Like the land they call Father, the Fahalanim are gray-skinned, with a pale slate-color predominating. Warmer tones are more common in the east as a throwback from (sinful) relations with Krymeans and other outlanders. Hair is always black, though gray speckling leads to white with age. Eyes may be brown, gray, black, green, or blue, though the last two are uncommon. The Children of Fahal are a somber lot, given to long contemplation and discussion of spiritual matters. Life is short, and they feel that they must always be prepared for Fahal to call for their blood. Their loyalties lie first to their god, then to their family, then to their tribe, and lastly to their people. They have no concept of nationalism or patriotism, but rather undying dedication to their god.

They all speak Fahalan, a language distantly related to the tongues of Ixliaph and Tez'hamun. Multiple dialects exist—each of the seven major tribes speaks differently. Those Fahalanim living on the borders

may speak the language of their neighbors.

Places of Note: Danaan, a city on the western shores. It's a muddy town by western standards, but is the largest permanent settlement in Fahal. It was built by unbelievers several hundred years ago and is the most racially diverse place in Fahal. Fahal is also the home of hundreds of catacombs, tombs, and mines built by ancient peoples and modern entrepreneurs.

Player Bonuses: The Fahalanim are stubborn, hard, and unchanging (+1 TO, WP, –1 Soc, MA). T predominant factor in daily life—other than deat is the Gray Father, in which the Fahalanim bel unflinchingly (+3 beginning Faith; Faith score reach 7, but this ability is lost if it *ever* drops to below). Because all wealth in Fahal is in goods, unspent wealth is lost.



Farrenshire

(far-en-sher)

Geography: Farrenshire is a st country located betw Ouestenreich and Anghu bordering the Sea of Raider the west and Stahl on the n and east. It is a rolling grassy l with no major mountains plenty of grasslands, woods farmland.

Religion: Farrenshire offici recognizes the Imperial Chur the Three-gods-become-o Many commoners, howe follow older Druidic tradit and superstitions mixed with teachings of the Imperial Chu

Politics/Military: Farrenshir food for the expansionist Ge Empire—at least that's ho feels. Sea travel from Farren has been limited to fishing other small craft since the Ge Navy began occupying Far bay. They are dou uncomfortable w Ouestenreich's alliance to Ge Though hills and mountains kept all but Cymri and Fi raiders away from anything than raiding, the southern be has always been protected by g will from Ouestenreich.

Farrenshire is ruled King—in reality little more

a pennath or prince—in true feudal tradition. Subordinate to him are all of the barons and bannerets, knights and men-at-arms in the whole country. Though small, the Farrenshire military is unified and well trained.

As a bastion of chivalry and knightly ways the army of Farrenshire supports fine archers, heavy cavalry, and spear-wielding infantry. They fight well from horseback and on foot.

Legal System: The king's word is the ultimate law, built on the same basic structure as law in Cyrinthmeir. Most crimes are punishable by fines or prison, while fewer result in hanging.

Economics: Farrenshire's small area is excellent for farms and orchards, and supports a fine fishing trade. It has been a bountiful land for the last two centuries, and fine Farrenshire wines and brandies have paid for feasts and tournaments to no end, allowing Farrenshire to be the envy of all chivalry.

Inhabitants/Culture: Farrenmen are of average height and build, with light complexions and all colors of hair and eyes. They lean towards colorful clothing of linen, velvets, wool, and leather. Hats are popular. Hair is worn long for women, short or bowl-cut for men. Short beards are popular, but only mildly common.

Farrenmen love song and poetry, and consider themselves part of it. They believe in chivalry, gentleness, and all that makes one noble. They are great lovers and valiant fighters.

Cities of Note: Mouren, the captial. Denaille, the next-largest city and main supplier of wines and brandies.

Player Bonuses: Farrenmen are very likable and thought to be noble (+1 Soc), though such financial success has led them to be, in many ways, soft (-1 WP or EN; add 25% to beginning finances). Many are compulsive drinkers of their own wine. All are thought to be noble dreamers by outsiders, though this is not necessarily true. Frequent attendance at tournaments and feasts has trained even the most common peasant a degree of manners (free Skill-*etiquette (any one kind)*). As the poster-nation for chivalry, Farrenmen all have their own crest of heraldic symbol, even freemen—peasants use a variation of their lord's (free Skill-*heraldry*). In addition even the lowliest knight has met his own king, and may even be known by him in turn.

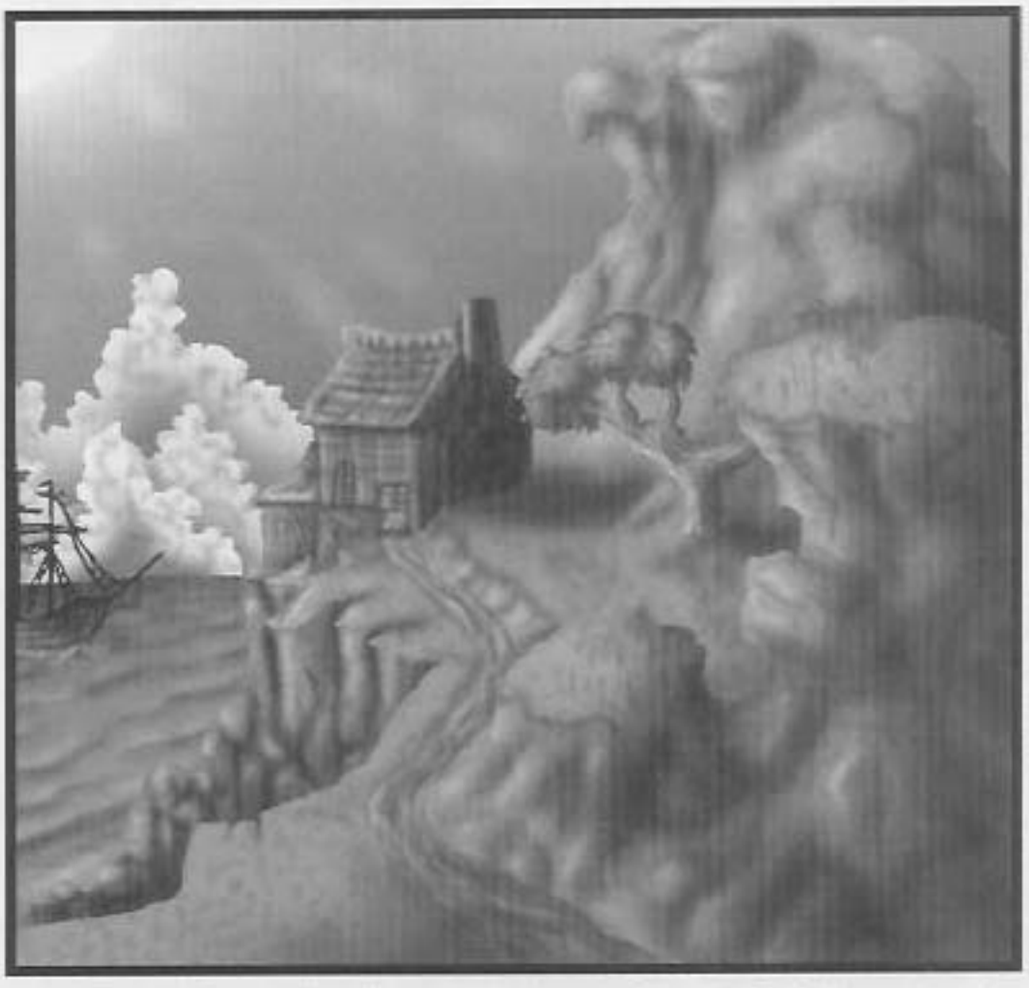
Fauth

(foth)

Geography: Warm coastal breezes make this peninsula a near paradise for those who inhabit it. Founded in 132 XV (In 1 XV, Xanar the "Thunderstaff" destroys the land in what is now the Sea of Fallen Gods by breaking his stave, forever changing the civilized world...) by the renowned wizard Moczvarphoth, who fled for a land free of his tyrannical Queen Tatyana. Legend holds that merfolk caused the ship to become lost at sea, wherein "Moxbar" (as Moczvarphoth came to be called) flew his shipmates south to land in the form of a giant condor. At the time Fauth was inhabited by blood sacrificing brown skinned heathens, to whom Moxbar brought civilization and temperance. With time the land and people matured, becoming tolerant and warm like the good wizard. Rams and sheep still freely roam the earth that gives forth bountiful harvests of figs and grapes. Fauth's craggy coastlines are home to many species of bird and gull, its rivers and streams populated with herons and cranes. Sparse windblown olive trees dot the rolling hills amidst forests of shrubbery.

Religion: Fauth broke from the Imperium's excursive religious freedom, refusing to accept any man (or woman) as a representative of the Divine. Moxbar, well versed in the lore of Spirits and Demons and how the church of old had hidden this knowledge from the people, brought the "truth of the afterlife" to light for the masses. The faith in Faith, called the *Ohm*, rests on a simple foundation. When one dies, ones spirit lives on bathed in the light of the Divine Creator (according to his actions in life). Evil in this religion is personified in Shadow of Death, a name whispered rarely though widely feared.

Politics/Military: Being a friendly folk, and preferring negotiation to open conflict, Fauth nonetheless carries a strong heritage in the arts of war. Fauth maintains a sound navy, (mainly to guard its ships for trade) as well as active ground forces. Cartels of merchants vie



and contest for rulership of the country in an endless game of power. Currently two great merchant factions openly war for control of the country, granting land and titles, commissions in the navy and other boons to any who hinder or eliminate members of the rival Cartel. Civil war is expected any day should the smaller guilds openly side one way or another. Until now, however, the seventeen other main factions have played one side against the other, though each side is known to have at least five of the guilds in its pocket. As these negotiations are always secret, no one guild truly trusts another. The Vardonna and Elujarde, the main Cartels, have secret alliances with neighboring countries, and open hostilities are about to begin...

Legal System: As all men of Fauth are free, any infraction committed is judged by their employer. Those who do not belong to a Cartel are considered worthless, and are set to tasks menial, debasing and physical, a near reflection of slavery. [illegible] greatest crime in the land [illegible] theft of any sort. It is punished with blinding for the first offense, and castration for a second. A third offense heralds death, as such a habitual thief is deemed worthless anyway. Murder requires the offending Cartel to pay 100 times the yearly wages of the man killed to the offended Cartel if the crime can be proven. This serves as a deterrent—or a challenge depending on ones point of view.

Economics: Merchants of Fauth have done everything in their power to become rich and successful, trading in [illegible] and all commodities for wealth and ships can be found. Unfortunately, the land of Fauth is sparse of wood, and the vast majority of building materials for ships come from Yore. The merchants of Fauth do their best to maintain peaceful trade relations with any and all countries they possibly can.

Inhabitants/Culture: There is a saying in Fauth that nearly sums up its people: "Smile and nod." Regardless of their inner temperament, the inhabitants of Fauth remain cool and outwardly nonplussed, as obvious displays of emotion are bad for trade. The people, they are dark haired and skinned, but have blue eyes and slender builds. They love wine and duels favoring light thrusting weapons and daggers in the Geluroise style of swordplay. Men of Fauth love to bet and wager, and pass the evenings away with dice. Bold colors are favored in clothing, and hats of wide brim are common.

Their language is a hybrid of Geluroise and Imperial Tongue with a heavy background in the

native languages of local indigenous tribes.

Places of Note: Any cathedral in Fauth is worth visiting, as their splendor is nearly unsurpassed. No expense is considered too lavish in their construction. The islands south of Fauth's mainland are thought by many to be paradise itself. The beaches of Fauth are warm and blessed with lavishly painted sunsets year round. If one is looking for something that cannot be found, a trek to Xend, the capital of Fauth, is advised. Collectors of every sort are said to have secreted away more wealth than the greatest of mythical dragons.

Racial Bonuses: Being shrewd is essential to trade, as well proficient in as many languages as possible. Thus, natives of Fauth acquire a +1 bonus to their MA score, and gain an automatic skill point in any language they speak (–1 beginning SR on any Language Skill). However, the climate of Fauth is one more conducive to rest and relaxation than that of hard work (–1 ST).

Gelure

(geh-luhr)

Geography: Gelure is located along the Frostbite mountains, with Xanar on the southwest, and Cyrinthmier and Ouestenreich to the east. Gelure has a great deal of seacoast as well, bordering both the Imperial Sea to the south and the Raiders Sea to the north. The northwestern shores are rather flat, making good farmland.

Religion: The self-proclaimed emperor of Gelure—who calls himself "Uglub"—claims to be the Dark Betrayer Reborn. He is god, priest, prophet, and king of his own land. He is openly opposed to the "weak" Imperial Church and the Xanarian Empire, claiming that it knows not its own history…a history of which He shall remind the world. Uglub preaches that one day the whole world must kneel before him, even as it did before the Dark Betrayer thousands of years ago. He endorses witchcraft, the old pagan practices (not all of which must be in his honor), and sorcery. He has publicly proclaimed sanctuary to any persecuted sorcerers or wielders of the dark arts—many of which find themselves in places of power within His organization.

Politics/Military: The "Gelure Empire" has simple politics: "kneel before us or die." So far only Ouestenriech has managed to stay politically allied with Gelure without being conquered first. Stahl also has reasonably good relations with Gelure, due to its secure military position and atheistic approaches to religion.

The Gelure Military is not especially large or well equipped, but its generals are excellent and their methods are ruthless. Gelure spies are very well informed, and most people believe (not without reason) that Uglub uses dark means to both extract information and win battles.

Only members of the military are allowed to carry weapons. Daggers are very popular, as are swords—particularly lighter cut-and-thrust or single-edged varieties.

Legal System: Lord Uglub, Supreme Ruler of the "Gelure Empire," officially creates and carries out all judgements. In reality most of this work is done by his generals and lieutenants. Everyone in the kingdom is considered part of a military-like chain of command. At the top sits Uglub, then Sengir, his son, followed by his generals and on to other lesser officers, all the way down to the peasants, who are considered to be just below grunt soldiers, and are expected to follow their command unless directed otherwise by someone of higher rank. Martial law is the norm, and all punishments for lawlessness are rendered immediately by the local lord, magistrate, or general. Anyone of higher rank may punish (or abuse) anyone else of a lower rank. Disputes between those of equal rank are settled by duels. Such deadly exchanges should be approved by the highest-ranking local officer, though usually the duel is done before any request for approval is made.

Economics: Bordering on two seas and three wealthy nations has left Gelure economically blessed. The bulk of this wealth goes to the military, which makes up for lack in size with the very best equipment and training. The lords of the land lived very well, exploiting the peasants worse than in any other country, until Uglub took power a few years ago. He has completely revamped the entire system in Gelure's new image. Despite protests from other world leaders,

the Gelure *fist*—a gold coin slightly larger than the Imperial Standard—has gained great popularity throughout the western world.

Inhabitants/Culture: The people of Gelure are struggling between the pride and safety they've grown accustomed to under Uglub's rule and the fact that he is rumored to be the Devil himself. The Geluroise have always been a religious folk, but find themselves moving away from their faith in light of their growing prosperity. Most every family has a son in the military. They still generally dissaprove of the idea of witches and warlocks running freely in their land—and have thus become a superstitious lot—but avoid lynchings now that Uglub has made a call for all practitioners of the dark arts to find shelter with him.

Most Geluroise have light skin and hair, with honey-blond and light brown being the most common. Their eyes are generally blue, brown, green. Nobles generally powder their hair and [illegible] though the Emperor dislikes the practice. Peasants dress poorly, wearing woolens and cottons [illegible]. Nobles wear fine silks and other fine materials [illegible] far-seas trade. All members of the military wear uniforms whenever possible, affording them respect and security.

The official language of Gelure is Geluroise. Most people in Gelure speak the language of their closest neighbor—Cyrinthmeiran, Ouestenreichisch, Xanarian (the Imperial Tongue). The languages of Farrenshire, Picti, and Angharad are not uncommon in the far northern peninsula.

Places of Note: Drack Guol, the capital, located on Lake of Mist. The Frostbite Mountains, where [illegible] is said to have come from, hundreds of small [illegible] along the seashores.

Player Bonuses: Uglub's social and political reforms changed a lot in Gelure. Instead of being hunted, Gifted are taken in and nurtured (+ 3 Proficiency points for the Gifted, not the Fey, in Gelure). Military training is excellent (any character with a military background gets –1 SR to any militarily backed packet and +1 Proficiency point for weapons training). Peasants are not allowed to carry any weapons, but freemen (assumed to be military) may carry anything they wish. Lastly, the strength of Gelure coinage adds +10% to starting wealth.

Helena

(heh-**lay**-nah)

Geography: Helena, land of the rolling plains. The [illegible] of the peninsula is rich in the necessary minerals, growing grapes, which are in turn used to make famous wines, and other sweet fruits. The landscape is lush and green with flowing hills and rolling plains vast enough to seemingly be oceans unto themselves. These qualities as well as several natural ports and easily made harbors also have drawn many to nickname this peaceful place "The Mercian Paradise."

Religion: The majority of Helena's populace follows a multitude of man-like gods and goddesses, such

into a pagan belief. However along the western front of Helena, the religion of "The Three-Gods-Become-One has been gaining influence and popularity among port towns trading with the Xanarian Empire.

Politics/Military: The nation of Helena is a neutral one, and often a meeting ground for warring nations to work out treaties. Though neutral, Helena does boast a decent sized militant force composed mainly of highly trained foot soldiers and a navy that is rarely matched. Beyond this, it is said that when an invading force has tried to take a portion of Helena, the farmers of the land have been known to rise up and fend off entire legions at a time.

Short swords and long spears are popular weapons, ideal for the *phalanx*, a military formation of spearmen with large shields in long ranks. Temperature and availability makes most armors impractical, though barbut-style helms, along with shin and forearm protection, are common amongst many soldiers. Only the more wealthy can afford breastplates or suits of chain.

Legal System: The legal system is a loose democracy, elected officials from moderate sized towns, each a wealthy male, meet in the capital city of Antica to decide upon taxes, and other internal affairs. These meetings are held twice a year, and on rare occasions as often as once a month.

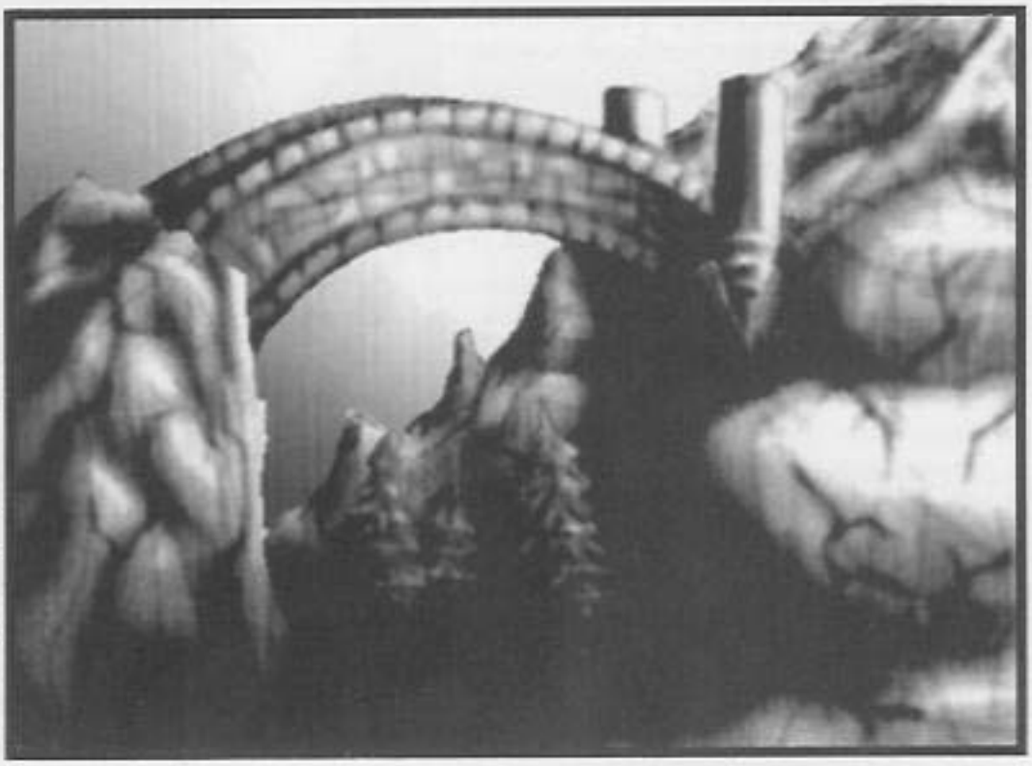
Economics: Helena is nearly the ideal trading place and is thus a very rich country. Its exports include, but are not limited to, exotic fruits, extremely sweet wines—for which Helena is famous—wool, and some silks. Their imports are the occasional shipment of arms and armor. Helena also collects taxes from visiting merchants, but not so much as to discourage outsiders from coming to trade.

Inhabitants/Culture: The majority of Helena's populace is a joyful and friendly sort. Most of the people work a farm that they will defend with their lives if it were ever threatened, but would also offer the spare room for a weary traveler at merely a second glance. The wealthier members of the Helena society run the ports, harbors and trading posts. All of the populace is of a medium build with light tones skin and medium to dark hair. The current popular hairstyles are, long hair to the waist, often braided in one or two thick strands for women, and short beards and short cut hair for men.

The populace speak their own language, Hellenic, though Helena's prominence as a merchant's paradise provides citizens with opportunities to learn many others. The Imperial tongue is particularly common.

Places of Note: Spatha is Helena's major port town, famous for its merchants and hospitality. Antica, is its capitol city, is known for its incredible and ancient architecture, art, and sculpture.

Player Bonuses: Due to the friendly and easygoing nature



of Helena's citizens, Player Characters from this nation get +1 Soc. Those from Antica receive any art or craft skill for free, and those from Spatha speak on additional language for free.

Imjia
(eem-jee-uh)

Geography: Cut by the massive rushing waters of the Caanan River, the land of Imjia feeds on the bloody water and from it grows twisted trees yearlong, crimson and black. An outlaw from the brown color scheme, green grass or leafs are seen briefly only in the months of spring. Summer bakes the leaves brown, and fall grinds them to billowing powder. In the dark recess of the night clouds of bats wing through the skies, silhouetted on fields of glowing crimson issuing from the volcano's mouth. Though water is plentiful, acidic soil limits the growth of plants in the vicinity of the Demons Fang mountain range. Spiting fire and brimstone from a sulfurous maw of dripping lava the Mountain of Destruction, *Voduzoqf Earnd*, torments the earth with ash and rock. Farther northeast the seed of these shriveled plants take root, and flourish in haphazard array. What wildlife there exists roams from these scraggly forests across the blasted plains and into the Desert of Bone. Feeding on gray *hej*-grass and twigs are long horned bison, customarily adorned with their flea-eating finch from which most life is sustained.

Religion: Forsaken by the gods, or so it is believed, the shuddering masses have taken to offering their prayers to their tormentor, in hopes that he will grant them a quick death from pestilence in the stead of starvation. Here worshiped by the forsaken and bound to his service are the Disciples of Shire, a Demon who kills while in ones dreams. Shire, or his priests, (depending on your point of view) demands half of all that is produced in the country in order to abate wrath. It is gladly given, for resistance result staking near the path of a lava flow.

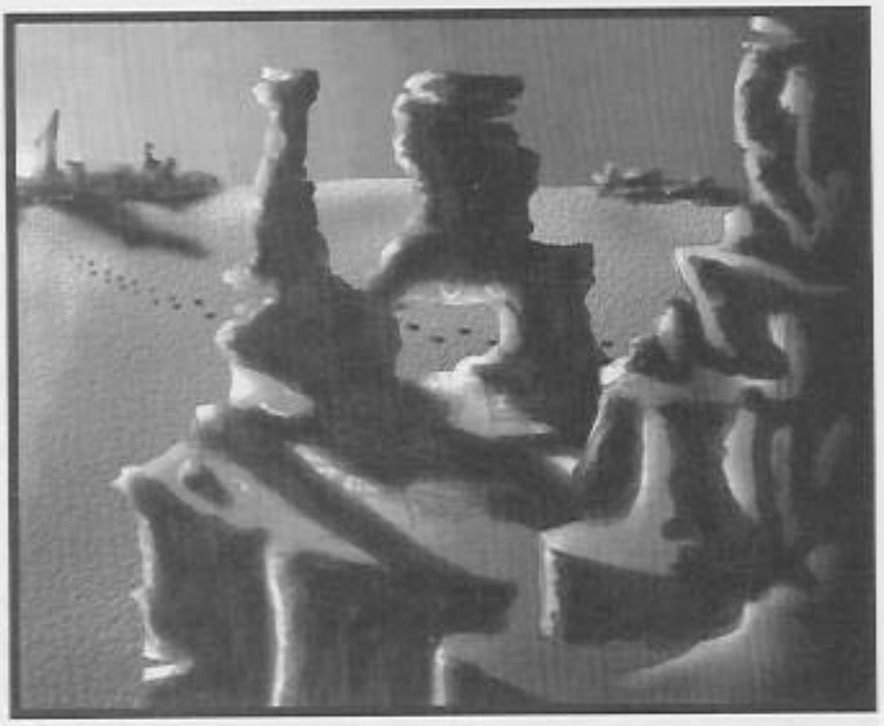
Politics/Military: Cutthroat bands of mercenaries, ba and killers roam the lands looting and burni their dark content. A few strongholds have ente through out the ages, and those that do exist du constant martial law. A preferable arrangeme starvation and death, many flee to these Shire Citadels, and serve the Generals and their armie glee. Most are aligned with the Darktongue two remain free, causing strife and perpetual wa is a simple matter of survival of the fittest, and often, the well fed.

Legal System: Under martial law, no one leaves home before sunrise, or after sunset. Villages be searched at anytime, and anyone may be bro in for questioning by the authorities. Any vil found in possession of a weapon, secreting foo creating dissension is exiled. Traitors are execut the block. All other criminals are thrown int pits to rot and die, or be eaten by the other prisn Appeals are made with gold. All practitioners "unrighteous" religions are sacrificed by the st of fire at the "Temple of the Scourge" on Vol Earnd.

Economics: Imjia is ric mineral wealth, iron prim Dark wood of the knurl trees produces exc bows and arrows, a dense and hard with Kudan necessary to ma the population's supply. Fruit spices from Sua are priceless, Numerian wine main export of h slaves, who are enough not too unhappy to be sold.

Inhabitants/Culture: Black or crimson is worn b population, the deeper the black, the wealthi

man. Crimson is reserved for priests, who follow suit in reverse order. All save the high military are forced to prostrate themselves on their bellies upon the passing of a Child (as the priest of the Darktongues refer to themselves). This practice is highly effective in weeding out dissenters and strong willed individuals. Tattoos are popular among the villagers, who etch their suffering into their skin. Piercing is also commonplace throughout the land.



Faces of Note: In the Temple of the Scourge on *Voduzoqf Earnd* one can gaze into the fires of hell itself. Only priests return from that dark abode of demons and they do so without souls. To the east, along the coast, more hospitable regions are maintained in an iron grip by the denizens of the Shadows and are much more pleasant to live in.

Career Bonuses: +2 EN, -2 HT; unfortunately, all members of the military are castrated.

Ixliaph

(iks-lee-af)

Crushed in the twisting pestle and mortar of its mountainous terrain, the country of Ixliaph unfolds its table toped mesas northward until their edges drape the lapping waves of the silent sea. Perfectly suited to rams and goats, endless ranges of inhospitable mountain scoff defiantly at the pathetic attempts man makes to settle them. Wind cut incisors of earth seemingly avalanche away from gleaming fangs of vorpal ice. Shallow valleys hide sheltering refugees of vegetation and wildlife from the relentless screams of the snapping wind, slit by glacial streams cradling life giving fish that feed the adamantine creatures fierce enough to stake claim atop the great plateau.

Religion: Hard lined fanaticism of stricture and abstinence is relentlessly enforced by the Clerics that wield the power of steel. Chosen by their god to enforce the true law of Esauln, they have outlawed anything that might pervert the minds of the flock. Art, dance, music, weapons, education and faiths not Esauln have been eliminated from the land. While this may seem harsh, only 3 recorded murders in the last 50 years and lack of civil war for over 70 prove that their methods, though extreme, are effective.

Politics/Military: The politics and military of Ixliaph are controlled by the Clerics, who interpret and enforce the word of Mosia. They alone may bear arms or judge the fallen and infidels, who are always attempting to infiltrate and undermine their society with their pagan beliefs. Primarily responsible for protecting the populous from the demons that lurk in the hills, the military is comprised of bands of zealous brothers who range the mountain passes and fight guerilla style against any for they are directed.

Legal System: The following are crimes of treason. Creating a graven image (any form of art), practicing sorcery, preaching a false faith, owning any book other than the Kova. Crimes against the faith are; Possessing a weapon, exposing any skin save that about the eyes, knowing another language, reading and writing, dancing (reputed to anger and disgust the holy one), failing to pray thrice a day, practicing medicine, and any action save prayer on the day of fasting (the last day of the week).

Economics: There is trade of rams wool and gold occasionally with those who have proven conversion to Esauln, mainly for grain.

Inhabitants/Culture: Stern and somber, stoical and separatists, the bronze skinned and black haired populous of gaunt shepherds and housewives are honest and forthright. They never doubt their law as being right or their lives as harsh or cruel. Viewing other nationalities as week and perverted, they hold themselves to be an example for the remainder of the world to follow. Nonetheless, they manage to eke out decent lives in a land most would regard as savage at best.

Places of Note: Far within the mountains, a small ra
miners is rumored to dwell. Those who have rem
tell wild tales of … before they are silenced for he

Player Bonuses: +1 TO, +1 EN, -1 SOC –1 MA 1
goat.

Krym-Khanan

(krihm khah-**nahn**)

Geography: Eagles and vultures circle the open skies o
endless steppe. Beneath them nomads and harfu
hordes roam through tall grasses, winding cr
shallow marshes, and scattered woodland. The g
plains of Krym-Khanan border a great variety of la
and climates, but are all unified by the rol
never-ceasing frontier-prairie.

Religion: Each tribe, clan, or horde ri
pray to its own gods or to none. Many, o
as the great Tataar Horde, follow the Se
Vows of the Prophet, brought to them b
Otamarluk to the south. All religio
Krym-Khanan, however, is "tainted" b
ancient heathen practices, no matter wha
priest or cleric teaches on holy days.

Politics/Military: Krym-Khanan has no
government to speak of. Rather zeal
tribes and clans roam the steppe, n
enforcing its own law. The most powe
of these clans is the Tataar Horde, w
holds the power to unite most of the sm
tribes and clans in times of war. The kh
are closely tied to the Sultan of Otam
religiously, economically, and politicall

Tataar horsemen—feared b
but the Kozaks of Zaporozhya—
diminutive fighters on small, tougher-l
nails ponies. They excel at hit-and-run
raiding tactics, are incredibly fast and nim
and can live (eat, sleep…do *everything*
the saddle for days or weeks on end. T
carry light sabers and short bows, th
poorer warriors may use only spea
chekany, axes made using horses' jawbo
No one—man, woman or child—will
be found without a long curved kni

dagger.

Legal System: The clan or tribal chief and the tribal elders have the final say in all intra-tribal matters. All matters between clans are handled through violence or, in times of war, by the Khan. The Khan is the chief of the Tataar Horde, and is said to be descended from the greatest warrior and conqueror ever to roam the steps, Gherei-Khan. Social status is determined by wealth, alliances, and physical might.

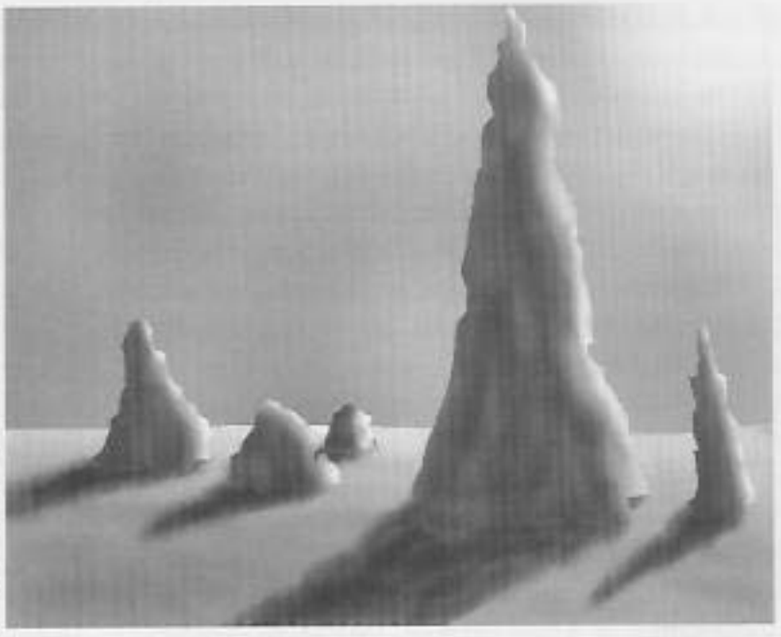
Economics: Herding is the most productive thing this land full of hunters and gatherers does. Many tribes and clans subsist through raiding and slave trade with (and through) neighboring countries. The Tataar horde is by far the wealthiest group, with herds, raiding, slave trade, and tributes from smaller clans and tribes.

Inhibitants/Culture: Krymeans are generally short and dark skinned with black hair and eyes. They are extremely resilient and stubborn, and are known for having fiery tempers. In the cold months, furs and leathers are popular clothes, whereas in warmer months many strip down to baggy breeches and a simple vest or no shirt at all. Many go barefoot in warmer months.

Several languages find their home in Krym-Khanan—Sarmatovian, Zaporozhyan, Zhibaran, and Marluk to name a few. Krymean Tataaruk, the language of the Tataar horde, is the most like a "national" tongue as might be found in Krym-Khanan.

Places of Note: Caanan, Na'zigg, and Ud'Anhul are three great rivers that pass between Krym-Khanan's sparse hills and flood its low plains in times of rain. Most stationary population lives along these rivers, though the Horde rides everywhere.

Player Bonuses: Tataars and Krymeans gain +1 TO and EN due to their incredible resilience. Their small stature (–1d6 inches) makes them a bit weaker (–1 ST). Life on and near horses makes them expert riders (–2 Riding Skill, negate missile weapon penalties for firing a bow from horseback).



Numeria

(new-**mehr**-ee-ah)

Geography: Though mostly desert, sheltered from the desert wind in the west by the canyons of Vagailith lies the Great Valley of Twilight. Astride the enormous oasis, the residents of Sephite farm the arid land for dates and olives, growing fields of grain and graze oxen on the short grass left from the harvest. Much else of the landscape is barren, save the occasional scraggly brush and withered tree decorated by flowers only willing to bloom for a thunderstorm. Spilling from the canyons walls in the east, the Black Desert billows in violent clouds of shale dust southward towards Tez'Hamun. No life lives in the black desert; its unquenchable fire flaying meat from all who traverse its blasted landscape. Near the border of Ahr rests the holy mount Veetch, habituated by shepherds and priests. Here the Numerians grow grapes and press them into a blood red wine favored by all within the region. Little wildlife roams the territories, with the exception of birds and their main staple: locust.

Religion: Priestesses lead Numeria, though the rulers claim to be Descendants from the gods. Entirely disagreeing, the priestesses continue believing their gods to posses the bodies of animals, and the faces of man. This line of reasoning allowed them to sway a large portion of the populous into breaking from

Tez'Hamun, and gave the priestesses a measurable increase in power. Ceremonies are held on a weekly basis, and the faithful are called upon for tithe and offerings in return for intercession on their behalf. Small idols (icons) can be found in nearly every home, an example of the commitment and belief of the people. They hold Ehld in higher status than Yone, their beliefs being similar, and now maintain decent relations with Tez'Hamun (albeit there are definite rivalries to be had).

Politics/Military: Currently engaged in skirmishes on their northern borders as both Taveruun and Dardanet encroach, Numeria struggles to maintain control of the river Anazum. As the port of Zahnitr is so far from the capital of Sephite, it is difficult to supply, and is generally forced to negotiate and trade in order to maintain itself. This has worked slightly to the advantage of other nations, who have been allowed to maintain embassies within the city borders. From Zahnitr goods are sailed across the sea to Savarstra and south to Tez'Hamun.

Equipment mainly composed of iron, the weapons and armor of this region are light and portable. Spears and short swords are favored, as are small bronze shields and helms. The military has mastered the use of the chariot, and bred a strain of horse well suited to the demands of the desert. Additionally, tribes of local camel mounted freemen can be rallied (for a price) to further add to the bulk of the standing army. As the first born child of any family is the property of the priestesses, an army of well-trained fanatics is always finding itself restocked by zealous young graduates.

Legal System: Law is enforced in Numeria only when a threat to the Priestesses is perceived. Treason and war are the only true concerns of the ruling females of this land. As figureheads, the Descendants ma show of handling merchants and petitioners, w the hedonistic religious leaders engage in th debauchery. Controlling a vast organization of da assassins, the Priestesses have more than insured loyalty and obedience be awarded them at all ti Blasphemy against their gods most often result public skinning, slaying one is punished in the fl desert with the accused staked naked to the sun

Economics: Iron mines provide a great deal of trade Ahr, and the Numerian wine is coveted by man Tez'Hamun. Additionally, demands for grain in

southern regions have maintained the economy for hundreds of years. Currently, the country is attempting to grow corn and refine their smithing practices, but is meeting with little success, due largely in part to the lack of direction by the Descendants. Wood, however, is scarce and imported in vast quantities from Ehld.

Inhabitants/Culture: Numerians share the browned skin and lithe musculature of their predecessors, however the men prefer long braided square cut beards banded in gold or copper with thickly oiled close cropped hair to the shaved heads of Tez'Hamun. Overall the country is hedonistic, fond of wine and lotus blossoms. Reading and writing is common, though practiced in a basic form.

Places of Note: High atop the Vagailith the Stairway of the Sun, an enormous tower built long ago, stands silently overlooking the dessert. It is where the priestesses practice their rituals, and is taboo to any save they. Ascending the Veetch is the final test of soldiery, and allows the warrior a clear view of what he is fighting to protect.

Racial Bonuses: -1 WP, +1 PER, due to the eat-or-be-eaten attitude often found in Numerians.

Odeon

(oh dee un)

Geography: Inky granite armored in a coat of shimmering samite sternly glares skyward, proud and fiercely stolid within the soft fluffy flurry of icy death wafting earthward in a languid curtsy. Falling darkness heralds the initiation of the moons battle for dominance on the virginal canvas of snow. On clear days with still wind, a man standing amid the seats of giants and gods can fully grasp the insignificance of his life, and the radiating power that is the land. Here in the north is a land unfit for men. A land for creatures and demons whose hearts are forged of steel, Odeon swears none save the strong shall inhabit its borders. It is here that the answer to the riddle may be found, if there truly is one, carried in the deadly kiss of the Stormqueen.

Religion: Know always that the gods have forsaken you. Their battle was waged, and lost. Now they sleep, some in the sky, some in the earth. They care not for you or your desires, your existence is no more than a passing dream. One day they will awaken again, and man shall know that all vanity is self deceit. Unto that day and that final end, live as you will, destroy those who stand against you, and head not the whimpering of the weak.

Politics/Military: Be strong that you may die well. No one but you can defend yourself. Stone weapons and tools fastened to bones are indicative of the general status of technological advance. Few trees dot the tundric landscape, hence wood is a valuable commodity for life. Politics are simple, protect what is yours by whatever means necessary. Bands of tribesmen war with one another, and no unity of any kind exists throughout the majority of the land. The Mountain, a semi-nomadic tribe of 200 warriors under the leadership of the Stormqueen, asserts itself as the ruler of the land. However, as little is done to maintain the kingdom, individuals in need must journey to the camp and petition aid. Stone axes and spears are the common weaponry, as well as bone daggers and clubs. Metal weapons are treasures, heirlooms, and the cause of countless thefts and accompanying murders.

Legal System: Got a problem? Fight to the death or shut up.

Economics: Odeons use teeth as coinage. Furs and pelts are traded for deer, which the inhabitants have limited success in herding.

Inhabitants/Culture: Many of the inhabitants flee the forsaken land of ice. Distinguished from other nationalities by their white hair, pale skin and silvery eyes, Odeons are hunters by birth, and while unlearned in the fineries of life, can be assured of their own survival, regardless of their surrounding terrain. They are agile climbers and silent as the falling snow. Women are the dominant sex, being larger and stronger than the men. On average they tower around 7 feet, the largest has reached 8' 9".

Places of Note: It is said that paradise lies just over the northern ridge of the farthest mountain, beneath the shimmering aurora that guards it. Few have survived the trek into those glimmering sabers, and none have

returned to tell of it. There are vast caves of icicles beneath the eternal glaciers carved by the steam and geysers of the volcanic region. Bands and tribes of Odeons inhabit many, and all are eerily beautiful in the glimmer of sunlight.

Player Bonuses: Females receive a +1bonus to ST and TO, Males a +1 ST. Both Sexes suffer –2 MA.

Otamarluk

(oh-tah-mahr-**luke**)

Geography: Wicked peaks, savage and dreadful, frame the northwest and southeast corners of mighty Otamarluk. Between these two jagged ranges lie the Marluk Steppes, home of great plains, soggy marshes, and scattered woodlands. The weather is warm throughout, with frequent winter rains and long summer droughts. Great riches—taken from the land itself—flow along winding rivers, beset by wildmen, bandits, and raiders.

Religion: All of Otamarluk bows before the Emir, the high cleric, as they recite the Seven Vows of the Prophet morning, noon, and night. Marluks (those that live in Otamarluk), though not as outwardly fanatical as their distant cousins in Ixliaph, have declared a great holy war upon the infidels—especially those that follow the Three-Gods-Become-One. This war manifests itself not only in battle, but in abuse of prisoners, heavy slave-trade, and *janisaries*—the captured sons of infidels raised to the faith of the Seven Vows and a hatred of their fathers.

Politics/Military: Tzaul and Krym-Khanan pay heavy tributes to Otamarluk, which funds add to an ancient war waged primarily on the borders of Helena and Dardanet. Since the fall of Xanarium and the Emprire Otamarluk is the most powerful imperial force in the world, and has designs on the domination of Maraiah and Tegaarn, if not on the whole of Weyrth. This is all under the banner of the Prophet and in the name of the Seven Vows.

The most feared of all Marluk soldiers are the light horsemen and mounted archers called *Marmuluks*. Armed with short bows and curved swords these merciless raiders ride small ponies in guerilla-style tactics. Though less common, *janisaries*, the "adopted" sons of infidels, fight with similar tac... but a hatred and fire that has formed many leg... in Otamarluk and horror-stories in the west a... north.

Legal System: The Suul'tahan is the highest power a... emperor-king who is counseled directly by the Em... and protected by a thousand concubines and eunuch... While all legal and judicial decisions ultimately l... with him, smaller issues are handled by ecclesiasti... leaders or local magistrates. The highest crimes a... those that violate the Seven Vows, and death, amputation, castration, or slavery are imposed a... punishments for most all crimes.

Economics: Otamarluk is roiling in wealth and th... Suul'tahan is loving it. Most people live poorly, b... the ruling class has more than it could ever use. Golde... spires top nearly every palace and temple. Slave trad... is big business, as is mining in the mountains an... farming in the plains. On top of it all are massi... tributes from neighboring countries and the spo...

of constant war in the west.

Inhabitants/Culture: Dark olive skin, brown eyes and night-black hair sit below turbans and veils. Men oil their beards and moustaches to a glossy sheen, and women paint their eyes and adorn their bodies with as much jewelry as they can—quality, not quantity, adjusting with station.

The people are devoutly religious, hot-tempered, and generally a zesty and fiery lot. Their rulers are mysterious and cruel, living in the greatest of finery while many of their subjects starve.

They speak Marluk, a relative of Krymean. Other common languages include Zaporozhyan, Fahalan, Ikliaph, Helenic, and Dardainian.

Places of Note: Marstanbuul, the capital and home of the Suul'tahan. The Palace of the Seven Djinn, a great and legendary mountain-top citadel in the southern ranges.

Player Bonuses: The distribution of wealth in Otamarluk leaves all freemen and lesser citizens impoverished (1/3 starting wealth) and nobles rolling in it (double starting wealth). Strict social rules and a society full of duels grant +1 Soc and Wit but –1 WP to starting Attributes.

Ouestenreich

(ow-sten-**raykh**)

Geography: Ouestenreich is located north of Cyrinthmeir and Gelure, bordering on the Rock Sea, Stahl and the Iron-tooth mountains, and the Principality of Farrenshire. The northern half is covered in low mountians and the southern hilly, but the whole country is heavily wooded. The capital, Oustenberg, is located at the foot of the mountains and buried in surrounding evergreen forests. The climate is temperate, with much rain from spring to fall and snow in the winters.

Religion: Ouestenreich is in a religious mess right now, full of nature-worshiping pagans, Imperial clergy, and pressure from Emperor Uglub of Gelure to worship him. Most commoners follow the Imperial Church or the Druids of the north, while the ruling class finds itself carefully balancing tradition and political necessity.

Politics/Military: Ouestenreich is ruled by the Crown Prince of the Reich, and follows feudal models. It is officially allied with Gelure, but feels uncomfortable in that situation given "Emperor" Uglub's expansionist tendencies. The Iron-tooth Mountains protect them from Stahl, but not from heavy raiding by Picts and Cymri from Angharad on the northern borders.

Ouestenreich's military is small, but very well trained. Ouestenreichisch mercenaries and captains are highly sought after. As their own geography is not conducive to cavalry, most of the army is made up of infantry and *landesknechten*. The bulk of the army is under the control of the Crown Prince and other powerful lords. The Ouestenreichisch navy is weak, being greatly overshadowed by the more powerful navies of Gelure.

Ouestenreichers have good relations with Cyrinthmeir and Gelure, but poor ones with Angharad and Stahl.

The longsword and poleaxe are the most popular weapons of Ouestenreich.

Legal System: Ouestenreich runs according to feudal models. Each lord or landowner is responsible for law and order in his own fief. Appealed disputes go to the next lord up, all the way to the Crown Prince. Generic punishments include fines, branding, and prison time for infractions by commoners against commoners, and prison time or (more likely) execution for crimes against lords or gentry by commoners. Very few hold the old Imperial classification of Freeman, and no additional rights are granted to such.

Economics: Ouestenreich exports finished goods, lumber, furniture, and iron products. Ouestenreichisch craftsmen are excellent with small work, such as locks, puzzles, and jewelry. In the south farming and livestock are important sources of income. While not as rich as her neighbors in Cyrinthmeir and Gelure, Ouestenreich's nobility lives in great comfort without excess oppression of her commoners. Wool makes up the bulk of Ouestenreichisch textile trade.

Inhabitants/Culture: Ouestenreichers are tall and fair skinned. Blue and hazel eyes with blond or brown

hair are common. In coastal villages red hair and green eyes are equally common. Commoners dress in wool, felts, and suede, preferring fancy needlework to jewelry. Moustaches are very popular, as are thick beards. The upper classes dress in Gelure or Stahlnish fashions, based on the political climate in any given area or time frame. They are a people wrapped in tradition and folklore, and seem to have no problem in reconciling their own superstitions with whichever faith is prevalent in their own area.

The official language is Ouestenreichisch, a dialect of the Stahlnish Tongue mixed with Geluroise.

Places of Note: Ouestenberg, the capital. [illegible] *Shadowwood*, a collection of large evergreen for[illegible]

Player Bonuses: Ouestenreichers can understand [illegible] Stahlnish and Geluroise when spoken simply [illegible] may also gain both languages as a skill for the [illegible] of one). They are very familiar with the forest [illegible] Skill-*Forest Survival*) and the legends surround[illegible] them (free Skill-*Folk Lore*).

Sarmatov and the Rzeczpospolita

(sar-**mah**-toof, zhetch-pohs-poh-**lee**-tah)

Geography: Flat southern plains gradually rise to [illegible] northern hills and icy arctic peaks, lapped by gla[illegible] wrought seas. Sarmatov is a harsh land, cover[illegible] snow in the winter and humid days in the sum[illegible] Her neighbor, the Rzeczpospolita ([illegible] Commonwealth"), is nearly the same. Forests [illegible] the hilly portions of both lands, surrounding the[illegible] lakes and wetlands on the border between ther[illegible]

Religion: Despite an overwhelming percentag[illegible] adherents to the Imperial Church of the Th[illegible] Gods-Become-One, Sarmatov and [illegible] Commonwealth are considered some of [illegible] most religiously tolerant and diverse nat[illegible] in Weyrth. Variations on most major faiths [illegible] ground in every reach of the two kingdoms. The[illegible] and minor nobility are generally Imperial, but [illegible] wealthier gentry and nobility lean toward Stah[illegible] atheism. Other popular beliefs include Zhiz[illegible] heathenism and the Seven Vows of Krym-Kan[illegible] and the south.

Politics/Military: Sarmatov and the Commonwealth[illegible] been united so long that they are really no lo[illegible] separate entities. Their governments have b[illegible] essentially combined for almost 400 years, which [illegible] good thing considering all of the unrest outsi[illegible] their borders. War ravages every side, with Zhiz[illegible] coming out of the mountains in search of wa[illegible] Krymeans riding hard up from the south in sear[illegible] janisaries and white-skinned slaves, and the Stah[illegible] constantly attempting to expand their domain[illegible] power. Until recently Magyar, now a provinc[illegible] Stahl, was part of Sarmatov, as was Zaporozhy[illegible] much of Krym-Kanan.

Centuries of constant warfare have made the Sarmats a tough and independent lot. Their cavalry is considered to be some of the very best in the world. Light dragoons, riding in the Krymean style, sweep down with lightening efficacy and flashing sabers. The winged Husars—heavy cavalry with eagle-feathered wings attached to their burnished plate harnesses—have not lost a major battle in over 60 years!

For the last 200 years the saber has been the weapon of choice for all gentry, who claim it as their right. Gelure-style swords—the thin cut-and-thrust swords and rapiers—are looked upon with disdain. Most all soldiers carry a short bow in addition to their spear, lance, or saber, and all know how to use one either mounted or on foot. Peasants favor pole arms and primitive axes formed from the filed and sharpened jawbones of a horse or cow.

Legal System: When the last king of the recent *Yagyelonian* dynasty passed away, leaving no heirs, the Sarmat peoples elected a new monarch. The king of Sarmatov reigns alongside the *Seym*, or Senate, over the Crown and the Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita). Upon the death of a king the nobles and gentry gather together and place their votes for any one of the electoral candidates. These gatherings are generally very large, as approximately 12 percent of all Sarmats are considered paper-carrying gentry or nobility. The electoral king then rules until his death, when another king is chosen. Any member of the gentry or nobility may be elected, though practicality generally limits candidates to the wealthy and powerful.

The Sarmats are perhaps prouder of their legal system than any other people. All gentry and nobility are afforded certain "gentleman's rights"—no gentleman may be imprisoned or even accosted by the law without proper warrants, all have a say in elections, any may be elected king or appointed to the senate, and any may bear arms and keep up a small military force of his own. These priveleges are in addition to general religious freedom.

The great flaw with the Samatovian system is that it doesn't really work. The king is largely powerless when compared to his "royal" peers in other nations, the *Seym* is divided, and "official" religious tolerance gives way to faith-led lynchings of minority churches and religions. General lawlessness rages throughout the country, where the strong or ruthless survive on the frontiers and those with "connections" and powerful patrons survive on the inside. Though the gentry are blessed with so many rights, the peasants live lives of virtual slavery, as they are considered to be the property of their masters.

Economics: Cold-sea fishing brings in most of the income in the frigid north, as does coal-mining in the south. Farming is everywhere, where beets, potatoes, and cabbages are raised in abundance. Despite a high percentage of nobility and gentry, all but the wealthiest do their own farming (though most gentry have the aid of at least a few peasants). Samatovian heavy cavalry are rumored to be the best, and find a great deal of work as mercenaries outside of their own borders.

Inhabitants/Culture: Sarmats tend toward brown and blond hair and brown, green, or hazel eyes. Men's hair is usually closely shorn around the back and sides, leaving a thicker "bowl cut" on top; walrus-like mustaches are extremely popular. Women wear their hair long and have none of the western tendency to hide it. The gentry dress in bright but not garish colors, favoring colored leather boots, fur hats, and cloaks made from the hides of exotic animals (such as wolves or the lions and tigers of Imjia). A saber in a black sheath is a sign of military prowess and is considered an invitation to prove that prowess to anyone else wearing a like scabbard.

Places of Note: Stolitza, the capital, rests between the two nations overlooking the enormous *Yezhoro* lake. The remainder of the countryside is littered with fortresses, castles, and walled cities, each belonging to a different lord.

Player Bonuses: Sarmat player characters gain +1 to their WP *or* TO and –1 HT due to the harsh conditions in which they live. Constant (and often violent) interaction with their neighbors has made them a multilingual people (free Skill: any two of the following languages: Zhibaran, Krymean, Zaprorozhyan, Magyar, Stahlnish, or Odean). Lastly,

though finances are not effected in any way, all characters in the "High Freeman" class are considered gentry and gain all of the rights attached. Low freemen are usually city-folk and have a number of rights depending on their lord. Peasants begin with half the normal starting wealth.

Savari

(suh-vahr-ee)

Geography: Dense jungle and open desert compose the landscape of this long forgotten land. The Iba'Nahn Desert, or "Endless Thirst" shields the teeming jungles of the Juba to the west in its wavering, mirage filled heat . Under the canopy of trees and vines, plants of all varieties flourish on nutrient rich soil. Most of the country is unknown to any but its inhabitants, as the Juba is considered death to all who dare trespass beneath its laced fingers. It is known that all manner of flowers and animals lurk unseen. An occas hill presses aside the matted foliage, only to sink a mire beyond. Water abounds in the central din rivers providing the easiest route into the land.

Religion: A highly superstitious people, the tribes of S worship spirits of animals and plants with offe of food and dance.

Politics/Military: Only twice in the country's histor a true Zool—or High Chieftan and Warlord—u the splintered tribes of this jungle paradise unit Spear of War. Only the wisemen of the villages know the account of their unwritten history. Father of the best hunter in a tribe leads the tr long as his son remains strong. Should the son be deceased or frail, succession falls to the next stro Tribes determine the strength of a leader by how foes he has vanquished, the largest beast taken t the number of wives, and signs of the spirits I

often consider men of other races to be spirits, and react accordingly, for good or ill. All are masters of the short bow, the spear, the javelin, knife and staff. They have little armor to speak of, though in times of war bear large shields of brightly colored hides before them. Their greatest strength is the inhospitality of the jungle, which protects the heart of the land from conquest.

Legal System: All formal decisions, though counseled by the wisemen and wives, are made by the chieftain of the tribe. Each tribe has its own taboos and superstitions, which inevitably leads to war amongst them. Most disagreements are over territory and hunting grounds. Banishment is a popular punishment, as is the removal of teeth.

Economics: Engaging only in meager trade of any kind with the outside world, the inhabitants often place great value on metals of any sort. Many are willing to kill for them. Though they rust and tarnish quickly if left uncared for, a large quantity of metal weapons would undoubtedly grant military superiority to the tribe possessing them. In trade they offer skins of exotic beasts, ivory, and raw gemstones, all of which are abundant in the land. Recently, Fauth has managed to establish a sea route and three forts on the shoreline. Ahr is rumored to have a secret base there as well.

Inhabitants/Culture: Home to black skinned giants (six to seven feet tall or more) with short, curly black hair, Savarian culture is best expressed through its dance and music. Characteristically drum-laden and vibrant, the rhythmic music serves as a communication device as well. The culture is prideful of their skill in arms, as well as their freedom. Savarians are fond of bright colors and bold patterns, and often adorn themselves with feathers and paint when at war. Little written history is to be found, though wisemen can recount tales from nearly 500 years previous.

Cities of Note: Buried in the heart of the jungle are the remnants of a once great, but now lost, civilization, or so the tale is told. No other true cities stand within Savari, though Fauth's and Ahr's forts may become very important in the decades to come.

Other Bonuses: Living in a jungle attunes ones senses to a razor keen edge, but limits initial understanding of such concepts as technology. (+1 Per, -1 MA) As poison and plant use is wide spread in conjunction with hunting, the skills of herbalism and tracking are free (SR = worst packet rating).

Savaxen

(Sah-vax-en)

Geography: Savaxen is a combination of mountainous islands and peninsulas to the west of Stahl. Surrounded by the Sea of Raiders—named for Savaxen raiders—it is a cold, ice-capped land. The mountains of Savaxen are snow-peaked nearly year round, and the warmer shores of its islands and peninsulas are largely barren, save for scant crops and grasslands. The shores are littered with fjords and lakes, all as deep as the freezing ocean itself.

Religion: The Savaxen northmen worship their own pantheon, led by Wodan One-eye, the All-father, god of War and Death, King of all Weyrth. Significant gods include (but are not limited to) Thule, Protector of Savaxen and god of Single Combat, Faira, goddess of fertility and birth, and Lorek, god of trouble and mischief. Savaxen's gods are appealed to when needed, and not otherwise. The Savaxen gods admire strength, independence, and wit.

Politics/Military: Savaxen has no official politics. They occasionally send a thane or jarl to Eisenberg for "international" matters. All other issues are handled between clans and families. The head of a family is a chief or "*jarl*;" the gentry call themselves "*thanes*;" freemen are "*karls*" and serfs, "*thralls*." The largest or most powerful of the *jarls* and chiefs may call himself a King, though many of the more powerful *jarls* do so as well. Inter-clan matters are managed between the clans in question—no greater government exists in Savaxen.

All Savaxen *karls*, *thanes*, and *jarls* are warriors as well, giving this small land a large army (though not centralized). The Savaxen live largely by raiding and pillaging their neighbors the Picts, Cymri, Stahlnish, and even some lands further south and east, in addition to each other. They are feared and accomplished seamen.

No major cities exist in Savaxen, nor do the trappings of war associated with such. Savaxen warriors pride themselves in the use of the spear, javelin, axe, hammer, and sword and shield. Ring-mail armor is common.

Legal System: The clan chief or jarl makes all important decisions, based on the council of the *thanes* and *karls* beneath him. Murder may be repaid by means of a wergild—a "death price" or by war. What sparse clergy there is also holds a great role in the administration of justice.

Economics: Raid, pillage, steal. Oh, and a little bit of sparse farming and husbandry, too. Their own craftsman are valued from clan-to-clan, but are generally inferior to many of their more advanced neighbors.

Inhabitants/Culture: Savaxen's Northmen are t
embodiment of their gods (or perhaps vise-ver
They are tall, well built, and fair. Red and blond h
is common, as are blue and green eyes. Clothi
functional, made from wool, furs, leather, and lin
Light jewelry is very common.

Northmen admire courage, honesty, genero
and hefty appetites for wine, women, and song. T
gather regularly for festivals of wrestling, storyte
and the exhibition of any and every skill. Braggi
a positive trait, as are all forms of largesse.

The official language is the Savaxen tongue, a
relative of Stahlnish.

Places of Note: A number of large city-like settlem
exist along the Stahlnish coast. All of Savaxen's
capped mountains are said to hide rock-dwarves,

and all manners of faeries, foul and fair.

Other Bonuses: The Savaxen Northmen are proud, strong, and robust (+1 ST and EN). Their technology is stunted in comparison to the rest of the old Empire, however (-1 MA), and they are considered uncouth by more civilized folk (-1 Soc). They are feared or hated by most all peoples along the northern and eastern coasts of Weyrth due to years of raiding (*bad reputation* flaw). They are said to be born with weapons in hand (1 extra proficiency point) and a boat under their feet (free skills- *Boating* and *Sailing*). Their language is so close to Stahlnish that with some effort the two may understand each other.

The Seat of the Xanarian Empire

(zah-nar-ee-ahn *or* zah-nar-ee-ahn)

Geography: The Seat of the once greatest empire Weyrth has ever known lies on a narrow peninsula in the very center of the Imperial Sea, called by the Imperials "The Sea of God's Sacrifice." Temperatures are warm in the summer and cool in the winter—never truly growing cold. Tropical fruits and surf abound. Most cities and settlements are coastal, with a few in the mountains.

Religion: The old Empire acknowledges its own Imperial Church of the Three-Gods-Become-One. It is thought that the church (or rather the Xanarth, its highest priest) holds more power than the emperor—outside of the Seat's immediate borders that is certainly true.

Politics/Military: The Seat of the Xanarian Empire was once just that—the capital of the greatest empire the world had ever seen. Its decline has been gradual, and though it now holds a great deal of political sway (particularly due to the Church) in nearby nations, it is no longer an Empire in anything but name.

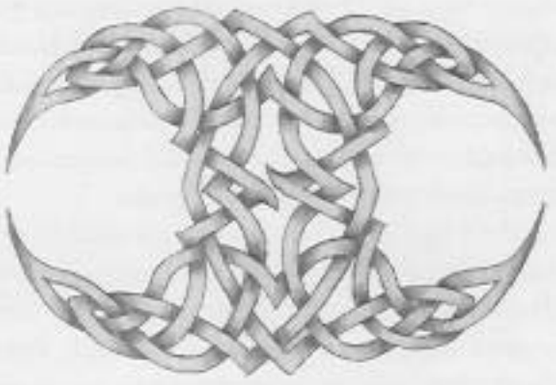
The Seat is ruled by an Emperor, his immediate councilors, and the Senate. Which is more powerful is a question that has been asked—and fought over—for centuries. The basic outline of government includes a representative from each of the Three-Gods-Become-One: The Emperor rules the "Righteous War," executing justice. The Senate covers the "All-Seeing Eye." The Church guides the "Merciful Hand." In reality each branch interferes with the others. The Church officially leads various groups devoted to the Righteous War and to the All-Seeing Eye, quietly professing that the mortal branches of human government need "assistance." The Great and Purifying Inquisition is an example of all three.

The Seat is currently threatened by the rising power of another "Emperor," Uglub of Gelure. Gelure continuously threatens not only the borders of the Seat itself, but also nations such as Cyrinthmeir—the Seat's strongest supporter and ally. Internationally the Seat is not especially popular politically, but is yet far from dead—it is still both feared and respected throughout the western world.

The Seat supports a very large and well-trained military, though it is now little more than a shadow of the Empire's former glory. The Seat's navy is still the best in the world, though it has lost most all of its influence in the Sea of Raiders to the north, due to the expansion of Gelure. There are still many fine schools of military science in the Seat, despite no major military victories in almost 50 years.

Popular weapons for both the military and civilians include longswords, shorter, thrusting weapons, and large shields. Some of the best artillery and siege engines come from the Seat as well.

Legal System: The Emperor is the final authority in all matters of judgement, though the Senate makes most all of the laws. Feudalism is still largely unaccepted in the Seat—rather a system of patronage is the norm. Freemen have as many rights as some gentry in other nations, though peasants have almost none at all.



Punishments are generally execution, mutilation, or servitude for commoners, fines or servitude for freemen, and fines for the gentry. The Emperor may punish anyone with whatever punishment he likes, however.

Economics: The Seat of the Empire, though in many ways failing, still has one of the most solid currencies in the entire world. Trade and tribute (paid by a great deal of "independent" nations) keeps the coffers from going empty, if not exactly full. Sea trade is particularly fruitful, as is fishing. The Church also holds a great deal of economic power—perhaps as much as its worldly brother.

Inhabitants/Culture: The residents of the Seat come from many lands and many races. Natives of the Seat generally have swarthy skin and dark hair and eyes, though lighter shades are not uncommon. They are generally short and thin, with slightly exaggerated facial features. They wear fine clothing (even most commoners, whose clothing is supplied by their lords) and sport elaborate hairstyles. Jewelry is common and often supports marine-based motifs. They are very proud and often stubborn, and delight in gossip, plotting, and politics.

The official language is the Imperial Xanarian Tongue, though many entire neighborhoods within the seat speak their own dialects or even separate languages.

Places of Note: Xanarium, the capital city of the old Empire.

Player Bonuses: Xanarians are very well educated (free Skill-read/write). All freemen and their betters are constantly engaged in political or social matters (free Skills-chose any 4 skills from the courtier packet; repeated skills gain –1 SR). All freemen (high or low) are considered "Citizens of the Empire," and may receive preferential treatment in countries with strong Xanarian ties. Such rights may be forfeit for those that abandon the Church, however.

Stahl

(stahl)

Geography: Stahl is a mountainous, hard land. The Iron-Tooth Mountains make up the southern and western borders, the Frost-Giant's Wake—some of We tallest peaks—make up the northern border b the Icy Sea. On the east lie the Sarmator Rzeczpospolita, and Magyarföld, to the s Cyrinthmeir and Ouestenreich, to the west. Sa Wide plains and forests make up the valleys bet the mountain ranges.

Religion: Stahlnish nobles, once loyal to the Imp Church, have proclaimed disbelief in any kind o or higher power whatsoever, claiming that man his own in the world. They furiously den superstition and sorcery. Though some of common folk have come to adopt this philos as well, the majority of Stahlners follow traditional faiths, worshiping the land or old g The north follows the traditions of Savaxen, the s follows the Imperial Church, the west follow ways of the Druids. Nobles and lords disco organized religion in their provinces, leading to villages and settlements having their own tradi and religions enacted by locals.

Politics/Military: Stahl is ruled by a number of ki princes, and pennaths—all under a "High King," lacks any kind of real unity. Warring is com amongst the various factions, clans, and famili few provinces of Stahl have become reasona independent of greater Stahlnish rule—nam Angharad, Savaxen, and Magyarföld. Stahl's high has done nothing to keep these nations in lin they are far from his center of power.

The Stahlnish army is large and varied. In addi to wild barbarian hordes they have highly tra heavy cavalry, good generals, and armored infan Stahlnish steel and metallurgy is some of the bes the world, and Stahlnish armor and barding is very best in the world.

Stahl's capital, Eisenberg, is perhaps the m heavily fortified city in the world, surrounded geological defenses as well as man-made.

Stahlnish relations with Cyrinthmeir are dec relations with Gelure and Zhibara are good, w those with Sarmatov and the seat of the Xana Empire are extremely poor.

Axes and heavy weapons and swords are pop

amongst the heavily armored Stahlners.

Legal System: Feudal. Punishments are extremely severe for any—commoner or gentry—that break the law of the local lord. Missionary work is illegal in most provinces as well.

Economics: Stahl's size allows it to remain largely self-sufficient. They provide much of the world's iron and steel. A breed of horse, the Stahlnish Shire Horse, is one of the largest and most expensive war-horses available beyond Stahlnish borders. Fur, wool, and wild game also make up a large part of Stahl's economy.

Inhabitants/Culture: Stahners are very tall, with light hair and eyes. Red hair is common in the north and west; darker hair and eyes in the southeast and southwest corners, near Magyarföld and Angharad. Furs, wool, and leathers are common apparel in all social classes, though exact fashions and workmanship vary from area to area and within the classes. They are a harsh, unforgiving, untrusting folk, given to violence and drink. The lack of real religion has caused great moral decline as well.

Places of Note: Eisenberg, the capital. Various mountain ranges.

Player Bonuses: Stahlners are tough as nails (+1 TO), and though openly untrusting they are not given to lying (-1 Soc). Due to the violent nature of their lives, most all Stahlners are familiar with weapons (1 extra point for weapon proficiencies), and all Stahlners—not just gentry or men—are allowed weapons and light armors. Many well-to-do commoners, along with most all gentry—have at least one trained Shire Horse as well.

Svarastra

(sfar-ahst-**rah**)

Geography: A refuge for its lions, tigers, leopards, panthers, elephants and rhinoceroses, Svarastra's vast tracts of rich fauna and rivers harbor the country from starvation and thirst. A vast plateau named the Fissan gaurds the border to Otalmarluk, secreting below it the great plain of Tarnassi and the river Enubd, fertile land seeps from the bank until the coastal waters of the Saphire Bay. Deep in the interior, small mountains crop up garnished with cities and temples, lavishly carved from the existing mountainside. Forests recede into jungle in the south, dense to the point of midnight, and prowled by invisible terrors.

Religion: Believing that the fastest way to heaven is through cremation, all bodies are burnt upon death and their ashes scattered in the rivers to speed the souls' journey. Interred in the earth for the period of a year, the soul is then reborn into its next incarnation

at the whim of nature and the need of the environment. It is taboo to eat meat in this country, and all travelers are "encouraged" to adhere to the custom. Fortunately, the wide selection of fruit and spices ensure meals to be just as savory.

Politics/Military: A caste system common to the Maraiah has maintained the countries Monarchy for 500 years. Arbitrary borders with Otalmarluk and Savari alter the countries territory on a continual basis. Forests are being depleted as the surging population cannibalizes them for farmland. Opulent wealth is found in the gold laden streams, and funds many a treaty and bribe. While well equipped, the military of Svarastra is more for show than war. Living contented lives keeps most of the peasant class in line, and the warm isolation of the country breeds little dissention. With Otalmarluk bribed and the savages superstitious, the remaining dangers to the country are posed by the rampant wildlife. Favored by pirates for rich, easy plunder, Svarastra faces its greatest dangers from the sea, having little or no navy of which to speak.

Legal System: The members of the royal family, the Pashirem, maintain peace throughout the land, though seldom are forced to do much more than arbitrate a contested marriage. Most inhabitants abide by common courtesy and supplication to their betters. There is an underbelly to the culture, but it is hidden well behind a polite smile and courteous bow.

Economics: Rich in gold from the interior, the country is able to pay for anything it desires or requires, though it is often charged exorbitant prices for goods (as the merchants are well aware they can pay). Exports from the country include fine pelts, jade, golden statues, tea, sugarcane, cr and cotton (in the north). Trade is good w Taveruun, a loss with Otalmarluk, and danger with the distrustful tribes of Savari. Eastern com also have established trade routes, and bring in a deal of silks and ivory.

Inhabitants/Culture: Warm and gener with a passion for dance, romance a ostentation, the culture of this land i spicy and rich as the food they eat. Alw shake the right hand of Svarastran, an left is a dire insult. Once invited int establishment, a guest is under t protection of his patron until the guest the good manners to leave. Men are hon and upright, clothed in loose skirt brightly died cloth about their waists, a turbans on their heads. Beards are the m of a commoner, though nearly all m attire themselves with a sharply hook knife. Women adorn themselves w jewelry of every fashion, and are alw looking for more.

Places of Note: Carved from sol marble, the palace of the thousand w currently is the largest single structur the world. Most of the land is beauti however deadly it may be.

Player Bonuses: +2 Soc due to t friendly nature and good manners of country. –2 Health (HT) due rampant fevers and other contag associated with large populations.

Taveruun

(Ta-ver-**roon**)

Geography: Taveruun, "the lan the winding rivers," spa folklore from its toes. Taveru the daughter of the Xanat Empire, a now independe territory that was once capture vast resources, and lost becau its enormity. Fifteen hundred mi

road were constructed in the Empire's glory, and remains largely intact to this day. Arrayed vertically across the origin of the Galadonian River, the Imperial road reaches as far as northern Numeria. A southward trek across the road originating in northern reaches through the Highlords Pass begins at the Kingdom's Gate, high in the frosty mountains. From there the road winds through the dark spruce and pine of the Spiders Forrest, along the foothills and into Longstone. Thus begins the second stretch of road, now meeting the Cathedral River and its omnipresent contingent of oak and stonewood. After entering the fields of the lower valley the road proceeds southward, the land withering and choking into the arid desert of Numeria.

Religion: Predominantly Imperialist, a smattering of Thayerism can be found in the north, as well as isolated sects of Esauln. In the south there is a tendency towards the acceptance of nature, but no true outward movement. With the dominant presence of phenomenally ornate churches throughout the country, the Imperialist church holds sway over the majority of the populous, reinforced by the hatred for the constant attack by the Marmaluk hordes that are fueled by their Seven Vows.

Politics/Military: Initially created as an extension of the Imperialist Church, the kingdom was eventually divided into the eight points of the compass, and a Highlord was set to rule each. Each Highlord protects the people, enforces the doctrine of the church, and maintains the district in which they rule. Garrisoning a standing army in each district each Highlord keeps the soldiers well trained in both the old and new styles of combat; masters of the arts being sent abroad to study and return with new techniques. Maintaining a small navy with which to guard its coasts and ships, the Highlord of the west is alone in his vocation.

Politically the country remains on good terms with Cyrinthmeir, Helena and the Imperium. Conditions are not so good with Otamarluk, or Ixliaph, with whom religious differences spark conflict. Viewing the Marmaluks as savage raiders and thieves, great conflict often erupts on the borders, as Otamarluk does not recognize the claims Taveruun makes to the territory they inhabit. A line of outposts has grown over the years into a nearly complete wall, the Highlords hoping to eliminate the Marmaluks ability to steal into the country unseen on their frequent raids of the west.

Legal System: Taveruun adheres to the governmental system of its feudal forefathers. Each baron, count, duke, earl or landowner is responsible for instituting the Lords law within his fief. Appeals climb the social hierarchy, and are only good for nobles who may ultimately appeal to all eight Highlords in council. This is rare though, and usually only occurs when a question of succession must be decided. Generic punishments include fines, branding, and prison time for infractions by commoners against commoners, and prison time or execution for crimes against lords or gentry by commoners. In stark contrast to the northern society, however, serfs are considered free men, and may come and go as they please, provided their contract has been fulfilled. In this manner, there is some competition to be useful, as a higher wage is paid to those who have skill. Additionally, a serf may chose to become a clergyman or join the army as a footman at any time if his tenure is unendurable.

Economics: While the hills are suitable to raise cattle in, many farmers prefer sheep, since they are easily herded, and their wool may be sold for an additional profit. Potato's and beans are the staple foods of the region, as well as other root vegetables. Due to current altercations (war) with Otamarluk, any surplus is being used to feed the army, and nothing is being sold at this time. Economically, it is beginning to destabilize the country, though they are not considered poor. Being outnumbered 2 to one in population density by the Marmaluks is also a strain on their ability to produce enough food, weapons and manpower to hold their opponents at bay.

Inhabitants/Culture: Hardworking and prideful are the Taveruun men, whose status may rival that of their lords if the opportunity presents itself. Though well treated and cared for, the nation suffers from rampant superstition and paranoia spread mainly by the church. They are distrustful of outsiders, fearing them to be blood drinking fiends from hell or similar

absurd threats. Many traditions have mingled together over the years, giving the Taveruun a rich and diverse collection of holidays, festivals, as well as an odd assortment of tastes. Pious and devout, they attend church on often a nightly basis, and place their fate solely in the hands of the Three.

Places of Note: Enormous statues of Xanar and an unknown companion adorn the cliff face at the entrance to the Imperial highway. In Longstone, the Cemetery of the Honored boasts countless mausoleums and crypts of resplendent decoration.

Player Bonuses: Distrustful of anyone Taveruuns gain a (+1 PER), but their urban lifestyle has softened them considerably (-1 TO). They are generally well educated (free Skill-Read/Write for Freemen and up) and familiar with foreign languages (free Skill-Imperial Tongue; may learn any language of the northern portion of the old Imperial territories at normal cost).

Tengoku

(ten-go-koo)

Geography: As the devastatingly breathtaking, manicured countryside shimmers in wintry dr blossoms, terraced rice fields ring all sides of the dead volcano that birthed the enormous island f the sea. Vegetation hardy enough to survive the assault of elemental rage grows in well ordered and orchards, carefully tended and cultured. W waters teem with fish off the jagged coastline, fi by the villagers who have settled in habitable Moist climes in summer spawn endless swarm misquotes and bugs, which in turn feed the flo birds that storm the skies. All available land is for the farming of rice; because of this, only isol families herd livestock such as chickens. Wit ocean as the countries only borders, the sky fr paint its full majesty in the splendor from whic country takes its name.

Religion: Believing that all life is of an endless circle of death and reb the inhabitants see death a inevitability and therefore str make their lives perfect in hop their next incarnation ascending a beyond one in which they curr dwell. Fate plays an important ro daily life, and all events are though be inevitable and predestined. I many, life gains meaning w unraveling the destiny that fat granted them, and then bringing bear. Religion is an individual pur more than a driving force for pol acquisition of power, as monks ar allowed to interfere directly in workings of government. Respe both spirits and of the Fey is expr as part of superstition and belief.

Politics/Military: As they are an an civilization, elapsing time h formalized the social structure in rigid feudal system, with de defined roles for everyone. Abo

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others are The Descendants of Heaven, the Emperor and his family. Revered as pseudo divinity, the royal family exists on a stipend provided by the Konon, or ruling warlord. Beneath him are the Feudal Lords, who owe their power directly to the lands they control. All lords must be of the appropriate bloodline, and swear fealty to the Konon. Politics are conducted in a ruthlessly polite and formalized manner of betrayal and honor, with allegiances changing hands daily as various lords maneuver for power.

The military is comprised of Sinjedi, or the honorable warriors of death; Men and women who have dedicated themselves to their lord and whose only goal is to uphold the honor of their master.

gal System: Do as you are told without hesitation or failure. If you are worthless, you will be culled.

conomics: Tengoku produces a vast amount of silver, which they trade with Kudara for silk. As devastation is often wrecked upon Tengoku by typhoon and earthquake, most of the gross national product goes towards supporting the enormous population. Additionally, the best cutting blades on earth are forged here, capable of beheading as many as a dozen men before dulling the blade.

abitants/Culture: Rigid and ritualistic in their pursuit of life, the nation boasts one of the only truly ordered and civilized societies upon the planet. It is a place of cleanliness and harmony, though life skims the razor's edge in a dance of intrigue and loyalty. Nudity is not taboo, and sex is regarded as a fact of life. Obedience and respect are of the utmost importance to the society. They place an epic proportion of importance on ones reputation, and will go to great lengths to maintain the one they desire.

ces of Note: Any part of the land that faces the sun or moonrise is beautiful enough to grant one peace for a lifetime. Many of the monasteries and shrines take this into account in their architectural design.

ter Bonuses: Tengokun manners are unmatched in the world. Therefor a +2 Soc is granted. Due to their diminutive stature (-1d6 +1 inches), Tengokun characters lose –1 ST.

Tez'Hamun

(tez-hah-**moon**)

Geography: As though an ancient dragon passed beyond, and in its passing ensorcelled the sand with the fire and wind of its breath, the ancient black rock of Issairia sheds scales of abrasive sand, propagating the endless desert that is Tez'Hamun. Beneath the Dragons breath flow the waters of the Raan and the trackless marshes of Ezivt. Here the inky darkness spawned an ancient civilization, foul and wicked. Ahr and Numeria are remnants of the wicked society that once enslaved all of Maraiah in order to insure their gods infinity and immortality. In order to create their massive triads of stone, the once lush jungle was stripped away, beginning the process of decay and destruction that to this day racks this blasted land. Only the rim of the forsaken marsh is habitable any longer, a sad testament to five thousand years of evil. Straggling oases found throughout the camel trains route their way winding north can attest to the splendor that once adorned what is now but a windswept sea of sand.

Religion: A distinct branch of paganism has been practiced here since the dawn of man. The gods of Tez'Hamun bear similarities to monsters of other nations myths. From the neck up, the gods are animal, from the neck down, man or woman. Each is capable of assuming the form they represent. These gods are the unification of all spirits of a certain type of creature, and are sent to guide men in their fashion. Generally one prays to the appropriate god on the appropriate occasion, ever vigilant to respect all and anger none. Offerings are given on a regular basis to pacify the gods one has angered, or in hopes of gaining the gods favor.

Politics/Military: With the Imperial conquest of Maraiah in 29 WEYR came an influx of new religion, leading to the decline in heathenish practices of both sorcery and the old religion. Numeria and Ahr splintered during this time, asserting themselves as nations in bloody revolution. Heedless of territorial losses, the divine representatives relinquished nothing in the way of mercy, beheading hundreds of thousands of "disloyal" followers, citizens and slaves. With drastic

losses to their slave pool, Tez'Hamun retreated from the lime-light for a time, attempting to reassert its former power. However, the loss of habitable land to the splinter kingdoms severed the trade lines, and without forests to grow more wood, the country receded into anonymity behind the grueling shield of the desert. Today, there are 19 Divine rulers of Tez'hamun, each house following a particular Divine Spirit. Each maintains a city of loyal followers and attempts to prosper. Currently the house of the Lion maintains the greatest base of power, followed by the Hawk and the Raven. Base metals such as copper are plentiful and as such most armors and weapons are of like make. (It was this fact, more than any other, that lead to the Imperial "victory" in 45 WEYR)

Legal System: There are three tiers of people in Tez'Hamun: the Divine, the servants, and the slaves. Slaves have no rights, save the right of being owned. A slave of the divine is not subject to discipline by any other one of the divine, but failure or embarrassment of the Divine is an invitation for death. Servants maintain order and perform tasks of state within the realm, serve

in the army, and are respon
for feeding the popul
Whipping and stoning
common punishments
disobedience, and one can
forward to a lobotomy i
event one disturbs the peace
heresy or like offense. Treas
dealt with harshly, the acc
being fed alive to beetles
buried alive in the endless
of the desert.

Economics: Based solely o
production of grain in the
that will grow it, the econ
manifests itself in the Tole
triangular brass coin bear
sun. Gold, while plentiful
property of the divine alon
is most precious stones and
metals. This allows the co
to trade for needed goods
the merchants that travel a
the sea and desert.

Inhabitants/Culture: Bald
heads and white linen, alt
light, are the chosen style
swarthy brown skinned na
Women attire themselves
same, and are not modest
their semi-nudity. Artist
and medicinally advanced
Library in Uzang rivals tho
the Xanarian Empire in qu
and knowledge. Physician
long sought methods to en
the life span of their chose
have resultantly uncover
great many mysteries conc
human anatomy. Likewis
attempts to ensure the ex
of their masters, the astro
and engineers have adv
knowledge of science and

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Player Bonus
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Geography: I
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Places of Note: Lost in the desert and marshes are the remnants of an unspoken civilization, vanished for all time but leaving behind wonders to mark its passing. In the heart of the desert are the six triads of the moons; "*Eqis dizeb nedi*," six black pyramids once covered in gold (long looted) built for an unknown reason defiant still of the desert's grinding maw. Rumored by tradesman to be an unholy place of evil and death, it is shied away from by most.

Prayer Bonuses: The hot sun and treacherous lifestyle of Tez'Hamun causes +1 EN, +1 Per, -2 WP. Required religion: A chosen Divine Spirit.

Vedij
(Vay-deej)

Geography: Lush flowers blooming on vines obscure the weeping trees from which they hang. Nesting within the boiling green foliage dense clouds of gnats and mosquitos heedlessly carpet the moist underbrush, gobbled voraciously by the birds. Small animals from monkeys to cats prowl the humid tangle in search of food and mates. Blind but for their ears the residents scream their location in hopes of discovery, layering their screeches and howls into a droning pulse. Between the folds of the jungle's dress is a civilization so ancient it claims to be raised by the very gods that formed the planet. They have cultivated the land where nature has permitted, and high in the hills where the knotted ropes of vine cease to thrive, great fields of rice grow in muddy patches. Storm and monsoon drench the countryside monthly, keeping the spongy landscape green and shimmering.

Religion: Being an ancient civilization has allowed enough time to elapse for the entire culture to change its philosophy a hundred times. Original theology taught that the rulers were the children of heaven, taught by the gods and instructed to further the cause of man. Later, Ru Zi hypothesized that man existed in harmony with nature, later to be contradicted by Shou Zend, who believed man to be an instrument of society. Currently, philosophical battles wage attempting to decide the question of equality between ruler and servant, basing their belief on the premise that all life should be treated ethically. Such unrestrained freedom to pursue theology is on the verge of being outlawed, but the civil war that will inevitably ensue has daunted the ruling emperor from passing such edicts.

Politics/Military: As the peasants are forbidden weaponry, to insure their equality they have developed a type of hand to hand combat based on the principles of water. It has allowed the common folk to stage multiple revolutions, some successful others not. On any hand the inhabitants are formidable when marshaled for war, or when fleeing to another country to pursue their destiny.

Trading with Tengoku for silver the silk that is mass-produced in the villages, the royalty has maintained a level of decadence unheard of in the west. They strive to ensure that privilege, and thusly maintain an army of devout followers trained from birth in the art of war. As the west has not met the

east in a true field of combat, correlation's between the two fighting styles can only be surmised.

Legal System: The basic laws that cohesive society needs in order to function are enforced with fairness and justice, however in regards to the emperors wishes, life is considered trivial, and most inhabitants are more than willing to embrace the next life when called to do so.

Economics: Silk and spices sold to caravans from the east provide great revenue, as does the yearly trade with Tengoku. Taxes are paid on all income, and not paying is considered *very* dangerous.

Inhabitants/Culture: Highly stylized and introspective, the natives of this land constantly seek to attain harmony with themselves, one another and nature. It is not surprising that so many of them have sought, or are seeking, the Riddle. They are somewhat diminutive in size and stature, averaging an overall height of about five feet, with black hair and green eyes. Masters of the arts of weaving and smithing, clothing consists of finely tailored silks and jewelry carved in the manner of an assortment of creatures. Medicine and science are greatly advanced as well, and many an alchemist has crossed the barren wasteland in search of eastern teaching. All of this is wrapped up in a great deal of superstition, which rules many day-to-day facets of Vhedijian life.

Places of Note: The imperial palaces and burial grounds are so well wrought that they must begin upon the conception of an Emperor to be, and are tirelessly improved throughout the course of his life.

Player Bonuses: State education and fitness programs grant +1 MA, +1 AG, but small stature causes -1 ST and TO, and -1d6 +1 to hieght.

Yone

(Yuh-own)

Geography: To the west, the horned ram of Fauth rises from the great stones of the Vadeon Forrest watched over by the Towers of the Guardians. In the East, beyond the Lancing Peaks rests Ahr, stalwart in its impenetrable walled cities. Yone became a country more by the isolating geography than conquerors' design. Warm coastal breezes keep the clime warm nearly year-round, though severe storms tou countryside amidst winter. A land of rolling hill sunken valleys below the cliffs that line its Yone's soil is rich and fertile, full of grain, orch and vineyards. Cattle, sheep and goats lethargi graze carelessly upon the emerald countryside.

Religion: To the Yon, religion bears the reigns of s order in a steady hand. In the days of the First M gospel—akin to wildfire—spread throughou parched land. The tenets he preached, recorded Unaro Vazedda upon the Stone of Ages, bein sound merit but wide interpretability, have b embraced throughout the majority of Yone.

"What one's dream beith upon one's death lies held in actions and regrets of one's life. Live then without in the light of truth, mercy and forgivingnes."

It is the belief of the people of Yone that u death, one slips into an eternal dream, in which regrets of ones life shape the dream of death a facsimile in which the deplorable actions which regrets must be endured by those who commit those wrongs. The Yon consider this as a very forgi religion in general, as most people are capable of m actions without regret. True mastery of fear given believers zealot stature, making the Yon diffic opponents upon the field of battle.

Politics/Military: A Feudal system has maintained u in Yone for many centuries. The strong exist to s the weak, warding them from danger and injust In turn, the weak provide the strong with tribute order that they may be defended whole-hearte should the need arise. The Kings of the land a known as "Masters," and each of the nine region overseen by one such lord. The country as a whol governed by a council comprised of the Master the Nine Regions, who meet upon the change of season to discuss policy, reform, and economic Nostsanglist; the capital city of Yone.

While trade remains good with both Fauth a Ahr, both countries look on Yone with a skepti eye, regarding the populace with disdain at tim Fauth holds Yone in even less regard, as a majority

its progenitors were considered revolutionaries even amongst the Exiles.

gal System: Nine Jurors of the common-folk, presided over by a Grand Juror, (always over 60 years of age, who at one time in life was chosen to represent the community in council) judge most matters of Servants. A merited appeal may be made to the Master of the region if proof of misconduct by any adjudicating party may be unwaveringly proven. Nobility of the Region, upon whom charges are laid, are granted audience before the Master of the region, and may prove themselves by way of combat on request. In such instances, the plaintiff is allowed to chose the weapon used as well as the lethality of the duel, and no armor or shields are allowed. Masters are judged by the remainder of the council, in the few instances where evil has beset such a leader.

nomics: Yone is known for its art above all things. Literature and self-expression are encouraged by the Enclaves (churches), who will gladly teach anyone to read and write, for the exchange of a year's loyal service. Yone has good trade relations with Fauth, supplying foodstuffs and leather, wool, silks and spices as major exports. Yone is not rich in precious metals, however, and relies mainly on crafts as primary staples of revenue. While only moderately skilled in the manufacture of weapons and armor, those produced in the country are often sought after heirlooms by peoples and nations worldwide. Many countries have been known to commission artists from Yone to decorate their armors and design their standards. Also, they harbor the sultriest vixens in the land.

bitants/Culture: Yone has become a safe-haven for independent and free-minded people. Many people of other countries have fled to Yone in search of freedom from persecution of one sort or another. As a result, Yone is a melting pot of cultures and traditions. Each brings its own history and culture, which are tolerated so long as they remain unprompted in a vigorous fashion.

Above all else, the people of Yone strive to create. This desire takes many forms, and most inhabitants live fulfilled lives. Many struggle in poverty, however, until such time as they can achieve their goals. Neighboring countries regard the Yone as prideful (often egotistical) willful, and isolationistic. (They are often too busy with their personal works to care about distant events.) Amidst themselves, they regard tolerance, endurance, wisdom, strength, truth, honor, and self-reliance as their chief qualities. Though they prefer to think their way out of a fight, they become formidable opponents if consumed by rage.

Languages flourish in Yone, but the Old Imperialist tongue has long been the common language of the land.

Places of Note: Yone brims with beautiful cities, as those who build them strive to perfect the art. The capital, Nostsanglist, has been known to captivate visitors with its endless sculptures, tapestries and murals. (There have been 3 attempts to capture the city in all of history, each attempt has ended miserably for the besiegers, as they quickly discover the inhabitants have no tolerance for anyone who tries to destroy or defame their art!)

Player Bonuses: The Yon highly prize independence (+1 WP, -1 Soc), and have learned in many ways to depend on themselves using the attributes, skills and knowledge they have chosen to develop (free Skill: any one *craft* skill).

Zaporozhya
(zah-poh-**rozh**-yah)

Geography: Whether during the dry summers, wet springs and autumns, or frozen winters, the *Dekh*, or Breath of the Gods, blows across Zaporozhya's rolling steppes and grasslands. It is this great wind that best characterizes this wide nation's fierce inhabitants. Wide, shallow rivers run southwest into the Crescent Sea, providing for thick forests, bogs, and tall grasses in the south. The north is characterized by open plains and prairies, growing colder as they come closer to Rzeczpospolita and Zhibara.

Religion: Beyond the general lack of organized religion in such a chaotic land, many Kozaks (as the Zaporozhyans call themselves) acknowledge either the Seven Vows of the Prophet, a modified version of the Imperial Church, or practice the old faith of the Thayrs. Despite such proclamations of religion, most outsiders consider the Kozaks and all of Zaporozhya to be godless.

Politics/Military: Zaporozhya recently broke free from political attachment to Sarmatov and the Rzeczpospolita with the aid of troops from Krym-Khanan and money from Zhibara. While the Kozaks have gained freedom from one lord they have really just knelt to another to the northeast.

The Krymeans have an odd relationship with the Kozaks, always either fighting with them or against them, and reversing position every 20 years or so. The two peoples have a profound respect for one another, despite constant warring.

The Kozaks are legendary horsemen that live, sleep, fight, and die in the saddle. They have no real army except in times of great war, when they gather under the Hetman, a type of warlord and general. Many Sarmat lords still hold lands and castles in Zaporozhya, protected primarily by Kozak troops.

Kozak footmen carry long spears and short axes, while cavalry and those that can afford them wield sabers or the long saber-like kindjal. Though still rare, the Kozaks are thought to have developed a reasonably reliable rifle-like handgun, with which they are said to be rather accurate.

Legal System: There is no centralized government in Zaporozhya. Instead, clans and "brotherhoods" ru the land freely, uniting under the call of the Hetm a warlord-general that claims to be of noble lin There are no laws ourside of the Hetman's ca (where he is the law), and each man must fend himself and his family.

Economics: Farming, sheep herding, orchards, a hunting make up the bulk of Zaporozhy productivity. The rest of the economy relies raiding and mercenary work for surround countries. Sarmatovian money is still commonly use, though barter is also a standard for mount transactions.

Inhabitants/Culture: Kozaks have dark hair and eyes, a generally pale skin (though mixing with Krym and Fahalanim in the south has led to many dar skin tones). Men often wear their hair shaved do to all but a single round tuft in the top or front wh is usually grown very long. Moustaches are extrem popular, and are often grown very long and th waxed or braided and tucked behind the ear on e side. Their clothing is very similar to the Sarmats Zhibarans in the north and the Krymeans in t south.

Kozaks are renowned as the world's foremo drunkards. They are wild and untamed, like falcons that fly over their great hills and plains. So are sung about the most unruly and independen their people, who revere *fantazya*, or panach imagination, and flair, above all else in one's chara and carriage.

Places of Note: The Dumai river stretches the length the country, flowing into the fertile basin of t Crescent Sea. Dnyepr, the Hetman's capital, is fou here.

Player Bonuses: The spirited and wild Kozaks rely hard upon superstition, and find that it supports them Luck; Luck may reach 7, but never drop below Most are raised in the saddle (free Skill: Riding –3 beginning SR). Also, social class is less meanin to the Kozaks, who don't believe in the west concept of "nobility," but rather that Kozaks are a own social class, where each one is free. This do not effect beginning wealth.

Zhibara
(zhee-bah-ra
Geography:
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Zhibara
(zhe-bah-rah)

Topography: Bleak, dismally barren skies of lead washed clouds strain the basin of heaven into blizzards of icy rain. Hardened by eternal cold and smothered in snow, the evergreen forests dominating the landscape in shadow and pine shelter herds of elk and moose in stern silence. Wolf packs, bears and mastodons trudge throughout the lonely expanses of wood, a howl or roar carrying for miles. Few crops are resilient enough to flourish in the frozen soil, limiting farmers to root crops such as potatoes and beets. Mountains, split in twain by banks of dense wet clouds, rise high revealing frost laden forests hiddden in the fog.

Religion: Carved into the Heart Tree of every village is a depiction of the god or gods of nature that are revered by that Clan. Heathenistic (by imperial standards) worship is prevalent throughout this isolated land, though near the borders of Rzeczpospolita some of the Imperial teachings have swayed farmers. Each Warlord vows to destroy all enemies of their god, and have no compunctions in carrying out this edict.

Politics/Military: Barbaric in comparison to neighboring countries, the ragtag assortment of clans are constantly losing ground as the boundaries of surrounding nations increase. Sheltered by the vast expanses of forests and streams, conquest of this land is nearly impossible. Though there is speculation that the mountains may be wealthy in ore, the country is considered worthless and is generally left to its own devices. As such, it is home to many a bandit and exile who wishes to escape prosecution.

Clans raid both west and south, seeking wealth and trappings unafforded in their homeland. Little armor is to be found in the country of axe wielding maniacs, and that that is is fashioned from boiled hides and leather. Several Imjian refugees turned Warlords have attempted to implement mastodons as assault platforms, with limited success. General tactics are to slip in under the cover of night, steal all that is available, and burn the rest to the ground.

Legal System: Few laws exist, and those that do involve the rights of a clan when attacked by another clan.

Economics: Miserably poor, no export or trade is to be found.

Inhabitants/Culture: Anarchists from society who prefer to live free, fight and die as they chose, the freemen of Zhibara care little for proper manners or education. Continuously hunting in pursuit of a full belly or chopping wood to stoke the fires has grown monsters out of men. Smelly and shaggy in their fur wrappings, drunk on fermented potato mash, any male can be expected to fly off in a fit of rage at any instant while women are either timid and removed, or bold enough to lash the fires of hell itself.

Skilled in carving wood, ones status is assured by the number of carvings within their lodge.

Places of Note: Far in to the mountains looms the Maw of Night, a titanic crevasse a thousand feet deep.

Player Bonuses: A harsh, cold land has conditioned Zhibarans physcially, but left them otherwise a backwards folk. +1 STR +1 EN +1 TO –1 HT –1 SOC –2 MA, Survival skill at best packet rating free.

IV. The Religions of Weyrth

Faith and devotion are important elements in the life of every man, woman, and child, and the residents of Weyrth are no different. As with our own world religion—and actions under the guise of religion—have formed much of the history of Weyrth. The following entries describe a few of the largest and most influential faiths on the great continent.

1. The Role of the Gods

Each believer takes his or her religion rather seriously—wars have been fought over such matters. The gods and religions of Weyrth are very real to their followers; while rarely any so-called "proof" or miracles surface, the people continue to believe. There are a few "rules" governing the use of religions and gods in *The Riddle of Steel*.

- Gods do not grant "spells" and there are no fantasy-style "clerics." Miracles, the fruit of great need and greater faith, however, are rumored to occur from time to time.
- There is no "official" true religion of Weyrth…at least none that the players should be aware of. Each character believes his or her own chosen path to be the "true" one. It is up to the Seneschal and the flavor of his campaign as to which—if any—of the following mythoi is the "one true church."
- This is still just a game. Though many of the religions presented here and in the dossier of lands borrow from real-world faiths, no preference is taken on the part of the authors or anyone else. Any similarities to real-wo faiths, real or imagined, are either complet coincidental or used to add a dash of realism, not a representation of any real persons beliefs or ideal at any time any of players are uncomfortable w the religious content of the game the Seneschal obligated to accommodate that player (see Bo Eight: The Seneschal for more).
- These religions are meant to provoke thought, act and emotion in the characters and their players. I them as such! Faith has always been the numbe motivational factor for the propagation of good a evil since time began.

2. Major, Influential, and International Religions of Weyrth Described

The following entries expand on th religions presented in "The Nations Weyrth Described," above, that apply many nations or peoples, having crossed boundaries of simple politics, language culture. In addition to fundamental be and histories each entry describes n given religion's perception of others how it is perceived by others. As w all cultures and peoples, these stereotypes made to be broken.

The Imperial Church of the Thr Gods-Become-One

History: Once there was but man woman, separate and apart. Then t Betrayer came to them—the Foul One, eldest of the Demons. He enticed the saying to the man, "See her beauty and strength…take it to yourself." And the m took her. The birth of the first child shatt the heavens, raining the pieces through the skies. As the heavens broke so did tru and all sense was lost for many a Mankind was then alone in the world, n parents and children. This was man's first for he created life with no right.

Children coupled with children and many more men were born, man and woman both. And the Dark Betrayer came to some and said, "See how the others walk your lands and gaze upon your women. It should not be so. See their lands and their women...there is but one way to gain recompense." And those men took up weapons, and killed their brothers so as to gain their brothers' lands and women. This was man's second sin, for he took life with no right.

Then one man found a shard of the heavens, and saw the truth it held, for through the shard he could see all things. "By what power is this?" he asked. "It is the power of the All-seeing Eye," it responded. He was commanded to reveal the truth to all men, his brethren, that they might no longer sin, but rather restore the order of the heavens. To combat the first sin came The Merciful Hand, as what is done cannot be undone, but forgiveness is in the Hand of the offended, He Who Gives the Right to All. Only he may cover the sins of men. To combat the second sin arose the Righteous War, Who dispenses Justice over what the Hand does not cover, and Takes the Right from Those that Should Not Have It.

Some men began to follow the way of the Merciful Hand, others the way of the Righteous War; the All-seeing Eye said that it was not good, "For we are not Three, but One: Knowledge, Mercy, and Justice. We will show the world that this is the way of Truth." They chose the man who first found the Shard of Heaven as their messenger and their conqueror, and called him Xanar. Xanar gathered an army of Justice and land by land took the whole of the world, taking a wife and begetting a son in each land, so that Truth might prevail in all times.

It was after Xanar had subdued the wicked world beneath the banners of Truth that the Dark Betrayer, the Foul One, rose again. He chose nine men and women—practitioners of darkness and witchcraft—to lead an army of Darkness against Xanar and the banners of Truth. One by one the Betrayer stole the hearts of men by murder and sorcery, until only a few remained in the west that had not fallen. In his great age Xanar called his brothers and his sons and left the keys of the All-seeing Eye, the Merciful Hand, and the Righteous War in their hands. Having so done he wrote his last words to the wayward children of men and marched alone to do battle with the Foul one and the Nine.

The battle that followed was great indeed—the power of Truth against the Power of Darkness. Weyrth shattered beneath the strain, and every nation within 300 miles was broken (as the heavens before them) and plunged into the sea. Xanar gave his life, and in so doing trapped the Dark Betrayer beneath land that lies beneath the seas, defeating him in a way and for a time.

That time is now. Through the power of Truth, Mercy, and Justice a mortal man defeated the Foul One and scattered his minions, for only through the Three-Gods-Become-One can man prevail over darkness and restore order to the shattered world as They did for the Heavens.

Basic Beliefs: The Descendants of Xanar rule today in the Seat of the Empire named for him. The Senate embodies the All-seeing Eye, the Courts rule as the Merciful Hand, and the Emperor guides the Righteous War. Above all is the Church, which is master of the tenants of all Three, and houses all the words of Xanar given prior to the martyrdom in what is now the Imperial Sea or the "Sea of God's Sacrifice." The empire handles all matters of "the flesh," the Church "the soul."

There are two overarching principles according to the Church: do not take that to which you have no right, and do not give that which is not yours to give. This roughly translates to "no murder, no stealing, no illegitimate children, and obedience to local laws." Mercy is valued, as are honor and justice. Priests and other ecclesiastical figures, who represent the highest interperetations of Xanar's words, may not commit violence—lest by accident they should kill, and abstain from all inter-sexual relations, lest a life be given. In addition to these stringent vows, they spend their days in study, so as to emulate the All-seeing Eye.

Though the Foul one is imprisoned in the Pit, his minions still run the earth, as do his human followers. The faithful ward off the evil eye, demons,

and other hellspawn by "crossing themselves," or tracing an "X" across their chest.

Upon death the soul is brought to trial before the Great Tribunal of Truth, where the Three sit. The soul will be weighed according to how it balanced and adhered to the great principles of Truth (seeking knowledge, serving mercy, and fighting the righteous war against the Foul One). Those that fail are sent to the pit to drown forever in lakes of blood. Those that pass are taken in as angels and kings of heaven to prepare for the last battle between Truth and Darkness.

Traditions: The faithful generally celebrate a number of festivals and religious ceremonies every year. The most important is "the March," a 21-day memorial of the final journey and battle of Xanar Shard-Finder. It is marked by somber days of fasting during the first week and a 3-day feast at the very end, in celebration of his victory.

Current Events: Though the Empire has grown weak over the last century, the Church—led by the Xanar[illegible] high priest of the Church—is still quite strong, [illegible] has much international influence. One branch [illegible] Church, calling themselves the "Sons of the Right[illegible] War," instituted an all-out inquisition and pur[illegible] of the "Darkness," burning both suspected [illegible] practicing witches, sorcerers, and any who medd[illegible] the arcane. They have tremendous support from [illegible] ruling figures in many countries, as well as [illegible] appreciation—if not the love—of the populace.

Perceptions: Magic is the tool of the Dark Betrayer [illegible] to destroy the souls of all those that come into con[illegible] with it. Other religions are lost from the Truth [illegible] may be returned to the fold by teaching, merc[illegible] war, as the Church sees fit. The farther adherents [illegible] the Church live from the Empire, the more moder[illegible] they tend to be in this area, leading to advan[illegible] religious tolerance in the far northeast (such as [illegible] Sarmatov). The Church is seen as a threat by o[illegible] religions in "missionary nations" where the Word [illegible] Xanar are preached by wandering evangelists or the[illegible] crusaders.

Thayrism

History: In the beginning there was Eimekal, the [illegible] true god of the world. Eimekal went to Triu[illegible] the forger-god, and commissioned that a world [illegible] built for Him. Triumph forged the world a[illegible] Eimekal placed his children on the world, namin[illegible] Thayrth and calling His offspring men. The w[illegible] was pure, then, without the Darkness—witchc[illegible] wickedness, and all its kind. War was unknown [illegible] as was hate.

Many great nations rose out of Eimekal's [illegible] born children, who were strong and immortal. O[illegible] time the many nations grew and split, creating [illegible] nations for the sons and daughters of Eimekal. [illegible] ruled by an undying member of the eldest-bor[illegible] the children of Thayr. The oldest and most pow[illegible] of these were Methusdal the Wise and his [illegible] brother, Xanar Storm-Bringer. Methusdal ruled [illegible] and with great prudence, and his realm grew. X[illegible] Storm-Bringer looked upon his brother's wealth [illegible] posterity, and gave birth to greed and envy.

Calling the names of dark gods Xanar released spirits and demons, all in effort to gain advantage over his brother. Giants and titans, the sons of deposed gods of other worlds heard what Xanar did, and said to one another, "There is a world down there, calling itself Thayr, ruled by only one god. This Eimekal cannot keep such power all alone! Let us go down to that world and take our positions as gods there, for when we control lands and take a harvest of souls will we not be gods, and giants nevermore?"

These demon-giants came to Xanar, hearing his call, and began teaching him the dark arts of other worlds...sorcery, summoning, speaking with spirits and commanding the dead. The wood-spirits and rock-spirits were released then, acting as tools of chaos and a scourge upon the children of Thayr and all men. Xanar, having mastered the black tricks of witchcraft, gathered an army of his subjects—those he had been trusted to nurture—and began war upon his brethren the immortals and all the people of Thayr. Others of the eldest-born saw what he did and fell before him pleading mercy, pleading for him to give them a piece of his victory and a taste of his knowledge in exchange for their service—in exchange for their souls! These became known as the Nine, and only Xanar Storm-bringer himself is more foul: *Ouija the Spirit Walker, Nivandean the Seer, Magen the Corruptor, Aurak the Soiter, Taikella the Captor, Merddyf the Summoner, Vachar the Blasphemer, Aimthes the Deceiver, and Wolfenthrax the Reaver.*

This dark army of Xanar and his Nine Generals marched throughout the world, lying and stealing, deceiving and laying waste, until much of the world was wasted. Many Thayrs and men were mislead, and fell before the Storm-Bringer or yielded to join him. As the children of Eimekal were pushed back from their ancient lands the wicked giants swept up what was left behind, taking the souls of the fallen and setting themselves up as gods. Having become such they called themselves "the Weyrs," and swore to wipe every last vestige of Eimekal from the world they renamed Weyrth.

When the last remnants of the armies of Thayrth had been surrounded in the west, at the foot of Eimekal's most holy temple, the Weyr-gods committed their greatest affront to all that Eimekal had built. Xanar himself, through deception and trickery defiled that sacred edifice, and brought the rage of his own father down upon him. Even as Eimekal struck his own second-born son from the face of his dying world, so did the Weyr-gods unveil their most hateful sorcery—for as Xanar perished so did all the land around him, crushed in the release of all his awful, hateful power. All the sons of Eimekal died that day but a very few, and those that lived fled to the ends of the world.

Today only a few roam Thayrth—called Weyrth by the fallen ones—many gathered in the north, crossing the icy seas, and there dug a hole to the depths of the world, from where a new moon is pulled every three centuries. One day there will be enough moons that the great tide will drown the world, and Eimekal may begin his work again.

Basic Beliefs: Those few that still follow the "old ways of Thayr" are dedicated to one main thing: the return of Eimekal to his throne in the heavens. This includes the end of all witchcraft and sorcery and the downfall of those nations that live under the rule of Xanar or his Nine. Since neither Xanar or his Nine have been seen in ages, however, the Thayrs have been forced to settle with most any Weyrthly government or society. One of the most popular angles toward this goal is the propagation of anarchy and chaos, which draws power away from the rulers of the world.

The most important ideal is that of one's "word" or "honor," for that is what was lost by man during the great betrayal. As such a Thayr's word given must never be broken, no matter what the cost. Most have even taken stringent vows—often involving inflicting pain on one's self—as a reminder of how men betrayed their Father and that such oaths and promises can never be violated.

Beneath honor in one's word comes perhaps the virtue of patience, to which the Thayrs look as their north star, leading them to the redemption of their world.

Traditions: The Thayrs are scattered across the whole of Weyrth, seeking to further their religion's ends as

individuals or in small groups. They have no holidays and will celebrate none ("For who can rejoice during the displacement of our Father?"). The only possible exception is the "Rising of the Moons," said to occur once every 300 years by the power of Eimekaf's last priests. In that they see their salvation and their god's return to Thayrth, when the world will be cleansed of the Weyrs in a great flood.

Current Events: Times have come and gone in recent history when the numbers of Thayrs has surged, primarily due to an influx of converts from other faiths (most commonly from the Imperial Church of the Three-Gods-Become-One). That has, in turn, created significant persecution of the Thayrs, many of which now live quietly or in hiding. In the year 1460 (seven years before the recommended year to begin play) an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the Xanarth (the High Priest of the Imperial Church) brought horrid retribution upon hundreds of Thayrs living in the Empire at the hands of the Inquisition. Since that time the followers of the old god have sat quiet, but their patience is well known.

Perceptions: The Thayrs know that all men are the children of Eimekal, and seek to return them to their Father. They bear no malice to anyone of another Faith (Weyr or no), except to those that stand in the way of the return of their god (such as priests, inquisitors, and many kings). Others look at the Thayrs either as anarchists and menaces, or as misguided rebels with no real cause. Governments detest them (lynch-mobs are tolerated when there are known Thayrs in town), churches preach against them, and the common man believes what he is told until he meets one, after which he just may be touched by how honest and mild they seem.

The Seven Vows of the Prophet

History: The Seven Vows of the Prophet roughly follow the same history as set forth by Imperial Church of the Three-Gods-Become-One, though it does not end in the same place, nor do all of the details line up. It continues thus:

After the great battle and much of the world had sunk beneath the sea, many men believed that all was lost. For a hundred years darkness covered the wo until finally the Prophet came. Guided *Ha'shalosh*—the Three—the Prophet entered a on the shores of the Sea of Fallen Gods, and fo there the tomb of Xanar Shard-Finder. The guard of the tomb, an angel called Maladreil, told Prophet that the war was not over. "The Betrayer, though locked away in the Pit, still cont the hearts and minds of many men, and many of Nine still walk the on the face of this world. T have retreated to the west, in fear of the wrat Ha'shalosh. There they have entered into the he of men, and control them even as the Nine controlled by the Foul One himself."

Maladreil gave the Prophet all the words of Xa Shard-Finder, and the wisdom of Ha'shalosh, that men might know who sent him. Since that day followers of the Prophet have led a Holy War a the Nine, swearing to bring light to the Darkn He then placed the Shard into the Prophet's hea and swore him to the Seven Vows that would k him pure and protected from the powers of t Enemy and the Nine. The Prophet then walked the world in a great circle, gathering the faithful the strong to fight the Darkness. When his time done he came to Hakh'mah, the Citadel of Tr and Light, and died. He is buried there today, a the Shard with him.

Basic Beliefs: Every follower of the Prophet is a soldi of Ha'shalosh against the Darkness of the Foul O and the Nine. To become such a soldier of Truth must remain completely pure, adhering to the Se Vows given by Maladreil to the Prophet. The Se Vows are always repeated thus:

I. There is One God, Ha'shalosh, and his name is holy. Th is One Shard-Finder, Xanar, and his name is h There is One Prophet of Truth, and his name is H These are the words Maladreil (and his name is ho spake unto him:

II. Take not but what God gives, give not but what been given to you; these things were the first sins, a the world is unclean because of it.

III. Pray at sunrise for Wisdom, that all will be made pu

Pray at mid-day for War, that as a soldier you may cleanse the world of sin and Darkness. Pray at sunset for Mercy, that Ha'shalosh will preserve you until tomorrow.

IV. Give alms to the poor, and protect the needy. We are all beggars under Ha'shalosh.

V. Fast day and night in the month of Rhaidon, to purify your mind, body, and soul.

VI. The journey to Hakh'mah must be made in this life—there you will find your soul and your God.

VII. As God lives so does his word, as contained in the writings of the Prophet.

Following these traditions and the words of Xanar Shard-finder, devout followers of the Prophet do not drink "the fermentation of grape or wheat," nor are breaches of chastity tolerated. Women, being generally less zealous, are held to the Vows by tradition and society. Many young men are fanatical believers and take the idea of the Great Holy War against the Nine very seriously.

All faithful followers pray at morning, noon, and night, facing Hakh'mah (where lies the Prophet and the Shard) lying prostrate with bared feet and hands. In those countries where there are many believers, mosques and temples ring bells calling all in the city to prayer at the appointed hours.

Daily reference to scripture, following the final vow, is important as well, leading the illiterate to temples and houses of worship daily. Those that can read most always posses their own copies of Xanar's writings, which they refer to for a short time every day.

Traditions: All devout followers of the Prophet must make a once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Hakh'mah, to commune with the spirits of the Prophet, Maladreil, and the Shard. The seventh month of the year—Rhaidon—is spent in a daylight fast, no true follower allows food or drink to touch his lips from sun-up to sun-down, nor does he or she engage in any sexual relations for the duration of the month.

Modesty is expected of all (especially women). In some nations this is as simple as daily clothing—in others, it consists of veils, shawls, and head-to-toe

covering.

Current Events: As there is no ecclesiastical head of the Faith of the Seven Vows of the Prophet, each nation interperets and acts upon the Seven Vows differently. In past years there have been many crusades (lead by the Imperial Church) in attempts to take Hakh'mah in an effort to "return" the Shard to Xanarium and the Seat of the Empire. Constant failure has begun to lessen the Church's zeal, but rumors abound that another crusade is in the making.

Some nations, such as Otamarluk, have taken on a form of counter-crusade against the west, calling it a "Righteous Holy War." Such sentiments are popular amongst the Prophet's followers.

Perceptions: In the west—especially in Mainlund—Followers of the Prophet are considered godless barbarians, heathens that need to be put down. The failure of recent crusades has not lessened these feelings. The Faithful, on the other hand, feel that it is their calling to return their wayward cousins in the west to the true faith of Xanar Shard-finder, though some wish to do this through preaching, and others through a holy war. The latter option seems to be more popular.

Riddle-Seeking

History: Riddle-seeking is not, and never really has been, a religion. It is more a goal, sought by men and women of all faiths and creeds. The entire quest is to unravel the question, "What is the Riddle of Steel?" Classical mythology contains many possible origins for this question, many dating back to the roots of Thayr-worship and the Forger of Worlds, Triumph. Some say that when Triumph pounded out the world that he left his mark upon it—as any smith does upon his work—but this mark was not a physical sign, but rather the Mystery of Steel. Any man who finds it will be the greatest master of his generation and many generations—a man that cannot be killed by the sword, because there is no mystery left to him.

History tells of only a few such individuals. Their stories are revered by every blade-slinger and swashbuckler from the Sea of Raiders to Tengoku, though their names vary with the telling. Such heroes have always fought and won at least 60 or 70 [illegible] are wandering outcasts, and go into retirement [illegible] day that they realize that they've achieved [illegible] riddle...for there is no longer any challenge in [illegible] thing. Such men always seem to drift away, becom[illegible] teachers for a spell, but eventually entering the [illegible] a hermit before writing their philosophies and [illegible] of *old age*.

Whatever the facts and myths might be, [illegible] elusive Riddle of Steel is sought by most all war[illegible] in most all lands.

Basic Beliefs: There are nearly as many approaches [illegible] discovering the Riddle of Steel as there are Ri[illegible] seekers. Some search for it in constant practic[illegible] training, studying anything and everything they [illegible] Others look for it in unending violence, beli[illegible] that the answer is found in strength and po[illegible] Many—especially within the gentry—quest [illegible] through service to king, country, god, and ma[illegible] knights-errant. Numerous men entered the cru[illegible] in hope that it would either be found in the hol[illegible] the Marluks and the Followers of the Prophe[illegible] that in killing them in the name of the Three-[illegible] would reveal it. It is said to be found in mus[illegible] blood, in pilgrimage, in wanderlust, in philos[illegible] in war, in peace, in excellence, in contemplation [illegible] repetition, in far-away lands and lost books, an[illegible] the soul of every fighter. Where is it really? He[illegible] finds that has found the key to the Riddle of St[illegible]

Traditions: There are no organized societies of Ri[illegible] seekers, though occasionally small groups [illegible] together hoping to learn from each other or per[illegible] find it together. The nature of violent men a[illegible] women, however, often overshadows this, leadi[illegible] bloody farewells after bloodier journeys. In so[illegible] lands the day that a given local hero who is sai[illegible] have reached enlightenment is quietly celebrated [illegible] those that wish to follow in his stead.

Current Events: The last man rumored to find the Ri[illegible] lives in the mountains between Sarmatov and [illegible] Rzeczpospolita. His name is Yezhy Srebrny, an[illegible] teaches saber to any that come in earnest and can[illegible] his strenuous tests. Ambitious fighters use[illegible] challenge him regularly—looking to make a na[illegible]

for themselves—but as none ever lived through it, he is now left alone by the outside world.

The nation of Cyrinthmeir is practically overrun with Riddle-seekers and blade-slingers of late, and many more arrive there every day to fight and to learn from their betters.

Exceptions: Most common folk tell stories of heroic blade-slingers and Riddle-masters, though none actually like to have them nearby. It is said that where a blade-slinger walks, death follows him like a lover. The ruling classes generally try to ignore riddle-seekers, hoping they'll go away, unless there is sudden need of a champion or an instructor prior to trial by combat. In some lands blade-slingers are accused of stealing children, though the reality seems to be more that children run off to become blade-slingers, often following the first one to wander through their village.

The Children of Weyrth

Between the borders established by men, deep in the mountains and forests, live innumerable races and peoples that—some say—existed before the world did. These denizens of the "other" Weyrth do not recognize any mortal human ruler, but instead reign over their own lands, under their own masters—sometimes bowing only to gods and demigods. These may be divided into three factions: the Siehe, Trollspawn, and those that come from the Other World.

One extremely important note is the "frequency" of these races. They are all incredibly *rare*. The Siehe are blamed for lost keys and misplaced items, talked of in legends but never really *seen*. The Fey are the stuff of legends alone—stories talk of them, but no one has even seen anyone who claims to have seen one of the Fey. Trollspawn hide in dark places safe from men—mountains, caves, the wilds. And the Other World…ghosts, demons, phantoms… "That's the stuff of black magic. None of that ever happens here…"

1. The Siehe

The Siehe (pronounced "shee-hee") are best known as faeries, sprites, and elves. They inhabit forests, groves, bogs, and all places untouched by men, engaging in constant revelry and song. Such creatures are the stuff of folk-tales, fables, and legendary romances amongst men. Though wildly varied in appearance, size, demeanor, the Siehe may be divided into three categories of their own: the Seelie, the Unseelie, and the Fey.

The Seelie

Called "the goodly folk" by superstitious humans (and "nonsense" by others), the Seelie encompass all the mischievous leprechauns, dwarves, faeries, nymphs, dryads, tree-spirits, and other relatively benevolent

gnomes and elves. Most Seelie are small compared to men, ranging from the size of a pinhead to that of a bird to that of human child. Some varieties, such as satyrs, nymphs, and dryads, are as large as men, and often rule over many of their smaller brothers and sisters. The Seelie are often adorned with soft light when they want to be, and many of them wield magic with great ease.

Seelie gather in groups called Courts which usually meet several times a month (in accordance with lunar cycles most generally) in sacred places such as groves and henges. These meetings are generally filled with laughter and dancing, all centered around some faerie-king or queen. While some courts are homogenous (only one kind of Seelie in attendance) most are filled with every type found in the nearby woods and hills.

Playing the Seelie: Be animated. Talk in character. Laugh a lot. Remember that you don't look like most anyone else, and that this could get you in trouble when around men. Try to keep a low profile (while causing as much trouble as you can in the process). Bow in respect or fear to the Fey, who are your ancestral masters. Seelie Characters gain an automatic 2 points in the Glamour Vagary, +2 Wit, -1 WP, the Ridicule Skill at SR 9, and any color skin they want...

Rock Dwarves

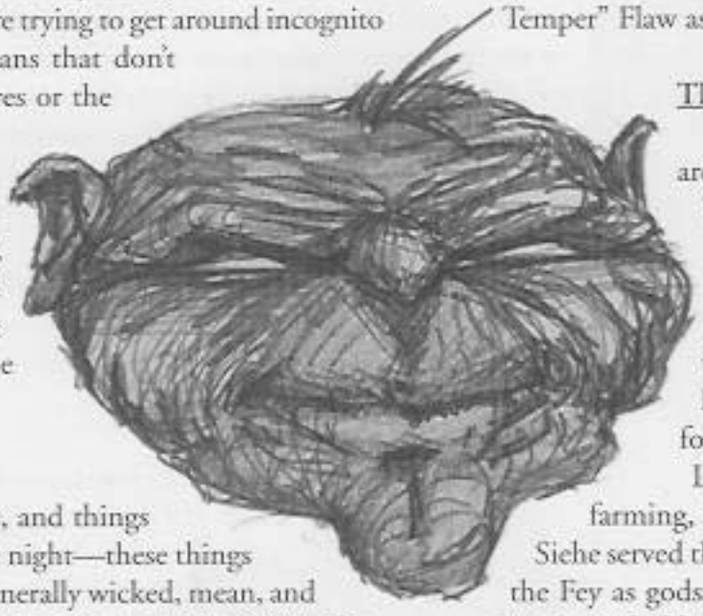
An example of homogenous Seelie courts, Rock Dwarves live deep beneath the surface of the world, in mountain kingdoms and subterranean castles and fortresses. They are short by human standards (about 4 feet tall), and prefer long beards and stout clothing. They speak in short bursting yells that are hardly intelligible to any but each other. Dwarves generally live long lives, spanning as many as three or four hundred years. Energetic and aggressive in their youth, they cool down with age, setting into grouchy, stubborn patterns of lazy complaining and insult slinging.

Most Dwarfish courts bow to a single King and his council of Elders. The entire court lives together—usually spread out over a few mountains—where they craft stone and metal. Dwarfish women are excellent weapon-sm... though the men excel with armors. Stone workin... reserved for the elderly who have the wisdom of ag... engrave their histories and language into the stone w... of the deep-dug mountain kingdoms. All dwarves liv... a commune-like society, doing their fair share of the w... in long shifts. They are given to drinking, fighting a... other noisy behavior which is often restricted by their ... who claims that he "can't get any sleep with all that dra... racket going on." Therefore drinking and partyi... reserved for feasts and name-days (a dwarf has a "na... day" once every five or ten years, depending on h... famous he is; on this day he receives a new nam... commemorate the last few years of his life). Festivi... name-day parties are generally attended in arm... dwarves are violent drinkers and become ea... drunken.

The most valuable commodity to dwarv... not their craftsmanship—w... they see as plain wa... true masterpiece... produced—but th... friendships. A dwarf... do *anything* for a m... friend, and m... dwarfish walls ar... the histories... whole courts... kingdoms ha... apart because... broken or abu... friendships.

Playing Dwarf: Talk lou... fast, and with a m... thick, alm... unintelligible ac... (we like Scottish... You love to drink h... get drunk easily, and t... to get louder and m... violent (though th... only playfully a... Admire anythi...

made with fine craftsmanship or unusual qualities. Feint when pretty girls wink at you. Act extremely protectively over your friends, for whom you would do anything. Never sell anything you own, but give gifts often. Buy anything you like…it's only money! As with other Siehe, remember that you're trying to get around incognito when around humans that don't know about Dwarves or the world of the Siehe. Dwarf characters must take the "Little" flaw, -1 Soc, -2 ST or TO, and gain an automatic Craft Skill (like anything) at SR 6.



The Unseelie

Ghosts, goblins, and things that go *bump* in the night—these things are the Unseelie. Generally wicked, mean, and bad-tempered, the Unseelie resemble their Seelie cousins in almost every way. Generally small and impish looking, they lay dangerous traps for men and beast (often pranks). Some, such as the dreaded Banshee, are feared by all that hear or see them. Others—such as the likes of gremlins and goblins—are cursed for the trouble they cause. While the Seelie are problematic, the Unseelie are dangerous.

Like their benevolent relatives the Unseelie also gather in courts, hold revelries, and sing and dance. The sight is often significantly different. In the dark groves, rocky cliffs, and deep caves that they meet in, the Unseelie bow to power and to Evil and do the bidding of the greatest demon or foul spirit amongst them. They are extremely jealous and spiteful creatures, and will backbite and betray one another to gain favor with their lord or master. This particular sentiment is overwhelming in regard to Troll spawn, which the Unseelie hate and will kill if given the chance.

Playing the Unseelie: Be mean. Cackle. Spit on things. Torture little animals. Be afraid of anything bigger or stronger than you are (until it turns its back). Avoid notice, especially around men (since you're always guilty, you're always sure you're gonna get caught!). Fear the Fey or powerful creatures of the Other World; be extra-spiteful to Trollspawn and the Seelie. Unseelie characters gain 2 points in the Glamour Vagary, +2 Wit, -1 WP, and the Ridicule Skill at SR 6, but must take the "Rage/Bad Temper" Flaw as well.

The Fey-Siehe

The Fey-Siehe (also called Fey-elves) are perhaps the oldest of all the races. Their history is forgotten even to the Seelie, which bow before them, and the Unseelie, who fear them terribly. Despite that fact that most of the world has forgotten about both the Fey and their history, *they* have not forgotten it.

Long before man discovered fire or farming, the Fey ruled the world. The lesser Siehe served them then, and many men worshiped the Fey as gods. The Elvish Courts—homes of the great households of the Fey—divided over what do to about men. Some wished to see them put down or driven into mountains and caves like the Trollspawn; others sought either peace or continued power through the manipulation of mankind. Wars were fought between the various factions, and in the chaos of it all many lesser Siehe broke away. The Dwarves entered the mountains, seeking stone and steel, the Seelie either continued under the Fey or established groves of their own, close to the homes of men (with whom many a faerie had become enamored), and the Unseelie swore to torment mankind, joining the ranks of other dark forces. In the end of it all the Fey decided to leave man alone, and retreated to the deepest and most hidden groves and forests, where their courts exist to this very day.

There are reasons, of course, that the Fey remember this: many of them were there. By the standards of any other race on Weyrth, the Fey are immortal. Elvish mothers carry an unborn child for one year before *painlessly* giving birth to the youngling. Fey-elves are born into the world already well developed, able to walk and to weave simple magics. They are usually very thin and emaciated in appearance, standing roughly 2 feet tall and

looking not unlike many woodland Seelie. The youngling then grows to its adolescent size after only 6 or 7 years, where it remains indefinitely. Aging—in any form—comes in the form of sorcery. Just as humans age when they use magic, so do Elves...and they age *the same amount*. The Fey only die when killed, or when their bodies have grown frail with the use of too much sorcerous power. Thus an elf may appear as a boy in his teens, but in reality be thousands of years old. Another elf could appear as ancient as father time, but have lived for only a few decades having been unwise with his use of that most ancient power.

The Fey have always believed that the immortal soul of an elf does not vanish with death, but that it is reborn. Once great wars were fought between the houses, clans, and courts of the Fey—each army believed that those killed would be reborn elsewhere in the world, perhaps within their own house or court. Death, then, was perceived the same way that shattering a beautiful sculpture was—a pity to lose so much time, effort, and beauty, but ultimately replaceable (and, in the case of an enemy, replaceable with improvement). The great tragedy of all the Elvish courts now, however, is that while the Fey continue to die from magic-induced age, accidents, and now-rare violence, almost no new births have taken place in over 800 years. [illegible] household or court may have no more than two or [illegible] born since that time. Increasingly rare pregnancies [illegible] increasingly common miscarriages and still births [illegible] once unheard of amongst the Fey). Many of the Fey [illegible] wonder what is causing this, and Courts have [illegible] sending secret emissaries out amongst men to see if [illegible] answer lies there. Those elves out amongst men [illegible] hidden, searching for the answer without ever revealing their true nature. Their mission will determine whether any Elves are ever born (or re-born) again.

Playing the Fey: Be reserved, calm, mystical. You have all the eternities to contemplate philosophy and faith. Men caused the ruin of the world, but not *these* men...their lives are so short. Feel things deeply, worry about the future of your people and whether or not there is any kind of an afterlife or not. Hide your true nature from men, except perhaps from those you truly trust (and even then think twice). Enjoy the wilds, enjoy beauty, enjoy song. Cry sometimes, unless sorrow has swallowed all of your tears. Remember that you are a member of the most powerful race in Weyrth, and that your race is dying. Fey characters gain +1 AG, Wit, and Per, -2 MA, the Sneak Skill at SR 7, and 2 Points in the Glamour Vagary. They also start with 3 less Spiritual Attribute Points upon character creation.

Halflings

Halflings, often called man-elves, are the child of one human and one Siehe parent. They retain much of the character and appearance of their Elvish parentage, but the mortality and resultant mindset of man. Those halflings born of Seelie or Unseelie stock generally keep the same color and build of their Siehe parent, often producing small blue or green men that look like big-nosed bat-eared midgets. Though given to pranks and trouble, much human sobriety runs through their veins as well. In the case of Unseelie-begotten halflings this can lead to a deadly variety of cunning with a mean streak a mile wide.

Those halflings who have one Fey parent—a true man-elf or "elfling"—usually look like tall, handsome men or women. They often have odd hair or eye colors and mature to adolescence very quickly (usually about 6 or 7 years). Their confused parentage leads to mood swings within and the notice of sorcerers and others who wish to study the Fey (and their bastardized offspring). Elflings are never allowed to remain in the grove or Court where their Fey parents reside, though a parent may choose to leave the Court in order to stay with his/her child.

Fey-Halfling characters gain +1 Per and the Sneak Skill at SR 8. Seelie and Unseelie Halfling characters gain +1 Wit and the Ridicule Skill at SR 8, in addition to inheriting much of their magical parent's appearance...

2. Trollspawn

Every story of every hero contains a battle with "monsters." These creatures are Trollspawn—the ancient races have plagued men and Siehe since the world began. Their numbers are small, but each one is a dangerous force in and of itself. There are perhaps hundreds of varieties. Two varieties that live with some semblance of social order are presented below.

Gols

The Gols, called *"die Golen"* in those reaches of Stahl and Farrenshire that touch the Irontooth Mountains, are a military race in every way. Organized into battle-ready units from birth, each Gol is raised to fight and die for his chief and his tribe. Male and female Gols fill different rolls within the Army: Men train, fight, build, and destroy; women hunt, scout, and tend to camp. Larger, smarter Gols rule as captains and generals, leading through compulsion, strength, and brute force. The whole Army moves constantly, roaming the mountains in search of other tribes and armies to fight with. Only rarely do they ever come down into the foothills or lands around the

Irontooth, when called by some higher power or when food is scarce in the mountains.

Physically *die Golen* are heavily built and very tall, ranging from 6 feet (at the shortest) to 8 feet tall and averaging 300 pounds. Their skin ranges from brown to grey-green and every shade between. They have yellow eyes with slit pupils (like cats) and are generally bald, though some tribes have course, black hair and others have short (1-3 inches) horns jutting out above the temples. A serious underbite frames their faces with two or four long tusks protruding from the lower jaw. They wear whatever armor they can make on their own or capture (restricting them to simple steel components such as arm-guards and heavy leather armors).

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G o l / He
crosses are rare
particularly mea
Hef do gro
attatched to a
woman that survives
birth of her first chil
(mortality is about 5
60%), and any woman capab
of giving birth to more than o
child is highly honored amongst
Hef. Hef-wives receive rough
treatment until they are with child, aft
which they are generously cared for. Many Hef actual
have several wives, with the most fertile generally bein
placed as the "first wife." Overall Hef-wives hold muc
importance in Hef society, as they are credited with fir
teaching the Hef to speak and to make weapons an
clothing.

The Hef life-span is terribly short. Within 3 years o
birth most Hef have reached close to their full size, an
by 7 they are substantially mature. Assuming a He
survives battles and climate, he can expect to live betwee
13 and 21 years before passing of old age. Wives tha
out-live their husbands are either given places of hono
within the tribe, given to another Hef as a wife o
concubine, or eaten if particularly unpopular.

Hef

The Hef roam the arctic climes of Weyrth, living in lands too cold for most men. They are most feared in times of winter when, stories say, they drift southward to hunt men for their skins and steal the women and children for mates and for food. The men of Savaxen are especially wary of the Hef, and often send small parties northward to kill the Hef and gain glory.

Physically the Hef are massive, towering at 8 feet tall on average, covered in shaggy white hair over jet black skin. Long black bull-horns sit atop feral heads overlooking the predatory muzzles of wolves or bears. Their hands end in black talons capable of tearing flesh or holding a weapon equally well. Though clothing is not a necessity, many have taken on the habit of wearing clothes usually made from polar bear or seal hide. The most prized leather is human, though, and such is always worn into battle. Hef are fully capably of building simple weapons (spears and axes) and using those taken from their prey (such as Viking swords and shields). They prefer ambush-style tactics, burying themselves in the snow and striking when they hear and smell their prey.

All Hef are male. Propagation of the species is done through females of most any other race, humans being preferred above bears. Any species large enough to carry a Hef child will generally do, however. Instances of elves are unheard of, though this is probably due to lack of

3. The Other World

Very little is known about the denizens of the Other world—spirits, demons, angels, and devils. It is said that they fight a constant war (the Thayrs believe it to be a continuation of the battle for the world itself, the Imperials believe it to be the angels of the Three-gods-become-one against the lost souls of the Dark Betrayer). They rarely involve men or even the Siehe into this conflict, though sorcerers—especially summoners—have been known to stick their noses into the business of the Other World. See **Book Six: Sorcery** and **Book Eight: The Seneschal** for more on Demons, devils, and the undead.

VI. The History of Weyrth

The subject of history is a touchy one, always written by conquerors and the victorious. As emporers and sultaans change, so do the "facts." Each religion holds its own assertions and traditions of how the world and its nations came to power long before men wrote things down. Despite all of the confusion a few written histories have survived, containing the works of the Imperial Dynasties of Xanarium and the Seat of the Empire. The following timeline covers most major historical events from the founding of the Seat of the Empire until the current year, 1467 WEYR.

1. The Age of the New Moon (myth to approx. 250 WEYR)

- Xanar Shard-finder subdues the world and names it Weyrth.
- 1 WEYR. The Great Battle between Xanar and the Dark Betrayer ends in the shattering of the west and the Sea of Fallen Gods. A new moon rises in the sky as a gift from the Gods in remembrance of Xanar and the Great Battle.
- 3 WEYR. Xanarium is founded in honor of the fallen hero, and his brethren take the Seat, now called the Seat of the Empire.

2. The Age of the Third Moon (approx. 250 to 550 WEYR)

- c. 250 WEYR. Another moon rises, totaling three. It is taken as an omen of prosperity by the fledgling Empire.
- Early growth of Xanarium over land. Xanarian rulers unite the local tribes and peoples, forming the first unified nation since the Great Battle.
- The number and quality of ships sailing the new Sea of Fallen Gods and along Xanarium's western coast expand, leading to increasing political, military, and economic power.

3. The Age of the Fourth Moon (550 to 773 WEYR)

- c. 550 WEYR. Rise of the Fourth Moon. Increasing tides destroy many shoreline villages and ruin crops, hurting the young Empire financially. Faster expansion becomes paramount to survival for the Empire. These same increasing tides seem to come with the rise of each new moon in the sky.
- Major Sea victories lead to the conquest of Helena (565 WEYR), Dardanet (583 WEYR), Fauth (601 WEYR), and Yone (608 WEYR).
- 610 WEYR. The capital of Xanarium officially titled "The Seat of the Xanarian Empire." Military strength grows through tribute from conquered lands.
- Missions and war bring the Imperial Church to the "heathen" conquered nations. It takes some hold in Helena and Dardanet, but fails to gain a significant following further south.
- 658 WEYR. Witchcraft of any form is outlawed and considered punishable by death, even in those lands where the Church isn't generally accepted by the populace. Priests and missionaries spend as much time rooting out "evil" as teaching the Word of Xanar and the Three-Gods-Become-One.
- 692 WEYR. Increased economic and military power makes a large overland expedition to the north possible. Entire legions of Imperial soldiers march side-by-side with missionaries of the Three to subdue the northern barbarians and show them the true way of the Gods.
- 739 WEYR. Northern campaigning brings all the lands south of the Irontooth Mountains under Imperial Rule. The Stahlnish and the Celts of Angharad continue to provide a serious obstacle to Imperial

advancement. The discovery of improved metalworking techniques among the northerners leads to the more frequent use of steel and metal armors.

4. The Age of the Fifth Moon *(773 to 1200 WEYR)*

- 773 WEYR. The rise of the Fifth Moon brings the dawn of new strategies for Imperial conquest. Political alliances are created where military might fails with Stahl. Though military victories with Stahl are fleeting, missionaries find significantly more success. The Church is officially established as the State Religion of Stahl and the entire north. Unlike the south, the Church is accepted with much popularity throughout all of the Empire's northern territories. Within 15 years Stahl becomes a vassal-state to the Empire due to religious involvement, not military power.
- approx. 900 WEYR. Over one hundred years of intense missionary work bring the Word of Xanar and the Three as far as Zhibara and Krym-khanan. It is accepted with some warmth in Zhibara and Zaporozhya, fully embraced in Sarmatov and the Rzeczpospolita, and utterly, bloodily rejected in Krym-khanan and the rest of the east. Severe wars break out on all borders as the Imperial Church clashes with the Faith of the Seven Vows of the Prophet.
- 957 WEYR. Imperial involvement in wars against the followers of the Prophet, along with religious ties, lead to direct alliances between the Empire and Sarmatov and other eastern nations.
- 1000 to approx. 1200 WEYR. The one thousand-year anniversary of the Great Battle inspires a number of "Holy Crusades." Entire armies of crusaders are formed to retake the Shard from the Followers of the Prophet in Hakh'mah and to wage war up[on] heathens everywhere. Other smaller groups ba[nd] together to hunt down the last of the Nine, [the] sorcerers that served the Dark Betrayer at the time[s] the Great Battle. More crusades follow with limit[ed] degrees of success. The Shard is never recovered, though many claim to have slain some of the Nin[e]. Increased travel and international trade lead to bet[ter] technology on all fronts—better armors, weapon[s] foodstuffs, etc.

5. The Age of the Sixth Moon (1200 WEYR to present)

- 1200 WEYR. The Sixth Moon rises, leading to rem[ote] flooding on the shores as tides increase. The Chur[ch] claims it to be punishment for the failed crusad[es] and calls for more.
- 1200 to 1275 WEYR. Expensive wars and losses tak[en] in flooding lead to increased levies and taxes. Ma[ny]

Table 7. 1: Standard Exchange Rates		
From...	To...	Modern Equivalent
1 Gold Coin	20 Silver Coins	$1,000.00
1 Silver Coin	12 Copper Coins	$50.00
1 Copper Coin	4 Quarter-bits	$4.16 ($4.00)
1 Quarter-bit	-	$1.04 ($1.00)

of these funds are squandered or embezzled by Imperial politicians. Corruption grows within the senate and the Empire as a whole. Civil wars erupt both at home and abroad as overtaxed commoners seek to replace rotten lords and state officials.

- 1302 WEYR. Stahl openly rebels, declaring independence from the Empire. When the Imperial Church attempts to increase its grip on Stahl in response, Stahlnish lords unanimously oust the Church, declaring *atheism* as the state religion. Commoners continue their support and faith in the Church, despite the drastic religious retaliation of their leaders.
- 1317 to 1338 WEYR. Tired of troublemaking crusaders and constant war, both Dardanet and Helena align with ancient enemies in Otamarluk to drive the Empire out. This leads to more civil war, particularly in Dardanet, and trading one lord for another. Within 20 years Helena re-aligns with the Empire, but Dardanet remains in a state of civil war and never-ending conflict with Otamarluk.
- 1340 to 1400 WEYR. Following the lead of Stahl, Helena, and Dardanet, the rest of the Empire's vassals cease paying tribute. The break is peaceful in most of the north, as ties to the Church are not left behind. Matters in the south are generally more violent, and the weakened Empire flees its southern territories in great haste. By 1400 WEYR the Empire is once again reduced to Xanarium alone and a few islands spread across the Sea of Fallen Gods. In response the Church declares its supremacy above all matters of the world, centering all real Imperial power in religion, not lands or military.
- 1467 WEYR. (This is the recommended year to begin play.) The king of Gelure—a mysterious man with black skin and white hair—declares himself emperor and opens a violent campaign in conquest of his neighbors. By the end of the year he has all but taken Farrenshire and Ouestenreich, and has begun to work on Cyrinthmeiran borders. That same year a counter-crusade is declared by the Sul'taan of Otamarluk, calling all that follow the Seven Vows of the Prophet to destroy the infidels of the west.

VI. Wealth, Stuff, and the Economy

Wealth comes in many forms—land, possessions, or just plain money. In the course of their adventures characters will find opportunities to acquire and use such wealth. Some are born with it (such as the Gentry and Nobility) and others must earn it.

1. Coinage

Though each nation calls its coins and monies by different names, all divide their coinage into four main groups: Gold Coins, Silver Coins, Copper Coins, and one fourth-size copper "bits." Bits and copper coins are everyman's money, used on a daily or weekly basis by most of Weyrth's impoverished population. Silver and gold are reserved for the wealthy and the financially prudent. Table 7.1 displays exchange rates for gold to silver to copper to bits, along with the rough equivalent in US Dollars (compared the Imperial Standard Weight, discussed below).

As if a multitude of names wasn't enough, different countries mint their coins in different weights, making Stahlnish Marks worth more than Farrenshire Crowns worth more than Numerian Tokens. Thanks to money-changers—and the universal value of gold and silver—coins of most any origin may be used most anywhere,

Table 7.2: Coin Weights	
Coin Weight	Effect of Size
Smaller	.5x Imperial Standard
Imperial	Standard
Larger	1.5x Imperial Standard

Table 7.3: Currencies and Exchanges		
Country	Currency*	Coin Weight
Ahr	Disk	Imperial Standard
Cyrinthmeir	Crown/Shilling/Penny	Imperial Standard
Dardanet	Alekrands/Leke/Rande	Imperial Standard
Ehld	Flag	Imperial Standard
Fahal	Shekhai	Light
Farrenshire	Crown/Shilling/Penny	Imperial Standard
Fauth	Stallion/Charger/Mule	Imperial Standard
Gelure	Fist/Finger/Nail	Heavy
Helena	Laurel	Imperial Standard
Imjia	Year	Light
Ixliaph	Horn	Light
Kudara-Shiragi	Koku/Bu/Zeni	Light
Numeria	Token	Light
Odeon	Teeth	Just plain teeth...
Otamarluk	Dollmar/Marë/Marczyki	Heavy
Ouestenreich	Mark/Funt/Pfennig	Imperial Standard
Sarmatov/Rzecz.	Zloty/Srebrny/Grosh	Heavy
Savaxen	Mark/Funt/Pfennig	Heavy
Stahl	Mark/Funt/Pfennig	Heavy
Svarastra	Bull/Cow/Calf	Heavy
Taveruun	Librum/Floren/Denarius	Imperial Standard
Tengoku	Koku/Bu/Zeni	Light
Tez'hamun	Token	Light
Tzaul	Rupi	Light
Vhedij	Dragon/Tiger/Ox	Heavy
Xanarium	Librum/Sterling/Denarius	Imperial Standard
Yone	Legend/Myth/Tale	Heavy
Zaporozhya	Zloty/Ruble/Grosh	Imperial Standard

*Those currencies with three listing feature the names of Gold/Silver/Copper coins. Those with only one listing refer to the generic name for any coin from that country, prefaced with "Gold," "Silver," or "Copper." E.g.: Silver Token, Golden Flag, etc.

though exchanging coins is rarely free (usually around 2-6%) and one's coinage can betray one's past travels. The coins of Weyrth may be divided into three primary weight groups: (1) those that match the Imperial Standard, set forth by the Emperor on the Seat of Xanar in 560 WEYR, (2) those that are lighter, roughly half the Imperial Standard Weight, and (3) those that are heavier, adding 50% to the Imperial Weight. Table 7.2 compares the three coin weights, while Table 7.3 presents the names of each country's coinage and their coin weights. Any countries not in Table 7.3 lack their own minted coinage.

2. Sources of Wealth

Each character begins with a quantity of wealth representative of their social station and a lifetime of saving (perhaps it's an inheritance, a nest egg, or just carefully saved cash). Additionally, those characters with the time or means to hold and maintain a regular job within their station may receive additional money every year. Both figures are shown on Table 7.4, in Imperial Standard Weight coins.

Starting funds should be devoted to building up one's livlihood—not just buying toys. Clothing, lodging, and other income-dependent items should be arranged first. Likewise, noone lives for free. Generally speaking, most of one's yearly income goes to keeping clothing in good repair (or, for the wealthy, in fashion), food, lodging, and other neccessities. Those that want extra money are going to have to find some way to make more, or will have to scrimp and save. Lastly, one's nation of choice may effect starting wealth. Check your character's nation of origin, under "Player Bonuses," to see if any such modifier applies to your character.

3. Goods and Services (Stuff)

Table 7.5 presents dozens of items—from beer to weapons and everything in-between—for purchase

TABLE 7.4: YEARLY AND STARTING INCOME (IMPERIAL WEIGHT) BASED ON SOCIAL CLASS		
Social Status	Yearly Income (Gold)	Starting Wealth (Gold)
Slave	0	0
Peasant	1	5
Low Freeman	3	15
High Freeman	10	50
Landless Noble (Gentry)	20	100
Landed Noble	50*	250

*Landed Nobility may hire a steward to manage their land while away on quests, adventures, etc. The steward takes 20% of this value, leaving the noble with 40 gold on average. This option applies *only* to Landed Nobility.

TABLE 7.5: EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Clothing

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Full Set of Clothing (by social class/quality):			
Peasant	6c	3c	2c
Freeman (Poor)	1s, 4c	8c	5c
Freeman (Average)	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Freeman (Wealthy)	2g	1g	13s, 4c
Merchant	10s	5s	3s, 4c
Soldier (Enlisted)	1s, 8c	10c	6c, 1b
Soldier (Officer)	6s	3s	2s
Clergy (Simple)	1s, 8c	10c	6c, 2b
Clergy (Elaborate)	4-10g	2-5g	1-3g
Gentry (Daily)	4g	2g	1g, 7s
Gentry (Court)	10-40g	5-20g	4-14g
Nobility	20-50g	10-25g	6-17g
Individual Items (all good quality):			
Belt	6c	3c	2c
Boots	5s	2s, 6c	2s
Breeches	2s	1s	8c
Cap, hat	20-30c	1-15c	6-10c
Cloak	1s	6c	4c
Girdle	10c	5c	3c
Gloves	1s, 4c	8c	5c
Robe	1s, 8c	10c	7c
Sandals	1s, 2c	7c	4c, 2b
Sash	8c	4c	5c
Shoes	1s	6c	4c
Silk jacket	2g	1g	13s
Surcoat	1g, 10s	15s	10s
Tunic	10c	5c	3c
Vest	1s	6c	4c

Prices are given in all three coin weights (to save calculation time). The location of the market, famines or surpluses, war, and many other factors may affect a product's price or availability. Likewise many items require days (clothing), weeks (weapons), or even months (suits of armor) for completion. As many such items are custom-made for their buyer, this wait should not be neglected.

Some characters may wish to purchase items of finer quality (more jewels, better craftsmanship, exceptional weapons). Such items may be arranged for anywhere from 5x to 10x the listed price. Other characters may wish to buy substandard items (due to constraints on time or finances). Such items cost around 50-60% of the list price, and are always in poorer condition.

Combat statistics for normal armors and weapons are found in **Book Four: The Codex of Battle** and the **Appendix**. Fine weapons may grant –1 ATN or DTN, fine armors +1 or +2 AV or reduce CP loss. Substandard weapons will often have a +1 ATN *and* DTN penalty, or may break upon heavy use. Similar armors will fit poorly and come loose during battle, penalizing the CP by 1-3 dice and possible reducing AV by as much as 30% or more.

Jewelry/Decorations

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Bracelets/Arm-bands/Anklets (Gold)	10g	5g	6s, 4c
Bracelets/Arm-bands/Anklets (Silver)	2g	1g	13s
Brooch (Elaborate)	8g	4g	2g, 10s
Brooch (Simple)	2g	1g	13s
Circlet (Gold)	20g	10g	6g, 7s
Dishes, etc. (Gold)	16g	8g	5g
Dishes, etc. (Silver)	4g	2g	25s
Earrings (Elaborate)	2g	1g	13s
Necklace (Elaborate)	14g	7g	5g
Necklace (Simple)	5-60s	3-30s	2-20s
Ring (Elaborate)	2g	1g	13s
Ring (Seal)	8g	4s	2g, 10s
Ring (Simple)	4s	2s	1g, 5s
Tiara (Silver and Gems)	20g	10g	6g, 7s

Food and Lodging

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Banquets/Feasts:			
Banquet (Noble; per person)	1s, 4c	8c	5c
Feast (Common; per person)	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Beverages:			
Ale (Pitcher)	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Beer (Pitcher)	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Liquor (Bottle)	6c	3c	2c
Mead (Bottle)	6c	3c	2c
Wine (Bottle)	8-40c	4-20c	3-13c
Foodstuffs:			
Bread (Loaf)	2b	1b	1b
Cheese (2 lbs.)	2c	1c	3b
Meat (1 lb.)	6c	3c	2c
Grain (5 lbs.)	5c	2c, 2b	1c, 3b
Fresh Vegetables (1 lb.)	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Household Provisions:			
Butter (per lb.)	1c, 2b	3b	2b
Coarse sugar (per lb.)	2s	1s	8c
Rations, Hard (per week)	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Rations, Soldier's (per week)	2s	1s	3b
Rations, Knight's (per week)	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Firewood (per day)	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Herbs (per lb.)	2s	1s	8c
Salt (per lb.)	2c	1c	3b
Spice, Common (per lb.)	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Spice, Rare (per lb.)	16s	8s	5s
Tun of cider (250 gal.)	2g	1g	13s
Tun of good wine (250 gal.)	8g	4g	2g, 10s
Meals (Tavern Quality, per day):			
Lavish	1s, 8c	10c	7c
Good	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Common	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Poor	1c	2b	1b
Inn lodging (per room, day/week):			
Lavish (suite)	12s/4g	6s/2g	4s/25s
Common (private room)	16c/8s	8c/4s	5c/30c
Poor (common room)	6c/40c	3c/20c	2c/12c
Grain and stabling for one horse	3s/1g	18c/10s	1s/6s
City Rooms/Apartments (per month):			
Lavish	12g	6g	4g
Common	1g, 4s	12s	8g
Poor	8s	4s	2s, 6c

Services for Hire

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Academic/Clerical:			
Read a letter	2c	1c	3b
Write a letter	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Book (per 50 pages)	4g	2g	1g, 5s
Illumination (per page)	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Copy a book (by hand, per 10 pages)	10s	5s	3s, 4c
Religious Ceremonies (weddings, funerals, masses, rights)	2-4s	1-2s	3b
Indulgences, minor sin	2-4s	1-2s	1s
Indulgences, major sin	2-6g	1-3g	1-2g
Hire a Lawyer (per day)	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Heralds and Messengers:			
Deliver a letter (per day traveled)	1s	6c	4c
Hire a Herald (per week)	1g, 4s	12s	8s
Determine Genealogy	8s	4g	2g, 5s
Forged Documents	1-4g	10s-2g	6-25
Medical:			
Medicine (various)	2s	1s	8c
Simple First Aid	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Surgery	1g, 10s	15s	10s
Hospital Care (per week, poor)	1s, 8c	10c	4c
Hospital Care (per week, good)	2g, 10s	1g, 5s	16s
Entertainment:			
Acting Troupe (per night)	16s	8s	5s
Compose a Poem	8s	4s	2s, 8b
Compose Song	14s	7s	4s, 8b
Courtesan (per night)	2-6g	15s-3g	10s-2g
Dancers, Common (per night)	3s, 4c	20c	13c
Dancers, Exotic (per night)	1g	10s	6s
Dancers, Fine (per night)	16s	8s	5s
Musicians, Common (per night)	6s	3s	2s
Musicians, Fine (per night)	12s-1g	6-10s	4-7s
Recite Poem/Song	1s	6c	4c
Theater Ticket	6c	3c	2c
Fighting Men:			
Guard (per month)	10-14s	5-7s	4-5s
Merc Archers (20 men; per month)	16g	8g	5g
Merc Cavalry (10 men; per month)	24g	12g	8g
Merc Infantry (50 men; per month)	24g	12g	8g

Swordsman (per

Assassin (per job)
Burglar (per job)
Cutpurse/Thief
Footpads/Thugs (per day)
Harlot, cheap (p
Harlot, pricey (p
Poison (various

Bath/Shave/Hair
Guide, City (per
Guide, Wilderne (week)
Laborer (per mo
Lantern/torchbe (night)
Laundry (by loa
Mourner (per fu
Servant (per mo

rial	Heavy-weight Coinage
	3b
	2c, 2b
	1g, 5s
	1s, 4c
	3s, 4c
	1s
	1s
	1-2g
	1s, 4c
	4c
	8s
	2g, 7s
	6-23s
	8c
	1s, 4c
	10s
	6c
	16s
	5s
	2s, 8c
	4s, 6c
	10s-2g
	13c
	6s
	5s
	2s
	4-7s
	4c
	2c
	4-5s
	5g
	8g
	8g

Swordsman (per day)	12s-2g	6-20s	4-13s
The Underworld:			
Assassin (per job)	4s-20g	2s-10g	1s-7g
Burglar (per job)	12s-1g	6-10s	4-7s
Cutpurse/Thief (per day)	1s, 4c	8c	5c
Footpads/Thugs (5 men; per day)	10s	5s	3s, 4c
Harlot, cheap (per night)	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Harlot, pricey (per night)	6-10s	3-5s	2-3s
Opium (various types)	2s-10g	1s-5g	8c-3g
Other Services:			
Bath/Shave/Haircut	6c	3c	2c
Guide, City (per day)	2s	1s	8s
Guide, Wilderness (per week)	10s	5s	3s
Laborer (per month)	8s	4s	2s, 6c
Lantern/torchbearer (per night)	6c	3c	2c
Laundry (by load)	2c	1c	3b
Mourner (per funeral)	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Servant (per month)	2s, 10c	1s, 5c	1s

Transportation

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Barge (per 10 miles)	4c	2c	1c, 2b
Carriage (per day)	8s	4s	2s, 8c
Ferry (per trip)	6c	3c	2c
Raft (per 10 miles)	2c	1c	3b
River Boat (per 10 miles)	2c	1c	3b
Sedan Chair (per day)	12s	6s	4s
Ship (at Sea; per 10 miles)	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Wagon (per day)	4c	2c	1c, 1b

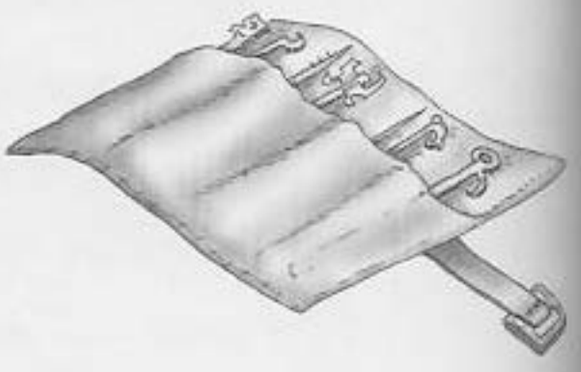
Animals

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Mounts:			
Camel	8g	4g	2g, 13s
Horse, Charger	20-50g	10-25g	6-9g
Horse, Courser	10-60g	5-30g	3-10g
Horse, Destrier	80g	40g	26g, 13s
Horse, Riding	2g, 10s	1g, 5s	8s
Horse, Work or Cart	16s	8s	5s, 4c
Mule/Donkey	12s	6s	4s
Pony	14s	7s	5s
Farm Animals:			
Bull	1g, 10s	15s	10s
Chicken (12)	2s	1s	8c
Cow	1g, 6s	13s	8s
Goat	2s	1s	8c
Ox	1g, 8s	14s	10s
Pig	3s, 4c	1s, 8c	1s, 1c
Rabbits (12)	2s	1s	8c
Ram	12s	6s	4s
Sheep	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Domestic Animals:			
Carrier Pigeon	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Cat	1s	6c	4c
Dog (Hunting)	2s-1g	1-10s	1-7s
Songbird	16s	8s	5s
Exotic Animals:			
Alligator	10g	5g	3g, 10s
Bear (Trained)	4g	2g	13s, 4c
Elephant	60g	30g	20g
Giraffe	70g	35g	23g, 7s
Lion or Tiger	70g	35g	23g, 7s
Monkey	6g	3g	2g
Parrot/Tropical Bird	4g	2g	13s, 4c
Wolf (not happy)	1g, 4s	12s	8s

Other Equipment

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Tack and Harness:			
Horseshoes & shoeing	1s, 4c	8c	5c
Saddle	6s	3s	2s
Saddle Bags	4s	2s	10c
Travel Gear:			
Tent, 2-man	1s, 4c	8c	5c
Tent, Pavilion	4g	2g	13s, 4c
"Travel Pack" (everything below)	12s	6s	4s
Backpack	10c	5c	3c
Bandage Kit	6c	3c	2c
Bedroll	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Grappling Hook	1s	1s	8c
Hatchet	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Lantern	1s, 4c	8c	5c
Mess Kit	10c	5c	3c
Pouch	2c	1c	2b
Rope (50')	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Satchel	1s, 4c	8c	5c
Soap	2c	1c	2b
Tinderbox	6c	3c	2c
Torch	1c	2b	1b
Whetstone and Oil	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Academic Supplies:			
Chalk	2b	1b	1b
Ink (bottle)	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Paper (per sheet)	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Parchment (per 3' roll)	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Quill-pen	2c	1c	2b
Scroll Case	6-20c	3-10c	2-7c
Sealing Wax	2c	1c	2b
Fineries:			
Hourglass	8s	4s	2s, 8c
Magnifying Glass	12s	6s	4s
Makeup	2s	1s	8c
Mirror	34s	17s	6s
Perfume	2s-2g	1s-1g	8c-12s
Scale	2s	1s	8c
Spectacles	16s	8s	5s
Spyglass	4g, 6s	2g, 3s	28s, 8c
Water Clock	10g, 16s	5g, 8s	3g, 12s
Musical Instruments:			
Bagpipes	1g, 4s	12s	8s
Drums	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Fiddle	1s, 8c	10c	6c, 2b
Flute	12s	6s	4s
Harp	6s-4g	3s-2g	2-27s
Horn	1s, 4c	8c	5c
Lute	10s	5s	3s, 4c
Lyre	10s	5s	3c

Panpipe	8c	4c	2c, 2
Tambourine	6c	3c	2
Violin	1g, 12s	16s	10s, 8
Other Items:			
Barrel	12c	6c	4
Basket	8c	4c	2c, 2
Bell (hand size)	6s	3s	2
Bucket	4c	2c	1c, 1
Candles (per pair)	4c	2c	1c, 1
Cards (Playing)	2s	1s	8c
Cards (Tarot)	18s	9s	6s
Chain (per 10')	6c	3c	2c
Chest	6s	3s	2s
Climbing Gear	10s	5s	3s, 4c
Cloth, course (yd.)	2c	1c	2
Cloth, fine (yd.)	8c	4c	2c, 2
Cloth, silk/exotic (yd.)	3s, 4c	1s, 8c	1s
Dice/Bones/Jacks	2c	1c	2
Fishing Gear	4s	2s	1s, 4
Hunters' Traps (per 5)	6s	3s	2
Ladder	10c	5c	3c, 1b
Lock Picks	8s	4s	2s, 8
Lock, good	16s	8s	5s, 2
Lock, poor	2s	1s	8
Tools (assorted)	8s	4s	2s, 8
Whistle	4c	2c	1c, 1



Armor

Item	
Leather Jack (w	
Leather Jack (w sleeves)	
Chain shirt (w	
Chain shirt (w	
Chain (full suit	
Breast Plate (fr back)	
Plate (full suit, helm)	
Chainmail coif	
Pot helm	
Full helm	
Buckler	
Medium round	
Medium "heat	
Large "kite" sh	

Armor

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Suits:			
Leather Jack (w/ sleeves)	1s, 8c	10c	6c, 2b
Leather Jack (w/o sleeves)	1s	6c	4c
Chain shirt (w/ sleeves)	5g	2g, 10s	1g, 13s
Chain shirt (w/o slvs)	2g, 16s	1g, 8s	18s
Chain (full suit)	10g	5g	3g, 7s
Breast Plate (front and back)	14g	7g	4g, 12s
Plate (full suit, w/o helm)	30g	15g	10g
Headgear:			
Chainmail coif	7s	3s, 6c	2s, 2c
Pot helm	10s	5s	3s
Full helm	1g, 10s	15s	10s
Shields:			
Buckler	10c	5c	3c
Medium round shield	20-c	10c	6c, 2b
Medium "heater" shield	3s	1s, 6c	1s
Large "kite" shield	5s, 4c	2s, 8c	1s, 10c

	2c, 2b
	2c
	10s, 2b
	4c
	2c, 2b
	2s
	1c, 1b
	1c, 1b
	8c
	6s
	2c
	2s
	3s, 4c
	2b
	2c, 2b
	1s
	2b
	1s, 4c
	2s
	3c, 1b
	2s, 8c
	5s, 2c
	8c
	2s, 8c
	1c, 1b

Weapons

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Swords and the Like:			
Arming Sword	1g, 10s	15s	10s
Bastard Sword	6g	3g	2g
Cut and Thrust	7g	3g, 10s	2g, 6s
Dagger, Poniard	12s	6s	4s
Dagger, Rondel	10c	10c	7c
Dagger, Stiletto	2s	1s	8c
Doppelhander	8g	4g	2g, 13s
Estoc	1g	1g	12s
Falchion	1g, 6s	13s	4s
Great Sword	5g	2g, 10s	1g, 13s
Long Sword	4g	2g	13s, 4c
Rapier	8g	4g	1g, 7s
Saber	3g	1g, 10s	1g
Scimitar	1g, 16s	18s	12s
Short Sword	1g	10s	6s, 8c
Mass Weapons:			
Club	6c	3c	2c
Flail	8s	4s	2s, 8c
Hand Axe	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Knuckle-duster	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Mace	4s	2s	1s, 4c
Maul	12s	6s	4s
Morning Star	2s	1s	8c
Pick (Footman's)	2s	1s	8c
Pole Axe	8s	4s	2c, 2b
Warflail	12s	6s	4s
Warhammer	6s	3s	2s
Pole Arms:			
Bill	10s	5s	3s, 4c
Halberd	12s	6s	4s
Lance (heavy)	14c	7c	4c, 2b
Lance (light)	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Pike	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Spear	4c	2c	1c, 1b
Spear, long	6c	3c	2c
Spear, short	3c	1c, 2b	1c
Staff, Quarterstaff	6c	3c	2c
Staff, Shortstaff	8c	4c	2c, 2b
Missile Weapons:			
Arrow (longbow)	2b	1b	1b
Arrow (short bow)	2b	1b	1b
Crossbow arrow	2b	1b	1b
Crossbow	1g, 10s	15s	10s
Javelin	2s	1c	2b
Longbow	1g	10s	7s
Short bow	14s	7s	6s, 6c
Sling	2c	1c	2b
Sling Bullets (5)	2b	1b	1b
Throwing Knife	8c	4c	2c, 2b

The Riddle of Steel Book Eight: The Seneschal

Seneschal
(sen'e shal) - n. steward, major-domo or bailiff who represents his Lord in the feudal courts and in the management of his estates.

If you're not the Seneschal, don't read this section. It's not meant for you…you don't want to know what's in here!

1. Your role as the Seneschal

So you're the Seneschal? Congratulations. You've got the most entertaining—and difficult—role in the game. If you've ever run another game before, under the title "GM" or something similar, you already know more or less what a Seneschal does. If you're not familiar with running games (or have never seen someone else do it), this section will provide you with a very general and basic guide. Many other RPGs have large sections on how to be a GM…in *The Riddle of Steel* we know better than that. Good Seneschaling can only come through experience, not from a bloated manual. What we have provided is some helpful hints and tips on getting started and making the most out of your experience.

In short a Seneschal's duties include (but are not limited to):

- Having all of your Stuff (not just owning it but actually having it on hand).
- Learning, Knowing and then Teaching the game.
- Finding players (and getting them to the game).
- Providing for your Players (oh the humanity!).
- Holding the players hands as you take them through character creation.
- Writing scenarios, adventures, and campaigns for your players.
- Rounding up the posse (gettin' 'em all to gather).
- Ordering (but never paying for) the Pizza.
- Delivering the Goods (running the game and following all of the tenets there in)
- Buying more Driftwood and *The Riddle of Steel* products and encouraging players to do likewise (so that they stop borrowing your copy and we stay in business).

1. Before you begin…
…the things you will need (the essentials)

- This Book

  Buy this book! No, really, having this book will make your job infinitely easier. If you've already got one, buy another. It couldn't hurt.
- Dice

  Get as many 10-sided dice as you can afford and scrap up a few six-sided. These are a must, you can't roll with out 'em.
- Bowls

  These are to keep your dice warm and happy (or at least where you can find them).
- Friends

  We strongly recommend having at least one of these. If you don't have any we recommend getting lots of them. What can we say, the game just isn't the same without.

- Pencils

  To stab your friends with…actually they're for writing up your character sheets and game notes, and for keeping them current. Always use a pencil, never a pen! And don't stab anyone, we were joking…

- Character sheets

  To soak up the blood from pencil wounds…actually they're for keeping track of your characters stats, stuff, wounds, and so on. Really, don't stab a soul…we were joking!

- A Sense of Humor

  Hey, it helps…this is a GAME—albeit one that covers serious territory (religion, philosophy, death and dying…). And don't really stab anyone with your pencil. That was a joke. If you didn't get it, look into finding a sense of humor before you begin playing the game.

2. Learn the Game

To be the Seneschal, you'll need to know the game. Read this book and know what's in it. That doesn't mean you need to know the text word for word, but rather just know the rules and have a general understanding of how they might be manipulated. You don't have to memorize all of the rules either—just know the basics and where to find the ones you can't remember. We've tried to make that easy for you [illegible] including appendices, an index, and "page content tab[s]" on the side of each page. Review the guidelines in Book One: In the Beginning and Book Four: Combat [illegible]. If your campaign involves much sorcery, read Book Six regularly as well. That will cover the bulk of your workload; the other chapters are best read once, and use as reference after that.

By now you've probably read through most of the book and have at least some idea of how the game works. If not, grab a friend and play through the examples that have been provided through out the book. If you're still baffled, contact us at **www.theriddleofsteel.com**. We fully support all of our games and products and will be glad to help. Now that you know the game, you have to teach it to your players…

3. Finding players

Players are best gathered from among your friends or through them. Player selection is fairly important as just one jerk can ruin the experience for the whole group. If you don't know one of your players well, meet with him or her before hand and get to know them. Ask yourself if you really want this person in your game or not. Chances are that if you can't stand them away from the game, you won't like hanging with them in the game. Spotting problem players prior to play is a difficult at best and most likely you won't know it until you have one. For more on this, see "Conflict Resolution," below.

4. Providing for Your Players

There are a few things you have that your players don't. Well, probably a lot of things. Fortunately, you're only required to provide them with but a few. Consequentially, the players are required to perform several duties as well. Make sure they know this.

Character Sheets: *You* make them and *you* pass them out. Once the characters are made, the sheets belong to the players and are their responsibility. If ever a player forgets to bring his sheet to the game, punish them! We don't care how. Some Seneschals are tempted to "hold" the sheets for their players for various reasons (chronically forgetful players, dishonest players (oh yes, we know)…

Don't do this. The players should feel like the characters are theirs (which they are), and holding the sheet is part of that. Instead, make copies of all character sheets. This is extremely advantageous in those rare instances when a player actually loses his sheet. Never let the player keep your copy and always make him beg for its use.

Pencils: Expecting players to bring pencils to a game is a pipe dream. Get over it. Expecting to get them back in the same condition is also a pipe dream. The eraser (if still attached) will be chewed, the body broken or gnawed at both, and—the in case of *Papermate's* excellent *Sharpwriter* mechanical pencils—the pocket-tab will have been broken off. Buy the cheapies in bulk and toss them out at will (just watch the eyes and don't stab anyone).

Bowls: While it's nice to expect players to bring bowls, don't bet on it. You can expect slightly better care to be taken of your bowls than of your pencils, though. But just in case, don't use the good ones. If you really want your players to bring their own bowls, punish them by giving out extremely ugly ones, broken ones, plastic or paper ones, ones that are too small to hold all their dice, or that really big one used to serve punch at holidays. Very inexpensive bowls can be found at your local bargain, discount store. Little plastic rice bowls (found at Asian import stores) are great and very cheap, for about a dollar each.

Dice: Under no circumstance are you required to provide dice. If they don't have dice, beat them!

The Place: While you're not required to use your own place, you are obligated to find and make all arrangements for a suitable playing area.

Fun: You can't get out of this one. It's all up to you. But you can be assured that if you provide this, your players will return it in spades. For more on this, see the rest of this chapter.

5. The First Session

Gather up all your players, and go to work. Begin by having them read the game basics at the beginning of the book, or by reading to them. After that, pass out the character sheets and pencils and work your way through the book starting with **Book Two: The Birth of a Legend?** During this process is the best time to explain in further detail how the rest of the game works by correlating entries made on the sheets with the rolls that

apply to them. Once the characters are made, you will want to run demonstrations on combat, spell casting, and the use of skills, attributes, and all the rest. Now you're ready for the adventure, if you have enough time. We never do. If you find yourselves short of time in which to properly start an adventure, it may be advantageous and loads of fun to play through the highlights of the characters' childhoods, possibly exploring the origins of their Gifts and Flaws or the foundations of their Spiritual Attributes. Doing this is not only a hoot, it's also a great way to really round out a character and gives you, the Seneschal, more time and much valuable information for writing an adventure.

6. Writing Scenarios, Adventures, and Campaigns

The bread-and-butter of all RPGs is the adventure. Adventures consist of multiple scenarios, and campaigns consist of multiple adventures. Who writes these adventures? YOU DO! Well, actually, we'll have a few you can buy, and we'll let people post some adventures on our web site, but you, as the Seneschal, are still left with the bulk of adventure creation.

How is it done? Take a look at all of your players' character sheets. See who they are and what they want out of the game (asking your players this same question is a good start as well). Lots of Weapon Proficiencies...write an adventure with lots of fighting. Tons of Skills? Base your adventure around using them. Dozens of flaws...you get the idea. The next step is to take into account everyone's Spiritual Attributes, along with each Attribute's focus. Your players need opportunities to make these traits come to life (or else their characters won't grow). Start with those focuses that several characters have in common. Do they have a common Drive, a common Passion, a common Destiny? Build your whole campaign around such things. Then see to it that each adventure (which may run over the period of several sessions) center on at least one Spiritual Attribute from each character.

But where do you find plot ideas? If you haven't com up with any yet, think over the last book you read movie that you saw. Was there anything there that wou apply to the PCs in your group? Sources for plot lin and adventures abound in our everyday lives. Ofte those with a lesson to learn make the very best stori Lastly, we've provided you with a collection of adventu hooks and ideas that might help you get started. You find them later in this Book.

Also keep in mind that the root of all adventure conflict. Conflict is best derived from villains. As yo

...layers will probably be heroes (we encourage this), ...member that a hero is only as good as his villain. Which ...ctor is more revered: the cardiologist who battles heart ...ease or the dermatologist who fights acme. Who is ...re gallant: the marshal who spends his days hassling ...e local child gangs or the knight who wages war with ...ld beasts and evil sorcerers. The better the villain and ...e higher the stakes, the greater the triumph and feeling ...f accomplishment. So make that villain a good one.

That being said, it's probably **not** a good idea to have ...ur players "save the world" on the first go around, as ...ny adventure to follow will undoubtedly be far less ...pectacular. You can however, plan far enough ahead and ...nk several adventures together with the last adventure ...ing the grand climax. This sequence is known as a ...mpaign.

And while it's good to plan an adventure to the end, ...y not to get too detailed in the later parts as the story is ...most certain to meander quite some distance during ...ay. Expect major revisions to occur while running a ...me.

7. A Typical Session

The 3 tenets of a typical session:

i-rounding up the posse
i-ordering (but never paying for) the pizza
ii-delivering the goods (entertaining your freinds)
1-running the adventure
2-providing tone and atmosphere
3-controling NPCs and the weather (ahhh, the power!)
4-Making Everyone Feel Important
5-Taking care of the Players (doling out rewards)
6-Being fair and impartial...and cheating like a dog when no one is looking
7-the rules (knowing, bending, breaking and faking)
8-conflict resolution and dealing with problems

i. Rounding Up the Posse

It's your job to bring them all together. This includes ...assling everybody for their schedule, setting a date, ...alling to let everyone know when that is, coordinating pick ups, and calling the day (and a few hours) before just to make sure no one forgot. They sometimes do. What you do now that you've got them all in one place? ...Order Pizza!

ii. Ordering the Pizza

This may need to be done multiple times for longer sessions and optionally, the group may wish to do this during a mid-game break, but a gaming session should never go without refreshment. The kind of grub at the table can make a large impact on the atmosphere of the evening's session. Instead of pizza, try ethnic foods related to the nations that your PCs are in. Meat, potatoes, cabbage, and other odd foods add flavor and feeling to the adventure you've worked so hard to write. For drinks, skip the soda and try juices, teas, and other less orthodox beverages. If everyone insists on pizza (who doesn't love pizza?), then go ahead and order it, but don't let them make you pay for it...you buy the books! ...and write the adventures! ...and run the games! ...and...

iii. Delivering the Goods (entertaining your friends)

Your number one purpose as the Seneschal is (a) to have a good time and (b) to make sure your friends do, too. If people don't enjoy the game, they won't come back and play next week. That usually means constant adjustment to carefully written plans, putting up with some player's stupid ideas, and going along with those ideas when the rest of the players agree with them. If at any time someone isn't enjoying themselves, figure out why not and what can be done to improve their time at the table with you. Always remember that this is just a game, and if it's not fun, it's not worth playing.

1. Running the Adventure

This begins when all the players stop talking to each other and start listening to you. Start with an introduction. A good introduction is important. If they've never played in this game world before, you'll need to fill their characters in on the basics (some of which happens during character creation). Next, describe in detail the surroundings and events happening around

your characters at the beginning of the adventure. Details are very important. Your players will then, hopefully in turn, tell you how they will react to those events and you in turn tell them how the events have reacted to them and so on. The most important thing to remember when running an adventure is that the players will always find some way to bungle your carefully thought-out plans. They'll take the wrong road, kill the wrong bad guy, chase the wrong clue, or outsmart your craftiest scheme. What do you do? Keep things running. Fly with it. Fake it. Call for a pizza break and quickly write up something new. Just never let them know that this "new direction" wasn't in your plan and they'll think you're a genius (which you probably are…).

2. Tone, Theme, Atmosphere

The ideas of tone, theme, and atmosphere exist on several different levels in an RPG. Some of these are by the room's décor, props, food and drink, maps and drawings, costumes, or music. These are all fine examples of external atmosphere. Internal tone and theme are harder to establish-they take skill and purpose. Most your efforts to establish the right themes are already your adventure—created by using the Spiritual Attributes as the guidelines we discussed above. Beyond all of these things is a greater overarching mood for your game. What ideas are you exploring? What passions, motivations, and beliefs are being pitted against one another? What will the results mean and what will they teach? These things

...e the Riddle of Steel—a deeper understanding of who ...e all are and what is important to us. As you begin ...ring scenarios and adventures, think about what ideas ...e important: philosophy? Religion and faith? Trust and ...trayal? Love and Hate? Sticking to those things, beliefs, ...l people one holds dear? This is what The Riddle of ...el was meant to explore. That's the kind of game you ...re in your hands. Sure, it's an RPG, and a strategy ...me, but it's also a moral play. Try it out that way...it'll ...a different kind of roleplaying experience for you and ...ur players. We promise.

...God of This World?

The tools you, as the Seneschal, have at your disposal ...e considerable. You are in complete control of the ...ions, words, and thoughts of everyone in Weyrth—...cept the PCs. The weather is yours to control. The ...olitics of Weyrth's nations, faiths, and peoples are at ...ur mercy. And you can change the rules whenever you ...ant. What do you do with all of that responsibility? ...se it to create a world of wonder and magic, a place for ...ur players to roam, explore, and add to. By following ...e patterns outlined above, you'll create a new and ...mazing experience for your friends and fellow gamers. ...That's what being a Seneschal is all about. You'll have a ...r more fun than they will (just don't let them know ...d).

4. Making Everyone Feel Important

The best way to make every one feel important is ...o make them important. Make sure that your PCs are the ...eroes of the story and not just a bunch of spectators ...atching the world whirl around them. Tailor each ...dventure making them the pivotal hub by catering to the ...pecific needs of each player and his character. The character ...progression system, based on Spiritual Attributes, is your ...est guide in seeing to each player's needs. If a player isn't ...presented with areas to grow, his character will not progress. ...This should push players into action, but some will remain ...n the quiet background. See to it that each player has a ...ime to shine as often as possible. If you're not handing out ...nough Spiritual Attribute points, someone is being left out. ...Take care of your players, and they'll take care of you.

5. Taking Care of the Players (Playing Santa-schal)

How many Spiritual Attribute points you hand out to each player during a game session is a subjective matter. We've tried to simplify the process by giving concrete requirements in **Book Three: Training.** Instead of staring at the ceiling after every game, trying to choose a "fair" number of experience points or character points (or spirit points) or whatever, each player earns his points in the course of the game. You hand them out right when they are earned-not before, not after (...unless you forgot...). This is meant to drive your players to really get into character and push the game forward. Most of them will know when they deserve a spirit point, and they'll let you know (then you give the thumbs-up or thumbs-down). We have found that 3-5 points per player per session is a pretty reasonable amount. Most players are willing to put that much effort into their characters. That's also a reasonable pace for character progression. If you want them to progress faster make gaining spirit points easier. If you want to slow it down, require more of you players before you throw a point at them.

As we said before, Spiritual Attribute points are given out right when they're earned. There are a few fun ways to go about that. In our sessions at Driftwood we use poker chips marked with a "D" for Drive, a "P" for Passion, an "F" for Faith, and so on to show which Attribute gains a point. Think of it as throwing a biscuit to a dog that just "rolled over." It's really the same idea...

6. Fairness and Cheating

Playing fairly is pretty easy to do. Don't jack one player more than any others, make sure the same rules apply to everyone, and try to be both merciful and just in your intra-player relations. Being fair and impartial outwardly is a must. Never assume that your players are trying to take advantage of you-they just want to be treated evenly and justly by you and by the game. See to it that this happens.

In order to be fair outwardly, however, you must learn to cheat like a weasel behind your book or screen, when and where the players never see. Cheating itself isn't so hard...lie about die rolls, or make die rolls when

you weren't planning on it. Let players roll to realize how big their characters' mistakes really are. Give characters a second chance and "remember" suddenly that they had earned a Spirit point last game or a few hours ago and let them have it in their time of greatest need. In short, bend the rules so that they have a good time with it-but never let them know that.

There's a flip side to this, too. Sometimes you have to cheat for the bad-guys. That's OK—even encouraged—so long as your players are having a good time. All we really mean by cheating is to bend the game-and the events that take place within it-so that everyone has more fun.

7. The Rules of the Game

As the Seneschal it's your job to make judgments in all situations within the game. That goes twice for the rules. Sometimes you won't have the rules you need to run the game. That leaves you with three options. First, make it up on the spot. You don't have to let your players know! If you encounter a situation, even fighting style, maneuver, or some such thing that isn't covered in this book, go ahead and invent it on the spot. Just make sure if fits with the tone of the game that you want to set, and on you go. Second, get on a computer and visit **www.theriddleofsteel.com**. We fully support our games and products, and you will find a discussion board where you can post your questions, concerns, and feedback about this and other Driftwood publications. In addition to our insight and support, you'll be joined by other Seneschals and players with similar issues and advice for yours. Lastly, we intend to publish in the upcoming year, several supplements to *The Riddle of Steel*, each containing new and expanded rules for combat, sorcery, the Fey, and the world of Weyrth. Keep an eye on your local RPG retailer's shelves, or visit our web site for updates on new Driftwood releases.

8. Conflict Resolution

In a game that's so full of gritty realism (yes, actions have consequences and characters do die in *The Riddle of Steel*) some players may become distracted or upset with you or other players. This is best avoided by picking your gaming group wisely and best handled by talking to the offending player in private and resolving the problem with him.

Always encourage your players to work together as a team—not only will their characters live a lot longer, but they'll have more fun. We find that one of the best ways to create a unified group is to start the game with common ground. Instead of beginning each campaign in an inn where all the characters accidentally end up as a party of adventurers, run a homogenous group of gentry, peasants, blade-slingers, fey, or gifted. Or try binding all the characters together through family ties-fathers, sons, daughters, brothers, cousins or spouses. Such groups always have an odd camaraderie that is conducive to teamwork. In addition, they'll likely have similar goals (read Spiritual Attributes), causing the group to

grow and develop as a unit. This alone will solve many player/character conflicts before they start.

& Buying More Stuff...

We strongly recommend that each player have his own copy of this book—or at least the players have one collective copy in addition to yours. Beyond that, however, *Driftwood Publishing* promises to provide a host of useful supplements and add-ons to enhance play. Look for expansion volumes on combat—including rules for mass battles and new proficiencies and maneuvers—on sorcery—with new spells and details on the world of magic and the mysterious Fey—and on the ever-growing world of Weyrth. We also plan a number of modules (pre-written adventures and campaigns) and other *Riddle*-related products, like a collectible card game.

II. Why We Did What We Did

This section explains why the game is set up like it is, from sudden-death battles to the layout of Weyrth. Here you will find answers to the questions players and seneschals most frequently ask. If you have any other questions, visit us at www.theriddleofsteel.com.

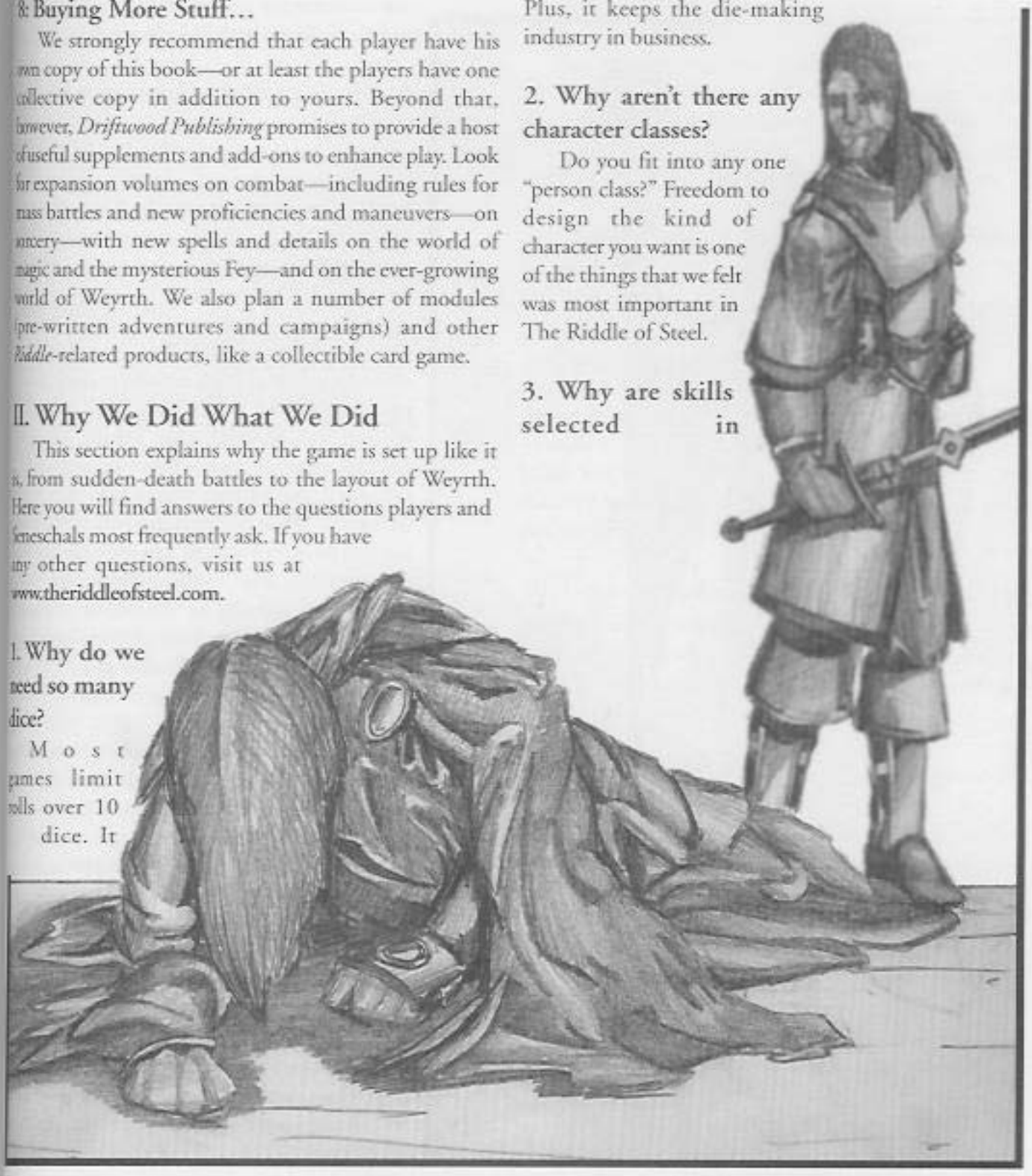
1. Why do we need so many dice?

Most games limit rolls over 10 dice. It just so happens that we really like rolling big handfuls of dice. We think its more fun than just rolling one or two. Plus, it keeps the die-making industry in business.

2. Why aren't there any character classes?

Do you fit into any one "person class?" Freedom to design the kind of character you want is one of the things that we felt was most important in The Riddle of Steel.

3. Why are skills selected in



"packets?"

First, it saves a lot of time by choosing two packets instead of 30 skills. Secondly, no one is a walking "combat machine" or anything like it. Skill packets assure t your character has a number of skills that a player m not have selected but which are very useful. A character creation packets are no longer an i and all Skills are learned individually.

4. Why is combat set up like it is?

Okay, so no one ever asks this, but wanted to explain anyway. The Riddle of Ste combat system is one-of-a-kind in the worl RPGs. Instead of winning by brute force superior stats, the key to survival and victo are tactics, teamwork and strategy. Thi intentional. This system is based on years research and application of western Europe martial art forms (incidentally many schools organizations that teach western martial art particularly from the late medieval and ea renaissance—abound. Our website contai links to many of them). Every maneuver an concept in this combat system is based on r technique. We're not recommending that y use this book as a martial arts manual—it is one—but this is as close as you'll ever get to creating real fighting on the tabletop. There so much more that we wanted to include her but the sheer volume of it forced us to writ *The Flower of Battle: Advanced Combat for The Riddle of Steel.*

We highly recommend running players th are new to the game through several mock combats before play begins. This will give them time to develop their own strategies and style as well as familiarize them with the lethali and brutality of reality-based combat. We found that the combat system alone could occupy a time for hours on end, filled with merry dash

One last particularly important note about combat is how you run it. The "take turns going around the table in order of initiative" thing doesn't work very well in *The Riddle of Ste* Instead run several rounds or even a whole hour with each character involved in the combat

When you reach the end of the bout or a good stopping point, go on to the next PC and run a few rounds with him. That'll keep everyone happier.

5. The maneuvers are cool and all, but I don't want to use them.

Then don't. We like them, as they add a lot of realism and flavor to combat, but if you like "hit and miss" combats, go ahead. The combat rules are set up so that you can use the mechanics you like, and leave the rest behind. Never let the rules bog you down.

6. There are a lot of combat tables. Isn't that time-consuming?

Yes, there are a lot of combat tables—damage tables in particular. The good news is that you shouldn't need to use them more than once or twice per bout—they are pretty lethal, and getting wounded (hopefully) is a rare event.

7. Why is your character progression system so weird?

We're actually pretty fond of it. The point is to motivate players to run their characters according to realistic motivations. It might be hard for old-school gamers to accustom themselves to at first, but soon you'll find them getting more involved in their characters' lives, goals, and personalities than in any game you've ever played. Just remember as Seneschal to provide them with the right kind of adventures for their characters' focuses. If no one gets many points during the first few games, don't sweat it—this is new for them, too. If continues with no one gaining any points during play, try loosening your requirements for gaining Spiritual Attribute points or for changing their focuses.

8. Why is Sorcery so powerful?

We strongly reject the classic RPG tradition of "balanced" play. Sorcery is a scary, mysterious, and deathly powerful thing. Is it ever any other way in books or in the movies? No. In the legends and fairy tales? NO! Why should things change for the game? What makes sorcery wonderful if it isn't rare, dangerous, and full of awe? Sorcerers—the Gifted and the Fey—are uncommon things. No magic retailers, no wizards' guild, no fireballs. Warriors and other mortals have good reason to fear Sorcerers. Make sure that they keep that sense of fear.

Some Seneschals have shared concerns that their sorcerer characters have gotten out of hand…that they're too powerful. That doesn't need to happen. Remember who's the boss! You are! Keep a close eye on any magic-wielding PCs, and know when to knock them down.

9. What's up with all the philosophical mumbo-jumbo?

This game is about more than fighting or sorcery (though it does have a great combat system and really cool magic rules). As each character seeks the answers to their own riddles, players and Seneschals can explore deeper questions and investigate their own feelings on a number of issues. Use the game as a moral sounding board and watch as your stories take on more meaning than the last adventure you ran in a fantasy RPG…it'll end up feeling more like a good book.

10. I'm not comfortable with all of this talk of religion and moral issues. What can I do?

Don't go anywhere you're not ready to go. Have fun with the system and change the parts that don't work for you. Always remember that it's just a game.

11. I don't like Weyrth. Can I use the game on my own world?

Go ahead. Feel free to change Weyrth around, add continents, blow up cities, or re-draw and re-name everything. It's your game now. You paid for it. If you have another game world you like-one from another game or one that you created yourself-take any elements from this book you like; they're yours to play with. Do you prefer science fiction to fantasy? Change a few things around and do "Weyrth 2025" or some such thing. Lastly, don't be afraid to let us know if there's something you really want to see. We just might write a supplement for it.

III. Sample NPCs (Non-player Characters)

This small collection of NPCs may be modified for whatever purpose. Attributes and other traits are simplified to save space. All statistics represent "average" samples. Permission is granted to photocopy these NPCs for personal private non-commercial home use only. For natural weapons (such as horns, teeth, and claws) see the combined weapon statistics in the Appendix.

1. Men and Women

Humans come in all the colors and cultures of our own world, plus a few. Nationality modifiers may be appropriate to any of these basic templates. Spirit points may be assigned in any quantity to any trait, as best fits the Seneschal's purposes.

Guardsman
Temporal: 4 (ST, AG 5)
Mental: 4 (Per 5, Soc 3)
Reflex: 4
Move: 7
CP: 8 (7-10)
MP: 8 (6-9)

Most town guards and constables are more interested in getting paid and causing trouble than getting in a real fight that they might die in. They always travel in small groups, and will never start a fight they're not sure they'll win.

Knight or Man-at-arms
Temporal: 5 (EN, HT 4; AG 6)
Mental: 4
Reflex: 5
Move: 7
CP: 14 (10-16)

Knights, being wealthy enough to afford armor, rarely fight without it. They prefer sword-and-shield styles, and fight very well from horseback. In single combat they are bold and deliberate, relying heavily on their armor for protection.

Peasant
Temporal: 4
Mental: 4
Reflex: 4
Move: 6
CP: 6

Peasants are more interested in day-to-day survival than the larger world around them. Any combat or interaction should reflect this.

Sorcerer or Druid
Temporal: 4
Mental: 6
Reflex: 5
Move: 6
CP: 6
SP: 13
Vagaries: 12-15 points total

These Gifted men and women are dangerous. They are patient, fleeing physical danger only to seek vengeance years later. They are often supported by warrior-types.

Warrior
Temporal: 4 (ST, AG 5)
Mental: 4 (Wit 5, Soc 3)
Reflex: 5
Move: 7
CP: 9 (7-11)
MP: 8 (6-10)

Most warriors are tribal or villager types with a decent amount of weapons training. They are generally cautious and quick in combat, going for multiple small wounds instead of the quick kill. They rely on small-group tactics when possible, and often use evasion when defending.

2. Animals and Beasts

Weyrth's many hills, forests, jungles, and plains are filled with all manner of beasts. Some, such as horses and dogs, have been domesticated. Most others remain wild and untamed. In combat most all animals opt for evasion of one sort or another. See the Appendix for how to handle damage against 4-legged and non-humanoid creatures.

Bear, Brown
Temporal: 6
Mental: 3 (P

Reflex: 4
Move: 8 (due to size)
CP: 9 (8-10)

These medium-sized bears are common throughout the temperate parts of Weyrth. They are generally non-aggressive unless provoked or threatened (when they become very dangerous).

Bear, Polar or Grizzly
Temporal: 6 (ST 12, TO 9)
Mental: 4 (Per 6)
Reflex: 5
Move: 9 (due to size)
CP: 10 (9-11)

These great bears inhabit the colder regions of the north. They are more aggressive than their smaller cousins. It is considered a great honor by many peoples of the north to kill one. Such being the case these bears are often hunted and have grown wary of humans.

Boar, Wild
Temporal: 8 (AG 4)
Mental: 2 (WP, Per 6)
Reflex: 5
Move: 8 (due to build)
CP: 10 (8-12)

Wild boars often travel in small herds, though it is not uncommon to find solitary specimens. They are

Bear, Brown or Black
Temporal: 6 (ST 10, TO 8)
Mental: 3 (Per 6)

stupid, mean, and aggressive. In combat they attack with their large tusks and trample prey, relying on charges and numbers. They are often hunted for their meat and for the glory of killing one.

Cat, Great
Temporal: 5 (ST, AG 10)
Mental: 3 (Wit, Per 7)
Reflex: 8
Move: 12 (varies by species)
CP: 12 (10-15)

Lions, tigers, big jungle cats...these creatures are feared by all that live near them. They are aggressive and bold, tempered only by their own cunning. They attack from an ambush whenever possible, and have little compunction for attacking larger groups of "inferior" creatures. As with the great bears, much glory and fame is to be found in hunting these deadly beasts.

Cat, Wild
Temporal: 3 (AG 12, EN 4)
Mental: 3 (Wit, Per 8)
Reflex: 10
Move: 10 (due to build)
CP: 14 (12-16)

Bobcats, minxes, and most small cougars fall into this category. They are quick animals that are not likely to be found if they don't want to be. They pounce on their prey from an ambush or similar position, granting them the element of surprise. These cats are crafty and intelligent, and will avoid large groups except for hit-and-run tactics.

Dog
Temporal: 5 (EN 8, AG 10)
Mental: 3 (Wit 7, Per 10)
Reflex: 8
Move: 11
CP: 12 (10-15)

These statistics represent dogs trained and conditioned for aggressive behavior such as those dogs used for hunting, guarding, or even for battle. Their primary weakness is a low WP, which may be exploited. Better-trained canines may have a higher WP and MA.

Horse, Plain ol'
Temporal: 4 (ST 7, AG 8)
Mental: 2 (Per 6)
Reflex: 5
Move: 9
CP: 8

Horses are used for all sorts of things—trave transportation of goods, farm-work. They are generall skittish and dull-witted. Some are trained as carthorse others to be ridden, and others for working. They avoi confrontation whenever possible.

Horse, Charger
Temporal: 5 (ST 12, AG 8)
Mental: 3 (Per 6)
Reflex: 5
Move: 12
CP: 8

These large war-horses are available only to knights and other wealthy individuals. They are powerful and quick. In combat they are instructed by their rider, but when un-mounted fight by biting and, more commonly, kicking. They are less skittish than other horses.

Horse, Courser
Temporal: 4 (ST 8, AG 12, EN 6)
Mental: 3 (Per 6)
Reflex: 7
Move: 13
CP: 10

Coursers are spirited mounts meant for combat, hunting, and racing. They are usually expensive and sought-after by lords for their training. Coursers are found throughout Weyrth, though the best known come from the southern reaches of the continent.

Horse, Destrier
Temporal: 6 (ST 14, AG 5)
Mental: 3 (Per 6)
Reflex: 4
Move: 12
CP: 8

These are truly massive mounts, found primarily in Stahl and Ouestenreich. They are stalwart and trained

to endure the rigors of combat. They are otherwise similar to chargers. Destriers are tremendously expensive, available only to wealthy Stahlnish gentry and to the truly wealthy outside of Stahl.

Wolf
Temporal: 4 (AG, EN 9)
Mental: 4 (Wit, Per 9)
Reflex: 9
Move: 11
CP: 13 (10-15)

Wolves travel and hunt in packs. While they are not generally a danger to humans, they are a serious problem for many villages and farms, where they kill livestock. In times of famine wolves may attack humans. They are incredible hunters and tacticians, cornering, herding, and separating their prey from any protection. Wolf furs are considered valuable in many parts of the world.

3. Siehe and the Fey

Classifying the mystical races of Weyrth is even more difficult than attempting to do so with humans. Broadly they are divided into two groups: the Fey, and the Siehe. The Fey are the highest of the elves, and live separate from men. The Siehe-themselves divided between the Seelie and Unseelie-come in thousands of shapes, colors, and sizes. While all Fey are capable of Sorcery, only some of the lesser Siehe are.

Dwarf Warrior
Temporal: ST, EN 6; AG 3; TO, HT 7
Mental: 4 (WP 6 Soc 2)
Reflex: 3
Move: 7
CP: 11 (8-13)

Rock Dwarfs are careful fighters, accustomed to close-quarters combat. They prefer thrusting weapons and short swords, though axes and picks are not uncommon due to their origins as tools. They use shields whenever possible. Dwarfs also work hard to exploit their small stature, revel in tight spaces and mass battles, and choose low targets.

Fey Elf
Temporal: 5 (AG, EN 6)
Mental: 6 (Soc 4, MA 2)
Reflex: 6
Move: 8
CP: 16 (12-20)
MP: 16 (14-20)
SP: 13
Vagaries (optional): 15-24 points total

The Fey are immortal unless killed or drained by their own magic. The Fey are powerful. The Fey are rare. They are set, unchanging, and superior to all other life on Weyrth (just ask one). Fey elves avoid contact with men at all costs, though they interact freely with the Siehe (who often worship them). In combat elves are beautiful, deadly, and brutal. They do not play with men. And as far as most men are concerned, they do not exist.

Satyrs, Nymphs, Woodspirits
Temporal: 6 (AG 8)
Mental: 7 (MA 2)
Reflex: 7
Move: 10
CP: 11 (7-15)
MP: 13 (10-18)
SP: 16
Vagaries: 9 points total

The Siehe of the forests come in many forms. Th use trickery and Glamour to trap and ensorcell th that enter their holy places and protected woodland They avoid hand-to-hand combat at all costs, but ma are deadly with bows, slings, and other missile weapo

Siehe, Seelie or Unseelie
Temporal: varies widely
Mental: ditto…
Reflex: also ditto…
Move: this too…
CP: that too…
SP: likewise…
Vagaries: 9-12 points total

Every Siehe is different from the last. They generally non-confontational, delighting in cau

mischief and trouble, but avoid actual combat at all costs. Unlike the Fey, they are mortal, and are rather sensitive of the fact. Generally superstitious people go out of their way not to inconvenience the "faeries," hoping to avoid as many mishaps as possible. Such people are wise.

Troll Spawn

Not all Siehe are cowardly. Some breeds have grown into formidable combatants and killers. These are Troll spawn, and are unified only by the name humans call them: monsters.

Gol (Grunt)
Temporal: 6 (HT, AG 4)
Mental: 3 (Per, WP 5)
Reflex: 3
Move: 8
CP: 10 (8-13)

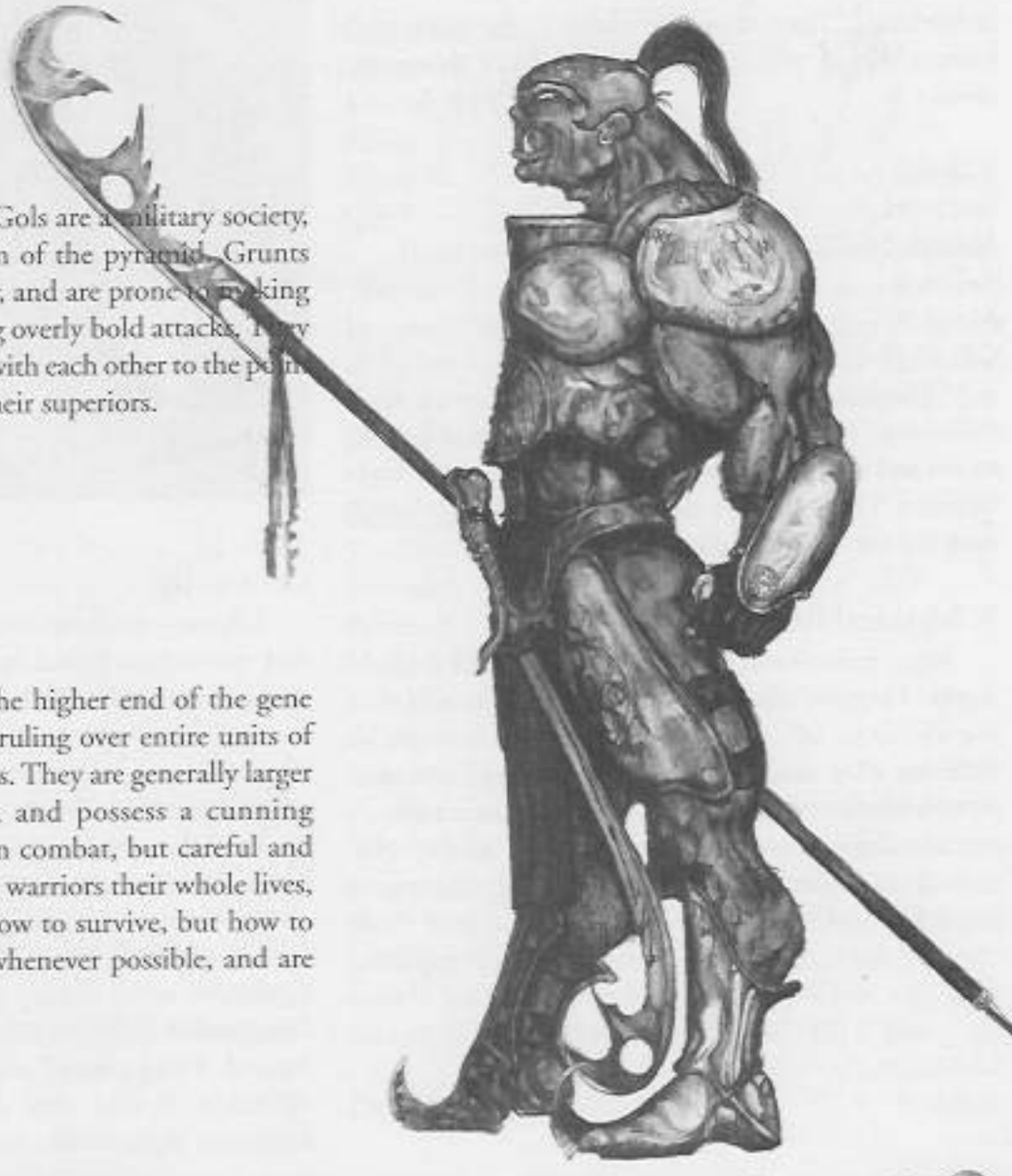
The mountain-dwelling Gols are a military society, with the grunt at the bottom of the pyramid. Grunts favor brutality over efficiency, and are prone to making rash decisions and attempting overly bold attacks. They live for blood, and will argue with each other to the point of death unless checked by their superiors.

Gol (Captain)
Temporal: 6 (ST, TO 7)
Mental: 6 (MA, Soc 3)
Reflex: 6
Move: 9
CP: 16 (14-18)

Gol Captains are from the higher end of the gene pool. They are found either ruling over entire units of Gol grunts, or in small groups. They are generally larger than their grunt brethren, and possess a cunning intelligence. They are bold in combat, but careful and scheming. They have lived as warriors their whole lives, and have learned not only how to survive, but how to conquer. They wear armor whenever possible, and are said to even forge their own.

Gorem
Temporal: 9 (EN, AG 3)
Mental: 2 (Wit, Per 4)
Reflex: 3
Move: 7
CP: 8 (7-10)

The Gorem are the offspring of a small giant and another trollspawn. They are large (between 8' and 10' tall), violent, and very aggressive. In combat they go strait for the kill, paying little or no heed to defending themselves. They tire quickly, and are likely to flee if wounded badly. They are stupid and generally solitary creatures.



Hef
Temporal: 8
Mental: 5 (Wit, Per 6; Soc 3)
Reflex: 7
Move: 12
CP: 15 (13-18)

The Hef are the most feared creatures of all the freezing spaces of Weyrth. These 7'-9' tall wolf or bear-faced black-horned humanoids raid northern villages in search of Hef-maids and man-skins. They hunt men just like men hunt beasts. Hef use spears of their own making, their own claws and horns, or weapons taken in raids (note that an arming sword in a Hef's hands will seem rather small). They often wear leather armor made from human skin as well, providing 1 or 2 DV to covered areas.

Vilkolak
Temporal: 6
Mental: 3 (Wit, Per 7)
Reflex: 6
Move: 9
CP: 10 (8-13)

Vilkolaks are wolf-headed furry man-sized trollspawn. They hunt in packs, and are fond of herding tactics and ambushes. They prefer flail-like or pole-based weapons. They strike quickly, from behind, and flee any time the battle fails to go their way.

5. Mythical Beasts

Many animals and creatures are members of the Siehe world. They are often imbued with keen intelligence, the ability to talk, or magical powers. Many are no different than mundane beasts (as above), save their powers of sorcery or communication. Others are truly special. Only a few are presented here. As for other animals, information on striking many-legged creatures is found in the **Appendix**.

Giant
Temporal: 3 (ST 20, TO 13)
Mental: 3
Reflex: 3

Move: 13
CP: 8 (6-10)

Giants—reaching 20 to 40 feet tall—live in the hil and mountains, feared by man and elf alike. They ar dreadful, powerful, and very stupid man-like titans. h combat they prefer to stomp (DR ST+10, distributed like a fall) or a huge club (such as a tree trunk-DR ST +5 bludgeoning). Should one encounter a giant the best option is always to run, as their great size makes sprinting impossible (but a hurried giant is a site to behold).

Griffin
Temporal: 8 (ST, AG 12)
Mental: 3 (Wit, Per 6)
Reflex: 7
Move: 16 (fly)

CP: 11 (9-13)

Griffins are half lion, half eagle. These mountain-dwellers are savage, bloodthirsty beasts with an appetite for flesh of all kinds. In combat griffins prefer to dive at their prey (like a charge), slashing and clutching at it with their eagle's talons. On ground they fight with their razor-sharp beaks.

Unicorn
Temporal: 15
Mental: 10 (Per 15)
Reflex: 12
Move: 22
CP: 16 (14-18)
SP: 35
Vagaries: 12 points total

Unicorns rule the forests, woods, and groves of western Weyrth. They are respected and adored even by the Fey. These magical creatures avoid any human that they see, preferring to watch from afar. They show themselves only to aid the pure in heart, or to destroy those that threaten the forests and sacred spaces they protect. In combat they are fearsome, thrusting with their long spiral horn and lashing out with their horse-like hooves.

Wyrm (Dragon)
Temporal: 12 (ST 20)
Mental: 10 (Per 12, MA 1)
Reflex: 10
Move: 22
CP: 17 (14-20)
SP (optional): 23
Vagaries: 18 points total

The great old wyrms are relics of the days before men, when the elves and the gods ruled the world. Their long, serpentine bodies are often adorned with wings and spikes, their limbs with talons and jaws with sword-like teeth. Most range from 30 to 100 feet long, though few are even half as massive as a giant is. Some are cunning and intelligent, with the ability to communicate with other races, wield sorcery, and lay out grand schemes and plans. Others are bestial, little more than god-like beasts (but beasts nonetheless). All of them-intelligent or otherwise-are set in their ancient ways, less changing than the elves (hence the low MA). Many of them fly, and most all of them breath horrible flames, capable of melting a man and his armor into one gelatinous mass (DR 10).

6. The Other World

Not every threat in Weyrth comes from the realm of men or the Siehe. Some are from farther, scarier places. Wicked sorcery brings wrestless souls back from the dead, reanimates fallen heroes, and summons up the very foulest denizens of hell.

Fallen Warriors
Temporal: 3 (ST 6)
Mental: 0 (Wit, Per 3)
Reflex: 3
Move: 6
CP: 7

These are the zombies and walking skeletons of lore. They are devoid of personality, and are only animated by sorcery. Without their source of power they'll fall back to lifeless heaps. In battle they follow whatever orders they are given by their master—attack, defend, flee, charge…it's all the same to them.

Fallen Legends
Temporal: 8
Mental: 6 (MA, Soc varies widely)
Reflex: 7
Move: 12
CP: 18 +
SP (optional): 18
Vagaries: 12 points total.

These undead heroes and villains walk the face of Weyrth still, in search of something. In life they were knights, blade-slingers, swordsmen, and champions. In death they are even more powerful. They fight with intelligence and care, as any great fighter might. Some possess sorcery—given beyond the grave—as well. They are not to be trifled with.

Demon, Lesser

Temporal: 7 (TO 8)
Mental: 6 (WP 9)
Reflex: 6
Move: 11
CP: 15
SP: 19
Vagaries: 15 points
- Sculpture 3
- Movement 3
- Conquer 3
- Glamour 3
- Summoning 3

For more on summoning demons consult **Book Six: Sorcery.**

Demon
Temporal: 8 (TO 9)
Mental: 8 (WP 10)
Reflex: 8
Move: 12
CP: 20
SP: 29
Vagaries: 18 points
- Sculpture 3
- Movement 3
- Conquer 3
- Growth 3
- Glamour 3
- Summoning 3

For more on summoning consult **Book Six: Sorcery.**

Demon, Greater
Temporal: 9 (TO 10)
Mental: 9 (WP 12)
Reflex: 9
Move: 14
CP: 25
SP: 33
Vagaries: 24 points
- Sculpture 3
- Movement 3
- Growth 3
- Conquer 3
- Glamour 3
- Vision 3
- Imprisonment 3
- Summoning 3

For more on summoning consult **Book Six: Sorcery.**

Devil (a devil, not the Devil)
Temporal: 20
Mental: 20
Reflex: 20
Move: 30
CP: 40
SP: 50+
Vagaries: 27 points (all Vagaries at level 3)

Don't screw with devils. Period. You will die (unless, of course, you are truly good…then it is they who should be deathly afraid). Consult **Book Six: Sorcery** for more about these foulest of beings.

IV. Adventure Seeds

Writing a good adventure can be a hard thing to do. Sometimes the hardest part is getting an idea that fits both your players' personalities and the mood you want to set for the game. This short list should prove helpful.

Feel free to change anything you see here—names, places, dates, themes…whatever. Have fun with it!

1. Out with the Old, in with the New

Background:

A small but profitable farming village and manor are operated by a minor knight who is getting old (read weak) and who owes fealty to a bannerett or other minor noble. The manor just happens to have a valuable resource that a neighboring lord/knight/duke/whoever wants (for example, an iron mine, a large herd of horses—perhaps war horses—a plentiful vineyard, a pretty view, lots of women, whatever).

Player Character Involvement:

1) the players live in the village, or

2) the players are stopping by (staying at an inn) on the way to somewhere else, or

3) the players are knights/soldiers of the bannerett, or

4) the players are knights/soldiers/mercenaries for the opposing lord, or

5) the players *are* the old knight or the opposing lord.

What happens with the fealty issues? Does the bannerett get involved? How powerful is the invading Lord? How powerful is the banerett? How strong are the players' ties to their lords (if they are knights/soldiers/mercenaries)? Do the players duck their tails and run? Do they get involved (if just passing through)? How do players respond when the invading army wants to disarm them and "liberate" any valuables from them? Did the players have advanced warning that the attack would take place? Were they politically involved in goading the invading lord or in placating the old knight? Were they saboteurs?

Spiritual Attributes can—and should—take an important role where possible. Involve Passions with a romantic interest with one of the lords or knights, or with their daughters/sons; loyalty to one party or the other can also cause problems. Drive can push the PCs to fight on one side or the other, or to *try* to avoid the problem altogether. Perhaps one of the characters' Destiny is to become a lord (or the reverse—to fall and become a peasant!). Lastly, never underestimate the meddling power of faith and religion!

2. A Prophet amongst Us?

Background:

Kanoarn Inuram has denounced all existing social order as wrong due to their catering to the rich and their oppression of the poor. He travels from village to village spreading the word of the Jheziev, a philosophy based on owing nothing to anyone, and achieving through hard work and understanding anything imaginable. He is passionately disinterested in the workings of existing social hierarchies, and believes that all men should exist as equals. He cites that that knowledge and literature are for all men to have access to and, that regardless of birth everyone should be entitled to life, liberty and happiness.

The ruling order of clerics in Ixliaph is violently opposed to such teachings. They fear social discord and revolution will manifest unless the madman is silenced. In two days the festival of the Fourth Moonrise will hail the arrival of fall, and as they have for centuries, the clerics will gather to preach in the capital city of Cith. Kanoarn has already arrived, and his sermons have already inspired three near riots and lead to two proven murders of corrupt officials.

With such unrest in the city, how can peace be maintained?

Player Involvement:

Are the Player Characters also there to preach? To quell preaching? Just passing through? Perhaps one of them knows Kanoarn, or is his disciple. Will the ruling order of clerics seek to capture Kanoarn—or to kill him?

3. Double-Cross

Background:

Duke Tathal is a large, powerful, and ruthless noble. He gained his power and land through unprovoked invasions against his neighbors. A coalition of nobles froze his territory in a series of treaties to prevent his further expansion. Tathal however, maintains border raids and skirmishes berween several of his neighboring nobles. Currently, Tathal and his allies are much too powerful to challenge directly.

Earl Cynrain, one of Tathal's enemies, has placed a spy within Tathal's court. The spy, who is yet undiscovered, has just discovered that Tathal's family will be traveling to one of his outlying manors for a harvest festival. Cynrain is planning to attack the duke and his family as they travel. In doing so the earl hopes to eliminate both Tathal and any apparent heir, so as to thrust Tathal's dukedom into chaos. The remaining (and now leaderless) knights and lands would be forced into allegiance or easy picking for an invading noble.

Player Involvement:

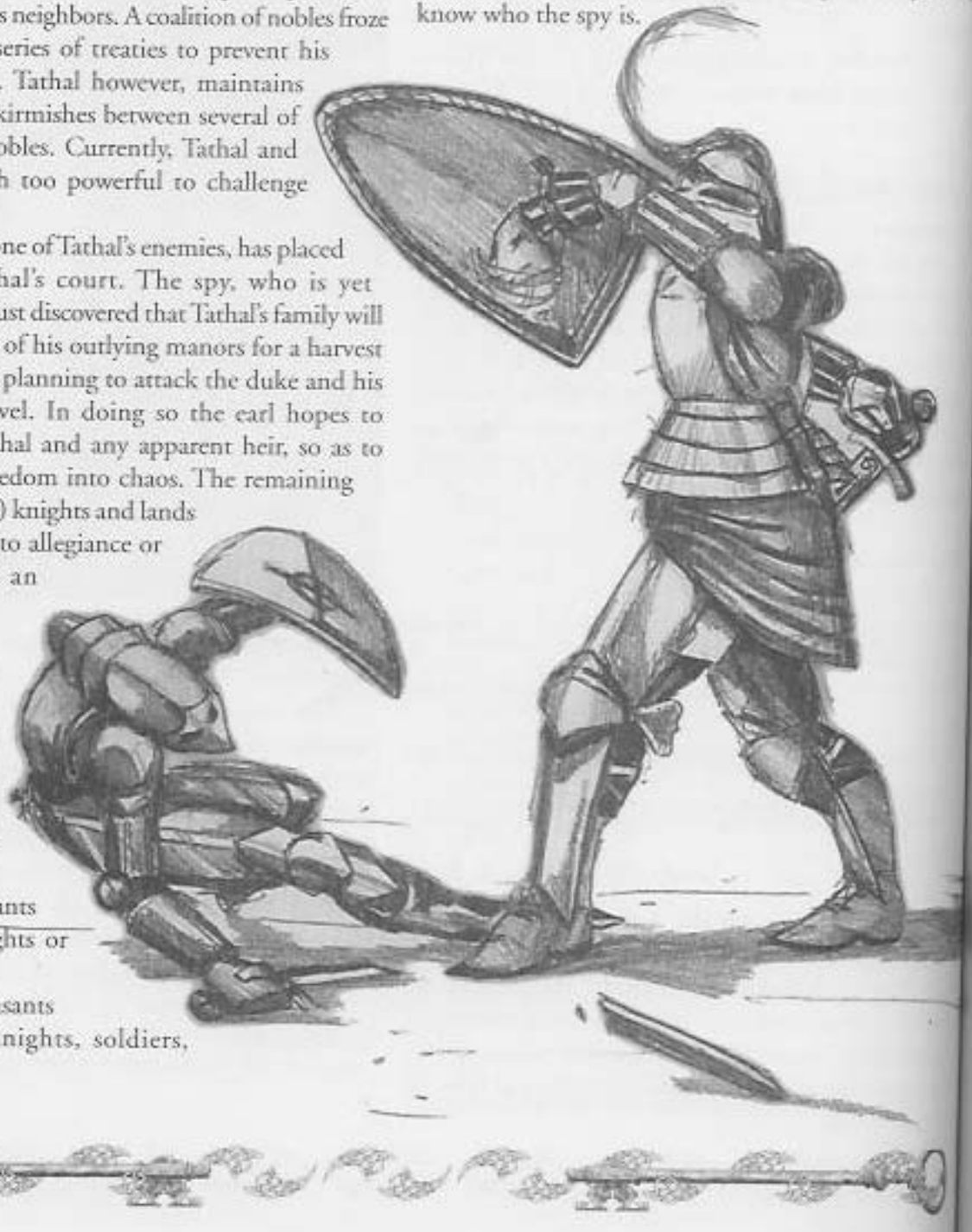
If the Players are militaristic fighting bloodthirsty types they could be...

1) Tathal's peasants
2) Tathal's knights or soldiers
3) Cynrain's peasants
4) Cynrain's knights, soldiers, mercenaries
5) travelers on the same road who witness the ambush or attack on Tathal and his men, or arrive immediately afterward. Will they be swayed to help the poor assaulted lord Tathal, or will they wish to be party to the apparent victor, Earl Cynrain?

Else the players could be politically involved...

1) in Tathal's court
2) in Cynrain's court

Perhaps the PCs *are* the planted spies. Maybe they know who the spy is.



Possibly, Tathal becomes aware of the ambush (thanks to the players or despite them) and plans to trap Cynrain with a counter-ambush…

If Cynrain is successful, what happens to Tathal's cessation of expansion? Who fills the vacuum left by Tathal? Do the players profit?

4. The Black Sails of Fauth

All of these hooks are for the same adventure, but are divided by the PC's social class (hey—we told you it was important). All five of these stories are interconnected…

If the PCs are…

Wealthy Nobles - Constintine Frizzel and her twin daughters Felicia and Cynthia were captured at sea, along with the ship taking them to their summer home in Talatta. Recetly a ransom demand of 10,000 *dema* was delivered anonymously to Don Frizzel, who is activly searching for any assistance available.

Gentry/Lesser Nobles - Roberdo Vascialli has finally finished his masterpiece, a ship called the "Toranado." He is actively seeking a captain, pilot, and crew to test the design at high sea, in hopes of selling the design—when proven successful—to merchant guilds throughout Fauth.

High Freemen - The Black Sail, a merchant guild in Fauth has recently spread the word that it is seeking able bodied men to assist in an attack on the pirate stronghold of renown pirate Amidio Frazinno. For motivation, the Guild has offered a share of the plunder. They are seeking master swordsmen with knowledge of the sea, but are willing to settle for what they can get.

Low Freemen - Sailors wanted! High pay for experienced seamen willing to put out to sea for a 3-month journey. 30 *dima* for 3 months !(10 dima to start, and 20 on completion of voyage.) Only the best. Southern dock, 3rd berth. Ask for Ahlehandro. Meals and ale supplied. This is the opportunity of a lifetime!

Peasants - Get yer ass on that ship forin' I kick yer teeth in. An' shut yer yap!

5. The Library of Barameir

Background:

The Festival of Lights, in Barameir, is held every third year in the late summer. When the darkness falls late, and the stars rain down (there's a group of comets orbiting Weyrth that pass every 3 years). This year people from all over this side of the Imperial Sea have come to enjoy the Tourney and other festivities. Important guests include:

The High Lord Inquisitor of the Imperial Church, Duke Danath Caen-Baram auth Bairameir,

Lord Chief Librarian (Leiborhod) Geralt Caen-Taryth, head of the Order of Saint Baram

Other notables, though not "Important"

- Thaddeus Hatch, of the Hatch Family Thieves Guild, and his thieves
- Numerous Knights trying the lists
- A handful of blade-slingers, come to test their luck at the sword contests
- Numerous craftsmen and Entertainers

The Library of Barameir, one of the largest in the world, is home to the knowledge, history, and lore of much of the old Empire. As with other monuments of higher learning, the college and library house more than books—much of the library and university staff dabble in the powers of sorcery—collectively known as the Order of Saint Baram (founder of the Library and the city). These ritualists, chased into hiding since the Imperial Inquisition began some 25 years ago, have grown powerful and bitter. They have begun moving any book they feel may one day be useful—books of magical theory, occultism, and the histories of great sorcerers—into storage, so that they might be again moved into a monastery/fortress in the mountains of

Ouestenriech. The Inquisition has grown especially hot in the southern Cyrinthmeir Provinces (especially on the Gelure Borders, in response to Lord Uglub's known practice of black magic). In order to retain alibis during this difficult time, the Order of Saint Baram has hired one of the local thieves' guilds—the Hatches—to "steal" the books and transport them to a storehouse on the docks.

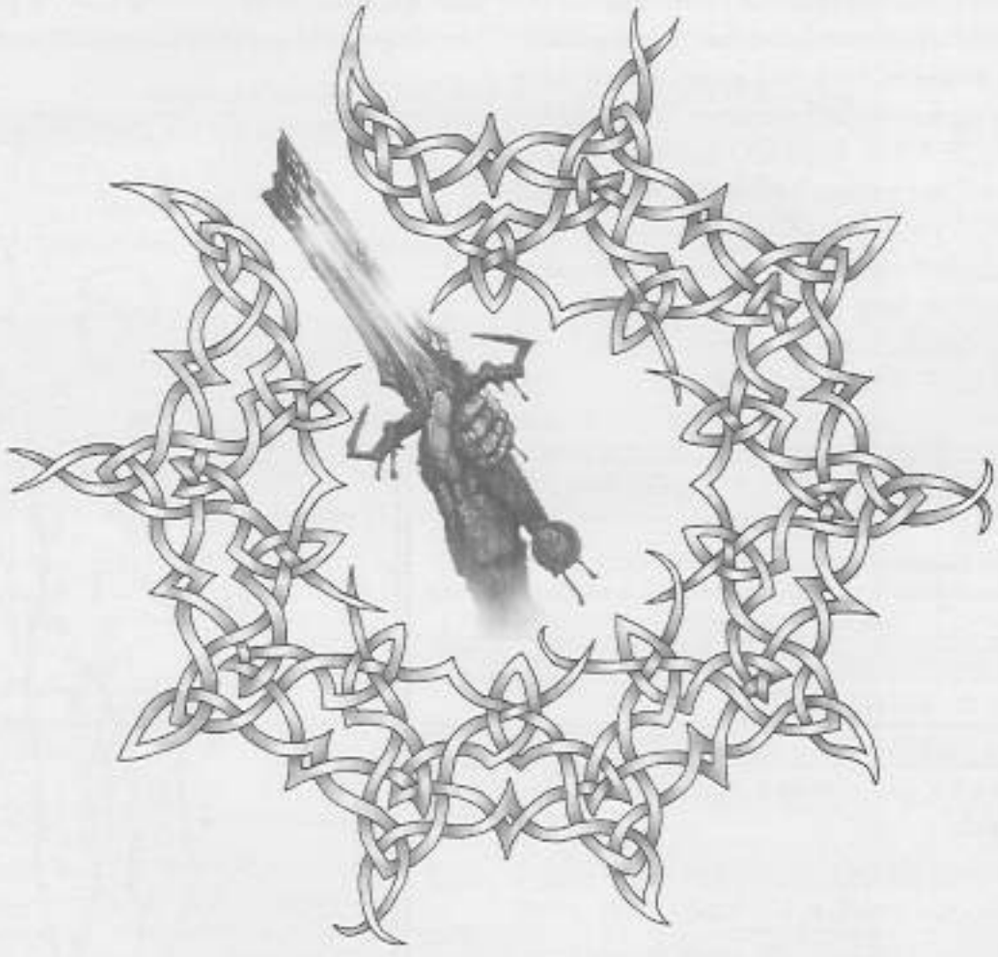
Their plan is to transport the "stolen" books up river to Ouestenriech, then by wagon up into the mountains. To cover their crime the Order plans to hold a meeting at the library for the High Lord Inquisitor and his staff, so that they can "educate" them in the ways of known occultists. In reality the Order plans to lock the High Lord Inquisitor and his men in the library, then burn it to the ground—allowing them to escape undetected and reap some vengeance upon the Inquisition simultaneously.

Player Involvement:

How will the players learn of this plan? Will they support it (no one likes the Inquisition) or oppose it (so much lost knowledge! There must be a better way!)? Which side of the conflict are they on? How did they get there? Start the players out just enjoying the festival, perhaps competing in events fitting to their social standing. Then let the plot build...

V. The Golden Rule of Roleplaying

Finally, there's one more rule that every Seneschal (and player) should know by heart. It's the most important rule: the Seneschal is always right. That's right, we said, "THE SENESCHAL IS ALWAYS RIGHT!" You are in charge of the game. Remember your responsibilities (like making sure no one gets stabbed with a pencil), and no one will ever say you're not.



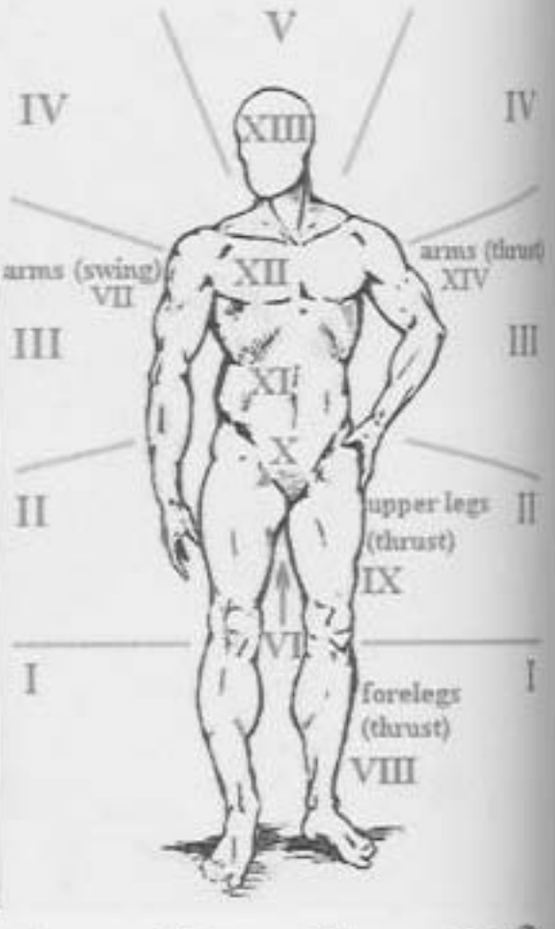
The Riddle of Steel Appendices

Appendix One: Damage Tables

Items under the "Roll" column are determined with the roll of a d6. Roman numerals refer to the Hit Location Chart (Table 4.2), explained in **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.** All results are open to Seneschal interpretation.

Wounds are meant to hurt, and most light wounds are just an opening for the killing blow. Remember—you don't have to lead your opponent to instantaneous death to kill him off. Sometimes it takes a while. Likewise, most pain modifiers assume standing postures (especially those related to the feet—sitting or prone characters may have less of a modifier from pain). When characters are knocked down all pools drop to 1/3 current value (after penalties, etc…). Yeah, getting hit sucks.

As with everything, the Seneschal should use common sense and discretion in interpreting wounds, damage, and anything on this table. When encountering non-humanoid opponents, modify results appropriately.



MODIFIERS FOR STRIKING AT DIFFERENT ZONES (OPTIONAL):
In the interest of realism and game balance, the following modifiers may be applied to the attacker's combat pool when attacking the following areas:
• Thrusts (including punches) to the head (XIII): -1 CP
• Thrusts to the lower legs (VIII): -2 CP
• Thrusts to the arms and hands (XIV): -1 CP
• Cuts (including blunt swung attacks) to the lower legs (I) vs. shields: + 1 CP
• Cuts/Bashes to the arms/hands (VII): +1 CP
• Missile Weapon attack to the head (XIII) -2 MP
• Missile Weapon attack to the lower legs or arms (-3 MP)
Missile Weapon attacks that miss due to a tie may strike another, nearby region of the body at Seneschal discretion.

Cutting Damage Tables

Cutting Damage Table: Zone I, right and left (Lower legs)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Foot	BL: 0 Shock: 3-WP Pain: 2-WP *Surface wound*	BL: 1 Shock: 3 Pain: 3-WP *Some flesh and bruised bone.*	BL: 2 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP *Deep cut, hit bone (knockdown +3).*	BL: 5 Shock: 6 Pain: 6-WP *Broken foot (roll knockdown +1).*	BL: 10 Shock: 9 Pain: 8-WP *Foot totally destroyed. Instant knockdown.*
2-4	Shin and lower leg	BL: 0 S: 3 P: 2-WP *Ow...ow ow ow damnit ow ow ow ow ow!.*	BL: 2 S: 5 P: 6-WP *Bone chipped (knockdown at +2).*	BL: 4 S: 5 P: 6-WP *As a Level two, plus you are swept off your feet automatically.*	BL: 8 S: 7 P: 8-WP *Broken (knockdown at -2).*	BL: 13 S: 9 P: 10-WP *Limb is destroyed. Instant knockdown.*
5-6	Knee and nearby areas	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 3-WP *Glancing blow.*	BL: 2 Shock: 5 Pain: 5-WP *Solid blow; funny-bone effect.*	BL: 4 Shock: 8 Pain: 8-WP *Torn ligament or similar wound; roll knockdown.*	BL: 8 Shock: 10 Pain: 13-WP *Shattered knee. Roll for knockdown at -5.*	BL: 13 Shock: 12 Pain: 12-WP *Destroyed or torn off at knee. Instant knockdown.*

Cutting Damage Table: Zone II, right and left (Upper legs)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Knee and nearby areas	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 3-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 2 Shock: 5 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect"	BL: 4 Shock: 8 Pain: 8-WP "Torn ligament or similar wound; roll knockdown."	BL: 8 Shock: 10 Pain: 13-WP "Shattered knee. Roll for knockdown at -5."	BL: 13 Shock: 12 Pain: 12-WP "Destroyed or torn off at knee. Instant knockdown."
3-5	Thigh	BL: 1 S: 4-WP P: 3-WP "Light laceration."	BL: 2 S: 2 P: 4-WP "Deeper laceration, including torn muscle (knockdown +2)."	BL: 4 S: 5 P: 6-WP "Serious flesh wound, including torn tendons; roll knockdown."	BL: 8 S: 10 P: 10-WP "More serious damage and bleeding, including a broken femur (Knockdown -4)."	BL: 12 S: 12 P: 12-WP "Compound fracture. Instant knockdown."
6	Hip	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 3-WP "Small cut, some blood."	BL: 2 Shock: 3 Pain:5-WP "Deeper cut."	BL: 4 Shock: 5 Pain: 7-WP "Near dislocation and chipping." Roll knockdown	BL: 8 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Cracked hipbone and dislocation. (-2 to knockdown)"	BL: 12 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Weapon stuck, hip broken, lots of blood (knocked down)."

Advice from an Old Bladeslinger

- Hitting an opponent is easy—but *not* getting hit is hard. Allocate more dice to defense than to offence, and always be willing to evade should things get tight.
- Use maneuvers carefully—many of them can spell the doom of your opponent when executed at the right moment. But beware—he might have a few up his sleeve, as well.
- Whenever you fight someone that you have never fought before—especially in a duel or one-on-one setting—be extra cautious. You don't know how many dice he's got in his pool, and finding out the hard way usually leads to death.
- Ambushes, surprise attacks, dirty tricks, and guerilla tactics have been working for thousands of years. They'll work for you, too.

Cutting Damage Location Table: Zone III (Horizontal swing right and left)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Hip	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 3-WP "Small cut, some blood."	BL: 2 Shock: 3 Pain:5-WP "Deeper cut."	BL: 4 Shock: 5 Pain: 7-WP "Near dislocation and chipping."	BL: 8 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Cracked hipbone and dislocation. (-2 to knockdown)"	BL: 10 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Weapon struck, hip broken, lots of blood (knocked down)."
2-3	Upper (2) and Lower (3) Abs	BL: 1 S: 2 P: 5-WP "Light laceration."	BL: 3 S: 4 P: 6-WP "Deeper laceration, including torn muscle."	BL: 7 S: 8 P: 10-WP "Internal damage equivalent to a hernia."	BL: 10 S: 10 P: 12-WP "More serious internal damage and bleeding."	BL: 20 S: All P: All "Total disembowelment. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."
4-5	Ribcage	BL: 0 Shock: 2 Pain: 4-WP "Light slash"	BL: 2 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Long slash"	BL: 3 Shock: 8 Pain: 7-WP "Winded, maybe with a broken rib." Roll knockdown	BL: 9 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Cracked ribs and internal bleeding. May lose consciousness."	BL: 20 CP loss from shock and pain is total, as weapon is lodged in chest. Death is imminent.
6	Arms	Go to Zone VII (Arms), below.				

Cutting Damage Location Table: Zone IV (Overhand right and left)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Upper arm and Shoulder	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 4-WP "Small cut, some blood."	BL: 2 Shock: 4 Pain:5-WP "Deeper cut."	BL: 4 Shock: 5 Pain: 8-WP "Serious flesh wound."	BL: 8 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Broken bones, serious blood."	BL: 13 Shock: 13 Pain: 14-WP "Total loss of limb, etc..."
3	Chest Cross-cut	BL: 0 Shock: 2 Pain: 4-WP "Light slash"	BL: 2 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Long slash"	BL: 3 Shock: 8 Pain: 7-WP "Winded, maybe with a broken rib." Roll knockdown	BL: 9 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Cracked ribs and internal bleeding. May lose consciousness."	BL: 20 CP loss from shock and pain is total, as weapon is lodged in chest. Death is imminent.
4	Neck	BL: 1 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Flesh wound."	BL: 4 Shock: 7 Pain: 10-WP "Chipped or cracked vertebrae."	BL: 9 Shock: 10 Pain: 11-WP "Crushed or slashed larynx."	BL: 20 Shock: 13 Pain: 14-WP "Cut jugular, maybe throat, too."	Total or near-total decapitation. Instant Death.
5	Head (lower), including the face.	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 0 "Classic scarring cut."	BL: 2 S: 8 P: 5-WP "Nasty teeth, cheek, or nose slash that will leave long-term effects."	BL: 5 S: 8 P: 7-WP "Roll 1d6 for feature loss: 1-2 eye; 3 nose; 5 whole ear; 6 partial ear."	BL: 7 S: 10 P: 10-WP "Jaw has been shattered, with a concussion. May lose consciousness."	Death. Destruction of cerebellum. Really messy.
6	Head (upper)	BL: 3 S: 3 P: 4-WP "Scalp cut. After 1d6 exchange blood seeps into eyes: CP reduced by 1/3 until wiped away (giving another 1d6 exchanges, and so on...)"	BL: 3 S: 7 P: 8-WP "Dizziness and bleeding. May lose consciousness (+1 to roll)."	BL: 4 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Cracked skull. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."	BL: 10 S: All P: All "Skull is shattered. Character is unconscious and may not recover (or will have brain damage if he does)."	Real, real messy. Instant Death.

Cutting Damage Location Table: Zone V (Vertical swing)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-3	Head (upper)	BL: 3 S: 3 P: 4-WP "Scalp cut. After 1d6 exchange blood seeps into eyes: CP reduced by 1/3 until wiped away (giving another full exchange, and so on…)"	BL: 3 S: 7 P: 8-WP "Dizziness and bleeding. May lose consciousness (+1 to roll)."	BL: 4 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Cracked skull. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."	BL: 10 S: All P: All "Skull is shattered. Character is unconscious and may not recover (or will have brain damage if he does)."	Real, real messy. Instant Death.
4	Head (lower), including the face.	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 0 "Classic scarring cut."	BL: 2 S: 8 P: 5-WP "Nasty teeth, cheek, or nose slash that will leave long-term effects."	BL: 5 S: 8 P: 7-WP "Roll 1d6 for feature loss: 1-2 eye; 3 nose; 5 whole ear; 6 partial ear."	BL: 7 S: 10 P: 10-WP "Jaw has been shattered, with a concussion. May lose consciousness."	Death. Destruction of cerebellum. Really messy.
5-6	Shoulders	BL: 1 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 4-WP "Small cut, some blood."	BL: 2 Shock: 4 Pain:5-WP "Deeper cut."	BL: 5 Shock: 6 Pain: 7-WP "Serious flesh wound."	BL: 10 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Broken collarbone, serious blood."	BL: 25 Shock: 10 Pain: 11-WP "Broken collarbone and ribs, heavy bleeding"

Cutting Damage Table: Zone VI (Upward swing)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-3	Inner thigh	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 4-WP "Light Laceration"	BL: 6 Shock: 3 Pain: 5-WP "Deeper laceration. Blood loss is now more serious."	BL: 9 Shock: 5 Pain: 16-WP "Deep cut, hit bone. Meat! (roll knockdown)."	BL: 12 Shock: 7 Pain: 8-WP "Some large blood vessels have been hit: serious bleeding."	BL: 17 Shock: 7 Pain: 10-WP "A major artery has been severed. Death is likely."
4	Groin (Male)	BL: 6 S: 9 P: 9-WP "Yup…Sorry. Pain drops by 5 after 1d6-1 minutes."	BL: 9 S: 9 P: 10-WP "Worse; much more blood."	BL: 12 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Surface organs destroyed. May lose consciousness (-2)"	BL: 18 S: All P: All "Instant loss of consciousness. The damage is real, real bad."	BL: 20 S: All P: All "Weapon destroys pelvis and lodges just below the navel. Death is imminent."
	Groin (Female)	BL: 2 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Small cut, some blood."	BL: 6 Shock: 3 Pain:5-WP "Deeper cut."	BL: 9 Shock: 5 Pain: 9-WP "Near dislocation of hip from beneath and chipping."	BL: 15 Shock: 8 Pain: 11-WP "Cracked pelvis and dislocation. (-2 to knockdown)"	As for men, above.
5	Abdomen	BL: 1 S: 2 P: 5-WP "Light laceration."	BL: 3 S: 4 P: 6-WP "Deeper laceration, including torn muscle."	BL: 7 S: 8 P: 10-WP "Internal damage equivalent to a hernia."	BL: 10 S: 10 P: 12-WP "More serious internal damage and bleeding."	BL: 20 S: All P: All "Total disembowelment. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."
6	Chest	BL: 0 Shock: 2 Pain: 4-WP "Light slash"	BL: 2 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Long slash"	BL: 3 Shock: 8 Pain: 7-WP "Winded, maybe with a broken rib." Roll knockdown	BL: 9 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Cracked ribs and internal bleeding. May lose consciousness."	BL: 20 CP loss from shock and pain is total, as weapon is lodged in chest. Death is imminent.

Cutting Damage: Zone VII, right and left (Arms)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Hand	BL: 0 Shock: 7-WP Pain: 4-WP "Surface graze. May drop anything held in hand."	BL: 2 Shock: 3 Pain: 4-WP "Some flesh (like the palm) and bruised bone. May drop at -3."	BL: 6 Shock: 9-WP Pain: 6-WP "Broken. Instantly drop hand-held items."	BL: 8 Shock: 8 Pain: 9-WP "Lost 1d6-2 (min 1) fingers. Drop any item instantly."	BL: 10 Shock: 10 Pain: 11-WP "Hand destroyed or cut off."
2-3	Forearm	BL: 0 S: 4-WP P: 4-WP "Grazed."	BL: 3 S: 5 P: 7-WP "Bone chipped (May drop hand-held items)."	BL: 4 S: 5 P: 7-WP "As a Level two, plus you automatically drop anything held."	BL: 6 S: 8 P: 8-WP "Arm broken, and lots of blood."	BL: 12 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Arm destroyed, perhaps cut off."
4	Elbow	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect. May drop items in that hand."	BL: 3 Shock: 6 Pain: 6-WP "Torn ligament or similar wound; instantly drop items in that hand."	BL: 6 Shock: 8 Pain: 9-WP "Elbow shattered."	BL: 12 S: 10 P: 10-WP "Arm torn off at elbow."
5-6	Upper arm and Shoulder	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 4-WP "Small cut, some blood."	BL: 1 Shock: 4 Pain:5-WP "Deeper cut."	BL: 4 Shock: 5 Pain: 8-WP "Serious flesh wound."	BL: 6 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Broken bones, serious blood."	BL: 12 Shock: 13 Pain: 14-WP "Total loss of limb etc..."

More Advice from an Old Bladeslinger

- Strike for unarmored body parts. If your opponent is using a lot of dice to protect his unprotected parts, throw several attacks at different, armored parts of his body. Change location frequently. When he has gotten into a rhythm of allocating a steady quantity of dice against your attacks, go for the unarmored part again. Your opponent is likely to stick to his pattern, and you will strike his unprotected flesh.
- If this fails, resort to Half-sword techniques or grappling. When he is pinned, stick him with a dagger.
- Always carry a dagger, especially if your primary weapons tend to be longer.
- You can't parry an arrow, nor can you dodge a curse. Unless you are close and fast, flee from sorcerers and archers. Catch them later with their guard down.
- Save Luck dice for defense. Not getting hit is more important than hitting hard.
- Take advantage of longer weapons, and close range when against them.
- Use terrain to lower your opponent's Combat Pool. Take higher ground, work him into a corner, or push him toward a cliff edge.
- A little leather on the arms and legs, and chain on the chest, costs little money and has no CP loss.
- Never go into a big battle without armor (or at least a shield). Even the greatest swordsman can't defend all sides at once.
- Never get into a fight without a plan, reinforcements, or a way out.

Puncture Damage Tables

Puncture Wound Damage Table: Zone VIII (Lower legs, right and left)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Foot	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 4-WP "Surface wound"	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 5-WP "Some flesh and bruised bone."	BL: 2 Shock: 4 Pain: 6-WP "Sunk deep (knockdown +3)."	BL: 3 Shock: 7 Pain: 7-WP "Hit ankle bones (roll knockdown -1)."	BL: 3 Shock: 7 Pain: 7-WP "As previous, with instant knockdown."
2-4	Shin and lower leg	BL: 0 S: 4 P: 4-WP "Ow...ow ow ow dammit ow ow ow ow ow!."	BL: 1 S: 5 P: 6-WP "Bone chipped (knockdown at +2)"	BL: 2 S: 5 P: 6-WP "As a Level two, plus you are swept off your feet automatically."	BL: 3 S: 5 P: 6-WP "Totally passes through, hindering movement (knockdown at -2)."	BL: 4 S: 7 P: 8-WP "Bone damaged in addition to Lvl. 4. Instant knockdown."
5	Knee and nearby areas	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect"	BL: 3 Shock: 6 Pain: 6-WP "Torn ligament or similar wound; roll knockdown."	BL: 4 Shock: 7 Pain: 8-WP "Dislocated or otherwise jacked up knee. Roll knockdown at -2."	BL: 6 Shock: 9 Pain: 11-WP "Shattered knee. Roll for knockdown at -5."
6	Passed between legs	Sorry, you missed. It happens. Don't thrust for the feet that often...they move a lot. Try the body.				

Puncture Wound Damage Table: Zone IX (Upper legs, right and left)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Knee and nearby areas	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect"	BL: 3 Shock: 6 Pain: 6-WP "Torn ligament or similar wound; roll knockdown."	BL: 4 Shock: 7 Pain: 8-WP "Dislocated or otherwise jacked up knee. Roll knockdown at -2."	BL: 6 Shock: 9 Pain: 11-WP "Shattered knee. Roll for knockdown at -5."
2-5	Thigh	BL: 0 S: 4-WP P: 4-WP "Light laceration."	BL: 1 S: 3 P: 4-WP "Deeper puncture, including torn muscle (knockdown +2)."	BL: 2 S: 5 P: 5-WP "Serious flesh wound, including torn tendons; roll knockdown."	BL: 4 S: 5 P: 6-WP "More serious damage and bleeding, including some bone damage (Knockdown -2)."	BL: 8 S: 5 P: 7-WP "As four, but with more serious bleeding (a blood vessel was hit)."
6	Hip	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 4-WP "Small cut, some blood."	BL: 1 Shock: 3 Pain:5-WP "Deeper puncture."	BL: 3 Shock: 5 Pain: 9-WP "Near dislocation and chipping."	BL: 6 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Cracked hipbone and dislocation. (-2 to knockdown)"	BL: 10 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Weapon stuck in hip, lots of blood (knocked down)."

Optional house rule: To prevent characters from attacking the same spot every time impose a 1-die CP penalty if they use the same attack maneuver and or location more than once in a row.

Puncture Wound Damage Table: Zone X (Pelvic region)

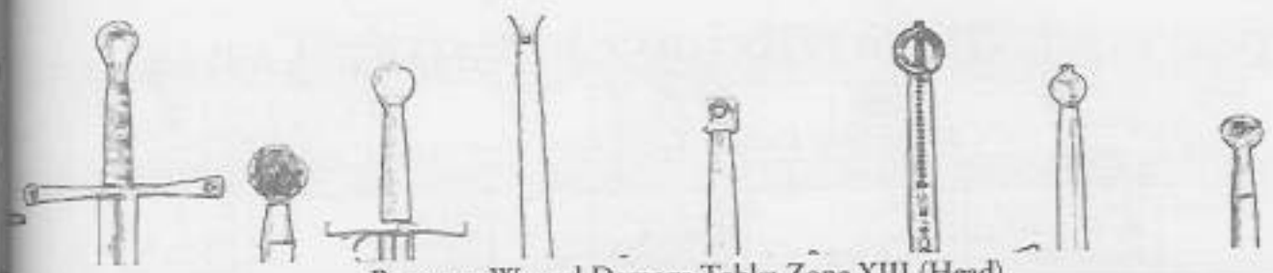
Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Hip	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 4-WP "Small cut, some blood."	BL: 1 Shock: 3 Pain:5-WP "Deeper puncture."	BL: 3 Shock: 5 Pain: 9-WP "Near dislocation and chipping."	BL: 6 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Cracked hipbone and dislocation. (-2 to knockdown)"	BL: 10 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Weapon stuck in hip, loss of blood (knocked down)."
3-4	Groin (Male)	BL: 6 S: 7 P: 9-WP "Yup…Sorry. Pain drops by 10 after 1d6-1 min."	BL: 8 S: 8 P: 10-WP "Worse; much more blood."	BL: 10 S: 10 P: 15-WP "Shish-kabob. May lose consciousness (-2)"	BL: 12 S: All P: All "Instant loss of consciousness. The damage is real, real bad."	BL: 15 S: All P: All "As Level Five to the abdomen, above."
	Groin (Female)	Count as Lower Abdomen (on 3) or Hip (on 4)				
5-6	Lower Abdomen	BL: 0 S: 3 P: 4-WP "Light laceration, no puncture."	BL: 6 S: 4 P: 6-WP "Internal damage equivalent to a hernia."	BL: 8 S: 7 P: 9-WP "Belly wound—internal bleeding is going to be a problem.	BL: 12 S: 10 P: 12-WP "More serious internal damage and bleeding. Some internal organs are in trouble."	BL: 18 S: All P: All "Serious damage to internal organs and heavy bleeding. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."

Puncture Wound Damage Table: Zone XI (Belly thrust)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-5	Lower Abdomen	BL: 0 S: 3 P: 4-WP "Light laceration, no puncture."	BL: 6 S: 4 P: 6-WP "Internal damage equivalent to a hernia."	BL: 8 S: 7 P: 9-WP "Belly wound—internal bleeding is going to be a problem.	BL: 12 S: 10 P: 12-WP "More serious internal damage and bleeding. Some internal organs are in trouble."	BL: 18 S: All P: All "Serious damage to internal organs and heavy bleeding. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."
6	Flesh to the side	BL: 3 S: 5 P: 6-WP *Pierced body without hitting any major organs, mostly just flesh and muscle. It hurts and bleeds, but probably isn't fatal.*				

Puncture Wound Damage Table: Zone XII (Chest)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Under the ribs (upper abdomen)	BL: 0 S: 3 P: 4-WP "Light laceration, no puncture."	BL: 8 S: 5 P: 6-WP "Internal damage equivalent to a hernia."	BL: 10 S: 8 P: 10-WP "Belly wound—internal bleeding is going to be a problem.	BL: 13 S: 13 P: 15-WP "More serious internal damage and bleeding. Some internal organs (diaphragm or liver) are in trouble."	BL: 19 S: All P: All "Serious damage to internal organs (heart or lungs) and heavy bleeding. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."
3-6	Chest	BL: 0 S: 9-WP P: 5-WP "Just muscle—no organs yet, as attack is stopped short by bone."	BL: 4 S: 4 P: 6-WP "Deeper puncture, including torn muscle."	BL: 8 S: 7 P: 8-WP "Deep, but survivable; wound hits deep, but misses any major organs."	BL: 19 S: 13 P: 13-WP "Punctured lung, with serious internal bleeding; death from drowning is very likely."	Pierced heart. Death is nearly instantaneous.



Puncture Wound Damage Table: Zone XIII (Head)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Collar and throat	BL: 2 S: 4 P: 5-WP "Right below the collarbone; hurts, but not fatal."	BL: 6 S: 7 P: 6-WP "Right above the collarbone."	BL: 7 S: 13 P: 15-WP "Pierced the throat, missing the jugular; still very nasty."	BL: 15 S: All P: 20-WP "Pierced the throat, destroying the larynx and jugular."	Weapon pierces throat and punctures the cerebellum or lower brain. Death is instantaneous.
3-6	Face (3-4) and head (5-6)	BL: 1 S: 7-WP P: 4-WP "Grazed cheek or temple. May lose consciousness (roll at + 2")."	BL: 2 S: 6 P: 6-WP "As a graze, only deeper. The skull is still unbroken; may lose consciousness."	BL: 8 S: 10 P: 9-WP "Pierces part of face, missing the brain, but still causing significant damage (KO -3)."	BL: 19 S: 13 P: 13-WP "Part of brain destroyed—permanent mental damage results (-1d6-1 to all mental attributes) Unconscious."	Pierced brain. Death is nearly instantaneous, coming from massive brain damage and hemorrhaging.

Puncture Wound Damage Table: Zone XIV (Arm thrust)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Hand	BL: 0 Shock: 6-WP Pain: 5-WP "Surface graze. May drop anything held in hand."	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 4-WP "Some flesh (like the palm) and bruised bone. May drop at -3."	BL: 2 Shock: 9-WP Pain: 6-WP "Pierced hand totally. May drop hand-held items (at -4)."	BL: 5 Shock: 7 Pain: 9-WP "Hit wrist bones (instantly drop whatever may be held in that hand)."	BL: 9 Shock: 8 Pain: 9-WP "As previous, a slashed artery or vein."
2-3	Forearm	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 4-WP "Grazed."	BL: 1 S: 5 P: 6-WP "Bone chipped (May drop hand-held items)."	BL: 2 S: 5 P: 6-WP "As a Level two, plus you automatically drop anything held."	BL: 6 S: 7 P: 8-WP "Totally passes through, causing greater blood loss and forcing any item to be dropped."	BL: 7 S: 8 P: 9-WP "As lvl 4, with more blood and some bone damage."
4	Elbow	BL: 0 Shock: 6-WP Pain: 5-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 6-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect. May drop items in that hand."	BL: 3 Shock: 6 Pain: 7-WP "Torn ligament or similar wound; instantly drop items in that hand.	BL: 5 Shock: 8 Pain: 9-WP "Dislocated or otherwise jacked up elbow. Use of arm temporarily lost."	BL: 7 Shock: 9 Pain: 11-WP "Shattered elbow. Arm now useless."
5-6	Upper arm	BL: 0 S: 4-WP P: 4-WP "Light laceration."	BL: 1 S: 3 P: 5-WP "Deeper puncture, including torn muscle."	BL: 3 S: 5 P: 6-WP "Serious flesh wound, including torn tendons."	BL: 5 S: 6 P: 7-WP "More serious damage and bleeding, including some bone damage."	BL: 7 S: 7 P: 8-WP "As four, but with more serious bleeding (a blood vessel was hit)."

Bludgeoning (Blunt/Bashing) Damage Tables

Bludgeoning Damage Table: Zone I (Lower legs)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Foot	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 4-WP "Surface wound"	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 5-WP "Some bruised flesh and bone."	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 6-WP "Hit bone, may be broken (knockdown +3)."	BL: 1 Shock: 5 Pain: 6-WP "Broken foot (roll knockdown +1)."	BL: 2 Shock: 8 Pain: 9-WP "Foot totally mashed. Instant knockdown."
2-4	Shin and lower leg	BL: 0 S: 4 P: 5-WP "Ow...ow ow ow damnit ow ow ow ow ow!."	BL: 0 S: 5 P: 6-WP "Bone chipped (knockdown at +2)"	BL: 0 S: 6 P: 7-WP "As a Level two, plus you are swept off your feet automatically."	BL: 2 S: 8 P: 9-WP "Broken (knockdown at –3)."	BL: 5 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Compound Fracture. Instant knockdown."
5-6	Knee and nearby areas	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect"	BL: 2 Shock: 8 Pain: 8-WP "Torn ligament or similar wound; roll knockdown."	BL: 6 Shock: 10 Pain: 10-WP "Shattered knee. Roll for knockdown at –5."	BL: 8 Shock: 15 Pain: 12-WP "Compound fracture at knee. Instant knockdown."

Bludgeoning Damage Table: Zone II (Upper legs)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Knee and nearby areas	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect"	BL: 2 Shock: 8 Pain: 8-WP "Torn ligament or similar wound; roll knockdown."	BL: 6 Shock: 10 Pain: 10-WP "Shattered knee. Roll for knockdown at –5."	BL: 8 Shock: 15 Pain: 12-WP "Compound fracture at knee. Instant knockdown."
3-5	Thigh	BL: 0 S: 4-WP P: 4-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a bruise."	BL: 0 S: 5 P: 4-WP "Serious 'Charlie horse' (knockdown +2)."	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 7-WP "Bone is bruised, maybe broken; roll knockdown."	BL: 3 S: 8 P: 9-WP "Femur is broken, and muscle is pulverized (Knockdown –4)."	BL: 7 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Compound fracture. Instant knockdown."
6	Hip	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 4-WP "Thump."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain:6-WP "Nearly dislocates leg, bone is bruised."	BL: 2 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Leg dislocated, hip cracked; instant knockdown."	BL: 10 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Hip mangled badly, broken bone fragments cause bleeding."	BL: 20 Shock: All Pain: 13-WP "Pelvis destroyed, with massive bleeding."

Recommended Reading and Resources

Books:

Clements, John. *Medieval Swordsmanship: Illustrated Methods and Techniques*. Boulder: Paladin Press, 1998.

Renaissance Swordsmanship: Illustrated Methods and Techniques. Boulder: Paladin Press, 1998.

These two texts are the best modern manuals on the actual physical practice of medieval and renaissance martial arts currently available. A real eye-opener for enthusiasts, gamers, re-enactors, and martial artists.

Malory, Sir Thomas. *Le Morte D'Arthur*. 2 vols. Janet Cowen, ed. 1969 London: Penguin Classics, 1986.

Bludgeoning Damage Location Table: Zone III (Upper Body)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Hip	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 4-WP "Thump."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain:6-WP "Nearly dislocates leg, bone is bruised."	BL: 2 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Leg dislocated, hip cracked; instant knockdown."	BL: 10 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Hip mangled badly, broken bone fragments cause bleeding."	BL: 20 Shock: All Pain: 13-WP "Pelvis destroyed, with massive bleeding."
2-3	Upper (2) and Lower (3) Abs	BL: 0 S: 3 P: 5-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a nasty bruise."	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 6-WP "Slightly winded, may lose consciousness (Roll at + 3)."	BL: 3 S: 10 P: 8-WP "Badly winded, may vomit and/or lose consciousness."	BL: 8 S: 10 P: 12-WP "More serious internal damage and bleeding."	BL: 15 S: All P: 15-WP "Internal damage is real nasty. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."
4-5	Ribcage	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 4-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a nasty bruise."	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow, ribs and muscle will be bruised."	BL: 1 Shock: 8 Pain: 6-WP "Winded, maybe with a broken rib. May lose consciousness (+2)"	BL: 3 Shock: 10 Pain: 9-WP "Cracked ribs and serious winding. May lose consciousness."	BL: 9 Shock: All Pain: 15-WP Broken ribs (perhaps several) and some internal damage and bleeding. May lose consciousness (roll at –3)
6	Go to Zone VII (Arms), below.					

Musashi, Miyamoto. *A Book of Five Rings.*

Sapkowsi, Andrzej. *Swiat Krola Artura.* Warsaw (Warszawa): superNOVA, 1998.
This is the best book on Arthurian lore and the background mythology available from a standpoint of scope and readability, written by Poland's premiere fantasy author. Unfortunately, it's in Polish.

Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*

Talhoffer, Hans. German *Fechtbuch* of 1467. Available in a translation by Mark Rector under the title *Medieval Combat.* Boulder: Paladin Press, 1999.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings.* Houghton Mifflin. Available in editions from 1954 to the present.
The recent film from New Line Cinema, directed by Peter Jackson, is worth seeing a few times as well.

Yamamoto Tsunetomo. *Hagakure.*

Films:
13th Warrior. Dir. John McTiernan
Braveheart. Dir. Mel Gibson.
Gladiator. Dir. Ridley Scott.
Ladyhawke. Dir. Richard Donner.
Legend. Dir. Ridley Scott.
The Dark Crystal. Dir. Jim Henson
The Seven Samurai. Dir Akira Kurosawa. (Anything by Kurosawa is good)
And there are so many more...

Bludgeoning Damage Location Table: Zone IV (Overhand right and left)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Upper arm and Shoulder	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Thump."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 5-WP "Charlie horse."	BL: 1 Shock: 7 Pain: 8-WP "Broken humerus (hairline). May drop item in that hand."	BL: 5 Shock: 10 Pain: 9-WP "Broken bones, including collar bone or worse."	BL: 10 Shock: 13 Pain: 12-WP "Entire shoulder caves in. Lots of blood and bone fragments."
3	Upper body	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 4-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a nasty bruise."	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow, ribs and muscle will be bruised."	BL: 1 Shock: 8 Pain: 6-WP "Winded, maybe with a broken rib. May lose consciousness (+2)"	BL: 3 Shock: 10 Pain: 9-WP "Cracked ribs and serious winding. May lose consciousness."	BL: 9 Shock: All Pain:15-WP Broken ribs (perhaps several) and some internal damage and bleeding. May lose consciousness (roll at -3
4	Neck	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Glancing blow, crick in neck remains."	BL: 1 Shock: 7 Pain: 9-WP "Damage to throat and air tracts."	BL: 3 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Crushed larynx. May lose consciousness or suffocate."	BL: 3 Shock: All Pain: 15-WP "Cracked vertebrae and other throat problems."	Neck instantly broken.
5	Head (lower), including the face.	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 0 "Gonna leave a shiner… May lose consciousness (roll at + 3)"	BL: 1 S: 8 P: 6-WP "Broken nose or lost teeth (or both)." May lose consciousness (roll at +1)	BL: 4 S: 10 P: see below "Bones near eye are smashed; eye is considered lost. Lose ½ of current pool (Unc at –1)."	BL: 6 S: 12 P: 9-WP "Jaw has been shattered, with a concussion. May lose consciousness (-3)."	Death. Destruction of cerebellum. Really messy.
6	Head (upper)	BL: 0 S: 8-WP P: 5-WP "Glancing blow, some dizziness, may lose consciousness (+2 to roll)."	BL: 3 (internal) S: 8 P: 8-WP "Concussion. May lose consciousness."	BL: 4 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Cracked skull. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."	BL: 6 S: All P: All "Skull is shattered. Character is unconscious and may not recover (or will have brain damage if he does)."	Real, real messy. Instant Death.

Glossary of Game Terms

This list contains definitions for many important terms used in The Riddle of Steel.

Armor Penalty: A negative modifier applied to the Combat Pool and Move Attribute when armor is worn. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Armor Value: The amount of protection a piece of armor provides to the area that it covers. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

ATN (Attack Target Number): Each individual weapon has its own ATN, which is the Target Number used for Proficiency Tests involving attack during both Melee and Missile Combat. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Attribute: A measure of a character's prowess in the three major spheres: Temporal, Mental, and Spiritual. A fourth group, the Derived Attributes, is used in Combat and Sorcery. See **Book One: In the Beginning.**

Bout: A single match or duel between two or more opponents. A Bout begins as soon as the Seneschal declares that time is broken into Rounds (such as during combat), and ends when the fighting stops and time returns to abstract measurement. See **Book Four**

Bludgeoning Damage Location Table: Zone V (Vertical swing)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Shoulders	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Thump."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 5-WP "Charlie horse."	BL: 1 Shock: 7 Pain: 8-WP "Broken humerus (hairline). May drop item in that hand."	BL: 5 Shock: 10 Pain: 9-WP "Broken bones, including collar bone or worse."	BL: 10 Shock: 13 Pain: 12-WP "Entire shoulder caves in. Lots of blood and bone fragments."
3	Head (lower), including the face.	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 0 "Gonna leave a shiner… May lose consciousness (roll at +3)"	BL: 1 S: 8 P: 6-WP "Broken nose or lost teeth (or both)." May lose consciousness (roll at +1)	BL: 4 S: 10 P: see below "Bones near eye are smashed; eye is considered lost. Lose ½ of current pool (Unc at –1)."	BL: 6 S: 12 P: 9-WP "Jaw has been shattered, with a concussion. May lose consciousness (-3)."	Death. Destruction of cerebellum. Really messy.
4-6	Head (upper)	BL: 0 S: 8-WP P: 5-WP "Glancing blow, some dizziness, may lose consciousness (+2 to roll)."	BL: 3 (internal) S: 8 P: 8-WP "Concussion. May lose consciousness."	BL: 4 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Cracked skull. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."	BL: 6 S: All P: All "Skull is shattered. Character is unconscious and may not recover (or will have brain damage if he does)."	Real, real messy. Instant Death.

The Codex of Battle

Character: There are two kinds of Characters in The Riddle of Steel. Player Characters (often referred to as "PCs" or simply "Characters") are the imaginary persona's whose actions are controlled by a player. Non-Player Characters (or "NPCs") are those imaginary persons and entities controlled by the Seneschal.

Character Sheet: A piece of paper used to record your character's traits, attributes, skills, belongings, and progress. While any scrap of paper will do, we recommend using the one in the appendix. See **Book Two: The Birth of a Legend.**

Combat Pool (CP): A pool of dice used during melee combat. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Combat, Melee: Any up-close form of physical combat, such as brawling, sword fighting, or jousting. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Combat, Missile: Long-range combat using weapons such as thrown rocks and spears, bows and crossbows, and so forth. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Command Pool: A pool of dice used when leading groups in mass combat. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Damage Rating (DR): The amount of damage a weapon inflicts prior to adding the number of attack successes. The combination of DR and the margin of attack successes create the Wound Rating. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Dice: The Riddle of Steel uses two kinds of polygonal dice: several 10-sided (d10) and six-sided (d6). See **Book One: In the Beginning.**

DTN (Defense Target Number): Each individual weapon has its own DTN, which is the Target Number used for Proficiency Tests involving defense during Combat. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Encumbrance: An abstract and approximate measurement of how much stuff a character is carrying, and how it effects him in physical feats (such as combat and movement). See **Book Five: The Laws of Nature.**

Exchange: One half of a Round. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Fatigue: A measurement of how physically tired or exhausted your character has become. Fatigue affects combat and movement. See **Book Five: The Laws of Nature.**

Flaws: Weaknesses or disadvantages that make a character unique from others. See **Book Three: Training.**

Gifts: Strengths or advantages that make a character unique from others. See **Book Three: Training.**

Bludgeoning Damage Location Table: Zone V (Vertical swing)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Shoulders	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Thump."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 5-WP "Charlie horse."	BL: 1 Shock: 7 Pain: 8-WP "Broken humerus (hairline). May drop item in that hand."	BL: 5 Shock: 10 Pain: 9-WP "Broken bones, including collar bone or worse."	BL: 10 Shock: 13 Pain: 12-WP "Entire shoulder caves in. Lots of blood and bone fragments."
3	Head (lower), including the face.	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 0 "Gonna leave a shiner… May lose consciousness (roll at +3)"	BL: 1 S: 8 P: 6-WP "Broken nose or lost teeth (or both)." May lose consciousness (roll at +1)	BL: 4 S: 10 P: see below "Bones near eye are smashed; eye is considered lost. Lose ½ of current pool (Unc at –1)."	BL: 6 S: 12 P: 9-WP "Jaw has been shattered, with a concussion. May lose consciousness (-3)."	Death. Destruction of cerebellum. Really messy.
4-6	Head (upper)	BL: 0 S: 8-WP P: 5-WP "Glancing blow, some dizziness, may lose consciousness (+2 to roll)."	BL: 3 (internal) S: 8 P: 8-WP "Concussion. May lose consciousness."	BL: 4 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Cracked skull. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."	BL: 6 S: All P: All "Skull is shattered. Character is unconscious and may not recover (or will have brain damage if he does)."	Real, real messy. Instant Death.

Halfling: Any character born of both human and siehe or fey parents. Also called a man-elf or half-elf.

Insight: This trait tracks a character's growth and progression. It is a vital factor in creating a new character, as a higher Insight can have a profound effect on how powerful a new PC will be upon creation. See **Book Three: Training.**

Maneuver: A specific action within a Proficiency, such as an individual attack, defense, or flashy move. See **Book Three: Training.**

Margin of Success: The number of successes remaining after an opponent's successes have been subtracted from the total original successes on any Contested Roll and most Proficiency Tests. See **Book One: In the Beginning.**

Missile Pool: A pool of dice used in long-range combat. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Modifier: A positive or negative adjustment to any die roll. Sometimes called "bonuses" or "penalties." All modifiers in The Riddle of Steel are applied to the number of dice rolled; thus a +1 modifier means "add one extra die to this roll," and a –1 modifier means "roll one die less on this roll." See **Book One: In the Beginning.**

Pain: A modifier applied to the Combat, Missile, and Sorcery Pools due to wounds taken or other harmful stimulus. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Player: A real-life person, who controls an imaginary persona, called a Character or PC.

Proficiency: A measure of training, skill, and ability with weapons and fighting styles. See **Book Three: Training.**

Round: The unit of time used in situations involving combat. One Round is roughly one to two seconds long. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Seneschal: A special player who leads the game, acting as storyteller and referee. Often called the "GM" or Game Master.

Shock: A form of Pain that lasts for one Round, applying severe negative modifiers. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Siehe, Greater: Called the Fey, these are the most powerful and noble of the elves and faeries.

Siehe, Lesser: These elves, faeries, sprites, and trolls are less powerful than their noble cousins are. They delight in mischief and troublemaking, and love to meddle in human affairs.

Skill: Any trade, study, or craft. There are many skills

Bludgeoning Damage Table: Zone VI (Upward swing)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-3	Inner thigh	BL: 0 S: 4-WP P: 4-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a bruise."	BL: 0 S: 5 P: 4-WP "Serious 'Charlie horse' (knockdown +2)."	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 7-WP "Bone is bruised, maybe broken; roll knockdown."	BL: 3 S: 8 P: 9-WP "Femur is broken, and muscle is pulverized (Knockdown –4)."	BL: 7 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Compound fracture. Instant knockdown."
4	Groin (Male)	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 9-WP "Yup…Sorry. Pain drops by 10 after 1d6-1 min."	BL: 0 S: 9 P: 10-WP "As Level one, but worse. May lose consciousness."	BL: 3 S: 11 P: 15-WP "Surface organs destroyed. May lose consciousness (-2)"	BL: 18 S: All P: All "Instant loss of consciousness. The damage is real, real bad."	BL: 20 S: All P: All "Weapon destroys pelvis. Death is imminent."
	Groin (Female)	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 4-WP "Thump."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 16-WP "Nearly dislocates leg, bone is bruised."	BL: 3 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Leg dislocated, hip cracked; instant knockdown."	BL: 10 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Hip mangled badly, broken bone fragments cause bleeding."	BL: 20 Shock: All Pain: 13-WP "Pelvis destroyed, with massive bleeding."
5	Abdomen	BL: 0 S: 3 P: 5-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a nasty bruise."	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 6-WP "Slightly winded, may lose consciousness (Roll at + 3)."	BL: 3 S: 10 P: 8-WP "Badly winded, may vomit and/or lose consciousness."	BL: 8 S: 10 P: 12-WP "More serious internal damage and bleeding."	BL: 15 S: All P: 15-WP "Internal damage is real nasty. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."
6	Head (lower), including the face.	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 0 "Gonna leave a shiner… May lose consciousness (roll at + 3)"	BL: 1 S: 8 P: 6-WP "Broken nose or lost teeth (or both)." May lose consciousness (roll at +1)	BL: 4 S: 10 P: see below "Bones near eye are smashed; eye is considered lost. Lose ½ of current pool (Unc at –1)."	BL: 6 S: 12 P: 9-WP "Jaw has been shattered, with a concussion. May lose consciousness (-3)."	Death. Destruction of cerebellum. Really messy.

and each one is quantified by a Skill Rating (SR). Skills work in combination with Attributes. See **Book Three: Training.**

Skill Rating: A specialized form of Target Number (TN), used in skill checks. See **Book Three: Training.**

Social Class: Weyrth's many nations divide their peoples into diverse social classes. One's class affects wealth, education, legal rights, and social circles. Five primary classes are recognized in some form or another throughout Weyrth's many nations: Slave/Bondsman, Peasant, Freeman, Gentry, and Lord. The first three are considered "common," the last two "noble." See **Book Seven: The World of Weyrth.**

Sorcery: The ability to bend the nine powers of magic to one's will. Sorcery is practiced by wizards, magicians, witches, druids, and the Fey (from whom it is said to originate). See **Book Six: Sorcery.**

Sorcery Pool: A pool of dice used by sorcerers in the creation and casting of spells. See **Book Six: Sorcery.**

Stacking: Any time a die rolls a 10 that die may be re-rolled and then added. There is no limit to the number of times a die may Stack. For example, if a die rolled 10, it would then be thrown again. If the second roll produced a 6, then the total for that die would be 16. If that same roll had been another 10, then it would have been rolled over, allowing Target numbers as high as 20, 30, and greater to be achieved (albeit very rarely). See **Book One: In the Beginning.**

Target Number (TN): The minimum number that must be rolled on one die in order to generate one success.. See **Book One: In the Beginning.**

Test: Any time dice are rolled against a Target Number (TN). See **Book Three: In the Beginning.**

Bludgeoning Damage: Zone VII (Swing to arms)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Hand	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Surface graze. May drop anything held in hand."	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 5-WP "Bruised bone. May drop hand-held items (roll at –3)."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 5-WP "Smashed fingers. Drop any item instantly."	BL: 0 Shock: 7 Pain: 7-WP "Hand broken. Instantly drop hand-held items."	BL: 2 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Hand is mashed badly"
2-3	Forearm	BL: 0 S: 4-WP P: 4-WP "Glancing thump."	BL: 2 S: 5 P: 6-WP "Bone chipped (May drop hand-held items)."	BL: 3 S: 5 P: 6-WP "As a Level two, plus you automatically drop anything held."	BL: 6 S: 7 P: 8-WP "Arm broken, and lots of blood."	BL: 12 S: 10 P: 10-WP "Arm destroyed, perhaps cut off."
4	Elbow	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect. May drop items in that hand."	BL: 2 Shock: 6 Pain: 6-WP "Torn ligament or similar wound; instantly drop items in that hand.	BL: 5 Shock: 8 Pain: 9-WP "Elbow shattered."	BL: 12 S: 20 P: 10-WP "Arm torn off at elbow."
5-6	Upper arm and Shoulder	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Thump."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 5-WP "Charlie horse."	BL: 1 Shock: 7 Pain: 8-WP "Broken humerus (hairline). May drop item in that hand."	BL: 5 Shock: 10 Pain: 9-WP "Broken bones, including collar bone or worse."	BL: 10 Shock: 13 Pain: 12-WP "Entire shoulder caves in. Lots of blood and bone fragments."

Bludgeoning Wound Damage Table: Zone VIII (thrust to lower legs)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Foot	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 4-WP "Surface wound"	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 5-WP "Some bruised flesh and bone."	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 6-WP "Hit bone, may be broken (knockdown +3)."	BL: 0 Shock: 6 Pain: 8-WP "Broken foot (roll knockdown +1)."	BL: 1 Shock: 9 Pain: 10-WP "Foot totally mashed. Instant knockdown."
2-4	Shin and lower leg	BL: 0 S: 4 P: 4-WP "Ow...ow ow ow dammit ow ow ow ow ow!."	BL: 0 S: 5 P: 6-WP "Bone chipped (knockdown at +2)"	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 7-WP "As a Level two, plus you are swept off your feet automatically."	BL: 2 S: 8 P: 10-WP "Broken (knockdown at –2)."	BL: 5 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Compound Fracture. Instant knockdown."
5	Knee and nearby areas	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect"	BL: 2 Shock: 8 Pain: 8-WP "Torn ligament or similar wound; roll knockdown."	BL: 6 Shock: 10 Pain: 10-WP "Shattered knee. Roll for knockdown at –5."	BL: 8 Shock: 15 Pain: 12-WP "Compound fracture at knee. Instant knockdown."
6	Passed between legs	Sorry, you missed. It happens. Don't thrust for the feet that often...they move a lot. Try the body.				

Bludgeoning Wound Damage Table: Zone IX (Thrust upper legs)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Knee and nearby areas	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect"	BL: 2 Shock: 8 Pain: 8-WP "Torn ligament or similar wound; roll knockdown."	BL: 6 Shock: 10 Pain: 10-WP "Shattered knee. Roll for knockdown at –5."	BL: 8 Shock: 15 Pain: 12-WP "Compound fracture at knee. Instant knockdown."
2-5	Thigh	BL: 0 S: 4-WP P: 4-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a bruise."	BL: 0 S: 5 P: 4-WP "Serious 'Charlie horse' (knockdown +2)."	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 7-WP "Bone is bruised, maybe broken; roll knockdown."	BL: 3 S: 8 P: 9-WP "Femur is broken, and muscle is pulverized (Knockdown –4)."	BL: 7 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Compound fracture. Instant knockdown."
6	Hip	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 4-WP "Thump."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain:6-WP "Nearly dislocates leg, bone is bruised."	BL: 2 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Leg dislocated, hip cracked; instant knockdown. "	BL: 10 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Hip mangled badly, broken bone fragments cause bleeding."	BL: 20 Shock: All Pain: 13-WP "Pelvis destroyed, with massive bleeding."

Bludgeoning Wound Damage Table: Zone X (Pelvic/groin thrust)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Lower Abdomen	BL: 0 S: 3 P: 5-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a nasty bruise."	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 6-WP "Slightly winded, may lose consciousness (Roll at + 3)."	BL: 3 S: 10 P: 8-WP "Badly winded, may vomit and/or lose consciousness."	BL: 8 S: 10 P: 12-WP "More serious internal damage and bleeding."	BL: 15 S: All P: 15-WP "Internal damage is real nasty. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."
3-4	Groin (Male)	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 9-WP "Yup…Sorry. Pain drops by 10 after 1d6-1 min."	BL: 0 S: 9 P: 10-WP "As Level one, but worse. May lose consciousness."	BL: 3 S: 11 P: 15-WP "Surface organs destroyed. May lose consciousness (-2)"	BL: 18 S: All P: All "Instant loss of consciousness. The damage is real, real bad."	BL: 20 S: All P: All "Weapon destroys pelvis. Death is imminent."
	Groin (Female)	Count as Lower Abdomen (on 3) or Hip (on 4)				
5-6	Hip	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 4-WP "Thump."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain:6-WP "Nearly dislocates leg, bone is bruised."	BL: 2 Shock: 8 Pain: 10-WP "Leg dislocated, hip cracked; instant knockdown. "	BL: 10 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Hip mangled badly, broken bone fragments cause bleeding."	BL: 20 Shock: All Pain: 13-WP "Pelvis destroyed, with massive bleeding."

Vagaries: The sorcerous counterpart to Proficiencies. There are nine vagaries, each of which controls some aspect of the creation and use of magic. See **Book Six: Sorcery.**

Wound Level: Often simply referred to as "wounds." Any lasting damage sustained by a character or object. All wounds in The Riddle of Steel have a ranking from 1 to 5, 1 being a light degree of damage, 5 leading to death and dismemberment. See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Wound Rating: Any damage done to a target prior to calculating in armor and Toughness (TO). See **Book Four: The Codex of Battle.**

Bludgeoning Wound Damage Table: Zone XI (Belly thrust)

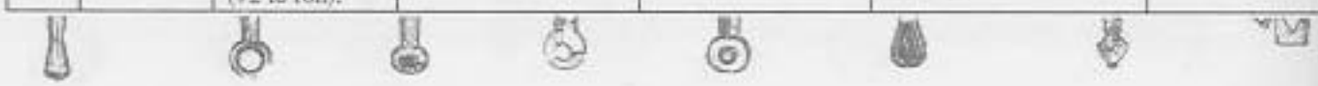
Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-6	Lower Abdomen	BL: 0 S: 3 P: 5-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a nasty bruise."	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 6-WP "Slightly winded, may lose consciousness (Roll at +3)."	BL: 3 S: 10 P: 8-WP "Badly winded, may vomit and/or lose consciousness."	BL: 8 S: 10 P: 12-WP "More serious internal damage and bleeding."	BL: 15 S: All P: 15-WP "Internal damage is real nasty. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."

Bludgeoning Wound Damage Table: Zone XII (Chest)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1-2	Under the ribs (upper abdomen)	BL: 0 S: 3 P: 5-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a nasty bruise."	BL: 0 S: 7 P: 6-WP "Slightly winded, may lose consciousness (Roll at +3)."	BL: 3 S: 10 P: 8-WP "Badly winded, may vomit and/or lose consciousness."	BL: 8 S: 10 P: 12-WP "More serious internal damage and bleeding."	BL: 15 S: All P: 15-WP "Internal damage is real nasty. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."
3-6	Chest	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 4-WP "Glancing blow—will leave a nasty bruise."	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Solid blow, ribs and muscle will be bruised."	BL: 1 Shock: 8 Pain: 6-WP "Winded, maybe with a broken rib. May lose consciousness (+2)"	BL: 3 Shock: 10 Pain: 9-WP "Cracked ribs and serious winding. May lose consciousness."	BL: 9 Shock: All Pain: 15-WP Broken ribs (perhaps several) and some internal damage and bleeding. May lose consciousness (roll at -3)

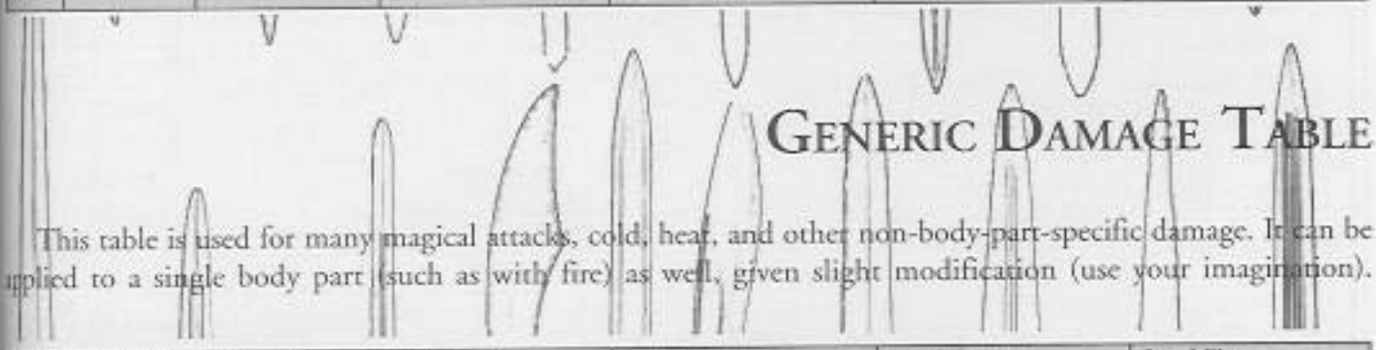
Bludgeoning Wound Damage Table: Zone XIII (Head thrust)

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Neck	BL: 0 Shock: 4 Pain: 5-WP "Glancing blow, crick in neck remains."	BL: 1 Shock: 7 Pain: 9-WP "Damage to throat and air tracts."	BL: 3 Shock: 10 Pain: 12-WP "Crushed larynx. May lose consciousness or suffocate."	BL: 4 Shock: All Pain: 15-WP "Cracked vertebrae and other throat problems."	Neck instantly broken.
2-4	Face (2-4) and head (5-6)	BL: 0 S: 5-WP P: 0 "Gonna leave a shiner... May lose consciousness (roll at +3)"	BL: 1 S: 8 P: 6-WP "Broken nose or lost teeth (or both)." May lose consciousness (roll at +1)	BL: 3 S: 10 P: 7-WP "Bones near eye are smashed; eye is considered lost. Lose ½ of current pool (Unc at -1)."	BL: 6 S: 12 P: 9-WP "Jaw has been shattered, with a concussion. May lose consciousness (-3)."	Death. Destruction of cerebellum. Real messy.
5-6	Head (upper)	BL: 0 S: 8-WP P: 5-WP "Glancing blow, some dizziness, may lose consciousness (+2 to roll)."	BL: 3 (internal) S: 8 P: 8-WP "Concussion. May lose consciousness."	BL: 3 S: 10 P: 12-WP "Cracked skull. May lose consciousness (-3 to roll)."	BL: 7 S: All P: All "Skull is shattered. Character is unconscious and may not recover (or will have brain damage if he does)."	Real, real messy. Instant Death.



Bludgeoning Wound Damage Table: Zone XIV (Arms thrust)

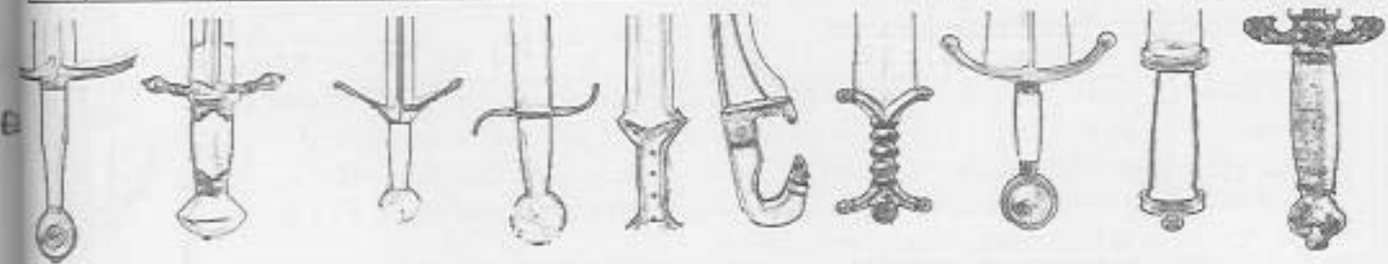
Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
1	Hand	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 0 "Glancing blow. May drop anything held in hand."	BL: 0 Shock: 3 Pain: 4-WP "Some flesh (like the palm) and bruised bone. May drop at –3."	BL: 0 Shock: 7-WP Pain: 5-WP "As Two, but with a good funny-bone effect. May drop held items."	BL: 1 Shock: 7 Pain: 8-WP "Fingers are broken. Drop any item instantly."	BL: 3 Shock: 9 Pain: 9-WP "Hand broken."
2-3	Forearm	BL: 0 S: 4-WP P: 0 "A bruise…"	BL: 0 S: 3 P: 4-WP "Bone bruised (May drop hand-held items at –3)."	BL: 1 S: 5 P: 6-WP "As Two, but with a good funny-bone effect. May drop held items."	BL: 2 S: 8 P: 8-WP "Bone broken, arm is useless (drop automatically)."	BL: 3 S: 10 P: 10-WP "Serious break."
4	Elbow	BL: 0 Shock: 5-WP Pain: 4-WP "Glancing blow"	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 4-WP "Solid blow; funny-bone effect. May drop items in that hand."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 6-WP "Mashed elbow; instantly drop items in that hand.	BL: 1 Shock: 8 Pain: 7-WP "Broken."	BL: 3 Shock: 9 Pain: 10-WP "Elbow shattered."
5-6	Upper arm and Shoulder	BL: 0 Shock: 4-WP Pain: 4-WP "Thump."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 5-WP "Charlie horse."	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 6-WP "Bruised bone. May drop item in that hand."	BL: 1 Shock: 7 Pain: 7-WP "Broken humerus (hairline). May drop item in that hand."	BL: 5 Shock: 10 Pain: 10-WP "Broken bones, including collar bone or worse."



Generic Damage Table

This table is used for many magical attacks, cold, heat, and other non-body-part-specific damage. It can be applied to a single body part (such as with fire) as well, given slight modification (use your imagination).

Roll	Location	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
☺	☺	BL: 0 Shock: 2 Pain: 5-WP	BL: 0 Shock: 5 Pain: 8-WP	BL: 0 Shock: 8 Pain: 12-WP	BL: 0 Shock: 11 Pain: 16-WP	BL: 0 Shock: All Pain: 20-WP

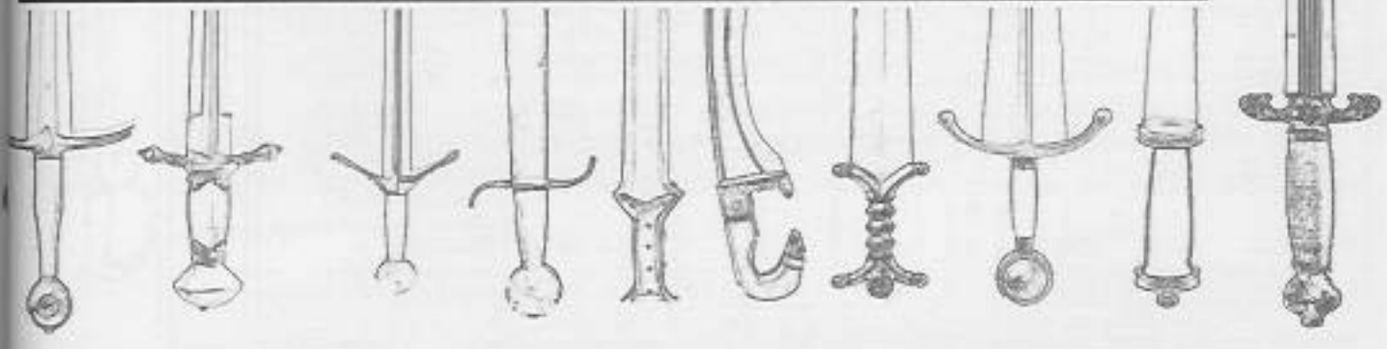


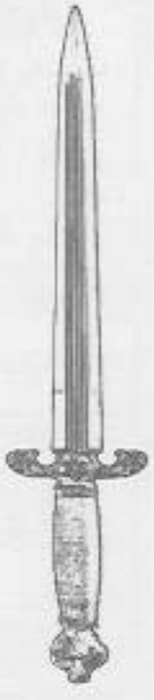
Appendix Two: Combined Weapon Statistics

Swords and the Like

Weapon	Grip, Length	Attack TN		Defensive TN	Damage	
		Cut	Thrust		Cut	Thrust
Arming Sword	**1H, medium**	**6**	**7**	**6**	**ST +1**	**ST**
Arming Swords are typical "knightly" swords—one-handed tools meant for a variety of situations. 33"-45", 2-3 lbs.						
Bastard Sword	**2H, long**	**6**	**6**	**6**	**ST + 1**	**ST + 2**
	1H, long	**7**	**7**	**7**	**ST**	**ST + 1**
The Bastard Sword is a fearsome anti-armor sword with a wide, stiff blade specially geared towards thrusting through plate armors. This sacrifices cutting ability to some degree. 48", 3 lbs.						
Cut & Thrust	**1H, medium**	**6**	**6**	**6**	**ST**	**ST + 1**
Cut & Thrust style swords are a direct descendent of the knightly arming sword. They are popular with bladeslingers and many light calvarly and infantry. Compoud hilts are popular, as are finger-rings and other extra hand protection due to the increased use of the thrust. 36"-48", 2-3 lbs.						
Dagger (long)	**1H, hand**	**8**	**7**	**9 (7)**	**ST – 2**	**ST**
Daggers come in many varieties. The rondel dagger, often a sidearm of warriors in battle, was unedged and had a triangular shaped blade. It had a small, round guard, a nasty point, It was designed to punch through openings in armor and deliver a nasty, hard-to-heal wound. The poniard was used as an off-hand weapon, usually with a cut and thrust sword or a rapier. It had an edge for slicing, a sturdy cruciform hilt so that it could bind other weapons, and a nasty point for sticking it in the eye, groin, arm pit, neck, hand, mouth, etc. of the opponent. The DTN for a rondel is 9, for a poniard 7 (5 against rapiers). 18', 1-2 lbs or less.						
Doppelhander	**2H, very long**	**7**	**8**	**8**	**ST + 4**	**ST + 1**
	***2H, long**	**7**	**6**	**6**	**ST + 2**	**ST + 2**
The Doppelhander is the true two-handed sword, as long as a man and used by anti-pike formations and the banner guard of Stahl and Oustenreich. When at longer ranges it is swung about not unlike a great sword. As the crush of battle increases, the back hand chokes up beneath the "second guard" (protruding spikes several inches below the cross-guard on the blade), employing pole-arm and half-sword techniques, including much thrusting. 72", 6-8 lbs.						
Estoc	**2H, ½-sword**	**7**	**7**	**6**	**ST + 1***	**ST + 2**
The Estoc is a purebred anti-armor sword. Consisting of a long triangular "blade" and a cruciform hilt, it is really little more than a sharp steel pole with a handle and cross-guard. It is designed to club opponents until closing-in is possible, after which it is used with "half-swording" techniques to break through armor for the kill. 48", 3-4 lbs. *Damage is blunt and bashing, not cutting.						

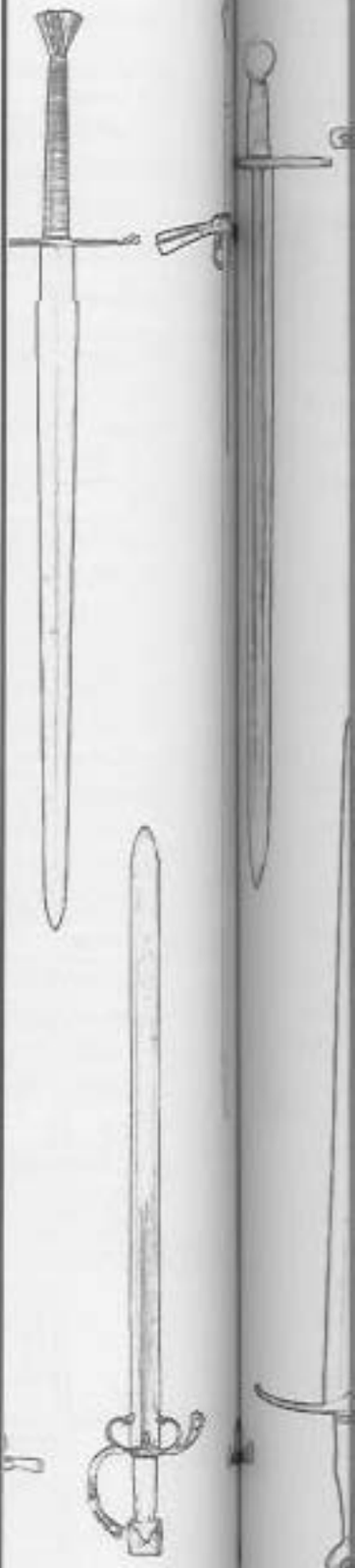
Weapon	Grip, Length	Attack TN		Defensive TN	Damage	
		Cut	Thrust		Cut	Thrust
Great Sword	**2H, long**	**6**	**7**	**7**	**ST + 3**	**St +1**
Great Swords are the largest of true swords, wielded with two hands and capable of terrifying blows. Longer and slower than shorter swords, they are still capable of impressive speed and finesse. The Scots Claymore (popular with the Highlanders of Angharad and Picti) is a fine example. 55" 3-5 lbs.						
Long Sword	**2H, long**	**6**	**7**	**6**	**ST + 2**	**ST + 1**
	1H, long	**7**	**8**	**7**	**ST + 1**	**ST**
Longswords are extremely popular in Stahl, Farrenshire, and Cyrinthmeir due to their substantial versatility. Long and powerful they may be used with one hand or two, can be used with half-swording techniques, and are still small enough to wear on the hip. 48", 2½ -3 lbs.						
Rapier	**1H, medium**	**6**	**5**	**8 (5)**	**ST –3**	**ST + 2**
Rapiers, while nearly useless in the crush of battle, are fearsome and deadly when encountered on the street or in a duel. Quick, agile, and lethal, a single thrust of a rapier will kill with little strength. The light build of the weapon is unsuitable for parrying larger swung weapons (hence the high DTN), but perfectly well-suited to blocking thrusts from most single-handed weapons such as other rapiers, arming swords, and the cut & thrust (DTN 5). 46"-56", 2-4 lbs.						
Saber/Scimitar	**1H, medium**	**6**	**6**	**6**	**ST +2***	**ST**
Sabers and scimtars are curved single-handed swords common in the east of Weyrth. Commonly used as cavalry weapons, they are capable of wicked cuts and slashes, though that same curvature slightly complicates the mechanics of thrusting. 36" 2-3 lbs. * Damage ST + 1 vs. soft armors, ST vs. metal armors.						
Short Sword	**1H, short**	**7**	**5**	**7**	**ST**	**ST**
Smaller than an arming sword, longer than a dagger, short swords are common emergency side-arms for archers, pikemen, and wealthier commoners. Like the now out-dated Imperial Gladius, short swords are quick on the thrust and capable of short, sudden cuts and chops. 20"-33", 2 lbs.						
Falchion	**1H, medium**	**6**	**8**	**7**	**ST + 2**	**ST**
The falchion is little more than a large meat-cleaver. Curved on one side and relatively heavy, it is a superb weapon against lighter armors such as leather or chain. 36" 4-5 lbs.						





Axes and Mass Weapons

Weapon	Grip, Length	Attack TN	Defensive TN	Damage	Notes
Club	**2H, medium**	**6**	**7**	**ST + 1b**	+ *x* shock (*x* = Dam Lvl)
	1H, medium	**6**	**8**	**STb**	
A simple hickory stick or other hard wood can be an effective weapon in the hand of most any trained fighter. 30"-50", 1-3 lbs.					
Flail	**1H, medium**	**8**	**15**	**ST + 2b**	+ *x* –1 shock (*x* = Dam Lvl) +1 Damage vs. hard armors +4 Blood Loss Automatically ignores 2 shield/blocking successes
This incredibly nasty weapon consists of a short pole attached to a steel ball with a length of chain between the two. Particulary adept at wrapping around shields and bashing armor, flails can be dangerous to an unexperienced user as well (any fumble causes damage as if each "1" rolled was a successful attack on one's self). 30-36", 2-4 lbs.					
Footman's Pick	**1H, medium**	**6**	**8**	**ST + 2p**	+2 Damage vs. hard armors May get stuck
A short, pointy version of the war-hammer used against opponents in metal armors. 24" 1-2 lbs.					
Hand Axe	**2H, medium**	**7**	**8**	**ST + 2c**	+ *x* shock (*x* = Dam Level) +1 Damage vs. hard armors
	1H, medium	**7**	**10**	**ST + 1c**	
Common as both an infantry and cavalry weapon, this ancient favorite is as effective against armored knights as it is against regular infantry. 24"-36", 2-3 lbs.					
Mace	**2H, medium**	**6**	**8**	**ST + 2b**	+1 + *x* shock (*x* = Dam Lvl) +1 Damage vs. hard armors
	1H, medium	**6**	**10**	**ST +1b**	
An iron-shod club, usually bearing a large iron or steel head in a ball or flower shape. 24"-30", 2-4 lbs.					
Maul	**2H, long**	**8**	**10**	**ST + 3b**	+1 + *x* shock (*x* = Dam Lvl) +1 Damage vs. hard armors
This near-mythical battle-version of a sledge-hammer is awkward and difficult to fight with, but capable of significant damage. 36"-54", 5-8 lbs.					
Morning Star	**2H, medium**	**6**	**8**	**ST + 2b**	+ *x* –1 shock (*x* = Dam Lvl) +1 Damage vs. hard armors +4 Blood Loss
	1H, medium	**6**	**10**	**ST + 1b**	
A meaner version of the mace, this weapon bears large spikes meant to draw blood in addition to blunt trauma. 24"-30", 2-4 lbs.					
Pole Axe	**2H, long**	**7**	**7**	**ST + 3c**	+ *x* shock (*x* = Dam Level) +2 Damage vs. hard armors
A noble weapon, the pole axe is an excellent anti-armor or dueling weapon. Techniques similar to the "half-sword" allow many close-combat possibilities in addition to simply swinging and cutting. 45-55", 3-5 lbs.					
Warhammer	**1H, medium**	**6**	**8**	**ST + 1b**	+1 + *x* shock (*x* = DL) +1 Damage vs. hard armors
	1H, medium	**6**	**8**	**ST+ 2p**	+2 Damage vs. hard armors May get stuck
Often misunderstood, the warhammer is an anti-armor weapon with a narrow blunt head on one side and a sharp pick-like head on the other. In addition to maces and axes, the warhammer is a favorite of heavy cavalry and those that fight them. 24"-30", 2-3 lbs.					
Warflail	**2H, long**	**8**	**16**	**ST + 4b**	+ *x* –1 shock (*x* = DL) +1 Damage vs. hard armors +4 Blood Loss Automatically ignores 2 shield/blocking successes
A two-handed variation of the flail, with a longer pole and chain. 36"-48", 4-8 lbs.					



Spears, Staves, and Other Pole Weapons

Weapon	Grip, Length	Attack TN	Defensive TN	Damage	Notes
Pike	**2H, extr. long**	7	9	**ST +2p**	May be set against charges (ATN 6, + 2 damage)
An extremely long spear used at the front of battles in group formations. Especially effective against charging cavalry (ATN 6, + 2 damage). 14' long.					
Lance (Heavy Cavalry)	**1H, very long**	7	15	***ST +2p**	*Uses Horses ST for damage; only used when charging
Few battlefield weapons are as devastating as the long and heavy lance of armored cavalry. Often adorned with banners, this long spear-like weapon is tucked under the right arm prior to charging. It is rarely useful after the first charge, as 50% of the time such a charge will break it. 11'-14' long.					
Lance (Light Cavalry)	**1H, very long**	7	9	***ST +1p**	*Uses Horses' ST *if charging;* use own ST otherwise
Essentially just a long spear, this light lance may be used in charges in the heat of battle. 6'-9' long.					
Long Spear	**2H, long or very long**	7	8	**ST +2p**	May be set against charges (ATN 6, + 2 damage)
Shorter than the pike, this spear is also good against cavalry charges. 7'-10' long.					
Short Spear	**2H, medium**	7	7	**ST +2p**	May be thrown like a javelin
	1H, medium	7	10	**ST p**	
Spears of this sort are common in all degrees of technology in the hands of mounted soldiers and infantry alike. 3'-4' long.					
Short Staff	**2H, long or very long**	6	7	**ST + 2b**	None
Short when compared to a long spear or pike, the "short staff" is actually quite long, and is perhaps one of the most versatile and deadly weapons available, despite such common origins. 8'-9' long.					
Spear	**2H, long**	6	7	**ST +2**	May be thrown (-3 MP)
Spears are amongst the earliest of weapons. Due to their effectiveness they've never gone out of style on the battlefield. 5'-7' long.					
Quarterstaff	**2H, long**	6	6	**ST +1b**	None
A shorter version of the "short staff," quarterstaves are popular as walking sticks and everyday item-turned weapon on the street or in the woods. 5'-7' long.					
Bill	**2H, long**	7	7	**ST +3c**	None
A long, curved blade (often with a spike at the end) attached to a very long pole. A versatile and dangerous weapon. 8' long.					
Halberd	**2H, long**	7	8	**ST +3c ST +1p**	None
A broad axe-head backed and topped with a hammer or spike, affixed to a very long pole. 6' long.					

NATURAL WEAPONS

Weapon	Length	Attack TN	Defensive TN	Damage	Notes
Bite (Long Teeth/Fangs)	**Hand**	**7**	**N/A**	**ST – 3c**	Following a successful bite the jaws begin to crush, doing **STb** damage until the victim succeeds in a contest of ST.
These figures are for the long, sharp, predatory teeth found on bears, wolves, and other mythic and real animals.					
Claws Talons	**Hand**	**5**	**6**	**ST – 3c *ST –2c**	Only thrusting attacks may be defended—otherwise take damage to the deflecting limb!
Claws are shorter than talons, generally under and inch long and good for tearing. *Talons, as found on many larger creatures, are often as long as daggers and tear, cut, and pierce with great effectiveness.					
Kick	**Hand**	**7**	**8**	**ST –1b**	Only other kicking attacks may be defended—otherwise take damage to the deflecting limb!
This form of attack is particularly popular against shins, knees, and the groin. Kicking above waist level is uncommon and more difficult (+1 ATN).					
Punch /Hand/ Grappling	**Hand**	**5**	**6**	**ST – 2b**	Only thrusting attacks may be defended—otherwise take damage to the deflecting limb!
The addition of a metal gauntlet, "iron kuckles" or a "knuckleduster" adds 1 damage.					

Bows

Crossbow
4-6 rounds preparation time:
Pull arrow: 0 (on ground), 2 (from quiver); knock and draw: 4
Refresh begins once the arrow is cocked.
2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one second at Reflex/TN of 8
Attack Target Number (ATN): 5
Effective ST: 4
DR (damage rating): ST +2p (6 total)
Range: +1 ATN per 10 yards
Crossbows are powerful and easy to use, though reloading one is slow. Damage is figured using the bow's ST, not the user's.

Longbow
2-4 rounds preparation time:
Pull arrow: 0 (on ground), 2 (from quiver); knock and draw: 2
Refresh begins with drawing the arrow.
2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one second at Reflex/TN of 8
Attack Target Number (ATN): 7
Effective ST: 5 (no one with a lower ST may use this bow)
DR (damage rating): ST +3p (8 total)
Range: +1 ATN per 25 yards
Longbows, common in Anglland, are about 6' long and incredibly powerful. Their primary drawback is the significant training necessary for their proper use. Damage is figured using the bow's ST, not the user's.

Short Bow
2-4 rounds preparation time:
Pull arrow: 0 (on ground), 2 (from quiver); knock and draw: 2
Refresh begins with drawing the arrow.
2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one second at Reflex/TN of 8
Attack Target Number (ATN): 6
Effective ST: 4
DR (damage rating): ST +1p (5 total)
Range: +1 ATN per 10 yards
Common in almost every culture, short bows range from 3-4 feet in unstrung length. Damage is figured using the bow's ST, not the user's.

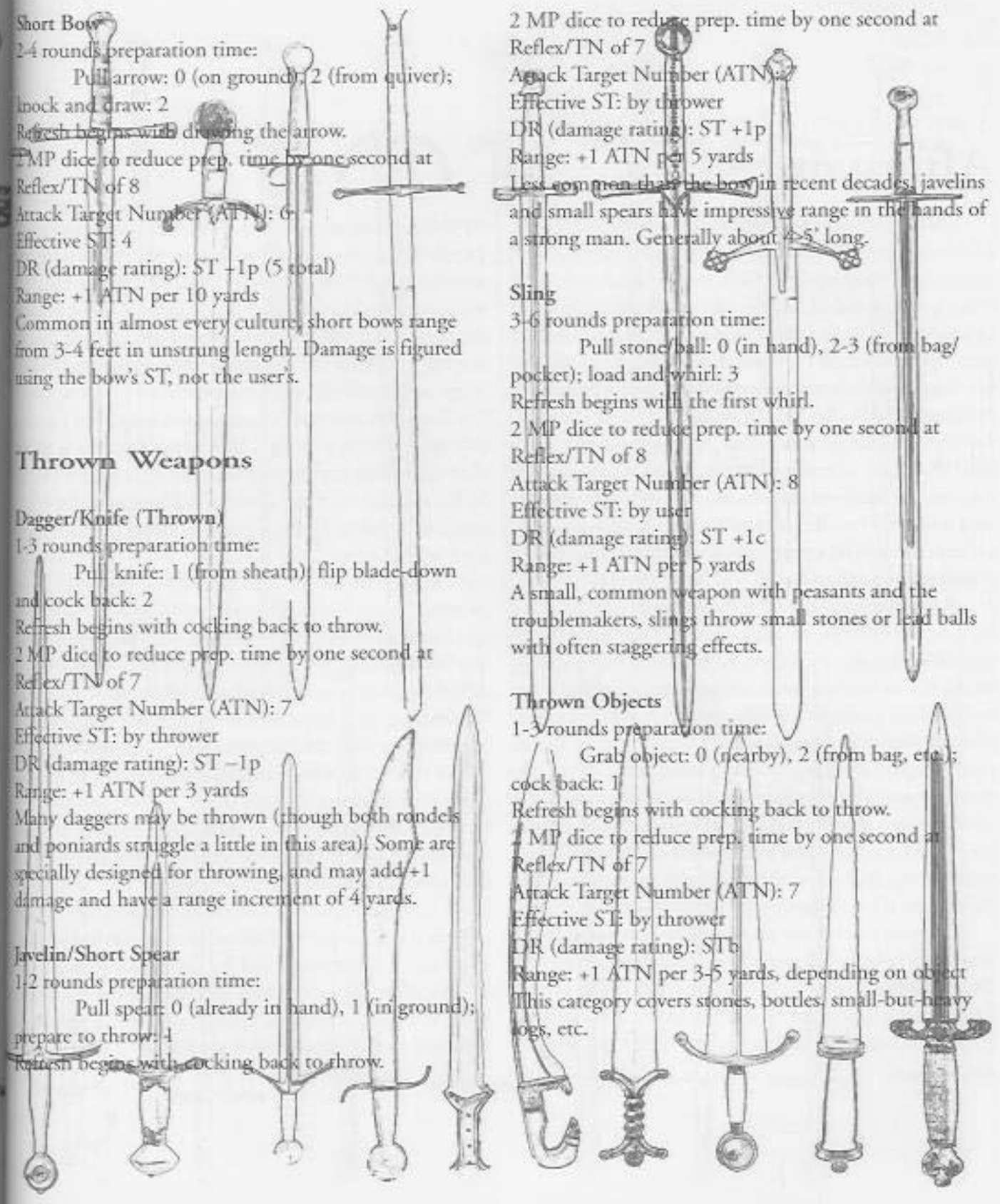
Thrown Weapons

Dagger/Knife (Thrown)
1-3 rounds preparation time:
Pull knife: 1 (from sheath); flip blade-down and cock back: 2
Refresh begins with cocking back to throw.
2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one second at Reflex/TN of 7
Attack Target Number (ATN): 7
Effective ST: by thrower
DR (damage rating): ST –1p
Range: +1 ATN per 3 yards
Many daggers may be thrown (though both rondels and poniards struggle a little in this area). Some are specially designed for throwing, and may add +1 damage and have a range increment of 4 yards.

Javelin/Short Spear
1-2 rounds preparation time:
Pull spear: 0 (already in hand), 1 (in ground); prepare to throw: 1
Refresh begins with cocking back to throw.
2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one second at Reflex/TN of 7
Attack Target Number (ATN): 7
Effective ST: by thrower
DR (damage rating): ST +1p
Range: +1 ATN per 5 yards
Less common than the bow in recent decades, javelins and small spears have impressive range in the hands of a strong man. Generally about 4-5' long.

Sling
3-6 rounds preparation time:
Pull stone/ball: 0 (in hand), 2-3 (from bag/pocket); load and whirl: 3
Refresh begins with the first whirl.
2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one second at Reflex/TN of 8
Attack Target Number (ATN): 8
Effective ST: by user
DR (damage rating): ST +1c
Range: +1 ATN per 5 yards
A small, common weapon with peasants and the troublemakers, slings throw small stones or lead balls with often staggering effects.

Thrown Objects
1-3 rounds preparation time:
Grab object: 0 (nearby), 2 (from bag, etc.); cock back: 1
Refresh begins with cocking back to throw.
2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one second at Reflex/TN of 7
Attack Target Number (ATN): 7
Effective ST: by thrower
DR (damage rating): STb
Range: +1 ATN per 3-5 yards, depending on object
This category covers stones, bottles, small-but-heavy logs, etc.



Afterword

The book you now hold is actually a revised edition of the original *The Riddle of Steel*, which was released in a very small run of about 300 copies. Printed in early March for the GAMA Trade Show, TROS experienced instant popularity. It seemed that every RPG website that went to the GAMA show mentioned us among the top ten "curiosities" or notable exhibits. About two months later to the day, the first printing of TROS sold out, having made its way into the UK, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France, Canada, Sweden, in addition to excellent sales in the US over the internet and through a handful of retailers. TROS became a best seller at many local game shops in Utah, Arizona, North Carolina, and other places.

A lot of this success is attributed, I believe, to a very long thread at RPG.net that opened up (or broke out, I should say) right after the GAMA Trade Show. I have heard that it was the most viewed thread on RPG.net ever (I don't know if that's true or not, but it *was* a huge thread). Shortly thereafter an official TROS forum opened up on the Forge (www.indie-rpgs.com), and the game's popularity continued to grow. I have spent a lot of time—too much, probably—browsing those forums and trying my best to be a part of the worldwide TROS community. It's been a lot of fun, and in many ways I'm having the time of my life.

A lot of folks have asked where this sudden and seemingly fanatical interest and devotion concerning The Riddle of Steel came from. I don't really know myself, but I have a few ideas. It really goes back to why the game was created in the first place—to fill a gap. Fantasy RPGs constitute the oldest genre for our hobby, and most games that most of us will ever be aware of have attempted to provide some kind of ultimate FRPG experience. Unfortunately many of us became disillusioned. Fantasy games weren't believable any more; they didn't let us tell the stories that we wanted. Then there was the whole mechanics issue...

I recall a session many years ago where I was playing a fighter. Our party had gotten involved in a fairly dramatic battle on the edge of a mountainous cliff. We had been hacking away at critters of some sort for quite some time when I got bored, and asked the GM how high up we were.

"About 100 feet to the chasm floor," he said, trying to scare me.

I did some quick math and realized that I could take the fall head-first and still only lose about 30-40 hit points (playing the "averages"...bad, I know). I had 60-something, so I leapt. After hitting the bottom and standing up only 34 hit points less I *ran* off. Orcs up above shot at me a few times, but even with 7 arrows in my body I managed to run away.

And so my disbelief was complete. I couldn't happily play that game anymore. It wasn't intense anymore. It had become a cartoon or a video game.

I later got heavily involved in the Martial Arts of medieval and renaissance Europe: the German longsword, the English quarterstaff, and Italian cut-and-thrust. The combat of our ancestors, I learned, was elegant, demanding, and intelligent. It required strategy and skill. I wanted—*perhaps I needed*—to play such a game.

The Riddle of Steel began as a project to fill in the gaps left to us by other FRPGs. No, it's not the be-all-end-all super FRPG of all time, but it gives us some things we never really had in all those old games we grew up with. Strategy and lethality in combat based on real historical models. Motivation-driven play and character progression. Flexible and horribly unbalanced magic.

Ron Edwards, the author of *Sorcerer*, once said that fantasy and fantasy roleplaying games have become too "nice" (sorry if that's not an exact quote, Ron). I agree whole-heartedly. The intensity is gone, and many RPGs have been reduced to a pen-and-paper re-creation of a PC CD-ROM.

We're here to bring it back. We have come to claim our place along thousands of disgruntled gamers to say "We want real fantasy! We want blood! We want stories and passions and reasons to live!" Whether you've come to *The Riddle of Steel* looking for something different, blisteringly cool combat, wicked sorcery, dramatic storytelling, or for anything else, we hope you've found it. We hope others will find it with you.

See you online.

Jacob Norwood
Creator, *The Riddle of Steel*
Provo, Utah
May 29, 2002

What's Changed since the First Printing?

A few problems showed up in the first printing of The Riddle of Steel that have been fixed in this edition. First, we did a ton of copy editing, bringing in a few additional hands to read the old manuscript and make corrections. A few lines here and there were changed, added, or deleted for clarity. The Beat and Stop Short maneuvers were both significantly re-worked and the Rapier Proficiency now includes the Feint maneuver. Rules for healing and first aid were expanded, and a few minor tweaks were made to Movement Outside of Combat. The fiction at the front of Book Two was replaced with a new story by Stewart Feil, our editor, along with new Essay about magic and player characters by Ron Edwards and Chris Kubasik. The largest changes were made in Book Six: Sorcery. The original mechanics (and most of the text) written by Rick McCann is still present, but it has been re-organized and clarified. A few features were added, and others were combined to create a more user-friendly approach to sorcery in TROS. A few CTN and Vagary values were changed as well. Finally we added a few resources to the Appendices, including an even larger and more comprehensive Index and re-worked character sheet. Every change we made was due to a suggestion or idea that was presented either on RPG.net or on *The Riddle of Steel* Forum at the Forge (in other words, we're taking notes, guys, and we do listen).

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The Riddle of Steel™

Temporal

- Strength (ST)
- Agility (AG)
- Toughness (TO)
- Endurance (EN)
- Health (HT)

Mental

- Will Power (WP)
- Wit (Wit)
- Mental Aptitude (MA)
- Social (Soc)
- Perception (Per)

Stuff

	Location

Name:

Player's Name:

Philosophy:

Faith/Creed:

Personality:

Gifts: Flaws:

Allies: Enemies:

BackGround & Notes:

Race: Social Class:

Nationality: Concept:

Age: Sex: Height: Weight:

Eyes: Hair: Skin:

Appearance:

Skills

	SR	TEST

Temporal

(ST)

Mental

(WP)

Spiritual

Derived

Reflex

Insight Points

Temporal

(ST)
(AG)
(CO)
(EN)
(HT)

Mental

(WP)
(Wit)
(MA)
(Soc)
(Per)

Spiritual

Derived

Reflex
Aim
Knockdown
Knockout
Move

Insight Points

Proficiencies

Pools

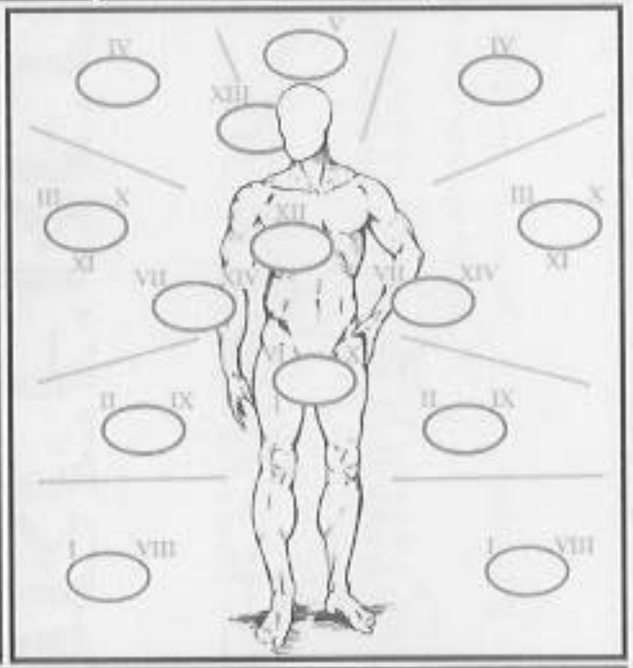
Armor

AV | cpm | other mod.

Wounds

Locale | Type | Level

Fatigue | Pain | Bloodloss



Offensive Maneuvers

cost

Defensive Maneuvers

cost

Melee Weapons

	Lth	Cutting ATN	Cutting damage	Thrusting ATN	Thrusting damage	DCN

Missle Weapons

	Prep Time	ATN	Range	Effective ST/ Damage

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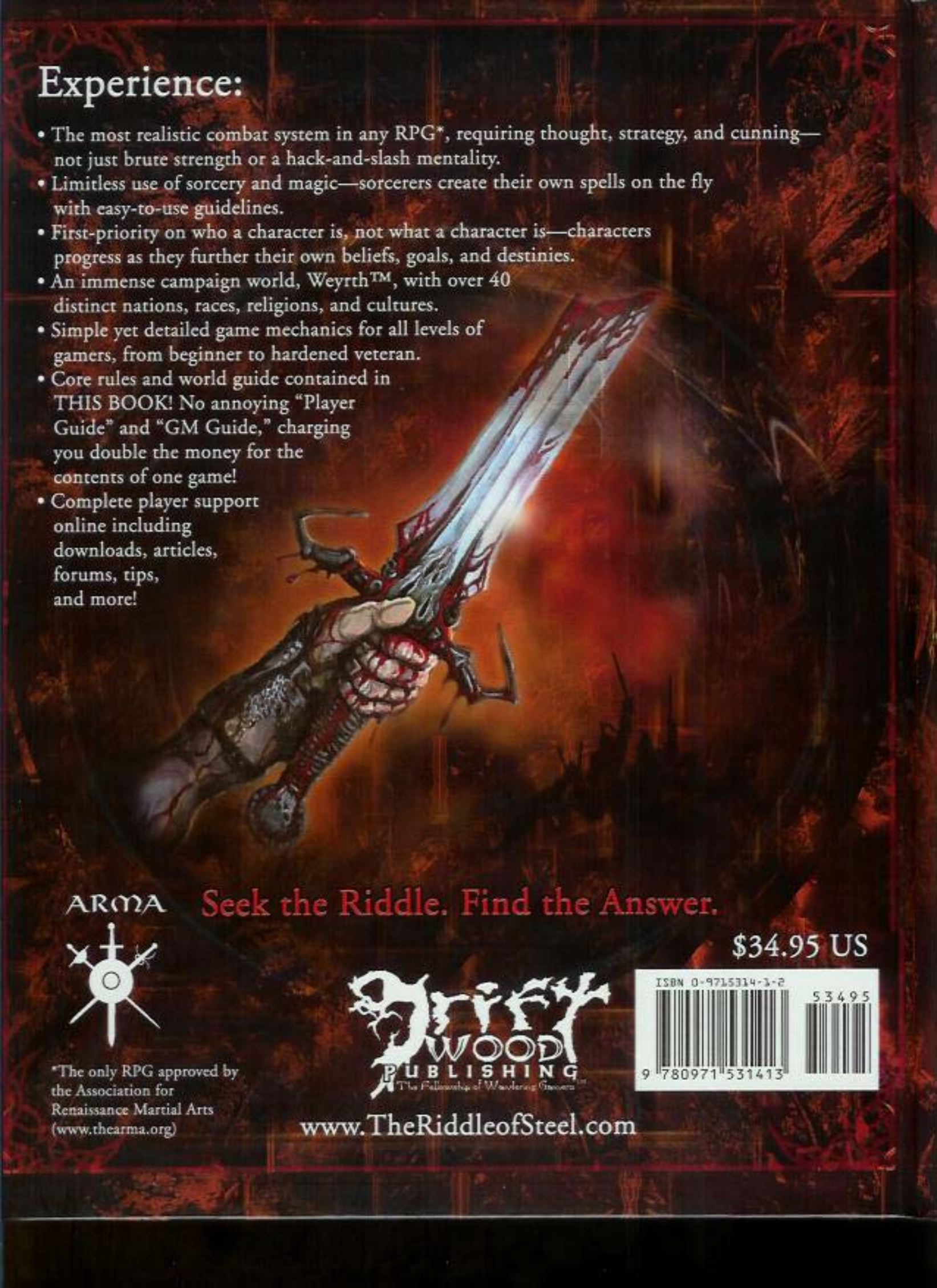

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