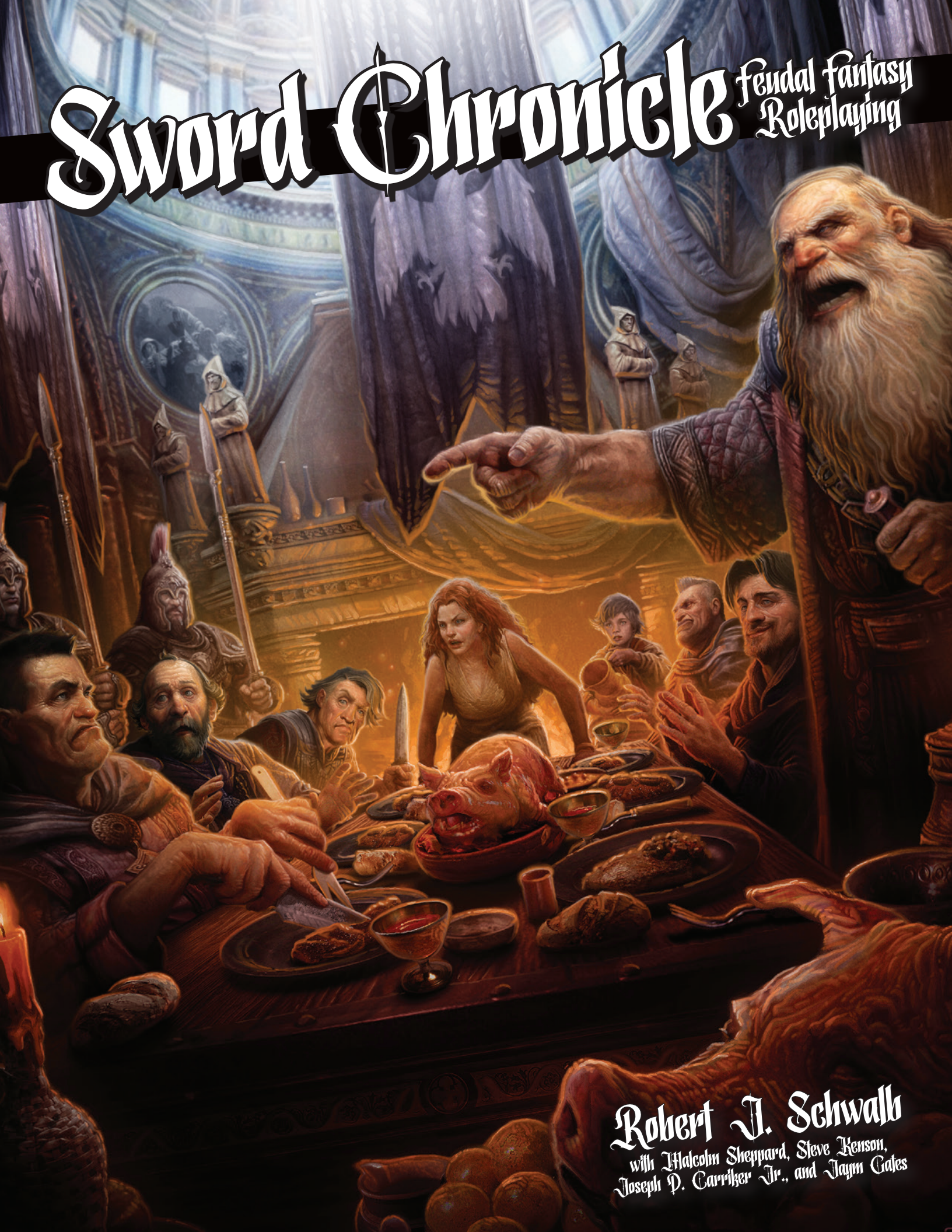
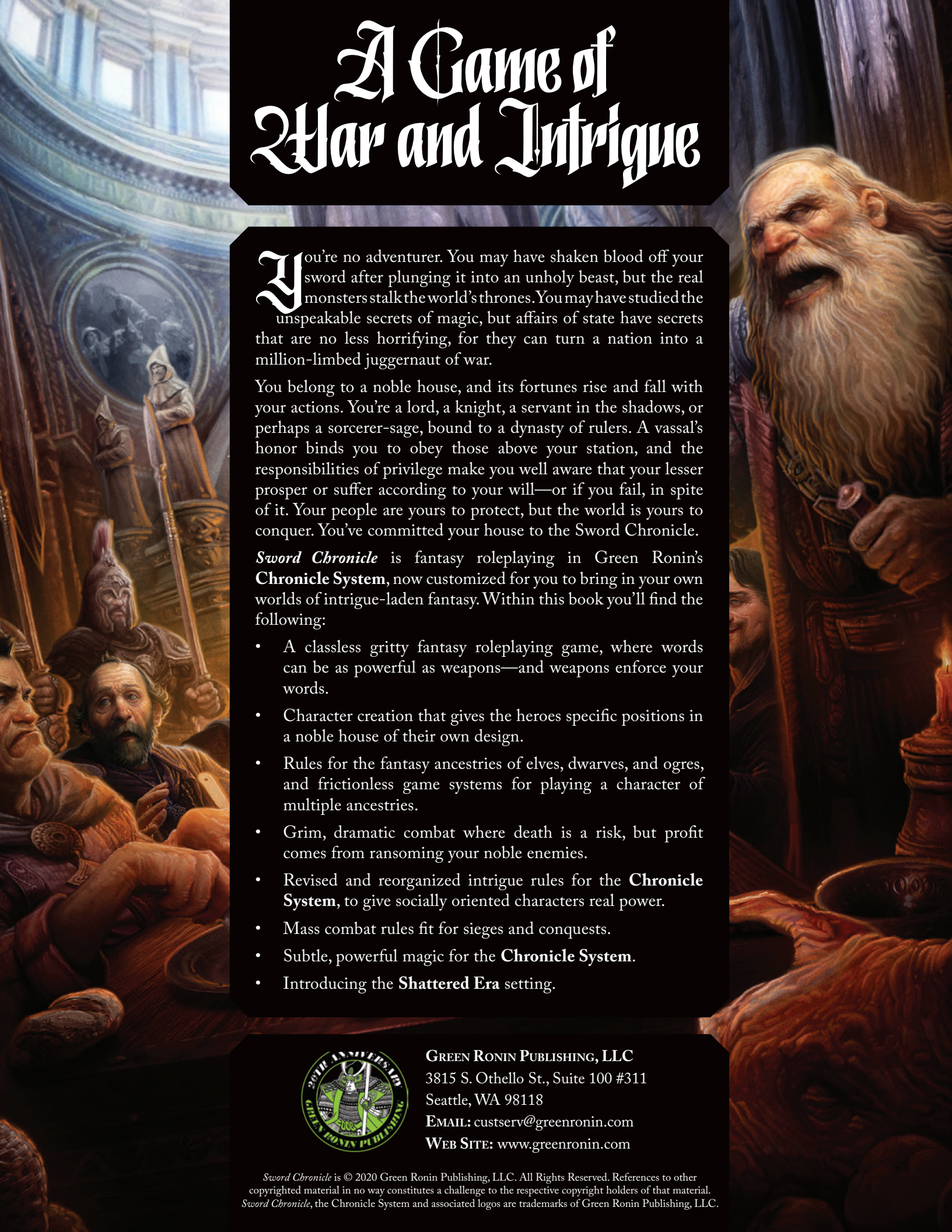
Sword Chronicle

Feudal Fantasy Roleplaying



Robert J. Schwalb

with Malcolm Sheppard, Steve Kenson,
Joseph D. Carriker Jr., and Jayn Gates



A Game of War and Intrigue

You're no adventurer. You may have shaken blood off your sword after plunging it into an unholy beast, but the real monsters stalk the world's thrones. You may have studied the unspeakable secrets of magic, but affairs of state have secrets that are no less horrifying, for they can turn a nation into a million-limbed juggernaut of war.

You belong to a noble house, and its fortunes rise and fall with your actions. You're a lord, a knight, a servant in the shadows, or perhaps a sorcerer-sage, bound to a dynasty of rulers. A vassal's honor binds you to obey those above your station, and the responsibilities of privilege make you well aware that your lesser prosper or suffer according to your will—or if you fail, in spite of it. Your people are yours to protect, but the world is yours to conquer. You've committed your house to the Sword Chronicle.

Sword Chronicle is fantasy roleplaying in Green Ronin's **Chronicle System**, now customized for you to bring in your own worlds of intrigue-laden fantasy. Within this book you'll find the following:

- A classless gritty fantasy roleplaying game, where words can be as powerful as weapons—and weapons enforce your words.
- Character creation that gives the heroes specific positions in a noble house of their own design.
- Rules for the fantasy ancestries of elves, dwarves, and ogres, and frictionless game systems for playing a character of multiple ancestries.
- Grim, dramatic combat where death is a risk, but profit comes from ransoming your noble enemies.
- Revised and reorganized intrigue rules for the **Chronicle System**, to give socially oriented characters real power.
- Mass combat rules fit for sieges and conquests.
- Subtle, powerful magic for the **Chronicle System**.
- Introducing the **Shattered Era** setting.

Green Ronin Publishing, LLC
3815 S. Othello St., Suite 100 #311
Seattle, WA 98118
Email: custserv@greenronin.com
Web Site: www.greenronin.com

Sword Chronicle is © 2020 Green Ronin Publishing, LLC. All Rights Reserved. References to other copyrighted material in no way constitutes a challenge to the respective copyright holders of that material. *Sword Chronicle*, the Chronicle System and associated logos are trademarks of Green Ronin Publishing, LLC.



Sword Chronicle

Feudal Fantasy Roleplaying

Original Chronicle System Design: Robert J. Schwalb, with concepts from Steve Kenson, Nicole Lindroos, Chris Pramas, and Robert J. Schwalb

Additional Design and Development: Joseph Carriker, Steve Kenson, Chris Pramas, and Jesse Scoble

Sword Chronicle Editing and Development: Joseph Carriker, Steve Kenson, and Malcolm Sheppard

Shattered Era Design: Jaym Gates, based on concepts by Jaym Gates and Jack Norris

Art Direction and Graphic Design: Hal Mangold

Interior Art: Ilya Astrakhan, Toren Atkinson, Drew Baker, Patrick Ballesteros, Kent Burles, Caleb Cleveland, Jonathan Kirtz, Pat Loboyko, Britt Martin, Jennifer Meyer, David Nash, and Michael Vilardi

Cover Art: Victor Leza Moreno **Publisher:** Chris Pramas

Team Ronin: Joseph Carriker, Crystal Frasier, Jaym Gates, Kara Hamilton, Troy Hewitt, Steve Kenson, Ian Lemke, Nicole Lindroos, Hal Mangold, Chris Pramas, Evan Sass, Malcolm Sheppard, Will Sobel, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Dylan Templar

Chronicle System Playtesters: Tyler M. Carey, Cody Carver, Tom Castelli, Jacob Chabot, Adam Doochin, Michael Elster, Andy Frades, Jan Philipp Gürtler, Kristian Hartmann, Dan Heinrich, Lyle Hinckley, Kevin Hamilton, Daniel Hodges, Travis Hodges, Mark Hugo, Sean Johnson, Doug Justice, Brian E. Kirby, Glen Kyle, Joe Quarles, Clemens Schäfer, Conrad Schäfer, Michael Simonds, Norman Simonds, Owen K.C. Stephens, Nathan Summar, Rich Tomasso, and Bobby Turman

Green Ronin Publishing, LLC
3815 S. Othello St., Suite 100 #311
Seattle, WA 98118
Email: custserv@greenronin.com
Web Site: www.greenronin.com

Sword Chronicle is © 2020 Green Ronin Publishing, LLC. All Rights Reserved. References to other copyrighted material in no way constitutes a challenge to the respective copyright holders of that material. *Sword Chronicle*, the Chronicle System and associated logos are trademarks of Green Ronin Publishing, LLC.



Table of Contents

Welcome to Sword Chronicle 6

What's Different 6
- You Belong to a Noble House 6
- You Are Not All Equal 6
- You Can Be Manipulated 6
- Play Takes Place on Multiple Scales 7

The Basics 7

The Game 7
- What You Need to Play 7
- The Game System 7

What Next? 7

Chapter 1: Game Rules 8

The Basics 8
- The Character 8
- The Dice 8
  - *Using Dice 9*
  - *Random Results 9*

Tests and Difficulties 9
- The Test Process 9
- Step 1: Player Declares the Action 9
- Step 2: The Narrator Selects the Ability 9
- Step 3: The Narrator Sets the Difficulty 9
- Step 4: The Player Rolls the Dice 10
- Step 5: The Player Sums the Dice and Applies Modifiers 10
- Step 6: The Player Compares the Result with the Difficulty 10
- Step 7: The Narrator Describes the Outcome 10
- Putting it All Together 10
- Types of Test 10
  - *Basic Test 10*
  - *Extended Basic Tests 11*
  - *Competition Test 11*
  - *Conflict Test 11*
- Modifying Tests 11
  - *Modifiers 11*
  - *Assistance 11*
  - *Taking More Time 11*
- Specialties & Bonus Dice 11
- Failure 12
- Penalty Dice 12
  - *Injuries & Frustration 12*

Difficulty and Success 12
- Success 12
- Degrees of Success 12
- Degrees of Failure 12

Glossary of Game Terms 13

Chapter 2: Character Creation 14

The Noble House 14

Creating Characters 14
- Step 1: House & Lands 14
- Step 2: Character Concept 15
  - *Determine Ancestry 15*
  - *Determine Age 16*
  - *Set Status 17*
  - *Determine Role 18*
  - *Determine Background 19*
  - *Goal 20*
  - *Motivation 20*
  - *Virtue 20*
  - *Vice 20*
- Step 3: Assign Abilities 21
- Step 4: Assign Specialties 21
- Step 5: Destiny Points & Benefits 22
- Step 6: Drawbacks 22
- Step 7: Starting Possessions 23
- Step 8: Derived Statistics 23
  - *Intrigue Statistics 23*
  - *Combat Statistics 23*
- Step 9: Play the Game! 23

Rewards & Improvement 24
- Coin 24
  - *Spending Coin 24*
- Glory 24
  - *Spending Glory 24*
- Experience 24
  - *Spending Experience 24*

Character Creation Summary 25
- Step 1: House and Lands 25
- Step 2: Character Concept 25
- Step 3: Assign Abilities 25
- Step 4: Assign Specialties 25
- Step 5: Destiny Points and Benefits 25
- Step 6: Drawbacks 25
- Step 7: Starting Possessions 25
- Step 8: Derived Statistics 25
- Step 9: Play the Game! 25

Chapter 3: Abilities & Specialties 26

Ability Rank 26

Specialties 27
- Using Specialties 27
  - *Specialties and Passive Tests 27*

Ability and Specialty Descriptions 27
- Ability Overview 27
- Ability Uses 29

Ability Descriptions 29
- Agility 29
  - *Acrobatics 29*
  - *Balance 29*
  - *Contortions 29*
  - *Dodge 29*
  - *Quickness 30*
  - *Other Uses 30*
- Animal Handling 30
  - *Charm 30*
  - *Drive 30*
  - *Ride 31*
  - *Train 31*
  - *Other Uses 31*
- Athletics 31
  - *Climb 31*
  - *Jump 32*
  - *Run 32*
  - *Strength 32*
  - *Swim 32*
  - *Throw 33*
  - *Other Uses 33*
- Awareness 33
  - *Empathy 33*
  - *Notice 33*
  - *Other Uses 33*
- Cunning 33
  - *Decipher 34*
  - *Logic 34*
  - *Memory 34*
  - *Other Uses 34*
- Deception 34
  - *Act 35*
  - *Bluff 35*
  - *Cheat 35*
  - *Disguise 35*

Other Uses ... 35
Endurance ... 35
Resilience ... 35
Stamina ... 36
Other Uses ... 36
Fighting ... 36
Attack ... 36
Healing ... 36
Diagnose ... 36
Treat Ailment ... 36
Treat Injury ... 36
Knowledge ... 37
Education ... 37
Research ... 38
Streetwise ... 38
Language ... 38
Other Uses ... 39
Marksmanship ... 39
Attack ... 39
Target Shooting ... 39
Persuasion ... 39
Persuasion without Intrigue ... 39
Other Uses ... 39
Status ... 40
Breeding ... 40
Reputation ... 40
Stewardship ... 41
Tournaments ... 41
Other Uses ... 41
Stealth ... 41
Blend In ... 41
Sneak ... 41
Survival ... 41
Forage ... 41
Hunt ... 41
Orientation ... 42
Track ... 42
Thievery ... 43
Pick Lock ... 43
Sleight of Hand ... 43
Steal ... 44
Warfare ... 44
Command ... 44
Strategy ... 44
Tactics ... 44
Other Uses ... 44
Will ... 44
Coordinate ... 44
Courage ... 44
Dedication ... 44
Other Uses ... 44

Chapter 4: Destiny & Qualities ... 45

Destiny Points ... 45
Spending Destiny Points ... 45
Spending Effects ... 45
Burning Destiny Points ... 46
Burning Effects ... 46
Gaining Destiny Points ... 46
Investing Destiny Points ... 46
Destiny and Qualities ... 46
Qualities ... 46
Quality Types ... 46
Benefits ... 47
Drawbacks ... 60
Special Drawbacks ... 60
Sorcerous Drawbacks ... 60
Strictures ... 60

Chapter 5: House & Lands ... 65

The Role of the Noble House ... 65
Creating the House ... 65
Step 1: The Realm ... 66
Step 2: Starting Resources ... 66
Initial Modifications ... 68
Step 3: House History ... 69
Historical Events ... 69
Putting it Together ... 71
Step 4: Holdings ... 71
Defense Holdings ... 71
Influence Holdings ... 72
Land Holdings ... 73
Law Holdings ... 74
Population Holdings ... 74
Power Holdings ... 75
Wealth Holdings ... 78
Step 5: Distinctions ... 79
Mottos ... 79
Coat of Arms ... 81
Step 6: The Household ... 81
Player Characters ... 81
Lord ... 81
Consort ... 81
Heirs ... 81
House Margoth of Graylock ... 82
Retainers, Servants, and Household Knights ... 82
The House in Action ... 83
Months and Actions ... 83
House Fortunes ... 83
Adventuring ... 83
House Actions ... 83

Chapter 6: Sorcery ... 85

A Different Kind of Magic ... 85
Sorcery Essentials ... 85
Qualities ... 85
Arts and Works ... 85
Initiation ... 86
Traditions ... 86
Resonances ... 86
Price ... 86
Sorcery Points ... 87
Sorcery Statistics ... 87
Sorcery Defense ... 87
Averting Bonuses ... 87
Health & Composure ... 87
Sensitives & Seers ... 87
Sorcery Structure ... 88
Ritual-Working ... 88
Step 1: Alignment ... 88
Step 2: Invocation ... 88
Step 3: Unleashing ... 88
Ritual Assistance ... 88
Interruptions and Disruption ... 89
Spell-Working ... 89
Paying the Price ... 89
Acquiring Sorcerous Arts ... 90
Learning Works ... 90
Sorcerous Arts and Works ... 91
Art of Benediction ... 91
Art of Divination ... 95
Divination Methods ... 95
Divination and the Art of Prediction ... 96
Insights ... 97
Art of Malediction ... 100
Art of Warding ... 103
Ward Rating ... 104
Ward Penalty ... 104

Chapter 7: Equipment ... 108

Money and Barter ... 108
Coinage ... 108
Trade Goods ... 108
Personal Equipment ... 108
Clothing ... 110
Food, Drink, and Lodging ... 110
Weapons ... 110
Weapon Quality ... 110

Weapon Descriptions 111
Armor 114
Mounts and Domestic Animals 115
Horses 115
War Horses 115
Mounts for Work and Play 115
Barding 116
Poisons 116
Poison Characteristics 116
Known Poisons 116
Social Manipulation & Roleplaying ... 119
Intrigue vs. Mind Control 119
Player vs. Character Decisions 119

Chapter 8: Intrigue 119

Intrigue Statistics 120
Abilities 120
Intrigue Defense 120
Composure 120
Simple Intrigues 120
Simple Intrigue Rules 121
Standard Intrigues 121
Standard Intrigue Summary 121
Standard Intrigues, Step By Step 121
Step 1: Scene 121
Step 2: Objective 121
Changing Objectives 122
Step 3: Disposition 122
Changing Dispositions 122
The Seven Dispositions 122
Player Characters and Dispositions 124
Dispositions by Circumstances 124
Step 4: Initiative 124
Step 5: Technique 124
Deception 125
Using Techniques 125
Divided Technique 125
Consequence vs. Objective 125
Techniques Defined 125
Step 6: Actions and Tests 127
Losing Composure and Being Influenced 128
Frustration 129
Step 7: Repeat 129
Step 8: Resolution 129
Defeat 129
Recovering Composure 129
Complex Intrigues 130
Complex Intrigue Rules 130
Victory Points 130

Chapter 9: Combat 131

Combat Essentials 131
Rounds, Turns, and Actions 131
Damage and Defeat 131
Combat Statistics 132
Abilities 132
Combat Defense 132
Size 132
Health 133
Movement 133
Effects of Athletics 133
Effects of Bulk 133
Armor 133
Armor Rating 133
Armor Penalty 133
Bulk 134
Weapons 134
Weapon Traits 134
Specialty 134
Training 134
Damage 134
Qualities 134
Combat Structure 138
Step 1: Battlefield 138
Battlefield Qualities 138
Step 2: Detection 140
Surprise 140
Step 3: Initiative 140
Ties 140
Delaying 140
Step 4: Action 140
Greater and Lesser Actions 140
Attack 140
Mounted Attack 141
Other Actions 142
Step 5: Repeat 143
Step 6: Resolution 143
Defeat and Consequences 143
Damage 144
Damage and Lesser Characters 144
Reducing Damage 144
Injuries 144
Recovery 144
Damage 144
Injuries 144
Wounds 145
Healing 145
Tournaments 145
Archery Contests 145
Grand Melee 145
First Blood 145
Jousts 145
Resolving the Joust 145
Duels and Battles for Honor 146
Advanced Combat 146
Tests 146
Critical Hits 146
Fumbles 146
Initiative 147
Interrupting Actions 147
Battlefield Tactics 147
Changing Initiative 147
Attack Modifiers 147
Higher Ground 148
Moving Targets 148
Unarmed Attacks 148
Attacking Objects 148
Break 148
Smash 148
Advanced Actions 149
Advanced Reach 149
Reach 150
Effects of Reach 150
Reach and Two Weapons 150
Free Attacks 150
Fatigue 150
Scale 151
Time 151
Commanders 151
Orders 151

Chapter 10: Warfare 151

Issuing Orders 152
Activating Units 152
No Commanders 152
Heroes 152
Heroes in Battle 152
Victory and Defeat 152
Components of Warfare 152
Abilities 152
Determining Abilities 152
Defense 153
Health 153
Movement 153
Equipping Units 153
Marksmanship Attacks 153

Equipment Upgrades *153*
Special Equipment *153*
Discipline 156
Anatomy of a Battle 156
Step 1: The Battlefield 156
Scope *156*
Terrain *157*
Visibility *157*
Weather *158*
Fortifications *158*
Step 2: Unit and Leader Placement 158
Concealed Units *158*
Step 3: Parlay and Terms 158
Step 4: Initiative 158
Step 5: Siege Weapons 158
Using Siege Weapons *159*
Common Siege Weapons *159*
Step 6: First Player Actions 160
Step 7: Orders 160
Step 8: Second Player Actions 162
Step 9: Resolve Standing Orders 162
Stet 10: Repeat 162
Step 11: Resolution and Consequences 163
Damage and Morale *163*
Consequences of War *163*
Captured Commanders and Heroes *164*
Units and Casualties *164*
Advanced Rules 165
Advanced Orders 165
Facing and Formation 167
Formation 167

Chapter 11: The Narrator 170

Basic Concepts 170
Time 170
Narrative Time *170*
Strategic Time *171*
Scenes 171
Anatomy of a Scene *171*
Rewards *172*
Story 172
Scenes in the Story *172*
Scene Exchanges *172*
Story Rewards *172*
Chronicle 173
Good Narrating 173
Preparation 173
Details 173
Group Dynamics 173
Managing the Rules 174
Routine Success 174
Passive Results *174*
Routine Success and Degrees *174*
Abilities 174
Substitution Caveat *174*
Expanded Specialties 175
Setting Difficulties 176
Difficulties Defined *176*
Roll of Circumstance *177*
When in Doubt, It's Challenging *177*
Modifiers 178
Winging It 178
Exploring The World 178
Sustenance 178
Starvation and Thirst *178*
Suffocation and Drowning *178*
Sleep *178*
Temperature 178
Extreme Cold *179*
Extreme Heat *179*
Travel 179
Chases 179
Hunters and Prey *180*
Space *180*
Anatomy of a Chase *180*
Chase Options *181*
Chases between Multiple Characters *181*
Hazards 181
Acid *181*
Disease *181*
Drunkenness *182*
Falling *182*
Fire *183*
Noble Houses 184
Your Role 184
Other Houses 184
House Fortunes 184
Adversaries & Allies 184
Primary Characters 184
Creating Primary Characters *185*
Primary Characters and the Game *185*
Secondary Characters 185
Creating Secondary Characters *185*
Secondary Characters and the Game *185*
Tertiary Characters 186
Creating Tertiary Characters *186*
Tertiary Characters and the Game *186*
Promoting Narrator Characters 186
Improving Narrator Characters 186
Demoting Narrator Characters 186
Sample Narrator Characters 186
Creatures 188
Supernatural Creatures 190
Play Styles 192
Adventurers 192
Game Modifications *192*
People of the Land 193
Game Modifications *193*
A Thousand Intrigues 193
Game Modifications *193*

The Shattered Era 194

The World of Annarum 194
Lightfall 194
The Wall 195
The Walled Era 196
The Shattered Era 196
Peoples of the Breachlands 197
Dwarves: the Valnadh 197
Dwarven Houses *197*
Elves: the Rekhu 198
Elven Houses *198*
Humans 198
The Aglam Empire *198*
Fallen Misral *199*
Yahi-Addu *201*
Ziyatul *201*
Militant Orders *202*
From the Monster Kingdoms 202
Distant Monsters 202
Ogres: The Kamtain 203
Ogre Houses *203*
The Kurgulan 204
Kurgulan Greatherds *204*
Kurgulan Characters 205
Step 1: House & Lands 205
Step 2: Concept 205
Step 3: Assign Abilities 205
Step 4: Assign Specialties 205
Step 5: Destiny Points and Benefits 205
Step 6: Drawbacks 205
Step 7: Possessions 205
Step 8: Derived Statistics 205

Index 207

Character Sheet 212

Welcome to Sword Chronicle

In a roleplaying game, anything is possible. Your character can explore the world, take part in convoluted intrigues, wage war against rival houses, and do just about anything else you can come up with. But every roleplaying game has particular concerns. Some emphasize action—others, building complex emotional bonds between characters.

Sword Chronicle is a roleplaying game, with an unlimited field for story development. It all comes down to the protagonists: main characters played by you and your friends. But they're not alone, because *Sword Chronicle* has a special focus: representing a noble house, and navigating the violent, treacherous politics of a feudal fantasy world.

If you're new to fantasy roleplaying games, reading further will provide a rough overview, but Wikipedia, videos, and numerous other online sources can give you a complete breakdown of how to play tabletop (as opposed to electronic) fantasy roleplaying games. If you know how to play them already, proceed to the very next section.

What's Different

Sword Chronicle varies from classic fantasy roleplaying games in several respects. In many games, you play a rag-tag group of wandering adventurers, looking for justice, glory, and gold as you wander from place to place. You *can* do that in *Sword Chronicle*, but even classic adventures take place in a quite different framework.

YOU BELONG TO A NOBLE HOUSE

By default, *Sword Chronicle* player characters all belong to one noble house, battling for survival and even supremacy. The game assumes that the noble house exists in the conditions of classic feudalism, meaning it is headed by a warlord who benefits from the labor of all those under their dominion in exchange for protection and the dispensation of justice.

In the real world, "feudalism" is really a shorthand for a number of historical governmental systems with common features. Just as the exact conditions of these societies differ from ruler to ruler, your house is unique. In fact, you and your fellow players will create your house together, settling on its strengths, weaknesses, customs, and even its favored symbols. The house is very much like a character you all create in common, with its own game statistics, opportunities to grow more powerful—and threats.

> ***"Take hold of the handles of government carefully and grip them tightly. Destroy all hope, smash all intention of wresting them from you; allow no man to covet them."***
>
> —Han Fei, "The Way of the Ruler"

> ***"But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god."***
>
> —Aristotle, *Politics*

While you play members of a house, and control it in common, you are not necessarily the house's leaders—in fact, you may not even be in line for the throne.

YOU ARE NOT ALL EQUAL

In many fantasy games, player characters who adventure together have roughly equal social status, but this is not necessarily the case in *Sword Chronicle*. Status is a game statistic, and it varies between individuals just like physical strength or skill at arms, though increasing status can a tad trickier. Some characters may be the children of the house's rulers, while others may be knights, bound by oath—and still others may be household servants.

This means that in the wider society to which the characters belong, some characters expect to be able to order others around. In private, the situation might be quite different, as young lords may strike an imperious attitude at court, but do what their advisors tell them in private. While your character belongs to a house, they may be servants, not rulers. You can coordinate your characters to give everyone about equal authority, but *Sword Chronicle* shines when the protagonists belong to different positions. This not only presents the challenge of working as a more hierarchical, cohesive group than many games allow, but also offers opportunities to subvert the hierarchy, because there's more to power than status.

Because feudal societies pass power from parent to child, your characters will often be related. Not only that, but as this makes the passing of generations important, your character must have a definite age, instead of belonging to the rough late teens to twenty- or thirty-something standard of many games. You may choose an elderly character or a child.

YOU CAN BE MANIPULATED

Unlike many games where you always have the final word over what your character says or does, *Sword Chronicle* includes rules for intrigue, where clever words and other inducements can manipulate your character into doing things that aren't necessarily in their best interest. This isn't to say your character might be made to do something against their will. Intrigue isn't magic. It's simply the art of convincing someone that what you want happens to be either what they also want, or at least what they'll accept in order to further their interests. Many games have similar systems, aimed at characters controlled by the Narrator. In *Sword Chronicle*, player characters can also be influenced this way.

Like combat, intrigue has a set of rules and a choice of tactics, and your character can, if they wish, get better at it over time. Furthermore, you can accept various penalties to avoid making your character do what they've been persuaded they should do. Ultimately, the Narrator decides what's fair game for intrigue, within the realistic bounds of what your character might be convinced to do, and what would be enjoyable for everyone—including the target of an intrigue.

PLAY TAKES PLACE ON MULTIPLE SCALES

Since you represent your house, your actions can take place on various scales. Your character might be absorbed in an individual action such as climbing a cliff; engaged in a group effort like a battle or an attempt to sail for a safe harbor; leading a battle with hundreds of even thousands of soldiers under their command; or involved in maneuvers intended to improve the political position of your house.

Different rules handle different scales. This is why, for example, **Chapter 9** discusses individual combat—what happens in back alley brawls and duels of honor—while **Chapter 10** provides the rules for mass battles. Similarly, your rewards aren't just for your individual benefit, but can be channeled into improving your house's capabilities.

The Basics

Sword Chronicle is a game in which the players take up the roles of characters who have a place and purpose within the larger society of a fantasy world. These personas are called player characters (PCs) or just characters. In most games, each player creates just one character and uses that character to interact with the imagined setting in structured or unstructured scenarios called stories. The PCs, then, are the principal characters—the protagonists—of the story.

Of course, a story rarely tells itself, and while the players make the decisions about how their characters act and react in response to certain developments in the game, the world does unfold around them, their nemeses still plot and connive in the shadows, and their foes take steps against them. Each player is in charge of his or her particular character, but who, then, is charge of the rest of the world? The Narrator.

The Narrator has the best job of all. It may very well be entertaining to portray a particular character, but the Narrator doesn't have to settle on just one. They get to play them all. The Narrator plays the villains, the minions, and all the other supporting characters who help make up the story. Furthermore, the Narrator also shapes the story, decides on the plot, what happens when, and is clued in on all the things that go on in the background. The Narrator might use a published Chronicle System story, or might spin out a story of their own. It's a big responsibility being the Narrator, but it's also the most rewarding one of all.

The Game

Whether you are a player or a Narrator, everyone uses the same rules in *Sword Chronicle*. Game rules are an important part of any roleplaying game because they help define what is possible. They ensure a certain level of fairness that comes from a shared understanding of how things work. Also, they help players and Narrators make decisions about the characters they portray by presenting meaningful numbers that reveal their ability with social interaction, how well they swing a sword, or how big or small, weak or strong, beautiful or hideous the character is.

But, to cite a cliché, rules are meant to be broken. Unlike other games, roleplaying games are famous for being fluid when it comes to rules, and if a certain rule doesn't fit with a group, it's not just okay to dump it, but expected! Use the rules in this book to support the stories you tell, not define them.

A Chronicle System Game for the Shattered Era

Sword Chronicle is intended to be a general fantasy roleplaying game with no specific setting, though it makes some loose assumptions about what your game's world is like: a fantasy setting where nobles by for power. Appropriately enough, *Sword Chronicle* uses the Chronicle System. This rules engine was first developed for the *A Song of Ice and Fire Roleplaying Game (SIFRP)*, but this book doesn't include material specific to the literary fantasy series. If you know how to play *SIFRP*, you know how to play most of *Sword Chronicle*.

Notably, *Sword Chronicle* includes rules for player character sorcerers and the fantasy ancestries of elves, dwarves, and ogres, which were lacking in previous core rulebooks. Furthermore, the game presents the Shattered Era, a fantasy setting you can use as-is, or as a starting point toward developing your own fantasy world.

In other words, if you ever asked, "Can I get a classic fantasy version of the Chronicle System?" this book is the affirmative answer.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Aside from this book, you should have plenty of paper, pencils, a good eraser, and at least five 6-sided dice. You may also want to print out copies of the character sheet.

THE GAME SYSTEM

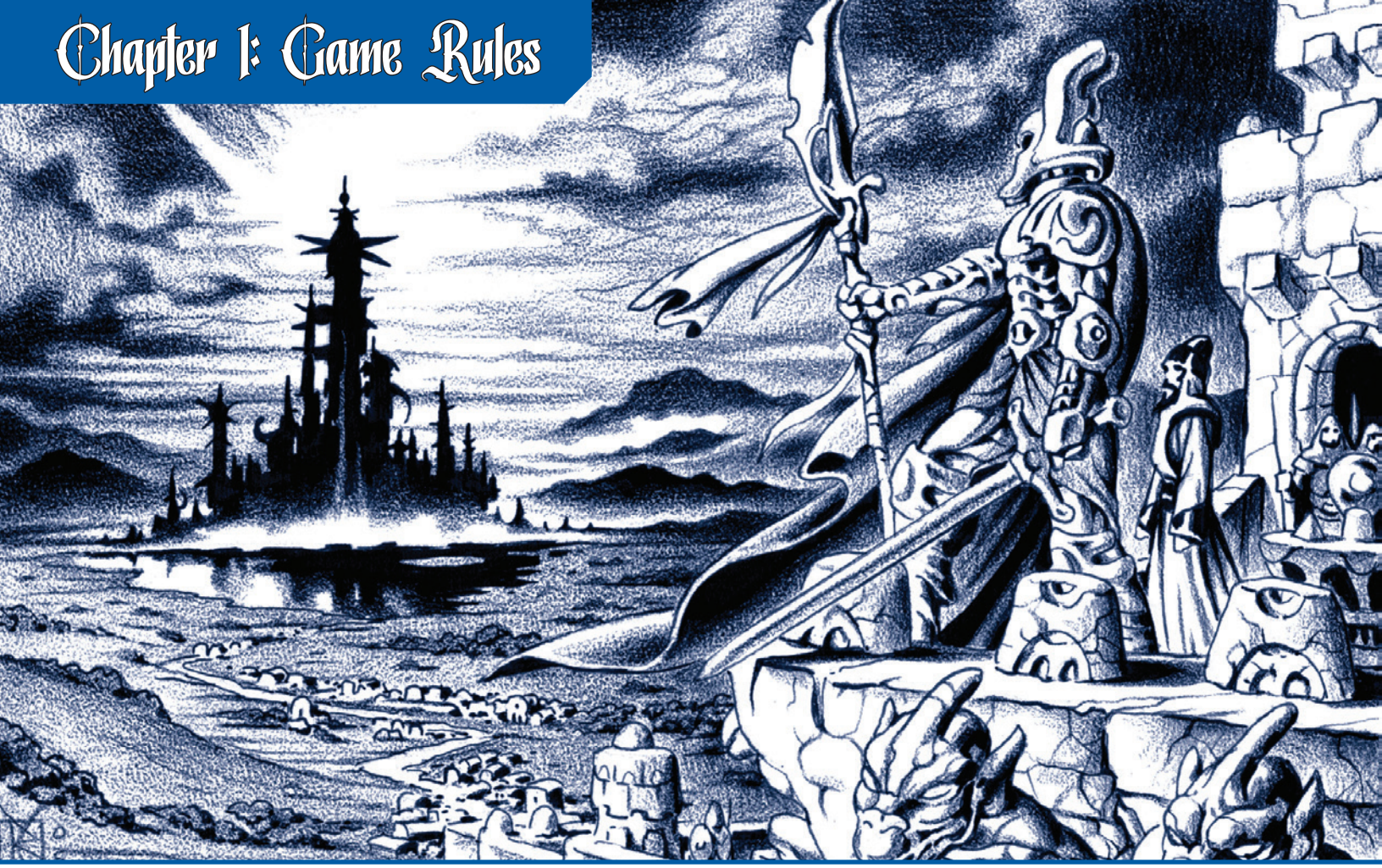
Since rules support the stories you and your friends will tell, you may find there are long stretches when you don't have to rely on the rules at all, when the interaction of your characters carries the game without needing dice or the book. Other times, the rules may figure in the game a great deal more than you would expect, especially in combat, negotiations, and other situations that can have serious consequences.

Drama is the key when it comes to the game mechanics. Whenever a player character or the Narrator attempts to do something in which failure has consequences or the outcome is not certain, the rules come into play in the form of a test. A test is simply rolling the dice, adding them up, and comparing them to a number called a Difficulty. If the sum of the dice equals or beats the challenge, the test succeeds. If the sum of the dice is lower than the challenge, the test fails.

What Next?

Now that you've read the basic concepts, the rest of the book awaits you. You might want to examine the rules in more detail, or you might be intrigued by the role of the Narrator. Then again, you may just want to create a character and get started. Read on, and you'll have everything you need to begin.

Chapter 1: Game Rules



This chapter lays out the fundamental workings of the *Sword Chronicle* game system and presents the information in a way that's easy to understand and helpful in creating a good foundation for learning the specific expressions of the rules—character creation, combat, war, and intrigue. Make sure you read this chapter before moving on to the rest of the book, for the information contained here is critical to understanding everything else.

The Basics

Sword Chronicle is a roleplaying game, a fantasy adventure game that sees the players taking the roles of **characters** and exploring either a fantasy world they enjoy from fiction, a purpose built game setting (such as Shattered Era, the setting outlined in **Chapter 12**), or a world invented by the Narrator (a special player role) or several players collaborating.

Veterans of roleplaying games will undoubtedly find many of the concepts familiar, but for the novices, a roleplaying game is a special type of game where the action unfolds in your heads and not on your computer screen, in a hand of cards, or on a board. Each game is an adventure, sort of like an act in a play or a chapter in the story, and you and your fellow gamers play the parts of the most important characters of all. In some games, you may take your own initiative and set out to explore a corner of the world, lead attacks against rival houses, or focus on improving your lands. The Narrator, who presents difficulties and challenges you, may create scenarios for you and your fellow players to overcome. The longer you play the same character, the better your character becomes, earning Experience, Glory, and Coin, all of which can be invested in your abilities—the things you can do in the game—or your house, the heart and soul of your gaming group.

THE CHARACTER

Each player controls one or more characters, sometimes called player characters or PCs. A character is your alter ego; it's the door to the world, your persona, avatar, or what have you. Your character has a range of abilities that grade the areas in which your character excels and those in which he could improve. Your character is more than just a set of numbers; your character should have a history, personality, goals, outlooks, ambitions, beliefs, and more. It's up to you to decide what your character looks like and how they behave, for this is your character, and your satisfaction with the concept and capabilities will go a long way toward making the play experience fun.

Narrators control characters who aren't PCs, from the lowliest peasant to the most fearsome enemy lord. These characters are called Narrator characters, or NCs.

THE DICE

Like many roleplaying games, *Sword Chronicle* uses dice to resolve the success or failure of dramatic actions and choices that crop up during game play. *Sword Chronicle* uses 6-sided dice (also called d6), the same kind of dice you'll find in many family games, but dice are widely available just about anywhere. To play this game, you'll need at least ten six-sided dice, but having more can't hurt.

USING DICE

Rolling dice is how you determine success or failure for attempted actions in the game. As shown under **Tests & Difficulties**, you roll a number of dice whenever you would do something with dramatic consequences. To keep things simple, *Sword Chronicle* tracks dice in three different ways.

- **Test Dice:** The number of dice you roll describes your chances of success at any given task. The ability that best describes the action you're attempting to perform determines how many dice you get to roll. When rolling dice to try something, you're said to be testing the ability or rolling an ability test. These dice are called test dice, and you add them up after rolling them.
- **Bonus Dice:** Sometimes, you'll get to roll additional dice called bonus dice. Bonus dice are never added; instead, they improve your chances at getting a better result. You never roll bonus dice alone; rather, roll them with your test dice, and then keep the best dice equal to the amount of your test dice. Bonus dice are abbreviated with #B, with # describing how many bonus dice you get to roll.
- **Modifier:** A modifier is a bonus or penalty applied to a test result. Modifiers are expressed as +# or –#, with the # telling you what to add to or subtract from your test result. Modifiers are gained as a result of situational factors, such as smoke or fog, being injured, and so on.

RANDOM RESULTS

Whenever the game or the rules call for a random result, you roll a number of dice called for in the situation and sum the results. The rules call for random results with #d6, The # describes how many dice you need to roll. So if you see 3d6, then roll three six-sided dice and add the results together.

Tests and Difficulties

Whenever you attempt something with dramatic consequences or when the outcome of the action is not certain, you test your abilities. A test is a roll of the dice with the aim of hitting or beating the action's Difficulty. The number of dice you roll is determined by the most relevant ability, so if you try to stab a guard with your sword, you'd use Fighting, or if you're trying to scale a keep's wall, test Athletics. Testing abilities is easy once you get the hang of it, but it does involve a few simple steps.

THE TEST PROCESS

Step 1: Player declares the action.

Step 2: Narrator picks the most relevant ability.

Step 3: Narrator sets the difficulty.

Step 4: Player rolls a number of dice equal to the ability's rank.

Step 5: Player sums the dice and applies any modifiers to the result.

Step 6: Player compares the result to the difficulty.

Step 7: Narrator describes the outcome.

STEP 1: PLAYER DECLARES THE ACTION

Before you roll the dice, declare what it is you want to do. The Narrator determines whether the action requires a test. As a rule, if the intended action has no significant risk or no consequences for failure, there's no need for a test, though the Narrator is the final word on what requires a test and when. Actions that might require tests include, but are not limited to, fighting, climbing, jumping, recalling a bit of useful information, addressing the king, sailing a ship through inclement weather, and so on. In short, if the action's outcome isn't certain or it has dramatic consequences, it probably requires a test.

Example

Nicole's character Lady Lanara happens upon a pair of conspirators discussing their plans to kill her sworn companion, Carnara. Lanara leans in to hear their whispers.

STEP 2: THE NARRATOR SELECTS THE ABILITY

Once the Narrator decides whether a test is appropriate, determine the ability to be tested. Abilities are flexible, allowing both you and the Narrator to use a variety of methods to overcome challenges in the game. A particular action may use one ability in one set of circumstances and another in a completely different environment. For example, you might use Persuasion to bluff your way past a guard or use Status to fall back on your notoriety and standing to remove the guard from your path. Even though these are two distinct methods, the intended outcome is the same: getting past the guard.

Generally, the Narrator determines the ability, but you do have some say in what ability you'd like to use. Just state what you want to use and how you intend to use it, and—if reasonable—the Narrator ought to allow it. Obviously, using Language to scale a wall or stab an enemy is ridiculous, so common sense must prevail.

Example

Since Lanara eavesdrops on the conversation, the Narrator decides the relevant ability is Awareness.

STEP 3: THE NARRATOR SETS THE DIFFICULTY

Once the ability is determined, the Narrator sets the test's Difficulty. The Difficulty describes the complexity and challenge of the action. To help assess how hard a task is, a Difficulty number has a descriptor, such as **Routine f**or Difficulty 6, **Challenging** for Difficulty 9, and so on. See **Difficulty** on page 31 for details.

Example

The Narrator considers the scene. It's dark, so Lanara can't see the conspirators or their body language. They're also some distance away and whispering. The Narrator decides the Difficulty is Formidable (12).

STEP 4: THE PLAYER ROLLS THE DICE

Knowing which ability to use and the Difficulty of the task, you roll a number of test dice equal to the ability. Many times, you may roll additional dice in the form of extra test dice or bonus dice.

Example

Lady Lanara has 3 in Awareness, giving her three dice off the bat. However, she also has 2B in Notice, a specialty of Awareness, giving her two bonus dice. She rolls five dice, but she only adds up the best three.

STEP 5: THE PLAYER SUMS THE DICE AND APPLIES MODIFIERS

Once you roll the dice, sum the ones you choose to keep and add or subtract any modifiers. The total is the test **result**.

Example

Nicole rolls 5 dice (three test dice and two bonus dice from her specialty) and gets a 6, 6, 5, 2, and a 1. She discards two dice (the 1 and the 2 since they count for her bonus dice) and adds up the rest, getting a 17.



STEP 6: THE PLAYER COMPARES THE RESULT WITH THE DIFFICULTY

Now that you have a total, compare the result to the action's Difficulty. If the result equals or beats the Difficulty, you succeed. If the result is less than the Difficulty, you fail.

Example

The test Difficulty was Formidable (12). Since Nicole beat the Difficulty with her 17, she succeeds by a significant degree.

STEP 7: THE NARRATOR DESCRIBES THE OUTCOME

Once the outcome of the test is determined, the Narrator describes the results, providing any relevant consequences of success or failure.

Example

Nicole's roll was good enough that she's able to hear most of the conversation, which the Narrator summarizes for her. Although both conspirators are careful to keep their identities concealed, Nicole now knows how they intend to go about their treachery, and with this information, Lanara may be able to stop their nefarious plan.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

After a few tests, everyone should get the hang of how the process works without having to read through the steps. Just keep the basic elements of testing in mind, and the game should flow smoothly, allowing for Narrators to call for tests without slowing game play.

TYPES OF TEST

Rolling tests is more or less the same no matter what you're attempting. How you interpret success, however, varies with the type of test taken. *Sword Chronicle* uses three standard tests for resolving actions. In all cases, you roll a number of test dice equal to the ability, plus bonus dice gained from a specialty and plus or minus any modifiers, and compare the result to the Difficulty to determine success or failure.

BASIC TEST

A **basic test** is the default test for just about every action. If the game or situation doesn't indicate another type of test, use a basic test to resolve the action.

1. Roll test dice equal to ability.
2. Roll bonus dice gained from Specialty or Assistance.
3. Discard a number of dice equal to the bonus dice rolled, and sum the remainder.
4. Add or subtract any modifiers.
5. Compare Result to Difficulty to determine success or failure.

EXTENDED BASIC TESTS

Some actions are so involved or ambitious they require multiple tests to determine success. A character climbing a steep cliff may have to test Athletics several times to reach the top, while a sage researching the lineage of a family rumored to be a hidden royal line might need several successful Knowledge tests to find the evidence he needs. When the situation demands, the Narrator may inform you that you need two or more successful tests to complete your action. Each test covers a particular span of time. Once you achieve the required number of successes, your task is complete.

COMPETITION TEST

Competition tests occur when two characters work toward or compete for the same goal. Both characters roll tests against the same Difficulty. The character who beats the Difficulty by the greatest degree wins.

Example

*Chris and Hal are in a foot race. Both will eventually cross the finish line, but they're competing to see who crosses it first. The Narrator calls for both players to roll **Automatic (0)** Athletics competition tests. Chris has Athletics 3, while Hal has Athletics 2 (Run 1). Chris rolls and gets a 6, 4, and 1, for a total of 11. Hal rolls and gets a 5, 2, and a 2. He drops one of the 2s for his Bonus die, leaving him with 7. Chris wins the race.*

CONFLICT TEST

Conflict tests are used most commonly in combat, warfare, and intrigue. A conflict test is always used to resolve anything that would function as an "attack." An attack might be a swing of a sword, sneaking past a guard, or using wiles to seduce a noble; effectively, anytime you would "do" something to someone else, you roll a conflict test. Unlike a basic test or competition test, where you are testing against the challenge and complexity of the action attempted, a conflict test pits your ability directly against your opponent. The Difficulty of these tests is your opponent's Defense. Generally, your opponent's Defense is equal to 4 × his rank in the ability used to oppose your attack: Awareness against Stealth, a poison's attack against Endurance, and so on. However, in the case of combat, your opponent's Defense is the sum of his ranks in several abilities. For details, see **Chapter 9: Combat.**

WHO ROLLS?

When faced with a conflict test, it can sometimes be confusing about who rolls and who defends. Consider, for example, a character who is hiding from a guard. To determine who rolls the test, consider who the active opponent is. If the guard is actively searching for the character, who's simply standing in the shadows or in a wardrobe, it falls to the guard to roll the test. On the other hand, if a character attempts to sneak past an unobservant guard, the character rolls the Stealth test against the guard's passive Awareness.

SIMULTANEOUS CONFLICTS

Sometimes, opponents are "attacking" each other at the same time. In these cases, both characters test, and the one with the highest result wins the conflict. Going back to the hidden character and the searching guard, if the hiding character tries to sneak past an actively searching guard, both of them would test their respective abilities, and the victory would go to the character with the highest result. Again, combat differs slightly from this, being more detailed in terms of character actions. See **Chapter 9** for more information.

MODIFYING TESTS

Ability tests are straightforward when you're just rolling test dice equal to your ability. However, a number of ways exist to modify your chances of success, for better or worse. Circumstances, favorable or otherwise, may modify your test results.

MODIFIERS

A **modifier** is a fixed number that's either added to your test result to reflect favorable circumstances or subtracted to reflect unfavorable circumstances. Generally, modifiers are imposed to reflect a temporary condition that affects you and not the action you're attempting. Most modifiers come from **assistance** (see following), environmental conditions, or injury.

ASSISTANCE

When faced with a tough Difficulty, you can call upon your allies to help you succeed. Any adjacent ally can assist you. Allies bestow a modifier to your test result equal to one half (round down, minimum 1) their rank in the ability you're testing. Say, for example, you're climbing a wall. You're near the top, where your ally waits. To help you up, an ally with Athletics 4 assists you. When you test Athletics to climb the rest of the distance, add +2 (half your ally's rank) to your test result. Usually, no more than two people can assist at a time, but for larger tasks, the Narrator may allow additional assistance.

TAKING MORE TIME

When you have the luxury of time on your side, you can work more slowly to ensure you complete the task, which is especially useful for high Difficulty tasks that are ordinarily beyond your ability to roll with a normal test. For each additional amount of time spent preparing for the task (say an hour of research or an extra six seconds before making an Athletics test), you gain an extra test die for the purposes of resolving your test. You can't gain more than double your test dice in this way. So if you have 2 in an ability, you can't gain more than two extra test dice by taking more time.

SPECIALTIES & BONUS DICE

Specialties are areas of expertise that fall under the purview of an ability, and as such, when testing an ability in a way that relates to your specialty, you may roll a number of **bonus dice** that you have in the specialty.

Bonus dice are never added to the result; they merely allow you to roll more dice than your ability would permit, and you keep the best dice equal to your ability's test dice. The number of bonus dice can never exceed the number of test dice rolled. So if you have two test dice in an ability and have a total of three bonus dice (say two from

a specialty and one from a complementary ability, see following), you can still only roll four dice and keep two. Various specialties for the different abilities, and their uses, are described in **Chapter 3: Abilities & Specialties**.

Example

Shane's character, Trent, has Stealth 3 (Blend In 2). When he tries to blend into a crowd, he rolls five dice and keeps the best three rolled.

FAILURE

A failed test simply means the attempted action doesn't work, but it usually doesn't mean you can't try again. In some situations, failure can carry greater risk, such as a failed Athletic test to climb a wall or a failed Agility test to maintain balance on a slippery surface. Any time danger is involved, and you fail the test by 5 or more, you may suffer a Critical failure: additional consequences in the form of damage, injury, or some other drawback usually spelled out in the action attempted.

PENALTY DICE

Penalty dice are uncommon drawbacks imposed by wounds or flaws. Each penalty die cancels one test die when adding up your result. You apply the Penalty after you roll and after you drop any bonus dice. Penalty dice are abbreviated, too. When you see –1D, it means you have one penalty die.

Test Difficulties

Description	Difficulty Rating	Minimum Rank for Success
Automatic	0	1
Easy	3	1
Routine	6	1
Challenging	9	2
Formidable	12	2
Hard	15	3
Very Hard	18	3
Heroic	21+	4

Degree of Success and Failure

Difference Between Test Result and Difficulty	Degree of Success or Failure
-5 or lower	Critical failure
-1 to -4	Marginal failure
0 to +4	Marginal success
+5 to +9	Great success
+10 to +14	Incredible success
+15 or higher	Astonishing success

INJURIES & FRUSTRATION

Engaging in combat and intrigue places you at risk of taking **injuries** or acquiring **frustration**. Both of these affect your ability to succeed on tests, imposing a penalty to your test result, or, in the case of wounds, taking penalty dice from your dice roll. Injuries and frustration work as any other modifier and apply after you sum the test dice.

Example

Steve's character, Rann, suffers from a wound, imposing 1 penalty die on all tests. In the thick of combat, he shoots an arrow from his longbow at a charging bandit Steve has Marksmanship 4 (Bows 2B). He rolls six dice and gets a 6, 5, 4, 4, 3, and 1. He drops the 1 and 3 for his bonus dice. He must also drop one of his 4s because of the penalty die, giving him a test result of 15.

Difficulty and Success

Every action has a Difficulty, a number that describes how hard the action is to accomplish. If your test result equals or exceeds the Difficulty, your action succeeds. Difficulties are ranked in three-point increments, starting at 0 for automatic actions and going all the way up to 21 or higher for truly heroic actions. See the **Test Difficulties** table for details on the different levels of Difficulty and **Chapter 3** for specific examples relating to abilities.

SUCCESS

When a test result equals or exceeds the Difficulty, the action is a **success**. A success represents the minimum amount of work and effort needed to achieve the intended result. Such successes are often sloppy and inelegant, and while they let you achieve what you wanted, they are in no way impressive. Often, these near successes are enough, but in some cases, excellence may be required for the long-term victory.

DEGREES OF SUCCESS

You need only equal the test's Difficulty to get a success. Beating the test Difficulty by a significant **degree**, however, can produce greater results. Your degree of success is governed by the **Degree of Success and Failure** table.

For many tests, you complete the action or effort a bit faster or with slightly improved results. For some, such as Fighting or Marksmanship tests, you can deal additional damage with a greater degree of success.

DEGREES OF FAILURE

Normally, failing to achieve the needed test result simply means an attempted action fails. In some cases, however, the degree of *failure* is also important, and greater degrees can lead to more serious consequences.

There are only two degrees of failure: a **Marginal** failure (where the Difficulty exceeds the test result by 4 or less) and **Critical** failure (where the Difficulty exceeds the test result by 5 or more). Only rarely does degree of failure matter; when it does, it is specified in the game rules.

Glossary of Game Terms

ABILITY

One of the defining game traits of a character. Abilities are measured by rank.

ABILITY TEST (OR SIMPLY TEST)

Using an ability to attempt an action when the outcome is in doubt. A test involves rolling a number of six-sided dice (the test dice) equal to the tested ability's rank and adding them together.

BENEFIT

A character quality with a beneficial effect on the character, such as a talent or connection to important people.

BONUS DIE

A bonus die is an extra die rolled during an ability test, but then a number of low dice equal to the number of bonus dice rolled is dropped from the test before the remaining dice are added to determine the result. Bonus dice are abbreviated +#B, where # is the number of bonus dice, *e.g.,* +3B is three bonus dice.

DAMAGE

Imaginary points used to track how close a character is to defeat in combat.

DEGREE (OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE)

How successful an ability test is, beyond mere success or failure.

DESTINY POINTS

The character's potential (and in some chronicles, their connection to fate-twisting forces), used by players during the game to influence fate and outcomes where that character is concerned.

DICE

Randomizers used to determine the outcomes of uncertain events in the game. *Sword Chronicle* uses six-sided dice, sometimes abbreviated "d6."

DIFFICULTY

A numerical value used to measure the chances of achieving a particular outcome in a test of ability. Difficulties range from **Automatic** (0) to **Heroic** (21 and higher).

DRAWBACK

A character quality with a negative effect on the character, such as a disability.

FRUSTRATION

A minor social difficulty suffered by a character to stave off influence (and therefore defeat) during an intrigue.

INFLUENCE

Imaginary points used to track how close a character is to defeat in a social intrigue.

INJURY

A minor wound suffered by a character to stave off damage (and therefore defeat) in combat.

MODIFIER

A bonus or penalty applies to the result of an ability test, expressed as +# or –#.

PENALTY DIE

A die subtracted from the test dice (starting with the lowest first) after any bonus dice have been discarded but before the dice are summed to determine the result. A penalty die is abbreviated –#D, where the # is the number of penalty dice, *e.g.,* –2D is two penalty dice.

QUALITY

A trait that describes some talent, ability or background element. Beneficial ones are called Benefits; detrimental ones are called Drawbacks.

RANK

A measure of a character's ability, ranging from 1 (impaired) to 7 (legendary). Abilities have an average rank of 2 by default.

RESULT

The value arrived at by adding up all of the test dice rolled for an ability test.

TEST

A roll of the dice to determine the result of an action where the outcome is in doubt. See **Ability Test**.

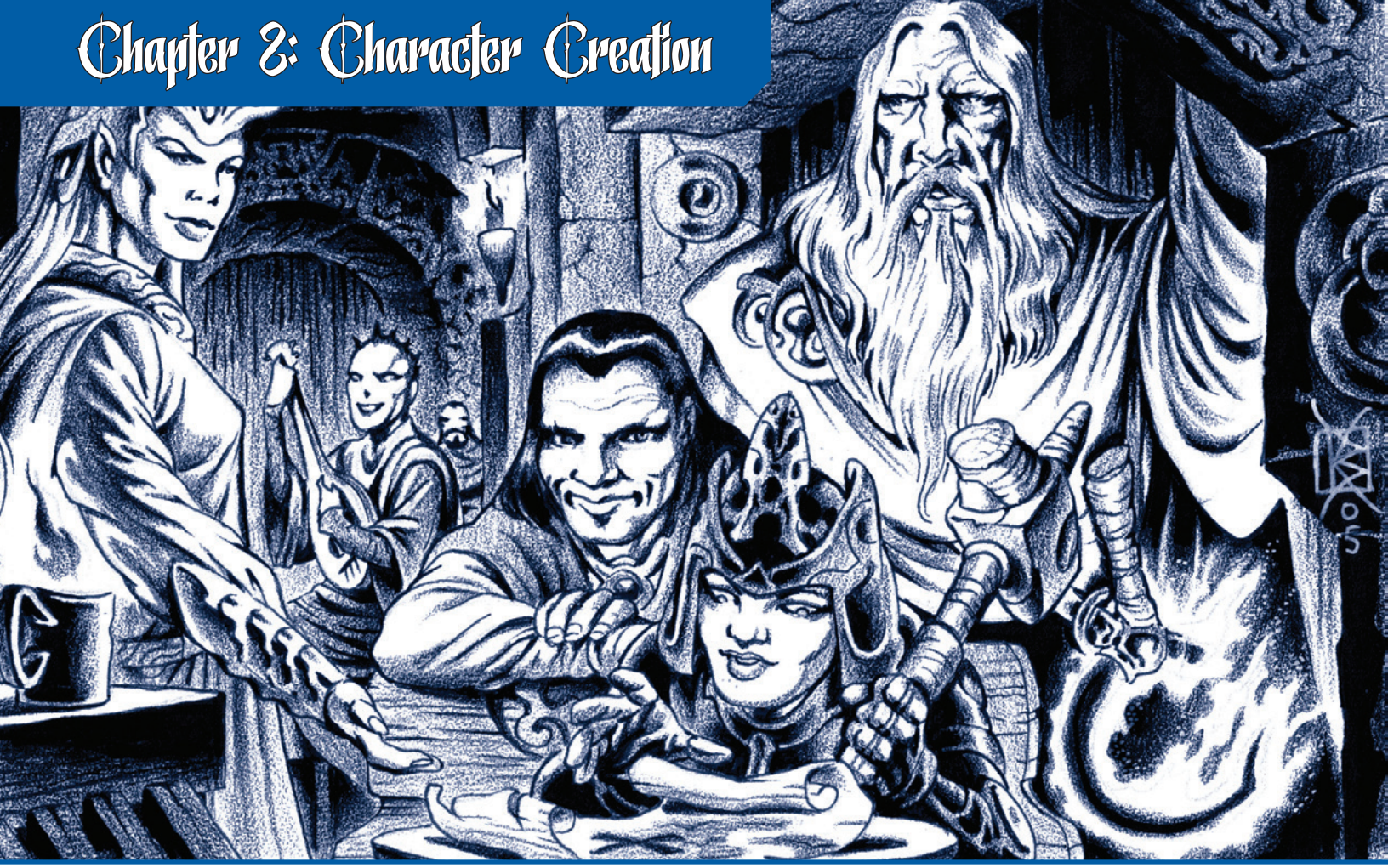
TEST DIE

A die that is rolled and added as part of an ability test. Test dice are abbreviated #D, where # is the number of dice (*e.g.,* 3D is three test dice). Additional test dice are abbreviated +#D (*e.g.,* +2D means "add two test dice to the test").

WOUND

A serious, lasting injury suffered by a character to help stave off damage (and therefore defeat) in combat.

Chapter 2: Character Creation



Sword Chronicle has a Narrator and other players. The Narrator sets the stage, shapes the general direction of the stories told, manages secondary characters, and serves as the game's referee. The players are responsible for their characters and their noble house. They make the decisions presented to them in the story, and it's about them that this shared story is told. Characters, then, are special. They are your playing pieces and serve as your primary point of interaction with the imagined lands of your chronicle. Therefore, your choice of character, your character's attitudes, motivations, objectives, what she looks like, what he hates, what they love, and everything else that makes up a person are all factors on how you play the game. Some are mechanical choices, being matters of numbers and dice, while others are purely designed for roleplaying to help you portray your character in a way that interests you and works well with your fellow players. This chapter, then, is your guide to building and playing characters in *Sword Chronicle*.

The Noble House

Sword Chronicle assumes most player characters are members of the same household, as heirs of a minor lord, oath-sworn retainers, or junior officers in a mercenary company, perhaps. A "house" can refer to a large number of organizations, including rebel armies and religious orders who would never identify themselves as noble.

This model provides a ready reason why the PCs would be together in the first place, and it trains the game's attention at building the individual character's fortunes, as well as that of their house. When one character succeeds and brings honor and glory to the house, all members, from the youngest child to the oldest servant, benefit. Similarly, when another character fails and brings shame and dishonor to their house, everyone suffers. Thus, game play is intensely cooperative, in which each player must always balance their ambitions against those of the family. Of course, *Sword Chronicle* is far larger than the concerns of potentates, far deeper than the struggles of lords and knights as they fight for power, independence, status, and more. Behind each lord and each knight are the stories of the common people—the merchants and the levied soldiers who live and die at the pleasure of the ruling class.

The expected play style is just that: expected, but not required. As you become more comfortable with the game system, feel free to explore different types of games and venture out into the unknown.

Creating Characters

Character creation is quite simple, but it is spread out over a number of steps to help guide you through the process and avoid the inevitable pitfalls that lay in wait. Each step sets out to help you make good mechanical decisions about your character and assist you in realizing the character's concept. As you become proficient with character creation, you can move through these steps quickly, but at the start, take your time, and consider the mechanical and roleplaying consequences of each step.

STEP 1: HOUSE & LANDS

If you and your fellow players are creating characters for the first time, you create your group's house and lands first. If you are creating a re-

placement character for a dead one or are joining an established game, you use whatever the house the group is using. For details on house creation rules, see **Chapter 5: House & Lands**.

STEP 2: CHARACTER CONCEPT

Easily the most important part of character creation is to establish a concept, a vision for what you want to play, what you want to achieve in the game. A good concept at the start helps you make good decisions about your character's function and place in the group, as well as help you lay a foundation for your character's objectives in the game. The concept need not be fully realized at the start, but you should have some broad concepts in mind.

DETERMINE ANCESTRY

In many *Sword Chronicle* games, not all characters may be humans, though of course, they're all people. A character's human or non-human nature is called their ancestry. Your character may have more than one ancestry, though only two may have game effects, as you must select two ancestry benefits. If you select both benefits from the same ancestry, it may be your exclusive heritage. If each benefit belongs to a different ancestry, this may reflect parents from two different ancestries, parents of the same mixed ancestry as yourself, or forebears with these ancestries that came before your parents, who may not necessarily be aware of their presence in the family tree.

The rules for each ancestry benefit can be found in **Chapter 4: Destiny & Qualities**. Review the available options in that chapter, then decide on your selections during **Step 5: Destiny Points & Benefits**, found in this chapter. You may spend Destiny Points on additional ancestry benefits. Some benefits are listed as Ancestry (Any), indicating they belong to certain clans and bloodlines across all ancestries. You may use your ancestry benefit selections on these, but must still note their connection to a specific heritage. As noted further in this section, characters of human ancestry may also select non-ancestry benefits as human ancestry benefits at character creation.

Sword Chronicle presents dwarves, elves, humans, and ogres as ancestry options, but the Narrator may disallow some, or add others, depending on who the primary intelligent beings are in the chronicle world.

DWARF

Dwarves are a hardy people who prefer to dwell in mountains and rocky hills, where they either dig their homes out of the rock, or mine the area for stone to build citadels. Mountain and citadel dwarves have different cultures, and sometimes, distinctive family talents. Most people of dwarven ancestry are hirsute, with many growing long beards. They're shorter than most humans by a foot or two, but considerably broader.

Dwarven culture values artisanship and concrete achievements over social niceties. In settlements dominated by dwarven social mores, smiths, stoneworkers, and other artisans may be part of the nobility, and lords may even be asked to produce a masterwork in their trade to qualify for leadership. Dwarves may possess more sophisticated technologies than other peoples, but are notably less interested in the study of nature. Dwarven communities practice some agriculture, but usually prefer to trade for things that grow.

ELF

Elves are a long-lived people who exert a gentle influence on the environments in which they dwell. Elven agriculture happens between the trees of a forest, and to the untrained eye, the plants they grow there might seem to be wild growth. Where elven culture reigns, even cities may consist of plant-covered earthworks and sculpted trees that gradually reveal themselves as something other than natural terrain. Elven crafts are famed for making the best use of natural materials, and are beautiful as well.

Not all elves have the leaf-shaped ears commonly associated with their kind. They tend to be slightly taller and slenderer than comparable humans. Traditional elves are strongly influenced by the environments in which they live, and their ancestries may acquire physical signs of their homelands. Thus, elves from the mountains favor gray and white raiment, and have eyes the color of granite, while coastal elves may have sea-green eyes and even hair. Of the many elven peoples, one can find a broad distinction between the sea elves, who retain mysteries others have forgotten of the faraway, deathless realms from which the elves originally came, and the wood elves, who have come to truly love the world of mortals.

HUMAN

In many respects, humans are the baseline other ancestries are compared to, but they're no less distinctive. Humans come in many shapes and sizes, and these are not necessarily dependent on geography, for humans love to wander—a tendency that can turn into peaceful settlement, nomadic visitations, or conquest, depending on the wanderers' interests. Humans not only enjoy new experiences, but elaborate on them, developing social customs that center their cultures even as they absorb new ideas.

Thus, humans may have the most politically focused cultures, filled with ceremony and decorum that people from more straightforward societies sometimes have trouble adapting to. However, humans have successfully interacted with other peoples for centuries, and many people of all ancestries are not only familiar with humans, but have some human heritage themselves.

HUMAN ANCESTRY BENEFITS

In addition to the listed benefit options for their kind, you may select any non-ancestry benefit as a human ancestry benefit at character creation, though you must still meet the listed prerequisites.

OGRE

There is no "typical ogre." Some are small, and others are enormous, when compared to humans. By human standards ogres may possess distorted features or strange beauty. An ogre's parents do not necessarily pass on their particular traits to their offspring, though there is usually some cosmetic similarity in eye color, facial features, or number of fingers and toes. The one thing all ogres share is hardiness and determination. Ogres sometimes lead difficult lives, but they tend toward stoic outlooks, and don't show their cares often.

Ogre legends say they came to the world from another realm, where they had a common shape, but that a great disaster forced them into the world, and the process changed not only their bodies, but loosened

their ancestral constancy of form. Ogres are sometimes stereotyped as monsters, when the truth is, they treat others as they are treated. If they're outcasts, they'll raid the people who cast them out. It is not enough for outsiders to tolerate a single ogre. Traditional ogres define themselves by their communities, so tolerance that doesn't extend to an ogre's kin is no tolerance at all. But when ogres are part of a mixed community, they aid the whole as if all were kin, regardless of ancestry.

DETERMINE AGE

The second decision you must make at the concept phase is your character's age. Responsibility and duty fall upon young shoulders when necessary, for one can never know with certainty when war or calamity will claim the lives of a parent, and when such a tragedy occurs, it falls to the heir to take up the mantle of leadership in their lost parent's stead. Elders are valued for their counsel, and sometimes even for a skill at arms or mystic wisdom that makes up for declining strength.

As some ancestries are longer-lived than others, rather than focusing too closely on a character's actual age, characters fall into a particular age group that both represents actual age and the level of expectations placed upon that individual. If your ancestry benefits reflect ancestors with two different aging rates, average the first and last years in each age category for each ancestry to discover the rate at which your character ages.



Your choice of age group helps you define your character's place within your group, but it also has mechanical repercussions, as shown later in this chapter. Before moving forward, select one age category for your character. Alternatively, if you prefer a bit of randomness, roll 3d6 and compare the total to the **Random Age** table.

YOUTH: HUMAN AGE INFANT TO 9

Youth-age characters are rare, and often enter adventures by accident. They hide in carts, lose their elders, and otherwise join stories in truly exceptional circumstances.

ADOLESCENT: HUMAN AGE 10 TO 13

Adolescent characters are usually just beginning the transition from chores and play to concentrated work, and education in a family trade or responsibility. Adolescents may enter stories without fully realizing what they're getting into.

YOUNG ADULT: HUMAN AGE 14 TO 18

Young adults are bound to assume the roles available to them in their societies, though not always without protest. Nobles may arrange political marriages at this age, where love is less important than the alliance it represents. Human young adults are infamous for their bravery and willfulness.

ADULT: HUMAN AGE 19 TO 30

Adult characters have either fully embraced their responsibilities or made a definitive choice to ignore them, and engage in eccentric pursuits. Commoner marriages tend to take place in this age range. Adults are usually considered to be in the prime of their lives, though they may grow in interesting ways even now.

MIDDLE AGE: HUMAN AGE 31 TO 50

Characters of middle age have lived through troubles and joys, and tend to look toward what they can build for their house and other interests that will last after they pass on—or they search desperately for such things to hold on to, if they haven't found a future to build.

OLD: HUMAN AGE 51 TO 70

Most old characters would like to pass their duties on to the next generation, but in many cases their successors aren't ready. If they've lost their former house, they may attach themselves to a new one with either desperate loyalty to make up for lost time, or with a certain detached cynicism, having seen powerful factions rise and fall.

VERY OLD: HUMAN AGE 71 TO 80

Rare is the warrior or commoner who lives to such an advanced age, though sages and sorcerers often do better, shielded as they are from bloodshed and the strains of labor. Very old characters are often respected even by enemies of the house, as they're thought of as advisors, not leaders, but there are both enlightened and bloodthirsty exceptions.

Random Age

3d6 Roll	Age Category	Human Age	Dwarf Age	Elf Age	Ogre Age
3	Youth	0-9	0-15	0-20	0-9
4	Adolescence	10-13	16-20	21-30	10-13
5–6	Young Adult	14-18	21-25	31-40	14-18
7–11	Adult	19-30	26-50	41-200	19-25
12–15	Middle Age	31-50	51-100	201-400	26-40
16	Old	51-70	101-150	401-500	41-50
17	Very Old	71-80	151-200	501-600	51-55
18	Venerable	81+	201+	601+	56+

Starting Status

2d6 Roll	Starting Status†	Available Position††	Example
2	House Max-4 (2)	No limit	House retainer, hired sword, freeman
3–4	House Max-3 (3)	32	Oath-sworn sword, guardsman, squire
5–9	House Max-2 (4)	16	Ranking member of household, sage, junior priest, landed knight, noble bastard
10–11	House Max-1 (5)	8	Herald, ward, courtier, advisor, and less respected heirs and spouses
12	House Max (6)	4	Lord of the house, respected heirs, spouses, offspring

† If the modifier would reduce a noble's Status to less than 3, it stays at 3, unless the house maximum is 3, in which case the lord does not possess hereditary honors, or 2, in which case the house is not truly noble. The number in parentheses is the suggested status for a default house, should you not choose to create your own.
††These are the default positions. If your group creates its own house, these numbers will likely be different.

VENERABLE: HUMAN AGE 80 OR OLDER

The shadow of death lies upon venerable characters, and while they are honored in most cultures, they're not necessarily respected, since age is often assumed to have ravaged their minds and bodies. But many have kept secrets for decades, and have the strength for one last great adventure.

SET STATUS

Status is another important component to defining your character's concept. A person is judged by the quality of their birth, their legitimacy, the purity of their blood, family history, and numerous other factors that are often beyond an individual's control. Those born to common parents are lumped in with the rest of the commoners, rarely given a moment's thought beyond the responsibility of any lord to attend to the people living in their domain. Thus, characters of better birth often have an easier time maneuvering in the halls of power than do their lesser counterparts.

For all the benefits Status might bring, it also comes with great responsibility. Characters of a higher rank must devote time and attention to the affairs of governing, often at the expense of developing other talents and abilities. In addition, characters with high Status find it much harder to move about without being recognized. In a world where enemies hide behind every corner, anonymity can be a great asset.

STATUS & HOUSE

As you and your fellow players are members of the same house, whether some or all of you are blood relations, servants, bastard children, or allies, your house sets the maximum Status for all its members. The head of the household and their family have the highest Status, typically 6, followed by banner lords, wards, courtiers, advisors, and priests, all of which are at 5. The rest of the household has Status according to their positions. Since a house is only so large and a family only so big, odds are that many of the players will not be blood relations to the lord, and in some cases, none of them are. Since Status is also a resource (and a scarce one at that), you and your fellow players should work together to determine where each of you want to fit into the house, what positions you want to hold, whether or not you want to have noble blood, and so on. The Narrator should work with the players to ensure that everyone gets to play what they want to play, filling the available positions as determined by the house (see **Chapter 5: House & Lands**).

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

A house has the lord (head of house) with a Status of between 2 and 8, though a lord with a Status of less than 4 is effectively an individual with honors they cannot pass onto others, and one with a 2 or 3 is, at best, a commoner with a gang, because true nobles have Status ratings







of at least 3. In any event, this is the maximum Status rating available to members of the house. In many cases, the lord is a Narrator Character.

The spouse and heirs have usually a Status of either 1 less than this maximum or equal station due to being given special respect, or because of unusual succession practices. Other positions have Status ratings of 1 or 2 or more less than the maximum. Nobles never have Status ratings of less than 3.

The rest of the positions are shown on the **Starting Status** table. This table also includes an option to determine starting Status randomly if a dispute or indecision arises. Roll 2d6 and compare the sum to the corresponding table. Note that you must still purchase the Status listed for the position.

PURCHASE STATUS

Playing a character with a high Status brings many rewards, but it also comes with a price. Since Status is an ability, you must purchase your Status from your starting Experience before purchasing any other abilities.

DETERMINE ROLE

Characters evolve in a variety of ways, and you have the freedom to create your character in whatever way you wish, but it's often a good idea to build toward a role, a game concept that helps guide your decisions about which abilities are important for not only your character but also for the group. A role is a broad description of what your character does in the game, giving the character a distinct place within the group, a function in which your character can excel. Ideally, a group will have representatives of each role, so each player has a chance to shine, though groups may comprise any combination of roles, with players taking overlapping roles and other roles being absent entirely. A role doesn't have any benefits or drawbacks; it merely acts as a tool to help you build an interesting character, and it ensures the group is well rounded. While it's advantageous for a group to have at least one of each role, it's not necessary. Work with your fellow players to see what approach the group wants to take toward the game, and find a role that best fits your character concept.

EXPERT

An expert is a character who specializes in a narrow selection of abilities. Such characters often include sages and priests but also cover a broad selection of retainers, such as blacksmiths, animal trainers, instructors, scholars, heralds, and many other important people in a noble's house. The expert is a common role for many characters, as it provides the greatest flexibility and function in the game.

Key Abilities: Whatever abilities reflect the character's expertise.

FIGHTER

Representing everything from noble knights to wretched sellswords, and bandits, the fighter role covers the greatest ground and represents the broadest spectrum of characters. The warrior's importance cannot be understated. Fighters occupy a special place in the eyes of the people. As an ideal of bravery, many people strive to live up to the expectations and stories surrounding legendary warriors, while others abandon the honor of being a fighter and use their power to take what they want and kill any who get in their way.

Key Abilities: Agility, Animal Handling, Athletics, Endurance, Fighting, Marksmanship, and Warfare







LEADER

The leader represents any character who commands and guides others toward some objective. Leaders are the decision-makers, but they are equally capable of listening to different opinions, even if they ignore advice from others. Leaders tend to be the individuals who lead soldiers into war, but they may also head up other groups, tending a large temple, commanding a mercantile empire, or captaining a ship.

Key Abilities: Cunning, Endurance, Fighting, Persuasion, Status, and Warfare

ROGUE

Where an expert specializes, a rogue diversifies. Encompassing a broad range of characters from common thieves and disgraced nobles, to vicious killers, rogues are the people who live outside the bounds of the social expectations and duties of their nations, and they are as comfortable alongside the aristocrats as they are among the common dregs.

Key Abilities: Agility, Awareness, Cunning, Fighting, Marksmanship, Persuasion, Stealth, and Thievery

SCHEMER

Masters of intrigue, schemers are as dangerous in the halls of power as anointed knights are on the battlefield. Schemers are the negotiators, the great players of political games, and they have as much impact on the world as the best battle-scarred general. With a word, a subtle lie, or a twisting of truth, they can plunge the lands into bloody warfare, bringing down the most beloved leaders and raising up the most despicable scum. While most schemers use their abilities to further their own agendas, not all are as morally vacuous as are some of the more infamous representatives of this role.

Key Abilities: Awareness, Cunning, Deception, Knowledge, Language, Persuasion, Status, and Will

SORCERER

The cosmos's secrets only reveal themselves after deep study and sometimes, painful sacrifice. Sorcery, covered in **Chapter 6**, is a subtle but powerful discipline with numerous manifestations. As such, a sorcerer's social role depends on what they know, and the culture they belong to. Some societies treat sorcerers as heretics and outcasts, while others treat them as valuable advisors, or even a priestly class demonstrating the miraculous truths of gods or philosophies. In the end, all sorcery has a price, however, and practitioners of the Art are as likely to be treated suspiciously for what they want as what they can do.

Key Abilities: The precise abilities used in sorcery vary, but Cunning, Endurance, and Will provide the physical and mental resources required to practice the Art.

DETERMINE BACKGROUND

While thinking about your character concept, you should think about where your character is from, what they achieved, and why your character is a cut above the nameless and faceless commoners of the world. You should come up with at least one moment, one event that shaped your life, but it's better to determine one for each age category you are above youth.

GOAL

Next, you should think about what your character wants most. A goal is what your character works toward, and it informs your character's choices and actions. A goal should be something big, broad, and nebulous. Work with your Narrator to come up with a suitable goal that fits with the chronicle and will be fun for you to play.

MOTIVATION

Now that you know what you want, you need to decide why you want it. Unlike the goal itself, the underlying motivations should be specific and tied to that signature event in your background. Your motive should stem from the event and provide a reasonable justification for chasing after your goal. For example, a character who fought in a war probably saw that power could be attained by those with the strength to hold it, and thus, such a character might crave power. The character's motivation might be because they witnessed what happened to the powerless in the war: the scorched fields, the strung-up commoners, and the widespread misery. The character, then, fears being powerless and is ambitious as a way to ensure survival in a world where life is short and often ugly.

VIRTUE

With your character's personality congealing, come up with at least one favorable character trait, some personality aspect that people would describe as a virtue. During game play, let your virtue guide how you portray your character when at their best.

VICE

With every virtue comes a vice. Your character should have at least one vice, some personality flaw or weakness of character that gives them humanity. Your vice should surface when your character is at their worst.

Example Character Concept

Nick, new to the gaming group, sets out to create a new character. Once he learns about the noble house from his fellow players, he starts building his character by working on the concept.

He wants to play a traveling singer who finally settled down in the house. He wants to play someone from a typical feudal culture, and decides on a solely human ancestry to make that easier. He chooses adult as his starting age. He doesn't need a high Status since he's not going to be of noble blood, but he wants to hold a high position in the house to help him in intrigues. Since his character is going to be a household retainer, he chooses 3 for his Status, making sure there's a position available first.

To fit his character into the group, he needs to figure out what role he'll play. Given his knowledge of songs and tales, he thinks the expert role is the best option. However, he also views himself as a peacemaker and so thinks that being a schemer might be a good option, too. Since he's not noble and, thus, doesn't have to invest much Experience in his Status, he opts to mix the roles, noting on scratch paper some of the most important abilities for both roles: Animal Handling, Awareness, Cunning, Healing, Knowledge, Language, Persuasion, Status, and Will.

Next, Nick works on his background. He needs only come up with one big event, though he could surely come up with more if he liked. Nick needs the background event to cement his place in the noble family, especially if he's not planning to be a blood relation. Nick decides that he had passed through the region a few years back and composed and performed a sonnet that celebrated the deeds of one of the house's ancestors. He impressed the lord and was invited to stay on in a permanent capacity.

His background may be simple, but Nick has a few ideas to make this event work for him. He turns to his character's goal. He figures he wants fame, and because of that, he probably refused the offer when it was first given to him. The motivation behind wanting fame, Nick figures, is because he probably encountered a famous minstrel in his youth and saw that even though the performer was common, he lived like a lord, could have any woman he wanted, and enjoyed the blessings showered on him by the lords and ladies he entertained. Such rewards were enough to convince Nick's character to learn the harp and practice his singing voice.

As for virtue, Nick decides his character is honest and rarely, if ever, lies, even when it would be better to do so. His vice is that he's arrogant about his talents, and he frequently includes himself amongst the names of the greatest singers in the land. His arrogance probably wins him no shortage of enemies, so perhaps after angering the wrong rival, he fled back to the house that welcomed him, putting his own ambitions on hold to avoid a knife in his back or poison in his cup.

Putting all the pieces together, Nick sketches out his background and personality. His character was born to a commoner couple and forced to work at a very young age, finding a place as a scullion in his lord's manor. One night, when he was still quite young, a singer performed to the delight of his lord. Although a hard man, the lord treated the singer well, giving him an honored place at his table. Nick's character wanted nothing more than to be that singer, so the next morning, Nick's character followed the rakish singer and somehow convinced the man to take him along and teach him to sing and play the harp.

For years, Nick accompanied the singer until he grew quite skilled himself. When he turned seventeen, he broke with his mentor to strike out on his own. Working the lowlands, he gradually built a reputation for his talent and wit. Finally, he came to a small castle closer to the mountains. There, he had the greatest performance of his life and won a place in the household. Although he liked the lord well enough, he had bigger plans, and so, with regrets, he departed, promising to return.

Months later, he had the misfortune of running into his old mentor. At first, it was like old times, and the pair played and sang together. But as the night grew old, Nick's character proved the better, and his old mentor darkened with jealousy and began to feel threatened by his former student. That night, after all had bedded down, the mentor snuck into Nick's chambers and tried to kill him. They struggled, but in the end, Nick's character proved the better and left his former master bleeding out on the floor. Terrified, he fled the inn lest he hang for murder. Thinking back to the house he had recently left, he returned, claiming he had reconsidered and has been there ever since.

Experience Tips

Assigning Experience to abilities can be difficult, especially with so many options available to you. The best place to start is with the abilities specified by your role. Then, pick a few more abilities that relate to your character concept. This compilation is your preliminary list. Increase the most important abilities on this list first, and then fill it in with your remaining Experience to round out your character. Resist the temptation to max out an ability. For an adult character, a 6 ability accounts for almost half of your starting Experience. Such lopsided characters tend to have a single trick and lack the durability of their more generalized counterparts.

STEP 3: ASSIGN ABILITIES

With a clear idea of your character in mind, you're ready to improve your abilities. All characters begin with rank 2 in each ability. Using the starting Experience determined by your character's age, you can improve an ability by purchasing additional ranks. The higher you improve an ability, the more Experience it costs. During this step, you must spend all Ability Experience, and you must purchase your Status rank first. Costs are shown on the **Ability Improvement** table.

GAINING MORE EXPERIENCE

With your Narrator's permission, you can reduce one ability to 1 and gain an extra 50 Experience points to allocate to other abilities.

Example

Nick's now ready to assign his abilities. As an adult, he gets 210 Experience to spend on his abilities. However, he must start with Status. He set his Status at 3, so he must allocate 10 Experience for this ability, leaving him with 200. Nick's role as a hybrid expert-schemer suggests he invest his Experience in Animal Handling, Awareness, Cunning, Healing, Knowledge, Language, Persuasion, Status, and Will. Nick also feels his character might have some experience in Fighting, as being a wandering minstrel probably put him in a few tight spots, so he also adds Fighting to his list. He also wants to hold his own in combat, so he also writes down Endurance.

With his preliminary list of abilities written down, Nick's now ready to start spending his Experience. As a performer, Nick sees Persuasion as his most important ability, so for now, he invests 40 Experience to bring it up to 4. He also wants his character to be able to read, so he must invest another 10 into Language (Common Tongue). He's stubborn, so he decides to increase his Will to 3 as well. Finally, he figures he needs some semblance of knowledge to be able to recall songs and stories to entertain his audiences, so he also increases Knowledge to 4, leaving him 100 Experience to divide between his other abilities.

At this point, Nick decides to start trimming down his list. Looking at his preliminary choices, he immediately sets on Animal Handling as one he doesn't need to increase. He feels 2 is enough since he's not a knight and was a scullion as a boy, not a stable boy. He also drops Healing from his list since he knows the house has a sage, and he doesn't see his character filling the role of a healer.

With a somewhat trimmed selection of abilities, Nick decides to increase his Awareness and Cunning both to 3, leaving him 80 Experience. He's not willing to give up Endurance and Fighting, so he increases both of these abilities to 3 as well. Nick has 60 Experience left, so he goes back to Persuasion. He can increase this ability to 5 for another 30, which he does, leaving him with 30 Experience. For his last three, he picks Agility, Survival, and Thievery, bringing each up to 3 for all 30 Experience. His starting abilities are as follows.

Agility 3: Cost 10
Awareness 3: Cost 10
Cunning 3: Cost 10
Endurance 3: Cost 10
Fighting 3: Cost 10
Knowledge 4: Cost 40
Language 3: Cost 10
Persuasion 5: Cost 70
Status 3: Cost 10
Survival 3: Cost 10
Thievery 3: Cost 10
Will 3: Cost 10
All Others 2: Cost 0

Ability Improvement

Age	Ability Experience	Maximum Starting Rank (Except Status)
Youth	120	4
Adolescence	150	4
Young Adult	180	5
Adult	210	7
Middle Age	240	6
Old	270	5
Very Old	330	5
Venerable	360	5

Rank	New Ability	Experience
–1	1	Gain +50 Experience
+1	3 (or 1 for Language)	10
+2	4 (or 2)	40
+3	5 (or 3)	70
+4	6 (or 4)	100
+5	7 (or 5)	130

STEP 4: ASSIGN SPECIALTIES

Once you have allocated all of your Experience for abilities, your next step is to invest Experience into specialties. As described in **Chapter 3: Abilities & Specialties**, specialties are areas of expertise within an ability, places where your character can develop a specific training to improve your chances on tests related to the specialty by granting one or more bonus dice. Remember, bonus dice are not added to the result; they let you roll more dice and take the best dice from the bunch. No specialty can offer more bonus dice than your rank in the attached ability, so if you have Fighting 2, you can't have any more than 2B in any single Fighting specialty.

Specialty Costs

Age	Specialty Experience
Youth	40
Adolescence	40
Young Adult	60
Adult	80
Middle Age	100
Old	160
Very Old	200
Venerable	240

Bonus Dice	Experience Cost	Bonus Dice	Experience Cost
1	10	5	50
2	20	6	60
3	30	7	70
4	40		

Specialty Tips

Specialties provide a good avenue to develop abilities in which you did not invest much or any Experience to improve. For example, if you didn't improve Marksmanship but still want a decent chance to hit an enemy when firing a crossbow, then you might pick up 2B in Crossbows, which would let you keep the best two dice of four rolled.

Your age determines how much Experience you have to acquire specialties. Each bonus die of a specialty costs 10 Experience. See the **Specialty Costs** table for a complete listing of the costs to acquire specialties and for your starting Experience to invest in specialties by Age.

Example

Nick has 80 Experience to invest in specialties. Thinking himself a bit deficient in Fighting, he places 1B in Short Blades. With that out of the way, he turns to Persuasion. Of the specialties available, he sees himself using Bargain, Charm, Deceive, and Seduce, so he places 1B in each. He also figures he has some ability at moving among the commoners to pick up rumors, so he puts a 1B in Streetwise under Knowledge. Finally, he thinks having at least a small advantage in Stealth would be smart, so he invests his last two bonus dice in Sneak. Thus:

Fighting 3—Short Blades: 1B Cost 10
Knowledge 4—Streetwise 1B: Cost 10
Persuasion 5—Bargain 1B: Cost 10
Persuasion 5—Charm 1B: Cost 10
Persuasion 5—Deceive 1B: Cost 10
Persuasion 5—Seduce 1B: Cost 10
Stealth 2—Sneak 2B: Cost 20

Age & Destiny Points

Age	Destiny Points	Maximum Benefits
Youth	7	2 + ancestry
Adolescent	6	2 + ancestry
Young Adult	5	2 + ancestry
Adult	4	2 + ancestry
Middle Age	3	2 + ancestry
Old	2	1 + ancestry
Very Old	1	1 + ancestry
Venerable	0	0 + ancestry

Destiny Tips

While it may be tempting to use up all of your Destiny Points on benefits, resist this impulse. Destiny Points are an important part of the game, and they improve your chances for survival. Conversely, be sure to pick up at least one benefit since these qualities can provide a significant advantage in game play.

STEP 5: DESTINY POINTS & BENEFITS

Destiny Points and benefits are next. As with other aspects of character creation, age determines how many Destiny Points with which you start the game. Younger characters have less experience and fewer opportunities to lose Destiny Points by escaping danger and death.

As noted in **Step 1**, you automatically gain two benefits from your character's ancestry. You can invest some of your starting Destiny Points into additional benefits (see **Chapter 4: Destiny & Qualities**), though there are limits. You may spend Destiny Points on additional ancestry benefits, representing an especially strong tie to your heritage. Starting Destiny Points and the maximum number of starting benefits (including those from character ancestry) are shown on the **Age & Destiny Points** table.

Example

*Nick begins with 4 Destiny Points. Looking through the benefits in **Chapter 4: Destiny & Qualities**, he spots Mummer, which is just what he needs to be a performer. He takes this as a human ancestry benefit, along with* Lucky, *which fits his carefree minstrel concept. As ancestry benefits, they don't cost Destiny Points. He might stop there, but while looking at the benefits, he noticed* Favored by Nobles. *Since he plans to be rubbing elbows with all sorts of folks, having this benefit can't hurt, so he spends 1 Destiny Point to acquire this benefit as well. Now that he has three benefits (two ancestral and one he bought for 1 Destiny Point), he has 3 Destiny Points left.*

STEP 6: DRAWBACKS

Flaws represent the ravages of time, the accumulation of nasty wounds, and the effects of life on your character as he ages and develops. To reflect the dangers and perils of the chronicle world, characters accumulate flaws and drawbacks. You must take the flaws and/or drawbacks listed on

the **Age, Flaws, & Drawbacks** table according to your age category, and all the age categories below your own. If you age into a new category, you must select new flaws and drawbacks as listed in the table.

A flaw imposes –1D on one ability. You may burden the same ability with multiple flaws, but the penalty dice cannot exceed your rank in the ability –1. Thus, if you have 3 in Athletics, you couldn't take more than two flaws in Athletics.

Drawbacks, on the other hand, are less painful to a specific ability, but they impose challenges that affect many aspects of your character. For a full list of flaws and drawbacks, see **Chapter 4: Destiny & Qualities.**

Example

Nick must select one drawback. Since he's an adult, he may choose any one drawback. Nemesis matches his character concept the closest, so he takes it as his drawback.

STEP 7: STARTING POSSESSIONS

Determining your starting possessions comes next. All characters begin play with a set of common clothes, boots or shoes, and a dagger. Heirs also begin play with a signet ring. Record these possessions on your character sheet.

Next, roll a Status test. The result is how many gold pieces you begin with to purchase your starting possessions. Obviously, you don't begin with a sack full of gold; rather, this starting fund reflects your accumulated possessions. You must spend at least half of your starting coin. You may keep the rest in reserve or invest it into your house as you wish.

Chapter 7: Equipment includes full price lists and descriptions for all the common sorts of equipment one might find in many chronicles.

Example

Nick writes down the common possessions every character gets. Then, he tests Status to see how many gold pieces he gets. He rolls a 10, so he has 10 gold pieces with which he may equip his character.

STEP 8: DERIVED STATISTICS

You're nearly there. Now that all of your equipment is listed, your abilities and specialties purchased, benefits and drawbacks selected, and Destiny Points recorded, you are ready to fill out the derived statistics.

INTRIGUE STATISTICS

Two important statistics exist for intrigue: Intrigue Defense and Composure. You calculate each as follows. Record the totals in the space provided on your character sheet using the following formulas:

Intrigue Defense = Awareness + Cunning + Status

Composure = 3 × Will

COMBAT STATISTICS

There are four important statistics for combat: Combat Defense, Health, Armor Rating (AR), and Damage. You calculate each as follows. Record the totals in the space provided on your character sheet.

Age, Flaws, & Drawbacks

Age	Flaws & Drawbacks
Youth	—
Adolescent	—
Young Adult	—
Adult	Any one
Middle Age	A flaw for any of the following abilities: Agility, Athletics, or Endurance
Old	Any one plus a flaw for any of the following abilities: Agility, Athletics, Awareness, Cunning, Endurance, Fighting, or Marksmanship
Very Old	Any one plus a flaw for any two of the following abilities: Agility, Athletics, Awareness, Cunning, Endurance, Fighting, or Marksmanship
Venerable	Any one plus a flaw for any three of the following abilities: Agility, Athletics, Awareness, Cunning, Endurance, Fighting, or Marksmanship

Drawback Tips

The best way to select a drawback is to choose one that ties into your chosen vice or vices. If one doesn't quite fit, work with your Narrator to come up with something that does fit.

Combat Defense = Agility + Athletics + Awareness + Defensive Bonus (From Shields or Parrying Weapons)

Health = 3 × Endurance

Armor Rating = Based on Armor Worn; see Chapter 7: Equipment

Damage = Based on Weapon; see Chapter 7: Equipment

Example

Nearly done, Nick turns to fill out his derived statistics. His Intrigue Defense is 9 (Awareness 3 + Cunning 3 + Status 3). His Composure is 9 (3 × Will 3). His Combat Defense is 8 (Agility 3 + Athletics 2 + Awareness 3) and his Health is 9 (3 × Endurance 3). Nick's not wearing any armor, but he purchased a small sword with his starting funds. A small sword deals damage equal to his Agility–1, so his base damage is 2. He also notes the weapon's Fast Quality on his character sheet in the space provided.

STEP 9: PLAY THE GAME!

The very last step in character creation is to fill in the rest of the sections on your character sheet—your character name, your place of birth, your parents' names, siblings, and so on. You might even sketch out your coat of arms and write down your motto if it's not the same as the rest of the players. Once your character sheet is fully filled out, you're done and ready to play!



Rewards & Improvement

As part of playing a character, you gain rewards for your achievements. Fighting bandits, uncovering insidious plots, or even just advancing the cause of your house can all result in benefits that you can use to improve aspects of your character or your house. There are three types of rewards you may earn from successful adventuring: Coin, Glory, and Experience.

COIN

Coin is the most tangible reward of the three. Acquiring coin improves your purchasing power, allowing you to upgrade weapons and armor, acquire new steeds, and so on. Alternatively, you can invest Coin into your house to outfit your soldiers, fund land improvements, expand your keep, and more. Coin rewards come from prizes and victories, mostly, but may also arise as payments, ransoms, and favorable business transactions.

SPENDING COIN

You may spend Coin on any equipment or service described in **Chapter 7: Equipment**. For house and land improvements that require Coin, see **Chapter 5: House & Lands**.

GLORY

Glory is the currency of the noble and is used to directly improve your family's fortunes. Whenever you acquire Glory as a reward, you may invest that Glory into your family's house by returning to your lands. You simply transfer the Glory to your house, dividing it up or investing it all in one or more of your house's resources. The effect of accumulated Glory is far less immediate and may take time to realize its benefits.

SPENDING GLORY

For details on Glory and its uses, see **Chapter 5: House & Lands**.

EXPERIENCE

Coin's benefits are obvious and tend to have short-lived returns. Glory always affects your house, slowly improving your family's fortunes. Experience, however, marks your personal improvement, providing a means to gradually increase your abilities, improve or acquire new specialties, and accumulate Destiny Points. Thus, of the three rewards, Experience has the greatest impact on your character.

SPENDING EXPERIENCE

Experience improves your character, allowing you an avenue for increasing your ranks, specialty dice, and Destiny Points. The cost of such improvement varies, based on what areas you want to address. Specialties are the least expensive, while Destiny Points are the most expensive. You may spend earned Experience at any time.

ACQUIRE OR IMPROVE SPECIALTY	10 EXP

You can acquire a new specialty at 1B or improve an existing specialty by +1B. If you're improving a specialty, the specialty dice cannot exceed your rank in the governing ability. Therefore, if you have Fighting 3 (Axes 2B, Long Blades 3B), you could improve Axes to 3B, but you couldn't improve Long Blades until your Fighting is at least 4.

IMPROVE ABILITY	30 EXP

You can spend Experience to improve an ability. It costs 30 Experience to raise an ability by one rank, and 30 Experience for each additional rank. So to improve Fighting 2 to Fighting 3, you would spend 30 Experience. To improve Fighting 2 to Fighting 4, you would spend 60 Experience.

Improving an ability takes time and training. For every rank you would increase your ability, you must spend a weeklong period training under the tutelage of a character who has at least 1 rank higher than you in the ability you want to improve. You can still improve the ability without the trainer, but the time increases to 1+1d6/2 weeks.

GAIN DESTINY POINT	50 EXP

The most expensive aspect of character improvement is the acquisition of Destiny Points. Once you acquire a Destiny Point, you may immediately invest it into a Benefit or erase a drawback as normal.

Character Creation Summary

STEP 1: HOUSE AND LANDS

Design House and Lands: Work with your fellow players to create a noble house.

STEP 2: CHARACTER CONCEPT

- **Determine Ancestry:** Elf, Dwarf, Human, or Ogre, or a mixture thereof, based on the ancestry benefits you choose.
- **Pick or Roll Age:** Youth, Adolescent, Young Adult, Adult, Middle Age, Old, Very Old, Venerable.
- **Pick or Roll Status:** Any from 1 to 6.
- **Determine Role:** Pick one, or make your own.
- **Determine Background:** Come up with at least one important event that shaped your life.
- **Determine Goal:** What does your character want?
- **Determine Motivation:** Why does your character want what they want?
- **Virtue:** Name at least one virtue or quality about your character.
- **Vice:** Name at least one vice or character flaw your character has.

STEP 3: ASSIGN ABILITIES

Find Age to determine Starting Experience.

- Purchase Status first.
- Allocate all remaining Experience.

STEP 4: ASSIGN SPECIALTIES

Find Age to determine Starting Experience.

- Allocate Experience between Specialties.

STEP 5: DESTINY POINTS AND BENEFITS

Find Age to determine starting Destiny Points.

- Finalized your choice of ancestry benefits.
- Invest Destiny Points into other benefits up to the maximum allowed by Age.

STEP 6: DRAWBACKS

Find Age to determine required drawbacks.

- Select drawbacks that most closely match concept, specifically your vice.

STEP 7: STARTING POSSESSIONS

Roll a Status test to determine starting coin.

- Spend at least half your starting coin on possessions.

STEP 8: DERIVED STATISTICS

Calculate Intrigue Defense: Awareness + Cunning + Status

- **Calculate Composure:** 3 × Will
- **Calculate Combat Defense:** Agility + Athletics + Awareness
- **Calculate Health:** 3 × Endurance
- **Find Armor Rating (AR):** Find your armor's AR (**Chapter 7: Equipment**), and note its effects on your character sheet.
- **Calculate Weapon Damage:** Fill in weapon statistics from **Chapter 7: Equipment.**

STEP 9: PLAY THE GAME!

Fill in any remaining entries on your character sheet (name, homeland, family name, and so on).

Carve your name into history!

Chapter 3: Abilities & Specialties



Abilities define how the characters interact with the world. They describe those areas in which a character excels and those in which they could use a bit of help. A character's abilities can also provide a snapshot of the PC, offering a glimpse of their style, motivations, and their strategy. Of course, to the untrained eye, abilities look very much like a collection of numbers, but these numbers have meaning, and in them is where your character lives.

Ability Rank

Talent or lack of talent in an ability is measured by rank. The greater the rank, the better you are at using the ability. Rank provides an obvious benefit by telling you how many dice you can roll, but ranks can also serve as a foundation for portraying your character in the game. Ranks say a lot about your character, and knowing what they mean can help you translate the number into a useful character trait.

Rank 0 - Lacking: Any being with rank 0 in an ability essentially lacks it altogether and cannot roll tests or perform actions related to that ability. Humans have at least rank 1 in every ability, but beasts, mythical creatures, and other beings may have one or more rank 0 abilities.

Rank 1 - Deficient: Having just 1 rank in an ability means you're deficient. Routine tasks are a challenge for you, requiring a bit of effort to achieve the things an ordinary person would take for granted. Generally, an ability at this rank is the result of some other physical or mental deficiency. For example, a character with Athletics 1 might have suffered a nasty injury affecting their muscles, while a character with Cunning 1 might have trouble concentrating from an old wound or an accident of birth.

Rank 2 - Average: Rank 2 is the average. Most people have abilities at this range. Having rank 2 in an ability means you can handle routine tasks with ease and can manage most challenges, given enough time. Certain things, however, are beyond your ability, and true masters can do better than you without much trouble.

Rank 3 - Talented: A cut above the common person, having rank 3 in an ability means you have a special knack and find tasks related to the ability to be far easier than other folks do. Talented can also imply a minimum amount of training, such as a few hours put in with the practice sword or having ridden a horse a few times in your life. Generally, rank 3 gives you just enough experience to be dangerous.

Rank 4 - Trained: At rank 4, you have trained extensively in the ability, combining your natural talents with extensive training. Your skill in this ability far exceeds that of the average individual, and you can confidently tackle challenging tasks without trouble and, with a little luck, can pull off some amazing stunts.

Rank 5 - Accomplished: Intensive training coupled with natural talent places you far above the common man. In fact, people with

rank 5 are often the best at what they do in many areas, having surpassed their peers in their craft.

Rank 6 - Master: By rank 6, you are considered one of the best in the world at what you do. People seek you out to learn, to improve their training, or to simply meet you. Only a few individuals attain rank 6 in any ability, much less two or more.

Rank 7 - Paragon: Paragon represents the height of human potential, the limit of mortal achievement, at least for most. Rank 7 is as high as any can hope to achieve. So rare is this rank, people with this level of ability are considered legends.

Rank 8 or Higher - Mythic: It's typically not possible for a human character to have more than rank 7 in any ability, and this is a rare degree of ability even for members of other ancestries. Some creatures can display this degree of personal might, however, and occasionally, mythic heroes break the supposed limits of their ancestries to demonstrate a puissance that endures in legend. These are world-conquerors, supreme artists, and kingmaking masters of magic who achieve immortality in myth—or condemnation as the breakers of old civilizations.

Specialties

Where rank represents the result of natural talent combined with training, specialties reflect a narrowing of a character's focus, the result of specific development in one of the many areas that an ability might represent. Specialties, like abilities, are ranked from 1 to 7. They are designated as a number attached to a B (for "bonus"). So, if you have rank 2 in the Axes specialty, you note it as "Axes 2B." Remember, your specialty rank cannot exceed your ability rank, though it can equal it. Unlike abilities, which start out with a default rank of 2, specialties start out with a default of 0, which is to say, characters have no specialties by default.

USING SPECIALTIES

Rank in a specialty confers an equal number of bonus dice. Whenever you test an ability, and it's a situation where your specialty applies, roll a number of test dice equal to your ability rank and bonus dice equal to your specialty rank. However, you only count a number of dice equal to your test dice (which is to say your ability). Say you have Fighting 3 and Long Blades 2, and you're attacking a fearsome knight. When you attack, you roll five dice (three test dice and two bonus dice), and add up the best three.

SPECIALTIES AND PASSIVE TESTS

Your rank in a specialty provides a number of bonus dice toward your ability test, but specialties provide some uses beyond the norm. Whenever an opponent rolls a test against your passive test result, you may add the number of bonus dice from a specialty that most closely applies to your passive test result. For example, if a spy tries to sneak past you, he rolls a Stealth test against your passive Awareness test. Assuming you have Awareness 4, your passive result would be 16 (4 × rank 4). If, however, you had 2B in Notice, your passive result would be 18 instead (16 +2 =18).

Ability and Specialty Descriptions

This section provides an overview of the various abilities and specialties used in *Sword Chronicle*. Narrators are encouraged not to expand the list of abilities. However, there is always room for additional specialties. If you, as a player, want to specialize in area not described under an ability's entry, work with your Narrator to come up with one that best meets your needs.

ABILITY OVERVIEW

Agility: Agility measures dexterity, nimbleness, reflexes, and flexibility. In some ways, it describes how comfortable you are in your body, how well you master your movement, and how you react to your surroundings.

Animal Handling: Animal Handling addresses the various skills and techniques used to train, work, and care for animals. Whenever you would regain control over a panicked mount, train a dog to serve as a guardian, or train ravens to carry messages, you test this ability.

Athletics: Athletics describes the degree of training, the application of physical fitness, coordination, training, and raw muscle. Athletics is an important ability in that it determines how far you can jump, how fast you run, how quickly you move, and how strong you are.

Awareness: Awareness measures your senses, how quickly you can respond to changes in your environment, and your ability to see through double-talk and feints to arrive at the truth of the matter. Whenever you perceive your surroundings or assess another person, use Awareness.

Cunning: Cunning encapsulates intelligence, intellect, and the application of all your collected knowledge. Typically, Cunning comes into play whenever you might recall an important detail or instruction, work through a puzzle, or solve some other problem, such as researching and deciphering codes.

Deception: Deception measures your gift at duplicity—your ability to lie and deceive. You use Deception to mask your intentions and hide your agenda. You also use Deception to pretend to be someone other than who you really are—to affect a different accent or disguise yourself successfully.

Endurance: Endurance measures your physical well-being—your health and hardiness. Your Endurance determines how much punishment you can take, as well as how quickly you recover from injury.

Fighting: Fighting describes your skill at arms—your ability to wield weapons effectively in combat. Whenever you would attack unarmed or use a hand-held weapon, test Fighting.

Abilities and Specialties

Ability	Specialties
Agility	Acrobatics, Balance, Contortions, Dodge, Quickness
Animal Handling	Charm, Drive, Ride, Train
Athletics	Climb, Jump, Run, Strength, Swim, Throw
Awareness	Empathy, Notice
Cunning	Decipher, Logic, Memory
Deception	Act, Bluff, Cheat, Disguise
Endurance	Resilience, Stamina
Fighting	Axes, Bludgeons, Brawling, Fencing, Long Blades, Pole-Arms, Short Blades, Shields, Spears
Healing	Diagnose, Treat Ailment, Treat Injury
Language	—
Knowledge	Education, Research, Streetwise
Marksmanship	Bows, Crossbows, Siege, Thrown
Persuasion	Bargain, Charm, Convince, Incite, Intimidate, Seduce, Taunt
Status	Breeding, Reputation, Stewardship, Tournaments
Stealth	Blend In, Sneak
Survival	Forage, Hunt, Orientation, Track
Thievery	Pick Lock, Sleight of Hand, Steal
Warfare	Command, Strategy, Tactics
Will	Concentrate, Coordinate, Dedication



Healing: Healing represents skill with and understanding of the accumulated medical knowledge throughout the world. Rank in this ability reflects an understanding of health and recovery; the highest ranks represent talents held only by the greatest of healers.

Knowledge: Knowledge describes your general understanding and awareness of the world in which you live. It represents a broad spectrum of subjects, ranging from history, agriculture, economics, politics, and numerous other subjects.

Language: Language is the ability to communicate in a tongue, usually through speech, but among the best educated, also through the written word. The starting rank you have in this ability applies to your knowledge of the common language used throughout many (though not all) nations. When you improve this ability, you may improve your ability with this common tongue or choose to speak other languages.

Marksmanship: Marksmanship represents your skill with ranged weapons, to use them appropriately and accurately in combat. Any time you make an attack using a ranged weapon, you test Marksmanship.

Persuasion: Persuasion is the ability to manipulate the emotions and beliefs of others. With this ability, you can modify how others see you, shape their attitudes towards others, convince them of things they might not otherwise agree to, and more.

Status: Status describes the circumstances of your birth and the knowledge they grant you. The higher your rank, the more likely you will be able to recognize heraldry, the better your reputation, and the stronger your knowledge of managing people and lands.

Stealth: Stealth represents your ability to creep about unseen and unheard. Whenever you would move without being noticed, you test Stealth.

Survival: Survival is the ability to get by in the wild—hunting, foraging, avoiding getting lost, and following tracks. It is important for a variety of people in that hunting remains an important method of providing food for one's family, especially in unpopulated areas.

Thievery: Thievery is a catchall ability for any skill involving larcenous activities. Examples include picking locks, hand tricks, and general robbery.

Warcraft: Warcraft describes a character's talents at managing the battlefield, ranging from the ability to issue commands and possessing strategic knowledge for maneuvering armies, to tactical knowledge for dealing with small engagements.

Will: Will is your mental fortitude, reflecting the state of your mind's health and endurance. It represents your ability to withstand fear in the face of appalling violence or supernatural phenomena and also serves as the foundation for your ability to resist being manipulated by others.

ABILITY USES

Each entry includes a summary of the rules associated with their use, sample difficulties for various tasks, and all the specialties associated with the ability.

Ability Descriptions

The following Abilities are available to characters in *Sword Chronicle*.

AGILITY

Specialties: Acrobatics, Balance, Contortions, Dodge, Quickness

Agility measures dexterity, nimbleness, reflexes, and flexibility. In some ways, it describes how comfortable you are in your body, how well you master your movement, and how well you react to your surroundings. A low Agility suggests stiffness, uncertainty, and uncommon tension. A high Agility reflects suppleness and grace, uncanny speed, and easy physical movements.

Agility has the following uses.

ACROBATICS

Test: Basic • **Action:** Lesser

You may use Agility to perform flips, tumbles, somersaults, to leap to your feet when lying on the ground, and a variety of other maneuvers.

Acrobatics

Difficulty	Description
Routine (6)	Ignore 2 yards of falling damage, plus 1 yard per degree.
Challenging (9)	Stand up as a Free Action—or as a Lesser Action when wearing armor with Armor Rating 6 or higher.
Formidable (12)	Increase your Movement by 1 yard, plus 1 yard per degree.
Hard (15)	Swing from a rope, flip through the air, and land on your feet.
Heroic (21+)	Ignore damage from a fall of any distance.

BALANCE

Test: Basic • **Action:** Free

Agility also helps you keep your balance when moving across a precarious surface, allowing you to move forward or backward on a narrow ledge. The only time you need to test Agility to maintain your balance is when failure to do so would have consequences (a fall that could result in death or when you would move more quickly across treacherous terrain). A failure means you make no progress, while a Critical failure means you fall.

Balance

Difficulty	Description
Routine (6)	Move 1 yard per degree across a narrow ledge (6 inches or less), up to maximum Movement.
Challenging (9)	Reduce terrain penalties to Movement by 1 yard per degree.
Hard (15)	Move 1 yard per degree on a tightrope, up to maximum Movement.

CONTORTIONS

Test: Basic • **Action:** Greater

You may test Agility to slip through a tight space. The Difficulty depends on the size of the space through which you're moving, as shown on the following chart. A successful test allows you to move through the gap with no trouble, while a failure results in no progress. A Critical failure indicates you become stuck and must succeed on another Agility test against the same Difficulty to escape.

Contortions

Difficulty*	Description
Easy (3)	Move 1 yard per degree through a crowd, up to your maximum Movement.
Routine (6)	Move 1 yard per degree through a dense crowd, up to your maximum Movement.
Challenging (9)	Escape a net.
Formidable (12)	Move 1 yard per degree through a narrow space, up to your maximum Movement.
Hard (15)	Move 1 yard per degree through a tight space, up to your maximum Movement.

*Plus your Armor Penalty again, so your AR counts twice against Agility tests to perform contortions.

In addition, you can also use Contortions to slip free from rope bindings and manacles. The Difficulty depends on the quality of the bindings, usually Formidable (12) for ropes and Hard (15) for manacles. On a failed test, you make no progress. If you fail by more than one degree, you gain an injury (see **Chapter 9: Combat** for details on injuries). When attacked by an Entangling weapon, you can use Contortions to slip free as well, substituting an Agility test for an Athletics test.

DODGE

Test: Basic • **Action:** Greater

During combat, you may use a Greater Action to Dodge all attacks made against you. The result of your Agility test replaces your Combat Defense until the start of your next turn, even if it's worse than your Combat Defense.

QUICKNESS

Test: Basic • **Action:** Free

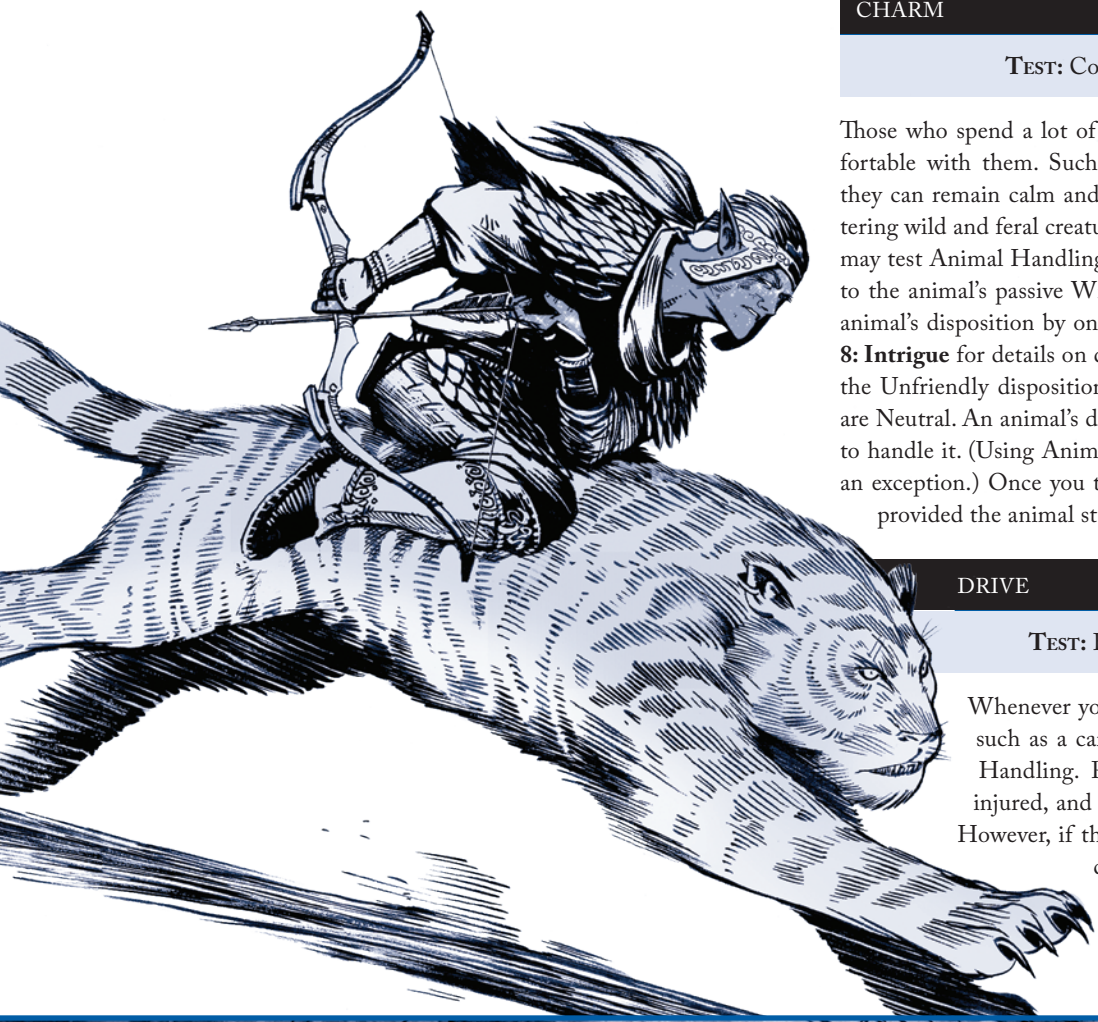
During combat, you test Agility to determine the order of initiative (bonus dice from Quickness apply). The combatant with the highest result goes first, followed by the next highest, and so on. In the case of a tie, the character with the highest rank in Agility goes first. If there's still a tie, compare ranks in Quickness. Finally, should the combatants still be equal, they test again until there's a clear victor.

Quickness also comes into play whenever you would test your reflexes or reactions, such as catching a thrown object for example.

OTHER USES

In addition to the normal actions that involve Agility, your rank in this ability determines a variety of other factors about your character.

- Your damage with many Marksmanship weapons (crossbow, bow, and so on) is equal to your Agility rank plus the weapon's base damage.
- Certain Fighting weapons deal damage equal to your Agility rank.
- Add your Agility rank to your Combat Defense.
- If you are helpless, trapped by a slain mount, or sprint, you lose your Agility rank from your Combat Defense.
- Your armor penalty is subtracted from all Agility tests.
- You may test Agility (Contortions) to wriggle free if you are trapped by a slain mount.
- When an opponent attempts a Knockdown maneuver, its Difficulty is 4 times your Agility rank.



ANIMAL HANDLING

Specialties: Charm, Drive, Ride, Train

Expertise in handling animals is a valuable talent, one that finds the best trained employed by noble houses great and small. The reason is simple: humanity relies on beasts to survive. A trained dog is more than just a companion; it's a servant, a fellow warrior, and even a savior. Thus, from kennel masters to horse trainers, those trained in Animal Handling are among some of the most valued common folk.

Animal Handling addresses the various skills and techniques used to train, work, and care for animals. Whenever you would regain control over a panicked mount, train a dog to serve as a guardian, or train ravens to carry messages, you test this ability. Animal Handling is also used to control dray animals, guiding them in their work as they pull ploughs or wagons. In short, this ability serves for just about any interaction between man and beast.

Animal Handling has the following uses.

CHARM

Test: Conflict • **Action:** 1 minute

Those who spend a lot of time around animals become more comfortable with them. Such individuals become so comfortable that they can remain calm and bear their vast experience when encountering wild and feral creatures. Upon first meeting a wild animal, you may test Animal Handling to calm the beast. The Difficulty is equal to the animal's passive Will result. If you succeed, you improve the animal's disposition by one step per degree of success (see **Chapter 8: Intrigue** for details on dispositions). Generally, wild animals have the Unfriendly disposition to humans, while domesticated animals are Neutral. An animal's disposition must be at least Neutral for you to handle it. (Using Animal Handling to ride an unfamiliar steed is an exception.) Once you test Animal Handling, you may try again, provided the animal stays around long enough for another try.

DRIVE

Test: Basic or Conflict • **Action:** Greater

Whenever you would control an animal-drawn vehicle such as a cart, wagon, or coach, you may test Animal Handling. Provided the animal is comfortable, not injured, and not frightened, the test is Automatic (0). However, if the animal becomes panicked or injured in combat, you must succeed on an Animal Handling test to restore your control. The Difficulty is equal to the animal's passive Will result. If you succeed, you

may direct the animal as normal. If you fail, the animal sprints away from the source of its fear or injury. You may try again on following rounds.

RIDE

Test: Basic or Conflict • **Action:** Lesser

Riding an animal trained to bear a rider requires an Automatic (0) Animal Handling test. When you try to ride an animal that's not inclined to be ridden (Dislike or worse disposition), you must succeed on an Animal Handling test. The Difficulty equals the animal's passive Will result. A success indicates you gain control for a number of rounds equal to your Animal Handling rank times your degree of success. Three consecutive successful tests mean you gain mastery over the animal, and it will bear you.

A failed test means the animal doesn't move for the round. A Critical failure means the animal throws you off. You land 1d6/2 yards away and take 1 damage (ignoring AR) for each yard you traveled.

When riding an animal in combat, you must spend a Lesser Action to maintain control over the animal. If, however, the animal is war-trained, you don't need to spend an action. If the animal is injured or frightened, you must test to control it as a Greater Action. The Difficulty is equal to the animal's passive Will result. If you succeed, you calm the animal down enough to resume normal actions. If you fail, the animal sprints away from the source of its injury or fear. If you roll a Critical failure, you land 1d6/2 yards away and take 1 damage (ignoring AR) for each yard you traveled.

Alternatively, you can use the Charm function to improve the animal's disposition toward you as you would whenever you encounter an unfriendly animal.

TRAIN

Test: Basic (Extended) • **Action:** Special (see text)

You can use Animal Handling to teach animals to perform tasks, ranging from simple tricks to complex tasks, such as war training. Animal instruction is an Extended Action. You must succeed on a number of tests equal to the animal's Will minus its Reason (minimum one test), with each test made once per week of training, assuming you spend a few hours every day with the animal. The test Difficulty is based on the animal's Will as shown on the following chart.

Training

Will	Difficulty
1	Routine (6)
2	Challenging (9)
3	Formidable (12)
4	Hard (15)
5	Very Hard (18)

Typical tricks and tasks include fetching, guarding, attacking, working, bearing a rider, and so on, within reason. Training an animal for war is a bit more involved and requires an extra week to instill the proper discipline.

OTHER USES

In addition to the normal actions that involve Animal Handling, rank in this ability determines a variety of other factors about your character.

- When mounted on a war-trained steed, you may add your Animal Handling rank as bonus dice on your Fighting tests.
- Your opponent must beat your passive Animal Handling result with an Athletics test to pull you from your mount.
- When jousting, your opponent tests Fighting against your passive Animal Handling result.
- When your steed is slain in combat, you test Animal Handling (Ride) to leap clear.
- When you perform the Trample maneuver, you substitute your Animal Handling rank for your Fighting rank on your attack.

ATHLETICS

Specialties: Climb, Jump, Strength, Swim, Throw

Athletics describes the degree of training, the application of physical fitness, coordination, training, and raw muscle. Athletics is an important ability in that it determines how far you can jump, how fast you run, how quickly you move, and how strong you are. Your Athletics rank alone describes many elements of your characters, but you can test Athletics to push yourself beyond normal limits.

Athletics has the following uses.

CLIMB

Test: Basic • **Action:** Lesser

Whenever you would ascend or descend a surface, you test Athletics. A successful test allows you to climb 1 yard up or down per degree of success, up to your normal Movement. The Difficulty of the test depends on the quality of the surface. A failed test indicates you make no progress, while more than one degree of failure means you lose your hold and fall from the height you've attained.

Climbing

Difficulty	Description
Routine (6)	A steep slope or ladder
Challenging (9)	A knotted rope using a wall to brace yourself
Formidable (12)	A rough surface with plenty of handholds
Hard (15)	A rough surface with few handholds
Very Hard (18)	A smooth surface
Heroic (21)	A sheer surface
+5	Slippery

JUMP

Test: Basic • **Action:** Lesser

You test Athletics whenever you would leap up or over an obstacle such as a fence or pit. The Difficulty depends on the type of Jump attempted. There are three basic Jumps—running jumps, standing jumps, and high jumps. To make a running jump, you must move at least 3 yards; otherwise, it is a standing jump. Should you need to know, when performing a standing or running jump, your vertical height is equal to half the distance jumped.

Jumping

Difficulty	Description
Routine (6)	A running long jump, covering 2 yards plus 1 yard per degree after the first.
Challenging (9)	A standing long jump, covering 1 yard per degree.
Formidable (12)	A high jump, covering 1 yard per degree.

RUN

Test: Basic • **Action:** Greater

Most times, you don't need to test Athletics to Run. You simply move at your sprint speed. However, two uses require tests. Whenever you would cover any great distance, you must succeed on a Challenging (9) Athletics test. If you succeed on the test, you may Run for an hour per degree. At the end of this time, you must test again, but the Difficulty increases by one step to Formidable (12). If at any time you fail, you gain one point of Fatigue (see page 150). If you're not using the fatigue rules, a failed test simply means you must stop and cannot Run again until you rest for four hours.

The other major use of Run is to increase your speed. In combat, whenever you take the Sprint action, you can attempt a Formidable (12) Athletics test to run faster and, thus, cover more ground. A success allows you to sprint 1 extra yard per degree.

Running

Difficulty	Description
Challenging (9)	Run for 1 hour per degree
Formidable (12)	Sprint 1 extra yard per degree

STRENGTH

Test: Basic • **Action:** Greater

You use Athletics to lift or push through heavy objects. Anytime you would lift something the Narrator deems heavy, test Athletics. For benchmark difficulties, see the **Lifting and Pushing** table. Note that these are starting points for lifting the weight once. The Narrator may modify the Difficulty based on an object's size and Bulk. It also gets harder to lift the same weight repeatedly and, thus, the Difficulty increases as well.

Lifting and Pushing

Difficulty	Description
Automatic (0)	10 pounds
Easy (3)	25 pounds
Routine (6)	50 pounds
Challenging (9)	100 pounds
Formidable (12)	150 pounds
Hard (15)	250 pounds
Very Hard (18)	500 pounds
Heroic (21)	750 pounds, plus 250 pounds per degree after the first

SWIM

Test: Basic • **Action:** Greater

You can only swim if you have at least a 1B in Swim. Without it, you can keep your head above water, provided the conditions are ideal—calm waters, no or light wind, relatively shallow water, and so on. Otherwise, you sink and possibly drown.

If you have the Swim specialty, you need not make Athletics tests unless you are in severe conditions, such as trying to ford a swollen river or keep your head above water in a storm-tossed sea. The test Difficulty depends on the conditions of the water, factoring in such things as depth, undertow, current, wind, and so on. The Narrator sets the Difficulty based on all of these issues but can use the following as benchmarks.

Swimming

Difficulty	Example
Automatic (0)	Calm, shallow water
Easy (3)	Calm, deep water
Routine (6)	Deep water, some waves
Challenging (9)	Deep water, moderate waves
Formidable (12)	Deep water, high waves
Hard (15)	Deep water, high waves, rough weather
Very Hard (18)	Deep water, high waves, storm conditions
Heroic (21+)	Deep water, high waves, hurricane conditions

A successful test allows you to move at half your Movement plus 1 more yard for each degree of success after the first. A failed Athletics test indicates no progress. A second failed test means you slip beneath the water's surface. On the next round, you must pass another Athletics test to break the surface. Each round spent under the surface requires another successful test to get back to the air. So, if you fail three consecutive tests, you need three consecutive successful tests to get back to the surface.

THROW

Test: Basic • **Action:** Lesser

You may also test Athletics to hurl objects. For items made for throwing, such as some axes, spears, knives, and the like, use Marksmanship instead. For all other items, use Athletics. The Difficulty and distance thrown depends on the object's weight and the degree of success. A failed test means the object lands 1d6 yards away in the intended direction, while more than one degree of failure means the object lands at your feet. If the item is bulky, you take –1D per Bulk point.

Throwing

Difficulty	Description	Distance Thrown
Automatic (0)	1 pound	15 yards per degree
Easy (3)	5 pounds	10 yards per degree
Routine (6)	10 pounds	8 yards per degree
Challenging (9)	20 pounds	6 yards per degree
Formidable (12)	50 pounds	4 yards per degree
Hard (15)	75 pounds	3 yards per degree
Very Hard (18)	100 pounds	2 yards per degree
Heroic (21)	250 pounds	1 yard per degree

OTHER USES

In addition to the normal actions that involve Athletics, your rank in this ability determines a variety of other aspects about your character.

- Your damage with a Fighting or Thrown weapon is equal to your Athletics rank plus the weapon's base damage.
- Your Run specialty rank can modify how fast you move.
- Your Athletics rank is used to determine your Combat Defense.
- When hit by an Entangling weapon (a net), you must succeed on a Challenging (9) Athletics test to escape.
- When wielding a Powerful weapon, you increase the weapon's damage by your rank in the Strength specialty.
- You make an Athletics test to pull a rider from their mount.
- Whenever you successfully grab an opponent in combat, that opponent must succeed on an opposed Athletics test to break free.
- You may pin a grabbed foe by succeeding on an opposed Athletics test.
- You test Athletics to break objects or burst through barriers.

AWARENESS

Specialties: Empathy, Notice

Awareness measures your senses, how quickly you can respond to changes in your environment, and your ability to see through double-talk and feints to arrive at the truth of the matter. Whenever you would perceive your surroundings or assess another person, use Awareness.

The Awareness ability has the following uses.

EMPATHY

Test: Conflict • **Action:** Free

You may use Awareness to look into the hearts of others and perceive the truthfulness of what they say and whether or not they seem genuine. Normally, this test is passively opposed, meaning you pit your Awareness test result against your target's passive Persuasion result. If the target is actively resisting your attempt, it may oppose your Awareness test with a Persuasion test (bonus dice from Deceive apply). If you equal or beat your target's result, you learn the target's disposition (see **Chapter 8: Intrigue**) and each additional degree of success reveals a more refined look at the target's agenda, attitude, and technique. This use of Awareness doesn't provide mind-reading; it merely lets you get an instinctual hunch about a target's motives based on their manner, expressions, and voice.

Using Awareness for Empathy can also be used during an intrigue with similar results.

NOTICE

Test: None or Conflict • **Action:** Free

Awareness is most often used to employ your senses, to perceive the world around you and see the small details. Unless you're actively searching or looking around, you don't test Awareness. Instead, anyone who tries to hide from you or conceal something from you must beat your passive Awareness result. On a failed test, you become aware of the effort to hide automatically.

If, however, you are actively searching for something or someone, you must equal or beat the opponent's Stealth test, or the Difficulty set by the Narrator to find the hidden item. Most Awareness test difficulties made to locate hidden objects, levers, and doors are Formidable (12), though well-hidden objects may be harder to find.

OTHER USES

In addition to the normal actions that involve Awareness, your rank determines a variety of other aspects about your character.

- Your Awareness rank applies toward your Combat Defense and Intrigue Defense.

CUNNING

Specialties: Decipher, Logic, Memory

Cunning encapsulates cleverness, intellect, and the application of all your collected knowledge. Typically, Cunning comes into play whenever you might recall an important detail or instruction, work through a puzzle, or solve some other problem, such as when researching and deciphering codes. While it's an important ability to those who hold

power, even those who fight on the battlefield can take advantage of being smarter than their enemies.

The Cunning ability has the following uses

DECIPHER

Test: Basic (Extended) • **Action:** Greater

Whenever you examine a text written in another language or in code, you may test your Cunning to discern the intent of the message and derive some basic understanding of its contents. Each degree of success allows you to Decipher about a paragraph of information.

Deciphering

Difficulty	Description
Automatic (0)	Decipher writings in a language in which you have rank 6.
Easy (3)	Decipher writings in a language in which you have rank 5.
Routine (6)	Decipher writings in a language in which you have rank 4.
Challenging (9)	Decipher writings in a language in which you have rank 3 or crack a simple code.
Formidable (12)	Decipher writings in a language in which you have rank 2 or crack a moderate code.
Hard (15)	Decipher writings in a language in which you have rank 1 or crack a tough code.
Very Hard (18)	Decipher writings in any language or crack a very difficult code.
Heroic (21)	Crack an impossible code.

LOGIC

Test: Basic • **Action:** Greater

You may test Cunning to solve riddles, puzzles, and other problems of logic. You might use Logic to figure out an enemy's plan from a series of unrelated movements, or you might use it to assess the currents of a noble's court to identify conspiracies and the web of alliances. The test's Difficulty depends on the complexity and size of the problem you wish to solve. Generally, most riddles are Formidable (12).

You may also pit your Cunning test against the passive Warfare result of an enemy commander—provided you have a good look at your opponent's plans—to find a flaw. At the Narrator's discretion, a successful test may allow you to add some or all of your Logic bonus dice to your Warfare test when the battle is joined.

MEMORY

Test: Basic • **Action:** Free

You can test Cunning to recall a piece of useful information that relates to a challenge you currently face. The Difficulty depends on the nature of the problem and is set by the Narrator. A successful test might grant you a hint about how to circumvent the challenge or could provide a useful bonus on a test against an opponent. For example, when engaged in an intrigue with another noble, you might test Cunning to recall something useful about the family in question. If you succeed, and if there is something in your opponent's past that you could know and would help, you could gain a bonus die or even an extra die on your test.

Remembering

Difficulty	Description
Automatic (0)	Recall your name, where you live, and the names of your parents.
Easy (3)	Recall the name and family that rules your land.
Routine (6)	Recall minor details about the land in which you live.
Challenging (9)	Recall important detail about a character with 6 or higher Status.
Formidable (12)	Recall important detail about a character with Status 5.
Hard (15)	Recall important detail about a character with Status 4.
Very Hard (18)	Recall important detail about a character with Status 3.
Heroic (21+)	Recall important detail about a character with Status 2.

OTHER USES

In addition to the normal actions that involve Cunning, your rank in this ability determines a variety of other aspects about your character.

- Your rank in Cunning applies toward your Intrigue Defense.
- You test Cunning when you attempt to distract a foe in combat.

DECEPTION

Specialties: Act, Bluff, Cheat, Disguise

Deception measures your gift at duplicity, your ability to lie and deceive. You use Deception to mask your intentions and hide your agenda. You also use Deception to pretend to be someone other than who you really are, to affect a different accent, and pull off a disguise.

Deception has the following uses.

ACT

Test: Conflict • **Action:** Lesser

Whenever you would pretend to be someone other than who you really are—in a stage performance or when impersonating someone else—you test Deception. Acting requires a conflict test in which you test Deception against your opponent's passive Awareness result. If your opponent has cause to suspect your duplicity, the Difficulty is equal your opponent's Awareness test result. Under certain circumstances, you may be entitled to add your Disguise bonus dice to acting Deception tests provided the costume is integral to your performance.

BLUFF

Test: Conflict • **Action:** Lesser

Deception is also a useful tool in intrigues. You may test Deception whenever you would test Persuasion to compel another target but only if your role in the intrigue involves concealing information, misleading your opponent, or blatantly lying about your intentions. As well, when a target attempts to discern your motives, your opponent's Difficulty is equal to your Deception test result.

CHEAT

Test: Basic • **Action:** Free

Whenever you are engaged in a game of chance or similar situation, you can fudge the results to give yourself an advantage. Roll a Deception test against your opponent's base Awareness result (or your opponent's Awareness result if they have reason to believe you are cheating). If you succeed, you may add (Deception rank x degree) to the test result involved in the game (usually Cunning).

DISGUISE

Test: Conflict • **Action:** Lesser

Similar to Act, using Deception to Disguise means you are concealing your identity, but you are not actively trying to be someone else. Disguise allows you to conceal your identity in plain view, such as by wearing a hooded cloak and garb suited to commoners to hide the fact that you are actually an infamous knight. Disguise requires a conflict test in which you test Deception against your opponent's passive Awareness result. If your opponent has cause to suspect your duplicity, the Difficulty is equal to your opponent's Awareness test result. Under certain circumstances, you may be entitled to add your Act bonus dice to Deception tests, provided a performance is integral to your disguise.

OTHER USES

Deception is a vital ability for intrigues. For details, see **Chapter 8: Intrigue**.

ENDURANCE

Specialties: Resilience, Stamina

Endurance measures your physical well-being, health, and hardiness. Your Endurance determines how much punishment you can take, as well as how quickly you recover from injuries. As well, whenever you are exposed to a hazard such as poison, smoke, and similar effects, you test Endurance to stave off the effects.

Endurance has the following uses.

RESILIENCE

Test: Basic (Extended) • **Action:** Free

Any time you are exposed to a hazard (poison, disease, and similar), you may roll an Endurance test to resist the effects of the hazard. Most hazards require multiple successful tests to overcome them fully, and a failed test could impose an injury, wound, or even kill you outright. Each hazard includes difficulty, virulence, and frequency. Difficulty describes the complexity of the Endurance test. Virulence describes the number of successful tests required to overcome the hazard, and frequency describes the time between Endurance tests. Generally, each additional degree of success on a test counts as an additional success. For details, see **Hazards** in **Chapter 11: The Narrator**.



STAMINA

Test: Basic • **Action:** Special

Whenever you gain injuries or wounds, you may test Endurance to overcome them. You must wait at least one day before testing to remove injuries and at least one week to remove wounds. The test Difficulty depends on your activity level during the time between when you took the injury and when you test Endurance to remove the injury.

Stamina Checks

Difficulty	Description
Routine (6)	Remove an injury after light or no activity.
Challenging (9)	Remove an injury after moderate activity. Remove a wound after light or no activity.
Formidable (12)	Remove an injury after strenuous activity.
Hard (15)	Remove a wound after moderate activity.
Heroic (21)	Remove a wound after strenuous activity.

A successful test removes 1 injury per degree or 1 wound per two degrees. A failed test means you make no progress, but Critical failure means your injuries fester, and you gain either another injury or another wound, depending on which you are trying to overcome.

OTHER USES

In addition to the normal actions that involve the Endurance ability, your rank in it determines a few other important aspects about your character.

- Your Endurance rank determines your Health, which equals 3 × Endurance.
- Your Endurance rank sets the limit on how many injuries and wounds you can take.
- When using the Catch Your Breath action in combat, a successful Automatic (0) Endurance test removes 1 point of damage per degree.
- When an opponent uses the Knockout maneuver, the Difficulty is equal to your passive Endurance result.
- If you use the fatigue rules, your Endurance sets the limit on how many points of fatigue you may accumulate.

FIGHTING

Specialties: Axes, Bludgeons, Brawling, Fencing, Long Blades, Pole-Arms, Shields, Short Blades, Spears

Fighting describes your skill at arms, your ability to wield weapons effectively in combat. Whenever you would attack unarmed or use a hand-held weapon, you test fighting.

Fighting has the following uses.

ATTACK

Test: Conflict • **Action:** Lesser or Greater

Whenever you attack in combat, you test Fighting against your opponent's Combat Defense. A successful test deals weapon damage times your degree of success. Weapon damage is equal to the key ability plus or minus any modifiers. **Chapter 9: Combat** goes into extensive detail on attacks and the consequences of a successful attack.

HEALING

Specialties: Diagnose, Treat Ailment, Treat Injury

Life can be perilous, and those who venture beyond the relative safety of their walls are at risk of attack from bandits, rogue knights, and even from some predatory animals. With such encounters come injuries, and while many may recover on their own, injuries left untended may fester, and death can result even from a minor cut. Healing, then, represents a skill with and understanding of the accumulated medical knowledge throughout the world.

Healing has the following uses.

DIAGNOSE

Test: Basic • **Action:** Greater

You may examine a sick or injured patient to see what is wrong with them or determine what is wrong with a patient by hearing a description of the symptoms. A typical test is Formidable (12) when the patient is present, though the Difficulty can drop as far as Automatic (0) if the cause of the injury is readily apparent—it's hard to miss a spear stuck in the belly. When diagnosing an absent patient, the Difficulty increases by 5. A successful test means you understand the general problem, while a failed test means you must guess. Each additional degree on the test grants +1D on the Healing test to treat the patient, up to the number of bonus dice you have invested in this specialty.

TREAT AILMENT

Test: Basic • **Action:** 1 minute

You can roll a Healing test to treat a patient suffering from sickness, poison, or some other hazardous effect. You substitute the result of your Healing test for the patient's Endurance test to resist the hazard's effect. You must use your result, even if it is worse than what the patient could achieve on their own, and you must test Healing before the patient tests Endurance.

TREAT INJURY

Test: Basic • **Action:** Varies

Healing is also used to treat the injured and speed along the natural recovery process. To treat a patient in this way, you must attend to the patient, spending at least one hour every day the patient must rest (or

not rest) cleaning the injury and changing bandages. At the end of this time, substitute your Healing test result for the patient's Endurance test. The patient must accept the result of your Healing test, even if it is worse than what the patient could have achieved on their own. However, a patient in your care is never at risk of further injury from a failed Healing test.

KNOWLEDGE

Specialties: Education, Research, Streetwise

Knowledge describes your general understanding and awareness of the world in which you live. It represents a broad spectrum of subjects, ranging from history, agriculture, economics, politics, and numerous other subjects—but only in the broadest possible ways. For specialized forms of knowledge, you must invest Destiny Points to acquire the Knowledge Focus benefit (see **Chapter 4: Destiny & Qualities**).

Knowledge has the following uses.

EDUCATION

Test: Basic • **Action:** Free

You test Knowledge to recall useful information about a subject. Generally, the Education specialty is used to identify things around you, such as knowing about local predators or who a nation's ruler is. The Difficulty depends on the question, specifically how widely known the sought-after information is.

Knowledge

Difficulty	Description	Example
Automatic (0)	Well-known	The identity of a local ruler.
Easy (3)	Common Knowledge	The name of the ruling family.
Routine (6)	Typical Knowledge	Names of the ruling family members and advisers.
Challenging (9)	Uncommon Knowledge	Who a ruling family's bastards are.
Formidable (12)	Scarce	A scandal affecting succession in the family.
Hard (15)	Rare	The secret origins of a scandal or tragedy.
Very Hard (18)	Very Rare or Guarded	The personal secrets of a famed or powerful figure.
Heroic (21+)	Forgotten	The secrets of old sorcery.



RESEARCH

Test: Basic (Extended) • **Action:** One day

Education isn't the only to way to find out information about the subject; if you have access to relevant texts, you can scour those tomes to locate the elusive knowledge. Researching functions much like Education, except it takes more time and requires a great deal of reading and searching. You may only Research a subject if you have access to a library that holds the information you're seeking.

The test's Difficulty depends on the obscurity of the subject and uses the same difficulties described under Education.

The number of successes needed to find the information depends on the library's size. Larger libraries are more likely to hold the information you seek, but sifting through the often-disorganized mess takes far more time. In addition, with larger collections come more opportunities to become lost, misled, or follow the wrong line of research.

Researching

Successful Tests	Example
1	A single book
2	A small collection of two to four books
3	A modest collection of five to eight books
4	A considerable collection of up to a dozen books
5	A large collection of books, up to a score
6	A huge collection, up to several score
7	A massive selection of books, tomes, scrolls, numbering in the hundreds
8	An enormous collection

As you gain successes, the Narrator may provide pieces of information to mark your progress. Once you begin, you can leave the process and return later, retaining all previously acquired successes—assuming the library is as you left it.

STREETWISE

Test: Basic • **Action:** Varies, at least one hour

You can use Knowledge to acquire useful information by listening for rumors, talking with the average person, and spending time in some of the seedier places in a community. By gathering information in this way, you can learn a great deal about current events, attitudes, and the atmosphere of the community. The Difficulty depends on how much time you spend haunting an area. A successful test only reveals rumors and speculation, but usually, one can learn a great deal about what's going on from such information. You gain one bit of useful information per degree of success.

Streetwise Checks

Difficulty	Time Spent
Automatic (0)	Spend 6 months or more
Easy (3)	Spend 1 month
Routine (6)	Spend 1 week
Challenging (9)	Spend 1 day
Formidable (12)	Spend 1 night
Hard (15)	Spend 4 hours
Very Hard (18)	Spend 1 hour
Heroic (21)	Spend 10 minutes

LANGUAGE

Specialties: Eloquence, Literacy

Language is the ability to communicate in a tongue, usually through speech, but among the best educated, also through the written word. The starting rank in this ability applies to your knowledge of the "common tongue" of the game world. You start with rank 0 in all other languages. When you improve this ability, you may improve your ability with the Common Tongue or select another language.

Language has no special uses. It simply confers the ability to communicate in a particular tongue. The rank you give a language determines your eloquence when using the language and determines if you are literate in the language or not.

Language Familiarity

Rank	Description
0	You have no familiarity with the language.
1	Your simple understanding allows you to convey basic concepts through speech only.
2	You have a common understanding of the language, and you can speak it well enough. You are still illiterate.
3	You have a good grasp of the language and have a basic ability to read.
4	You have a solid grasp of the language, and your reading level is excellent.
5	You have an excellent understanding of the language and its various dialects. You can read most forms of the written language.
6	Such is your mastery of the language that you can communicate in similar languages as if you have rank 2 in them.
7	You have perfect command of the language and adjust your speech to emulate different dialects. You can read all written forms of your language and can even read the most ancient inscriptions with ease.

OTHER USES

Language can also affect your character in other ways.

- Your choice of language in an intrigue may grant situational bonuses on Persuasion tests. See **Chapter 8: Intrigue** for details.

MARKSMANSHIP

Specialties: Bows, Crossbows, Siege, Thrown

Marksmanship represents your skill with ranged weapons—most notably bows and crossbows, but also slings, thrown weapons, and even larger siege weapons. It is the ability to use them appropriately and accurately in combat. Whenever you make an attack using a ranged weapon, you test Marksmanship, likewise when you are target shooting or simply showing off your skill.

Marksmanship has the following uses.

ATTACK

Test: Conflict • **Action:** Lesser or Greater

Whenever you Attack in combat, you test Marksmanship against your opponent's Combat Defense. A successful test deals weapon damage times your degree of success. Weapon damage is equal to the weapon plus the weapon's key ability. **Chapter 9: Combat** goes into extensive detail on attacks and the consequences of a successful attack.

TARGET SHOOTING

You can also use Marksmanship to hit a fixed target, such as when you are competing. Distance from the target determines the Difficulty. A successful test indicates you hit the target, and your degrees put you closer to the center. Note, the size of the target can increase or decrease the Difficulty. For more information on competitive shooting, see **Tournaments** in **Chapter 9: Combat**.

PERSUASION

Specialties: Bargain, Charm, Convince, Incite, Intimidate, Seduce, Taunt

Persuasion is the ability to manipulate the emotions and beliefs of others. With this ability, you can modify how others see you, shape their attitudes towards others, convince them of things they might not otherwise agree to, and more.

One of several important abilities you will use when engaged in an intrigue, Persuasion has many different expressions, each differentiated by the techniques you employ and what it is you are after. Bargain reflects exchanging a service or good for something of equal value, while Charm serves to cultivate friendships and alliances. Taunt can compel targets to action to escape condemnation, while Incite works to diminish a target's opinion of someone else. All the various methods and full uses of the Persuasion ability can be found in **Chapter 8: Intrigue**.



PERSUASION WITHOUT INTRIGUE

Not all roleplaying exchanges must involve a full-blown intrigue, especially minor encounters without lasting consequences. When resolving such a minor exchange, roll a Persuasion test against your opponent's passive Will test result. A success indicates you improve that target's disposition by one step per degree. Generally, improving a target's disposition to Amiable is sufficient to get them to do a minor task. However, the results are often short-lived, and the target's disposition falls back to its original level after a few minutes. A failed test cannot be retried without engaging in an intrigue, and a Critical failure reduces the target's disposition by one step. Reductions in disposition are longer lasting and persist until you engage the target in an actual intrigue to restore their disposition.

OTHER USES

Various conditions and situations can affect Persuasion.

- Whenever you successfully test Persuasion in an intrigue, your rank plus your technique modifier determines your Influence.



Status Ranks

Rank	Description
0	Slave
1	Commoner, junior squire, acolyte in a religious order
2	House retainer, lesser merchant, rural cleric, mercenary "knight," foreign merchant prince
3	Merchant, oath-sworn warrior, member of a minor house
4	Landed knight, advisor to a minor house, urban cleric, member of a noble house, heir to a minor house, important foreign dignitary
5	Lord of a minor house, merchant prince, advisor to a great house, officer of a knightly order, member of a great house, heir to a house, foreign noble
6	Lord of a house, elder cleric, great house sorcerer, master of a knightly order, heir to a great house
7	Lord of a great house, royal advisor, general, religious patriarch or matriarch
8	Member of the royal family, elector noble, senator
9	Queen, crown prince, regent, vassal king
10	High king, emperor

- Your own disposition modifies your Persuasion tests.
- Language can modify your Persuasion tests.
- Various intrigue tactics allow you to test Persuasion to Assist, Fast Talk, Manipulate, and Mollify participants in the intrigue.

STATUS

Specialties: Breeding, Reputation, Stewardship, Tournaments

Of all of the abilities, Status is one of the more unusual in that it isn't determined through normal means during character creation. Instead, your position inside your noble house determines your Status. In a way, it is as much a part of you as Athletics, Endurance, and Persuasion are, for you have little control over where and to whom you were born. If you were born to a family of leech farmers, odds are that you'll never be able to raise yourself to a higher Status. Similarly, if born to a great house, your family may be scattered and destroyed and you exiled; your condition and circumstances can never change who you are in the eyes of your peers—even though shame and disgrace can significantly affect how well you can exert your Status.

Functionally, Status describes the circumstances of your birth and the knowledge those circumstances grant you. The higher your rank, the more likely you will be able to recognize heraldry, the better your reputation, and the stronger your knowledge of managing people and lands.

Status has the following uses.

BREEDING

Test: Basic • **Action:** Free

Breeding represents your knowledge of customs and procedures, the forms of etiquette and the expected behavior when interacting with others of a similar or higher station. Whenever you engage in an intrigue with a character who has Status 4 or higher—and you are aware of the target's Status—you may test Status as a Free Action against the target's Intrigue Defense. A success grants +1B, and every two degrees thereafter grants you another +1B. These dice represent a fixed pool, which you may add to Persuasion tests in any amount throughout the intrigue. Once you spend the bonus die, it is gone. Any bonus dice remaining at the end of the intrigue are lost.

REPUTATION

Test: Basic or Competition • **Action:** Free

During an intrigue, you test Status to determine the order of initiative. The highest result goes first; ties are broken by bonus dice in Reputation and then Status; have players re-roll if there is still a tie. You may also test Status whenever you would perform the Shield of Reputation action in an intrigue.

Another use for Reputation is to maneuver in social situations and garner more attention than you would otherwise warrant. Typically, you must succeed on a Challenging (9) Status test to gain the notice of someone to whom you'd like to speak, but if you're jockeying for position, you might have to make a competition test against your rival.

STEWARDSHIP

Test: Basic • **Action:** Varies

Status is also a vital ability for managing the holdings of one's house. Status tests rolled for Stewardship occur in response to troubles affecting your lands. You can also test Status to oversee improvements on your keep, round up conscripts, hire mercenaries, improve trade, communities, or roads. For more details on this use, see **Chapter 5: House & Lands**.

TOURNAMENTS

Test: Basic • **Action:** Varies

Whenever you would host a tournament on your lands, you test Status to see what sorts of knights and sworn swords you attract. For more details, see **Chapter 5: House & Lands**.

OTHER USES

In addition to the normal actions that involve Status, your rank in this ability determines a variety of other aspects about your character.

- Status may be used to determine an intrigue opponent's starting disposition.

STEALTH

Specialties: Hide, Sneak

Stealth represents your ability to creep about unseen and unheard. Whenever you would move without being noticed, you test Stealth.

Stealth has the following uses.

BLEND IN

Test: Conflict • **Action:** Lesser

In a crowded area, you may use the Blend In specialty to make yourself part of the crowd. To conceal your presence, you must make a Stealth test against your opponent's passive Awareness result. However, if your opponents are actively searching for you, you must beat their Awareness tests with a Stealth test.

In combat, if your opponent is unaware of you, you gain +1D on all Fighting and Marksmanship tests during the first round.

SNEAK

Test: Conflict • **Action:** None (as part of a Move)

You can also use Stealth to move unseen and unheard through the shadows. You may only test Stealth in this way if you benefit from rain, foliage, darkness, or some form of cover. A normal Stealth test requires you beat your opponent's passive Awareness result, but if your opponent is searching for you, you must beat your opponent's Awareness test result.

As with Blend In, you gain +1D on all Fighting and Marksmanship tests against opponents that are not aware of you. This extra die is good for the first round of combat only.

SURVIVAL

Specialties: Forage, Hunt, Orientation, Track

Survival is the ability to get by in the wild, to hunt, to forage, to avoid getting lost, and to follow tracks. The Survival skill is important for a variety of people in that hunting remains an important method of providing food for one's family, especially in the remote regions. Hunting and hawking are common pastimes for nobles as well.

Survival has the following uses.

FORAGE

Test: Basic • **Action:** Varies

You can test Survival to gather edible food and water for yourself and your companions with the Forage specialty. You may only test this ability in areas that actually contain food. The Difficulty depends on how long you spend foraging, as well as the terrain and season. A successful test provides enough food for one person for one day per degree.

HUNT

Test: Basic • **Action:** Varies

You can also test Survival to go hunting for animals. You may only test this ability in areas that actually contain wildlife. The Difficulty

Foraging

Difficulty	Description
Easy (3)	Spend 12 hours
Routine (6)	Spend 8 hours
Challenging (9)	Spend 4 hours
Formidable (12)	Spend 2 hours
Hard (15)	Spend 1 hour
Very Hard (18)	Spend 30 minutes
Circumstance	**Difficulty Modifier**
Verdant Wilderness	–5
Spring	–5
Summer	–2
Fall	–5
Winter	+10
Drought	+5
Blight	+5
Wasteland	+10

Navigating

Circumstance	Difficulty Modifier
Day	+0
Night with moon	+0
Night with partial moon	+2
Night with no moon	+5
Overcast	+5
Light rain	+2
Heavy rain	+5
Light snow	+5
Heavy snow	+10
Plains/desert	+0
Hills	+2
Mountains	+5
Light forest	+5
Dense forest	+10

Tracking

Circumstance	Difficulty Modifier
Day	+0
Night with moon	+2
Night with partial moon or torchlight	+5
Night with no moon	+10
Overcast	+5
Light rain	+2
Heavy rain	+5
Light snow	+5
Heavy snow	+10
Clear, but recent light rain	–1
Clear, but recent heavy rain	–2
Clear, but recent light snow	–2
Clear, but recent heavy snow	–5
Soft earth	–5
Firm earth	+0
Rocky	+5
Crossable river	+10
Lake	+20
Loose rocks, branches, and similar debris	–2

Hunting

Difficulty	Description
Easy (3)	Spend 1 week
Routine (6)	Spend 4 days
Challenging (9)	Spend 2 days
Formidable (12)	Spend 1 day
Hard (15)	Spend 12 hours
Very Hard (18)	Spend 6 hours
Heroic (21+)	Spend 1 hour

Terrain	Difficulty Modifier
Verdant Wilderness	–5
Spring	–5
Summer	–2
Fall	–5
Winter	+10
Drought	+5
Blight	+5
Wasteland	+10

depends on how long you spend hunting, as well as the terrain and season. A successful test provides enough food for one person for one day per degree.

If you have hounds or a hunting bird (such as a hawk), you gain +1D on your Survival test.

ORIENTATION

Test: Basic • **Action:** Once per 4 hours

Survival is also vital for getting around in the wild without becoming lost. The base Difficulty is Challenging (9) but is modified by the time of day, weather, and terrain. A successful test indicates you travel in the direction you intend for four hours multiplied by your degree of success without having to test Survival. A failed test means you drift one step right or left. So, if you are traveling north, a failed test might indicate you travel northeast for four hours. A Critical failure means you become turned around and actually head in the opposite direction. If at any time the terrain, time, or weather changes, and you are lost, you are entitled to a new Survival test. Modifiers are cumulative.

TRACK

Test: Basic • **Action:** Once per two hours (see text)

Finally, you can test Survival to follow tracks. Before you can follow them, however, you must first find them. Locating tracks requires an Awareness test. The base Difficulty is Challenging (9) but is modified by lighting, weather, and the surface holding the tracks.

Once you locate the tracks, you can follow them by succeeding on a Survival test against the same Difficulty used for Awareness. A successful test indicates you follow the tracks for two hours per degree without having to test Survival. A failed test means you lose two hours but don't lose the tracks. A Critical failure means you lose the tracks completely.

If at any time the terrain, time, or weather changes, you must make a new Survival test to follow the tracks.

You can also learn information from impressions left in the ground. Make a Survival test as if you were following the tracks. A success tells you how many different sets of tracks are present. Each additional degree of success gives you one more important aspect, such as approximate sizes, the speed they're traveling, how many animals, if they are being pursued, the age of the tracks, and so on.

THIEVERY

Specialties: Pick Lock, Sleight of Hand, Steal

Thievery is a catchall ability for any skill or talent that involves larcenous activities. Examples include picking locks, hand tricks, and general robbery.

Thievery has the following uses.

PICK LOCK

Test: Basic • **Action:** 1 minute

You can test Thievery to bypass a lock. The Difficulty of the test depends on the quality of the lock; common locks are Challenging (9), good locks are Formidable (12), and excellent locks are Hard (15) or harder. A successful test indicates you pick the lock. Each additional degree reduces the time by 10 seconds. A failed test means you were unable to open the lock, but you may try again. A Critical failure means the lock has defeated you, and you cannot try again until you place another bonus die in Pick Lock.

To pick a lock, you must have the proper tools. If you do not, you take one or more penalty dice depending on the extent of your lack. Improvised tools, for example, may impose –1D, while no tools at all may impose –5D.

SLEIGHT OF HAND

Test: Basic • **Action:** Lesser

Sleight of Hand involves simple tricks used to entertain and misdirect a person's attention. You can substitute a Thievery test for a Cunning test whenever you distract in combat.

You can also palm small objects (like a ring) without anyone noticing. You have to test Sleight of Hand against the target's passive Awareness result to palm the objects unnoticed.

You also know how to play simple conjurers' tricks, such as pulling coins out of your ears. You have to succeed on a Routine (6) test to play tricks with small objects, such as coins. To play tricks with bigger objects, such as knives, you have to pass Challenging (9) or harder test, depending on the size of the objects.

Finally, you can also conceal small objects on your person (daggers, poison, scrolls, and so on). Whenever you are searched, the searching



character must equal or beat your Thievery test result with an Awareness test to find the item.

At the Narrator's option, you may substitute a Sleight of Hand test for a Deception test in an intrigue based around using your legerdemain to fool or distract your target in some fashion, such as certain con games or attempts to cheat at gambling.

STEAL

Test: Basic • **Action:** Lesser

You can use Steal to rob unsuspecting people by cutting their purses or picking their pockets. Against an unaware opponent, you must succeed on a Thievery test against the target's passive Awareness result. If you succeed, you manage to get the purse away without their knowledge. However, the target is entitled to a Challenging (9) Awareness test to notice the lightened load each round. Each additional degree gives you an extra round before the target begins testing Awareness to know they were had.

WARFARE

Specialties: Command, Strategy, Tactics

Warfare describes a character's talents at managing the battlefield, ranging from the ability to issue commands, to strategic knowledge for maneuvering armies and tactical knowledge for dealing with small engagements. Warfare is used extensively in combat and warfare but may also be used outside of combat to look for areas or opportunities for strategic or tactical advantage.

Warfare has the following uses.

COMMAND

Test: Basic • **Action:** Special (see text)

Warfare is used during skirmishes and battles. During such encounters, a character tests Warfare (using Command bonus dice) to issue commands to a unit. For full details on this use, see **Chapter 10: Warfare**.

STRATEGY

Test: Basic • **Action:** Free

In skirmishes and battles, a side's leader tests Warfare (using bonus dice from Strategy) to determine the order of initiative.

TACTICS

Test: Basic • **Action:** Free

In combat, you can forgo your Agility test to determine your placement in initiative in order to test Warfare to grant bonus dice to your allies' Agility tests. The Difficulty is usually Challenging (9). A successful test grants +1B per degree.

OTHER USES

Beyond the uses listed above, your rank in Warfare determines the number of commands you can issue each round of a skirmish or battle.

WILL

Specialties: Coordinate, Courage, Dedication

Will is your mental fortitude, and it reflects the state of your mind's health and endurance. It represents your ability to withstand fear in the face of appalling violence or supernatural phenomena, and it serves as the foundation for your ability to resist being manipulated by others.

Will has the following uses.

COORDINATE

Test: Basic • **Action:** Greater

You may test Will to improve an allies' ability to assist. Usually, when an ally assists, they grant a bonus equal to their rank in the tested ability. When you coordinate efforts, you can add your Will rank times your degree of success to the result as well. The Difficulty is Challenging (9) for non-combat tests and Formidable (12) for combat tests.

To use this function of Will, you must take your turn after the assisting character but before the character who is testing their ability.

COURAGE

Test: Basic • **Action:** Free

Any time you are exposed to a terrifying experience (seeing a friend mauled, encountering a wight), you may make a Will test to resist the effects of the fear. Each source of fear includes a difficulty, potency, and frequency. Difficulty describes the complexity of the Will test. Potency describes the number of successful tests required to overcome the fear, and frequency describes the time between Will tests. Generally, each additional degree on a test counts as an additional success. For details on fear, see **Chapter 11: The Narrator**.

DEDICATION

Test: Basic • **Action:** Greater

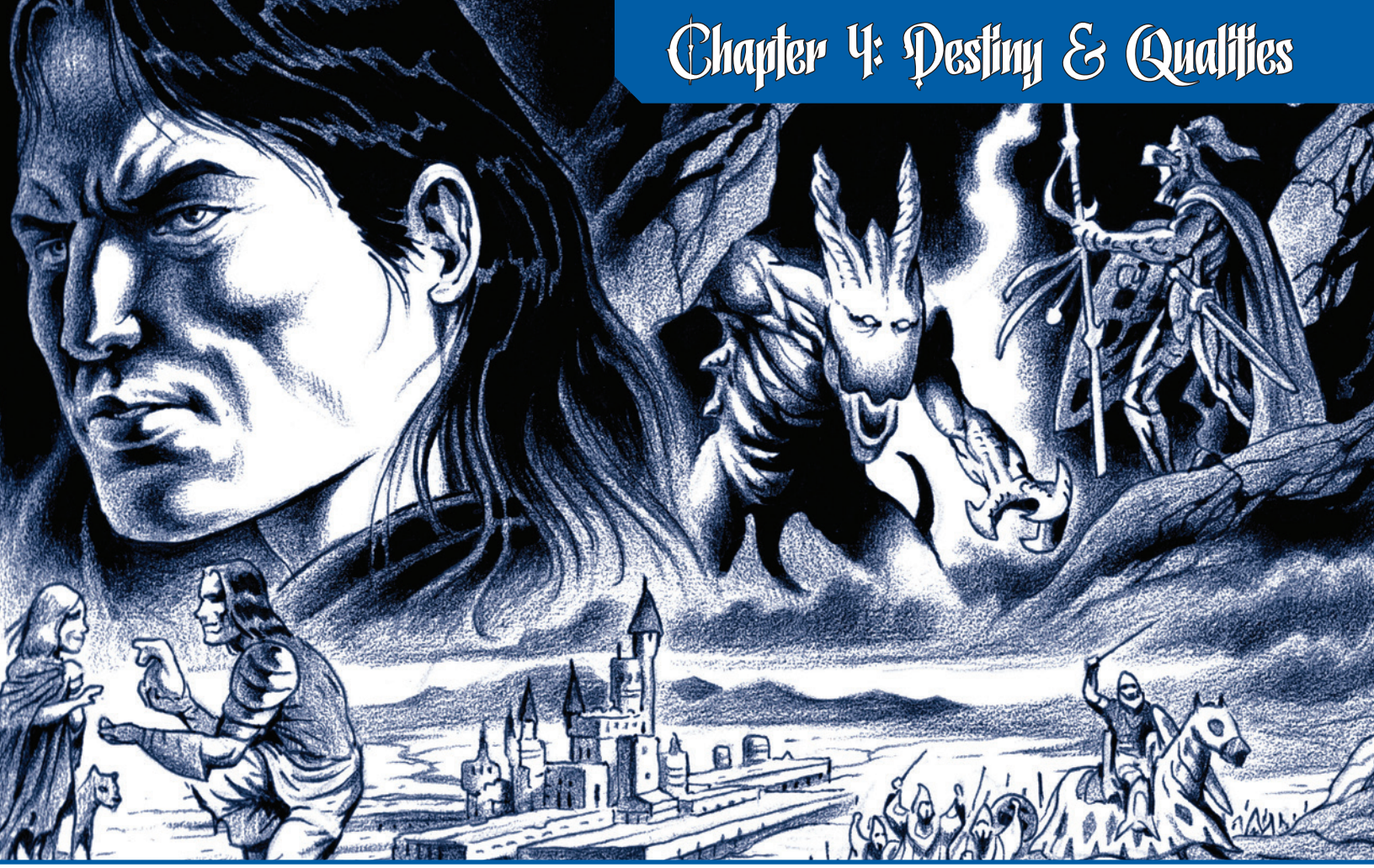
Will can also be used to resist temptation and hold true to your ideals. During an intrigue, you may test Will using the Withdraw action to replace your Intrigue Defense with your Will test result.

OTHER USES

In addition to the basic uses of Will, this ability can affect your character in other ways.

- Your Will rank helps determine your Intrigue Defense.
- Your Composure is equal to 3 × Will.

Chapter 4: Destiny & Qualities



Your destiny sets you apart. It is the brush to the canvas of your life. It is luck, fate, or maybe divine providence. Regardless of the source, it is what ultimately sets you apart from people with less interesting lives. In *Sword Chronicle*, life isn't necessarily fair, but those with exceptional gifts, such as the player characters in your campaign, are often burdened with challenges to match.

Destiny Points

Destiny is opportunity, the ability to shape the outcomes of your experiences by subtly altering the story in ways to let you overcome adversity and lift yourself above sthe fickle fortunes of mere probability.

Your fate lives in **Destiny Points**. Through them, you take control of the story, create opportunities where none exist, escape near-certain death, or use them to advance your own cause. You may use your Destiny Points in one of three ways: spend, burn, or invest. You *spend* a Destiny Point to change the game in a minor way. You *burn* a Destiny Point to change the game in a significant way. Or you *invest* a Destiny Point to acquire a benefit. During character creation, you start the game with a number of Destiny Points determined by your starting age. Younger characters have more Destiny Points, while older characters have less. Your age limits how many Destiny Points you can invest in qualities; younger characters have fewer qualities, and older characters have many options but more flaws. For details, see **Chapter 2: Character Creation**.

Note not all *Sword Chronicle* characters have Destiny; indeed, most do not. Most of the assorted rabble and encountered in the course of the game are not touched by Destiny in the same way as the characters and their major rivals. They may have some qualities, but not the special favor of fate, not a purpose to fulfill beyond the mere fact of their existence.

SPENDING DESTINY POINTS

The easiest and most conservative use of Destiny Points is to spend them. Whenever you spend a Destiny Point, you adjust your circumstances. You might activate an environmental quality, alter the outcome of a test, or assume narrative control over the story in some minor way. Once you spend the Destiny Point, you cannot use it again until you achieve a story goal, the climax of a particular chapter in your character's life. Since you should be able to achieve a story goal in one or two game sessions, you are rarely without your Destiny Points for long.

SPENDING EFFECTS

You can spend a Destiny Point at any time, even when it's not your turn, though it's polite to let other players finish their turns first. You may only spend a single Destiny Point at a time for any one of the following effects.

- Gain +1B. This die can exceed the normal limits on bonus dice.
- Convert one bonus die into a test die.
- Remove –1D.
- Bestow –1D on opponent.

- Take an extra Lesser Action.
- Ignore Armor Penalty for one round.
- Improve or worsen another character's disposition by one step.
- Negate another character's use of a spent Destiny Point.
- Add a minor detail to a scene, such as a shoddy lock, a minor clue, or another useful but small element that can move the story along.
- Activate environmental quality.
- Ignore environmental quality.
- Pay the price for a work of sorcery (see **Chapter 6**).

BURNING DESTINY POINTS

When spending a Destiny Point is not enough, you can always burn a Destiny Point for a much greater effect. Burning a Destiny Point permanently reduces the number of Destiny Points you have. In effect, they function like extra lives, giving you much more control over the dice when they turn against you. Destiny Points are rare and precious commodities, so burn them wisely.

BURNING EFFECTS

As with spending Destiny Points, you may only burn one at a time. A burned Destiny Point can achieve any one of the following results.

- Convert all bonus dice into test dice.
- Add +5 to your test result.
- Automatically succeed on one test as if you had rolled the Difficulty exactly.
- Remove all damage and injuries (though not wounds).
- When defeated, decide the consequences of your own defeat.
- Transform another character's successful test into a failed test.
- Automatically compel another character in an intrigue.
- Permanently remove the penalties associated with a negative quality.
- Negate the effects of another character's burned Destiny Point.
- Add a significant detail to a scene, such as gaining a major clue, finding a way out of a nasty predicament, or some other significant and useful element that moves the story along in your favor.
- Avoid certain death. When you spend Destiny Points for this option, your character is presumed dead and is removed from the story until such time as the Narrator deems it appropriate for the character's return.
- Pay the price for a significant work of sorcery (see **Chapter 6**).

GAINING DESTINY POINTS

Once you burn a Destiny Point, it is lost. You may gain additional Destiny Points during game play by spending earned Experience, and the Narrator may award a Destiny Point in addition to Glory and Experience for exceptional play. Alternatively, you may acquire a drawback to gain one Destiny Point, though you must concoct a reasonable explanation for how you gain this negative quality. Do note that drawbacks gained as a consequence of combat, war, or intrigues do not grant Destiny Points.

INVESTING DESTINY POINTS

The protagonists in *Sword Chronicle* often find themselves on paths not of their own choosing, as if they are working toward some predetermined event that is beyond their understanding, almost as if they were pawns of larger forces at work in the world. These Qualities represent these important developments and offer new ways to interact with the world around you. Not all qualities are the direct result of Destiny Points, of course; some derived from your ancestry.

Qualities that provide a new ability or advantage are called **benefits**. Some qualities require just the investment of a Destiny Point, while others may require particular ranks in abilities, particular ancestry, roleplaying achievements, or other qualities in order to acquire them. The stricter the quality's requirements, the greater its benefits. All benefits offer constant advantages, and they always apply, so you never need to spend or burn a Destiny Point to use them. Once you invest in a quality, you need not do so forever. At any time, after completing a story objective, you can withdraw your investment in a benefit (not a drawback) and regain the Destiny Point(s) or reinvest it elsewhere.

DESTINY AND QUALITIES

As you can probably tell, Destiny Points and qualities are closely related. Younger characters have not yet had the time to make their names in the world or gain much experience. Thus, they have not had the opportunity to gain qualities. Older characters, however, are grounded in the world and have a more strongly defined place. Thus, they have fewer opportunities to change their fate, instead making their own luck through their knowledge and experience. Ancestral benefits are outside this, as one's parentage and deepest connections to their people are undiluted by time.

Qualities

Qualities are special traits and abilities acquired through your character's ancestry and investing Destiny Points. There are two types of qualities: benefits and drawbacks. In both cases, the quality modifies your character in some way, providing bonus dice, a special ability, or even a piece of equipment. Where you see +1D, the quality effectively increases your ability by one, letting you roll another die and add it to the test result. If you opt to withdraw your investment, you lose the quality. Sometimes, when you lose the quality, you can never again regain it.

QUALITY TYPES

Qualities belong to one or more of five categories.

ANCESTRY QUALITIES

Ancestry qualities are expressions of the ancestries your chose for your character during creation (see **Chapter 2**). All characters have two ancestry qualities and can choose more by investing Destiny in them. Some ancestry qualities have a specific, declared ancestry as a requirement, while others have reduced or different requirements for characters of that ancestry. For example, the Accurate quality requires Marksmanship 4, but only Marksmanship 2 if you have the Elf ancestry.

ABILITY QUALITIES

Ability qualities expand options when using an ability or provide slight advantages to that ability.

FATE QUALITIES

Fate qualities are specific expressions of your destiny and reveal the hand of fate upon your life and future.

MARTIAL QUALITIES

Martial qualities provide a variety of combat-related advantages, particularly involving weapons or armor.

SOCIAL QUALITIES

Social qualities provide advantages in intrigues, improve intrigue-related tests, and expand your intrigue options.

SORCEROUS QUALITIES

Sorcerous qualities grant access to and proficiency with the arts of sorcery, as detailed in **Chapter 6**.

Benefits

All of the following benefits are presented in alphabetical order. You may only take a particular quality once unless mentioned in the quality's description.

Accurate — Ancestry (Elf), Martial

Requires Marksmanship 4 or Elf Ancestry and Marksmanship 2

Your steady hand and keen eye make you deadly accurate with ranged weapons. When you roll a Marksmanship test against a target protected by some form of cover, you gain +1D.

Acrobatic Defense — Martial

Requires Agility 4 (Acrobatics 1B)

You are extraordinarily mobile in combat. By flipping and somersaulting, you make yourself a difficult target.

You gain a new combat maneuver. Spend a Lesser Action to add a number equal to twice the number of bonus dice you have in Acrobatics to your Combat Defenses until the beginning of your next turn. You cannot use this maneuver if you are wearing armor with Bulk 1 or greater.

Adept Negotiator — Social

Requires Deception 3

By deeply burying your feelings, your opponents have difficulty assessing your true motives.

You never take a penalty to Persuasion tests from starting disposition provided your starting disposition remains hidden from your opponent.

Animal Cohort — Fate

Requires Animal Handling 3 (Train 1B)

Choose an animal from the following list: dog, eagle, horse, puma, raven, or wolf. This animal is extremely loyal to you and aids you in combat. So long as your animal cohort is adjacent to you or your opponent, you gain +1D to Fighting tests. Check with your Narrator for your animal cohort's statistics or for additional choices. Should the Animal Cohort die, you lose this benefit and the Destiny Point you invested.

Armor Mastery — Ancestry (Dwarf), Martial

You are accustomed to the weight and bulk of armor and know how to wear it to maximize its benefits.

When wearing any armor, add +1 to its AR and for the purposes of calculating movement, you treat the armor as having 1 less Bulk (if it has any).

Artist — Ability

You are a skilled artist in a particular form, able to create works that denote exceptional amateur ability, if not a gift honed during an apprenticeship.

Choose any one art form. Examples include painting, poetry, composition, and sculpture. You may produce art of its kind. Spend eight hours each day for five days performing your art and earn 10 silver pieces. You may also make a Challenging (9) Cunning test to earn 1 extra silver piece per degree. At the Narrator's discretion, you may gain +1D on Persuasion tests against people aware of and impressed by your work.

Attractive — Ancestry (Elf), Social

There's something about you people find attractive, giving you an advantage in interactions.

Whenever you roll a test to Charm or Seduce in an intrigue, you may re-roll a number of 1s equal to half your Persuasion rank (with a minimum of one re-roll).

Authority — Social

You wear the mantle of leadership, and people recognize you as figure of authority.

During an intrigue, reduce your Persuasion penalty (if any) by two. Thus, when your disposition is Dislike, you take no penalty, when Unfriendly it is –2, and when Malicious it is –4.

Averting Adept — Ability, Ancestry (Dwarf)

Requires Will 4

Your skill at defending yourself from magical attack is almost instinctual.

When using the Averting Action, your may re-roll 1s on the Will test. Additionally, Averting is now a Lesser Action for you.

Axe Fighter I — Ancestry (Dwarf), Martial

Requires Fighting 4 (Axes 2B) or Dwarf Ancestry and Fighting 2 (Axes 1B)

You can swing axes with dreadful results.

Whenever you make a Fighting test to attack using an axe, you can sacrifice bonus dice before the test to deal additional damage. On a hit with the attack, your target takes extra damage equal to the number of bonus dice you sacrificed at the start of its next turn. This extra damage ignores AR.

Axe Fighter II — Martial

Requires Fighting 5 (Axes 3B), Axe Fighter I

Whenever you make a Fighting test to attack using an axe, you can sacrifice all your bonus dice before the test to deal additional damage. On a hit with the attack and if you get at least two degrees of success, the target takes wound in addition to any damage the attack deals. The wound bestowed by this benefit does not reduce any damage.

You must choose which Axe Fighter benefit (if any) applies when you attack with axes.



Axe Fighter III — Martial

Requires Fighting 6 (Axes 4B), Axe Fighter II

You can tear off limbs and sever heads with each swing of your axe.

Whenever you make a Fighting test to attack using an axe, you can sacrifice all your bonus dice before the test to deal additional damage. On a hit with the attack, the target takes wound in addition to any damage the attack deals. The wound bestowed by this benefit does not reduce any damage. In addition, the target must succeed on an Endurance test against your Fighting test result or permanently gain the Maimed quality. An opponent may burn a Destiny Point to avoid gaining this quality.

You must choose which Axe Fighter benefit (if any) applies when you attack with axes.

Beastfriend — Ability, Ancestry (Elf)

You have a knack for handling and dealing with animals.

You gain +1D on Animal Handling tests made using the Charm or Train specialties.

Berserker — Ancestry (Ogre), Martial

You can fly into a frenzy, becoming a brutal killing machine.

Each time you take an injury or wound, you may make a Fighting attack as a Free Action against an adjacent enemy. You gain no bonus dice for this test.

In addition, you can continue fighting even when you should be defeated. At the end of your turn, if you have taken wounds sufficient to defeat you, you may make a **Formidable (12)** Will test to continue fighting. The penalty dice gained from wounds do not apply. You may make a number of such tests equal to your Endurance rank. After this time, you are defeated as normal.

Blood of the Ancient Ones — Ancestry (Human)

Increase your Health by +2. Whenever you test Endurance, add +2 to the result.

Blood of the Beyond — Ancestry (Ogre)

You retain the alien resonance of your ancestors' home realm, and marks of the great passage between worlds, making you a creature of strange beauty or unearthly fear.

If you choose beauty, you gain the benefits of the Attractive quality (previously). If you choose fearsome, when you roll a test to Intimidate in an intrigue, or to Incite against you specifically, you may re-roll a number of 1s equal to half your Persuasion or Will rank (whichever is higher, with a minimum of one re-roll).

Blood of the Citadel — Ancestry (Dwarf)

The legacy of the citadel dwarves flows through your veins.

Each time you make a Cunning roll to practice a trade involving working metal, stone or other solid minerals, or to identify the value

and properties of anything made largely of metal or jewels, you may re-roll a number of 1s equal to your Awareness rank. Whenever you are attacked by fire or heat, increase your passive Endurance by 2. Finally, add +1B to Warfare rolls when attacking, defending, or fighting in fortifications.

Blood of the Far Isles — Ancestry (Elf)

Your lineage traces back to the haughty and wise sea-faring elves.

Add +2 to the results of tests you make to Bargain or Intimidate during an intrigue. Furthermore, you have been initiated into one sorcerous Tradition favored by your ancestors, and have been initiated into one of its Arts, though you gain no Works. You may study and learn sorcerous Works of that Art normally. See **Chapter 6: Sorcery** for details.

Blood of the Heroes — Ancestry (Human)

Increase your Combat Defense by +2. When testing Warfare (Tactics), you may re-roll a number of 1s equal to your Cunning rank.

Blood of the Mountains — Ancestry (Dwarf)

You are attuned to the depths of mines and caverns like your deep dwarf forebears.

You can see in total darkness as if it was torchlight, and in torchlight as if it was daylight. You may also perform Survival tasks in underground environments at a +0 modifier, as long as the task is possible at all. In the case of Orientation, a mystical sense guides you in the absence of other cues. You increase your Sorcery Defense by 2.

Blood of the Sorcerers — Ancestry (Any)

Magical power and potential flow through your veins. You bear the physical signs of an ancient lineage of powerful sorcerers. This Benefit grants you access to the Tradition favored by your sorcerous ancestors, and you are also considered initiated into one of its Arts. Though you do not automatically gain a Work, you are considered to always have access to learn Works of that Art. It also takes you only half the time to learn the Works of that Art as a whole. You gain a Sorcery Point.

Blood of the Wasteland — Ancestry (Ogre)

Like your ancestors, you are a stubborn survivor, no matter how challenging the environment. When making Endurance tests for resilience, or Survival tests to forage or hunt, you can re-roll a number of 1s equal to your Will rank.

Blood of the Witch-Hunters — Ancestry (Any)

Requires possession of no Sorcerous Qualities

Your ancestry is opposed to magic and all of its corruption.

In any culture where there are those who wield magical power, there will be those who rise against them. You bear the physical signs of such a heritage (the precise details of which to be determined by your Narrator with your input). You are considered a Sensitive even if you don't meet the full Empathy requirements to do so. See **Sensitives and Seers** in **Chapter 6** for details.

Unlike other Sensitives, you can make an Awareness (Empathy) test to feel when someone simply has knowledge of sorcerous Works, at a Difficulty of the target's passive Will, reduced by one point for each Work the target knows.

You may also spend your Destiny Points to cancel out expenditures of Destiny Points on spells cast against you. This is an innate, reflexive ability, and you need not even know the magic is coming to use it. You may never purchase Sorcerous Qualities.

Blood of the Wild — Ancestry (Any)

Yours are a wild people, known for survival and determination.

Add your Athletics rank to passive Endurance when attacked by an environmental hazard. In addition, characters with higher Status can never automatically compel you and must always engage you in an intrigue.

Blood of the Wood — Ancestry (Elf)

Swift and stealthy beneath the forest canopy, you take after your wood elf kin.

Increase your Combat Defense by 2. Each time you test Stealth, you may re-roll a number of 1s equal to your Cunning rank. You may also see in starlight or moonlight as if it was day, and on a cloudy night as if it was lit by the moon and stars, but you gain no special benefit indoors or underground.

Bludgeon Fighter I — Ancestry (Ogre), Martial

Requires Fighting 4 (Bludgeons 2B), or Ogre Ancestry and Fighting 2 (Bludgeons 1B)

Shields are no defense against your attacks.

Bludgeoning weapons in your hands gain the Shattering 1 quality. If a bludgeoning weapon already has Shattering, you increase it's rating by 1.

Bludgeon Fighter II — Martial

Requires Fighting 5 (Bludgeons 3B), Bludgeon Fighter I

Those struck by your attacks reel from the impact.

Whenever you make a Fighting test to attack using a bludgeoning weapon, you can sacrifice all your bonus dice before the test to smash your opponent. On a hit, the target is reeling until the start of your next turn. A reeling target can only take Lesser Actions and subtracts 1 from all test results for each degree gained after the first (two degrees is -1, three degrees is -2, and so on).

Bludgeon Fighter III — Martial

Requires Fighting 6 (Bludgeons 4B), Bludgeon Fighter II

You can land crushing blows that can splinter bones and cave in skulls.

Whenever you make a Fighting test to attack using a bludgeoning weapon, you can sacrifice all your bonus dice before the test to knock

your foe down. On a hit with two or more degrees, the target suffers the following effects until the start of your next turn: it is knocked prone, can only take Lesser Actions, and gains 1 wound. The wound does not reduce damage.

You must choose which Bludgeon Fighter benefit (if any) applies when you attack with bludgeons.

Brawler I — Martial

Requires Fighting 4 (Brawling 1B)

Your fist attacks gain the Fast quality. In addition, your fist attacks deal damage equal to your Athletics rank –2.

Brawler II — Martial

Requires Fighting 4 (Brawling 3B), Brawler I

Your fist attacks gain the Powerful property. In addition, you may add your Athletics rank to your Fighting test results when making Fighting tests using your fists.

Brawler III — Martial

Requires Fighting 5 (Brawling 5B), Brawler II

Whenever you succeed on a Fighting test to hit an opponent using your fist, you may choose to sacrifice three degrees of success to stun your opponent. You must have attained at least three degrees of success on the test result. Compare your test result to your opponent's passive Endurance result. If it equals or beats the passive result, your opponent is stunned and can only take a special Recover action on their next turn. An opponent stunned by this benefit cannot be stunned again while suffering its effects.

Recover (Greater Action): You must succeed on a Challenging (9) Endurance test or be forced to attempt another recover action on your next turn. You gain a cumulative +1B for each previous failed test.

Cadre — Fate

Requires Persuasion 5 or Warfare 4 (Command 2B)

You gain a veteran squad of ten men. Work with the Narrator to derive their statistics. The cadre may be all guards, but you may also derive their statistics from any unit in which your house has invested. In skirmishes, the cadre automatically reorganizes and rallies at the start of each of your turns until destroyed. If destroyed, you lose this quality and the Destiny Point you invested to acquire it.

Cautious Diplomat — Social

Requires Awareness 4 (Empathy 2B)

Extensive experience with negotiation gives you an advantage when you take the time to size up your opponent first. Whenever you take the Consider action during an intrigue, the bonus dice gained can exceed the normal limits on bonus dice. In addition, you retain these dice until the end of the intrigue.

Charismatic — Social

Requires Persuasion 3

Choose one Persuasion specialty. Add 2 to the test result of any Persuasion test involving that specialty.

You may choose this benefit multiple times. Each time, choose a new specialty.

Cohort — Fate

Requires Status 3

You gain a cohort. Create another character using the rules described in **Chapter 2**. The cohort's Status cannot exceed your own. Your cohort is loyal and follows your commands to the best of his or her ability. If your cohort dies, you lose this quality and the Destiny Point you invested to gain it. A cohort earns experience at half the experience you earn.

While your cohort is adjacent to you, increase your Combat Defense and Intrigue Defense by 2.

Compelling — Social

Requires Charismatic

Such is the power of your personality, others find it hard to resist your demands.

Choose one Persuasion specialty for which you selected the Charismatic benefit. When using this specialty in an intrigue, increase its Influence by 1.

You may choose this benefit multiple times. Each time you select this quality, its benefits apply to a different specialty of Persuasion for which you have also selected the Charismatic quality.

Connections — Ability

Requires Streetwise 1B

You have a number of spies and informants in a particular area. Choose one region in the chronicle's setting. You have connections in this place, and you can tap them to gather information about them. You gain +1D on all Knowledge tests made while in your chosen location.

You may select this quality multiple times. Each time, it applies to a new location.

Courteous — Social

Requires Persuasion 3

You have impeccable manners. Add a number to Deception test results equal to one-half your Persuasion ranks (round down, minimum 1). In addition, when an opponent targets you with the Read Target

action, increase your passive Deception result by a number equal to your Cunning ranks.

Danger Sense — Martial

Requires Awareness 4

Your keen senses help you anticipate danger before it reveals itself. You may re-roll all 1s on Agility tests made to determine the order of initiative. In addition, whenever you or a unit to which you are attached is surprised in combat, your opponent does not gain the customary +1D on the Fighting or Marksmanship tests.

Deadly Shot — Ancestry (Elf), Martial

Requires Marksmanship 5 or Elf Ancestry and Marksmanship 3 (Bows 2B)

You have deadly aim, and know where to fire projectiles to achieve maximum effect.

Bows and crossbows you wield gain the Vicious quality and the Piercing 1 quality. If the weapon already has the Piercing 1 quality, increase the Piercing value by 1.

Deft Hands — Martial

Requires Agility 4

When armed with a weapon that has the Reload quality, reduce its reload time from one Greater Action to one Lesser Action, or one Lesser Action to one Free Action.

Dexterous — Ability

When rolling an Agility test, you may re-roll a number of ones equal to the bonus dice in the specialty that relates best to the test (e.g. balance for tightrope walking) (minimum 1 die).

Double Shot — Martial

Requires Marksmanship 5 (Bows 3B)

You gain a new combat maneuver.

Double Shot: Spend a Greater Action to make two attacks at once when using a Marksmanship weapon. Resolve these attacks as normal Marksmanship attacks, but with a -1D to each test. You may make both attacks against the same target or divided between two adjacent targets.

Duelist I — Martial

Requires Fighting 3 (Fencing 1B)

Sharp-eyed and aware, you add a number equal to your Fighting rank to all Awareness test results and your passive Awareness result.



Duelist II — Martial

Requires Fighting 4 (Fencing 2B), Duelist I

Add to a number equal to your Fighting rank to all Agility test results.

Duelist III — Martial

Requires Fighting 4 (Fencing 3B), Duelist II

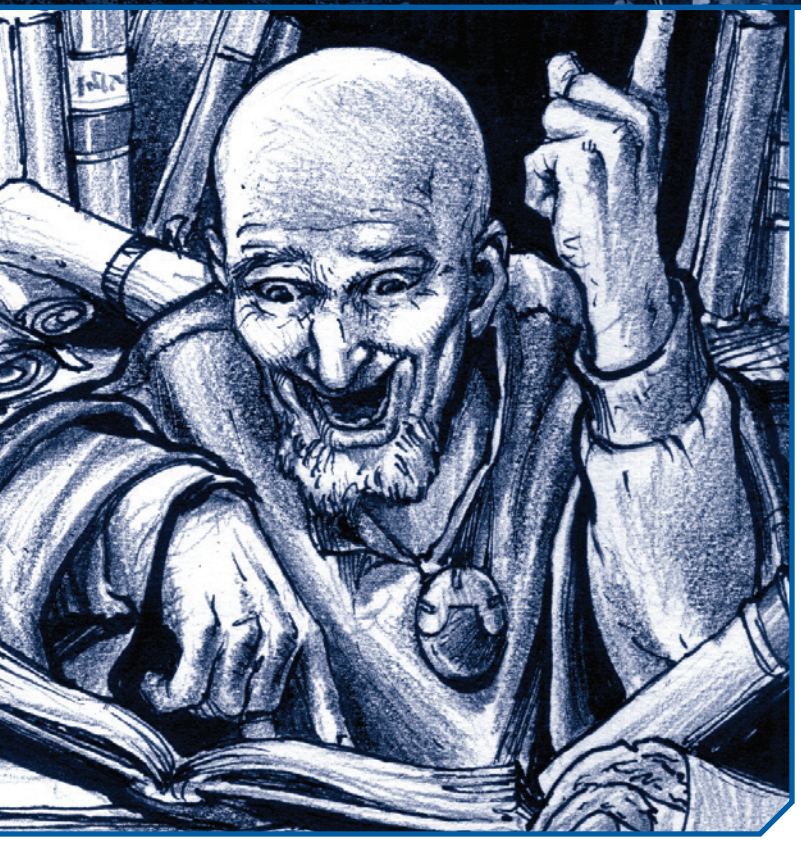
Add to your Combat Defense a number equal to the bonus dice you assigned to the Fencing specialty when you are armed with a Fencing weapon.

You lose this benefit if you are denied your Awareness contribution to your Combat Defense at any point, or when wearing armor with a Bulk of 1 or higher.

Dutiful — Social

Requires Will 4

You are unfailingly loyal. Opponents have –1D on all Persuasion tests made to influence you involving Convince, Intimidate, or Seduce.



Eidetic Memory — Ability

Requires Cunning 2 (Memory 1B)

You have an astonishing capacity for recalling details about something you have seen or read. When testing Cunning to use Memory, you may add your Memory bonus dice as test dice.

Eloquent — Social

Requires Language 4, Persuasion 4

When engaged in an intrigue using a Language in which you have rank 4 or greater, you automatically go first in the round.

Evaluation — Ability, Ancestry (Dwarf)

Requires Knowledge 3

You have a knack for identifying an object's worth.

Whenever you encounter a potentially valuable object, you may spend one minute examining it and roll a **Challenging (9)** Cunning test. A successful test allows you to determine its relative worth. Each additional degree reveals a piece of trivia about the object, including its maker, circumstances related to its maker's life, and so on.

Expertise — Ability

You possess amazing talent with a single ability.

Choose one specialty in which you have bonus dice. You gain +1D on all tests related to the selected specialty.

You may select this quality multiple times. Each time, it applies to a new specialty.

Face in the Crowd — Ability

Requires Stealth 3 (Blend In 1B)

Even in strange places, you are adept at making it seem like you belong. Add a number equal to your Cunning ranks to Stealth tests made to Blend In. Using Stealth to Blend In is always a Free Action for you.

Famous — Fate

You are known throughout the land. During an intrigue when you would make a Persuasion test to Charm or Seduce, you treat Charm or Seduce bonus dice as test dice up to a number of bonus dice equal to your Status rank. However, you always subtract a number from your Stealth test results equal to your Status rank. Work with your Narrator to determine what you did to become famous. If you are a young adult or younger, you may only select this quality after you have done something in the game the Narrator deems worthy of fame.

Fast — Martial

You are uncommonly fast on your feet. When calculating your move, your starting move is 5 yards. When running, you move five times your Movement.

Favored — Social

A particular social group favors you. This might be nobility (Status 4 or more), common folk (Status 3 or less), soldiers, the faithful of a religion, to members of a trade, and so forth. Work with the Narrator to determine which group favors you. You gain +1B on all Persuasion tests made to interact with members of this group.

Fencer I — Martial

Requires Fighting 4 (Fencing 1B)

Fencing weapons in your hands gain Defensive +1 or increase their existing Defensive Bonus by +1. You always retain +1 of this bonus, even when making an attack with the weapon. You lose this benefit when wearing armor with a Bulk of 1 or higher.

Fencer II — Martial

Requires Fighting 5 (Fencing 2B), Fencer I

You can weave a curtain of steel about you.

Curtain of Steel: Spend a Greater Action to make an attack using a fencing weapon. Your bonus dice do not apply. A hit deals normal damage, but for every degree you increase your Combat Defense by 1 until you next make a Fighting test. You cannot take this action while wearing armor with a Bulk of 1 or higher.

Fencer III — Martial

Requires Fighting 6 (Fencing 3B), Fencer II

Your highly trained fighting instincts let you seize opportunities when presented to you. Each time an opponent misses you with a Fighting attack, you may make a single Fighting attack with a fencing weapon against that opponent as a free action. You are, however, unable to use this ability when wearing armor with a Bulk of 1 or higher.

Furtive — Ability

Requires Stealth 4 (Sneak 1B)

Re-roll any result of 1 on all of your Stealth tests. When making a Stealth test to sneak, you may add a number equal to your Agility ranks to your test result.

Fury — Ancestry (ogre), Martial

Requires Athletics 4 (Strength 2B)

You are wrathful and filled with rage in battle. You gain a new combat maneuver.

Furious Attack: Spend a Greater Action to make a Fighting attack. This attack takes -2D, but if you hit, increase the damage by +4 before applying the benefits for degrees of success.

Gifted Athlete — Ability, Ancestry (human)

Requires Athletics 4

Choose one Athletics specialty. When testing Athletics to perform your chosen specialty, you may treat one-half your bonus dice (round down, minimum 1) as test dice.

You may select this quality multiple times. Each time, choose a new Athletics specialty.

Gifted Ritualist — Ability

Requires knowledge of at least one Ritual Working

The power of a magical rite flows easily at your command. Choose one of the three steps of Ritual (Aligning, Invoking, Unleashing) and gain a +1D when performing that step.

You may select this quality multiple times. Each time, choose a new Ritual step.

Gifted Spellcaster — Ability

Requires knowledge of at least one Spell Working

Magic worked swiftly comes naturally to you. You may re-roll all 1s on Spellcasting Action tests. Additionally, you may also add your Will Rating to your Spellcasting test results.

Gifted Teacher — Ability

Requires Knowledge 4, Persuasion 3

You gain a new use for Persuasion.

Instruction: Spend at least one hour instructing another character. A successful Persuasion test lets you to grant that character bonus dice on Knowledge tests related to your instruction. Thus, if you succeeded on Persuasion test to instruct another character about architecture, that character would gain bonus dice on his own Knowledge test related to architecture. You may not instruct characters who have more bonus dice than you have in a particular specialty. The Difficulty of the test depends on the size of the bonus you wish to confer. A failed test indicates the subject matter was too lofty for the student to absorb.

Difficulty	Bonus Dice
Routine (6)	1B
Challenging (9)	2B
Formidable (12)	3B
Hard (15)	4B
Very Hard (18)	5B
Heroic (21)	6B

Once you have successfully instructed the student, that student may at any time make a Challenging (9) Cunning (Memory) test to recall your instructions. A success grants the character +1B per degree, drawn from the bonus dice you conferred. Once the student exhausts the pool of bonus dice, the student may not draw further on your teachings without another lesson.

Great Hunter — Ability, Ancestry (elf, ogre)

Requires Survival 4 or Elf or Ogre Ancestry and Survival 3

When making Fighting tests or Marksmanship tests to attack an animal, you may add a number equal to your Survival ranks to your test results. In addition, you may treat one bonus die as a test die when making Survival tests to hunt.

Guttersnipe — Ability

You are comfortable among the scum of the streets. You may re-roll a number of 1s on a Thievery test equal to the number of bonus dice in the specialty that best applies (minimum 1 re-roll).

Hail of Steel — Martial

Requires Marksmanship 4 (Thrown 2B)

Thrown weapons in your hands gain the Fast quality.

Hardy — Ability, Ancestry (Dwarf, Ogre)

Requires Endurance 3 (Stamina 1B)

When testing Endurance to remove injuries or wounds, you may ignore one –1 penalty or one –1D on your test.

Head for Numbers — Ability

Requires Status 3 (Stewardship 1B)

You manage your household with expert precision. When you roll for House Fortunes, you may add your Cunning rank to your Status test result. In addition, anytime you make House Fortunes roll that results in an increase of the Wealth Resource, gain one additional point of Wealth to that increase.

Head of House — Fate

You are the head of your household and receive all of the benefits for your position. Add 2 to all of your Status test results.

You must secure permission from your Narrator and your fellow players before you can select this quality. Only one member of your group can have this quality at a time.

Heir — Fate

You stand to inherit the fortunes of your house. You receive the benefits for being next in line to rule your house. Add 1 to all of your Status test results. Should anything happen to the head of house, you exchange this quality for the Head of House quality.

You must secure permission from your Narrator as well as your fellow players before you take this benefit.

Heirloom — Ancestry (Any)

You have inherited something of great value. It may be a legendary weapon, a title, property, or whatever else you, the Narrator, and the other players can agree upon.

Improved Armor Mastery — Martial

Requires Armor Mastery

Increase the AR of any armor you wear by 1. Decrease its armor's penalty by 1. These benefits stack with similar benefits, such as those conferred by Armor Mastery.

Improved Weapon Mastery — Martial

Requires Weapon Mastery

Choose a single weapon for which you selected Weapon Mastery. Increase the weapon's base damage by 1.

You may select this quality multiple times. Each time, its effects apply to a different weapon.

Inspiring — Martial

Requires Warfare 4

In warfare, you gain 1 additional command each round. In addition, when testing Warfare to issue a command, you may sacrifice a command to re-roll the test and take the better result.

Keen Senses — Ability, Ancestry (Elf)

Requires Awareness 4 or Elf Ancestry and Awareness 3

Each time you would test Awareness to notice something, you may re-roll a number of 1s equal to the number of bonus dice you possess for the Notice specialty. Also, increase your passive Awareness result by a number equal to your Cunning ranks.

Knowledge Focus — Ability

Requires Knowledge 4

Choose one area of expertise from the following: alchemy, architecture, astronomy, geography, heraldry, history and legends, magic, nature, religion, or the underworld. You treat any bonus dice assigned to the specialty as test dice.

You may select this quality multiple times. Each time, select a new area of expertise.

Landed — Fate

Requires Sponsor

You have earned the favor of your lord, and in exchange, you have been granted lands and title.

The individual to whom your sword is sworn recognizes your constant and loyal service and grants you a parcel of land on which to build a home and rule as you see fit. As a landed knight, you are in the debt to your lord and must answer to his call to arms and attend him whenever he has need. You may spend Experience to increase your Status. See **Chapter 6** for guidelines on founding a house and managing lands.

Long Blade Fighter I — Martial

Requires Fighting 4 (Long Blades 2B)

The weight of your blade make your attacks harder to parry. Whenever you make a Fighting test to attack using a long blade weapon, you can sacrifice all your bonus dice before the test to gain one extra degree of success on a hit. You also add 1 to your Fighting test results when using a long blade to attack an enemy that does not possess a shield.

Long Blade Fighter II — Martial

Requires Fighting 5, Long Blade Fighter I

You drive your enemies before you with the fierceness of your attacks.

Whenever you make a Fighting test to attack using a long blade weapon, you may sacrifice bonus dice to maneuver your opponent. For every two bonus dice sacrificed, you and your opponent move 1 yard in any direction with a hit. Should you move your opponent in such a way that they would lose their balance or be in danger, your opponent can negate this movement by succeeding on a Challenging (9) Agility test. Bonus dice from the Dodge specialty apply.

You must choose which Long Blade Fighter benefit (if any) applies when you attack with long blades.

Long Blade Fighter III — Martial

Requires Fighting 6, Long Blade Fighter II

You can deliver a savage strike to cut your enemy to pieces. Whenever you make a Fighting test to attack using a long blade weapon, you may sacrifice all of your bonus dice to deliver a dreadful wound. If you achieve three or more degrees of success, you deal normal damage, impart a wound (this does not reduce other damage), and give the target the Maimed quality (see page 63). A target can burn a Destiny Point can avoid gaining this quality.

You must choose which Long Blade Fighter benefit (if any) applies when you attack with long blades.

Lucky — Fate

Once per day you may re-roll a single test. You take the better of the two results.

Magic Resistance — Ability, Ancestry (Dwarf)

Requires possession of no Sorcerous Qualities

Occult power seems to flow off of you, failing to take hold. You are always considered protected by the effects of a Standard Ward. If you are currently protected by a stronger ward, increase the effect of that ward only for the purpose of protecting you. You also may add your Endurance ranks to the results of all Averting Action tests. You may never invest in Sorcerous Qualities.

Magnetic — Social

Requires Attractive or Charismatic

You have a way about you that draws people to you—and keeps them there. Whenever you defeat a foe using Charm, that foe's disposition increases by a number of steps equal to the number of bonus dice you invested in Charm (minimum 2 steps).

Massive — Ancestry (Human, Ogre)

Requires Endurance 5 or Ogre ancestry and Endurance 3

You are uncommonly large. You can wield Two-handed weapons in one hand, and you may ignore the Unwieldy quality of these weapons (if any).



Miracle Worker — Ability

Requires Healing 4

You know a variety of techniques and remedies to aid your patients. Add a number to all Healing test results you make equal to the number of bonus dice you assigned to Education. Whenever you successfully use Healing to diagnose your patient, you gain +2B plus +1B for each degree of success on your next Healing test to treat the patient. You may swap two bonus dice gained from this benefit into one extra test die.

Mummer — Ability

Requires Persuasion 3

You are an accomplished performer, actor, and entertainer and can earn a living with those skills. To perform, you must succeed on a Persuasion test. The Difficulty is usually Challenging (9), but it may be higher or lower depending on the atmosphere and mood of the crowd. If you succeed, you earn 1d6 silver drachmas. Each additional degree results in an additional coin. A single test represents an evening's performance.

If you roll a Critical failure, your act offends your audience and you are tossed out for your poor performance. Until you next succeed on a Persuasion test to perform, you take a –5 penalty on your Persuasion test results.

Natural Leader — Martial

Requires Warfare 4 (Command 1B)

Once per round of a skirmish or battle, you may automatically reorganize one disorganized unit or rally one routed unit. Using this quality does not count as an order.

Natural Sorcerer — Sorcerous

Requires Will 4

The talent to use magic comes to you naturally—or unnaturally, some say. Choose a sorcerous Work that you now know even though you are not initiated into the Art from which it springs; you are automatically considered to have the access needed to learn that Art, however, at which point you can also learn its other Works. You gain a +1B to casting all Works in your chosen Art, including your first. You gain a Sorcery Point.

Night Eyes — Ancestry (dwarf, elf, ogre), Fate

You never suffer a penalty to tests when attempting them while in areas of low light. You still suffer penalties as normal when in complete darkness.

Pious — Fate

Requires Will 3 (Dedication 1B)

Choose a religion, philosophy, or ideal to which you are dedicated. Once per day, before making a test, you can call on your faith to gain +1D for that test.

Pole-Arm Fighter I — Martial

Requires Fighting 4 (Pole-arms 2B)

You gain a new combat maneuver.

Sweep: Spend a Greater Action to make a Fighting attack using a pole-arm. Make a Fighting test, but subtract 2 from your test result for each opponent in your reach that you want to hit with this attack. Compare your test result to the Combat Defense of each target. Opponents you hit take normal damage and are knocked to the ground.

Pole-Arm Fighter II — Martial

Requires Pole-Arm Fighter I

When using a pole-arm to pull a rider from his mount, you may treat your pole-arm bonus dice as test dice. If you fail to beat the rider's Animal Handling test, you are disarmed.

Pole-Arm Fighter III — Martial

Requires Fighting 5, Pole-Arm Fighter II

You can pin your opponent in place with a deft jab of your weapon. You gain a new combat maneuver.

Pin: Spend a Greater Action to make a Fighting attack using a pole-arm. Make a Fighting test. A hit deals normal damage. If you achieve two or more degrees of success, the target cannot spend actions to move until it breaks free. A target can break free by beating you on an opposed Athletics test (Strength applies). Your bonus dice from the Pole-arm specialty apply to the opposed Strength test.

Polyglot — Ability

Requires Cunning 4 (Decipher 1B)

You have a great facility with languages. You can read any language in which you have at least 1 rank. When exposed to a language with which you aren't familiar, you may make a Formidable (12) Cunning test. If this test succeeds, you gain 1 rank in the Language for the duration of the scene. For every two additional degrees on the test, you gain an extra rank.

Prophetic Alignment — Fate

Requires a sorcerer to have cast a Vision ritual

A sorcerer has shared their visions of the future with you. You are moved and driven to either see that their prophecy comes to pass, or filled with the determination to prevent it somehow. Either way, this Benefit grants you a number of Prophetic Destiny Points equal to the Vision ritual's Unleashing degrees of success, plus one. These points may be spent or

burned as normal Destiny Points, save that the outcome of that expenditure must either aid or hinder the prophecy from coming true. This may even be used to power sorcerous work, so long as the magic directly contributes to the culmination or prevention of the future vision.

Once you have burned all of these Prophetic Destiny Points, you lose this Benefit and regain the point of Destiny invested in it: you have done all you can to either fight or facilitate the prophecy, and it is now in the hands of others, and fate.

Prophetic Dreams — Fate

Requires Will 5

You are a seer, visited by two kinds of oracular dreams: premonitions and portents. Whenever you sleep, roll 1d6. On a 6, you experience an oracular dream.

Premonitions are simple dreams, more emotion and feeling than concrete images. They are warnings of trouble in your personal life, and provide inspiration and strength to make it through those events. In game terms, you may choose any single test the following day to gain a +1D on, reflecting a sudden insight into the difficulty and how to navigate it best.

Another way that premonitions might be employed is when spending or burning a Destiny Point to edit a scene, allowing you to have retroactively dreamt of this situation (although such dreams aren't always believed or remembered when they happen). In such a situation, the scene editing results from the character gaining insight from the dream.

Portents are prophetic dreams, powerful visions of what is to come—or of what is happening now. The dreams are filled with various metaphors and symbolic images. The meaning behind the dreams is not always obvious, but once you have experienced one, you will see the fulfillment of your visions in the unfolding of the events around you.

You may also choose the nature of a portent. By spending a Destiny Point, you may choose the symbolism and meaning of a portent, granting you a +1D that may be used toward making that dream come true. Unlike premonitions, this bonus remains for longer than a single day, waiting until it is used. (It is notable that it is not the character, but the player, who chooses the content and goals of this dream; it is just another dream filled with strange symbols to the character.)

If your Narrator has a portent ready, when you experience a prophetic dream, you receive that portent. Otherwise, such dreams are assumed to be premonitions.

Respected — Social

Requires Reputation 2B

Your accomplishments are widely known and your reputation inspires respect in others. Your opponents take –1D on Persuasion tests made to target you with Incite, Intimidate, or Taunt.

Shield Mastery — Martial

Requires Fighting 3 (Shields 1B)

You are able to deflect attacks with ease while wielding a shield. Increase the Defensive Bonus of any shield carried by +1 per rank in the Shields specialty, to a maximum of doubling the bonus granted by the shield.

Short Blade Fighter I — Martial

Requires Fighting 4 (Short Blades 1B)

You know how to slip your blade through the gaps in even the strongest armor. Short blade weapons in your hands gain the Piercing 1 quality. If the weapon already has this quality, increase it by 1.

Short Blade Fighter II — Martial

Requires Fighting 5, Short Blade Fighter I

You can draw a short blade as a Free Action. In addition, add a number to your Fighting test results made using a short blade equal to the bonus dice you assigned to the Short Blades specialty.

Short Blade Fighter III — Martial

Requires Fighting 6, Short Blade Fighter II

You may add the number of bonus dice you assigned to the Short Blade specialty to the damage for any attack you make using a short blade. This extra damage applies after you apply the benefits from your degrees of success.





Sinister — Ability

Everything about you suggests you are a dangerous individual. During the first round of every combat or intrigue, you gain a +2 bonus to you Combat Defense and Intrigue Defense.

Sorcerous Initiation — Sorcerous

Requires Will 4 or any other Benefit that grants access to a sorcerous Art

You are initiated into a sorcerous Art (see **Chapter 6: Sorcery**). You also know a single Work from that Art without needing to spend the normal time or test to learn it. You gain a Sorcery Point for having this Benefit.

You can take this quality multiple times. Each time, choose a new sorcerous Art and Work. You also gain an additional Sorcery Point.

Sorcerous Proclivity — Sorcerous

Requires knowledge of any sorcerous Work

You gain two Sorcery Points, trading one Destiny Point for them through the purchase of this Benefit.

Sorcerous Works — Sorcerous

Requires access to any sorcerous Art

You acquire two new Works from any of the sorcerous Arts you are initiated into without needing to spend the normal time or test to learn them. They come to you via esoteric insight and sudden inspiration, rather than the painstaking learning and effort normally required.

Spear Fighter I — Martial

Requires Fighting 3 (Spears 1B)

A spear's haft is as much a threat as is its point. You gain a new combat maneuver.

Haft Strike: Spend a Greater Action to make a Fighting attack using a spear. A hit deals normal damage. If you miss, make a second attack against any other foe in your reach with the haft of the spear to deal damage equal to your Athletics – 1 on a hit.

Spear Fighter II — Martial

Requires Spear Fighter I

You can trip up your foes with a deft strike of your spear. Spears in your hands can attack opponents 1 yard further than they normally could at no penalty. In addition, when armed with a spear, you gain +1D on tests to made Knockdown your opponents.

Spear Fighter III — Martial

Requires Athletics 5, Spear Fighter II

With skill and brute strength, you thrust your spear through your foes. Spears in your hands gain the Piercing 2 quality. If the spear already has the Piercing quality, instead increase it by 2.

Sponsor — Fate

A person of quality will vouch for you. Sponsor is a requirement for several qualities. You and the Narrator should work together to define the person who stands for you. The Sponsor should be related to one of the qualities you pursue. A Sponsor may grant you information, audiences, companionship, and even take an interest in your development, though this quality typically does not provide a mechanical benefit.

Stubborn — Ancestry (dwarf, ogre), Social

Requires Will 3 (Dedication 1B)

You are difficult to persuade. Increase your Composure by a number equal to the bonus dice you assigned to Dedication.

Talented — Ability

You have a natural talent with a single ability. Choose an ability. Add 1 to the results of any test using this ability. You may select this benefit multiple times. Each time, choose a new ability.

Terrain Specialist — Ability, Ancestry (Dwarf, Elf *)

Requires Survival 4 or Dwarf or Elf Ancestry and Survival 3

Vast experience in the wild gives you an advantage when moving through familiar terrain. Choose one terrain type from the following: deserts, forests, hills, marshes, mountains, plains, or coastal lands. You may add the number of the bonus dice you assigned to Education to the results of any Survival test made in this terrain. You never take a Movement penalty when moving through this terrain.

You may select this benefit multiple times. Each time, its effects apply to a different terrain type.

Dwarf ancestry applies only to hills or mountains. Elf ancestry applies only to forests.

Tough — Ancestry (Ogre), Martial

Requires Resilience 1B

You are uncommonly tough and can shrug off damage with ease. Increase your Health by a number equal to the bonus dice you assigned to Resilience.

Tourney Knight — Martial

Requires Fighting 3 (Spears 1B), Status 3 (Tournaments 1B)

You are a veteran of numerous tournaments. Add a number equal to the bonus dice you assigned to Tournaments to your Fighting test results when jousting. You also add this number to your passive Animal Handling result to stay in the saddle.

Trade — Ability

You have learned a trade. Choose any one trade. You have to invest at least 2 silver coins and spend ten hours each day for five days. After this period is up, roll a Challenging (9) Cunning test. Success grants you 6 × your initial investment (12 silver coins or a profit of 10 coins). Each additional degree improves the multiplier by 1 (so 35 silver coins for two degrees of success and 5 coins as investment). If you roll a Critical failure, your investment is lost, and you receive –1D on your next Trade test.

You can make items related to your trade, effectively allowing you to purchase them for half the list price.

Treacherous — Social

You use your cunning and duplicity to outmaneuver your enemies. During an intrigue, you may add a number equal to your Cunning ranks to all of your Deception test results.

Triple Shot — Martial

Requires Marksmanship 7 (Bows 5B), Double Shot

You gain a new combat maneuver.

Triple Shot: Spend a Greater Action to make three attacks at one time when using a Marksmanship weapon. Resolve these attacks as normal Marksmanship attacks, but with a -2D to each test. You may make all three attacks against the same target or divided between two or three adjacent targets.

War-Mage I — Martial

Requires Fighting 3, knowledge of any sorcerous Work

Your weapon of choice defends you against threats both physical and magical. Choose one weapon type. You gain a +1 bonus to your Averting bonus while wielding a weapon of that in at least one hand. This bonus explicitly stacks with any other equipment that grants an Averting bonus. See **Averting Bonus** in **Chapter 6** for details.

War-Mage II — Martial

Requires Fighting 4, Will 4, War Mage I

With a single hand free, you can unleash magics while still defending yourself against attack. When taking the Spellcasting Action while wielding the weapon that applies to your War-Mage I Benefit, you may add your Will to your Combat Defense for that turn. For the purpose of other rules, this Spellcasting Action also counts as a Dodge Action.

War-Mage III — Martial

Requires Fighting 5, Will 5, War Mage II

Weapon and magic flow as one, landing both curse and blow at the same time. You gain a new combat maneuver.

Sorcerous Strike: As a Greater Action, you can attack with your weapon and use a Spellcasting Action simultaneously. Spend one Sorcery Point (this cost is in addition to any required by the spell being cast) and make a normal Spellcasting Action roll, with any Fighting specialty dice that apply to the use of your weapon added to the roll. The results of this roll are compared to the target's Combat Defense and applied as a normal attack; they are also applied to the target's Sorcerous Defense, and applies as a normal Spellcasting test against that target.

Warding Marks — Fate

Requires a sorcerer to cast the Warding Marks ritual

You have a series of scrolling sigils and protective designs over part of your body, typically tattooing or scarification, designed to protect you from sorcery. You gain the effects of a single ritual that grants a Warding. You are protected at the lowest possible Warding granted by that ritual, but it is permanent unless the marks are removed from your body (at least 50% of the whole design must be marred).



Wealthy — Fate

You have fortunes from inheritance or through mastery of business. At the start of each month, you may roll an Easy (3) Cunning or Status test to refill your coffers. Success earns you 10 gold coins times your degree.

Weapon Mastery — Martial

Choose a weapon you have mastered. Increase the weapon's base damage by 1.

You may select this quality multiple times. Each time, choose a different weapon.

Weapon Savant — Martial

Requires Agility 4, Cunning 4, Fighting 5

You can wield any weapon without penalty, regardless of its training requirements.

Worldly — Social

Gain +2B on all Persuasion tests made to interact with foreigners and strangers due to your worldly manner and experience.

Drawbacks

The following drawbacks are listed in alphabetical order. Generally, you may only take a particular quality once unless mentioned in the quality's description. Whenever you voluntarily take a drawback, you gain 1 Destiny Point. You cannot have more drawbacks than you have benefits. However, when you gain a drawback as a consequence of defeat, you do not gain a Destiny Point. You may burn a Destiny Point to remove the effect of a drawback you have gained.

The following drawbacks are by no means complete. If you'd like to explore some other dimension of human failing not included here, work with your Narrator to come up with something appropriate that's a significant drawback.

All adult or older characters begin with one drawback. Generally, this manifests as a flaw, but with your Narrator's permission, you may choose another drawback instead.

SPECIAL DRAWBACKS

The following Drawbacks have special characteristics.

SORCEROUS DRAWBACKS

Some Drawbacks are marked as Sorcerous. These Drawbacks are limited to characters who possess knowledge of the sorcerous arts and works detailed in **Chapter 6**. You cannot take one of these drawbacks unless you know at least one sorcerous art.

STRICTURES

Some Drawbacks are marked as Strictures. Strictures require some continued behavior on the part of a sorcerer in order to continue to use their magic. These drawbacks are limited to characters who possess knowledge of the sorcerous arts and works detailed in **Chapter 6**. Failure to adhere to Strictures violates the delicate flow of power offered to the sorcerer, resulting in a loss of magical ability. Mechanically, the player of a sorcerer must keep track of what Benefits are purchased with the Destiny Points gained from these Stricture Drawbacks. If a Stricture is violated, the sorcerer loses access to that Benefit (and any Benefits that have that lost Benefit as a requirement) until the proper amends are made—when this happens, the Stricture is in place once again.

Addicted

You turn to an addiction in times of stress or hardship. Whenever you are faced with a troubling situation, you must succeed on a Challenging (9) Will test or turn to your addiction for comfort, indulging in it until circumstances pull your focus away from it. This includes any of the side-effects of indulging, such as getting drunk, the effects of drugs, losses to gambling, and so forth.

Childhood Ailment

A disease or sickness in your youth left you weak and frail. Decrease your Health by 2.

Cowardly

Whenever you are engaged in combat or intrigue, you take –1D on all tests. Each round as a Free Action, you may attempt a Formidable (12) Will test to find your courage. If you succeed, you remove the penalty and gain a +1B on all tests.

Crippled

You suffered a terrible injury or were born twisted in some way. You reduce your Movement by –2 yards (to a minimum of 1 yard).

Cruel

You are heartless and wicked, lacking in compassion and empathy. You take –2D on all Awareness tests involving Empathy. In addition, when engaging in intrigues, your opponent's disposition is always one step worse if they recognize who you are.

Cursed

You live under a dreadful curse, a streak of bad luck that colors all that you do. Whenever you would spend a Destiny Point, roll 1d6. On a roll of a 1, the Destiny Point has no effect and is wasted.

Debt

You are burdened by debt. All purchases cost twice the listed amount (to reflect your scarce resources).

Disturbing Habit

You have an unusual compulsion, a habit others find unsettling. When recognized and using Persuasion to Intimidate, you gain +1D. In all other uses of Persuasion, however, you take a –1D on Persuasion tests.

Eunuch

You have been castrated. You take a –1D on all Persuasion tests, and enemies cannot use Seduce to influence you. As well, you may sire no children and, thus, can have no heirs.

Familiar — stricture

You have been given a spirit of occult power that takes the form of an innocuous animal. This animal remains close to you and your domicile, and may even be treated as a pet. It has no powers other than that of any other animal of its type. You are obligated to care for this creature and see that it thrives, for part of your power relies on it. You must be within 100 yards of your familiar to use the Benefits purchased with this Drawback.

If you allow this animal to sicken, be injured or die, it violates the Stricture of this Drawback. You are no longer in violation once the animal has been returned to full health; if it has died, you must undertake a spiritual pilgrimage to find a new animal. You must also feed a small bit of your blood to it at least once a month. Failure to feed the animal your blood results in violation of this Stricture as well, until the animal fed upon your blood. The animal's only supernatural trait is that it lives as long as you do. Sorcerers can have multiple familiars, but the violation of the stricture for any one familiar results in the loss of all Benefits purchased through this Drawback.

Fear

You are deeply afraid of something. Choose one object of your fear—fire, snakes, wolves, darkness, and so on. When in the presence of the thing you fear, you take a –1D on all tests. Each round on your turn, roll 1d6. On a 6, you overcome your fear and lose this penalty for the duration of the encounter.

Feeble

Requires Old age or older

You are ancient. You cannot make Agility, Athletics, Fighting, or Marksmanship tests, but you gain +1D on all Cunning and Knowledge tests.

This drawback counts for up to three required flaws for characters of the venerable age group.

Flaw

When you gain this drawback, select a single ability. You take –1D on all tests involving this ability. When calculating your passive test

Flaws

Ability	Flaw
Agility	Clumsy
Aim	Unsteady
Athletics	Sedentary
Awareness	Obtuse
Endurance	Frail
Fighting	Inept
Intellect	Dullard
Knowledge	Uncultured
Language	Illiterate
Persuasion	Shy
Stealth	Obvious
Survival	Pampered
Will	Brash
Animal Handling	Cruel
Status	Wretched
Thievery	Unsubtle
Warfare	Coward

result with your flawed ability, treat it as being 1 point lower. For example, if you have Perception 4 and the Flaw (Awareness) drawback, your passive Awareness result would by 12 ([4 – 1] x 4). You also reduce any derived characteristics (such as Intrigue Defense or weapon damage) by 1. For ways your Flaw might manifest, see the **Flaws** table.

Forgetful

Your mind wanders, and you have problems recalling small details. Whenever you test Cunning, you must re-roll any die result of a 6 and take the second roll.

Furious

You have a terrible temper. When rolling Persuasion tests, your first roll must use Intimidate. In addition, you take –2D on all Persuasion tests made to Seduce.

Haughty

Your sense of propriety overshadows your compassion. You take a –1D on all Awareness tests involving Empathy. When dealing with someone beneath your station or who breaches proper conduct (such as a woman in armor, a bastard, and so on), your starting disposition must be Dislike or worse.

Haunted

The memories of the past torment you. You take a –1D on Awareness tests, but during the first round of combat, you may add the number of Memory bonus dice to your Fighting test results.

Honor-Bound

Honorable to a fault, you must re-roll all 6s on Deception tests and take the second roll, even if it's worse than the first roll.

Ignoble

You have a reputation for treacherous and dishonorable tactics. You take –1D on all Persuasion and Status tests.

Illegitimate

Your birth is viewed as illegitimate in your culture, perhaps due to the status of your parents or the nature of their backgrounds or relationship.

You take –1D on all Persuasion tests when interacting with characters with a higher Status and may not be eligible for certain benefits like Heir or Heirloom.

Impaired Sense

You are blind or deaf. When gaining this quality, choose blindness or deafness. You automatically fail all Awareness tests that rely on this sense. In addition, reduce your Movement by –1 yard.

Inept

You are slow and clumsy. Whenever you test Agility, you must re-roll any die result of a 6 and take the second roll.

Lascivious

You have a powerful libido, and it guides most of your interactions. During an intrigue, if your first Persuasion test does not use Seduce, you take a -2 penalty to Intrigue Defense until the end of the scene. You also take a –2D on all Persuasion tests made to Charm.

Linked Strictures — Stricture

This Drawback is sort of a meta-stricture in that it links together two already existing Stricture Drawbacks. If you violate one of these Strictures, then those linked are considered violated as well, resulting in the loss of not only all the magics connected to those Drawbacks, but to the magic purchased with this Drawback as well. You may take this Flaw more than once, though if it is used to link one Stricture to another that is already linked to a third, violation of any one of them is considered a violation of all three (or four, and so on).

Marked

You bear a visible nasty scar or physical defect. Whenever you test Persuasion, you must re-roll any die result of 6 and take the second roll.

Maimed

You lost a limb in battle or by accident. As Marked, plus lose any one limb. If the limb lost is a leg, halve your Movement and take –1D on all Athletics tests. If the limb lost is an arm, you cannot wield two-handed weapons, and you take a –2D on any test that requires two hands.

Menacing

You exude a menacing aura. During an intrigue, if your first Persuasion test does not use Intimidate, you take a -2 penalty to Intrigue Defense until the end of the scene. You also take a –2D on all Persuasion tests made to Charm or Seduce.

Mute

You are incapable of speech. You take –2D on all tests made during intrigues; however, opponents take –2D to ascertain your disposition.

Naïve

You are unskilled at detecting deception. You take a -3 penalty to Intrigue Defense against Deception tests.

Nemesis

You acquire a destructive enemy, an individual who holds you in utter contempt whether you did something to deserve it or not. The particu-

lars of this flaw are up to the Narrator to define, but your nemesis will undoubtedly haunt you until you confront him or her.

Oath-bound — stricture

As part of your magical training, you have taken an oath of some kind. This oath is magically binding, granting you access to greater power that will be stripped away if you violate that oath. The exact nature of this oath will depend on the campaign, but common versions are an oath of loyalty to your mentor, an oath of obedience to a demon or other supernatural entity, an oath of service to a magical order or coven, or even oaths of fealty to a liege lord in settings where magicians are bound in service to rulers. This may also be an oath of secrecy to a dark cult or secret society. You may take this Flaw more than once.

Obligation — stricture

This stricture requires certain kinds of behavior from you, such as a requirement to never refuse food offered to you by a host, or to always sleep beneath the open sky. This obligation is often in alignment with the superstitions of your culture or the occult Tradition you have invested in through the adoption of this obligation. You may take this Flaw more than once.

Outcast

You have done or are accused of doing something dreadful, and you have been cast out of your lands. You take –2D on Status tests.

Poor Health

Either from excess or poor constitution, you are never quite healthy. Reduce Endurance test results made to remove injuries or wounds by 3.

Reviled

You are widely reviled and despised. When engaged in an intrigue, your opponent's disposition is one step worse than normal. In addition, you take a –1D on all Status tests.

Sickly

You are weak and plagued with near-constant sickness. You take –1D on Endurance tests to resist hazards and ailments.

Small

You have an unusually small stature. Reduce your base Movement by –1 yard. In addition, you take –1D on all Persuasion tests made to Charm and Seduce.

Sorcerer's Aura — sorcerous

Your sorcerous power cannot be fully contained and some of it escapes into the world around you. This causes strange and oft-disturbing manifestations when you enter an area. The more Sorcery Points you possess at your maximum (rather than the amount varying with spent points), the more blatant these changes are; burning Sorcery Points reduces the effect of your Sorcerer's Aura. The definition of your aura's manifestation should be decided between you and the Narrator.



- **1–2 points:** Your power is subtle, and only the very sensitive are aware of it. Sensitives may feel a small shiver in your presence, and seers may have Prophetic Dreams about you, fraught with symbols associated with the types of magic you practice.
- **3 points:** Your presence causes strange, minor transformations subtle enough that they aren't noticed when they occur, though they may be discovered later. Jugs of milk and ale may spoil, glass may cloud, wood may discolor or slightly warp. Sensitives are always distinctly unnerved by your presence, and seers have nightmares of you engaged in distinctly sinister symbolic activities thematic of your magic.
- **4 points:** Your arrival to a location causes small manifestations the very attentive may perceive with a Formidable (12) Awareness (Notice) test. Water takes twice as long to boil, bread will not rise, ale spoils, and milk curdles in udder and breast, which causes the sickening of cattle, new mothers, and their nursing babes. Little children begin crying without knowing why, and domestic animals react with fear and aggression. Sensitives and seers are so shaken by your presence that they receive a -1D to their first action in a given scene regardless of the nature of the action. When you perform any act of magic with the Price of

burning a Destiny Point, every seer within 10 miles has a Prophetic Dream of the occurrence.

- **5 points:** This level of power is apparent to those who make Challenging (9) Awareness (Notice) tests. In addition to the consequences of the 4-point level, holy symbols tarnish and fall off walls and altars, the virtuous and faithful experience blinding headaches and vomiting, shadows seem to pull closer to you, and candle flames gutter and die out as you pass. Sensitives and seers are fearful of your presence, receiving -2D to their first action in any given scene. When you perform any work of magic with the Price of burning a Destiny Point, every seer within 50 miles has a Prophetic Dream of the occurrence.
- **6+ points:** At this potency, few miss the twisting of the natural world in the wake of your passage, requiring only a Routine (6) Awareness (Notice) test to see holy symbols fall and break, small plants wither and die when your shadow touches them, and the way animals, children, and the feebleminded react with terror. Shadows writhe in anticipation of your approach, predators and scavengers are drawn to your location. Sensitives and seers hear a low susurrus of haunting voices whispering of your power, and are treated as though they had the Fear Flaw with regards to you. When you perform any act of magic with the Price of burning a Destiny Point, every seer within 100 miles has a Prophetic Dream of the occurrence.

Supreme Arrogance

Your arrogance blinds you to the dangers swirling about you. You take a penalty to all Awareness test results equal to your Status.

Taboo

Taboos restrict behavior, such as vow to to never eat the meat of a stag, or to never allow a huntsman to cross one's threshold. This taboo is often in alignment with the superstitions of your culture or the Tradition in which you have invested through the adoption of this obligation. You may take this Flaw more than once.

Vulnerability — sorcerous

You or your magic are vulnerable to a particular substance. When in the presence of that substance, your Spellcasting actions are performed at -1D. Warding incorporating that substance in its creation is increased by one rank against your magic, and those who bear the substance and are affected by Warding are also considered protected by Warding of one rank higher. Sorcerers with this Drawback typically go to great lengths to avoid contact with the substance, but also to keep their Vulnerability secret.

If you come into contact with the substance, you may be physically affected by it, based on how many Sorcery Points you have. Each Tradition has its own kind of substance associated with it, and many cultures and faiths maintain superstitions about the various herbs, minerals, or symbols that weaken sorcerers, including wolfsbane, mountain ash, cold iron, silver, holy water, or certain holy symbols.

- **1–2 points:** The touch of the substance stings, but does not truly injure you.
- **3 points:** The touch of the substance raises welts, requiring a Routine (6) Endurance (Resilience) test to avoid an Injury.
- **4 points:** The touch of the substance raises welts, requiring a Challenging (9) Endurance (Resilience) test to avoid an Injury.
- **5 points:** The touch of the substance burns or sickens you, requiring a Challenging (9) Endurance (Resilience) test to avoid a Wound.
- **6+ points:** The touch of the substance burns or sickens you, requiring a Formidable (12) Endurance (Resilience) test to avoid a Wound.

Ward

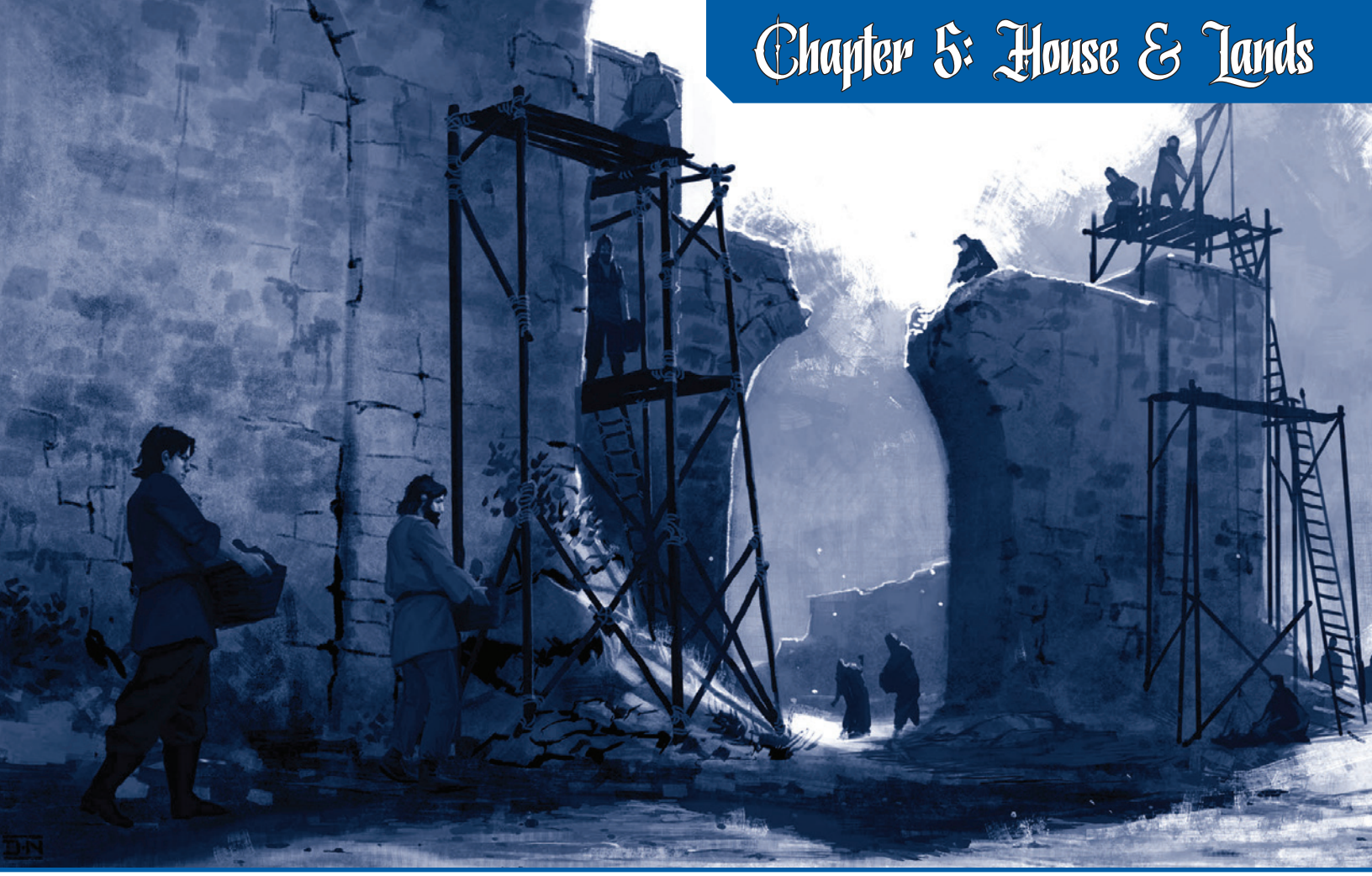
You were sent to your foster House by your birth House as part of either a pact against aggression between the Houses (in which case there is likely a member of the foster House who is a Ward of your birth House), or as part of the defeat of your birth House. Your Status is based on your position in your birth House, not on the foster House.

You take a -1D on all Persuasion tests with both your birth and foster Houses; each assumes that you speak from a position of favoring the other, and is therefore less likely to heed what you have to say. Additionally, should your birth House take any kind of overt action against your foster House, you may be slain in retribution.

Witchmark — sorcerous

Somewhere on your body is a Witchmark, a birthmark, scar, or unnaturally symmetrical pattern on your skin that betokens you as a sorcerer. Depending on the setting, this mark may put you in grave danger of being revealed as a reviled practitioner of sorcery, or it might mark you as one of the blessed few capable of channeling divine magic. The mark exists because of a need for your power to manifest itself through your body, which means that not only do you bear a physical sign, but it is also easier to know you for what you are. The Difficulty for Sensitives to detect your magic and your presence is reduced by 3.

Chapter 5: House & Lands



A person's family often says as much or more than do the merits of the individual, shrouding the person in the deeds, actions, and legends of his family's past. A person born to a noble family with a history of honor, fairness, and courage often inherits those same attributes, at least in the eyes of those they meet. Similarly, an individual born to a house noted for being corrupt, brutal, and bloodthirsty bears these stains on their person even if they are kind, innocent, and peaceful. Yet there are always those who rebel against their house's ethos, be they reformers at the top, or rebels at the bottom.

The element that binds player characters together is the shared loyalty to a common family, be they blood relations to that family or retainers who swear their swords to the defense of a noble bloodline. This common purpose is what unites the often fractious and divisive interactions between those of powerful birth and gives the players a strong foundation from which they can explore the chronicle world. The noble house the players control gives them a thread in the grand tapestry of blood and relation, making their characters feel as though they have a place in the world—and have the ability to change it.

THE ROLE OF THE NOBLE HOUSE

Ultimately, the noble house is, in many ways, another character, but it is one controlled by all the players. It has a history, a place, and a function. It has quantifiable attributes that reflect its strengths and weakness, and it can grow and thrive or wither and die. But for as much as the house is integral to the players, it also stands apart, functioning in the background as the player characters carve out their places in history. The house has lived long before the players, and unless disaster strikes, it will live long after they are all dust.

Note that this chapter structures noble houses based on the classic assumptions of medieval feudalism, but other forms of organization are possible. Consider possible equivalents, such as a general and her chain of command, or the hierarchy of a religious order. In most cases, you can find equivalents of the feudal positions and structures discussed in this chapter.

Creating the House

Unlike character creation (described in **Chapter 2**), house creation is a cooperative process in which each player has equal say about the salient features pertaining to the house. House creation involves making important decisions, rolling dice, and applying the results. Most importantly, you and your fellow players will work together to attach stories to mechanical developments in the house creation process. You will use the broad descriptions and details generated from these decisions and transform them into a living, breathing house with a history, future, and interesting family to engender the same sorts of investment that players have for their particular characters.

Ideally, your group should create their noble house before creating their characters. Doing so provides a good basis from which each player can build their personas. Some groups may find that creating their characters beforehand helps guide their choices about the house and its historical developments. There's no wrong order, so follow whatever approach works best for you.

Degrees of Focus

The rules presented in this chapter are designed to help shape the attitudes and objectives of the player characters. While it's possible to play in a chronicle where the focus on the noble house is much greater, the rules here are intentionally basic and serve to enhance game play rather than define it. Thus, the extent to which a house influences the game depends entirely on the players' and the Narrator's tastes. Some games may dispense with the noble house entirely, focusing on the deeds and actions of the characters, and if the house exists at all, it does so merely as a background element. Other games may take a top-down approach, where the noble house is everything, and the characters are unimportant in comparison. In such games, each player might control their own noble house and have a stable of characters they might use to facilitate the interests of their house and its survival, and when game play focuses on characters, it does so using only those characters pertinent to the greater story of the chronicle. Most games, though, take a middle-ground approach, where the players interact with the setting with just one character, and their house, while important, is not as vital as the development of the individual characters and the unfolding of their stories.

STEP 1: THE REALM

Most chronicle worlds are vast, having nearly every type of terrain and climate imaginable. People carve out their homes in a variety of regions, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. Your first step, then, is to place your noble house in one of these places. If the Narrator wishes to have characters adventure in their house's territory, they might require a particular location. Otherwise, the Narrator should present a number of options, brainstorming with players about the possibilities of various places based on their politics and dominant powers. In any case, your realm is important because it has a great deal of influence on other factors, including your house's starting resources, history, and a number of other elements that shape its final form.

STEP 2: STARTING RESOURCES

A house is essentially a collection of seven resources. Each resource, like a character's abilities, describes aspects of your family's holdings, such as the size of your Lands, your house's Status, Wealth, and so on. Each resource has a rating that ranges from 1 to 10 or higher, with the higher number representing greater resources and smaller number representing fewer resources. These values will fluctuate during house creation and more during game play, rising and falling depending on how well you play at politics and war.

Since resources are very much a part of the lands where your house resides, your starting kingdom determines your starting values. Unlike a character's abilities, your resources are *not* purchased with Experience; rather, they are generated randomly to reflect the deeds of those who have come before you and the circumstances surrounding your family's founding.

House Hargoth of Graylock

Throughout this chapter are examples of the various stages and steps involved with the creation of a noble house. The details included reflect the decisions of a typical gaming group, and the house, as presented, can serve as your own noble house if you don't have the time or inclination to create one of your own. The house's full details can be found on page 88.

For each resource, roll 8d6 and sum the results, then roll 2d6, sum the results, and subtract it from the 8d6 total. The 2d6 subtraction cannot reduce your resources below 1. This creates a range between 1 and 46.

DEFENSE

Defense describes fortifications, castles, keeps, towers, and other structures that serve to protect your holdings. Defense also describes the presence and quality of roads, representing the ability to move troops and supplies to threatened areas.

Defense Ratings

Score	Description
0	Desolate, ruined land, ravaged by disaster, war, or simply abandoned. No defensible structures of any kind, and no infrastructure for moving troops. You have no fortifications whatsoever.
1–10	Scarce cultivation, mostly wilderness with a few unprotected pockets of civilization, having one or two roads or a minor stronghold.
11–20	Some cultivation, presence of a keep or smaller stronghold with a few roads, rivers, or ports.
21–30	Defensible, with at least one fortified town or castle. Roads and trails are present, and rivers or ports are likely.
31–40	Good defenses with, almost certainly, a castle, along with a few other strong points. Roads and rivers provide easy transportation. Alternatively, natural terrain features, such as mountains or swamps, provide additional fortification.
41–50	Excellent defenses, with man-made fortifications likely combined with defensible terrain features.
51–60	Extraordinary defenses with structures, walls, and terrain features that, when combined, make attacking this land very costly.
61–70	Among the greatest defenses in the world.

INFLUENCE

Influence describes your presence in the chronicle world, how other houses see you, and the notoriety attached to your name. A high Influence resource typically describes a great house, including royalty, while

a low Influence resource would describe a house of little consequence, small and largely unknown beyond the lands of their liege.

Influence Ratings

Score	Description
0	The house's name and history has been erased from all records, and no one speaks of them anymore.
1–10	A minor landed knight or the equivalent.
11–20	A greater landed knight or the equivalent.
21–30	A small minor house.
31–40	A minor house.
41–50	A powerful minor house with colorful history.
51–60	A great house.
61–70	Royal or imperial influence, expressed directly or through high representatives.

LANDS

Land resources describe the size of your House's holdings and the extent of their influence over their region. A high score describes a house that controls an enormous stretch of terrain, such as a vast woodland realm.

Land Ratings

Score	Description
0	Landless, the house has been completely stripped of its holdings.
1–10	A speck of land, no larger than a single town.
11–20	A small stretch of land, about the size of a single small island or small portion of a larger island, or a large city and its immediate environs.
21–30	A modest stretch of land or medium-size island.
31–40	An area of land that includes several terrain features, islands, or large groups of islands.
41–50	A large area of land, that spreads across a great distance. This area likely includes a variety of terrain features.
51–60	A huge area of land, perhaps even a small continent.
61–70	A large continent, with land that probably overlaps with the holdings of other houses.

LAW

Law encompasses two things: the extent to which commoners respect and fear you and the threat of bandits, brigands, raiders, and other external and internal threats. Law is something your family must maintain, and if you don't invest in keeping your realm safe, it could fall into chaos.

Law Ratings

Score	Description
0	Lawless, uncivilized land. You have no authority here.
1–10	Bandits, raiders, and other criminal bands are afoot in your lands, causing mischief and trouble.
11–20	Lawlessness and banditry are a problem along the fringes of your lands.
21–30	Crime is common but not out of control.
31–40	You exert a great deal of control over your lands, and crime is uncommon.
41–50	Such is your influence and devotion to maintaining the peace that crime is rare.
51–60	You have almost no crime at all in your lands.
61–70	There is no crime in your lands.

POPULATION

Population addresses the density of people living in your lands. The more people, the more mouths you must feed. However, the more people, the more your lands produce. This abstract value describes in descriptive terms the quantity of folks that live under your rule.

Population Ratings

Score	Description
0	Barren. No people live under your rule.
1–10	Thinly populated. Tiny settlements are scattered throughout your lands.
11–20	Small population but no single community larger than a small town.
21–30	Typical population. Commoners usually live on farmsteads or in hamlets, but you might have a couple of small towns and a community around your primary fortification.
31–40	Modest population. At least one town and several smaller hamlets.
41–50	Large population. You have a large number of people in your lands; many live in a large town or spread throughout a number of smaller towns.
51–60	Immense population. An enormous number of people live under your protection.
61–70	You count everyone in your culture—and perhaps, substantial communities from other cultures—as your subjects.

POWER

Power describes your house's military strength, the ability to muster troops and rouse vassals sworn to you. Houses with low scores have few soldiers and no vassals, while those with high scores may have a dozen or more vassals and can rouse an entire region.

Power Ratings

Score	Description
0	Powerless, you have no troops, no soldiers, and no warrior vassals loyal to your family.
1–10	Personal guard only, with one or two old veterans and a small peasant militia at most.
11–20	Small force of soldiers largely made of levied commoners.
21–30	A modest force of soldiers, including some trained troops and at least one vassal house.
31–40	A trained force of soldiers, including cavalry and possibly ships. You have the service of at least two vassal houses.
41–50	A large force of diverse, trained, and competent soldiers. You probably also have the services of a specialists, such as sailors and rangers. Several vassal houses are sworn to you.
51–60	You can muster a huge force of soldiers, drawn from your lands and those from your numerous vassals.
61–70	You can potentially call upon everyone in your culture capable of bearing arms.

WEALTH

Wealth covers everything from coin to cattle and everything in between. It represents your involvement and success in trade, your ability to fund improvements in your domain, hire mercenaries, and more.

Wealth Ratings

Score	Description
0	Destitute. Your family is penniless.
1–10	Impoverished. Your family lacks essential resources and struggles to make ends meet.
11–20	Poor. Your family has little excess. While they are able to sustain themselves and their holdings, they do not live in luxury.
21–30	Common. Your family has enough to get by.
31–40	Prosperous. Your family has the funds to live in accordance with their station.
41–50	Affluent. Your family has more funds than it needs and lives in comfort.
51–60	Rich. Your family wants for nothing.
61–70	Decadent. Your family is so wealthy, they can afford to have sixty-six course feasts.

INITIAL MODIFICATIONS

Once the starting values for each resource are determined, each player gets to modify the values by rolling 1d6 and adding it to a resource of their choice. The immediate result is that larger groups of players have slightly more powerful houses because they have the benefit of more signature characters. Players may modify any resource they like, but no resource can benefit from more than two extra rolls.

Example

With their house positioned in the northern reaches of the chronicle's world, the players next generate their starting resources. Each player takes a turn rolling the dice so that everyone has a chance to roll at least once. Each resource starts with the sum of 8d6-2d6. The players roll and wind up with the following results:

Resource	Starting
Defense	25
Influence	36
Lands	39
Law	14
Population	13
Power	17
Wealth	12

Finally, each player gets to roll 1d6 and add the result to a resource of their choice. Steve goes first. He feels their lands are a bit lawless and adds his die roll (a 3) to Law. Nicole, up next, chooses Wealth and gets a 5. On Hal's turn, he selects Population and gets a 6. And finally, Chris chooses Power and rolls a 3.

Resource	Starting	Player	Total
Defense	25	—	25
Influence	36	—	36
Lands	39	—	39
Law	14	+3	17
Population	13	+6	19
Power	17	+3	20
Wealth	12	+5	17

From these starting values, the players derive some interesting results. Their Defense resource means their lands are defensible and probably benefit from at least one stronghold. They have large holdings for their small significance, far larger than many lords have in other regions. Their lands suffer from lawlessness and banditry, suggesting that they have a tough time controlling their territory, probably owed to the fact that they have a small population and a small force of soldiers. Finally, they are a poor house with few, if any, luxuries.

Historical Events

Roll	Event	Defense	Influence	Lands	Law	Population	Power	Wealth
3	Ascent	—	+1d6	+1d6	—	—	+1d6	+1d6
4	Catastrophe	—	—	—	–1d6	–1d6	–1d6	–1d6
5	Conquest	–1d6	+1d6	+1d6	–1d6	+1d6	—	+1d6
6	Defeat	–1d6	–1d6	–1d6	—	–1d6	–1d6	–1d6
7	Decline	—	–1d6	–1d6	—	—	–1d6	–1d6
8	Doom	–2d6	–2d6	–2d6	–2d6	–2d6	–2d6	–2d6
9	Favor	—	+1d6	+1d6	+1d6	—	+1d6	—
10	Glory	+1d6	+1d6	—	+1d6	—	+1d6	—
11	Infrastructure	———	———	Choose two and increase each by +1d6	———	———	———	———
12	Invasion/Revolt	—	—	—	–2d6	–1d6	–1d6	–1d6
13	Madness	+6–2d6	+6–2d6	+6–2d6	+6–2d6	+6–2d6	+6–2d6	+6–2d6
14	Scandal	—	–1d6	–1d6	—	—	–1d6	—
15	Treachery	—	–1d6	—	–1d6	—	+1d6	—
16	Victory	+1d6	+1d6	—	—	—	+1d6	—
17	Villain	—	+1d6	—	–1d6	–1d6	+1d6	—
18	Windfall	+1d6	+2d6	+1d6	+1d6	+1d6	+2d6	+2d6

STEP 3: HOUSE HISTORY

The next step is to determine your house's historical events. Roll 1d6. On a 6, add 1d3-1. This creates a range of 1 to 8 events. A large number of events usually indicates an ancient house.

Example

Chris and company have gone this far leaving things to chance, so they opt to do so again. This time, Hal rolls 1d6 and gets a 5, indicating an older house, though not among the most ancient. The Narrator says it could be a century or two old.

HISTORICAL EVENTS

Each house has a history, a chronicle of deeds and crimes that shape its identity. Great deeds might elevate a house to greater heights, while scandal and tragedy can shatter a house's foundation, forcing it to fall into obscurity. Historical events provide important developments in your family's history, either adding to your fortunes or diminishing them. Each event modifies your resources, increasing or decreasing them by the indicated value. Roll 3d6 once for each historical event and compare the result to the **Historical Events** table. Record them in the order that you rolled them. Historical events can reduce a resource to 0 but no lower.

The first historical event rolled describes the circumstances of your house's origins, defining what sort of event elevated your family to nobility.

ASCENT

An advantageous marriage, a great deed for a liege lord, or heroism in a decisive battle can all improve the fortunes of a noble house. If this is your first historical event, it indicates that your house was raised from the common people by marriage or through some great act that warranted your elevation to a noble house. Otherwise, ascent indicates that your house participated in some key historical event that improved their fortunes.

CATASTROPHE

A result of catastrophe usually indicates a natural disaster, such as an outbreak of plague, blight, or drought, any of which can diminish your population and ability to control your lands. If catastrophe is your first historical event, it means your family may have gained their status through dubious or tragic means, perhaps replacing the previous lords who were wiped out during the catastrophe or were a lesser branch that rose in station as they inherited the holdings of their kin.

CONQUEST

Your family fought and defeated an enemy, annexing their lands and holdings to their own. With such a victory comes the trouble of old loyalties, weakening your house's hold and influence over the common folk. If conquest is your first historical event, you gained your noble status by defeating another lord or landed knight.

DEFEAT

Your family fought a war or smaller conflict but was defeated, losing status, precious resources, and influence. If defeat is your first roll, your family might have been swallowed up by another house and forced to marry into a lesser branch until your original bloodline became all but extinct.

DESCENT

Whether from a poor marriage, a downturn in trade, or a series of tragic losses in a conflict, your house entered a period of decline. If descent is your first roll, your house was probably born from a poor marriage—a desperate lord wedding his daughter to a merchant prince—or of a major branch becoming extinct, leaving the holdings to a lesser branch to rule.

DOOM

Easily the worst possible result, your house suffered a terrible series of mishaps, disasters, and tragedies that nearly erased your family. The doom might be of a supernatural origin—a dreadful curse or an attack by horrors from beyond the world—or purely natural, combining the results of several downturns into one catastrophic setback. For a first historical event, your family might have clawed their way out of the ashes of a destroyed house, maybe being loyal retainers or even just commoners that seized the old lord's holdings.

FAVOR

Your family gained the favor of the king, their lord, a powerful religion, or from some other powerful body. As a result, their fortunes improved, and they climbed in standing. This favor might also result from the naming of a family member to some high position in a larger kingdom, such as a high priest or member of the imperial guard.



GLORY

A family wins glory through a military victory, personal achievement, or by a great act of heroism. Glory is similar to ascent, but it focuses on one figure in your family's past. The result of this individual's deeds advances your family's standing in the eyes of its peers. Generally, glory as a first historical event should imply that your house was formed as a reward for the great acts of their founder.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure describes a period of peace and prosperity, a moment in your house's history remembered for growth and expansion. Whenever you get this result, choose two different resources and increase each by 1d6. If infrastructure is your first result, your house was born during a period of expansion under your lord or king's rule.

INVASION/REVOLT

An invasion or revolt marks a period of collapse, destruction, and ruin. Most of these results come from an external invasion or from an enemy house, but it can also stem from a period of inept rule that led to a widespread commoner revolt. Invasion/revolt as a first historical event means your house was born from the strife and came to power in the aftermath.

MADNESS

A madness historical event indicates that a particular figure suffered from destructive eccentric behavior, producing unpredictable results, with positive or negative outcomes. Each resource increases by +6 and then decreases by –2d6, producing a range of +4 to –6. If this was your first result, your family was instead raised by a mad lord or king as appropriate to the period of your first founding. Note that "madness" does not necessarily indicate mental illness, but refers to capricious rule for any reason.

SCANDAL

Your family was involved in some disaster, a scandal that haunts them still. Good options include spawning a bastard, failed conspiracies, and so on. In the case of your first roll, the scandal created your family as a way of covering up the crime.

TREACHERY

Either you suffered at the hands of treachery or you were involved in a treacherous act. In either case, the historical event stains your family's name. Should treachery be your first result, you gained your house by means of some dark deed, possibly betraying another lord or noble.

VICTORY

You family achieved an important victory over their enemies. In any event, your family rose in prominence and power because of their victory. As an initial historical event roll, this victory was so great that your family was raised to nobility.

VILLAIN

Your family produced a character of unspeakable cruelty and wickedness, a villain whose name is still whispered with dread. Such a char-

acter might have committed terrible crimes in his home, killed guests under his roof, or was simply just a bad person. A villain as a first roll usually wins this position by dint of his evil, possibly murdering a rival and seizing his lands or birthright.

WINDFALL

A windfall is a boon, a blessing that catapults your family into fame (or infamy). Possible results could be an advantageous marriage, a gift from the king, discovery of new resources on one's lands, and more. If windfall is your first historical event, you won your lands by attaining a victory at a tournament, performing a great act, or something else of the like.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

As mentioned, these events are broad and loosely defined to allow you and your fellow players the greatest latitude in building your house. It's up to you and the Narrator to determine the particular details of each event, though suggestions are present under each entry. Come up with particular instances that can help you make your house as interesting as possible. Doing so binds your characters to the setting and helps to shape your own character's ambitions and personality. Pay special attention to the first historical event, for it should inform your decisions about your family's motto and heraldry.

Example

Moving forward, the group is ready to roll for their historical events. The group has two historical events. Hal and Steve both volunteer to roll the dice. Hal goes first getting a 14: Scandal. A scandal imposes –1d6 to Influence, Lands, and Power, an unfortunate result to say the least. Hal rolls for Influence getting a 6. Chris rolls for Lands and gets a 3, while Nicole gets a 5 for Power. The group subtracts these numbers from their resources.

Resource	Starting	Scandal	Total
Defense	25	—	25
Influence	36	–6	30
Lands	39	–3	36
Law	17	—	17
Population	19	—	19
Power	20	–5	15
Wealth	17	—	17

Although the scandal weakens their house, it provides inspiration for how and why their house was founded. Nicole suggests that maybe a bastard founded their house since nothing says scandal like wicked indiscretions. Steve asks the Narrator if it would be okay to have their house founder be a bastard child from another noble house. Everyone thinks this back-story is swell, so they turn to Steve to roll the next historical event.

Steve rolls a 10: Glory, an excellent result and one in keeping with the house's past. Glory grants +1d6 in Defense, Influence, Law, and Power, which helps repair some of the damage from the Scandal that birthed their family. Each player rolls the modifiers, adding them to their resources as follows:

Resource	Starting	Glory	Total
Defense	25	+5	30
Influence	30	+5	35
Lands	36	—	36
Law	17	+1	18
Population	19	—	19
Power	15	+2	17
Wealth	17	—	17

Figuring out what act or series of events led to the glory is easy. The group decides their house distinguished itself during a rebellion against the house their founding bastard came from, earning legitimacy in the eyes of the grateful ancestral line.

STEP 4: HOLDINGS

With your resources generated, it's time to define your holdings. In a way, holdings are like investments in that you use your resources to select specific elements in the form of castles, towers, cities, towns, soldiers, mines, and more. When you define your holdings, you do not reduce the resource; instead, allocate those points to a specific expression of that resource. You don't need to allocate all of your resources and may keep some in reserve to make other investments as your resources grow from Glory or Coin earned by the player characters or from House Fortunes.

If your resources are later reduced, such as by a blight sweeping through your crops or losing a battle, you may lose your investment. Similarly, if an investment is destroyed, such as having an enemy burn your castle to the ground, you lose the resources you invested in that particular holding.

All of the following holdings include how much of your resources you need to invest to gain the holding and a time factor, expressed in months (see **Months and Actions** on page 83). Whenever you would invest after house creation, you allocate your resources as normal, but you must wait the allotted time before you can derive the benefits from the investment.

DEFENSE HOLDINGS

Defense holdings are strongholds, towers, walls, and other fortifications. A defense holding grants benefits to your units' Defense when defending your lands, but they are also a symbol of status and power. To gain a defense holding, you must have at least one land holding.

SUPERIOR CASTLE

Investment: 50 Build **Time:** 144+10d6 Months

A superior castle is a massive stronghold. A superior castle has several towers, structures, and smaller buildings, all surrounded by a steep curtain wall and likely a moat as well.

Benefit: Units defending a superior castle gain a +10 bonus to their Defense.



CASTLE

Investment: 40 **Time:** 96+10d6 Months

Castles are impressive fortified strongholds but are not as large or as imposing as a superior castle. Most castles incorporate at least one central keep and several towers connected by walls and surrounded by a moat.

Benefit: Units defending a castle gain a +5 bonus to their Defense.

SMALL CASTLE

Investment: 30 **Time:** 72+10d6 Months

A small castle is simply a smaller version of a standard castle. It usually has no more than a single keep, perhaps two towers and a wall.

Benefit: Units defending a small castle gain a +3 bonus to their Defense.

HALL

Investment: 20 **Time:** 60+10d6 Months

A hall (or keep) is usually a small, fortified building. It may or may not be surrounded by a wall, and it could have a tower, though it's unlikely.

Benefit: Units defending a hall gain a +2 bonus to their Defense.

TOWER

Investment: 10 **Time:** 36+10d6 Months

Towers are single stone or timber structures that thrust up from the ground. If they have any outbuildings, they are small and unprotected.

Benefit: Units defending a tower gain a +1 bonus to their Defense.

Example

With a Defense of 30, the group has enough resources to invest in a small castle. Chris points out that they have a lot of land, and investing all of their defenses into one small castle means they will likely have a hard time defending their territory if it comes under attack. So instead of a small castle, the group selects a hall and a tower, positioning each in different domains.

INFLUENCE HOLDINGS

Influence represents your social power. The primary investment for Influence is in heirs, the children of the house's head. Heirs are valuable in that they extend the will and presence of the patriarch, but they also provide means to improving the house's standing through deeds and marriage.

Alternatively, you can reserve Influence to use as an expendable resource. You can reduce your family's Influence to modify the outcomes

of your House Fortunes roll. For every 5 points of Influence you spend, you can add 1d6 to your House Fortunes roll. If reducing your Influence would lower the maximum Status, such characters take –1D to Status tests for each rank they have above the maximum until they raise their Influence back to its original level or higher.

Your character can also expand your family's Influence, expending 2 points of the Influence resource to gain a +1B on any tests related to intrigues. Again, such expenditures reduce your family's Influence. Resolve diminishing Influence as described in the previous paragraph.

Influence also establishes the highest Status attained by any member of the household. This character is always the head of the house (Lord or Lady). Limits on Status can be found in the **Influence and Status** table.

Influence and Status

Resource	Maximum Status
0–10	2
11–20	3
21–40	4
41–50	5
51–60	6
61–70	7
71+	8 or higher

HEIRS

Your investment in heirs opens up options for players to take the roles of the house's heirs. Each investment creates a character of a particular Status. Influence does not limit the number of children a house can have but rather how many heirs with a significant Status you have.

Heirs

Heir's Status*	Example	Cost
Maximum–1	First-born child**	20
Maximum–2	Second child	10
Maximum–3	Other children	5

*Minimum Status 3. Status 2 does not cost an Influence investment.

** In some cultures, gender may take precedence over birth order in whole or in part, or precedence might be partly or completely selected instead of based on birth order. The Narrator should adapt these results according to the culture the house belongs to.

Example

With an Influence of 35, the group's house is minor but significant, but it's not as well-known as some of the greater houses in the region. The players discuss whether or not they want heirs and if the players want to play them. Both Nicole and Chris want to play characters of blood relation to the family. Neither Hal nor Steve are much interested, so Chris invests 20 of the house's Influence to become the first born. Nicole invests 10 points to become the second child. The group has 5 point left unallocated, which they intend to use during the chronicle as they engage in intrigues.

LAND HOLDINGS

Lands describe the terrain and extent of your actual holdings. Lands may be forests, lakes, hills, mountains, coastlines, and more, all based on where your house is situated and the terrain of your realm. Each Land investment is called a domain. Each domain has a radius roughly a league (3 miles) and thus covers around 36 square miles. Your domains reflect only those lands that are under your direct control and not under the control of your vassals, sworn knights, and others in your service.

Domains each have two components, features and terrain. A feature is something found on that land such as a town, river, woods, or coastline. A domain can have as many features as you'd like to invest. A domain without a feature is a barren, being a desert, scrubland, or waste depending on the realm. Terrain specifically describes the lay of land, being mountainous, hilly, flat, or sunken. A domain must have terrain and may only have one type of terrain, even if it has elements of other terrain types. The Narrator can veto combinations of terrain types that are unlikely to arise in nature, such as a desert next to a swamp.

TERRAIN

Sword Chronicle recognizes four broad types of terrain: hills, mountains, plains, and wetlands, as noted in the **Terrain Costs** table. If you cannot afford to invest in a domain, your holdings are smaller than a league and extend out around your primary stronghold.

Terrain Costs

Terrain	Cost
Hills	7
Mountains	9
Plains	5
Wetlands	3

FEATURES

A feature is some descriptive element or noteworthy landmark or place that merits attention and can provide additional advantages in battle as described in **Chapter 10: Warfare**. Costs are in addition to the terrain cost, as listed in the **Feature Costs** table.

Example

The group has a Lands resource of 36, which is considerable given their status. The Narrator recommends the PCs choose a spot near Siren Bay, a location in the chronicle world. So the group chooses their first domain to be plains with light woods and a coastline. The plains

Feature Costs

Feature	Cost
Coast	+3
Community, Hamlet	+10
Community, Small Town	+20
Community, Large Town	+30
Community, Small City	+40
Community, Large City	+50
Grassland	+1
Island	+10
Road	+5
Ruin	+3
Water, River	+3
Water, Pond	+5
Water, Lake	+7
Woods, Light	+3
Woods, Dense	+5



cost 3, light woods cost +3, and coastline costs another +3, for a total of 9. Nicole brings up the need for a community, but she doesn't want to dump all their resources into their first domain. So she suggests the group add a hamlet, bringing up the domain cost to 19.

For the other 17 points in Lands, the group decides to add two more inland wooded domains, each costing 6 for a total of 12, and add a stream (+1) between them, for small boat travel and irrigation for future crops. To make things interesting, they install a ruin (+3 points) on a grassland (+1) onto one of these domains: an old holding formerly held by ancient elves.

LAW HOLDINGS

Unlike other resources, Law does not have holdings for investment. Instead, your Law resource describes the extent of your authority over your lands, specifically as it applies to drawing resources from your lands with minimal loss to crime, banditry, and villainy. Maintaining a high Law resource helps reduce waste and loss, generating the full potential of Wealth and allowing your Population to grow. But if you let Law lapse, you derive less and less of your resources, and your Population growth shrinks until it can actually diminish. From the following, find your modifier to your House Fortunes roll.

Law House Fortunes Modifier

Score	House Fortunes	Score	House Fortunes
0	–20	41–50	+0
1–10	–10	51–60	+1
11–20	–5	61–70	+2
21–30	–2	71+	+5
31–40	–1		

Example

The players' house has 17 Law, indicating they have problems with brigands. Each turn, when they make their House Fortunes roll, they take a –5 penalty to their result.

POPULATION HOLDINGS

Like Law, you do not invest Population Holdings. Instead, your Population describes the density of people that live on your lands. The greater your Population, the more people occupy your lands. Population, again like Law, modifies the outcome of your House Fortunes; however, more people bring more opportunities for mishaps. Similarly, fewer people mean greater chances for trouble to brew in remote corners of your lands. From the following, find your modifier to your House Fortunes roll.

Population and Law are the most direct influences on House Fortunes, which in turn affect Wealth. While Wealth can be invested in holdings to increase its value, and these have prerequisites in certain Land holdings, they both enhance the primary criteria of having a significant population of loyal subjects working for the good of the House.

Population House Fortunes Modifier

Score	House Fortunes	Score	House Fortunes
0	–10	41–50	+1
1–10	–5	51–60	+0
11–20	+0	61–70	–5
21–30	+1	71+	–10
31–40	+3		

Example

With a Population of 19, the players' have no modifier to their House Fortunes roll from Population.

POWER HOLDINGS

From your Power resource, you derive your family's military might, its sworn swords, knights, guardsmen, and vassal houses that fight on your behalf. You can invest Power into vassal houses, ships, or units. You do not have to invest all of your Power and can keep some or much of it in reserve to deal with Household Fortunes as they crop up.

VASSAL HOUSES

Vassal houses are loyal noble families and landed knights that have sworn vows of service to your house in exchange for your protection, support, and aid in times of trouble. While promises bind the vassal house to your own, such vows can be tested when personal ambitions get in the way of honor and duty. Moreover, smaller houses often come to envy the power and influence of the larger houses to whom they are sworn, and betrayals, while uncommon, can and do occur.

VASSAL HOUSES

Cost: 20 for the first house, 10 for the second, and 5 for each additional house.

The relationship between you and your vassal is much the same as your relationship between you and your liege, meaning that as you are sworn to provide military and financial support to your lord, so, too, is your vassal house. The benefit of a vassal house is that they provide you with income each month and may be called to lend their military strength to your own. However, they are not blindly obedient, and though they are sworn to you, their interests usually come first. Furthermore, if you want to keep the loyalty of a vassal house, you must also support them and their conflicts, even if doing so would interfere with your own plans.

Your vassal house (or houses) begins loyal to your family, and their dispositions start at Friendly. As with all Narrator characters, developments in the chronicle, you and your family's choices, and reputation can improve or worsen a vassal house's disposition toward you. Should a vassal's disposition ever fall to Malicious, you lose them and the points you invested into this house.

Ultimately, the Narrator controls the vassal house. The members of the vassal house are usually Narrator characters as well; although, to reinforce the bonds of loyalty, players may play characters who are members of these smaller houses.

CREATING VASSAL HOUSE

You create vassal houses much in the same way as you create your own house, following the same procedures with the following exceptions:

- **Realm:** The vassal house's realm must be the same as your own.
- **Starting Resources:** Roll 5d6 for each resource instead of 8d6-2d6. Your vassal house's starting Influence cannot exceed your own.
- **House Fortunes:** Your vassal house does not roll for House Fortunes. Instead, your House Fortunes can modify your vassal houses. Alternatively, you may spend a Destiny Point to deflect a House Fortune onto any one of your vassal houses instead of your own house.

UNITS

Units are the most common investment for noble houses. They reflect the standing armies that support the household and can be called up to defend the family's lands at a moment's notice. Each unit consists of 100 men, 20 men and horses, or 5 warships.

TRAINING

A unit's level of training determines the cost of the investment. Training reflects experience, the skill of their masters-at-arms, and their time on the battlefield. Lesser-trained units are cheap but are less reliable and lack the durability of experienced units.

Each level of training includes a base **Discipline**. This starting level of Discipline determines the troop type and sets the Difficulty of Warfare tests to control these troops on the battlefield. The unit's type modifies its Discipline (see **Type**).

Units have all the same abilities as characters. The default for each ability is rank 2. Most of these abilities never come into play in battle, so there's no need to record them. The unit's training determines the amount of **Experience** attached to each unit to improve its abilities. To raise an ability one rank, it costs 20 Experience. The unit's type determines which abilities can be improved with Experience.

Unit Training

Training	Base Power Cost	Discipline	Experience
Green	1	Challenging (9)	20
Trained	3	Routine (6)	60
Veteran	5	Easy (3)	100
Elite	7	Automatic (0)	140

- **Green:** Green troops are soldiers with little or no experience on the battlefield and may include extremely old veterans well past their primes. Green troops are raw recruits, fresh-faced boys, peasant levies, or old men called out of retirement.
- **Trained:** Being professional soldiers, trained troops have spent some time with masters-at-arms and received sufficient instruction to fight competently on the battlefield. Trained troops include household soldiers, garrisons, less-expensive mercenaries, and the like.

- **Veteran:** Veteran units are trained units that have seen extensive action. Battle-scarred and competent, they are reliable and a valued component of any fighting force. These troops may include established mercenary companies, experienced rangers, knights, and so on.
- **Elite:** Exceptionally rare and expensive, elite units have the benefit of extensive training, vast experience, and an identity that invokes fear in those who must face them. In real history, groups like the Spartan army and the medieval White Company are examples of such units.

TYPE

Each unit has a broadly defined type, a role it plays in battle. Type describes how the unit operates and describes the abilities you can improve with the unit's Experience. In addition, type also modifies a unit's Discipline, increasing or reducing the Difficulty to control the unit in battle. For example, cavalry modifies Discipline by –3, so trained cavalry would have an Easy (3) Discipline (6–3 = 3, which is Easy). After all modifications from type, the unit's final Discipline cannot be lower than Automatic (0).

Most units have just one type, but it's possible to build units with two or more types. Obviously, units with multiple types are more valuable and, thus, more expensive. A unit may spend its upgrades on any abilities available to all types. Discipline modifiers are cumulative. So green (base 9) cavalry (–3) raiders (+6) would have a Formidable (12) Discipline test.

Unit Types

Type	Power Cost	Discipline Modifier	Key Abilities
Archers	+3	+3	Agility, Awareness, Marksmanship
Cavalry	+5	–3	Agility, Animal Handling, Fighting
Criminals	+1	+6	Endurance, Fighting, Stealth
Crusaders	+4	+0	Athletics, Endurance, Fighting
Engineers	+2	+3	Endurance, Knowledge, Warfare
Garrison	+2	–3/+3	Awareness, Endurance, Fighting
Guerillas	+2	+3	Athletics, Marksmanship, Stealth
Infantry	+4	+0	Athletics, Endurance, Fighting
Mercenaries	+1†	+3	Athletics, Endurance, Fighting
Peasant Levies	+0†	+6	Animal Handling, Awareness, Survival
Personal guards	+6	–6	Athletics, Endurance, Fighting
Raiders	+3	+3	Agility, Endurance, Fighting
Sailors	+4	+0	Agility, Awareness, Fighting
Scouts	+2	+3	Endurance, Stealth, Survival
Special	+4	+0	Any three
Support	+2	+3	Animal Handling, Endurance, Healing
Warships	+7	+0	Awareness, Fighting, Marksmanship

†Other costs, see respective entry

Archers: Archers are troops armed with Marksmanship weapons. Typically lightly armored to move about quickly, archers are useful for softening up a foe, but they tend to be vulnerable in close combat.

Cavalry: Any unit that rides animals into battle counts as cavalry; thus, examples can include units of knights or bands of clansmen raiders. Cavalry is often combined with other types. Horse archers are units of cavalry raiders, while units of knights are often cavalry crusaders. A cavalry unit that dismounts becomes infantry (though the cost does not change). Cavalry units use the Athletics and Endurance of their mounts in place of their own.

Criminals: Units made up of criminals are cheap to field but are unreliable at best.

Crusaders: Any troops formed around a political or religious cause count as crusaders. These zealots are fiercely loyal so long as they pursue their objective, but they are often undisciplined and difficult to control.

Engineers: These specialty units exist to circumvent enemy defenses, and on the battlefield, they work to tunnel through walls, assemble and operate siege weaponry, and fashion scaling ladders, pavanes, and a variety of other useful equipment. Engineers tend to be lightly armed and armored, making them vulnerable if attacked directly.

Garrison: A garrison is a unit of soldiers assembled to protect a community or fortification. Many garrisons perform double duty as watchmen and enforce the lord's peace. While often competent soldiers, garrisons are better at protecting their homes than fighting on a battlefield, a fact reflected in their poor morale when drawn into a more protracted war. When fighting on their lands, their Discipline Difficulty drops by –3. When away from their lands, their Discipline Difficulty increases by +3.

Guerillas: Another specialized force, guerillas are trained to fight in specific terrain, exploiting the lay of the land to give them a strategic advantage on the battlefield. As one would expect, guerillas are less useful when fighting outside of their preferred terrain.

Infantry: The most common unit, infantry consists of the common foot soldiers that form the spine of any army.

Mercenaries: Mercenaries are soldiers hired to wage war, protect a fortification or community, or escort troops. While mercenary units are better trained, they are more expensive to field and can be unreliable in larger engagements. Mercenaries tend to fight better when they outnumber their foes.

Special: Mercenaries are cheap to field in terms of Power, but they cost you in Wealth. Each unit of a particular training as shown on the following chart reduces your Wealth. Thus, if you field two green units, reduce your Wealth by –2.

Mercenary Costs

Training	Wealth
Green	–1
Trained	–3
Veteran	–6
Elite	–9

Peasant Levies: Peasant levies are the rabble rounded up from your hamlets and towns. Each unit of Peasant Levies you field reduces your Population resource by –2.

Personal Guard: One of the most expensive units in the game, a personal guard unit consists of expert warriors assembled to protect a commander, usually the noble that leads the force. A personal guard unit is disciplined and loyal and rarely breaks in battle.

Special: A commander or sub-commander can attach himself to a personal guard unit and retain the ability to issue orders.

Raiders: Raiders are a fighting force designed to hit opponents fast and hard to crush their defenses and plunder their holds. They are unsuited to sieges and extended battles, and indeed, are often recruited from semi-nomadic peoples for whom fortresses and marching in rank are alien concepts.

Sailors: Whether pirates, smugglers, or members of a true navy, naval units include any force trained to fight at sea.

Scouts: Scouts serve as the forward observers, spreading out to gain intelligence about enemy positions and bringing back the information to their commanders. Typical scouts are not exceptional warriors, though when combined with other types, they can be an effective addition to any force.

Special: A special unit is a catchall for all other units. Special units tend to have a unique set of abilities and are formed to do a specific task and do it well. Since these units have specialized training, they are the most expensive to field.

Support: A labor force is a unit that specifically works to erect fortifications and construct equipment for the larger force, including arms and armor, while also providing food, new clothes, and



even working as medics. Labor units are support troops and are exceptionally vulnerable to attack. In addition to their abilities, support units are trained in caring for equipment, erecting tents, cooking, cleaning, and more.

Warship: A unit of warships is a small fleet of combat vessels. A unit of warships can transport another unit into battle. To invest in a warship, you must have at least one domain with a coastline.

Example

The group has 17 Power to invest in units. Given the group's position on Siren Bay, they decide to invest in a green warship for 11 points. With the remaining 6, they pick up a trained garrison for 5 points and a green unit of peasant levies for 1 point (also reducing their Population by 1).

HOUSEHOLD GUARD

(Trained Garrison; 5 Power); Easy (3) Discipline at home or Challenging (9) away; Awareness 3, Endurance 3, Fighting 3

COMMONERS ON FOOT

(Green Peasant Levies; 1 Power; Population –2); Formidable (12) Discipline; Awareness 3

FLEET

(Green Warship; 11 Power); Formidable (12) Discipline; Awareness 3



WEALTH HOLDINGS

Wealth describes your family's soluble resources, explaining how they generate their income. You can invest Wealth into specific holdings, which grant specific benefits, or keep it free to spend in other areas as needed. It's often best to keep some of your Wealth free for problems that might crop up during game play.

The following holdings represent the most common types. Others might be available with your Narrator's permission (in which case you should all work together to come up with a workable benefit and relevant requirements). Many holdings include requirements, which you must meet before investing in the holding. Finally, all entries include a time entry for investments that occur during game play. Whenever you would invest after house creation, you allocate your resources as normal, but you must wait the allotted time before you can derive the benefits from the investment.

You must meet the requirements of each holding if it lists any. In addition, the holdings also include a time entry in case you would add the holding at a later time. Each Land Holding may have up to two Wealth investments.

ARTISAN

Requirement: Hall or larger defensive structure
Investment: 10 **Time:** 2d6 Months

Your house acquires the service of a master artisan.

Benefit: Choose one of the following benefits each time you invest in this holding.

- All weapons forged in your house count as castle-forged.
- Cover benefits from fortifications increase the Defense by +1.
- Once per month, add +1 to the results of your House Fortunes rolls.
- Other benefits may be available at the Narrator's discretion.

GUILDS

Requirement: Small town or larger community
Investment: 15 **Time:** 2d6 Months

A Guild is any organization that sees to the manufacturing and pricing of commodities, ensuring equal prices and a minimum expected quality of goods.

Benefit: All members of the household gain a 10% discount on any goods purchased in their own lands.

MARKETPLACE

Requirement: Small town or larger community
Investment: 10 **Time:** 1d6 Months

A Marketplace facilitates trade and draws merchants from communities to do business in your community.

Benefit: Each month, whenever your Household Fortune would increase your Wealth resource, increase it further by +1.

MINE

Requirement: Mountains or hills
Investment: 10 **Time:** 24+2d6 Months

You open one or more mines on your lands to generate additional income.

Benefit: Gain a +5 bonus on House Fortunes rolls.

PORT

Requirement: Coastline
Investment: 10 **Time:** 3d6 Months

Your port enables merchant ships to come to your lands to bring exotic cargo and goods to your community.

Benefit: Gain a +5 bonus on House Fortunes rolls. Also, if you have a Marketplace, whenever a House Fortune indicates you should increase your Wealth, add +1d6 instead of just +1.

SAGE

Requirement: Influence 20+
Investment: 10 **Time:** 1d6 Months

All houses can benefit from the wisdom and learning of a sage and even minor houses keep sages in their employ.

Benefit: Gain a +3 bonus on House Fortunes rolls. In addition, your family acquires the service of a sage. This character can be a player character or a Narrator character.

TEMPLE

Requirement: Hall or larger defensive structure or small town or larger community
Investment: 15 **Time:** 12+2d6 Months

You erect a temple to show your family's piety.

Benefit: Gain a +3 bonus on House Fortunes rolls. In addition, your family acquires the service of a priest from a religion present in the chronicle. This character can be a player character or a Narrator character.

Example

The group has a Wealth resource of 17, a modest foundation with which they can make improvements to their lands, recruit soldiers, and maintain what they have already until they expand their other resources. They hold onto the remaining 7 Wealth to be able to react to challenges later in the game.

STEP 5: DISTINCTIONS

In settings that resemble medieval Europe, a noble house will have a motto, arms, and other distinctive elements. Your house should be no less distinct, though the Narrator decides what the relevant customs are in the chronicle world. Online articles and books about heraldry across multiple cultures can serve as important inspirations.

In addition, look to your house's history and lands, because these will influence how the house describes itself. Houses related to a royal line might use a variation of its symbols, for example, while royalty may have the exclusive right to some symbols and colors.

Beyond visual symbolism, consider your house's culture. A house motto (see below) is one way to define its values. You can also decide that your house has specific customs around naming its heirs, how it arms certain troops, and more—just stay focused on the fact that these are distinctions that influence how the house presents itself to the world. Don't feel the need to define every little aspect of your house, but choose a small number of telling features that suggest a greater whole.

MOTTOS

Mottos are formal phrases and declarations that speak to a family's values, reflect on a significant moment of their history, or encapsulate their vision of the future. A motto is important to a family as it functions as a sort of rallying point, a mantra, so to speak, that can remind players of their characters' loyalties and the house's way of doing things.

A motto also represents the *minimum* work you should do regarding your house's distinctions. The motto need not formally exist in the chronicle world, but should at the very least act as an informal basis of unity for the house and its player characters. Of course, if the motto is a known custom in the chronicle, it may well be that the house fails to live up to it—something which should also be noted.

You should work together to come up with something that reflects your group's objectives in the game or to describe a historical event that shaped your house's current form. The **Sample Mottos** sidebar features real-world mottos (which you can borrow if no one's looking). If you're still lacking for a motto, various websites on the internet can provide many examples that are bound to fit whatever type of house you create.

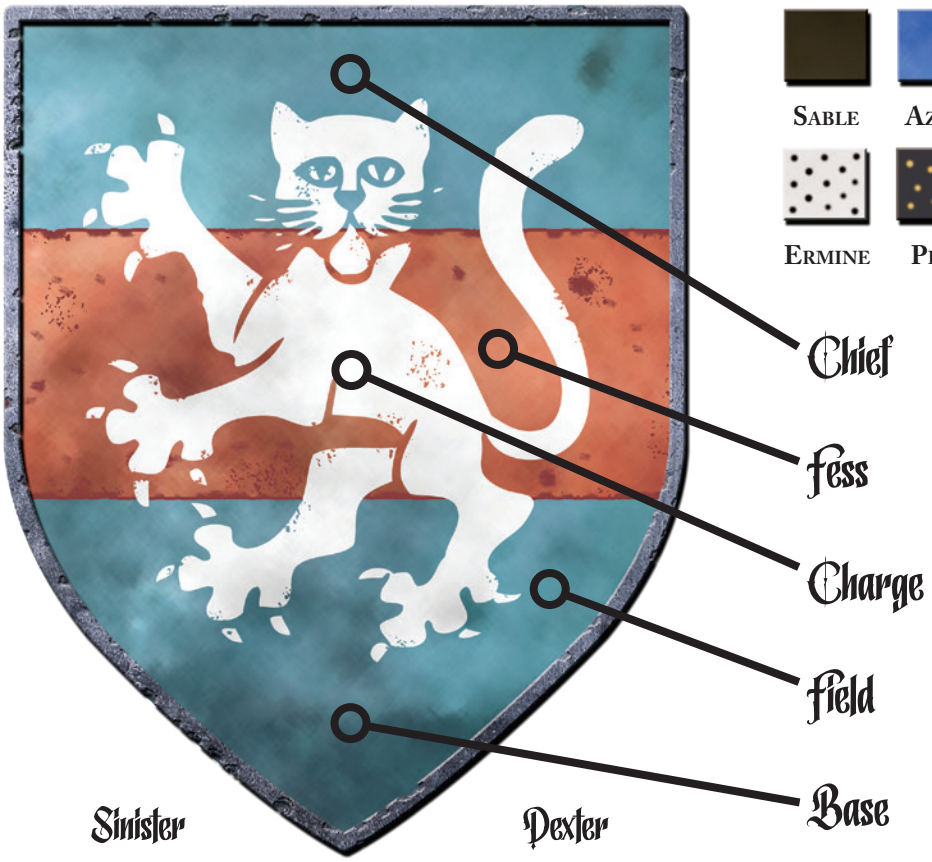
Example

The group thinks about their history and bats around a few ideas. Steve comes up with: "Truth Conquers All." It has a nice ring to it, so the group adopts it as their motto.

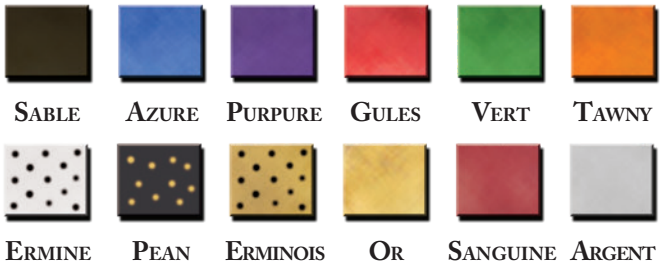
Sample Mottos

Neither rashly nor timidly
Boldly and honestly
By the watchful
Neither overjoyed, nor dejected
Courage against opposition
Always prepared
The stag at bay becomes a lion
I have fought and conquered
First and last in battle
By fidelity and valor

Anatomy of a Shield



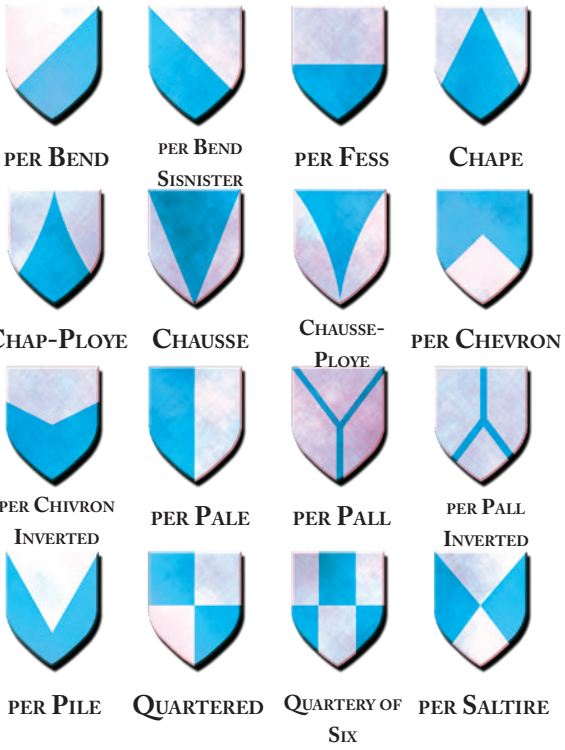
Colors



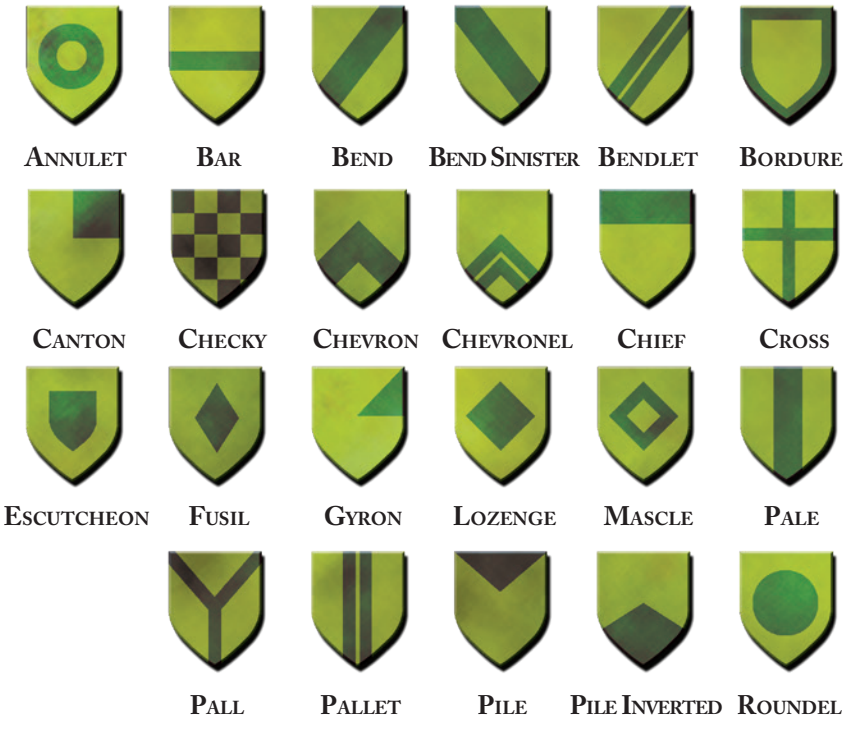
Heraldic Lines



Fields



Ordinaires



COAT OF ARMS

We also recommend that, at minimum, you come up with some visual distinction for your house. In chronicles similar to medieval Europe these would be formal coats of arms, which not only set the house apart but tell a story about its history and relationship with other houses. While this can be satisfying, even a simple drawing of symbols that represent the house can go a long way toward promoting a common feel and sense of purpose.

Example

The group looks at its history and lands and settles upon a coat of arms consisting of a mermaid (a reference to Siren Bay) between two towers. One tower is ruined, representing the elven ruin on their land, and the other is a tall and gilded representation of Skyseek Spire, representing a triumphant future.

STEP 6: THE HOUSEHOLD

The final step in house creation is describing the household, those individuals who constitute the most important family members and retainers that make up the noble house. Most important are the lord and lady, but there are also the heirs, the sage and priest (if you have them), master-at-arms, castellan, steward, and anyone else who is more than just a common servant. Some of the characters may be player characters under your group's control, while the rest are Narrator characters.

When defining these characters, the most important thing to worry about is their names, how they fit in with the rest of the family, what function they fulfill, and the most salient parts of their personal histories to shape their identities. Their statistics and abilities are relatively unimportant, and the Narrator may fill them in later as needed. Instead, focus on the narrative elements for these individuals, concocting a story that's both appropriate for the house's history and itss current state.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

In addition, part of this process is also the generation of your specific characters. Once you sketch out the family and servants, each player should build their own characters using the information presented in **Chapter 2** Character Creation. Generally, your choices about role and function within your group depend a great deal on your character's Status. Players who staked out their territory early to play scions of the house must invest their own starting Experience in Status and put Destiny Points in specific benefits to meet the requirements of their birth. Other characters have more flexibility, being able to tailor their characters in whatever way they wish, keeping in mind the sort of retainer they wish to play: page, ward, master of the hunt, guardsman, and so on.

LORD

The lord (or lady, dominus, or other chronicle-appropriate title) is the most important character your group will define. As this is your house, the particulars of the lord's life and his deeds are up to you. When defining this character, carefully consider your house's history and the political developments on the broader scale. Some questions you should answer follow:

- *How old is the lord?*
- *Did they participate in any wars?*
- *If so, for whom did they fight?*
- *Did they distinguish himself in these wars?*
- *What is their relationship with their liege?*
- *Do they have any extended family?*
- *What was their relationship with their parents?*
- *Does your lord have any rivals or enemies? Any strong allies?*
- *Did they have bastards?*
- *Did they have any moments of failure or shame?*
- *Did they have any moments of glory or greatness?*
- *What do they look like?*
- *Name one ambition.*
- *Describe one mannerism.*
- *Describe one virtue and one flaw.*

CONSORT

Often bound to the presiding house consort by marriage, the consort is still a valued advisor, instructor, and agent on behalf of the house. Some "consorts" are surviving parents, siblings or close friends of the lord instead of spouses or lovers, and of course would be given another name, such as "vizier" or "sworn sister." When creating the consort, consider the following questions:

- *Are they still alive?*
- *How old are they?*
- *From what house do they hail?*
- *Do they have any siblings?*
- *What is their relationship with their kin?*
- *Did they have any moments of failure or shame?*
- *Did they have any moments of glory or greatness?*
- *What do they look like?*
- *Name one ambition.*
- *Describe one mannerism.*
- *Describe one virtue and one flaw.*

HEIRS

- Most houses have at least one offspring, one heir to carry the line forward. If you invested your Influence in at least one heir, this character must be defined. In most cases, players take the roles of the house's heirs but not always—and usually not all of the heirs, either. For those siblings not played by the players, consider the following questions for each heir:

- *Are they still alive?*
- *What is their birth order?*
- *How old are they?*
- *Did they have any moments of failure or shame?*
- *Did they have any moments of glory or greatness?*
- *What do they look like?*
- *Name one ambition.*
- *Describe one mannerism.*
- *Describe one virtue and one flaw.*

RETAINERS, SERVANTS, AND HOUSEHOLD KNIGHTS

The remaining characters in your house can be defined, or they can be left vague for the Narrator to establish in the unfolding story. Generally, you should at least name the most important servants in your house, answering many of the same questions and filling in the details as with the other characters. Again, some of these characters may be played by the players, and so more detail arises during the standard methods of character creation. A list of common retainers follows.

HOUSE MARGOTH OF GRAYLOCK

Liege Lord: The Aglam Emperor

DEFENSE	30

Graylock (Hall, 20), Skyseek Spire (Tower, 10)

INFLUENCE	35

Heir (20), Daughter (10), Expendable 5

LANDS	36

Forested Coastline with Hamlet (19), Woodland (6), Woodland (6), Stream (1), Grassland with Ruin (4)

LAW	18

House Fortunes –5

POPULATION	19

House Fortunes +0

POWER	17

Household Guard: (Trained Garrison; 5 Power); Easy (3) Discipline at home or Challenging (9) away; Awareness 3, Endurance 3, Fighting 3

Commoner Foot: (Green Peasant Levies; 1 Power; Population –2); Formidable (12) Discipline; Awareness 3

Fleet: (Green Warship; 11 Power); Formidable (12) Discipline; Awareness 3

WEALTH	17

Sage (10, +3 House Fortunes)

TOTAL HOUSE FORTUNE MODIFIER	-2

FAMILY AND RETAINERS (NARRATOR CHARACTER)

Lord Saith Margoth, Lord of Graylock, a middle-aged man of 50 years

Vice-Lord Kethring of Graylock, the lord's spouse, a man of 44 years

Sage Pyrad, from the East (deliberately left vague at the Narrator's request)

Dame Vanari, household knight and master-of-arms, a middle-aged woman of 42 years

CASTELLAN

An individual who oversees the defense of the house. Generally, a castellan only serves when the lord is away or otherwise unable to see to this task himself.

CLERIC

Invested members of a religion present in the chronicle, who act as spiritual advisors and mentors. You only have clergy if you invested in a temple.

STEWARD

An individual who cares for the family's financial concerns. Often, a sage handles this business.

SAGE

Instructor, advisor, and healer, the sage is a valued member of the lord's court. You only have a sage if you invest in one.

MASTER AT ARMS

The individual who oversees the household guard. Generally, this role exists only if your family invested in a Garrison. The master commands any household guards and your garrison. A master-at-arms also often instructs members of the household in fighting and leads weapons drills.

MASTER OF HORSE

The individual in charge of the care, training, and acquisition of steeds. This master commands a number of stable boys and grooms.

MASTER OF THE HUNT

An individual who oversees hunting expeditions. Sometimes filled by the same individual who maintains the hounds.

KENNEL MASTER

The person who trains, cares for, and feeds the hounds.

VASSAL KNIGHTS

Swords sworn to the lord. These may be landless warriors, but they can also be landed knights who have come to serve the lord and advance their own renown.

OTHERS

Servants, blacksmiths, heralds, pages, squires, cooks, scullions, messengers, scouts, wards, children of servants, and more, round out your household. Most of these characters are "invisible" and work behind the scenes to ensure your household functions.

The House in Action

A created house is not frozen in time; rather, the process of house creation is a moment in its life, defining it as it stands at the beginning of your chronicle. As you undertake adventures, navigate the perils of intrigue, fight battles, wage wars, and more, your house will blossom and grow or wither and die. Your actions and choices determine the fate of your house. If you exploit its resources, wringing your holdings for every resource to increase your Wealth or Power, your lands will suffer and eventually die. On the other hand, if you have care and cultivate your holdings, you can grow them through alliances, battles you win, and the acclaim your family wins.

However, your house is a vehicle to creating adventures, a place to call home, and the inspiration that drives you to reach for greatness, but it should not define the play experience, for *Sword Chronicle* is a game about characters and not governance and shrewd accounting of one's resources. Thus, most of the house rules that follow are necessary abstractions designed to reflect change and to create consequences and rewards for your actions.

MONTHS AND ACTIONS

Time is measured for the purposes of using your house in months. Each month is about four weeks long, and during that time, your house has one House Fortune roll and one House Action.

HOUSE FORTUNES

A House Fortune is an event that affects your lands, either improving or diminishing one or more resources, revealing a complication or disaster or awarding a greater turn of events or a boon. A house must roll for a House Fortune at least one month of every three, but no more than one House Fortune roll can take place for each month. You must decide at the start of each month. If you choose not to roll for a House Fortune, you may instead increase any resource by 1. Otherwise, the steward or acting steward must roll a Status test (bonus dice from Stewardship apply, plus modifiers from holdings) and compare the result to the **House Fortunes** table, which described the nature of the fortune. The Narrator determines the specific outcomes of these fortunes, which will manifest themselves sometime during the four weeks of the month. For details on these results, consult **Chapter 11: The Narrator**.

ADVENTURING

The easiest way to improve a house's holdings is through adventuring. By undertaking missions, engaging in intrigues, and cementing alliances, you and your fellows earn rewards. Experience is most common, and it provides an immediate benefit of being able to improve your personal character. Coin, similarly, provides increased spending power, but of the three, Glory is the one that improves your house the most.

DONATING COIN

For every 200 gold pieces you donate, you can increase your house's Wealth resource by +1.

DONATING GLORY

Unlike Experience, which is given to individual characters, Glory is awarded to the group. Glory serves two purposes. First, each point of Glory spent grants +1B on a single test. Bonus dice gained from spent Glory can exceed the limits on bonus dice. Second, your group can donate Glory earned to their house, increasing any resource by 1 for each point of Glory invested.

HOUSE ACTIONS

Once per turn, the lord may take a single action. The possible actions listed here describe the most basic choices. You can expand these as desired to provide even more detail to your house and lands.

MANAGE RESOURCES

One of the easiest actions a lord can take is the management of resources. Essentially, managing resources allows you to convert one type of resource for another, such as investing Wealth into Law or investing Lands into Defense. There are limitations on what resources can be converted, as shown on the **Resource Management** table. During a turn, you can only convert resources once, but you can do so of any amount. If a reduction results in an inability to pay for an investment, you lose that investment. If you're desperate, you can convert two resources, but the exchange is worse. Such exchanges are called "rushed" and the conversion is also shown on the **Resource Management** table.

House Fortunes

Test Result	House Fortune	Test Result	House Fortune
2 or less	Disaster	17	Decline
3	Curse	18	Blessing
4	Decline	19	Curse
5	Disaster	20	Blessing
6	Growth	21–22	Growth
7	Decline	23	Curse
8	Growth	24–25	Growth
9	Curse	26–27	Blessing
10	Decline	28	Boon
11	Growth	29	Curse
12	Boon	30	Blessing
13	Decline	31–34	Growth
14	Blessing	35	Blessing
15	Growth	36	Boon
16	Curse	37–41	Growth
		42 or more	Boon

Example

House Margoth decides to exchange Influence for Law. They reduce their Influence by 5 to increase their Law by 5. However, brigands are sweeping through their lands, so they also decide to round up commoners to fill out their troops on the same turn. Since this is a rushed exchange, they increase their Power by 1 for every 2 points they reduce their Population.

BEGIN PROJECTS

Another way to improve your holdings and resources is to begin a project, an investment of existing resources into an improvement, such as a castle, a guild, or even just the acquisition of more domains. *Sword Chronicle* hides the income and expenditures inside the resources, so the only funding you need to supply is through the resource that governs the investment and the time to complete the project. Once you begin a project (such as building a castle), initiating the project starts on the month, and you make progress each month that follows. You must invest the requisite amount of resources into the project and keep them invested even though you derive no benefit until the project is complete. When your house begins a project, it counts as your house's action for the month.

WAGE WAR

Most conflicts are skirmishes, localized engagements between two houses whose dispute proves impossible to solve through peaceful means. Full details on mass combat rules can be found in **Chapter 10: Warfare**, including what results from a successful or failed skirmish or battle, as well as how those results affect your house and its resources.

HOST TOURNAMENT

Ranging from small, localized affairs to larger events filled with pomp and ceremony and overseen by the king, the tournament is a spectacle, an opportunity to win glory, to exchange news, forge alliances, engage in intrigues, and more. The tournament is a valuable event for the knights who participate, giving them the chance to win fame and gold. More importantly, though, it's a great event for the sponsoring family, as a tournament helps establish one's presence as a significant house, gain the attention of the great houses, advertise daughters and sons for good marriages, and, above all, grow the house's renown and magnanimity.

SIZE

Generally, there are three sizes of tournaments. The tournament's size determines the sorts of participants it will draw, and the value of the prize offered. Larger tournaments are far more expensive than the smaller ones but can also win more acclaim and generate more Influence.

Resource Management

Resource	Exchange	Rate	Rushed
Defense	—	—	—
Influence	Law	1:1	2:1
Lands	Defense	1:1	2:1
Law	—	—	—
Population	Power	1:1	2:1
Power	Influence, Law, Population	1:1	2:1
Wealth	All	2:1	3:1

LOCAL

A local tournament usually costs 2 Wealth to sponsor and 2 Wealth as the prize. You can substitute the hand of a lesser daughter for the prize if desired. Local tournaments are small, drawing no more than 100 knights from lands around your own and wandering knights in the area. Most local tournaments feature a joust and may include a grand melee and archery contest. Each additional contest beyond the joust requires an additional loss of 1 Wealth.

REGIONAL

A regional tournament encompasses the entire realm and may draw upwards of 500 knights. Putting on a regional contest costs 5 Wealth plus 2 Wealth for each contest featured at the tournament.

GRAND

A grand tournament is an enormous event that encompasses much if not all of a great kingdom, if not multiple kingdoms, such as the historical Field of the Cloth of Gold. These events draw thousands of knights and their entourages and are a great place to encounter the lords and ladies of the most powerful houses. A grand tournament costs 10 Wealth, plus an additional 5 Wealth as a prize for each contest featured.

INFLUENCE

A tournament offers a great deal to the sponsor house, even though it can break the house's finances to host one of significance. Once the tournament is finished, prizes awarded, and knights, ladies, and the rest depart, the sponsoring house gains +1d6 Influence, +0 for local tournaments, +3 for regional tournaments, and +6 for grand tournaments.

Chapter 6: Sorcery



In the low-fantasy milieu of *Sword Chronicle*, magic is rare and wondrous. Witches dwelling in forests, swamps, and highlands provide charms of good luck, herbal treatments for every ailment, and malevolent hexes. Astrologers gaze upward at the vault of the Heavens, reading destiny's course as plotted in the patterns of the planets and stars. Alchemists combine strange ingredients in smoky laboratories, concocting arcane potions and transmutations for nobles and others who can afford their prices. Spirit-whisperers dwell at the fringes of tribal societies, feared even by the fiercest savages, and blood sorcerers tap into darkest sacrifice for the power to be found in the blood—and its shedding.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF MAGIC

Sword Chronicle sorcery is not the overt, flashy spells of many roleplaying systems. It is a "lower" sort of magic, without the pyrotechnics, earth-shaking manifestations, or epic altering of reality of "high-magic" fantasy systems. In fact, many sorcerous Arts provide effects that could, to the skeptical eye, be regarded as coincidence, chicanery, or some combination of the two. Indeed, the price of many of these Arts is so high that sorcerers who openly proclaim themselves as such often resort to sleight of hand, tricks of chemistry, and taking credit for things that are genuinely coincidental, in order to avoid paying.

It should be noted that throughout this chapter, the terms "magic" and "sorcery" are used interchangeably (as are magics and sorceries, and magician and sorcerer). In game terms, they are the same things, even if people may perceive them differently.

Sorcery Essentials

Sorcery is the ability to harness Destiny to change or perceive the world in ways beyond what most mortals can accomplish. A character must have certain qualities to wield sorcery, learn sorcerous Arts and their various Works, usually in the context of a particular Tradition. There is also always a price to pay for sorcery, although it is not always the sorcerer who pays it.

QUALITIES

Sorcerous qualities are detailed in **Chapter 4** and some of them grant access to sorcerous Arts and their Works. Other sorcerous qualities enhance or otherwise modify a character's use of sorcery. See the previous chapter for details and descriptions, but particular qualities granting access to sorcerous Arts include: Blood of the Far Isles, Blood of the Sorcerers, and Sorcerous Initiation. Characters without a quality that explicitly grants them access to sorcerous Arts and Works cannot use sorcery.

ARTS AND WORKS

Sorcery is divided into particular Arts, grouped by their intended accomplishments. These are:

- **The Art of Benediction** which invests people, places, and things with magical blessings and power.

- **The Art of Divination** which draws aside the veils of space and time to grant sorcerers knowledge.
- **The Art of Malediction** which brings ill-fortune and harm to one's enemies.
- **The Art of Warding** which turns away unwanted magic and guards against sorcery.

Within each Art are magical *Works*, particular things an Art may accomplish through *Workings*, Rituals and Spells. Each Art has four or more Works, some of which may be applied in multiple ways. These Works are the magician's tools, their sword and shield—or their medicines and poisons, if you prefer.

INITIATION

A sorcerer must be initiated into an Art in order to learn and use its Works, and sorcerers use the term "initiate" to refer to anyone who has achieved this. A magician who has learned all of an Art's Works is sometimes referred to as an "adept" of that Art, while a sorcerer who is initiated into three or more Arts, knowing two or more Works from each, may be regarded as a true master. Different Traditions of sorcery (following) may use different terms or expressions for these degrees.



TRADITIONS

While every sorcerer wields similar Arts, they do not all do so in quite the same way: The curse of a woods-witch is worked with a lock of hair and dried herbs cast into a fire under the dark of the moon, while the maledictions of an astrologer might involve a complex horoscope and symbols intensifying the energies of certain planetary alignments to bring about ill-fortune. The effects may well be the same, but their magical Traditions differ.

Tradition is typically something passed from teacher to student in the sorcerous Arts but, even in Traditions that make use of the written word, there is considerable room for improvisation and individual style, and no two sorcerers are truly the same. Narrators may decide on the significant sorcerous Traditions in their own *Sword Chronicle*, but some common examples include the following:

- **Alchemy** is the study of the hidden qualities of materials and how these can be unlocked, combined, and transformed.
- **Astrology** studies the heavens and the movements and positions of the stars and planets, and their influence over Destiny.
- **Diabolism** is sinister sorcery involving blood-sacrifice and pacts with evil spirits in exchange for forbidden knowledge of the Arts and their Works.
- **Rune-craft** and other naming- or letter-magic focuses on written symbols and their deeper meanings to speak to creation in a language of power.
- **Thaumaturgy** draws upon the blessings and gifts of the divine to bless and to curse and to otherwise work wonders. It's often tied to the role of the clergy, but priests are not necessarily wonder-workers, and those thaumaturgists who are not priests may be seen as blasphemers or heretics.
- **Witchery** is the wort-cunning and folk-magic of the common people, both respected and feared. Because it is often the most low-Status form of sorcery, nobles and priests may look to stamp out witchery as a threat to their power.

RESONANCES

Sorcery draws upon worldly things, whether naturally occurring or crafted, to forge a connection between the powers of magic and the physical world. Like the tallest tree in the field that pulls the lightning's arc to earth, these items allow the magician to call upon occult powers and harness them.

Each Tradition has its own resonances. These aren't necessarily things: they can be people, times, places, events, or even emotions and states of being. Each Spell or Ritual has specific resonances noted in its description and there are some common resonances that apply to all of the Works of an Art. Generally, the more elaborate and powerful the Working, the rarer (and costly) the resonances required. Sorcerers often have extensive collections of rarities, oddities, and valuables just for this reason.

PRICE

It is a maxim of magicians: "All magic has its price." At its core, this price is paid with Destiny: either by the expenditure of general Destiny

points, or specialized Sorcery points. Each Work requires payment in a particular way, detailed in their descriptions. Some Works offer ways for others to pay their price. This is particularly for Works that must burn Destiny—it is, after all, far better to get another to pay this price whenever possible, particularly if the sorcery is being performed on their behalf…or at their expense.

SORCERY POINTS

A number of Benefits can grant a character Sorcery points. These function like Destiny points except they are solely useful for Works of magic. Characters can spend or even burn Sorcery points whenever a Destiny point is called for as the price for a Working unless the Work's description specifically says otherwise.

However, Sorcery points are not useful for anything else, and cannot be spent or burned as Destiny points. More of a sorcerer's Destiny is often tied-up in their Arts, which are their primary way of working their will in the world.

Sorcery Statistics

As with combat and intrigue, certain abilities are important to the Works of sorcery. They are used for various sorcerous tests and from them you derive your Sorcery Defense.

CUNNING

Cleverness and quick-thinking are often vital traits for a sorcerer. A sharp mind can also help defend against sorcery, as well.

- Add your Cunning rank to your Sorcery Defense.

ENDURANCE

Sorcery can take its toll on the body, and those who are physically fit can often shake off the effects of some kinds of sorcery.

- Add your Endurance rank to your Sorcery Defense.

KNOWLEDGE

Even the most rural hedge-witchery requires a great deal of Knowledge and the study of the occult Arts only increases a sorcerer's store of Knowledge.

- Knowledge is the key ability for studying and learning new Works.

WILL

A strong will serves the sorcerer well, for often it requires intense focus and dedication to master the Occult Arts. Targets of sorcery also find a strong will a boon in defending against it.

- Add your Will rank to your Sorcery Defense.

SORCERY DEFENSE

Though certainly a quite potent force, magic is not an all-powerful one. Living beings can resist the Works of sorcery, perhaps through the same spark that feeds those powers. This resistance is based both on quickness of mind and on strength of body and spirit. Sorcery Defense is figured as follows:

Sorcery Defense = Cunning + Endurance + Will + Averting Bonus (from equipment or benefits)

AVERTING BONUSES

Certain conditions grant a character additional defense against sorcerous influence. Averting bonuses do not stack; only the best Averting bonus available applies in any given situation.

For every two Sorcerous Benefits they have (or at the Narrator's option, other Benefits of occult power), a character gains a permanent +1 Averting bonus. Beings who wield supernatural power tend to develop strong resistance to the sorcery of others.

FOLK-WARDS

Those who know to beware of sorcery can use various prayers or folk remedies to protect themselves, like making a sign against the evil eye, sprinkling salt, or similar customs, gaining a +1 Averting bonus, commonly known as a "folk-ward" (somewhat disdainfully amongst sorcerers). This is a Challenging (9) Knowledge test. Each degree of success on the test grants the Averting bonus for one minute.

AVERT MAGIC	GREATER ACTION

You steel your will against a magical attack, calling on your own resolves, your faith, or upon cultural invocations or gestures against malign sorcery to protect you. Roll a Will test (bonus dice from the Dedication specialty apply) and add any base Averting bonus you have to your test result. The result replaces your Sorcery Defense against the first use of sorcery against you in this scene.

HEALTH & COMPOSURE

Unlike combat and intrigue, sorcery does not have its own measure of its influence on an individual. Some Works inflict Damage, while others exert Influence. Thus sorcery uses, and potentially affects, both Health and Composure.

SENSITIVES & SEERS

Some characters are naturally more sensitive to sorcery and the use of magic. Sorcerers tend to refer to these characters as "sensitives" and "seers."

- *Sensitives* have an Empathy specialty in Awareness of 3B or higher. Such characters are sensitive to the subtle emanations of a sorcerer's magical will. Sensitives may use the Notice Magic action (following) as well as playing a special role in the Sorcerer's Aura Drawback (see **Chapter 4**).
- *Seers* have the Prophetic Dreams Benefit (see **Chapter 4**). Because of the Destiny-manipulation that is the essence of all magical use in *Sword Chronicle*, seers frequently have dreams about sorcerers and their Works. They do not automatically recognize them as such, however, unless those sorcerers possess the Sorcerer's Aura Drawback. Seers can also use the Notice Magic action, regardless of their Awareness specialties (their Benefit is sufficient).

NOTICE MAGIC	FREE ACTION

You can sense the presence and use of magic. When someone in an area you can see takes a Spellcasting action, you notice something strange on a successful Very Hard (18) Awareness (Empathy) test. This manifests as a sudden chill, a rush of adrenaline, goosebumps, the sensation of someone "walking over your grave," or other similar sensations. Characters don't automatically know that this is caused by magic, but with experience in such things, sensitives often come to trust what they feel. Noticing magic already present in an area, on an object, or on a person requires a Heroic (21) Awareness (Empathy) test. You cannot, however, detect the fact that someone simply has magical abilities, unless they use them.

Sorcery Structure

The structure of sorcery breaks down into two types: Rituals, potent Works of magic requiring time, effort, and resources, and Spells, fairly quick and easy Workings sorcerers can do immediately. A given Working specifies if it is a Ritual or a Spell.

RITUAL-WORKING

Rituals are great Works of occult power requiring immense concentration, time to enact, and often resources of a rare, costly, or sacrificial nature. Rituals evoke great power, though the nature of that power and how it is harnessed and made manifest varies for each Tradition.

Rituals are always performed as dramatic scenes in which sorcerers lay out their ritual space and begin the undertaking of calling up the power necessary for the Ritual's success.

Rituals differ from most actions in the *Sword Chronicle* in that they require multiple Ability tests to perform. Each Ritual has a minimum of three steps, with an Ability test at each step. The three basic steps are *Alignment*, *Invocation*, and *Unleashing*. Some Rituals add additional intervening steps.

Each such step has a result for success or failure. Success at minimum allows the Ritual to proceed, with greater degrees of success improving later parts of the rite. Failure often results in the Ritual's ruination, or make subsequent steps more difficult. Failure with certain powerful rites can result in backlashes of magical power upon the sorcerer, any others who are present, and even the surrounding area!

STEP 1: ALIGNMENT

Alignment is the act of preparing a space for the performance of the Ritual. This usually includes the introduction of various symbols to better align the space with the powers to be raised; hence the name "alignment." Each Ritual has a particular test Ability, Difficulty, and base time.

This process can be rushed through or done methodically. For every 25% reduction in the Alignment time, increase the Difficulty by +3. For every 50% increase in the Alignment time, reduce the Difficulty by 3. Thus, rushing through and doing the preparation in half the time increases the Difficulty by +6, while taking double the normal time decreases it by -6.

Success on this test prepares the area for the performance of magic within it. For each degree of success past the first, the sorcerer gains a bonus die to use in other tests during the Ritual. Once a bonus die is used, it is gone.

Failure with this process does not prevent the accomplishment of the Ritual, but does impose a -1D to all subsequent tests to perform it; critical failure on Alignment imposes a -2D to subsequent Ritual tests.

STEP 2: INVOCATION

This is where the "heavy lifting" of a Ritual occurs. Invocation builds the magical power of the Ritual and focuses it through the performance of the Ritual itself, whether that takes the form of chanting, symbolic gestures, the use of ritual ingredients, the crafting of some kind of handiwork, or nearly any other action that can be imbued with occult significance.

Like Alignment, Invocation has a test Ability, Difficulty, a base time. The time to perform this step may be increased or decreased, as with Alignment, previously, although the modifiers for this test can never be altered by more than +6 or -6 (half or double the base time).

At the end of the required time, the sorcerer must roll the Ability test at the Difficulty for the Invocation. The results of success and failure differ with each Ritual, and are noted in each for its specific Invocation step.

STEP 3: UNLEASHING

The final step in any Ritual, Unleashing takes the power raised through the Ritual and concentrates it into a focused manifestation, unleashing it into the world. This moment is critical, and can make or break the success of the rite.

Unleashing is always a Will test with a Difficulty determined by the Ritual in question. Unleashing takes a mere moment, effectively a Greater Action. The effects of success or failure depend upon the Ritual in question, although failing an act of Unleashing inevitably has dire consequences.

RITUAL ASSISTANCE

Sorcerers who have assistance performing a Ritual can ofttimes work greater magics than they might on their own. A sorcerer may have one assistant in a Ritual for each bonus die they have in the Will (Coordinate) specialty.

The sorcerer leading the Ritual makes a Formidable (12) Will (Coordinate) test in-between the Alignment and Invocation steps of the Ritual. Multiply the degree of success by the sorcerer's Will rank; the result is a pool of bonus points that may be added to any test total during the Ritual, as the sorcerer desires, usually to bump results upwards out of failure ranges or to gain additional degrees of success. Once a point is spent from the pool it is no longer available.

Each assistant then rolls an Ability, using the same Ability as the Ritual's Invocation test. The Difficulty is Routine (6) if the assistant knows the Work being used, Challenging (9) if the assistant only knows the Art of the Working, Formidable (12) if they are a sorcerer with no knowledge of the Art of the Ritual, or a Hard (15) if the assistant is a non-sorcerer.

Success adds half the assistant's rank in the test Ability to the pool of bonus points from the sorcerer's Will test. Failure adds nothing. Critical failure negatively impacts the Ritual, imposing a -1D penalty at some point in the process. The Narrator chooses the where this occurs, but once the penalty has been applied, it is gone.

INTERRUPTIONS AND DISRUPTION

It is dangerous to interrupt a sorcerer at work, and interruptions can result in the disruption and failure of the Ritual. In the event of an interruption, the sorcerer (and anyone involved in the Ritual) must make a Will (Dedication) test, with a Difficulty based on the severity of the disruption. If the test succeeds, they may continue with the Ritual. If it fails, that character is no longer involved in the Ritual. This means assistants are no longer helping or the sorcerer is no longer performing the Ritual and it is disrupted. The Narrator may also rule that certain interruptions automatically disrupt a Ritual, such as anything that destroys the Ritual's subject, focus, or working area, or the renders the sorcerer incapacitated.

When a Ritual is disrupted, the sorcerer immediately rolls the Ability test for the current step, treating success as a failure, and any degree of failure as one degree worse. This means that Ritual is spoiled, at the least, and may have more severe consequences, depending on the degree of failure.

SPELL-WORKING

In contrast to involved Rituals, Spells are simple Works of magic, more quickly evoked, but lesser in power and scope. Spells enact magic that is more immediate, and does not require extensive preparations or ritual performances, only the Spellcasting Action.

SPELLCASTING	GREATER ACTION

Unlike Rituals, the casting of a Spell is a simpler, more immediate process. Spellcasting is a standard test using a Greater action (in scales where such things matter) with an Ability and Difficulty determined by the Spell being cast. Each Spell includes these details, as well as the results of success and failure for the Spellcasting test.

PAYING THE PRICE

Once a sorcerer has successfully performed a magical Working, they must pay the Price for their interference with Destiny. Some magics are so minor there is no effective Price, other than the time, effort, and risk of the Working, so its Price is listed as "None." For others, the Price is one of the three types of uses of Destiny Points: spent, burned, or invested (see Destiny Points in **Chapter 4**). A sorcerer can also substitute a Sorcery Point to pay magic's price (see Sorcery Points previous under Price).

Spent and burned Destiny Points are expended normally, as detailed in **Chapter 4**. A Destiny Point invested in a Working remains tied to it, essentially sustaining that magic in the world. Once the Working is complete and no more, the sorcerer regains the invested Destiny Point.

If a sorcerer does not have sufficient Destiny Points to pay the price of a Work of magic (or, for some reason, does not wish to expend them), they have two options: First, the Working simply fails, and with the normal results of failure, regardless of the tests results. Second, the sorcerer can choose to accept an immediate Flaw from **Chapter 4** as the Price of the magic. The Narrator chooses the Flaw based on the sorcerer's Tradition and the Working. For magic requiring a spent Destiny Point, the Flaw lasts until the sorcerer spends a Destiny Point to remove it. For magic requiring a burned Destiny Point, the Flaw lasts until the sorcerer burns a Destiny Point to remove it.

The powers of fate will have their due for an act of magic, no matter how it is paid.



Acquiring Sorcerous Arts

Characters gain sorcerous Arts during creation through investment in a Benefit, which may or may not also provide access to one or more of the Art's Works or Sorcery Points. See **Chapter 4** for details on Sorcerous Benefits.

Acquiring a new Art during play also takes investment in a Benefit, but there is usually a story requirement to gain this knowledge as well. The precise nature of this should be tailored to the *Sword Chronicle* in question—the strange bloodlines that awaken occult magic in their scions in one campaign might not suit the one where such occult Tradition is the result of sacrifice, ordeal, and transformative enlightenment. Narrators should establish at the outset of their campaigns how characters learn new sorcerous Arts, though they need not necessarily reveal this to the players. Some ideas include the following:

MENTORS

Sorcery may be passed from master to apprentice. Finding such a mentor may be an extended endeavor, as most sorcerers are wise enough to hide from the world in general. Perhaps sorcerers attend well-regulated, formalized colleges of sorcery or seek out reclusive, misanthropic masters, intent on proving themselves worthy to serve as their apprentices.



SORCEROUS LIBRARIES

Some campaign settings may include grand libraries filled with tomes of occult lore for those brave enough to plumb their depths.

MAGICAL BLOODLINES

The Arts are passed through the blood. Those with "purer" bloodlines awaken their sorcerous talents faster and earlier, but even those with the slightest trace may have one or two gifts awaiting cultivation. These might be ancient lineages of sorcerer-kings, or secretive and strange families who keep their heritage hidden.

ACCIDENTS OF BIRTH

No one knows how or why, but certain individuals manifest magical gifts, without apparent rhyme or reason. There may be some outward sign of potential: omens or portents at birth, a strange mark on the skin that appears when their awakening is nigh, or the like.

TRAUMATIC ENLIGHTENMENT

What is madness and death for some awakens power in others. Sorcery comes to those strange few who survive terrible accidents, illnesses, and tragedies: the goodwife who nearly drowned in the flood; the courtier who suffered a terrible wasting sickness, yet miraculously survived; the old hag on the village's periphery who faced starvation last winter, but emerged when spring's first buds blossomed. All of these come out the other side of their ordeal with wisdom, strength... and powers waiting to be tapped.

BLESSINGS OF GODS & SPIRITS

The touch of the Otherworldly reaches into the recesses of the human soul, awakening power to be wielded for good or ill. These higher Powers grant the gifts of the Arts for inscrutable reasons of their own.

CONTACT WITH HORRORS

Similar to Traumatic Enlightenment, but distinctly occult. There are horrors beyond the ken of humanity. Most who come into contact with them simply go mad, but a rare few distill that knowledge, becoming vessels of power.

ANCIENT LORE

Faded runes on a cavern wall. Ruins that speak of secrets and powers now unknown. An ancient puzzle-box that unlocks occult puissance within those who can resolve its riddle. A tome of blasphemous rites and revelations. Any or all of these elements might figure prominently in a campaign where magic comes as part of uncovering ancient Tradition.

LEARNING WORKS

Once a sorcerer has access to an Art, the process of learning more of its Works usually begins. Learning a new Art takes three to four months of study, assuming the luxury of being able to devote all of one's time and effort toward the education. Most, however, do not have this luxury, and must stretch this time out much longer periods.

Unlike initiating into new Arts, learning its Works does not require investing in a Benefit, although there are Benefits that grant characters additional Works. Learning a new Work requires three things: access to the Work, time spent studying and experimenting, and a successful Knowledge test. Access to the Work usually comes from the same sources as Sorcerous Arts: mentors who already practice the Work, or books of Tradition wherein that Work's secrets are recorded, and so forth.

Each Work in the **Sorcerous Workings** section (following) lists a time and a Difficulty to learn it. Once you have invested the time required, you can make a Knowledge test against the Work's Learning Difficulty. If you are learning from a mentor, add half of your mentor's Knowledge rank (rounded up) to your test result.

- On a success, you learn the Work and may add it the list of those available to you.
- On a failure, you may continue to study the Technique, investing the learning time again, and reducing the Difficulty of your next Knowledge test by 3.
- On a critical failure, the source of lore about the Work is beyond your understanding. You need to find a new source for the Work—a new tome, mentor, or guide—and start over in order to learn it.

Sorcerous Arts and Works

This section details each of the four main sorcerous Arts in *Sword Chronicle* along with their most common Works and how they function in game terms. This is not the whole of sorcery—a vast and mysterious power—but the essentials known to most sorcerers.

The section for each Art starts with a brief description of it, its tools, and the benefits of being an initiate of that Art. It is followed by descriptions of each of the Art's Works and their effects. The following is a rundown of the game mechanics of the Works as presented.

- **Name:** The Work's name is the one most commonly used, although Narrators are encouraged to give each Working multiple names appropriate for their chronicles, especially in settings that have a long history of magic use.
- **Type:** A Work's type indicates whether it is performed as a Ritual, Spell, or both.
- **Test:** Each Work uses a specific Ability, denoted in its test notation; this is the Ability tested for Spells, or used in the Invocation stage of a Ritual.
- **Learning:** This is the time investment to learn the Work, along with the Knowledge test Difficulty. See **Learning Works**, previously, for details.
- **Price:** This is the Destiny Point (or Sorcery Point) price paid to perform the Work, usually listed as Spent, Burned, or Invested.
- **Resonances:** A Work may require specific resonances, physical items, places, times, situations, or other necessities to make the magic happen. These are listed here, separately for the Ritual and Spell versions of the Work, if they differ.

Finally, the description of the Work details not only what is done to perform the magic, but also its effects, both narrative and in game terms.

Art of Benediction

The Art of Benediction prepares a person, place, or thing for some magical Working, aligning them with the powers they are about to receive. Benediction Works often involve religious or spiritual overtones—even faiths that decry the use of "vile sorcery" sometimes practice this Art.

Tools: The tools of the Art of Benediction usually include censers and rare incenses, feather fans used to brush down a target, and holy water (or other sacred oils and liquids) used to anoint or cleanse the target.

Initiation: Those versed in the Art of Benediction perform all magics with an eye toward the proper preparation and purification of place and personage. Add your Persuasion rank to the Alignment test results for all Works of Ritual sorcery if you possess access to the Art of Benediction through a Sorcerous Benefit.

Attunement

Type: Spell **Test:** Persuasion
Learning: 3 weeks **Challenging (9)** **Price:** Spent
Resonances: Specially prepared ointments and unguents (30 silver drachmas)

Through the Work of Attunement, a willing individual may be made more receptive to a specific kind of magic. By smearing the target's head, hands, and the chest over the heart with the properly prepared ointments, uttering invocatory words meant to align the target's spirit, magics of a specific sort function in a superior way on the target. This affects only a single individual whom the sorcerer must touch (including the sorcerer themselves). The Difficulty of the Working the Spell is based on the magic to which the target is being attuned. A target may be attuned to a single specific Work, or all the Workings of a given Art.

Attunement Difficulty

Type	Difficulty
Work	Challenging (9)
Art	Hard (15)

If successful, the Spell functions for one week. This time may be increased by increasing the Difficulty by +3 per additional week, to a maximum of one month (for +12 to the Difficulty).

The effects depend on how many degrees of success are gained in the Spellcasting action.

- **Critical Failure:** Something goes terribly wrong with the attunement and the target's spirit is wracked with a terrible curse. The subject gains a new drawback chosen by the Narrator for the duration of the Spell. It always manifests in ways thematic to the magic and Tradition of the intended attunement.
- **Marginal Failure:** The attunement has no effect, and cannot be attempted again for a full cycle of the moon.

- **Success, One Degree:** Use of magics to which the target is attuned gain a +1 bonus to Spellcasting or Unleashing actions.
- **Success, Two Degrees:** Use of magics to which the target is attuned gain a +2 bonus to Spellcasting or Unleashing actions.
- **Success, Three Degrees:** Use of magics to which the target is attuned gain a +1B bonus to Spellcasting or Unleashing actions.
- **Success, Four Degrees:** Use of magics to which the target is attuned gain a +1D bonus to Spellcasting or Unleashing actions.

Blessing

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Persuasion
Learning: 8 weeks Hard (15)
Price: Spent (Spell or Ritual of Convocational Blessing, Sorcerer) or Burned (Ritual of Anointing, Sorcerer)
Resonances: None or Ritual Regalia and Incenses (1 gold piece)

This Working lays blessings of great purpose on those who consent to it. Benediction usually involves a great deal of exhortation to some higher power or another: the gods, spirits, ancestors, Fate itself, or whatever else the sorcerer believes brings such favor. This Work can be performed as a Spell or as one of two Rituals, and the sorcerer must provide the Destiny Point that powers the rite.

BLESSING

When performed as a Spell, Blessing involves no resonances other than the sorcerer laying hands on the one they intend to bless. This affects only a single individual whom the sorcerer must be able to touch. The sorcerer must name a specific given task or purpose that can possibly be accomplished in the span of a year. Thus, "retrieve the Chalice of Orann" is a viable benediction; "serve the Church of Orann" is not.

This Spell is a Formidable (12) Persuasion test. If successful, the Spell functions for one month. This time may be increased to a season at Hard (15) Difficulty, or a full year at Heroic (21) Difficulty.

- **Failure:** The benediction has no effect, and cannot be attempted again for a full cycle of the moon.
- **Success:** For each degree of success, the target gains a bonus die to a pool that they may choose to use at any time during the Spell's duration. The roll they are augmenting must be an action that directly contributes to the success of the purpose named in the benediction, and once a die has been used, it is exhausted.

RITUAL OF CONVOCATIONAL BLESSING

The first Ritual of Blessing mimics the effects of the Spell, save that it is used to bless multiple people. This version requires a Destiny Point be spent to power it, and requires Ritual Regalia, along with a measure of rare incenses or similar ritual materials.

Alignment: ***Formidable (12) Knowledge****, 30 minutes.* The sorcerer prepares the ritual area with the rare incenses, instilling their virtue into the space with ritual movement and chants. Those to be blessed need not be present for this phase, but once it ends, the invocation must begin within a quarter-hour.

Invocation: ***Formidable (12) Persuasion****, 1 hour.* This step is functionally identical to the Spell version above, including the ability to alter the duration of the benediction by increasing the Difficulty. This part of the Ritual involves the invocations of the powers the sorcerer favors for their blessings on the endeavor. For each degree of success in this step, each target gains a non-renewing bonus die that is used to help accomplish the task named in the rite. Failure at this stage ruins the Ritual.

Unleashing: ***Routine (6) or higher Will.*** The final blessing is uttered and empowered by the sorcerer's will, investing those gathered there with the power of the rite. The Difficulty of Unleashing this Ritual is equal to 6 plus one for each person beyond the first benefitting from it. If successful, the Ritual's power settles on the subjects, investing them with the bonus dice generated in the Invocation. If the Unleashing fails, the power generated is wasted, with no other deleterious effects.

RITUAL OF ANOINTING

The focus of this Ritual is not to invest blessings towards the performance of a single task, but rather to instill rarified blessings in someone who is taking on a mantle of responsibility for the rest of their lives: kings, knightly orders, priesthoods, and the like. Because of the great magical cost to the sorcerer performing the rite, this is not given casually. This version requires a Destiny Point be burned to power it, and requires Ritual Regalia and a measure of rare incenses. Ritual assistants usually walk around the outside of the ritual space, maintaining a low chant or hymn, wafting incense or asperging the space.

Alignment: ***Hard (15) Knowledge****, 1 hour.* The space for this rite must be in a properly consecrated temple (see **Temple Consecration** in the **Sample Consecrations** sidebar) aligned with the powers the sorcerer invokes in this Ritual. This step is performed during the last hour of an eight-hour vigil the subject of the Spell must maintain.

Invocation: ***Formidable (12) Persuasion****, 1 hour.* The sorcerer calls upon the powers to watch over and guide the one being anointed. This may include a homily pertaining to the role the anointed-one will fulfill, recitations of those who have been thus anointed before and other cultural elements. Each degree of success from Invocation reduces the Difficulty of the Unleashing step by 3. Failure does not end the Ritual prematurely, but it does increase the Difficulty of the Unleashing step to Heroic (21).

Unleashing: ***Very Hard (18) Will.*** In this final step, the sorcerer leads the subject in the recitation of an oath, usually an ancient and revered Tradition of the role into which the target is being anointed. If successful, the target gains use of a special blessing: at some point during their lifetime, as long as they maintain their oath and act in the capacity of the role to which they are being anointed, a spent Destiny Point gains one of the effects of a burned point. The target gains one use of this blessing for each

degree of success in the Unleashing over the course of their life while in that role. Failure in the Unleashing is usually taken as a sign that the candidate is unworthy in some way, accompanied by some physical sign of that lack, e.g., a holy symbol cracks, the central gem of a crown clouds and falls out of its setting, the dubbing sword actually cuts the new knight, and so on.

Consecration

Type: Ritual **Test:** Persuasion
Learning: 12 weeks Challenging (9)
Price: Spent or Burned (Sorcerer)
Resonances: Extensive redecoration of the location with fine materials and symbols appropriate to the purpose in question (100 gold pieces). The Work must also be performed at a ritually auspicious time, whether a high holy day of a given faith, a cultural festival, a day of astrological significance, or the like.

The sorcerer may consecrate a location towards a given practice, philosophy, religion, or purpose. Generally speaking, this allows someone in the consecrated area to mimic the effects of a non-Sorcerous Benefit for an hour by spending a Destiny Point (as normal for Battlefield Qualities) as long as their aims and goals are aligned with the purpose invested into the Consecration. Those affected do not have to meet the prerequisites of the Benefit, with one exception: if the Benefit granted has other Benefits as a requirement, only those who have the requirements may take advantage of the Consecration.

This Ritual affects an area whose size is determined by the power of the Ritual's Invocation. The effects of this rite last until the sorcerer's death, until they cast this Ritual on another site, or until the location is desecrated in some way that destroys the location's Resonance. If the sorcerers burns a Destiny Point in the working of the rite, the Ritual's effects are permanent on the site, transcending even the sorcerer's demise or the use of this rite in another location; only desecration of the site can disrupt it.

Alignment: ***Challenging (9) Knowledge****, 1 hour.* Once the space is prepared, the first hour of the auspicious time frame is spent in the singing of hymns, chanting of orisons, and similar vocalizations, aided by a ritual assistant who possesses the Benefit the sorcerer intends to imbue into the location.

Invocation: ***Routine (6) or higher Persuasion****, time varies.* The time required for the invocation of power and the Difficulty varies with the area to be Consecrated. If this roll fails, the entire Ritual is ruined and must be started anew, including the investiture of gold pieces equal to the Difficulty of this step in Resonances.

Unleashing: ***Formidable (12) Will.*** The final act of Consecration is powerful. If successful, not only does it instill the Ritual effects into the location, but for one day per degree of success, everyone who enters the Consecrated area who is aligned with its purpose gains the Benefit as though they had spent a Destiny Point without actually doing so. Failure on this roll, however, is tragic, inflicting a Drawback on the sorcerer and all ritual assistants, reflecting a twisting or perversion of the Consecration's intended purpose in some way.

Sample Consecrations

The following are some examples of Consecration Workings:

Audience Chamber Consecrations: An audience chamber sees many difficulties, and so many lords see to this kind of investiture wherever they hold court. There are three common such Consecrations, all usable by those who have only the lord's best interests in mind: the Guardian Consecration, the Commoner Consecration or Folk Consecration, and the Noble Consecration. The Guardian Consecration involves marking places of honor for the guards, and sacred mirrors inscribed with magical eyes to increase the attentiveness of any guardians, who may spend Destiny Points to gain the Keen Senses Benefit. The Commoner Consecration plays down the sumptuousness of an audience chamber, using tokens of affection from the peasantry to imbue any noble in the chamber who spends a Destiny Point with the Favored Benefit for commoners. The Noble Consecration decorates with fineries and tokens of appreciation from other nobles to grant the Favored Benefit for Nobility by spending a Destiny Point.

Field of Valor Consecration: Kingdoms that uphold the noble virtues and code of chivalry may perform auspicious workings on the sites of tourneys and other such gaming fields. So long as its participants are properly anointed knights who have sworn vows to uphold the chivalrous code of the land's knightly traditions, they may spend a Destiny Point to gain the benefits of the Tourney Knight Benefit.

Temple Consecration: Many temples are Consecrated to the aims of its clergy, granting Benefits to those who uphold the ethos and strictures of the faith. Such locations are always prepared with sacred relics, richly crafted symbols, and regalia of the religion. The exact Benefit depends on the purpose of the sanctuary in question and the mythos of the deity: a war god might grant any number of Martial Qualities, while the sanctum of a love goddess might grant the Attractive or Magnetic Benefits.

Consecration Area

Size	Difficulty	Time
A chamber no more than 10' on a side	Routine (6)	30 minutes
A larger chamber of up to 25' on a side	Challenging (9)	1 hour
A massive chamber, or series of chambers of up to 60' on a side	Formidable (12)	3 hours
An entire building of up to 150' on a side	Hard (15)	6 hours
A soaring cathedral or moderately sized keep	Very Hard (18)	12 hours

Investiture

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Persuasion
Learning: 5 weeks **Challenging (9)**
Price: Spent (Spell) or Burned (Ritual)
Resonances: An item of unbroken, good quality (Spell) or an item of extremely fine quality, worth at least 100 gold pieces, plus consumable materials such as sacred ointments, incenses, and embroidered cloths, worth at least 2 gold pieces (Ritual).

An item may be imbued with magical power aligned to a specific task. The task might be a given practice, a specific quest or undertaking, the following of a given philosophy or religion, or even the practice of a specific magical Tradition. There are two forms of Investiture: the Investiture of Telesma Spell, or the Investiture of Regalia Ritual.

INVESTITURE OF TELESMA

Taking an item of good quality in good condition, the sorcerer spends 10 minutes chanting over it and tracing certain runes and sigils into its surface. The bonus the invested item grants determines the Difficulty of the invocation.

Telesma Difficulty

Bonus	Difficulty
+1 test total	Challenging (9)
+1B or Quality	Hard (15)
+1D or Benefit	Heroic (21)



- **Critical Failure:** The Investiture fails, and the sorcerer is afflicted with a Flaw for the Ability they were attempting to invest into the item for one week. The item is broken or otherwise ruined.
- **Failure:** The Spell has no effect, and the item is broken or otherwise ruined.
- **Success:** The Spell grants a +1 to test totals with a chosen Ability, as long as the test is being made towards the accomplishment of the Investiture's declared practice, undertaking, or philosophy. This benefit lasts for one week. Each degree after the first may be used to increase the test total bonus by +1 or the Spell's duration by one week.

INVESTITURE OF REGALIA

This Ritual imbues an item of great worth and quality with the permanent power to assist in the accomplishment of a purpose for so long as the item exists. The magic also hardens and preserves the item so that it might better withstand the passage of time. Such items are rare and costly, and inevitably become sacred relics and regalia of noble houses, religions, knightly orders, and sorcerous societies. Such items might be chosen at character creation with the Heirloom Benefit. Mantles that aid nobles of a particular bloodline with an increased skill in Warfare, knightly blades of preternatural sharpness that augment the wielder's Fighting, sorcerous orbs, or golden mandalas held by occult orders, and the like.

Alignment: ***Challenging (9) Knowledge****, 1 hour.* The process of alignment for this Ritual involves a cleansing of the space used as well as the item being invested. It usually takes place on a table or altar cleared of anything save a never-before-used cloth embroidered with certain sigils, and other ingredients used in the Working.

Invocation: ***Persuasion****, difficulty varies, 3 hours.* This process requires a completely undisturbed environment in which the sorcerer might concentrate, invoking the magics needed to imbue the item. The bonus the item grants determines the Difficulty of the invocation. Failure in this stage ends the Ritual without effect, with no other ill results.

Regalia Difficulty

Bonus	Difficulty
+1 test total	Challenging (9)
+1B or Quality	Hard (15)
+1D or Benefit	Heroic (21)

Unleashing: ***Hard (15) Will.*** The final bindings of the magical energies are at their most delicate in the final moments. If this roll is successful, the sorcerer must burn a Destiny Point for the magical power imbued into the item. For each degree of success, increase the Difficulty to destroy the item (by either the Break or Smash rules) by one. If this roll fails, not only is the entirety of the Ritual wasted, but the poorly bound magical energies lash out, destroying the item, and inflicting a Wound on the sorcerer.

ART OF DIVINATION

The Art of Divination unveils information in an occult fashion, often about things the sorcerer has no reasonable way of knowing, save by magic. Divination opens the sorcerer to knowledge from a variety of methods. When learning a Work of Divination, the exact method of divination much be chosen. These Works describe what is discovered, rather than how it is discovered.

Tools: The sorcerous tools for the Art of Divination vary depending on the types of divination the sorcerer employs, whether reading of omens, seeking truths in dreams or casting lots, or in a deck of cards. These are referred to as methods. The physical requirements for such methods are inexpensive enough—cards, bones in a bag, stones hung from strings, and so forth—so there is no significant in-game cost associated with them, and many methods use no such tools whatsoever.

Initiation: Those initiated in the Art of Divination gain a subtle awareness of the world around them, interpreting tiny signs and omens even when not using divinatory sorceries. You add your Knowledge rank to all Awareness test totals if you possess access to the Art of Divination through a Sorcerous Benefit.

DIVINATION METHODS

The actual tools and method used in Divination Workings are largely window-dressing, particularly so far as game mechanics are concerned. The mechanics of Divination focus on what is learned, rather than how it is learned. Still, knowing whether a sorcerer is going into a revelatory trance by staring into a sacred flame, laying symbol-laden cards in specific patterns, or reading the entrails of an all-white goat are important for the story and setting.

To that end, here are a handful of divination methods, with notes on what their use looks like. Note that while they do reveal the future or hidden truths, things like true dreaming, visions, and spontaneous prophecy are not included here: these are the province of Benefits like Prophetic Dreams. Seers tend to be slaves to their visions; divination is a magical Art whose invocation is at the will of the sorcerer.

Learning a Divination Method takes three months, and does not require any expenditures other than time. All Divination Works are assumed to have a Method associated with them, and can only be learned if that Method is already known, although possession of a Work with a new method is sufficient information for the sorcerer to spend the three weeks to learn the new Method. If the sorcerer encounters a Work they already know, but is crafted for a different Method, they may simply spend the time to learn the new Method, and thereafter use that Work with either Method.

Example

Lady Erdalla is a sorceress of some skill. One of her knights brings her an ancient grimoire. Within its pages, the lady finds a method for determining the character of an individual by divining it from the burning of a poppet of that individual, with a bit of their hair sewn into it, which in games terms is the Reading Work (Gazing). She must first study the Gazing Method, which takes three months, before she can spend the time to learn the Reading Work. Elsewhere in the book, she finds a method for scrying to discover where hidden caches of gold can be found. This is a Dowsing Work (Gazing), so she need only take time to learn the new Working.

GAZING

This method involves gazing into a medium filled with patterns the sorcerer may read to discern the information they seek. This includes such methods as *catoptromancy* (mirror gazing), *crystallomancy* (crystal or crystal ball gazing), *hydromancy* (bodies or basins of water), *libanomancy* (rising smoke, usually from sacrifices or incense), *nephomancy* (clouds and other atmospheric phenomena), and *pyromancy* (open flames). In order to use this method, the medium is considered an additional resonance of the Working.

HIEROSCOPY

Hieroscopy uses sacrifice to ascertain the future. These methods teach that at the edge of mortality, a living creature is exposed to what may come, and that is imprinted indelibly upon their body. This is a collection of the techniques used to read those signs. Such methods may include reading the entrails or other organs of sacrifices, observing spatters of blood, the smoke and flames of pyre, or reading the cracks in bones, shells, or other leavings in pyre.

OMENS

A relatively benign divinatory method, the reading of omens takes time. Unlike other methods such as sortilege, the sorcerer does not supply the signs that must be read, but plucks them out of their environs. Nearly anything may be read as omens, though most sorcerers are adept at one or two primary "categories" of signs: the movement of people around them, the passage of clouds or birds through the sky, the sounds of the wind through the leaves, the movement of animals in the local environs, or any number of other signs.

ONEIROMANCY & TRANCES

These techniques are strange, but ancient in provenance. Spells are wrought through the use of trances, entering into dreamlike, often ecstatic states in which visions come to the sorcerer. Rituals, on the other hand, are wrought in dreams, the seeking of universal truths through the medium of sleep. Spells using trance take at least 10 minutes to cast. Rituals are performed by sleep, with Alignment being performed before entering sleep, Invocation taking 30 minutes extra, in which the sorcerer drifts off into a sound (and sometimes drugged) slumber and does the true occult Working, and Unleashing occurring at the moment of waking. Such slumbers are not restful, however, no matter how long the sleep-ritual takes to perform. Indeed, sorcerers often wake from their efforts quite fatigued.

SOMATOMANCY

The human body contains many secrets in its physical form, apparent to those with the ability to see it. This encompasses a number of



styles of reading, including the reading of the skull (*cephalomancy*), reading the hand-and-palm (*chierognomy*) or feet (*podomancy*), or even the study of facial features (*schematomancy*). The slightest lines, shapes, and textures are interpreted for signs of who the person is and where their destiny leads. Naturally, the sorcerer needs access to the subject in person to utilize this method, however, their divinatory Spells have their difficulties reduced by 3.

SORTILEGE

The casting of lots is an ancient practice, in which patterns are formed by rolling dice, casting bones, drawing cards or rune stones, and similar methods. It is not merely the symbols themselves that mean things, but also the order in which the symbols are drawn, or how they fall in relation to one another that requires in-depth skill to read. Sometimes, the patterns are not symbols, but are actual movements of something held by the sorcerer, such as the swinging of a pendulum or the movement of the rods, wands, staves, sticks, arrows, and other tools used in the sortilege style called rhabdomancy.

DIVINATION AND THE ART OF PREDICTION

Powers of divination and prophecy are easy to manage in fiction, as it's generally only a single person controlling the narrative from beginning to end. It's harder to control them in a roleplaying game, where players can and do make decisions the Narrator has no way of anticipating. To that end, here are some suggestions for implementing visions and premonitions into a game successfully.

Prepare a few "warning visions" in any given scenario. Couch them in the symbolism appropriate to the sorcerer's divination methods, but don't be so oblique that they're useless. Consider this just another source of information gathering, as valid as any bit of carousing in a tavern or seduction of secrets from an enemy—it just uses a different method.

Provide some basic symbolism when the Working is cast, again based on the method employed by the sorcerer. It is then up to the player to decide how to make those symbols apply to a given situation. When a player does so (and be very lenient and flexible), allow a spent Destiny Point the benefits of a burned point. Thus, if a vision is "a fox rips the belly out of the bellowing bull," and the player decides that is the pretty redhead getting one over on a drunken knight, then a Destiny Point spent by the player in such a situation can be used to gain the benefits of burning that point instead.

If no other ideas present themselves, simply allow the reading to be vague: "the omens are good for your success," "the reading indicates danger to yourself and your loved ones" and the like, and give the subject of the divination was performed a "floating" bonus (+1B for a Spell, or +1D for a Ritual) that can be applied to any single roll that might have something to do with the context of the divination.

INSIGHTS

Divinatory Workings generate Insights about a subject. Each degree of success generates both a single Insight and an Insight Die.

Insights are details about the subject's personality and past. They may include any of the following details about a character:

- A Background Event, or other detail about the subject's past.
- A Quality possessed by the character that is not known to the sorcerer, either a Benefit or a Drawback (chosen by the sorcerer).
- A Goal, of which the subject may have several.
- What Motivation drives the subject.
- Virtues the subject holds in high regard.
- Vices the subject indulges in.
- A relationship to a character known to the sorcerer that is important to the subject, particularly if that relationship if of interest to the sorcerer.

INSIGHT DICE

Insight Dice are a mechanical representation for how a sorcerer may use this knowledge. In order to gain the benefits of using one of these Insight Dice, a sorcerer must invoke or otherwise utilize one of the Insights gained above. Once they have done so, that particular Insight and Insight Die are expended. A sorcerer may also transfer the use of these Insight Dice to others. Uses for Insight Dice are:

- Gain a +1D to Deception and Persuasion tests against the subject for one scene.
- Improve the subject's Disposition to you by two steps during an Intrigue.
- Gain a +1D on a number of attack rolls against the subject equal to the sorcerer's Awareness.
- Negate the spending (but not burning) of a point of the subject's Destiny.
- Gain the benefits of having spent Destiny applied to the subject.
- Gain the benefits of having spent Destiny against actions taken by the subject.

Example

The sorceress Lady Erdalla is mostly certain of the loyalty of her favorite champion, Wardun, but only a fool doesn't make certain. As such, she has a servant snip a bit of hair from him while he sleeps, and the sorceress uses it to cast her Reading Ritual. She generates a total of five degrees of success between the Ritual's Invocation and Unleashing actions.

Erdalla seeks to know her knight's weaknesses, so she starts by asking for his Vice and Motivation. The Narrator reveals that her knight-champion—who presents himself as the perfectly chivalrous, ideal knight—has the Licentious Vice and a Motivation of Lust. Wondering where such things have come into play, Erdalla seeks a Background Event and finds one that is well known to everyone, the rescue of one Lady Perda, a rival of Erdalla's.

But the Reading also reveals something others do not know: the supposedly chaste Perda rewarded Wardun in her boudoir for the rescue! Erdalla inquires after his current relationship with Lady Perda, and finds that not only are they still lovers, but he brings Lady Perda delicate information. Concerned, she then uses her last degree of success to ask after his relationship with herself, and her worst fears are confirmed: he is revealing the Erdalla's secrets to his damnable lover!

With this in mind, she seeks to coerce the knight into revealing his treachery. Using his Lust Motivation and Licentious Vice against him in an Intrigue, Lady Erdalla grants herself a two-step Disposition improvement and a +1D to her Deception rolls against him as she enacts a seduction of her own. He falls almost completely under her Spell, and when she confronts him, he reminds her that he is her devoted champion, as he spends a Destiny Point to try and improve her Disposition toward him. Lady Erdalla uses another Influence Die to negate that expenditure, reminding him that it was not her boudoir he has been visiting all this time.

When she calls two other knights in, he draws his blade, but she has already prepared those knights to deal with the traitor, telling them he has betrayed her by revealing secrets to Lady Perda, and using the Insight Dice associated with those secrets to grant them a bonus on their first five attack rolls (because her Awareness is 5) to take him prisoner. They do so handily, and now all that is left is for her to concoct a suitable punishment for the traitorous knight.

Casting

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Awareness
Learning: 4 weeks **Hard (15)** **Price:** Spent (Spell and Ritual)
Resonances: In addition to any resonances based on divination method, the sorcerer must have something that belongs to the subject of the divination. This is not necessary if that person is present when the Work is performed.

Casting allows a sorcerer a glimpse at the path that lies ahead for an individual. There are two versions of this Work: a quick Spell that grants only a look at the immediate future, and a more in-depth Ritual that grants insight far into the future.

Such divinations are more difficult to perform successfully for oneself: increase the Difficulty of the Casting by +6 if the sorcerer chooses to look into their own future with this Working.

THE GLIMPSE AHEAD

This Spell is a quick Working, intended only to provide insight into what lies ahead for the subject. This is an Awareness test, with a secret Difficulty set by the Narrator. This Difficulty should range from Routine (6) if the character is about to experience dramatic, life-changing events to Hard (15) for events of note in the immediate term, but with no real impact on the long-term—the more important and dramatic the events in the next week, the easier it is to see them. The sorcerer receives information of some kind from this Work: they just have no way of knowing whether or not their insights are accurate.

The magic reveals the most significant events, in general terms, within the next week, although it does not indicate exactly when such things might occur. See **Divination and the Art of Prediction** (previously) for methods of adjudicating the results of this Spell.

THE UNFOLDING PATH

A more reliable method for determining an individual's fortune, this Ritual takes some time to perform. It gives the sorcerer a greater span of vision, casting their sight entire months or even seasons to see what events of importance lie ahead. The precise details of the Ritual are based on the divination methods used by the sorcerer.

Alignment: ***Routine (6) Knowledge****, 10 minutes.* Preparation for this Work involves readying methods for an in-depth reading, laying out materials and Resonances, and even possibly explaining to the subject exactly what to expect and how not to disrupt the Working once it has begun.

Invocation: ***Challenging (9) or higher, Awareness****, 30 minutes.* The sorcerer deeply studies the symbols of their method. The success of this step indicates how far ahead the sorcerer is capable of perceiving. The sorcerer need not decide beforehand how far ahead they wish to divine, but may instead use the result of this step. Failure at this stage results in confusing images that haunt the sorcerer for a week, resulting in the Flaw (Awareness) Drawback during that time.

Unfolding Path Difficulty

Time	Difficulty
One year	Challenging (9)
Five years	Formidable (12)
10 years	Hard (15)
25 years	Very hard (18)
Lifetime	Heroic (21)

Unleashing: ***Routine (6) or higher Will.*** As with the Spell version above, the Narrator secretly sets the Difficulty of this step based on the degree of impact events in the time frame covered by the Ritual will have. If this roll fails, however, the sorcerer knows they were not able to achieve true visions: the portents are clouded and unclear. Refer to **Divination and the Art of Prediction** for suggestions on how to handle the outcomes of this Ritual.

Dowsing

Type: Spell **Test:** Awareness
Learning: 2 weeks **Routine (6)** **Price:** Spent
Resonances: Any Resonances based on Divination Method employed.

Through this Working, the sorcerer can seek the presence of specific things in the world surrounding them. Each kind of material this Spell can seek out is a different Spell, effectively, requiring the sorcerer to spend the normal time and resources to learn it; this takes the normal time if the sorcerer has a mentor or written resource. However, the sorcerer can create a new version of the Spell by spending double the time (four weeks) to do so.

This Spell has extremely broad potential applications, although it is notable that what it detects is always precise. If used to detect substances, a singular specific substance must be named: "water" or "wine" rather than "liquids," "gold" rather than "metals," "swords" rather than "weapons," or "oak trees" rather than "plants" or even a general "trees." This Spell cannot be used to detect people, although it may be used to detect animals.

When this Spell is cast, the Narrator determines how far away the nearest such substance is, setting the Difficulty in secret, and the sorcerer takes the Spellcasting Action.

Dowsing Difficulty

Distance	Difficulty
Within 50 feet	Routine (6)
Within 100 feet	Challenging (9)
Within 500 feet	Formidable (12)
Within 100 feet	Hard (15)
Within 2,000 feet	Very hard (18)
Within one mile	Heroic (21)

- **Failure:** The sorcerer searches for 10 minutes, following one sign after another, but the search is ultimately fruitless.
- **Success, One Degree:** The sorcerer's link to the item is unsure. They follow the signs at a movement of a half-yard per turn, constantly stopping to reevaluate the signs. When they arrive in the area where the substance is, they can't pinpoint it exactly, but know it lies within an area approximately 10 yards across.
- **Success, Two Degrees:** The sorcerer's link to the item is fair. They follow the signs with some measure of confidence, traveling at 1 yard per turn. When they arrive in the area, they know it lies within an area 5 yards across.
- **Success, Three Degrees:** The sorcerer's link is solid, allowing them to follow the signs at a pace of two yards per turn. When they arrive in an area, they can pinpoint the location of the target within a ten foot wide area.
- **Success, Four Degrees:** The sorcerer's link is certain, allowing them to move confidently toward the target at a rate of 3 yards per turn. Upon arriving in the area where it is found, they can pinpoint its exact location.

A sorcerer may cast this Spell again without spending another Destiny Point, but each subsequent Spellcasting action is at a cumulative -1D. This penalty is lifted if the sorcerer spends Destiny in the recasting of the Spell. Though this is often used when sorcerers fail the Spellcasting roll, even a successful sorcerer might use it, if their divinations brought them just enough success to find the general area where the substance they seeks lies, casting a second time to hopefully (due to a much lower Difficulty) pinpointing the target's exact location.

Reading

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Awareness (Spell), Knowledge (Ritual)
Learning: 3 weeks **Challenging (9)**
Price: None (Spell), Spent (Ritual)
Resonances: Any Resonances are based on the Divination Method used.

Unlike Casting, this Work does not look into a subject's future. Instead, it looks at who they are in the present, and what in their past has brought them to this point. This can be used to work either quick divinations that give a simple idea of who the person is, or more extensive rituals that lay bare a great deal about the subject's personality and past.

FLASH OF INSIGHT

This simple Spell is absurdly easy and subtle in its execution; so much so, in fact, that only other sorcerers trained in the Divination Method used to work it can even detect the sorcerer has cast a Spell at all (and only then if they succeed at a Challenging (9) Awareness test).

For all intents and purposes, this Spell functions as a magical Read Target Intrigue Action, save that the Difficulty is the target's Sorcery Defense. With a successful test, the sorcerer gains a +1D on all Deception and Persuasion tests against the target for the duration of the intrigue. On a critical failure, however, the target is aware that the sorcerer has tried to use occult methods to somehow peer into their secrets and they become suspicious, worsening their Disposition towards the sorcerer by one step.

READING THE SPIRIT

This Ritual results in a great deal more information about the subject of the reading. The sorcerer must either have the subject present and participating in the Ritual, or must be in possession of something belong to the subject. Sorcerers may perform a Reading the Spirit on someone that doesn't meet either of those classifications, but they suffer a penalty to all tests equal to the Disposition Rating of the subject toward the sorcerer. If the sorcerer is wholly unknown to the target, the sorcerer may not attempt the Ritual, so some sorcerers seek to make themselves known and even ingratiate themselves to a target, even using disguises to do so, in order to perform a reading.

Alignment: ***Challenging (9) Awareness****, 10 minutes.* In this step, the sorcerer prepares their Resonances and purifies the space for the Ritual. If the subject of the Reading is present, they will likewise prepare them, explaining what will occur and even strengthening their connections to them by touch.

Invocation: ***Formidable (12) Knowledge****, one hour.* In this step, the sorcerer peruses the signs utilized by the divination method for their reading. Whether turning cards, seeing visions in a dancing flame, or reading omens, the diviner is quite involved in this process, and may even mutter things to themselves during it. The degrees of success gained during this stage are added to the degrees generated during Unleashing to determine the final outcome of the Reading. A failure during this stage ruins the reading in its entirety, ceasing it even before the Unleashing, and inflicts the sorcerer with a Flaw (Awareness) Drawback until they get a full night's sleep.

Unleashing: ***Challenging (9) Will.*** At the climax of the Ritual, all of the signs and symbols solidify into a full awareness of who the subject is, knowledge of their personality and past blossoming in the sorcerer's mind. Each degree of success gained from this test and the Invocation may be used to purchase one Insight about the person, and also generates a pool of Insight Dice (see **Insights** previously).

Vision

Type: Ritual **Test:** Awareness
Learning: 4 weeks, **Hard (15)** **Price:** Spent or Burned
Resonances: Any Resonances are based on the Divination Method used, plus Ritual Ingredients (3 gold pieces).

This Ritual is the rarest of divinatory Workings, laying bare the past and future. Unlike other Works of Divination, it does not focus on individuals. Rather, its emphasis is the "larger vision" and the fate of organizations, cities, nations, and so forth, a look at the great tapestry of Destiny. It explicitly cannot tell the fate of individuals in the future, although it can tell the role individuals have played in a group or area in the past.

Mechanically speaking, this allows the sorcerer's player to ask the Narrator questions. The answers the sorcerer receives depend on the topic being asked about, and questions relating to the past are usually more clearly answered than those relating to the future.

Alignment: ***Formidable (12) Knowledge****, 1 hour.* The preparation for this Ritual can be difficult and is time consuming. The precise details depend on the Divination Method the sorcerer is employing, but they are all exhaustive and include the use of expensive ritual materials to cleanse and prepare the area and the sorcerer. Many sorcerers perform a Benediction Working before working this Ritual to better ensure its success.

Invocation: ***Challenging (9) Awareness****, 5 hours.* The Ritual's Invocation takes a great deal of time, but it is necessary, for successful Invocation determines how far into the past or future the sorcerer may cast their vision. It is easier to see into the past than the future, and the present is the easiest of all to see.

Vision Invocation Difficulty

Difficulty	Past	Future
Challenging (9)	Present Only	Present Only
Formidable (12)	1 year	3 months
Hard (15)	10 years	1 year
Very Hard (18)	25 years	3 years
Heroic (21)	50 years	10 years
Heroic (24)	100 years	30 years
Heroic (27)	250 years	60 years
Heroic (30)	500 years	100 years

Unleashing: ***Formidable (12) Will.*** The moment of Unleashing (or Unveiling) grants stunning insight, though it is often steeped in symbolism the sorcerer must interpret. Each degree of success on the Unleashing grants the sorcerer's player one question to ask the Narrator. These answers should come in the form of fever-dream symbols and riddle-like narratives for future events, or in flashes of important moments for visions of the past.

If the sorcerer spent a Destiny Point to perform the Ritual, then they receive the answer. If, on the other hand, the sorcerer sought answers of the future and burned a Destiny Point to perform the rite, the Narrator should be a great deal clearer in answering the questions. Moreover, the sorcerer also gains a number of Prophetic Destiny Points equal to the degrees of success in the Unleashing plus one. These Prophetic points may be spent or burned by the sorcerer in taking any action that either prevents the Vision from coming true, or helps it come to pass. They can even be used to power sorcerous Work, so long as that magic directly contributes to the culmination or prevention of the future Vision. Moreover, if the sorcerer shares their Vision with anyone, that person can likewise invest a Destiny Point in acquiring the Prophetic Alignment quality (see **Chapter 4**).

ART OF MALEDICTION

The most feared of the sorcerous Arts, the Art of Malediction places curses upon others, causes direct harm, and even causes a victim's own mind or senses to betray them. It is considered the most dangerous—and often the most corrupt—form of magic.

Tools: The tools of Malediction are often poppets or other symbolic representations of the target of the Working, along with implements to represent the kinds of harm inflicted upon them. It is a key reason why those in the know—or merely superstitious—carefully dispose of hair clippings, nail parings, blood, and other bodily fluids that might be used in Workings against them.

Initiation: Initiates of the Art of Malediction become comfortable with the notion of imposing their will upon others and the world. You may substitute Will for Status in your Intrigue Defense and for determining your place in the initiative order of an intrigue.

Castigate

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Will
Learning: 3 weeks **Challenging (9)** **Price:** Spent
Resonances: None (Spell), prepared poppet containing link to the target (Ritual)

One of the most basic Works of Malediction is inflicting of pain or harm upon a target, stabbing at them with needles of occult power.

WRACK

The simplest form of Castigation involves no more than a gesture and a sharp word from the sorcerer along with a Spellcasting Action against a foe within Close Range. It requires a Willpower test against the target's Sorcery Defense, much like a conventional attack. If successful, the target is wracked with pain, suffering damage equal to the sorcerer's Will times the degree of success. This damage is not reduced by any armor, but can be reduced by taking Injuries or Wounds. As with other damage, if the target is reduced to 0 Health they are defeated, and the sorcerer chooses their condition.

In addition to damage, the sorcerer can choose to sacrifice one degree of success to leave the target unable to take a Greater Action on their next turn, just like a Staggering attack. This is a common precaution to try and keep a foe at bay until the sorcerer can defeat them.

Once Destiny has been spent on a Wracking Spell, the sorcerer can continue to attack targets during that combat without having to spend additional Destiny Points.

DOOM

The Ritual form of Castigation is intended to inflict slow, agonizing pain and harm to a target, even dooming them to death. It requires some link to the target as its Resonance. The sorcerer slowly builds up the Ritual's malevolent power before unleashing a terrible force against the victim.

Alignment: ***Challenging (9) Knowledge,*** *1 hour.* Preparation for the Ritual involves the creation of the symbolic representation of the target. Usually this is a poppet of fabric, clay, or wax that includes some material connection, as detailed under **Tools** of Malediction, previously. Success on the Knowledge test means the poppet is linked to the target, with additional degrees of success providing +1B for later tests of the Ritual. A sorcerer can even prepare poppets of various targets in advance and keep them, but each is linked to one individual.

Invocation: ***Formidable (12) Will,*** *6 hours.* The sorcerer then invokes and propitiates the malefic powers that will bring pain and suffering to the target, naming the intended victim, and pronouncing all manner of terrible curses upon them. They often mutter and speak to the poppet as if it were their foe, describing the exquisite agonies they will suffer. When the Invocation begins, anyone able to notice magic around the target (see **Notice Magic** under **Sensitives & Seers**, previously) feels a distinct sense of danger if they succeed on a Routine (6) Notice test. With three or more degrees of success, they get a brief impression of the sorcerer working the Doom. A seer may also have a Prophetic Dream about the Doom during this time. Each degree of success on the Invocation adds +1 to the Doom's Toxicity (following). Failure on this test results in a backlash that causes a Wound to the sorcerer.

Unleashing: ***Will.*** When the sorcerer Unleashes the gathered power of the Doom, the target is struck with a kind of occult poison with a Virulence equal to the sorcerer's Will, Toxicity equal to 1 + the degree of success on the Invocation test, a Frequency of 1/Hour, and a Diagnosis Difficulty equal to the test result of the Invocation test. See **Poisons** in the **Equipment** chapter for details. Any remaining bonus dice from the Align-



ment can also be added to any of the Doom's Virulence tests. The Doom imposes a –1D to all abilities and an additional –1D per extra degree. If penalty dice equal the victim's Endurance rank, they perish.

A Doom can only be stopped by interrupting the Ritual, killing the sorcerer or forcing them to withdraw the Doom before it has run its course, or placing a **Blessing** on the victim with a Difficulty equal to the Invocation test result of the Doom+3. A failure in the latter case causes magical backlash that inflicts a Wound on the sorcerer attempting to end the Doom. Wards apply their normal benefits against a sorcerer working a Doom and increase the victim's passive Endurance by their Rating to resist it.

Curse

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Will
Learning: 5 weeks **Hard (15)** **Price:** Spent, Invested, or Burned
Resonances: None (Spell), link to the target (Ritual)

The most infamous of Maledictions—and of sorcerous Workings—is the ability to curse, to twist the strands of fate against a victim, bringing about terrible misfortune. So feared with this malevolent Work that many folk attribute misfortunes and ill-luck to curses even when there are none, and sorcerers are well-advised to mind the risks of frightened folk turning into a torch-wielding mob.

HEX

The hex, also known as "the evil eye" or jinx, is a short-lived malediction, a Spell performed at Close Range with a Spellcasting Action. If the test result exceeds the targets Sorcery Defense, the target gains a Drawback of the sorcerer's choice. The target must meet the requirements for the Drawback, which cannot be Sorcerous or a Stricture. A hex Working does not physically transform its victim, so physical drawbacks like Maimed simply result in the affected part(s) being rendered unless while the Drawback is in effect.

The hex lasts for one day, plus an additional day per degree of success after the first. On a failed Will test, nothing happens, but on a critical failure, the sorcerer gains a temporary Drawback of the Narrator's choice (not necessarily the one they sought to inflict) for the next day.

RITE OF CURSING

This Ritual places a more severe curse upon the victim, longer-lasting than a mere hex.

Alignment: ***Challenging (9) Knowledge,*** *1 hour.* Preparation for the Ritual involves the creation of the symbolic representation of the target, as with **Doom**, previously. Success on the Knowledge test means the poppet is linked to the target, with additional degrees of success providing +1B for later tests of the Ritual. A sorcerer

can even prepare poppets of various targets in advance and keep them, but each is linked to one individual.

Invocation: ***Formidable (12) Will,*** *3 hours.* The sorcerer manipulates the poppet, often performing actions symbolic of the curse, such as stabbing pins into certain body parts, dowsing the poppet in certain liquids, or bending, twisting, or defacing it. They call on malefic powers to bring the curse down upon their target. Each degree of success in the Invocation adds a degree for the result of the Unleashing.

Unleashing: ***Will.*** The sorcerer unleashes the curse at the target with a final, blistering word of power. If their Will test exceeds the target's Sorcery Defense, the target acquires a Drawback of the sorcerer's choice. The target must meet the requirements for the Drawback, which cannot be Sorcerous or a Stricture. Unlike a **Hex** Working, however, a Rite of Cursing *can* physically transform the victim to apply Drawbacks such as Marked or Maimed. For each degree of success, the Curse will last for 5 years. The Destiny Point invested remains so for as long as the curse endures. If the sorcerer burns the Destiny Point instead, the Curse becomes permanent unless it is broken (following) and the sorcerer does not recover the Destiny Point even if that happens.

A Rite of Cursing can only be broken before it ends by killing the sorcerer or forcing them to withdraw the Curse, or placing a **Blessing** on the victim with a Difficulty equal to the Invocation test result of the Curse, + 3 per degree of success on the Unleashing. A failure in the latter case causes magical backlash that inflicts a Wound on the sorcerer attempting to break the Curse.

COMMANDER'S CURSE

This Ritual is intended to thwart an opposing force in battle. If cast in advance of a battle, it can turn the tide in favor of one side.

Alignment: ***Formidable (12) Knowledge****. 1 hour.* The sorcerer prepares a symbolic link to the enemy commander they wish to target (see **Tools** under **The Act of Malediction**, previously). A part of this Knowledge test is learning the identity of the commander (if unknown) or creating a suitable link to the opposing force regardless of who commands them. Success means the representation is linked to the target, with additional degrees of success providing +1B for later tests of the Ritual. Once a bonus die is used, it is expended.

Invocation: ***Formidable (12) Will****. 5 hours.* The sorcerer shifts tokens and symbols like pieces on a game board, playing out the symbolic elements of battle, calling upon arcane forces to nudge and shift things in the favor of the side opposed to the target. Degrees of success on the Invocation add to those from the Unleashing test. Failure on this test spoils the Ritual and destroys the link to the target.

Unleashing: ***Will.*** When the rite is done, the sorcerer seals it and unleashes its power with a Will test against the opposing commander's Sorcery Defense. Each degree of success on this test, along with those from the Invocation test, provide a Penalty Die that can be imposed against the targeted force during their next battle. Once a penalty die is applied, it is expended. The sorcerer directs the expenditure of penalty dice, and may choose to apply them in advance (to known tests like initiative or the first command tests) or reserve and direct them during the battle, as desired. Failure on the Unleashing test creates a backlash, imposing a penalty die on all of the sorcerer's Sorcery tests for the following week.

Ensorcell

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Will
Learning: 5 weeks **Hard (15)** **Price:** Spent, Invested
Resonances: None (Spell), link to the target (Ritual)

Nearly as feared the power of cursing is the power to ensorcell the heart and mind, snaring the victim in an arcane web of bewitchment. Works of Ensorcellment insert occult power into Intrigues, with the following effects:

- Engaging in an Intrigue involving the Ensorcelled Ability and subject, you make tests against the *lower* of your opponent's Intrigue Defense or Sorcery Defense.
- You may substitute Will for Persuasion or Deception rank for Intrigue techniques, and gain bonus dice equal to your Coordinate or Dedication specialty, in addition to the appropriate Persuasion or Deception specialty for your chosen technique.
- Using the guidelines for faster intrigues, substitute Will for Status, meaning a sorcerer working Ensorcellment can automatically Influence a subject with a Disposition Rating equal to or less than their Will in a fast intrigue.

BEWITCHING

This Spell makes you supernaturally charming and irresistible; take a Greater Action and roll a Spellcasting test against your target's Sorcery Defense. Each degree of success increases your Influence over the target by 1 for the Charm, Convince, and Seduce techniques, in addition to the benefits given for Ensorcelled Intrigues previously. Failure on the Spellcasting test creates a sense of repulsion in your target, worsening their disposition towards you by one, or increasing their Disposition Rating by 1, in the case of a Malicious target.

SEEMING

A Spell of Seeming wreathes you in deceptive guise; take a Greater Action and roll a Spellcasting test against your target's Sorcery Defense. Each degree of success increases your Influence over the target by 1 for the Bargain, Charm, Convince, and Incite techniques, in addition to the benefits given for Ensorcelled Intrigues previously. You can also treat your Spellcasting test result as a Deception result for Disguise (see the Disguise specialty in **Chapter 4**), adding your degree of success to the result. Failure on the Spellcasting test makes your target wary and suspicious, increase their Disposition Rating by 1 and their Deception Modifier by –1 against you without changing their Disposition.

TERROR

The Spell of Terror gives you an imposing, terrible presence in the target's eyes and mind. Take a Greater Action and roll a Spellcasting test against your target's Sorcery Defense. Each degree of success increases your Influence over the target by 1 for the Incite and Intimidate techniques, in addition to the benefits given for Ensorcelled Intrigues previously. Failure on the Spellcasting test emboldens your target, increasing their Disposition Rating by 2 against you.

WEB OF INFLUENCE

This Ritual weaves a web to ensnare the target and change their Disposition to suit you.

Alignment: ***Challenging (9) Knowledge.*** *1 hour.* To prepare the rite, you need something connected to the target, ideally some part of them like a lock of hair or a few drops of blood (see **Tools** under **The Art of Malediction**). You prepare a symbolic representation of the target, with each degree of success on the Alignment test granting +1B you can use for successive tests in the Ritual. Once a bonus die is used, it is expended. Failure on this test ruins the Ritual and the materials.

Invocation: ***Formidable (12) Will.*** *1 hour.* You work your will over the representation, whispering the words of your intent, telling the target's heart and mind to believe what you say. Degrees of success on this test add to those of the Unleashing test. Failure on the Invocation spoils the rite, but has no other effect.

Unleashing: ***Will.*** Finally, you unleash the gathered power upon your target. Roll a Will test against their Sorcery Defense. Each degree of success shifts their Disposition one level in a direction of your choice, towards you or another subject of your choice. This change lasts for a week's time, and you may extend it an additional week by committing a degree of success towards that purpose (rather than using it to shift Disposition). Destiny spent on the Ritual remains invested until it ends. A **Blessing** on the target of your Web of Influence can end the effect prematurely. The Difficulty is equal to your Unleashing test result, +3 per degree of success on the Invocation test.

Ruination

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Will
Learning: 5 weeks **Hard (15)** **Price:** Spent
Resonances: None (Spell), link to the target (Ritual)

All things must come to dust in time, the Work of Ruin simply ensures that time comes quickly.

DESTRUCTION

With a simple Spell, the sorcerer can destroy a material object within Close Range. Take a Greater Action and roll a Spellcasting test with a Difficulty based on the object's weight on the **Strength** table (see the Athletics ability in **Chapter 4**): Increase the Difficulty by one level for an object made of stone or soft metals, by two for an object made of hard metal like steel. So the Destruction of 50 pounds of steel (normally Routine) would be Formidable (12). If the object is worn or carried by a living creature (such as a warrior's armor or weapons) the Spellcasting test must also exceed that creature's Sorcery Defense if it is higher than the Difficulty. If the Spellcasting test is successful, the object immediately falls to dust, rust, and tiny scraps or shards.

DISASTER

Also known as "The House Pox" or "Estate Curse," this Working calls Ruination down upon the Holdings of a House.

Alignment: ***Challenging (9) Knowledge,*** *variable.* The preparation of this Working requires placement of certain talismans at the four cardinal directions surrounding the target Holding. Preparation of the talismans takes an hour and a **Knowledge** test, and they are usable solely for one intended target. Their placement depends on the size of the Holding, how well guarded it is, and so forth. The Narrator may wish to roll a **Stealth** test against the passive Awareness of any sentinels or guards, with success meaning the talismans are successfully placed.

Invocation: ***Formidable (12) Will,*** *3 hours.* The sorcerer works their rites over a representation of the Holding linked to the talismans. Usually this is a map or drawing, but it may well be a model or sculpture. They call up the malefic powers to bring ruin down upon the target. Successes on this test add to those on the Unleashing test. Failure of the invocation spoils the Ritual and renders its components (including the talismans) useless.

Unleashing: ***Formidable (12) Will.*** The power of the rite is released to rain down upon the Holding. Each degree of success (including those from the Invocation) imposes –1D on the Status of the steward (or acting steward) for tests of house fortunes for that season, and requires a test in the next month. A degree of success can also be applied to extend the Disaster for another month, beyond the initial three, and the sorcerer can, of course, perform the Ritual again, so long as the accursed talismans remain in place. Failure on the Unleashing test results in a magical backlash, causing a Wound to the sorcerer.

A Ritual of Disaster can be ended prior to its expiration by killing the sorcerer or forcing them to withdraw the curse, or by finding all four talismans and destroying them using a **Consecration** Ritual with a Difficulty equal to the Invocation test result of the Disaster Ritual, + 3 per degree of success on the Unleashing. A failure in the latter case causes magical backlash that inflicts a Wound on the sorcerer attempting to end the curse.

ART OF WARDING

As long as folk have practiced the Arts of magic, there has been an equal need for protection from magic. As such, the Art of Warding, which provides that protection, is perhaps one of the most-practiced of the sorcerous Arts. Indeed, to a degree, it is the only sorcerous Art regularly practiced by non-sorcerers, as various common averting gestures (see **Sorcery Defense**, previously) are drawn from this Art.

Warding

Warding	Ward Rating	Ward Penalty
Incidental	1	–1
Apprentice	2	–1
Basic	3	–2
Standard	4	–3
Adept	5	–1D
Potent	6	–1D
Powerful	7	–2D
Master	8	–2D
Arch-Ward	9	–3D

Tools: The tools of the Art of Warding usually involve a wide variety of protective materials and talismans: salts and powders, mirrors and lead seals, protective oils, and the chalks, chisels, and inks to inscribe warding sigils and signs.

Initiation: Those versed in the Art of Warding can extend their skills of protection from magic even without sorcery. If you possess access to the Art of Warding through a Sorcerous Benefit, each degree of success grants ten minutes of protection rather than just one when working a folk-ward (see **Sorcery Defense**, previously). You may also work a folk-ward on another's behalf at a Formidable (12) Difficulty.

WARD RATING

Wards offer protection against magic directly affecting body, mind, or spirit. When you take either Damage or Influence from a sorcery effect, reduce the amount taken by your Ward Rating. Damage or Influence can be reduced to 0, but not below it. Wards can also reduce the Damage or Influence inflicted by some magical creatures.

WARD PENALTY

Wards are less efficacious against sorcery that does not directly inflict Damage or Influence. All but the weakest of wards apply a Ward Penalty, a penalty to the Casting of all sorceries affected by the ward protecting the individual(s). The ward also affects the Casting tests of the individual being warded, as powerful protections against magic also inhibit wielding it.

Protection

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Cunning (Spell) or Knowledge (Ritual)
Learning: 4 weeks Challenging (9) **Price:** Spent (Subject)
Resonances: None (Spell) or Protective salts and oils (35 silver drachmas, Ritual)

A sorcerer who knows this Working can protect themselves and others against magic of all kinds. This works in two ways: an immediate Spell meant to defend the sorcerer against magic and a Ritual that protects not just the sorcerer, but anyone for whom they work the Ritual.

THE WARDING GESTURE

This Spell is simply a folk-ward (see **Sorcery Defense** and **Averting Bonuses**, previously) backed up by potent Warding Arts. With but a gesture, the sorcerer wards themselves against Workings directed at them.

This Spell is a Cunning test and requires spending a Destiny Point. The warding protects the sorcerer for one minute, with the test result determining how much. Because Ward Penalties inhibit even magic cast by those they protect, the sorcerer may choose a lesser result than they achieved.

Warding Gesture Difficulty

Difficulty	Ward Rating (Rating/Penalty)
Routine (6)	Incidental (1/-1)
Formidable (12)	Apprentice (2/-1)
Very Hard (18)	Basic (3/-2)
Heroic (24)	Standard (4/-3)

PROTECTION RITUAL

This Ritual takes 30 minutes to work, and can defend targets other than the sorcerer, although a sorcerer can work this blessing on themselves. This Ritual uses a variety of protective substances: circling the target in pure salt, anointing their brow, heart, hands, loins, and feet with defensive oils and unguents, and dusting them in protective powders.

Alignment: ***Challenging (9) Cunning****, 10 minutes.* This time is spent applying the variety of protective substances to the subject, who must be nude and standing facing the west. The sorcerer chants as the Work is done.

Invocation: ***Challenging (9) Knowledge****, 20 minutes.* In this portion of the rite, the sorcerer surrounds the subject in a circle of salt, and inscribes protective sigils just outside of the line of salt in dark powders. They fume the subject in counterclockwise circles, from head to toe, banishing any influences that might give sorcery something to latch hold onto. Each degree of success on this test grants one week of protection—this is called the "protective interval."

Unleashing: ***Formidable (12) or higher Will.*** In this portion, the sorcerer claps their hands loudly above the head of the subject. If they are successful, the salt circle at their feet blows apart, scattering salt in all directions.

At this stage of the Spell, the subject must spend a Destiny Point while the sorcerer makes the Will test. The result of this test determines the power of the resultant Ward protecting the subject. This protection lasts for the protective interval determined during Invocation, and then drops to the next lower level. This continues until the ward drops to Standard, passes through another protective interval, and then is no more.

Example

A bandit protected from the King's Arcanists by his camp witch goes through the Ritual, resulting in a two-week protective interval, and a Potent ward. This lasts for two weeks, at which point it drops to Adept for another two weeks before dropping to Standard Rating. After another two weeks, the ward vanishes entirely.

Protection Ritual Difficulty

Difficulty	Ward Rating (Rating/Penalty)
Formidable (12)	Standard (4/-3)
Hard (15)	Adept (5/-1D)
Very Hard (18)	Potent (6/-1D)
Heroic (21)	Powerful (7/-2D)

Focus Ward

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Cunning
Learning: 6 weeks Hard (15)
Price: Spent or None (Calibrate Wardings)
Resonances: None (Spell) or Rare ingredients symbolic of the Tradition, Art, or Working defended against (5 gold pieces, Rituals)

This Working is a rare one, and knowledge of it is coveted. It unleashes no power on its own; instead, it alters the power of already existing Wards. Focus Ward boosts the efficacy of a Ward at the cost of giving it a narrower focus: Wards augmented by this Working boost their protection against a single Tradition, Art, or even Working. Wards focused to protect against one category of magic cease to protect against any others, and a sorcerer must at least know of a given Tradition, Art, or Working before they can use this Working to protect against them.

SORCEROUS AEGIS

A swift Spell, Sorcerous Aegis boosts an existing Ward, whether that Ward comes from the place where the sorcerer is located, a Spell upon the sorcerer, or from items carried by the sorcerer. Though it can only augment Wards currently defending the sorcerer casting the Spell, others may benefit if those Wards happen to protect them as well.

This Spell is a Formidable (12) Cunning test. If the test is successful, the sorcerer spends a point of Destiny and chooses the effect:

- **Tradition Focus:** Augmenting a Ward to protect against only magic of a specific Tradition (see **Traditions**, previously) increases the Ward's Rating by 1 step.
- **Art Focus:** Augmenting a Ward to protect against a specific Art increases the Ward's Rating by 2 steps.
- **Work Focus:** Augmenting a Ward to protect against a specific Working increases the Ward's Rating by 3 steps.

This boost to the Ward lasts for one minute with a single degree of success, one hour at two degrees, six hours at three degrees, and for a whole day with four degrees. This effect can be ended by the sorcerer at any time, restoring the Ward to normal, if it has not yet expired.



RITE OF ALIGNMENT

This Ritual is used to adjust existing Wards, even if the sorcerer did not create them. These are longer-term adjustments than those provided by Sorcerous Aegis, and can be applied to Wards that are not protecting the sorcerer. A sorcerer who attempts such manipulation must take care, however: Wards are potent, and this level of tampering is dangerous.

Alignment: ***Challenging (9) Knowledge****, 10 minutes.* The sorcerer spends the Alignment time of this rite studying the mystic currents of the Ward. This time is spent in the presence of whatever the Ward is laid upon, whether that is a person, an item, or even in a place.

Invocation: ***Formidable (12) Cunning****, 50 minutes.* This stage involves near-silent murmuring and mystic passes with hands stained by the Resonances used in the Spell. This phase is delicate

and fairly difficult, for the sorcerer might cause a disruption if they aren't cautious. If this phase is successful, each degree of success adds +1B to the Unleashing stage. If it fails, not only does the Ritual immediately end, but any subjects involved take 1 point of damage per point of Ward Rating being altered from a violent magical backlash!

Unleashing: ***Hard (15) Will.*** With the power aligned to the already existing mystic currents of the Ward, the sorcerer seals them in with a word of power. Anyone benefiting from the Wards at this moment feels a sudden jolt, like a sudden shiver up their spine. If this test is successful, choose one of the Focus traits above (Tradition, Art, or Work) and apply it to the existing Ward. This lasts for one year for one degree of success, a decade for two degrees, and is permanent for the life of the Ward at three or more degrees of success. If the Unleashing test fails, the Ward is damaged, reduced in Rating by one point per degree of failure. The backlash also inflicts one Wound on the sorcerer per degree of failure.

RITE OF CALIBRATION

Rather than altering an existing Ward, this Ritual allows a sorcerer creating a Ward to calibrate those energies into one of the Focuses noted above (Tradition, Art, or Work). Doing so from the creation of the Ward is safer than altering Wards, and the process is simply the addition of the Calibration Ritual Action (following). This is done between Invocation and Unleashing in a Warding Ritual. This adjustment does not cost any additional Destiny Points, although it does use 5 gold pieces worth of additional Resonances.

Calibration: ***Challenging (9) Cunning****, 30 minutes.* This step shapes the Ward as it is wrought, focusing it into one of the Warding Focuses previously. If this test is successful, any Ward resulting from the successful completion of the Ritual gains the desired Focus. If this test fails, the Ritual proceeds as normal, without any ill effects, as though this step had never been included in it, save for the expenditure of time and Resonances. If this step is a critical failure, the Ritual is ruined with no other ill effects.

Warding Marks

Type: Ritual **Test:** Knowledge
Learning: 6 weeks Hard (15) **Price:** Invested (Subject)
Resonances: Specially crafted inks, pigments, and implements (5 gold pieces)

This Ritual allows a sorcerer to place marks meant to defend against sorcery on a subject's skin. While this Ritual does not itself grant protection, it permits protections from other Rituals to be retained by the subject, albeit often at a somewhat reduced power, for as long as the Warding Marks endure. In order to use this Ritual, the sorcerer must also know another Ritual that grants a Ward of some kind. When this Ritual begins, the subject must already be under the effects of the protective Ritual.

Alignment: ***Formidable (12) Cunning****, 2 hours.* This step can be performed without the subject's presence. The sorcerer designs the Warding Marks specific to the subject. The sorcerer may even prepare designs and simply retain them for some point in the future, but each set of designs is unique to an individual.

Invocation: ***Hard (15) Knowledge****, 3 hours.* The process of bestowing the Warding Marks is painstaking, but it must all be done in a single session. Each degree of success in this test grants a +1B to the Unleashing of the Ritual.

Unleashing: ***Hard (15) Will.*** When the Ritual is successfully Unleashed, the subject spends a Destiny Point. A sensation like fire surges through their body, inflicting four Wounds. Each degree of success beyond the first reduces the number of Wounds taken by one. If the subject survives, they now have the Warding Marks Benefit (see **Chapter 4**). If the Unleashing fails, the subject takes a Wound but spends no Destiny and gains no benefit. The Ritual is wasted.

The Warding Marks Benefit endures as long as the marks themselves do. For this reason, Warding Marks are often tattoos or scarification (done with cutting or branding) which are effectively permanent, unless they are severely marred. In other Rituals, the sorcerer may apply the Warding Marks in inks, pigments, or the like that only last a matter of weeks or days before wearing off. Whenever the marks are no longer effective, the subject loses the Benefit and regains their invested Destiny Point.

Warding Walls

Type: Ritual, Spell **Test:** Cunning (Spell), Knowledge (Ritual)
Learning: 8 weeks Very Hard (18)
Price: Spent (Spell) or Burned (Ritual)
Resonances: Incenses and protective oils (30 silver drachmas) or occult materials for inlaying sigils of warding, seals of protection above doors and windows, along with incenses and protective oils (varies)

This Work of Warding imbues structures and domiciles with magical protection. The foremost purpose of any building is to provide shelter, and these magics simply extend that purpose to include magic as well. This Work has both a Spell and a Ritual.

HEARTH-WARD

Sometimes magical protections are needed immediately. In such instances, the sorcerer may turn to the simple Hearth-Ward to protect a single small structure, or chamber in a larger structure, enchanting its walls into bulwarks against hostile sorcery. The structure or area protected cannot be larger than 50 feet on any side.

Once the Spell's Resonances are employed, filling the area to be protected with incense smoke, and marking its doors and windows with the oils, the sorcerer spends a Destiny Point and makes a Cunning test. The sorcerer must choose the degree of warding they wish to achieve before the test is made, and each degree of success on that test grants an hour of protection.

Hearth-Ward Difficulty

Difficulty	Ward Rating (Rating/Penalty)
Routine (6)	Incidental (1/-1)
Formidable (12)	Apprentice (2/-1)
Very Hard (18)	Basic (3/-2)
Heroic (24)	Standard (4/-3)

SANCTUM RITUAL

A sorcerer with more time and resources may choose to imbue a structure with potent wards for a significantly longer duration. Using this Ritual, a sorcerer grants a structure and its inhabitants protection from sorcery until the end of their days.

Sanctum Ritual Area

Size	Alignment Time	Invocation Difficulty	Resonances Cost
A chamber no more than 10' on a side	30 minutes	Routine (6)	1 gold pieces
A chamber of up to 25' on a side	1 hour	Challenging (9)	10 gold pieces
A chamber, or series of chambers of up to 60' on a side	3 hours	Formidable (12)	100 gold pieces
An entire building of up to 150' on a side	6 hours	Hard (15)	500 gold pieces
A soaring cathedral or moderate-sized keep	12 hours	Very Hard (18)	1000 gold pieces

Alignment: ***Challenging (9) Cunning****, varies.* The time required for the Alignment of the area depends on its size (see the **Alignment Time** column of the previous table). This time is spent inlaying sigils of warding at key points, fuming with protective incenses, and laying wardings on doors and windows with magic-spoiling oils. The cost of these Resonances also depends on the size of the area, as shown in the **Resonances** column of the table.

Invocation: ***Routine (6) or higher Knowledge****, 3 hours.* Once the structure is prepared, the sorcerer must raise the power to imbue the wards. This phase involves a great deal of chanting and the sprinkling of a mixture of iron filings and salt throughout the structure. This is a Knowledge test, with Difficulty determined by the size area (see the **Invocation Difficulty** column of the previous table). If successful, each degree of success past the first grants a +1B to the Unleashing. Failure of this roll spoils the Ritual; a waste of the time and money invested, but with no other penalty.

Unleashing: ***Formidable (12) or higher Will.*** Standing in the center of the area to be warded, the sorcerer unleashes the magics raised, speaking a single potent word of warding. The sorcerer must choose the degree of protection they seek from the chart below, and make the Will test against that Difficulty.

If the test is successful, the area is permanently warded at the chosen Rating, for as long as the structure or place exists. Windows rattle in their sills as though thunder boomed overhead, and every door, gate, and other such structure immediately slams closed to seal the rite. On a critical failure, however, windows shatter, and doors and gates are blown off their hinges to lie broken and twisted. An ordinary failure has no effect, but wastes all of the time and resources invested in the Ritual.

Sanctum Unleashing Difficulty

Difficulty	Ward Rating (Rating/Penalty)
Formidable (12)	Standard (4/-3)
Hard (15)	Adept (5/-1D)
Very Hard (18)	Potent (6/-1D)
Heroic (21)	Powerful (7/-2D)

Sorcerer's Bane

Type: Spell **Test:** Knowledge
Learning: 12 weeks **Very Hard (18)** **Price:** Spent
Resonances: None

This Spell is aptly named, for it is a curse laid upon another sorcerer, countering the magics they may attempt to employ. While under the effects of this curse, any target of the sorcerer's magic is treated as though it were protected by a Ward with a Rating determined by the casting of this Spell, even if the target of the Spell is wholly willing.

This Spell is a Knowledge test, with a Difficulty based on the potency of the Ward the sorcerer laying the curse wishes to use (see the **Sorcerer's Bane Difficulty** table for Difficulties and their respective Ward Ratings). Each degree of success on this test grants one week of duration. Failing this test results in no effect whatsoever, although a critical failure results in a backfire: the caster falls under the effects of the curse for 24 hours instead!

Sorcerer's Bane Difficulty

Difficulty	Ward Rating (Rating/Penalty)
Routine (6)	Apprentice (2/-1)
Formidable (12)	Basic (3/-2)
Very Hard (18)	Standard (4/-3)
Heroic (24)	Adept (5/-1D)

Chapter 7: Equipment



Whether one is interested in armor and weapons, or silks and velvets, or horses and oxen, this chapter provides an overview of what is available in the markets and shops of the world. Of course, this chapter cannot be comprehensive—but the information provided should provide a rough guide to the wares found in many chronicles. The Narrator may, of course, adjust the range of coin and items available based on the technology and economy of their chronicle's world.

Money and Barter

Barter is common and expected amongst the common people, with coins and money a privilege of the merchant and noble classes. Of course, this rule is not hard and fast. In rural areas, minor lords may find it more convenient to barter with far-traveled visitors, while in major city centers, copper and silver see daily use in all markets.

The exchange rates listed in below represents a rule of thumb. Rates may change across different regions, time periods, and so forth.

COINAGE

- **Coppers:** Penny (cp)
- **Silvers:** Drachma (sd) = 50 copper pennies (cp)
- **Gold:** Gold Piece (gp) = 200 silver drachmas (sd) or 1000 copper pennies (cp)

TRADE GOODS

To give a baseline for barter, the a selection of trade goods have been given an average value. Obviously, in times of war or prosperity, these values may fluctuate. You can find the on the **Values of Trade Goods** table on the next page.

Personal Equipment

Candle: A candle illuminates a small radius (perhaps 5 feet) and will burn for 1 hour.

Craftsman's Tools: Various professions, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, stone masons, and gold smiths all use their own particular set of tools. Blacksmiths might need an anvil, hammers, rasps, files, chisels, or pincers. A carpenter might have an axe, saw, auger, adze, and wood chisel. A stonemason would have heavy hammers, a crowbar for manipulating stones, a stone chisel, and a trowel.

- Artisans such as bakers, butchers, weavers, dyers, and glassmakers also have their own sets of craftsman's tools.
- A locksmith's tools can be used to build or defeat locks or shackles. A locksmith (or thief) would often have several skeleton keys, long metal picks of different sizes, a long-nosed clamp, a small handsaw, and a wedge or chisel and hammer.
- Craftsman's tools can range from ordinary pieces to well-honed and expertly crafted sets, and the price range shifts accordingly.

Values of Trade Goods

Goods	Price
Aurochs, 1	13 sd
Bread, Large Loaf	1 cp
Chicken, 1	4 cp
Cinnamon or Cloves, 1 lb.	2 sd
Cow, 1	9 sd
Dog (untrained pup), 1	3 sd
Dog (trained adult), 1	11 sd
Eggs, 1 dozen	1 cp
Ginger or Pepper, 1 lb.	10 sd
Goat, 1	1 sd
Linen, 1 lb. (sq. yard)	1 sd
Ox, 1	13 sd
Pig (best in market), 1	2 sd
Saffron, 1 lb.	1 gp
Salt, 1 lb.	3 sd
Sheep, 1	48 cp
Silk, 1 lb. (2 sq. yards)	20 sd
Tea Leaves, 1 lb.	4 cp

Flask: A container to hold liquids, made of ceramic, glass, or metal, with a tight stopper.

Flint and Steel: A set of flint and steel is used to start a fire; striking the pieces together causes sparks, which are shed on tinder to begin a blaze.

Healer's Kit: A traveling healer will often keep a kit of bandages, herbs, salves, potions, small knives, thread and needle, and other tools used to treat injuries.

Ink: Black ink is the most common type, but other colors can be purchased at a higher price.

Iron Stakes: A sharp spike of metal, often with an eye on the end. The spike is driven into a rock or ice face, or a castle wall, and a rope can be passed through the eye or tied off to assist climbing a difficult surface.

Lamp: An oil lamp will burn for about 6 hours on a pint of oil. It illuminates a 15-foot radius. It burns more steadily than a torch, but the flaming oil can spill easily.

Lantern: A lantern is like a lamp but is enclosed in glass. It may have shuttered or hinged sides to control how much light is given. A lantern will burn for about the same amount of time as a lamp (6 hours), but it normally illuminates a wider area (approximately a 30-foot radius).

Looking Glass: This simple lens magnifies any small object to make it easier to see, and can be used to help start fires, in lieu of flint and steel, assuming a bright enough ray of light can be focused through it.

Goods and Services

Goods	Cost	Goods	Cost
Backpack	1 sd	Rope	10 cp
Candle (Pair)	2 cp	Sachet	1 sd
Craftsman's Tools (Ordinary set)	10–200 sd	Scents	1 sd
Craftsman's Tools (Expertly crafted set)	100–1,000 sd	Tent, Soldier's	5 sd
Far-eyes	300 sd	Tent, Pavilion	30 sd
Flask	2 sd	Torch	1 cp
Flint and Steel	2 cp	Waterskin	8 cp
Healer's Kit	50–500 sd	Whetstone	3 cp
Ink (Black, one vial)	20 cp	**Musical Instruments**	
Iron Stakes	4 cp	Drum	20 cp
Lamp	10 cp	Fiddle	10 sd
Lantern	2 sd	Flute	10 sd
Looking Glass	20 sd	Harp	18 sd
Oil, Pint	8 cp	Horn	3 sd
Pouch (Belt)	8 cp	Pipes	3 sd

Musical Instrument: Singers are often skilled with one or more instruments, such as the flute, high harp, lute, pipes, horns, drums, fiddles, and bladders.

Oil, Pint: Burned for light in lamps and lanterns. A pint lasts for about 6 hours.

Rope: A length of twisted fibers normally made from hemp.

Sachet: A small bag or pouch filled with fragrances, often carried by ladies during their travels. Sachets may be sewn into the sleeve of a gown or tunic, for those sensitive to foul odors.

Scents: Various lotions and powders are used to scent the body. Rosewater is common, as are lemon and jasmine.

Telescope: A device that allows an observer to see farther than the naked eye, a telescope consists of a pair of lenses fitted at either end of a tube of wood or leather.

Tent, Soldier's: A basic soldier's tent is intended for one man, with arms and armor. Two would find it cramped.

Tent, Pavilion: A pavilion is a large tent with vertical walls. A central pole topped with a spoked wheel holds the walls up and gives the roof a conical shape. A pavilion is large enough for a knight and their attendants. Brightly colored pavilions, adorned with house colors, serve knights during tournaments.

Exceptionally large pavilions can serve as feasting tents or a traveling court. Pavilions tend to be well made and can be quite decorative, outfitted with fine furnishings, etc.

Torch: A short piece of wood or length of flax or hemp, with an end soaked in tallow to make it easier to light. A torch illuminates about a 20-foot radius and burns for approximately 1 hour.

CLOTHING

Artisan/Craftsman's Garb: Artisans and craftsmen tend to wear simple, utilitarian garb. If in the employ of a lord or lady, they might wear a uniform that reflects the house colors (if they are a particular favorite of their patron). Normal garb includes a shirt with buttons, pants with a drawstring or leather belt (or a skirt if a woman), leather shoes, an apron of cloth or leather with pockets, and perhaps a cap or hat. See also **Peasant's Garb**.

Clerical Vestments: Religions sometimes mandate distinctive garb for ordained members. This form of clothing is also favored by sorcerers who believe their arts come from particular gods and sacred philosophies.

Courtier's Garb: Court is a formal affair, and those who attend tend towards fancy, tailored clothing in a seemingly ever-changing fashion. Courtiers tend to favor silks and satins, or decorative armors, or fur-lined cloaks, and many adorn themselves with gold or jewels. Visiting merchants, commoners, and foreigners oft try to dress as best they can, for those who appear plain or impoverished may receive a chilly reception.

Entertainer's Garb: Singers, mummers, and other entertainers normally have clothes tailored for their performances. The clothes are often brightly colored and flashy and may well be gaudy or outlandish, such as fool's motley. Entertainers whose primary audience are commoners tend to have simpler clothes of wool, cotton, and linen, while those who perform for the highborn are more likely to wear silk and velvet.

Noble's Garb: Nobles dress in the finest garb, tailored from the best materials, which are often embroidered or otherwise adorned. Silks come in many colors, fine furs are used to trim cloaks and boots and gloves, and many pieces are embroidered or otherwise adorned.

Northern Garb: Those who know how to dress for cold weather tend towards a wool coat and fleece-lined cap worn over the ears, a heavy fur cloak with hood, a shirt of linen, heavy pants or skirts, and fur-lined boots. Even further north, sealskin and bear fur may be used.

Peasant's Garb: Peasants dress in simple, loose clothes of rough wool with linen undergarments. Coarse tunics, baggy breeches, and long stockings for men and course wool dresses and stockings for women. Their shoes are normally made of thick cloth or sometimes leather.

Sage's Garb: Sages and sorcerers often favor robes with many pockets sewn into the sleeves, in order to keep many tools and instruments close at hand.

Traveler's Garb: A traveler taking to the road for an extended time would want a pair of good boots and might have wool breeches or a skirt, a sturdy belt, a wool or linen shirt or tunic, probably a vest or jacket, gloves, and a hooded cloak. A prepared traveler will also have a wool scarf, gloves, and possibly a wide-brimmed hat. A merchant might wear this type of outfit, as might a young lad setting off to seek adventure. It is also the type of outfit that a noble might wear if they wanted to avoid attention.

Clothing

Item	Cost
Artisan/Craftsman's Garb	1–5 sd
Clerical Vestments	2 sd
Courtier's Garb	10–100 sd
Entertainer's Garb	4 sd
Noble's Garb	100–1000 sd
Northern Garb	4 sd
Peasant's Garb	1 sd
Sage's Garb	4 sd
Traveler's Garb	3 sd

Food, Drink, and Lodging

Most inns will let poor travelers sleep on the floor—near the hearth if it's not too crowded—and probably lend use of a blanket for a few copper pennies per head. Cheaper accommodations can be found in the stables. A private room might cost a silver drachma or two.

The meals a traveler can expect depend on the fortunes and customs of the area, and what visitors are willing to pay. Some sort of stew or porridge is common, and may be enhanced by meat, vegetables and spices. The pricier the fare, the more likely it is to include more substantial portions of meat and spices, though this isn't the case where vegetarianism is customary, or where spices are easy to get, and not symbols of status.

Nobles usually eat well, even when traveling, and during a banquet, they eat splendidly. Wine, coffee, or other liquid indulgences are on hand to complement their meals, should their customs and personal preferences allow them.

Weapons

Great knights and noble lords carry weapons of the finest quality. Of course, brigands and desperate peasants may only care to know that the tool is effective in its purpose: to inflict or defend from harm.

Weapons are broken down into two broad categories—Fighting Weapons covers melee and close-combat weapons, while Marksmanship Weapons covers ranged devices. Each of those categories is then further divided into smaller categories, grouping similar weapons together, such as axes, spears, and bows.

WEAPON QUALITY

There are four categories of weapon grade quality: Poor, Common, Superior, and Extraordinary. These qualities are treated like other weapon qualities (see **Qualities** in **Chapter 9: Combat**, and the following **Weapon Grade** table).

- **Poor** quality weapons are most often used by poor commoners pressed into battle, broken men, or desperate outlaws. Examples of Poor-quality weapons include a farmer's sickle sharpened for war or a hastily made blade now spotted with rust.

Weapon Grade

Grade	Modifiers
Poor	–1D on Fighting or Marksmanship tests
Common	No modifiers
Superior	Add +1 to the result of all Fighting or Marksmanship tests
Extraordinary	As Superior, plus increase the weapon's base damage by +1.

- **Common** quality weapons are produced by smiths of common skill, found in any village and by the score in cities of any size. Most city guards, hedge knights, and footmen of well-equipped armies use Common quality weapons.
- **Superior** weapons are made by renowned master weapon smiths and use the highest-quality materials. These weapons may be called "castle-forged," for their prized smiths find a warm welcome in the halls of the great lords. Superior weapons may be branded with a maker's mark, a personalized symbol. Such marks help give a history to a particular weapon, and the mark of a famous smith will often significantly increase the value of the weapon.
- **Extraordinary** quality weapons are forged of exotic steel, which might be made in a handful of places in the world. On Earth, this was sometimes called "Damascus steel," because it was traded through Damascus from Central and South Asia, where the people had learned to produce high carbon steel centuries before anyone else. The Narrator determines where the finest steel makers dwell in their chronicle's world, though dwarves are likely to know the secret.

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

The weapons listed on the **Weapon Costs** table on page 113 are described herein.

Ball and Chain: A one-handed weapon similar to a flail but with a shorter reach, with a small handle or leather thong for gripping.

Battleaxe: A wicked, broad-headed axe that is larger than a hand axe, used to cleave through armor and shields. It can be wielded in one hand, and some battleaxes are double-bladed.

Boar Spear: Also called a longspear, a boar spear has a wide head of iron or steel at the end of a long wooden shaft. A boar spear traditionally also has a crosspiece to help brace the weapon against a charging boar (or horseman).

Bow: Bows are made from wood, sometimes including laminated horn or bone. Bows are difficult to use while mounted and cannot normally be used with any accuracy if the mount is moving without special training.

Bow, Double-Curved: This small bow is double-curved and made from laminated horn, wood, or bone. These bows can be fired from horseback and can be crafted with especially heavy pulls to take advantage of a person's strength.



Club/Cudgel: A short club fashioned of hard wood or sometimes metal.

Crossbow, Heavy: A crossbow is a type of mechanized bow where the bow is mounted to a wooden stock and drawn with a small winch. Being mounted allows the loaded weapon to be aimed with greater accuracy and fired with the release of a trigger. A heavy crossbow can only be used with two hands, and it fires bolts with force great enough to pierce all but plate armor, but they are slow to reload.

Crossbow, Light: A lighter cousin to the heavy crossbow. While a light crossbow still needs two hands to reload—it can be done by hand or with a simple lever—and does not require a winch, it still takes time to reload. A light crossbow can be aimed and fired with one hand.

Crossbow, Medium: Filling a niche between the light and heavy crossbows, this weapon requires two hands to reload and normally requires a push lever or ratchet. It is faster to reload than the heavy crossbow, but it takes two hands to aim and fire.

Crossbow, Repeating: The repeating crossbow is an oddity and is more of an eccentric's choice than a weapon to be feared. It is a large, ungainly distant cousin to the standard crossbow, and it fires three bolts with a single pull of a trigger. It takes both hands to aim and fire and is complicated to reload.

Crowbill: More of a war pick than an axe, these fighting picks are designed to pierce chain and the weak joints of plate. They are named for their resemblance to the bill of a crow.

Dagger: A long knife used to stab and pierce, often carried as a tool as much as a weapon.

Dagger, Left-Handed: Similar to normal daggers, these weapons feature broader crossbars to catch enemies' swords.

Dirk: A dagger designed for combat with a straight, narrow blade, often used in the off-hand to compliment a primary weapon.

Flail: A military cousin to the farmer's tool, a warrior's flail is a length of chain attached to a rod. At the end of the chain is a heavy metal head, either blunt like a mace or spiked like a morning star.

Greatsword: A large, powerful blade requiring two hands to wield. Greatswords can reach five or six feet in length.

Halberd: A two-handed pole arm with an axe blade mounted on a long wooden shaft. The axe blade is normally topped with a spike to engage spearmen and pikemen, and it has a hook or thorn opposite the axe blade, designed to pull cavalry from their horses. The halberd's statistics and features encompass a broad range cut-and-thrust pole arms.

Hand Axe: A warrior's version of a hatchet, smaller than a battleaxe and balanced to be thrown.

Khopesh: This sword's long, curved blade is a cross between a conventional sword and a peasant's scythe.

Knife: More cutlery than weapon, most people keep a knife as a handy tool, utensil, and weapon, should they find themselves in danger.

Lance, War: A weapon of knights and heavy cavalry, lances are longer and stouter than spears, normally 8-10 feet long, made of turned ash, and banded to prevent splitting. The lance is tipped with a sharpened steel point and is normally used for a single charge before becoming too unwieldy in close combat.

Lance, Tourney: Tourney lances are longer and more fragile than their battlefield cousins. Their tips are blunted to better unhorse an opponent without causing serious harm, and they are unbanded, meaning that they will often break upon impact. A tourney lance is normally 12-14 feet long.

Longaxe: A greater cousin to the battleaxe, this two-handed weapon may end in a double-bladed axe head or may have a spike on one side.

Longbow: A tall bow, roughly the height of a man, made from a single piece of wood and with a long draw. A longbow cannot be easily used while mounted or while the mount is moving.

Longsword: A common knightly weapon, these blades can be used in one or sometimes two hands. The blades are about three feet in length, double-edged, and mounted on a hilt, with a heavy cross guard.

Mace: A blunt crushing weapon designed to smash armor, a mace consists of a heavy head of stone or metal set upon a wooden or metal shaft. The head is often flanged or knobbed to better penetrate armor.

Mattock: An agricultural tool, similar to a pickaxe but with a broad, chisel-like blade, used as an improvised polearm by commoners and poorer armies.

Maul: Normally a blacksmith's or woodsman's tool, this long-handled hammer may be used in warfare to smash foes. Although they take tremendous strength to wield properly in combat, commoners will use them if they are capable.

Morningstar: Cousin to the flail and ball and chain, a morningstar is a length of chain connected to a rod at one end and bears a spiked ball at the other.

Net: Made of strong rope, a net is typically a tool to catch fish or birds. Some people have adapted them for fighting, to ensnare opponents or entangle weapons.

Peasant Tool: A peasant tool is a catchall term for sickles, hoes, and scythes sharpened for war. At best, peasant tools are Poor quality weapons, snatched up to defend a farmstead from raiders or because a father or brother was pressed into an impoverished army.

Pike: A very long spear used by infantry both against foot soldiers and especially to counter cavalry charges. A pike is normally 10-14 feet long, ending in a sharpened metal tip.

Poleaxe: Similar to a halberd, a poleaxe is a long shaft with an axe blade mounted on the end, though it is normally smaller than a halberd. The opposite side of the blade may be a spike or hammer.

Quarterstaff: A simple weapon made from a length of hardwood, sometimes reinforced with metal tips.

Rapier: These narrow-bladed swords have complex hilts to protect the hand, and are often optimized for thrusting, though they can cut as well.

Weapon Costs

Weapon	Weight	Cost
Axes		
Battleaxe	7 lb.	50 sd
Crowbill	6 lb.	60 sd
Hand Axe	4 lb.	30 sd
Longaxe	20 lb.	500 sd
Mattock	10 lb.	50 sd
Woodsman's Axe	6 lb.	40 sd
Bludgeons		
Ball and Chain	8 lb.	40 sd
Club/Cudgel	3 lb.	20 sd
Flail	12 lb.	100 sd
Mace	10 lb.	50 sd
Maul	13 lb.	80 sd
Morningstar	8 lb.	80 sd
Quarterstaff	4 lb.	—
Warhammer	8 lb.	100 sd
Brawling		
Knife	1 lb.	5 sd
Whip	2 lb.	5 sd
Fencing		
Left-handed Dagger	1 lb.	20 sd
Small Sword	3 lb.	300 sd
Rapier	3 lb.	800 sd
Long Blade		
Bastard Sword	10 lb.	700 sd
Greatsword	15 lb.	800 sd
Khopesh	4 lb.	450 sd
Longsword	4 lb.	500 sd
Pole-Arms		
Halberd	11 lb.	100 sd
Peasant Tool	9 lb.	10 sd
Poleaxe	9 lb.	80 sd
Shields		
Buckler	3 lb.	25 sd
Shield	5 lb.	30 sd
Shield, Large	6 lb.	40 sd
Shield, Tower	10 lb.	60 sd
Short Blades		
Dagger	1 lb.	20 sd
Dirk	1 lb.	20 sd
Stiletto	1-1/2 lb.	30 sd
Spear		
Boar Spear	9 lb.	40 sd
Fishing Spear	3 lb.	25 sd
Pike	9 lb.	80 sd
Spear	6 lb.	50 sd
Tourney Lance	8 lb.	40 sd
Trident	5 lb.	30 sd
War Lance	10 lb.	60 sd
Bows		
Bow, Double-curved	2 lb.	500 sd
Bow, Hunting	3 lb.	100 sd
Longbow	3 lb.	900 sd
Crossbows		
Crossbow, Light	6 lb.	150 sd
Crossbow, Medium	8 lb.	400 sd
Crossbow, Heavy	9 lb.	950 sd
Crossbow, Repeating	9 lb.	2,000 sd
Thrown		
Javelin	3 lb.	20 sd
Net	4 lb.	20 sd
Sling	0 lb.	—

Shields: There many types of shields, though it is usually easiest to distinguish them by size. Bucklers, or target shields, are small disks of wood and iron designed to be strapped onto the arm. Triangular and round shields are often wooden edged with metal or rawhide, though some are made from steel. They often bear the colors and arms of the knight that wields it, and come in standard and large varieties, with the larger shields being favored by cavalry or specially trained heavy infantry. Tower shields or pavises are heavy items used to block missile fire and provide cover from enemies' attacks.

Sling: A sling is a simple and inexpensive weapon made by fastening two lengths of cord to a pouch. A bullet is placed in the pouch, and then the cords are swung quickly. Releasing one cord causes the bullet to fly fast and out in a straight line. A sling is harder to use than a crossbow but is easily made from common materials.

Spear: A spear is made of a long shaft of wood with a sharpened tip. Although the poorest fighters might only use sharpened sticks, most spears are tipped with heads of iron or steel. A spear can be used in melee or thrown.

Spear, Boar: A larger, longer version of the spear, the boar spear features a two-foot-long blade at the end.

Spear, Fishing: These small spears are primarily used for fish and frogs, but they can just as easily be adapted to fight people. Fishing spears can also be thrown, and often have an attached rope for retrieval after being thrown short distance, such as at swimming fish.

Spear, Throwing: A light spear that is thrown as a ranged weapon.

Stiletto: A small weapon designed to slip into the gaps of an enemy's armor and reach vital organs with its long blade.

Sword, Bastard: Neither a longsword nor a greatsword, the bastard sword is named for its lack of family. It has a longer blade and a more elongated grip than a longsword.

Sword, Small: Shorter than a longsword but longer and heavier than a dagger, the small sword is a one-handed blade meant for thrusting. Some fighters like to use a small sword in their off-hand for parrying.

Trident: A three-pronged spear, each prong extending out from the weapon's haft all in a row.

Warhammer: Although its origins are as a smith's tool, the warhammer is a fearsome weapon. A metal hammerhead tops a stout wooden shaft about three feet in length. The opposite face of the hammerhead is normally a metal spike.



Whip: A long, tapered, flexible length of leather—the lash—is attached to a short handle. Whips are primarily used to drive livestock but can be used to fight, usually to entangle foes.

Woodsman's Axe: A woodsman's tool for chopping and splitting wood, this axe can easily turn into a deadly weapon. Normally used by commoners and brigands, it is normally single-bladed and smaller than its martial cousin, the battleaxe.

Armor

The following descriptions apply to the armor types described in **Chapter 9: Combat**. A "suit of armor" normally includes protection for the head, arms, and legs, such as a helm or half-helm, coif, gorget, greaves, skirt, and gauntlets, as appropriate to the type or style of armor.

Bone or Wood: Bone and wooden armor is held together with cord and draped over the torso and arms. It is noisy and uncomfortable but easy to manufacture.

Breastplate: A breastplate is the front portion of plate armor that covers the torso in a full suit of plate armor. Technically, the breastplate only covers the chest, but in this case, it also includes the backplate, allowing decent protection of the vital organs without limiting mobility much.

Hides: This armor is made up of heavy layers of animal hides and boiled leather. Hide offers more protection than simple leather armor but is bulky and hard to move in.

Leather, Hard: Boiling it in water or wax hardens the leather, which is then fashioned into breast and back plates and shoulder guards. More flexible leather is used for the leggings, gauntlets, and so forth. Some versions of hard leather are sewn with metal rivets or studs.

Leather, Soft: Leather armor is common throughout the world. Cured and hardened for protection, it is supple enough to be worn like regular clothing.

Mail: Also called chainmail, mail is armor made by interlocking small metal rings to form a mesh. The metal weave provides solid protection against thrusting and slashing attacks. Mail is normally worn over a layer of quilted cloth to make it more comfortable, reduce chafing, and absorb some of the force from blows. Mail often includes gauntlets and a coif to protect the head and neck.

Padded: The lightest form of armor, padded armor is composed of layers of cloth, stuffed with batting and quilted together. Padded armor normally covers the chest and shoulders.

Ring: A medium-weight armor made of interlocking metal rings, similar to mail worn over hardened leather armor or padding.

Robes: Heavy robes of burlap, homespun, or some other material offers a modicum of protection.

Scale/Coin: A medium-weight armor consisting of small metal scales sewn onto a leather jacket and skirt. The metal may be bronze, iron, or steel, and looks a bit like fish scales. Variants include armor fashioned from gold, silver, or steel coins worn in the same fashion as scale armor.

Splint: A cheaper version of heavy armor, splint armor consists of vertical metal strips arranged around the torso, with plates for the shoulders, greaves for the arms, and leggings for the legs.

Brigandine: Brigandine armor is made of cloth or leather lined with overlapping metal plates (normally of iron), designed to protect the upper body, laid over a suit of mail. The brigandine can be removed, leaving just chainmail armor.

Half-Plate: Those who find a full suit of plate too cumbersome may opt for half-plate armor. Made in the same fashion as plate, half-plate is composed of a partial suit of plate armor usually worn over mail. Because the plate is not necessarily properly fit to the wearer, it is actually more encumbering.

Plate: A full suit of armor favored by knights and lords, plate armor is composed of shaped steel plates fitted over most of the body. It includes a helmet (open-faced or with a visor), cuirass (back and breastplate), gorget (for the neck), pauldrons or spaulders (for the shoulders), vambraces, gauntlets, greaves, sabatons (for the feet), etc. Some suits of armor include a mail skirt or chain coif.

The plate is strapped and buckled on over a padded doublet, evenly distributing the weight over the entire body, so it is less restrictive than it might seem. The finest armor smiths decorate the armor of the great lords with fantastic heraldry and wonderful images, dressing the armor with jewels, and in some cases coloring the steel itself.

Armor Costs

Armor	Weight	Cost
Robes	20 lb.	3 sd
Padded	10 lb.	200 sd
Leather, Soft	15 lb.	300 sd
Leather, Hard	18 lb.	400 sd
Bone or Wood	25 lb.	300 sd
Ring	20 lb.	600 sd
Hides	25 lb.	400 sd
Mail	40 lbs.	800 sd
Breastplate	25 lbs.	800 sd
Scale/Coin	30 lbs.	600 sd
Splint	50 lb.	1,000 sd
Brigandine	50 lb.	1,200 sd
Half-plate	40 lb.	2,000 sd
Plate	50 lb.	3,000 sd

Mounts

Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Courser	600 sd	Stot	50 sd
Destrier	1000 sd	Feed (Per day)	1 cp
Garron	40 sd	Stabling (Per day)	1 cp
Mule	12 sd	Saddlebags (Pair)	1 sd
Palfrey	150 sd	**Vehicles**	
Pony	50 sd	Sled	5 sd
Rounsey	50 sd	Wagon	20 sd
Sand Steed	1200 sd	Wain (Cart)	8 sd

Mounts and Domestic Animals

People have domesticated a wide variety of animals for work and war. Of all creatures, great and small, horses are probably the most important.

HORSES

The history of the knight is intertwined with that of their steed—in many ways, the horse distinguishes the armored knight from plebeian foot soldiers. As horses are expensive to own and maintain, they fall more commonly under the providence of young lords. A poor knight who loses their horse in battle may feel shamed and distraught, for they may have no coin to acquire a new steed.

Obviously, work horses are plentiful, but they are not suited for combat, and anyway, many families would likely not have the means to let a rambunctious son take the horse and seek glory and wealth in war or tourneys.

WAR HORSES

There are three broad categories of war horses.

Destrier: Destriers are tall, strong, splendid animals and are often high spirited. Destriers give knights a majestic air at tournaments. They are normally the most valuable type of horse, being well bred and highly trained. Some even consider them too valuable to risk in war—thus the courser is the preferred mount for fighting.

Courser: Lighter than a destrier and less costly, coursers are still beautiful animals. Coursers are also strong and fast.

Rounsey: Lowest of all is the rounsey, a strong and capable steed of no particular breeding. Although rounseys are perfectly capable war horses, they are relegated to hedge knights, squires, and non-knightly men-at-arms. Rounseys are common riding horses and may also be used as pack animals.

MOUNTS FOR WORK AND PLAY

Garrons: Garrons are small, shaggy horses found in mountainous regions and cold climes. They look more like ponies than horses but are as sure-footed as goats.

Mule: These hardy, sure-footed beasts are capable of carrying heavy loads. They are less likely to spook than a horse and more willing to enter strange places.

Palfreys: Palfreys are well-bred horses that may be as valuable as a destrier, but their gentle and quiet disposition makes them ill-suited for warfare. Instead, they are coveted as riding horses, used often by noble ladies, and may also be used for hunting.

Barding Types

Armor	Weight	Cost*
Leather	60 lb.	1,100 sd
Ring	80 lb.	2,400 sd
Scale/coin	120 lb.	2,400 sd
Mail	160 lb.	3,200 sd
Brigandine	200 lb.	4,800 sd
Plate	200 lb.	12,000 sd

*Barding for smaller animals costs half this amount and weighs half as much.

Pony: A pony is small horse with proportionally shorter legs and a thicker body. Ponies are often ridden by the children of lords but may be used as general riding steeds or pack animals (especially in mines).

Stot: Stots are heavy draft horses used for farm work.

BARDING

Barding is armor for a mount, normally covering the animal's face, head, neck, chest, flanks, and hindquarters. Barding helps protect the horse when it is targeted—a common tactic for bringing a knight down in battle. Barding is available in almost as many types of armor as a warrior.

Barding for a horse weighs twice as much as for a man, and it costs four times as much. Barding for a pony or garron costs only double, but the weight is roughly the same.

Barding must be removed at night, and it should normally only be worn during battle. Barding can chafe the animal and cause sores. Because it is so heavy, a mount with barding normally cannot carry much more than a rider and simple saddlebags. A knight will often have a secondary pack animal for carrying additional gear.

Knights and lords often drape their horses with caparisons, long, elaborate quilts that cover the horse from nose to tail and reach almost to the ground. These quilts display house colors and may be used during tournaments, though rarely in war.

Poisons

Poison is often considered a vile weapon used by cowards. Of course, much of this is posturing. Sages and healers study poisons in addition to their healing arts, and many nobles have fallen to a poisoned blade or tainted morsel.

Poison may be delivered by dosing food or drink, coating a weapon, or even through the skin.

POISON CHARACTERISTICS

All poisons have the following characteristics.

- **Delivery:** Poisons need to interact with the body in a particular way to take effect. This entry describes the primary means for introducing a poison to a victim's system. Ingested means the victim must eat or drink the poison, whereas contact means the poison must touch the skin or be injected such as by a stab wound. Finally, some poisons are inhaled, whereby the poison is blown from a tube or thrown into the air.
- **Virulence:** A poison's Virulence rating describes its "attack dice." Whenever you expose an opponent to poison, you roll a number of dice equal to the Virulence rating against the victim's passive result, usually Endurance (Endurance rank × 4) but sometimes Will for poisons that affect the mind. If the poison's attack beats the target's passive result, it takes effect.
- **Frequency:** Even if the poison fails to get past the intended target's Endurance (or other ability), it often lingers in the victim's system and may strike again. A poison's Frequency describes the time between attacks. Multiple successful attacks produce cumulative effects.
- **Toxicity:** All poisons have Toxicity, which describes the number of times it can attack before it runs its course.
- **Diagnosis:** A healer can only assist a poisoned character if the poison is successfully identified. This entry describes the Difficulty of the Healing test to properly identify the poison. A healer that diagnoses the poison can substitute the result of a Healing test for the victim's passive Endurance result. The victim may use the higher of the two results.
- **Effects:** Poisons all produce some sort of effect, whether it's one or more penalty dice to a set of abilities, injuries or wounds, or some other effect. Effects from multiple successful attacks are cumulative. A poison's effects last until the victim manages to overcome it or is successfully treated.
- **Recovery:** Recovery describes the type of test and Difficulty a character must make to recover from the poison once its effects take hold. Recovery tests are always Endurance tests.

KNOWN POISONS

The following poisons might be found in the chronicle's world. Note that these are not realistic treatments of poisons, much less any sort of guide to real herbs or toxins. Some of these "poisons" are also useful medicines, but these rules are the best place for them, and they may also have toxic effects.

DEADLY NIGHTSHADE — **INGESTED**

Virulence: 4 **Frequency:** 1/minute and 1/hour
Toxicity: 2 **Diagnosis:** Routine (6)

Deadly nightshade is a type of shrub. Its leaves are dull green, and it flowers with pink or purple blossoms and has shiny black berries that are quite toxic. Nightshade poison is extracted from the berries, and even eating two or three berries can be dangerous. Nightshade causes nausea, dizziness, an increased heart rate, and hallucinations. Its symptoms also include paleness and dilated pupils.

Effects: Nightshade has two effects. The first attacks the mind once per minute. On a successful attack, the poison imposes –1D



to Cunning with an additional –1D for every two degrees. The second effect strikes every hour, imposing –2D to Endurance with an additional –1D to Endurance for each additional degree. If the penalty dice equal any of the associated abilities, the victim dies.

Recovery: After the poison has run its course, the victim can recover normally. Each week, the victim can remove one –1D per degree by succeeding on a Challenging (9) Endurance test. A healer can assist in the recovery as normal.

NEUROTOXIC VENOM	INJECTED

Virulence: 5 **Frequency:** 1/round
Toxicity: 2 **Diagnosis:** Challenging (9)

Neurotoxic venom acts quickly, inducing muscle seizures and numbing the neck and face, making it difficult to breathe. This poison is found in certain sea creatures and snakes.

Effects: On a successful attack, neurotoxic venom deals 1 wound per degree. If at any time a victim gains an injury or wound from the venom, they lose the ability to speak and must succeed on a Formidable (12) Endurance test or take –1D to Endurance.

Recovery: Injuries and wounds heal normally; however, the penalty die is permanent unless the victim burns a Destiny Point, in which case they recover after 2d6 days.

Poisons

Poison	Cost
Deadly Nightshade	100 sd
Neurotoxic Venom	5–10 gp
Opium	200 sd
Opium, Large Dose	500 sd
Pennyroyal, Mild	5 sd
Pennyroyal, Strong	10 sd
Poisonous Mushroom	25 sd
Wound Ointment	25 sd

OPIUM	INGESTED OR INHALED

Virulence: 4 or 6 (large dose) **Frequency:** 1/minute
Toxicity: 1 **Diagnosis:** Easy (3)

Opium is made by scoring the unripened seed pods of poppies and collecting the sap. A small dose causes a patient to become drowsy and dulls pain, and a larger dose will allow one to sleep through even great pain. This can be made into a drink or dried and smoked.

Effects: Opium automatically dulls pain, and the victim halves any penalties from injuries or wounds (round down). Victims treated with a large dose take a –3 penalty to all test results. In addition, if the poison successfully attacks the victim, it knocks him unconscious for 6 hours plus 1 hour for each degree (or 12 hours plus 1 hour for each degree for a large dose).

Recovery: The pain-deadening effects of this poison last for 8 hours, after which time the victim removes any related penalties.

PENNYROYAL	INGESTED

Virulence: 3 (mild) or 5 (strong)
Frequency: 1/hour and 1/2 hours **Toxicity:** 2
Diagnosis: Routine (6)

Pennyroyal is an herb, similar to spearmint or peppermint, that gives off a highly aromatic oil. Pennyroyal leaves are green, and its clustered flowers are reddish purple or lilac blue. It may be cooked with, and the leaves, either fresh or dried, may be steeped for tea—a common remedy for colds. However, drinking more than two or three strong cups can make one sick, resulting in nausea, dizziness, hot flashes, and even numbness in the limbs. Pennyroyal tea was sometimes used as birth control or as an abortifacient medicine in its strong dose.

Effects: If a mild dose of pennyroyal successfully attacks, it imposes a –1 penalty to all Agility, Athletics, and Awareness test results, per degree. A strong dose imposes the same penalties as a mild dose plus a –2 to Health and another –1 to Health for every two degrees.

Recovery: Penalties from being poisoned completely fade after 24 hours.

POISONOUS MUSHROOM	INGESTED OR INHALED

Virulence: 5 **Frequency:** 1/6 hours and 1/day
Toxicity: 2 **Diagnosis:** Challenging (9)

This represents a number of poisonous mushrooms and in some cases, their spores.

Effects: The poison produces two nasty effects. The first attacks the body once every six hours. On a successful test, the poison imposes –1D to Athletics with an additional –1D for every two degrees. The second effect strikes every day, imposing –2D to Cunning and –1D to Endurance per degree. If the penalty dice equal any of the associated abilities, the victim dies.

Recovery: After the poison has run its course, the penalty dice to Cunning fade at a rate of –1 die per day. Penalty dice to Athletics and Endurance are permanent unless the victim burns a Destiny Point, in which case they recover fully after 1d6 days.

WOLFSBANE	CONTACT OR INGESTED

Virulence: 3 (contact) or 5 (ingested)
Frequency: 1/round (contact) or 1/round and 1/hour (ingested)
Toxicity: 4 **Diagnosis:** Routine (6)

An herb and relative to the buttercup, wolfsbane plants are long and tall, crowned by blue, yellow, purple, white, or pink flowers. Carefully used, wolfsbane can be a painkiller. If touched, wolfsbane burns the skin and causes itching. If ingested, it causes burning, tingling, and numbness in the mouth and a burning in the stomach. After about an hour, the victim vomits violently, followed by weakness and burning, tingling, and numbness throughout the body. The pulse and breathing both slow until the victim dies of asphyxiation.

Effects: Wolfbane can be used in two ways—contact or ingestion. Contact with wolfsbane imposes –1D on Agility and Endurance tests per degree. Ingested wolfsbane has two effects. The first, attacking each round, imposes –2D on Athletics tests plus an additional penalty die for each additional degree. The second attacks each hour and imposes –2D on Endurance tests plus an additional penalty die for each extra degree. Again, if the penalty dice to Endurance equal the victim's rank in the ability, the victim dies.

Recovery: The victim loses –1D each day after the contact poison runs its course or each week after the ingested poison runs its course.

WOUND OINTMENT	CONTACT

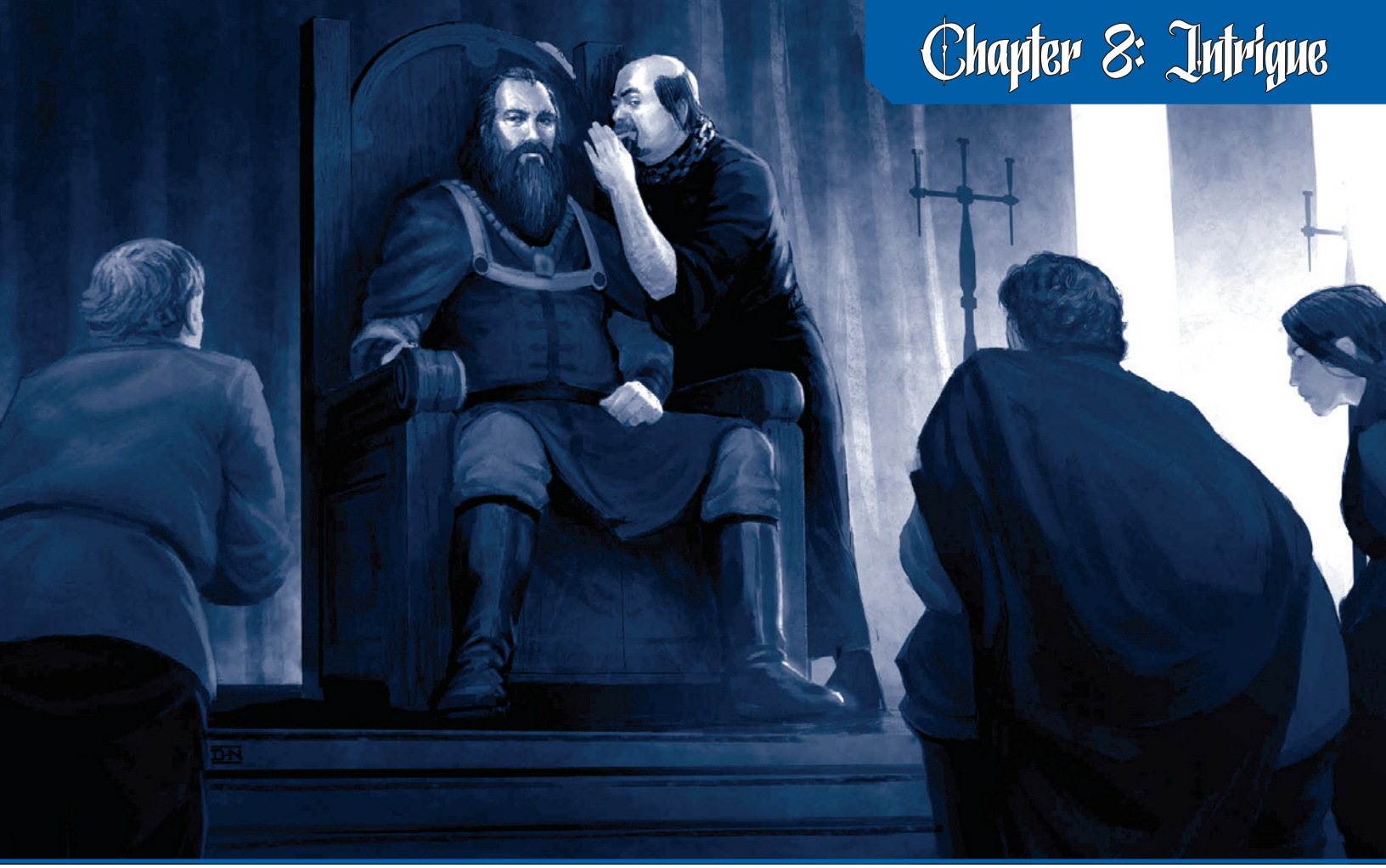
Virulence: 3 **Frequency:** 1/round
Toxicity: 2 **Diagnosis:** Easy (3)

Typically a mixture of honey, herbs and alcohol, wound ointment helps sterilize open wounds, though users may not know its true mechanism of action, having developed recipes through trial and error.

Effects: Wound ointment improves the victim's chance to recover from lacerations. The poison grants a +1D to Endurance tests made to recover from injuries and wounds on a success and +1B per additional degree. However, the poison also imposes a –1 penalty to Athletics test results per degree on a successful attack.

Recovery: The penalty to Athletics tests fades 24 hours after the poison is first applied. The extra test die and bonus dice (if any) apply to the next Endurance test to remove any injuries or wounds.

Chapter 8: Intrigue



Bold deeds and the heroic acts of courageous warriors adorned in glittering armor and wielding shining swords in the defense of the innocent live large in the minds of the young and naïve. But behind the endless ranks of knights and soldiers are the true movers and shakers of the land. Swords and those who wield them are potent weapons capable of much destruction, but they are tools all the same, used and discarded as need be. Intrigue is what truly decides that fates of houses, kingdoms, and civilizations, for alliances and wars alike are intrigue's children.

Social Manipulation & Roleplaying

The essence of the intrigue rules is the idea that characters' actions can be swayed through means other than logic or obvious self-interest. Characters in *Sword Chronicle* have varying social abilities and limits, just as they have varying physical characteristics. Some roleplaying games allow player characters to trick and manipulate Narrator-controlled characters ("NPCs," in those games, NCs here). *Sword Chronicle* assumes that player characters are also vulnerable to social maneuvering.

When do the intrigue rules come into play? That happens whenever pure roleplaying is not sufficient to reflect the social actions occurring during play. This is the case when:

1. One of the participants wants the other to do something.
2. The individual being pressed is not inclined to immediately agree to the task, and:
3. Pure negotiation alone can't settle things one way or another.

When these three conditions exist, it's time to use the intrigue rules.

INTRIGUE VS. MIND CONTROL

Intrigue is different from supernatural mind control. A successful intrigue convinces the target that doing what has been asked of them is in their best interest, whether for themselves, someone they care about, or some cause, due to a mixture of rational thinking and emotional interference. An intrigue-Influenced character may be wrong about this, but they never think they're wrong.

In cases of supernatural mind control the target's opinions are often irrelevant, and the compulsion to act comes from an external force. If the character currently feels the best thing to do is to obey, this is either due to a rational decision (such as in cases where disobedience can cause them harm), or because their thoughts have been altered by a supernatural force.

There are in-between cases, such as when a spell or power might enhance someone's apparent Status or attractiveness, but in any event, the critical distinction is whether the results come from a character's decision (in an intrigue) or a supernatural compulsion (as for a spell or supernatural power).

PLAYER VS. CHARACTER DECISIONS

One of the central ideas of intrigues is that characters can have different desires than their players. In many roleplaying games players are used to having finer control over what their characters want. In *Sword*

Chronicle, characters have strong social needs. Just as characters will become hungry, cold, or injured, or enjoy physical benefits from better weapons and other aids, they also have social urges that come up regardless of what players think might be in their characters' best interests. In this case, the role of the player is to respond to their characters' needs, and interpret them in a way consistent with who they think the character is as a person.

Intrigue Statistics

In many respects, intrigue is a form of "social combat." Characters have varying levels of competence when it comes to exerting Influence on others, warding off Influence, and enduring social pressure.

Thus, several abilities describe your effectiveness in an intrigue. From them, you derive the information you need to engage in these risky exchanges and shape the future of your lands. What follows is a summary of the game's intrigue statistics and the methods for coming up with your derived statistics.

ABILITIES

All of the following abilities describe your capabilities in intrigues.

AWARENESS

You use Awareness to gauge your opponent's motives—to watch for misdirection and subterfuge.

- Add your Awareness rank to your Intrigue Defense.

CUNNING

Cunning measures your wit and mental dexterity.

- Add your Cunning rank to your Intrigue Defense.

DECEPTION

One of the key tools in successful intrigues, Deception is a critical ability for masking your intentions and influencing a target under false pretenses.

- You may roll Deception tests to Influence a target.

PERSUASION

Another vital ability, Persuasion represents your talents at bargaining, seduction, charm, and a variety of social skills.

- You may roll Persuasion tests to Influence a target.

STATUS

Status describes your character's social standing, his class, and rank within society.

- You add your Status rank to your Intrigue Defense.
- You roll a Status test to determine your placement in the order of initiative for intrigues.

WILL

Self-control, resolve, and commitment—Will describes your endurance and stamina in intrigues.

- Your Composure is equal to 3 × your Will rank.

INTRIGUE DEFENSE

The first line of defense against Influence is your Intrigue Defense. This derived ability combines your perceptiveness, intelligence, and social standing. Your Intrigue Defense equals:

Your Awareness + Your Cunning +Your Status + Circumstantial Bonuses

Example

Nicole's noble has Awareness 3, Cunning 4, and Status 5. Adding up her ranks in these abilities, her Intrigue Defense is 12.

COMPOSURE

Composure is your ability to withstand the pressures of negotiation and persuasion. Whenever an opponent successfully Influences you, you reduce your Composure by your opponent's Influence. You are not affected adversely unless your Composure falls to 0, at which point you are defeated.

Composure = Will rank × 3

Example

Nicole's noble has Will 4, so her Composure is 12.

Simple Intrigues

The most common and easiest to use, simple intrigues handle all the basic interactions between the PCs and minor Narrator characters, in situations that require more than a simple conversation. Simple intrigues are useful for bluffing your way past a guard, pretending to be someone other than you are, or ferreting out information in a relaxed environment. Generally, simple intrigues are used when the intended outcome (what you hope to achieve or what you want your opponent to do) is not out of character for your opponent. For example, if you were trying to seduce a man that's already attracted to you, a simple intrigue signals that you are open to his attentions and willing to proceed with an assignation.

Simple intrigues are also used to resolve exchanges between characters with large disparities between their Status abilities. Whenever you try to Influence another character whose Status is 3 or more ranks lower than yours, you may use a simple intrigue to handle the exchange.

Simple intrigues have the following characteristics:

- Usually involve two participants
- Occur in a single exchange
- Involve a single test
- Have short-term consequences

SIMPLE INTRIGUE RULES

In a simple intrigue, roll Deception, Persuasion, or Status vs. the target's Intrigue Defense. If you succeed, your target takes the short-term action you wish, understands the subtext you want to get across, or believes some falsehood. Deception is normally used for a simple falsehood, Persuasion is used in interpersonal matters, and Status is used to draw upon one's social standing and the target's social obligations.

Dispositions (see **Step 3: Disposition** later in this chapter) are normally unnecessary for simple intrigues. Instead, the Narrator can impose 1 or 2 bonus or penalty dice to your roll to reflect the target's positive or negative feelings, respectively. In cases of powerful amity or deep hatred, no roll is possible—the target sticks to their feelings, and you have to switch to a standard intrigue (see **Standard Intrigues**) or find some other route to getting your way.

Example

Nicole's character, the highborn Lady Lanara, wants to convince a guard to let her pass. She draws upon her Status of 4, rolling a 12, while arguing that being left out in the dirt is demeaning for one of her station and there will be consequences for them both if she is so "shamed." This defeats the guard's Intrigue Defense of 8. The guard apologizes and lets her pass.

Standard Intrigues

Standard intrigues arise when a simple intrigue won't suffice. Usually, standard intrigues come into play when PCs and major Narrator characters try to Influence each other. These exchanges can involve convincing another character to do something potentially dangerous or out of character, to bargain for a much better price, or to intimidate someone into coughing up guarded information. As a good rule of thumb, standard intrigues occur whenever your intended outcome is dangerous for your opponent or out of character. For example, trying to seduce a noble's wife would require a standard intrigue.

Standard intrigues have the following characteristics:

- Involve two or more participants
- Occur over the course of several exchanges
- Involve several conflict tests
- Have long-term consequences

STANDARD INTRIGUE SUMMARY

The Narrator sets the scene of the intrigue (which may provide circumstantial modifiers to participants), and each participant sets their objective (what they want their target to do) and Disposition Rating (their feelings) regarding each additional participant. A standard intrigue takes place in exchanges, which are to intrigues what rounds are to physical combat. An intrigue initiative roll at the start of the intrigue determines the order of actions for each exchange.

During each exchange, each participant targets another with an intrigue technique, rolling the corresponding ability versus the target's Intrigue Defense. If the attempt succeeds, it inflicts Influence, which reduces the target's Composure. Once the target's Composure is reduced to 0, they are defeated, and the participant who inflicted the most Influence "damage," achieves their objective, though the Narrator negotiates with the defeated character about how they do so.

STANDARD INTRIGUES, STEP BY STEP

A standard intrigue has the following steps:

Step 1: Scene
Step 2: Objective
Step 3: Disposition
Step 4: Initiative
Step 5: Technique
Step 6: Actions and Tests
Step 7: Repeat
Step 8: Resolution

STEP 1: SCENE

The Narrator sets the scene by describing the location and general situation in which the intrigue takes place. These can be critical factors in deciding the outcome of an intrigue. Certain environments are more conducive to an intrigue than others. For instance, trying to seduce a pious noblewoman inside a temple is no easy task.

The appropriateness, or lack thereof, of the venue may bestow a bonus to a character's Intrigue Defense, usually a +3 bonus for awkward environments, +6 for inappropriate locations, and +12 or more for wildly inappropriate settings. An awkward environment might be bargaining for a mercenary's service in front of a current employer. An inappropriate location would be trying to intimidate a young noble while his father looks on, and a wildly inappropriate setting would be trying to seduce a priest on a battlefield littered with the dead and dying.

STEP 2: OBJECTIVE

The core of every intrigue is your objective: what you hope to achieve by engaging in the intrigue in the first place. An objective is what you want your opponent to do or say. Without an objective, you don't have an intrigue. Set your objective at the beginning of the intrigue. Your target doesn't know your objective unless you make it obvious, but the Narrator knows, and can veto some objectives as impossible or inappropriate.

The objective should be able to be stated in one or two clear sentences, such as, "I want her to make her best armor for me," or "I want this knight to behave as my vassal for the upcoming battle without actually promising I'll take him into my service." In a standard intrigue, an objective directs a defeated target to perform one task that has can be definitively accomplished, though it will color how the target interacts with you afterward. If you want anything more, that becomes a complex intrigue, covered in **Complex Intrigues**, later in this chapter.

The Narrator is the final arbiter of what constitutes a reasonable objective. Generally speaking, you can only press someone to risk their long-term physical or social well-being when it fits their social role and drives. You could, for instance, press a knight to fight for you, or ask a peasant who has agreed to take up arms in your service to enter a dangerous battle, but it would be out of the question for an elderly sage. You might trick a noble into insulting the queen, but not a servant who might lose their head—and if the noble knows they might lose their title over it, they won't do it either.

Managing Dispositions

A good way to manage your dispositions is to keep a list of the NCs you meet over the course of the chronicle. Record your disposition from your last encounter, along with any relevant notes. Then, when you meet the character again, you'll know how you last left this character and can pick a good disposition based on your prior dealings.

Your objective colors your roleplaying and gives you a position from which you can argue. What follows is a broad selection of normal objectives that prompt intrigues. This list is by no means complete, but it gives you a good foundation for coming up with objectives relevant to your situation in the game.

FRIENDSHIP

Many intrigues involve cultivating alliances and forging friendships, whether for the short-term or long. Your expected outcome is to foment feelings of kinship with your target to make future exchanges easier or even unnecessary. Friendship, obviously, covers a lot of ground, and with this objective you might seduce a man, arrange a marriage, build an alliance, or simply gain a new friend.

INFORMATION

Knowledge is power, to cite a cliché, and the information stands as one of the most common objectives for engaging in an intrigue. With this objective, you hope to acquire guarded or secret information, to learn rumors, gossip, and anything else you might need to get the edge against your enemies.

SERVICE

When a service is your objective, you want your opponent to do something for you. What that something is can be just about anything, from loaning you some gold to spying on the queen, from giving you a good deal on a new sword to sparing your life when your opponent has every right to take it.

DECEIT

You may also engage in intrigues to dupe your opponent, feeding false information, setting up your foe for a potential double-cross, and masking your true intention behind a deceptive façade. When deceit is your objective, you gain Influence by rolling Deception tests instead of Persuasion tests.

CHANGING OBJECTIVES

There are bound to be times when you enter an intrigue hoping to come away with one thing and discover something much more interesting after the first or second exchange. At the start of a new exchange, you may change your objective, but you lose an amount of accumulated Influence over your target equal to your target's Will rank, and they recover Composure equal to the amount of Influence you lost.

If there were other participants in the intrigue and you decide you try to sway someone new, this penalty does not apply, though you must set an objective before you act upon that new target during the exchange.

STEP 3: DISPOSITION

A disposition describes a particular outlook as it relates to a character's opponent, describing whether the character sees you in a good light or bad, whether they intend you harm or want to help you. Disposition acts as a form of "armor," protecting you from your opponent's Influence. It's far more difficult to convince a person who hates you to help than a person who loves you. Thus, whenever your opponent would apply their Influence to your Composure, you first reduce the amount by your Disposition Rating (or DR). Disposition also interacts with your efforts at Deception and Persuasion, by providing bonuses or imposing penalties to your test results. It's rather difficult to mask your disdain when trying to befriend a long-time enemy, just as it's hard to dupe a person you love.

Select a disposition regarding each participant in the intrigue, from among the seven types listed in the **Dispositions** table and detailed further in this section. If you're engaging in an intrigue with someone for the first time, your disposition will usually be Indifferent.

CHANGING DISPOSITIONS

Over the course of the intrigue, a character's disposition is bound to change. The events of an exchange coupled with roleplaying allow players and Narrators to adjust their characters' dispositions in response to what happened during the previous exchange. At the start of every new exchange, each participant may improve or worsen their disposition by one step.

The only exception to this rule is when a character was affected by Influence on the previous round. Such a character cannot worsen their disposition during the next exchange unless that fits the objective of at least one character who inflicted that Influence.

THE SEVEN DISPOSITIONS

Of the seven dispositions, three are favorable, three are unfavorable, and the seventh is Indifferent, which is neither favorable nor unfavorable. Descriptions of each follow and include the relevant Disposition Rating and modifiers to Deception and Persuasion tests. All of this information is also summarized on the **Dispositions** table.

Dispositions

Disposition	DR	Deception Modifier	Persuasion Modifier
Affectionate	1	–2	+5
Friendly	2	–1	+3
Amiable	3	0	+1
Indifferent	4	0	0
Dislike	5	+1	–2
Unfriendly	6	+2	–4
Malicious	7	+3	–6

AFFECTIONATE

DR: 1 **Deception Modifier:** –2 **Persuasion Modifier:** +5

Affection implies love and adoration, feelings of obligation and strong loyalty such as that shared between most spouses, parents and their children, and so on. A character of this disposition gives in to most requests even if the request is to their detriment. Affectionate characters are likely to overlook faults in the person they adore, and they would give their lives for that person.

FRIENDLY

DR: 2 **Deception Modifier:** –1 **Persuasion Modifier:** +3

A Friendly disposition suggests feelings of kinship and goodwill and is found in most siblings, long-time allies, and members of the same household. Friendly can also serve to define the relationship between knights bound to a common cause and the ties that bind the closest members of the Watch to each other and their commanders. Friendly characters are willing to do you favors and may take risks on your behalf. They won't betray you, and that's what counts most.

AMIABLE

DR: 3 **Deception Modifier:** +0 **Persuasion Modifier:** +1

Amiable characters see you in a positive light and consider you an acquaintance—but not necessarily a friend. Such characters are unlikely to put themselves at risk for you, but they are helpful if it benefits them. A character with an Amiable disposition may betray you if given a good reason.

INDIFFERENT

DR: 4 **Deception Modifier:** +1 **Persuasion Modifier:** +0

An indifferent character has no strong feelings toward you, one way or the other. They may be convinced to help you, following orders out of duty, and may consent to other favors if they get something in return. Indifferent characters won't take risks to help you unless suitably compensated.

DISLIKE

DR: 5 **Deception Modifier:** +1 **Persuasion Modifier:** –2

Dislike indicates a general unfriendliness, a certain uncomfortable frostiness. Whether this disposition originates from distrust, reputation, or some past misdeed, the character will not take risks for you and may entertain conspiracies against you.

UNFRIENDLY

DR: 6 **Deception Modifier:** +2 **Persuasion Modifier:** –4

Unfriendly characters simply do not like you. These feelings may be grounded in good reason or not, but regardless, they hold you in disdain. Such characters will not seek to actively hurt you, but they won't interfere with those who would and can be easily convinced to conspire against you.

Dispositions by Circumstance

Factor	Modifier		
Opponent is attractive	+1 step	Opponent is known for decadence	–1 step
Opponent is known for honor	+1 step	Opponent is known for cruelty	–1 step
Opponent is known to be just	+1 step	Opponent is hideous	–2 steps
Opponent is from allied family	+2 steps	Opponent is known for treacherousness	–2 steps
Opponent's people are discriminated against	–1 step	Opponent is from enemy house	–2 steps
Opponent is a bastard	–1 step	Opponent is from a distant land	–1 step
Opponent is ugly	–1 step	Opponent is from a reputedly hostile culture	–2 steps



Option: Recognition

The default assumption is that players and Narrators will pick appropriate dispositions based on the story elements in the game. While perfectly suitable, it can sometimes be hard to assess the effect notoriety has on an individual character's reputation. To address this potential complication, you can introduce a Status test before the intrigue begins to help characters pick the most appropriate disposition for NCs they have just met.

When you use this system, all intrigues involving characters who have just met set the starting dispositions at Indifferent. Participants may draw upon their knowledge and the reputations of their opponents to modify their disposition appropriately. Each character rolls a Formidable (12) Status test, taking a penalty to their result equal to their opponent's rank in Knowledge—more knowledgeable characters are less likely to be impressed by the legends and deeds attributed by other characters. A success improves or worsens the opponent's disposition by one step per degree of success. The character decides whether to improve his opponent's disposition or worsen it, based on his reputation and that of his house.

Example

On the evening before the tournament, Glen's knight meets with a knight sworn to a minor house in the hopes of learning information about a murder that had taken place the night before. Having it on good authority that the other knight might know something, Glen decides to engage him in an intrigue to gain information. Before the intrigue begins, though, both characters must determine the effects of their reputation. Glen's character has a Knowledge 3 and Status 4 (Reputation 1), while his opponent has a Knowledge 2 and Status 3. Glen rolls first and gets a 21. Subtracting his opponent's Knowledge rank, he's left with a 19. Since he beat the Formidable (12) Difficulty by 7, he gets two degrees of success, which moves the other knight's disposition up or down by two steps. Glen's knight is known to be an honorable sort, so he improves the other knight's disposition by two steps to Friendly.

It's now the other knight's turn. The Narrator rolls and gets a 12 exactly. Subtracting Glen's Knowledge rank (3), it drops the knight's result to 9, which isn't enough to change Glen's disposition. Thus, Glen's character begins the intrigue at Indifferent.

MALICIOUS

DR: 7 **Deception Modifier:** +3 **Persuasion Modifier:** –6

Malicious characters actively work against you, doing what they can to harm you, even if it means putting themselves at risk. Malicious characters would wage war against you, harm your family, and do just about anything else they can to destroy or discredit you. Such characters are your dire enemies.

PLAYER CHARACTERS AND DISPOSITIONS

Player characters can choose whichever dispositions they like at the start of an intrigue, but are limited in shifting them as noted in **Changing Dispositions** for the remainder of the intrigue—and may in fact radically change their attitude for the next encounter.

While Narrator characters' dispositions are usually honestly come by (a Malicious NC genuinely hates you), PCs can choose a disposition as if they're deeply pretending to have that disposition—this is more than a deception, but less than actually feeling this way, in a manner similar to modern, real-world method acting. This means that regardless of the PC's deepest feelings, they must abide by the rules of the disposition they selected.

Note that if you want to display an attitude different from your disposition—that is, engage in superficial but convincing trickery—you may do so. As a matter of fact, in an intrigue, smiling at someone you want to betray is virtually routine.

DISPOSITIONS BY CIRCUMSTANCES

Most intrigues between people who do not know each other begin at Indifferent. However, circumstances may modify dispositions, such as the identity of the individual, tales about the character, and other factors. The **Dispositions by Circumstance** table offers suggestions to modify starting dispositions—all modifiers are cumulative. These modifiers apply for the first exchange, and characters may modify their dispositions as noted under **Changing Dispositions**.

Player characters can ignore these modifiers as long as they can explain to the Narrator how this is possible. Are you *really* indifferent to beauty or loyalty? Be honest.

STEP 4: INITIATIVE

To determine who tests when, each participant in the intrigue rolls a Status test. Bonus dice from Reputation apply. The Narrator records each result and arranges them in order from highest to lowest. The highest result goes first, followed by the next, and then the next highest until everyone has acted. Note that the test result does not require a character to act in this order; it merely describes the earliest they can act. A participant may wait and see what other participants do before acting, but they cannot interrupt an action someone else is taking with their own. They must act between others' actions. This is a concession to game rules; in the intrigue scene, people are speaking in no particular order. In this case, initiative determines who can attempt to exert Influence first.

STEP 5: TECHNIQUE

If dispositions are armor, techniques are the weapons. Techniques describe the tactics a character employs during the intrigue.

When successfully deployed, a technique inflicts Influence, a form of social "damage" that reduces the target's Composure. When a technique reduces the target's Composure to 0, it inflicts a Consequence. You must also track the amount of Influence you successfully imposed—the "damage" you did. If you accumulated the most Influence against a target, they act according to your objective.

Intrigue in the World

Each intrigue is more than dice rolls—characters are talking, gesturing, and employing any gambit necessary to prevail.

Strong portrayals of your character, as well as convincing arguments, can and do have an effect on intrigues. Good roleplaying modifies your chances by granting bonus dice, usually 1 or 2, but sometimes as many as 3 for extremely convincing performances. Naturally, some roleplaying sequences may result in saying the absolute wrong thing at the wrong time, which may affect a character's efforts by removing bonus dice or imposing a flat penalty of –1 to –5, depending on the seriousness of the gaffe. Not all groups include great actors, and not everyone wants to describe what their character is doing word for word, so electing not to roleplay dialogue never imposes a penalty.

One vital element, though, is language—your target must be able to understand you. If your target does not speak your language, you take –3D on all Persuasion tests. If this number exceeds your test dice, you cannot engage the target in an intrigue.

Knowledge of certain languages can even improve your chances at persuading and impressing your target. The ability to speak a rare or native tongue of your opponent suggests education and intelligence, as well as a certain amount of respect. If the target would be impressed by such familiarity, you gain a +1B on tests to Influence your opponents.

DECEPTION

You may substitute Deception for Persuasion tests to simulate any of the following techniques. You may only do so when trying to deceive your opponent, such as charming under false pretenses or bargaining with no intention of making good on your promises. You make this decision when you decide your objective. When testing Deception, you roll bonus dice from one of your Deception specialties most appropriate to the technique you're trying to simulate. If you have bonus dice in the Persuasion specialty, you may use those dice or the listed Deception specialty, whichever is greater.

USING TECHNIQUES

Whenever you roll a Deception or Persuasion conflict test to Influence your opponent, you may roll bonus dice from a specialty that corresponds with the technique. The Difficulty is equal to your opponent's Intrigue Defense. A successful test delivers an amount of Influence determined by the technique you used (usually equal to your rank in an ability) times your degree of success.

DIVIDED TECHNIQUE

When you wish to Influence several targets, you must use one technique, but you must divide its test dice in any way that you wish between them. You may also need to split your bonus dice, if any, as your bonus dice can't exceed your test dice. Resolve each technique separately as normal.

CONSEQUENCE VS. OBJECTIVE

If there are more than two characters in an intrigue, it may happen than you reduce someone's Composure to 0, but someone else holds more Influence over them. This means you get the benefits of the consequence, but the other person achieves their objective as well. Thus, ganging up on someone is a time-honored social tactic. If the consequence and objective are incompatible, your target addresses the consequence since that appears more pressing to them. The person hoping to achieve their objective loses out, since the person who inflicted the "final blow" of the intrigue swooped in to take advantage of the target's put-upon condition.

Techniques

Technique	Influence	Persuasion Specialty	Deception Specialty
Bargain	Cunning rank	Bargain	Bluff
Charm	Persuasion rank	Charm	Act
Convince	Will rank	Convince	Act
Incite	Cunning rank	Incite	Bluff
Intimidate	Will rank	Intimidate	Act or Bluff
Seduce	Persuasion rank	Seduce	Bluff
Taunt	Awareness rank	Taunt	Bluff

TECHNIQUES DEFINED

On your turn, you may use any of the following techniques during an intrigue. You need not choose the same technique each exchange and may select a different technique that best matches how you portrayed your character during the exchange. Each entry describes the technique, the amount of Influence a successful conflict test generates, applicable specialties, and finally, the consequences gained when you defeat your opponent. For a summary of these features, see the **Techniques** table.

BARGAIN

Influence: Cunning rank **Persuasion Specialty:** Bargain
Deception Specialty: Bluff

When you Bargain, you are asking the target to do something in exchange for recompense in some form. Bargain can be used to bribe a guard, form an alliance, attain services, and so on, but it only works so long as you live up to your side of the deal.

Consequence: Bargain is used to negotiate a service in which the target does something for you in exchange for you doing something for the target. This exchange can be as simple as a transaction, exchanging gold pieces for some good or service, or it

could be some other form of arrangement. The quality of the deal depends on the target's disposition at the end of the intrigue as shown on the following chart.

Bargain Effects

Disposition	Bargain Effect
Affectionate	Target gives you the goods or service for nothing in exchange.
Friendly	Target gives you the goods at discount (Cunning × –10%) or for some minor service in exchange.
Amiable	Target gives you the goods at discount (Cunning × –5%) or for a very easy service in exchange.
Indifferent	Target gives you the goods at discount (Cunning × –2%) or for a service in exchange.
Dislike	Target gives you the goods at discount (Cunning × –1%) or for a service in exchange. The target may renege on the bargain if the demanded service is dangerous.
Unfriendly	Target gives you the goods at normal price or for an equal service in exchange.
Malicious	Target sells you the item at normal price but foists off a shoddy or damaged good. Target may perform the service but may renege if they can get away with it.

CHARM

Influence: Persuasion rank **Persuasion Specialty:** Charm
Deception Specialty: Act

Use Charm whenever you would cultivate a friendship, improving the target's disposition to make them more amenable to your position in future intrigues. When you use this technique, you ply your target with complements, empathizing with their plights and conditions, and work to adapt yourself to your subject's desires.

Consequence: Charm is the simple act of cultivating friendships and alliances, or to reason with enemies and avoid conflict. When you defeat an opponent using charm, you improve the target's disposition by one step. The target's improved disposition lasts until circumstances would worsen their disposition against you—such as a betrayal on your part or a rival inciting the opponent against you. In addition, you gain +1B on all Deception and Persuasion tests during your next intrigue against this opponent.

CONVINCE

Influence: Will **Persuasion Specialty:** Convince
Deception Specialty: Act

Sometimes a forceful argument can get your point across where charm or seduction might fail. Convince imparts your position or idea by simply putting the idea out there in a reasoned and logical manner. Convince is a stated desire that stands on its merits alone. It is often less effective because it isn't backed up by a threat, and there may not be something in it for the subject. Thus, it often takes longer to persuade a subject to your position, especially when they are ill-disposed against you.

Consequence: Whenever you defeat an opponent using Convince, you are honestly trying to get the target to assist you or to agree with your position. Using Convince does nothing to improve the target's disposition; instead, Convince gets them to support your position or help you. Even dire enemies can be persuaded to help, provided they have sufficient cause, though there's nothing to say the enemy won't use the opportunity to betray you later. A convinced target assists you through the particular trial but no further.

INCITE

Influence: Cunning rank **Persuasion Specialty:** Incite
Deception Specialty: Bluff

Incite is used to make your subject angry, to fill them with loathing or rage against someone or something. Incite is risky because the unchecked emotion created can cause the subject to react brashly.

Consequence: Inciting a target involves turning the opponent against another opponent, usually by producing evidence of betrayal, vile acts, or revealing any other sordid details your opponent might find repugnant. Incite is often powerful, but it produces short-term effects. An incited target's attitude to the individual, organization, or house you indicate shifts a number of steps downward equal to your rank in Persuasion. Each day after you use Incite on the target, his attitude toward the target improves by one step until it returns to its starting disposition. Typically, only targets whose disposition is worsened to Malicious attack the individual or members of the house or organization you indicate.

INTIMIDATE

Influence: Will rank **Persuasion Specialty:** Intimidate
Deception Specialty: Act or Bluff

You use Intimidate to scare others and make them think twice before crossing you. Intimidating a target temporarily improves their disposition by three steps for a short period, which gets the target to back down, divulge information you're after, flee, or become cooperative and pliable.

Consequence: One of the most powerful techniques, Intimidate is bluster and threats used to frighten or cow your opponent. A successful use of Intimidate either drives off the target—if they can flee—or improves their disposition to Amiable or one step better if already Amiable for as long as you remain in the target's presence if the target cannot flee. The target does as you ask, reveals information, and possibly lies if they believe they have no other

recourse to escape your presence. An intimidated target's disposition in future intrigues is always Unfriendly or worse.

SEDUCE

Influence: Persuasion rank **Persuasion Specialty:** Seduce
Deception Specialty: Bluff

Of all the techniques, seduction is the most subtle. Use of this technique requires patience and practice, as well as a keen eye for body language and innuendo to guide your own words and behavior. If you defeat an opponent using Seduce, you fill the subject with feelings of desire—or at the very least the willingness to give into your advances.

Consequence: Seduction instills feelings of pleasure and affection in the target, blinding them to your faults and ulterior motives. You improve the target's disposition by a number of steps equal to your rank in Persuasion. If the target is attracted to your gender, is capable of physical love, and is at least Friendly, they may be willing to share an intimate moment. As such, it may take several intrigues to seduce a target properly. The ultimate decision rests with whoever controls the character. Players decide if PCs are interested intimacy, and Narrators decide that for NCs. For some characters, an intimate moment may be entirely sexual, while others share a powerful, purely emotional time together that creates a comparable bond. The effects of seduction occur whether or not it's consummated in the characters' preferred way.

Each day after being seduced, the target's disposition shifts down one until it falls to one step below their starting disposition. Each moment of intimacy staves off one day of this degrading disposition, though this no longer becomes possible if the target's disposition falls below Friendly. You can also sustain feelings of attraction by courting the individual and by using Charm to create a more permanent disposition. Characters with dispositions that started at Dislike or worse but who are seduced pretend to be attracted and may even go so far as to engage in lovemaking or some other act of passion. They only follow through if they believe such an act will advance their position or give them some advantage over you—whether it's to produce a bastard, or sneak a knife to their "lover's" throat.

TAUNT

Influence: Awareness rank **Persuasion Specialty:** Taunt
Deception Specialty: Bluff

Taunting is risky. You goad another character into action based on your barbs and insults. You can use Taunt to provoke a character to do something—at the cost of worsening their disposition toward you.

Consequence: Taunting pushes your opponent to act. An opponent who has an Amiable or better disposition does what you want, but when they have completed the task, their disposition falls by one step. An opponent whose disposition is Neutral or Dislike may or may not perform the task based on the danger posed to them. Again, his disposition worsens by one step. Finally, opponents with dispositions worse than Dislike attack you or flee if attacking is not an option.



STEP 6: ACTIONS AND TESTS

During an exchange, a player may choose and perform one of following actions. Each participant has but one action. Influence, which is using one of the techniques in **Step 5**, is the most common action.

CONSIDER

You give up your action for the exchange. You gain +2B on any one test you take during the next exchange. Bonus dice gained in this way cannot exceed your rank in the ability you're testing. Once you roll a test and use these bonus dice, excess bonus dice are lost.

FAST TALK

You can unleash a stream of nonsense in the hopes of distracting your opponent and putting them off guard. Make a Persuasion test against the target's passive Will result. If you achieve at least two degrees, the target loses his Cunning rank from his Intrigue Defense until the end of the next exchange.

INFLUENCE

Influence is the most common action used in an intrigue. It reflects your effort to modify your opponent's behavior. To Influence an opponent, roll a Deception or Persuasion test, gaining bonus dice from your technique. A successful test indicates you Influence your opponent by



an amount described under your technique times your degree of success. You reduce all Influence by your opponent's Disposition Rating. Remaining Influence applies to your target's Composure. Reducing an opponent's Composure to 0 defeats him.

MANIPULATE

You may try to manipulate your opponent's emotions by goading them into using a specific technique. You must beat or equal your opponent's passive Will result with a Persuasion test. If so, you may choose your opponent's technique on the following round.

MOLLIFY

During an intrigue, you may press your opponent too far, or see that your opponent is perilously close to defeating an ally. You can repair damage to Composure by rolling a Formidable (12) Persuasion test to mollify a target. Your test is modified by the target's disposition as normal. A success restores an amount of Composure equal to your Persuasion rank. Each additional degree restores another point of Composure.

QUIT

You need not suffer the indignity of an aggressive opponent, and provided there's an avenue of escape, you can usually flee an intrigue. Upon doing so, the intrigue ends, but there are often other repercussions as determined by the Narrator, especially if there are witnesses to your weakness.

Alternatively, when an opponent who proves uninterested in discussion or negotiation resists your efforts, you may quit the intrigue without trouble, though questions and information offered may raise suspicions and have other consequences.

READ TARGET

In lieu of coercing a target, you can hold back and read your target's disposition and technique. Make an Awareness test against your target's passive Deception result. If you equal or beat your target's test result, you learn the target's current disposition and the technique they use for this exchange. As a result of this insight, you gain +1B on all Deception and Persuasion tests for the duration of the intrigue.

SHIELD OF REPUTATION

You can fall back on your reputation and status to Influence your opponent. Make a Status test against your opponent's passive Will. If you equal or beat the target's passive Will, that target's disposition automatically improves by one step. You may use this action only once per intrigue. Increasing disposition through the use of this action is considered to be exerting Influence on the target.

SWITCH TO COMBAT

On your turn, you can abandon the intrigue and attack your opponent. Clearly, this may not be an option in every intrigue, and attacking may have other consequences, such as imprisonment, loss of rank, and so on. Once you switch to combat, the intrigue immediately ends.

WITHDRAW

You may shore up your defenses and set yourself against your target. Roll a Will test (bonus dice from Dedication apply). The result of the test replaces your Intrigue Defense until the end of the next exchange.

YIELDING

You may choose to yield to an opponent, offering a compromised outcome. You can only yield on your turn in an exchange, and your opponent may accept, offer a counterproposal, or refuse. If you, in turn, refuse a counteroffer, the intrigue continues, and you may not yield. Yielding is an option for when defeat seems certain or if you want to offer an opponent an immediate, lesser, victory to put a quick end to the conflict. If your Composure is 0, the time for yielding has passed; you are defeated, and your opponent doesn't need to negotiate.

LOSING COMPOSURE AND BEING INFLUENCED

When someone successfully uses a technique on you, you lose Composure equal to the Influence it imposes after subtracting your Disposition rating. Your opponent also tracks the Influence "damage" they inflicted on you as a running total in case they're competing with someone else to persuade you.

Loss of Composure doesn't affect you unless it reduces your value to 0 or less, at which point you are defeated.

FRUSTRATION

One way to reduce Influence upon you is to accept frustration. Each point of frustration gained removes an amount of Influence equal to your Will rank. However, each point of frustration gained imposes –1D on all Deception and Persuasion tests for the duration of the intrigue. If your accumulated frustration exceeds your Will rank, you are defeated because you lose your Composure. At the end of the intrigue, win or lose, all accumulated frustration is removed.

Unimportant characters in the story generally don't avoid Influence through frustration, and they tend to yield quickly when the intrigue goes against them, allowing the Narrator to dispense with intrigues quickly when it becomes clear the character has the upper hand (assuming the intrigue was important enough to test the characters' abilities to begin with).

STEP 7: REPEAT

Repeat **Steps 5-7** until the intrigue has been resolved, whether it is because all targets are defeated or have defeated you, combat breaks out, the participants disperse, or some other even happens that interrupts the flow of the intrigue an prevents it from being taken up shortly after.

STEP 8: RESOLUTION

An intrigue usually concludes with some participants persuading others after reducing their Composure to 0.

DEFEAT

If your Composure is reduced to 0 or less, or your accumulated frustration exceeds your Will rank, you are defeated. You must choose between obedience, stress, or Destiny's call.

OBEDIENCE

If you obey, you suffer the consequence of the last technique used on you, and you must fulfill the objective of the character who holds the most Influence over you. If these two directives are incompatible, you must satisfy the consequence, as noted in Consequence vs. Objective. Note that these are not incompatible just because you can't do both things simultaneously. If you can do one, then the other, you will.

STRESS

You may accept stress instead of obeying. In essence, you have decided to deny yourself your social needs, and turn your back on your instincts, but this in turn induces feelings of guilt, anxiety, and other unpleasant emotions tailored to the obligation you have chosen to ignore.

Each rank of stress imposes a cumulative –1D penalty on Awareness, Cunning, and Status tests. Your negative feelings distract you and dull your thinking, and the feeling you are profoundly unworthy hinders your ability to exert authority. You may accumulate up to two ranks of stress. If you would gain a third rank, you lose your stress ranks, but gain a new drawback (see **Chapter 4**) that reflects the consequences of ignoring your social needs. The exact drawback is worked out between you and the Narrator, but the following are recommended: Addicted, Cowardly, Cruel, Debt, Fear, Forgetful, Furious, Haughty, Ignoble, Marked, Nemesis, Outcast, Reviled, and Supreme Arrogance.

You may remove a stress rank by spending a Destiny point or by deciding on obedience after all. If you choose the latter, you lose the stress rank after either succeeding at, or making the best possible attempt short of physical or social suicide to do what, perhaps, you should have done in the first place.

DESTINY'S CALL

You may also burn a Destiny Point when defeated to choose an outcome other than stress or obedience. The Narrator must approve the new outcome, and you should work with them about how to rationalize what happened. It may be a sudden change in attitude or a bizarre twist of fate, but you suddenly feel free from your obligation.

RECOVERING COMPOSURE

You recover all Composure in the scene after the intrigue, as long as there is no possibility of continuing the prior intrigue, though you may start a new intrigue scene as part of a complex intrigue.

Example Standard Intrigue

Lady Lanara of a minor house arranges a meeting with Thalabron, a man-at-arms in the service of another house.

LADY LANARA

Awareness 4, Cunning 3, Persuasion 4, Status 4, Will 3; Intrigue Defense 11; Composure 9

THALABRON

Awareness 3, Cunning 3, Deception 3, Persuasion 3, Status 3, Will 4; Intrigue Defense 9; Composure 12

STEP 1: SCENE

The Narrator sets the scene. Lanara had arranged the meeting to take place in the chapel, away from the ears of her enemies. Thalabron is there waiting. No one else is present. The Narrator mentions this scene has one quality, "With the Gods Watching," to represent the painted statues of the gods arranged before each wall of the sacred building. The Narrator explains that spending a Destiny Point here can grant Lanara a +1B on Persuasion tests involving loyalty and honor.

STEP 2: OBJECTIVE

Hoping to acquire a spy inside the larger house, Lanara believes the information she might learn could give her own house a great advantage among her rivals. Lanara's objective is service.

Thalabron sees this opportunity as a chance to seduce Lanara and bed her. His objective is friendship.

STEP 3: DISPOSITION

Lanara writes down her disposition. Feeling that she's nervous and uncertain about this warrior she settles on Amiable. With this disposition, she gains DR 3 and a +1 Persuasion modifier.

The Narrator knows Thalabron is attracted to Lanara, but he believes the woman is here under other pretenses. He, too, sets his disposition at Amiable.

STEP 4: INITIATIVE

With the scene set, Lanara's player and the Narrator test Status for initiative. Lanara's Status test result is 20. Thalabron's is 9. Lanara goes first during actions and tests.

STEP 5: SELECT TECHNIQUE

Lanara wants to convince the Thalabron to help her, so she decides to use Convince. The warrior wants to bed the noble woman, so he uses Seduce.

Lanara's player initiates the conversation, slowly feeling out her opponent. Meanwhile, Thalabron, who's operating under a misconception, pushes to seduce her, laying it on thick. Sensing an opportunity, Lanara plays coy and maneuvers him by offering a possible tryst in exchange for his assistance.

STEP 6: ACTIONS AND TESTS

As Lanara won the initiative, she goes first. She's not certain what Thalabron's disposition is even though he's clearly interested in bedding her, so sensing an opportunity, she opts to Influence. She rolls a Persuasion test and gets an 18. Because she's Amiable, she adds +1 to her result for 19. Since her test beats Thalabron's Intrigue Defense by 10, she succeeds with three degrees. Convince produces Influence equal to Lanara's Will, so she gets 3 Influence. With her degrees, though, she brings her Influence up to 9. Thalabron reduces the Influence by his DR (3) and applies the rest to his Composure, reducing it to 6.

It's now Thalabron's turn. He's trying to seduce the noblewoman, so he rolls a Persuasion test to Influence her. His roll was poor, resulting in a 7. He's Amiable, so he adds +1 to his result for a total of 8. He didn't beat Lanara's Defense, so he didn't Influence her at all.

STEP 7: REPEAT

Lanara knows she's close to defeating the warrior, but she decides to use Deception to mislead the warrior into thinking that he might have some sort of physical reward for his service. She's deceiving him to make a deal, so if she defeats him, she'll resolve it as a Bargain. Thalabron, clueless, pushes on to seduce the noblewoman.

RESOLUTION

The intrigue continues over a number of exchanges until there's a clear victor, resulting from the defeat or yielding of an opponent. In the end, Lanara defeats the man-at-arms, and he chooses obedience, agreeing to feed Lady Lanara information in exchange for a tumble between the sheets. Since Lanara won, she can set the terms and tells the man-at-arms he will receive his reward once he brings her something of substance. Of course, Lanara does not intend to sleep with the warrior, so upon giving up the information, Lanara will likely have to engage him in another intrigue to retain his service.

Complex Intrigues

Above standard and simple intrigues stand complex intrigues. These exchanges are challenging, involving convoluted negotiations, cunning interplays, and usually a variety of opponents. A complex intrigue consists of several standard intrigues whose outcome Influences the outcome of the complex intrigue. In a way, these standard intrigues represent the battles, and complex intrigue describes the war. You use complex intrigues whenever your outcome has far-reaching consequences, when your objectives involve several Narrator characters, and when the outcome is particularly dangerous. A good example of complex intrigue is the building of alliances to help support your house's invasion of a neighboring lord. To prevent other houses from rallying toward your rival's cause, you likely have to treat with other lords to gain their assistance or at the very least their noninterference. As well, you'll probably deal with merchants, negotiating to get a better price for weapons, horses, and materials, to say nothing of trying to appease your own lord to make a case for the attack in the first place.

Complex intrigues have the following characteristics:

- Involve several participants
- Occur over the course of several standard intrigues
- Involve numerous conflict tests
- Require a number of victory points to achieve final success
- Have far-reaching consequences

COMPLEX INTRIGUE RULES

A complex intrigue consists of several standard intrigues. Before a complex intrigue begins, you must decide what it is you're after: your ultimate goal. Your Narrator may decide the ultimate goal can be attained with a standard intrigue, but in complex plots, you're likely to have to defeat multiple foes in several intrigues to set up the events in a way that realizes your plan.

VICTORY POINTS

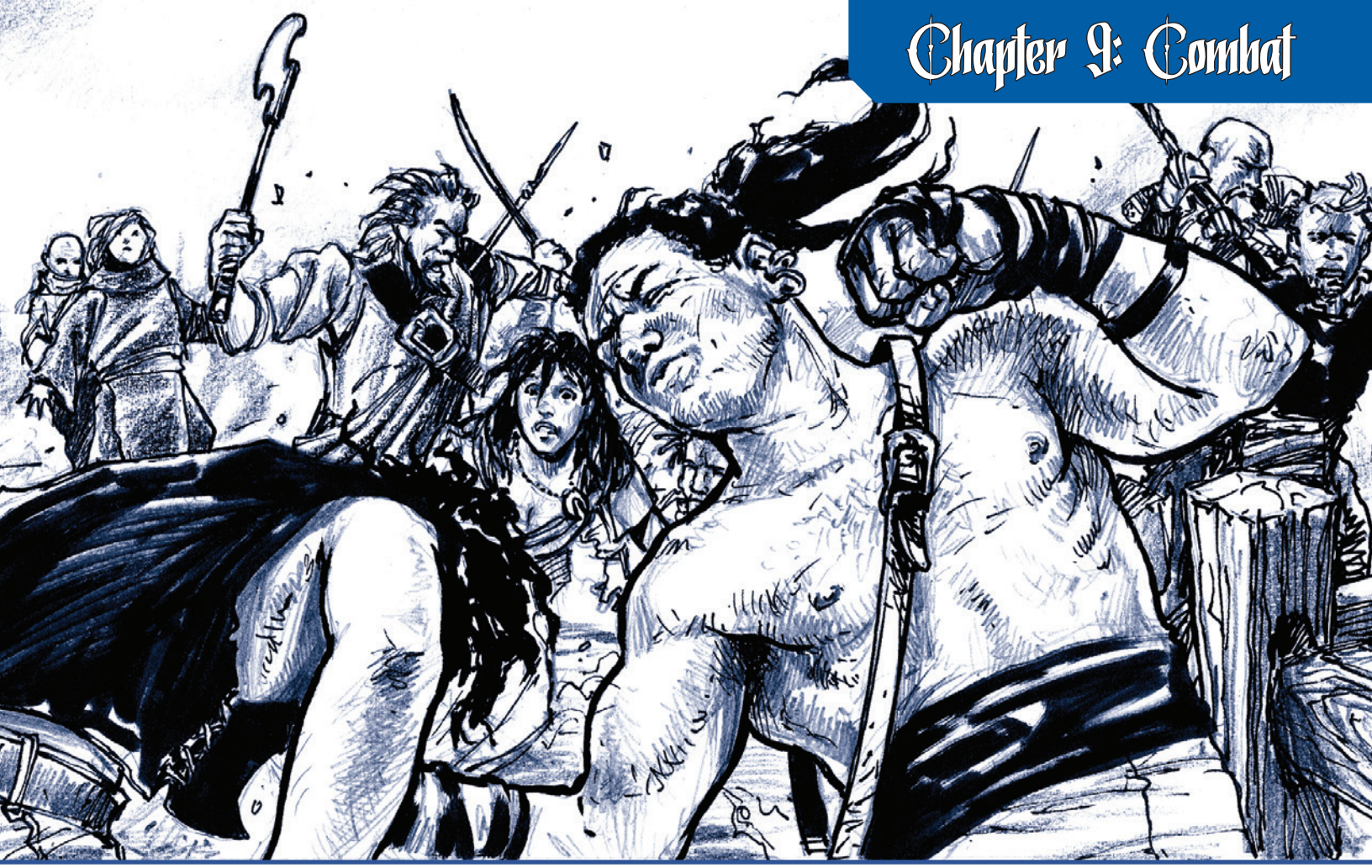
Once you decide on an ultimate goal, the Narrator decides how many Victory Points it needs.

Victory Points are a feature of complex intrigues, those engagements where defeating an opponent is not enough to achieve the overarching objective. Three points are typical, but extremely complex plans may require six or more.

Each time you secure the obedience of someone in a standard intrigue, and they either aid you in an objective or suffer a consequence that contributes to your ultimate goal, you gain 1 Victory Point. Each time you are defeated (your Composure dropping to 0) you lose 1 Victory Point, regardless of the context, as this reflects wasted time and exhaustion. If neither event occurs, your total doesn't change. Once you have accumulated the requisite number of Victory Points, your intrigue is complete, and your plans are enacted.

The standard intrigues that make up a complex intrigue don't have to cover every single thing you need to do in the service of your ultimate goal, but they represent key turning points. Naturally, if your plans require money, military force, or other concrete, measurable assets, you must secure these before your plans fully ripen.

Chapter 9: Combat



Intrigue and interpersonal drama are parts of *Sword Chronicle*, but so are brutal exchanges of swords and axes, gritty action scenes, and deadly consequences. Combat is dangerous, and the outcome of a combat can leave a character dreadfully wounded, captured, or even killed.

Combat Essentials

A combat is far more structured in its approach than other aspects of *Sword Chronicle*. To make sure each combatant has a chance to act—and possibly survive a combat intact—a combat unfolds over a number of rounds, each one divided into a set of turns, one for each player. A combat lasts as long as the participants want to fight or until one side is completely defeated. The essentials of *Sword Chronicle*'s combat system are simple to understand, but there are numerous variations and exceptions in the game, with benefits, maneuvers, and abilities all making the combat system a dynamic and engaging part of the game.

ROUNDS, TURNS, AND ACTIONS

When a combat begins, *Sword Chronicle* cuts up game play into discrete moments called rounds. Each round lasts approximately six seconds. Thus, ten rounds of combat equals about a minute of game time.

During a round, each player and opponent get a **turn** to act. A turn is an opportunity to do something significant (or not) that may affect (or not affect) how the combat develops. While there's only six second in the round, each character acts in order of initiative, so a character who goes first applies the effects of their choices before characters who go later in the round.

On a character's turn, the player may perform any of a variety of actions. Most actions fall into one of three types: Greater, Lesser, and Free. A **Greater Action** consumes the largest chunk of a combatant's turn, representing a furious series of sword blows, running across the battlefield, and so on. Performing a Greater Action uses up your entire turn, so once you resolve your action, you're done until it becomes your turn on the next round.

Lesser Actions are similar to Greater Actions, but they take up less time, allowing you to combine two Lesser Actions on your turn instead of taking one Greater Action. Examples include aiming, firing an arrow from your bow, reloading a crossbow, and moving. During your turn, you may perform up to two Lesser Actions. You can't save unspent Lesser Actions for the following round, so be sure to use them up before the round ends.

Finally, **Free Actions** are minor actions that consume very little time. Usually, these things include shouting orders to men under your command, drawing a weapon, dropping your weapon to the ground, and just about anything else that consumes little or no time. Generally, you can perform as many Free Actions as you like, but your Narrator may judge extensive conversation or rooting around in a saddlebag to be more time-consuming than a Free Action ordinarily allows.

DAMAGE AND DEFEAT

The object of every combat is to defeat your enemies. Defeat usually, but not always, means killing your foes. However, if your opponent

yields, flees, or is knocked unconscious, you have still defeated them. The currency of defeat is damage, and most combat actions are geared toward dealing damage enough to kill, maim, or force your enemy to yield. Since healing and recovery can be uncertain and difficult, players may find it wise to yield when their characters face certain defeat.

The primary method for dealing damage is through conflict tests. You roll a test using Fighting or Marksmanship against your opponent's Combat Defense. A success deals damage as determined by the weapon you're using multiplied by your degree of success. The opponent's Armor Rating reduces the damage you deal, but any damage left over comes off your opponent's Health. Once you reduce an opponent to 0 Health, you defeat them and decide the consequences of defeat.

Combat Statistics

Some abilities are more useful for combat than others. From these key abilities, you derive vital information such as your Combat Defense, Health, your weapon damage, and Movement. What follows is a summary of the game's combat statistics and the methods for coming up with their values.

ABILITIES

All of the following abilities directly affect your character's effectiveness in combat.

AGILITY

Agility represents your natural dexterity, flexibility, and nimbleness, your ability to defend yourself, and your ability to react to new threats.

- Your Agility rank is added to your Combat Defense.
- You test Agility to determine order of initiative.
- Your Agility rank determines the base damage for most Marksmanship weapons and some Fighting weapons.
- You test Agility when taking the Dodge action.

ATHLETICS

Athletics measures your physical prowess, strength, muscle, and ability to use your physical resources.

- Add your Athletics rank to your Combat Defense.
- Athletics can modify how fast you move.
- Athletics determines the base damage for most Fighting weapons and some Marksmanship weapons.

AWARENESS

Awareness describes how attuned you are to your surroundings, helping you notice hidden enemies and dangers.

- Add your Awareness rank to your Combat Defense.
- Hidden opponents test Stealth against your passive Awareness result.

ENDURANCE

Endurance describes your stamina, your natural toughness, and your ability to shrug off damage.

- Your Endurance rank determines your Health.
- Your Endurance rank determines the maximum number of injuries you can take.
- Your Endurance rank determines the maximum number of wounds you can take.
- You test Endurance to overcome injuries and wounds.
- When attacked by poison or some other hazard, that attack must beat your passive Endurance result.

FIGHTING

Fighting measures your skill and training in hand-to-hand combat.

- You test Fighting whenever you would use a weapon in hand-to-hand combat.

MARKSMANSHIP

Marksmanship measures your accuracy and aim with missile weapons.

- You test Marksmanship whenever you would use a weapon in ranged combat.

WARFARE

Warfare describes your understanding of strategy and tactics, your mastery of the battlefield.

- You may test Warfare to gain tactical advantages in combat.

COMBAT DEFENSE

The first line of defense against attacks is your Combat Defense. This derived ability combines your dexterity, your perceptiveness, and your athleticism to define how tough it is to hit you in battle. Your Combat Defense equals:

Agility + Athletics + Awareness + Defensive Bonus (from shields or parrying weapons)

Example

Hal calculates his knight's Combat Defense. Hal has Agility 3, Athletics 4, and Awareness 3. His base Combat Defense is 10. When armed with a large shield, he increases his Combat Defense to 14, due to the +4 bonus it provides.

SIZE

Hitting a large target is easier than hitting a small one. Small targets (children, dogs, and ravens) increase their Combat Defense by +2, while large targets (horses, mammoths, and giants) decrease their Combat Defense by –2.

Movement

Run	Bonus	Modified Movement
0B–1B	+0 yd	4 yd
2B–3B	+1 yd	5 yd
4B–5B	+2 yd	6 yd
6B–7B	+3 yd	7 yd

HELPLESS TARGETS

Any target incapable of defending themselves from attacks—sleeping, restrained, or otherwise prevented from taking actions—is considered helpless. A helpless target loses Agility from Combat Defense and grants attackers +1D on Fighting and Marksmanship tests made to attack them.

HEALTH

Health is your ability to absorb damage and keep on fighting. It doesn't matter how much damage you've taken to Health; so long as you have at least one point of Health, your abilities aren't reduced, and you can continue fighting.

Health = Endurance × 3

Example

Hal's knight has Endurance 4, so his Health is 12 (4×3).

MOVEMENT

Movement describes how far you travel when you use an action to move on your turn. Most characters move 4 yards when unarmored or unburdened by bulky items. Characters with bonus dice in Run may move faster, while characters wearing armor may move slower.

EFFECTS OF ATHLETICS

Physically fit characters can often move faster than unhealthy characters. For every 2 bonus dice in the Run specialty, you move an extra yard on a move. If, however, you only have 1 rank in Athletics, you reduce your Movement to 3 yards (a bonus die in Run negates this penalty). For quick details, see the **Movement** table.

Example

Hal's character has 2B in Run, so his Movement is 5 yards.

EFFECTS OF BULK

When carrying bulky items, you move more slowly than normal. Reduce your Movement by one half of the Bulk carried, and your sprint rate by your Bulk carried. Any bonus Movement from the Run specialty applies before you adjust your Movement for Bulk. The most common sorts of bulky items include armor and large shields, but some Unwieldy weapons also qualify. Bulk cannot reduce your move below 1 yard or your sprint speed below 4 yards.

Armor

Armor	Armor Rating	Armor Penalty	Bulk
Clothing	0	0	0
Robes, Vestments	1	0	1
Padded	1	0	0
Leather, Soft	2	–1	0
Leather, Hard	3	–2	0
Bone or Wood	4	–3	1
Ring	4	–2	1
Hide	5	–2	2
Mail	5	–3	2
Breastplate	5	–2	3
Scale	6	–3	2
Splint	7	–3	3
Brigandine	8	–4	3
Half Plate	9	–5	3
Full Plate	10	–6	3

Barding, armor for horses, supplies the same benefits.

Example

While quick out of armor, Hal's character slows down considerably when wearing full plate (2 Bulk points). When so equipped, he moves 3 yards and runs 14 yards.

Armor

Armor signifies a warrior's status, wealth, and prowess, but even though armor serves to reinforce or diminish a warrior's reputation, armor is fundamentally protection. All armors have three statistics as shown on the **Armor** table in this chapter.

ARMOR RATING

Armor offers some amount of protection, represented by its Armor Rating. When you take damage in combat, you reduce the damage taken by your Armor Rating. Damage can be reduced to 0 but not below 0.

ARMOR PENALTY

Armor can turn aside killing blows, but it does so at a cost. Heavier forms of armor can interfere with your Movement, making you slower to react to opponents and maintain your balance. All forms of armor

impose a penalty that you apply to the results of all Agility tests. Armor is designed for fighting, however, so even though it slows you down, it doesn't reduce your Combat Defense.

BULK

Heavier armors impose Bulk. As mentioned, every two points of Bulk reduce your move by 1 yard, and every point of Bulk reduces your sprint speed by 1 yard.

Weapons

Weapons are more than just tools. Like armor, they are a symbol of status, training, and expertise. A combatant armed with a rapier likely fights differently from a warrior wielding a greatsword. The **Combat Weapons** table provides summaries combat statistics for a variety of weapons. Weapon descriptions can be found in **Chapter 7: Equipment**.

WEAPON TRAITS

Each weapon has several traits to reflect its assets and disadvantages in combat.

SPECIALTY

The specialty entry describes which specialty applies to your Fighting test when wielding this weapon in combat. When attacking with the weapon, you may roll any bonus dice from the listed specialty in which you have invested.

TRAINING

Not all weapons are created equal, some are harder to use than are others. Certain weapons require a minimum level of specialized training to wield properly and those without the minimum specialty rank find fighting with these weapons more challenging than simpler ones. Whenever a weapon indicates 1B, 2B, and so on under training, you lose the indicated number of bonus dice from your Fighting or Marksmanship tests with the weapon. If the penalty reduces your bonus dice to less than 0 (or you have none to begin with), you take a penalty die on your tests with the weapon for each additional –1. For example, a character using a whip loses two bonus dice. If she only has 1B in Brawling, she loses the bonus die and takes a penalty die. If she has no bonus dice in Brawling, she takes –2D on her Fighting tests with the whip.

DAMAGE

The damage a weapon deals is derived from both its construction and the ability of its wielder. The base damage is equal to your rank in the listed ability. Many weapons include modifiers as well, which you add to or subtract from your rank in the associated ability. Most Fighting weapons use Athletics, and most ranged weapons use Agility, but there are several exceptions. Multiply this base damage times your degree of success on the attack test. Only after you have totaled the damage do you reduce it by your opponent's Armor Rating.

QUALITIES

Qualities individuate weapons from other weapons, providing a group of functions that make a particular weapon stand out from the rest. Qualities can take the form of advantages that provide a tactical benefit in combat, while others impose drawbacks to make up for improved damage or an advantage. Most weapons have at least one quality.

ADAPTABLE

An Adaptable weapon is designed for use with one or two hands. When you wield this weapon in two hands, increase the weapon's damage by +1.

BULK

Some weapons are heavy or awkward and, thus, slow you down in combat. If a weapon has a Bulk rating, it applies toward your total Bulk for the purposes of reducing your Movement.

CLOSE RANGE

A Close Range weapon has an effective range of 10 yards, meaning you can attack opponents within 10 yards at no penalty. You can still attack opponents beyond this range, but you take –1D for every 10 yards beyond this range. Thus, attacking an opponent that's 11 yards away imposes –1D on your Marksmanship test.

DEFENSIVE

Defensive weapons serve a dual function. They can be used as weapons, but they are often more effective in knocking aside your enemies' attacks. If you are armed with a Defensive weapon and do not attack with it, you add the weapon's Defensive rating to your Combat Defense. Many Defensive weapons also have the Off-hand quality, which allows you to wield them and a primary weapon at the same time. If you choose to add your Off-hand bonus to your damage, you lose the Defensive Bonus until the start of your next turn.

ENTANGLING

An Entangling weapon slows and hampers your opponent. A foe struck by an Entangling weapon reduces Movement to 1 yard and takes a –5 penalty on all tests. The target can free themselves by rolling a Challenging (9) Athletics test (bonus dice from Strength apply) or Challenging (9) Agility test (bonus dice from Contortionist apply). You cannot make further attacks with an Entangling weapon as long as it affects your target.

FAST

A Fast weapon is designed to slip past your opponent's defenses and enable its wielder to strike rapidly. When you make a divided attack using a Fast weapon, you gain +1B on each test. These bonus dice cannot exceed the number of test dice rolled per attack.

GRAB

Grab weapons let you seize and hold onto an opponent, preventing them from moving away from you. Whenever you successfully hit an

opponent with a Grab weapon and also equal or beat that opponent's passive Athletics result (Strength applies), you may, if you choose, grab that opponent.

A grabbed opponent cannot move until you release them (a Free Action) or until that opponent beats you on an opposed Fighting test (Brawling applies; A Lesser Action). A grabbed opponent can only make attacks using Brawling weapons or short blades. Finally, grabbed opponents take a –5 penalty on their Combat Defense (minimum 1).

While you grab an opponent, you cannot move, and you may only make attacks against that opponent using a Grab or Off-hand weapon.

IMPALE

Impale weapons punch through their victim. Whenever you get three or more degrees with an Impale weapon, you drive the weapon through your opponent. You must immediately succeed on a Challenging (9) Athletics test. A failed test indicates you are disarmed, as the weapon remains in your opponent. If you succeed, your opponent cannot move, but you cannot attack with the weapon, either. To yank the weapon free, you must succeed on an Athletics test against a Difficulty of 3 + the opponent's Armor Rating. A success frees the weapon, and every additional degree deals the weapon damage again.

PINNING AN OPPONENT

As a Greater Action, you can use an Impale weapon to pin an impaled foe to the ground, wall, or some other surface. Roll an Athletics test against your opponent's passive Endurance result (Resilience applies). A successful test prevents your opponent from moving until they pull themselves free.

GETTING FREE

An impaled opponent may remove the weapon by spending a Greater Action and by successfully rolling a Challenging (9) Athletics test. Removal inflicts 1 injury—or 1 wound if the victim cannot take any more injuries. An ally may remove the weapon safely by succeeding on a Formidable (12) Healing test as a Greater Action. Failure removes the weapon but deals 1 point of damage for every 5 points by which the test failed (minimum 1 point).

LONG RANGE

Provided you have a clear shot, you can fire a Long Range weapon at targets up to 100 yards away. For every 100 yards of distance between you and your target, you take –1D on your Marksmanship test.

MOUNTED

Mounted weapons are too large and bulky to be used on foot and, thus, are intended for use while mounted on a horse or some other steed. Using these weapons on foot imposes –2D on your Fighting tests.

OFF-HAND

An Off-hand weapon can be wielded in your off-hand, allowing you to add your Off-hand modifier to your primary weapon damage on a successful Fighting test. To gain this benefit, you must spend a Greater Action to make a Two-weapon attack (see page 141).



Combat Weapons

Weapon	Specialty	Training	Damage[1]	Qualities
Battleaxe	Axes	—	Athletics	Adaptable
Crowbill	Axes	—	Athletics–1	Shattering 1
Hand Axe	Axes	—	Athletics–1	Defensive +1, Off-hand +1
Longaxe	Axes	1B	Athletics+3	Bulk 1, Powerful, Reach, Two-handed, Vicious
Mattock	Axes	—	Athletics+1	Powerful, Slow, Two-handed
Woodsman's Axe	Axes	—	Athletics+1	Two-handed
Ball and Chain	Bludgeon	1B	Athletics	Powerful, Shattering 1
Cudgel/Club	Bludgeon	—	Athletics–1	Off-hand +1
Flail	Bludgeon	2B	Athletics+3	Powerful, Shattering 1, Two-handed
Mace	Bludgeon	—	Athletics	—
Maul	Bludgeon	—	Athletics +1	Bulk 1, Shattering 1, Slow, Staggering, Two-handed
Morningstar	Bludgeon	—	Athletics	Shattering 1, Vicious
Quarterstaff	Bludgeon	—	Athletics	Fast, Two-handed
Warhammer	Bludgeon	—	Athletics	Bulk 1, Powerful, Shattering 2, Slow, Two-handed
Fist	Brawling	—	Athletics–3	Grab, Off-hand +1
Gauntlet	Brawling	—	Athletics–2	Grab, Off-hand +1
Improvised	Brawling	—	Athletics–1	Slow
Knife	Brawling	—	Athletics–2	Fast, Off-hand +1
Whip	Brawling	2B	Agility–1	Entangling, Reach
Left-hand Dagger	Fencing	1B	Agility–1	Defensive +2, Off-hand +1
Rapier	Fencing	1B	Agility	Defensive +1, Fast
Small Sword	Fencing	—	Agility–1	Fast
Bastard Sword	Long Blade	1B	Athletics+1	Adaptable
Greatsword	Long Blade	—	Athletics+3	Powerful, Slow, Two-handed, Unwieldy, Vicious
Longsword	Long Blade	—	Athletics+1	—
Halberd	Pole-arm	1B	Athletics+3	Bulk 1, Powerful, Two-handed, Unwieldy
Khopesh	Long Blade	1B	Athletics	Adaptable, Fast
Peasant Tool	Pole-arm	—	Athletics+2	Two-handed, Unwieldy
Pole-axe	Pole-arm	1B	Athletics+3	Bulk 1, Powerful, Reach, Two-handed, Unwieldy
Buckler	Shield	—	Athletics–2	Defensive +1, Off-hand +1
Shield	Shield	—	Athletics–2	Defensive +2
Shield, Large	Shield	1B	Athletics–2	Bulk 1, Defensive +4
Shield, Tower	Shield	2B	Athletics–2	Bulk 2, Defensive +6
Dagger	Short Blade	—	Agility–2	Defensive +1, Off-hand +1
Dirk	Short Blade	—	Agility–2	Off-hand +2
Stiletto	Short Blade	1B	Agility	Piercing 2
Boar Spear	Spear	1B	Athletics+1	Impale, Powerful, Slow, Two-handed
Fishing Spear	Spear	1B	Agility+1	Adaptable

Combat Weapons

Weapon	Specialty	Training	Damage[1]	Qualities
Pike	Spear	—	Athletics+2	Impale, Set for Charge, Slow, Two-handed, Unwieldy
Spear	Spear	—	Athletics	Fast, Two-handed
Tourney Lance	Spear	1B	Animal Handling+3	Bulk 1, Mounted, Powerful, Reach, Slow
Trident	Spear	—	Athletics	Adaptable, Slow
War Lance	Spear	1B	Animal Handling +4	Bulk 2, Impale, Mounted, Powerful, Slow, Vicious
Bow, Double-curved	Bow	1B	Agility+1	Long Range, Powerful, Two-handed
Bow, Hunting	Bow	—	Agility	Long Range, Two-handed
Longbow	Bow	1B	Agility+2	Long Range, Piercing 1, Two-handed, Unwieldy
Crossbow, Heavy	Crossbow	—	Agility+2	Long Range, Piercing 2, Reload (Greater), Slow, Two-handed, Vicious
Crossbow, Light	Crossbow	—	Agility+1	Long Range, Reload (Lesser), Slow
Crossbow, Medium	Crossbow	—	Agility+1	Long Range, Piercing 1, Reload (Lesser), Slow, Two-handed
Crossbow, Repeating	Crossbow	1B	Agility+1	Long Range, Piercing 1, Two-handed
Frog Spear	Thrown	1B	Agility+1	Close Range
Hand Axe	Thrown	—	Athletics	Close Range
Javelin	Thrown	—	Athletics	Close Range
Knife	Thrown	—	Agility–1	Close Range, Fast
Net	Thrown	1B	None	Close Range, Entangling
Sling	Thrown	—	Athletics–1	Long Range
Spear	Thrown	—	Athletics	Close Range
Trident	Thrown	—	Athletics	Close Range

†Minimum 1

PIERCING

Piercing weapons bypass armor. Whenever you hit an opponent with a Piercing weapon, your damage ignores an amount of Armor Rating equal to the listed value.

POWERFUL

Strong characters can put more muscle behind Powerful weapons and, thus, deal more damage on a successful hit. For every bonus die invested in Strength, you can increase a Powerful weapon's damage by +1.

REACH

When armed with a Reach weapon, you can attack opponents that are not adjacent to you. You can roll a Fighting test with a Reach weapon at any opponent up to 3 yards away. However, attacking any foe inside 3 yards with a Reach weapon imposes –1D on your Fighting test.

RELOAD

A Marksmanship weapon with the Reload quality requires an action to reload the weapon after it has been fired. The weapon's quality specifies what sort of action is required to reload the weapon, either Lesser or Greater.

SET FOR CHARGE ONLY

A Set for Charge weapon is too unwieldy for use in normal combat and functions only when used with the Counterattack action. See **Counterattack** on page 149 for details.

SHATTERING

Shattering weapons are designed to smash through shields, parrying weapons, and armor. Whenever you get two or more degrees on a Fighting test made with a Shattering weapon, you reduce the opponent's Defensive Bonus or Armor Rating by the amount indicated by the quality. The Shattering weapon affects weapons with a Defensive Bonus first. Reducing a weapon's Defensive Bonus or an armor's Armor Rating to 0 destroys it.

SLOW

A Slow weapon is cumbersome and difficult to wield with speed and grace. You may not make Divided Attacks using these weapons.

STAGGERING

The force of a Staggering weapon's hit can knock a foe senseless. Whenever you attain two or more degrees with a successful Fighting test using a Staggering weapon, you may sacrifice one degree to prevent your foe from taking a Greater Action on their next turn.

TWO-HANDED

Large weapons need both hands to be wielded properly in combat. If you use only one hand, you take –2D on your Fighting test.

UNWIELDY

An Unwieldy weapon isn't designed to be used while mounted, so when astride a steed, you take –2D on Marksmanship tests involving Unwieldy weapons.

VICIOUS

Some weapons are so good at what they do that fighting with them produces ugly outcomes. If you defeat a foe when wielding a Vicious weapon, the consequences of defeat are always death. A victim may burn a Destiny Point, as normal, to avoid this fate.



Combat Structure

All combats use the same series of steps, each of which are repeated over a number of rounds until the combat ends. This procedure is simple, and after running a few combats, you won't even have to reference these steps; they'll become second nature.

Step 1: Battlefield
Step 2: Detection
Step 3: Initiative
Step 4: Action
Step 5: Repeat
Step 6: Resolution

STEP 1: BATTLEFIELD

The Narrator describes any salient features found on the battlefield. Muddy ground sodden with rainwater and blood can suck at boots, slowing the combatants as they struggle for victory. A cloudburst sending down sheets of rain can render ranged attacks worthless, and smoke can weaken the fighters as they spend half their time coughing and struggling for breath. These factors are called Battlefield Qualities, and nearly every combat has at least one, but some may have as many five. When the combat begins, the Narrator describes the battlefield's appearance and the general tactical situation. During this description, the Narrator also points out any relevant Battlefield Qualities.

BATTLEFIELD QUALITIES

Battlefield Qualities are salient factors that modify combats, interfering with or augmenting attacks, creating obstacles and opportunities for victory. A Battlefield Quality can be broad, affecting all characters equally, or narrow, in which it is constrained to a specific location on the battlefield. Smoke might be a broad Battlefield Quality, while a raging river could be narrow. All Battlefield Qualities affect characters exposed to them in the same way, usually offering bonus or penalty dice. However, characters with Destiny Points can spend them to augment a Battlefield Quality's effects for one round to create an opportunity to strike their victim or make a quick getaway.

BOUNDARIES

Boundaries include walls, locked doors, cliffs, and anything else that prevents moving in a specific direction. Boundaries halt movement.

Destiny: If you spend a Destiny Point, you find a way around or through a boundary, such as an unseen passage, a nearby key to unlock the door, a tangle of vines to aid in climbing up or down a cliff face, and so on. You decide the nature of this new avenue subject so long as the explanation is logical and possible and is always subject to the Narrator's approval.

OBSTACLES

Obstacles include unlocked doors, pillars, columns, statues, windows, and anything else that slows but doesn't necessarily stop movement. A Battlefield Quality is deemed an obstacle if it slows but doesn't stop movement.

Moving over or through an obstacle is a Lesser Action and is not part of normal movement. Thus, crawling over an altar would require one Lesser Action to reach the altar and one Lesser Action to climb over the altar.

OBSTACLES AS COVER

Obstacles provide cover. When standing behind an obstacle, you gain a +5 bonus to your Combat Defense against attacks from which you have cover. If you crouch down behind cover and take no other actions, the bonus increases to +10.

Destiny: By spending a Destiny Point, you can move over or through an obstacle as part of your normal Movement. Alternatively, you can increase the bonus to your Combat Defense gained from cover by an additional +5.

BYSTANDERS

Bystanders include anyone not involved in the combat. Bystanders are often crowds of commoners, horses, sheep, and just about anyone or any creature not directly involved in the fight. Bystanders merely watch the combat; they don't participate in the action. While bystanders don't generally find themselves in danger, they can be of use to opportunistic combatants.

BYSTANDERS AS COVER

As with obstacles, bystanders provide cover. However, when an attack misses because of the cover afforded by the bystander, the attack strikes the bystander instead. The attack deals damage to the bystander as normal. Minor characters usually do not negate damage by taking injuries; thus, these attacks can be and are often lethal to bystanders.

Destiny: Whenever you are hit by an attack and are standing next to a bystander, you may spend a Destiny Point for the damage to apply to the bystander instead of you.

THINGS AND STUFF

Battlefields are littered with all sorts of things, from weapons and shields, to carcasses, broken wagons, scorched wood, and countless other miscellaneous items. Even beyond the fields of war, useful and not-so-useful items lay about anywhere you look. A fight in a tavern might have mugs, trenchers, knives, pots of scalding soup, barstools, and more. The Narrator will describe the most useful and obvious items present, but spending a Destiny Point can put a useful item directly into your hands.

Destiny: Spending a Destiny Point allows you to find a minor useful object. Examples include a broken sword when disarmed, a battered shield when hard-pressed, and so on.

VISIBILITY

Visibility describes the quality of sight on the battlefield and notes the effects of anything that impedes vision. Examples include darkness, smoke, fog, rain, and even foliage.

LIT

Sunlight, torches, or lanterns, all provide illumination enough to see clearly. When in lit areas, you take no penalties.

SHADOWY

Shadowy lighting occurs when the lighting is poor, such as being just inside a cave on an overcast day or at the outer edge of light cast by your campfire. Shadowy lighting can also occur in smoke-filled areas, during downpours, snow, twilight, or even in the light of a full moon. When in an area of shadowy light, you take –1D on all Agility, Athletics, Awareness, Fighting, and Thievery tests. You take –2D on all Marksmanship tests.

Destiny: You may spend a Destiny Point in areas of poor visibility to slip away from your opponent and make a Stealth test to hide. You may also spend a Destiny Point to remove the effects of poor visibility for you for one round, getting a break in the fog or a momentary respite from the rain.

DARKNESS

Darkness occurs on moonless nights, in dark rooms, or underground. In darkness, all terrain counts as treacherous (see **Terrain** following). You also take –2D on all Agility, Athletics, Awareness, Fighting, and Thievery tests, and –4D on all Marksmanship tests.

Destiny: If you ignite a light source in an area of no lighting, you can spend a Destiny Point to blind all targets within the radius of the light source for one round. Effectively, these targets do not benefit from the improved lighting until the start of their next turn.

TERRAIN

Any terrain that is difficult to move through, such as deep water, rubble, extensive underbrush, ice, snow and so on is called treacherous terrain. Such terrain decreases the rate at which you move through the area. For every yard you would travel, treacherous terrain costs an extra yard of your Movement. So if you move 1 yard over rubble, you must spend 2 yards of Movement. Charging and running are impossible in areas of treacherous terrain.

The effects of treacherous terrain are cumulative, so each factor present that would create treacherous terrain costs an extra yard of Movement to move through. If you do not have enough Movement to move even 1 yard of Movement, you may spend a Greater Action to move 1 yard.

Destiny: You can spend a Destiny Point to ignore the effects of treacherous terrain for one round.

OTHER QUALITIES

There are many more possible Battlefield Qualities than those described here, including such things as temperature, the deck of a rocking ship, clouds of biting flies, and more. The Narrator is free to apply modifiers based on these factors, using guidelines described under Penalty Dice in **Chapter 1: Game Rules**. When spending a Destiny Point to augment these qualities, you could negate their effects on you or increase their effects against a single opponent for one round.

Miniatures

Some gaming groups use miniatures as aids to help resolve conflicts. While miniatures are certainly not required for this game, having some sort of representative token can go a long way toward keeping track of what the various characters are doing and their relative positions. So even if you don't have a pile of painted or pre-painted figures to use, dice, glass beads, game components from board games, or anything else may serve. Simply assign a piece to each player character and to each opponent, and arrange them based on the starting positions before the start of the conflict, usually during **Step 1: Battlefield**.

Many gaming groups also use wet-erase mats lined with grids. These are excellent tools because the Narrator can sketch out the scene quickly with a wet-erase pen, noting any qualities, terrain features, and other details that could affect the conflict's outcome. These maps also provide a sense of scale (each square equals 1 yard). For groups that prefer to use terrain without a grid, one inch equals 1 yard. Again, these accessories are not necessary to enjoy *Sword Chronicle,* but they can certainly enhance play.

STEP 2: DETECTION

Hidden characters roll Stealth tests against their foes' passive Awareness to gain surprise. Detection is an optional step that only comes up when one side hides or is otherwise concealed from their opponents. If any combatants attempt to hide, they must test Stealth against a Difficulty equal to their opponent's passive Awareness. Any opponents they beat are surprised by their attacks.

SURPRISE

When attacking an opponent you have surprised, you gain +1D on your Fighting and Marksmanship tests during the first round of combat.

STEP 3: INITIATIVE

Initiative sets the order of when each combatant takes their turn. Each combatant (or group of similar combatants) tests Agility (bonus dice from Quickness apply). The Narrator then arranges the results from highest to lowest. The character with the highest result goes first, followed by the next highest, and so on until every combatant has had a turn to act.

TIES

If there's a tie again, compare the bonus dice from Quickness. If there's still a tie, the characters test Agility again to see who goes first. The result of this second test doesn't change the order in the initiative as it relates to other combatants; it only determines which combatant who had the tie goes first.

DELAYING

The Agility test result describes the earliest a character may act in the round. You may always wait until later in the round to act, but you cannot interrupt another character's turn. You may only take your action after another character has completely finished their turn.

STEP 4: ACTION

During the first round, each character acts, in order of highest initiative to lowest, taking one **Greater Action** or two **Lesser Actions**.

Combat lives in actions. The choices that the combatants make, the success or failure of their rolls, and how they interact with the battlefield all work together to simulate the thrill and danger of battle. Your imagination is the only limit on what you can attempt in battle, but this extensive section covers the most likely and most successful actions a character might attempt.

GREATER AND LESSER ACTIONS

When it's your turn to act, you may perform a variety of actions. You have two Lesser Actions, or you may combine them for one Greater Action.

A Lesser Action could be moving, attacking, standing up, or diving for cover. A Greater Action includes dodging, charging, knocking a foe to the ground, pulling a rider from their horse, and so on.

As a rule of thumb, a Lesser Action takes about three seconds of time, while a Greater Action takes six seconds. So if you want to try something not described in this chapter, your Narrator will judge how long the effort will take and whether or not your action qualifies as a Lesser or Greater Action.

ATTACK

The attack is obviously the most common action in combat. Anytime you are armed with a weapon, unarmed (but feisty), or when wielding an improvised weapon, you may attack an opponent.

- When armed with a Fighting weapon, you must be adjacent to your opponent. This situation is called being engaged.
- When armed with a Reach Fighting weapon, you can attack foes up to 3 yards away.
- When armed with a Close Range Marksmanship weapon, you can attack foes within 10 yards at no penalty.
- When armed with a Long Range Marksmanship weapon, you can attack foes within 100 yards at no penalty.

If you meet the conditions, roll a Fighting or Marksmanship test, and compare the result to your opponent's Combat Defense. A successful hit deals base damage times degree of success. Once you have totaled the damage, your opponent reduces the damage by their AR and applies any left over to their Health. There are several forms of attack as follows. You may make only *one* attack in a round, regardless of action it requires; to attack multiple opponents at once, use the divided attack or two-weapon attack options.

STANDARD ATTACK — LESSER

The standard attack is the default and most common attack in combat. It involves a simple conflict test.

Example

Marald attacks a man-at-arms from his rival's house. Marald has Fighting 4 (Long Blades 4). His opponent has a Combat Defense of 9. Marald's player rolls eight dice—four for ability rank and four for his specialty—and keeps the best four, getting a total of 19, which hits by 10.

Normally, a longsword deals damage equal to the attacker's Athletics+1. Marald has rank 4, so a regular successful attack would deal 5 damage. However, Marald got two degrees of success (he beat the Difficulty by at least 10), so Marald deals three times this damage (5 + 5 + 5) for 15 damage. His foe wears ring mail (AR 4), so the armor reduces the damage to 11, a solid—and ugly—hit.

Example

Marald's companion, Thrail, a scout and hunter, stands on a nearby hill. Armed with a longbow, she takes a shot at the same man-at-arms. Thrail has Marksmanship 4 and Bows 2B. Thrail's player rolls six dice and keeps the best four, getting a 17, a solid hit. Since she beat her opponent's Combat Defense (9 from the previous example) by more than 5, he gets two degrees, allowing her to deal extra damage. Longbows deal Agility+2 and have Piercing 1. Thrail has Agility 3, so her attack deals 10 damage (5 + 5). Ordinarily, the enemy's armor would reduce this damage to 6, but because longbows also have the Piercing 1 quality, thus reducing AR by 1, the man-at-arms takes 7 points of damage, which is enough to defeat him.

DIVIDED ATTACK — GREATER

When facing several opponents, you may switch your tactics to battle all your enemies at once, making attacks against each foe. When doing so, you may divide your Fighting test dice in any way that you wish between your opponents. You may also need to split your bonus dice, if any, as your bonus dice can't exceed your test dice. Resolve each attack separately as normal.

Example

Seeing Marald strike down the man-at-arms in short order, two allied mercenaries come barreling toward the warrior to get revenge. Now faced with two opponents, Marald decides to attack both in the same round. He splits his attack evenly, so his first attack uses two test dice plus two bonus dice from his specialty and his second attack is the same. The mercenaries both have a Combat Defense of 9.

On Marald's first attack, he rolls a 10, which hits. Both mercenaries wear mail (AR 5), which reduces the damage (4) to 0. Marald's next attack is a 10 as well, which hits but is not enough to get past the second knight's armor.

TWO-WEAPON ATTACK — GREATER

Whenever you wield a weapon in your main hand and an Off-hand weapon in your other hand, you can combine them to make a more powerful attack. Simply add the weapon's Off-hand modifier to your primary weapon's damage. You deal this damage on a successful Fighting test. If your Off-hand weapon has the Defensive quality, you lose that quality until the start of your next turn.

Example

Kaela is a vicious mercenary who wields a rapier in her right hand and a dagger in her left. She's toyed with the brute for a few rounds, nicking him here and there, but has finally grown weary of the conflict and decides to press in for the kill. She drops the +1 Defensive Bonus from her dirk to add +1 to her damage. She attacks and hits with three degrees. Normally, she would deal 4 damage with her rapier, but because she also attacked with her dirk, she deals 5. After her three degrees of success, she inflicts an impressive 15 points of damage.

COMBINING ATTACKS — GREATER

Although divided and two-weapon attacks all require Greater Actions, you can combine them into a single attack as follows. You may split your Fighting dice between multiple opponents. Resolve the attacks as normal, but increase your damage on each attack by your Off-hand weapon.

PIN — GREATER ACTION

If you are grabbing an opponent at the start of your turn (see **Grab** on page 134), you can pin your opponent to the ground by beating your opponent on an opposed Athletics test. If you succeed, you can maintain the pin by spending a Greater Action each round.

Consequences: A pinned opponent can take no actions other than to try to break the pin. As a Greater Action, the pinned opponent must beat you on an opposed Fighting test (Brawling applies). A pinned opponent counts as helpless. See **Helpless Targets** on page 133.

MOUNTED ATTACK

A mounted attack occurs whenever you attack from the back of a steed. Fighting from horseback provides a variety of advantages, including enhanced mobility, the advantage of height, and—if the mount is trained for war—the steed's own hoof and bite attacks.

When riding a steed, you gain the following benefit:

- Use the mount's Movement in place of your own.
- Gain +1B on Fighting tests made to attack non-mounted opponents.

When riding a steed trained for war, you gain the following benefits:

- If your mount doesn't move during your turn, increase your damage on a successful Fighting test by +2.

ATTACKING STEEDS

Although deemed dishonorable to attack a rider's steed, your mount is always at risk of injury when you ride it into battle. Enemies attacking you may choose to attack your steed. Should your mount's Health fall to 0, it dies. However, you may spend a Destiny Point to give your steed an injury or wound to remove this damage as normal (see **Injuries**).

SLAIN STEEDS

Should your mount die while you are riding it, you must immediately succeed on a Formidable (12) Animal Handling test. If you succeed, you leap clear of the collapsing steed and land within a yard of the poor beast. If you fail, you take damage (ignoring AR) equal to the mount's Athletics rank from the fall and are trapped beneath the dead animal. Freeing yourself requires a Greater Action and a Challenging (9) Agility or Athletics test (bonus dice from Contortions or Strength apply). Other characters may assist as normal or pull you out by succeeding on an Athletics test against the same Difficulty. While trapped, you take a –5 penalty to your Combat Defense.

PULLING A RIDER FROM A MOUNT	GREATER

In addition to a straight attack, you can also try to pull a rider from their mount. You may do so only if you are armed with a Grab weapon or a pole-arm. Roll a Fighting test against your opponent's passive Animal Handling result (Ride applies). If you equal or beat the Difficulty, you pull your opponent from their mount, and they land prone on the ground, adjacent to their steed.

OTHER ACTIONS

In addition to attack, there are a number of other actions you might perform in combat.

ASSIST	LESSER

As a Lesser Action, you can assist an ally on their test. If assisting on an attack, you must be adjacent to your ally's opponent. For other tests, your ally must be able to clearly see and hear you and may need to be adjacent, depending on the task to which you're lending your assistance. You grant one half your ability dice as bonus dice (minimum one die) to the ally you are trying to help. As normal, the number of useable bonus dice cannot exceed the character's ability rank.

CATCH YOUR BREATH	GREATER

You can take a quick rest as a Greater Action to catch your breath. Roll an Automatic (0) Endurance test. Each degree of success removes one point of damage.

CHARGE	GREATER

Throwing caution to the wind, you surge forward to destroy your enemies. Charging allows you to combine Movement with an attack. You can charge any opponent that's up to twice your Movement away. At the end of your charge, you may make a standard attack. You take –1D on the attack, but you increase the weapon's damage by +2 for the round.

DODGE	GREATER

In the face of overwhelming odds, sometimes it's best just to get out of the way. When you take the Dodge action, you may move up to half your Movement if you choose, usually to reach cover. Roll an Agility test. The result replaces your Combat Defense (even if worse) until your next turn. Add any Defensive Bonuses gained from weapons to your test result.

INTERACT	LESSER

Manipulating an object includes picking something up from the ground, moving an object, retrieving a stowed possession, drawing a weapon from a scabbard, and so on. It also includes opening doors or windows, pulling levers, and anything else you would move, shove, or pull in the environment. Interact also allows you to mount a horse or climb inside of a vehicle.

Some hard-to-reach items, such as a small item at the bottom of a pack, may require more time as determined by the Narrator.

Move and Draw: You can draw a weapon while moving, but you take –1D on all attacks until your next turn.

MOVE	LESSER

A move is a brisk walk, and you may move a number of yards equal to your Movement. If you spend both Lesser Actions to move, you can move up to twice your Movement.

SPRINT	GREATER

You may also sprint. Sprinting allows you to move up to four times your Movement.

FALL DOWN/STAND UP	LESSER

You can drop to the ground or pick yourself up as a Lesser Action. If your Armor Rating is 6 or higher, it requires a Greater Action to stand.

DRIVE/RIDE	VARIES

When mounted on a steed, your mount's action is spent moving or attacking; however, you must spend a Lesser Action to control your beast if it is trained for war or a Greater Action if not. If your steed is injured, regardless of its training, controlling the animal is a Greater Action. See **Animal Handling** in **Chapter 3: Abilities & Specialties** for details.

Vehicles drawn by animals work much in the same way. Driving a vehicle requires a Lesser Action each round. If the driver is slain or leaves their post, the vehicle moves as long as the animal is inclined to pull it, usually in the direction it was pointed last. Other characters on the vehicle may move about normally, but the vehicle counts as treacherous terrain. If moving would carry a passenger out of the vehicle, they may take damage from the fall. A fall from a slow-moving vehicle deals 1d6–3 points of damage, while a fall from a fast-moving vehicle deals 1d6+3 points of damage.

PASS	GREATER

You opt to wait and see what develops. You take no action on your turn but gain +2B on the next test you take, subject to the normal limits on bonus dice. Any excess bonus dice are lost. Multiple rounds spent passing are not cumulative.

USE ABILITY	VARIES

You may use other abilities not directly related to the combat. You might use Athletics to break down a locked door, Awareness to look for an exit, Agility to catch a swinging rope, and so on. The test's Difficulty depends on the action intended.

In addition, many abilities can be used in one round, but some are far more involved and may require several rounds to complete, indicating you have to spend several rounds working toward completing the task while the conflict rages around you.

USE DESTINY POINTS	NO ACTION

Destiny Points grant you a bit more control over your fate and allow you to modify circumstances in minor and major ways. Spending or burning a Destiny Point in combat is not an action.

YIELD	GREATER

On your turn, you may sacrifice your entire action to yield, placing yourself at the mercy of your foes. Most honorable opponents recognize surrender and call off their attack. Others may not. You take this risk when you surrender.

You may re-enter the conflict, but doing so is a dishonorable action. You take –1D on all Persuasion and Status tests made to interact with anyone who witnessed your treachery. This penalty remains until you improve the target's disposition to Friendly or better.

STEP 5: REPEAT

Combat proceeds over a number of rounds, each participant acting on their turn until the combat ends. Each round gives each combatant a new set of actions and an opportunity to spend them in whatever way they wish. Repeat this step until there is a clear victor.

STEP 6: RESOLUTION

Once one side has fled or has been defeated, the combat is at an end, and the victors determine the fates of the losers.

DEFEAT AND CONSEQUENCES

If at any time your Health drops to 0 or lower, you are defeated and removed from the combat. The opponent that defeated you decides what happens to you. Common choices include any of the following. Remember, defeat by an attack using a Vicious weapon always results in death.

DEATH

This outcome is the most common when defeated. You are dead, barring divine intervention or unnatural interference in your condition.

MAIMED

Your opponent might leave you alive but gives you something by which you will remember them. Examples include a wicked scar across the face or the loss of an eye, thumb, or some other body part. Permanently reduce one ability of your opponent's choice by one rank.

RANSOM

Your opponent holds you or some possession for ransom. In tournaments, ransom usually means the victor gains the loser's armor and horse. In war, it might mean captivity until the loser's family can offer up sufficient coin or a valuable hostage of their own.

UNCONSCIOUS

You are knocked out and left for dead. You awaken 2d6 hours later. While unconscious, you are helpless and may be killed or eaten by someone or something else.

YIELDING

You may choose to yield in order to choose the outcome of your defeat. If you fear imminent defeat, you may, on your turn, offer the Narrator terms by which your character will go down to defeat, including the outcome. So for example, you can offer to have your character defeated and left unconscious or taken for ransom. The Narrator has the option of accepting your terms, making a counter-offer, or rejecting them. If you reject the Narrator's counter-offer, you cannot yield.

DESTINY AND DEFEAT

You may also burn a Destiny Point to choose a fate other than the one your opponent chooses for you. If your family is particularly poor, you might choose maiming or death over a ransom. Similarly, if your opponent would see you dead, you might opt for unconsciousness instead.



Damage

Whenever an opponent hits you in combat, you are at risk of taking damage. Any damage taken in excess of your Armor Rating applies to your Health. Damage doesn't reduce your effectiveness in any way unless it reduces your Health to 0 or less, at which point you are defeated.

DAMAGE AND LESSER CHARACTERS

Outside of player characters, only the most important Narrator characters accumulate injuries. Common soldiers, brigands, and the like don't usually pick up injuries and are defeated once their Health is reduced to 0.

REDUCING DAMAGE

Although you have a small pool of Health, there are many of ways to remove damage, enabling you to avoid defeat. Reducing or removing damage in any of the following ways does not count as an action. Furthermore, you can reduce damage at any time, even if it's not your turn. These methods are in addition to the Catch Your Breath action.

INJURIES

An Injury is a minor, rarely fatal wound. Anytime you take damage, you can accept an injury to reduce the damage taken by an amount equal to your Endurance rank. Each injury you accept imposes a –1 penalty to the results of all of your tests. You cannot accept more injuries than your Endurance rank.

Example

Battling a local village defender, Nikola is hit for 7 points of damage. Knowing he cannot take all the damage, he opts to take an injury. His Endurance is 3, so he can remove 3 points of damage per injury accepted. He takes two, reducing the damage to just 1 point. Henceforth, for the duration of the combat, he reduces all test results by –2.

WOUNDS

Some attacks are so brutal and so deadly that the only way you can overcome them is by accepting a wound. A wound removes all damage taken from a single hit in exchange for taking –1D on all tests. If the number of wounds taken equals your Endurance rank, you die.

Example

The assassin leaps out of the shadows and strikes Kerob with a dagger, dealing 20 points of damage, more than enough to defeat him outright. Knowing the assassin intends to kill him, Kerob faces death with defeat. He could reduce the damage with injuries, but it would virtually incapacitate him for the duration of the battle. Instead, he accepts a wound, gaining –1D on all tests.

Damage Outside of Conflict

Certain situations may result in injuries that do not directly result from conflict. For example, a captured character noted for skill at archery might lose a hand. Such a loss would have repercussions throughout the character's life, possibly across a wide number of abilities, more than would normally result from a permanent injury. In these cases, the character may either burn a Destiny Point to miraculously escape their fate, or gain a flaw appropriate for the injury.

Aside from lasting injuries, any damage a character takes in or out of combat can be reduced using the normal rules for resolving damage. A character who catches fire, for example, could reduce the damage by taking one or more injuries (burns) or wounds (severe burns). Likewise, a character who falls from a height could reduce the damage by breaking a bone (injury) or shattering a leg (wound). If damage exceeds the character's Health, the character usually dies—nature isn't forgiving. As damage is removed at the end of the encounter, any damage sustained out of combat has no effect unless it results in an injury or wound.

But some threats are so deadly that not even a wound is enough to avoid death. A fall from several hundred feet, being dipped into a pool of lava, and drinking a tankard full of wildfire are events so lethal that surviving them requires the intercession of fate. Whenever you are faced with certain death, you can only escape your fate by burning a Destiny Point.

Recovery

The wounds you sustain in combat heal—eventually. The rate at which you recover depends on the type of injury you sustain. Damage to Health vanishes rapidly. Injuries take longer, sometimes as long as a week or more. Wounds can plague you for months, such are the perils of battle.

DAMAGE

Damage is a minor injury, little more than a few cuts and scrapes. At the end of the combat, you remove all damage to your Health.

INJURIES

Injuries are more significant than damage and, thus, take longer to heal. One day after gaining an injury, you may roll an Endurance test. The Difficulty depends on your activity level.

Injury Recovery

Activity	Example	Difficulty
Light or no	No fighting, riding, or physical activity	Routine (6)
Moderate	Travel, some physical activity	Challenging (9)
Strenuous	Fighting, riding, hard physical activity	Formidable (12)

Each degree of success removes 1 injury. A failed test, however, means you don't recover at all. If you roll a Critical failure, you gain another injury. If you cannot accept another injury, you gain a wound instead.

WOUNDS

Wounds are the nastiest injuries, the ones that take the longest to heal and can cause the most lasting harm. One week after gaining a wound, you may roll an Endurance test. The Difficulty depends on your activity level.

Wound Recovery

Activity	Example	Difficulty
Light or no	No fighting, riding, or physical activity	Challenging (9)
Moderate	Travel, some physical activity	Hard (15)
Strenuous	Fighting, riding, hard physical activity	Heroic (21)

A successful test removes 1 wound. You may remove an additional injury for every two degrees of success. If, however, you roll a Critical failure on the Endurance test, you gain another wound. If you cannot accept another wound (your wounds equal your Endurance rank), you die.

HEALING

The best way to recover from an injury is to receive Healing. The Healing ability can help speed recovery from injuries by allowing the healer to substitute their Healing test result for the Endurance test. Since injuries impose a penalty on all tests, the presence of a healer can greatly improve a character's chances for recovery.

To use Healing, a healer must devote at least 4 hours per day of treatment to the injured character. When the character would roll an Endurance test, the healer instead rolls a Healing test. The result of this test must be taken. A failed Healing test does not result in the worsening of injuries.

Tournaments

A tournament is a grand event, part spectacle, part sport, an occasion that draws warriors from all over to compete for glory and financial reward. Sponsoring a tournament and offering up the prize are means to improve a house's Glory (see **Chapter 5: House & Lands**), so in times of peace, there's almost always a tournament somewhere in the the world of your chronicle. The most common activities include grand melees, archery contests, and jousting.

ARCHERY CONTESTS

An archery contest, while not as exhilarating as melees and jousts, is an avenue for competitors skilled with bows to win fame. In an archery contest, the competitors take shots at fixed targets. Most archery competitions take place over a series of rounds, each contestant testing Marksmanship to hit the target. The first shot is Routine (6), each successive shot increasing in Difficulty by one step (3 points) until the Difficulty reaches Hard (15). During the final round, each competitor compares the results of their Marksmanship test to see who has the highest successful result. The one with the highest result wins.

GRAND MELEE

A grand melee is a competition of arms. Usually, the participants gather in teams of seven, but some might involve just a pair of warriors or more than seven warriors, especially in competitions designed to "reenact" a historical event. A grand melee resolves as a normal combat using all the rules found in the chapter.

FIRST BLOOD

Many melees are fought to the drawing of first blood to give the spectators a bit of color and to add the risk of danger to the fight. The first opponent to take an injury or wound loses.

JOUSTS

Jousting is the most common spectacle at a tournament. In a joust, armored competitors mount their steeds, lower their lances, and charge their opponents with the intent of unhorsing them. Although jousts are intended as a sport, they are deadly, and the risk of injury—and even death—is a risk in these competitions.

RESOLVING THE JOUST

A joust occurs whenever two opponents armed with lances ride against each other. Given the structure of a joust, the methods for resolving these contests are somewhat different from normal combat. However, characters employing lances in the chaos of the battlefield use the normal rules for combat.

When tilting lances, each opponent tests Fighting and compares the result of their Fighting test to their opponent's passive Animal Handling result (Ride applies). Since the attack occurs simultaneously, the outcome of the pass depends on the results of each test as shown on the **Jousting Results** table.

A hit by a lance deals damage based on degree of success. A rider knocked from their horse takes damage equal to an additional degree.

Jousting Results

Test Result	Outcome
Critical Failure	A miss
Failure	Lance shatters on opponent's shield
One Degree	Lance shatters on opponent's shield and opponent must succeed on a Challenging (9) Animal Handling test or be unhorsed
Two Degrees	Lance strikes opponent and opponent must succeed on a Formidable (12) Animal Handling test or be unhorsed
Three Degrees	Lance strikes opponent and opponent must succeed on a Hard (15) Animal Handling test or be unhorsed

CONSEQUENCES OF DEFEAT

An opponent knocked from their steed usually loses the match. The loser forfeits steed and armor to the victor, but they can purchase them back, provided they can meet the ransom price. The ransom is usually equal to the value of the armor and steed combined, but some tournaments may have steeper fees, while others may have less.

Opponents defeated by taking damage in excess of their Health face consequences determined by the victor. For competitions, defeat usually results in unconsciousness, though death can also occur, especially when wielding war lances.

Example

Jomal the Green rides against "The Brute" in a tournament. Jomal has the following relevant abilities:

JORMAL

Animal Handling 3 (14 passive with Ride) (Ride 2B), Athletics 3, Fighting 4 (Spears 2B)

The Brute has the following relevant abilities:

THE BRUTE

Animal Handling 3 (12 passive result) Athletics 4, Fighting 3 (Spears 3B)

The two put spurs to horseflesh and lower their tourney lances.

Jomal rolls a 21. The result succeeded by 9, enough for two degrees, so he deals 12 damage. The Brute wears full plate, so he reduces the damage to 2 points. However, the Brute must succeed on a Formidable (12) Animal Handling test to keep his seat. He rolls an 11, missing by 1. The Brute loses his seat and falls to the ground. However, the joust is not over yet!

Because the attacks occur at the same time, The Brute still has a chance to unhorse his foe. He rolls and gets a 12. He fails, though not Critically, so his lance just shatters on Jomal's shield. Since Jomal kept his seat, he is the victor.

DISHONOR

A lancer can opt to lower the lance to strike the steed or the rider in an unprotected location. Doing so deals normal damage as if in combat, likely killing the steed or the rider. Such poor form always results in the rider being disqualified from the tournament, penalties to their house's Glory, and usually a fine as well.

DUELS AND BATTLES FOR HONOR

Jousts and melees may also be used to settle an issue of honor. Opponents may engage in hand-to-hand combat, fighting until first blood is drawn or to the death. Likewise, they might begin with a joust and fight on foot if unhorsed until one opponent yields. The parameters of these contests are set before the match begins and may include battles pitting squads of evenly matched warriors against each other, one opponent may be permitted to choose the nature of the duel and the other to choose the weapons, and so on.

Advanced Combat

Once you have mastered the basic rules of combat, you may find you'd like to add more depth to your battles. The following rules expand the combat options, offering player characters and Narrator characters a variety of tactical choices and techniques to add tactical options to combats. Since these rules also increase the complexity of the game, they are recommended for experienced groups. However, there's no reason why you have to use all of the rules provided here. You can use a one, many, or all of them at your Narrator's discretion.

TESTS

The following advanced option can be used in conjunction with conflict tests.

CRITICAL HITS

Sword Chronicle is designed to reward good rolls with greater success. Degrees of success allow you to speed up a difficult test, perform and act with flair, or deliver an appalling amount of damage with a well-placed hit. Critical Hits provide an opportunity to achieve more with a single test, to defeat a foe with a single hit, to create such bloody results as to turn the tide of battle. While this does create exciting opportunities for players, it also gives their adversaries the same chances at victory, making a deadly combat even deadlier.

ROLLING A CRITICAL

A Critical occurs whenever your Fighting or Marksmanship test doubles your opponent's Combat Defense. Thus, if your opponent's Combat Defense is 10, you would need a 20 or higher on your test result to achieve a Critical. If a Critical results, count the number of 6s rolled and compare the total to the **Criticals** table.

FUMBLES

A failed Fighting or Marksmanship test in combat is never worse than a simple miss. There are no greater consequences for failure, and a bad roll is just a bad roll. However, some groups enjoy the heightened risks of botched rolls—complications that can be minor setbacks or major mishaps. For those who prefer these sorts of situations, Fumble rules follow.

This option favors characters who have greater rank in Fighting or Marksmanship, making it harder for trained characters to have a mishap with their weapons while simultaneously reflecting the ineptness of characters with lower ranks in the same abilities.

ROLLING A FUMBLE

A Fumble occurs whenever the dice come up all 1s on a test roll. Compare the number of 1s rolled (including those from specialties) to the **Fumbles** table. Whenever you get a Fumble result, you may reduce the it one step by spending a Destiny Point.

Criticals

Sixes	Result
1	**Solid Hit:** You land a solid blow. Increase the base damage of your weapon for this attack by +2.
2	**Powerful Hit:** Your attack leaves your opponent reeling. Increase the base damage of your weapon for this attack by +4.
3	**Bloody Wound:** Your attack leaves a bleeding wound. In addition to the damage dealt, your target gains 1 injury. This injury does not reduce damage. If your opponent cannot take another injury, they take a wound. If they cannot take a wound, they die.
4	**Crippling Wound:** You cripple your opponent with a dreadful wound. In addition to the damage dealt, your target gains 1 wound. This injury does not reduce damage. If your opponent cannot take another wound, they die.
5	**Killing Blow:** Your attack kills your opponent instantly.
6	**Terrible Blow:** Not only does your attack kill your opponent instantly, but you deal your base damage (unmodified by degree) to all opponents adjacent to the victim of the terrible blow.
7	**Impressive Death:** Your killing attack is so impressive, all your allies gain +1B on all tests for the duration of the combat.
8	**Horrible Death:** You kill your opponent with such force that you sicken all who witness the act. All characters (allies and enemies) that witnessed the attack must succeed on Challenging (9) Will tests or take –1D on tests for one round. For the duration of the combat, you gain a +1B on all tests.

Fumbles

Ones	Result
1	**Injure Self:** Poor handling of the weapon results in a nasty injury. You hit yourself and take weapon damage.
2	**Strike Ally:** You strike an ally instead of the intended target. If there's an adjacent ally, test Fighting, or if there's an ally in range, test Marksmanship to hit your ally as normal.
3	**Drop:** The weapon slips from your hand and lands 1d6 yards away in a random direction.
4	**Minor Break:** The weapon becomes damaged from heavy use. Reduce its damage by 1. If castle-forged or better, treat this result as 3.
5	**Major Break:** The weapon snaps or becomes badly damaged. The weapon is worthless and cannot be repaired. If castle-forged, treat as 4. If exotic steel, treat as 3.
6	**Slippery Grip:** Blood or sweat makes the weapon's grip slippery. Take –1D on all attacks until the end of your next turn.
7	**Blood in the Eyes:** Blood or sweat falls into your eyes, affecting your vision. Take –1D on all tests until the end of your next turn.
8+	**Overbalanced:** In your eagerness to hit your foe, you lose your balance and give your opponent an opening. Take a –5 penalty to Combat Defense until the start of your next turn.

INITIATIVE

The following advanced options pertain to order of initiative.

INTERRUPTING ACTIONS

In the basic rules, whenever a character delays they may act at any time later in the round, but they may not interrupt another character's action, meaning they must wait for the character currently acting to finish their turn. As an optional rule, you can allow a delaying character to interrupt another character if they succeed on an opposed Agility test (Quickness applies).

BATTLEFIELD TACTICS

You can always forfeit your Agility test to determine order of initiative to direct your allies in combat instead. In place of the Agility test, roll a Warfare test (Tactics apply). The Difficulty depends on the nature of the battlefield, advantages had by the opponents, the numbers of opponents, and so on; The Difficulty is always set by the Narrator, but Challenging (9) is the default. If the test succeeds, you bestow a +1B per degree of success to an ally's Agility test for initiative. You can provide the bonus dice to one or more characters, dividing them as you choose.

Only one character per side can use the Battlefield Tactics option. Because you opted to manage the battlefield, you go last in the round. If multiple characters from different sides used this option, resolve ties by comparing Agility, then Quickness, and then by an opposed Warfare test.

CHANGING INITIATIVE

If you'd like to reflect the ebb and flow of combat, you can call for Agility tests each round to determine initiative. This process slows game play, but it emulates the shifting fortunes of the battlefield.

ATTACK MODIFIERS

Circumstances can affect your chances of hitting your opponent. While many modifiers are the result of Battlefield Qualities, attack modifiers

may result from specific choices and immediate changes in your environment. When testing Fighting or Marksmanship, you may apply any of the following modifiers that apply.

HIGHER GROUND

Whenever you stand on ground that puts you above your opponent, such as when you are on a table or on the slope of a hill, you gain a +1B on your Fighting test. Higher ground does not affect Marksmanship tests.

MOVING TARGETS

Whenever you attack a target that sprinted on its last turn, you take –1D on your Fighting or Marksmanship test.

UNARMED ATTACKS

Some fights involve not armored soldiers with sword and axe, but bare-fisted brawling. This works the same way as any other sort of fighting, using the Brawling specialty. An empty fist does Athletics–3 damage (minimum of 1) while a gauntleted fist does Athletic–2 damage and an improvised weapon, like a chair leg or heavy flagon, does Athletics–1 damage (see the **Combat Weapons** table). Attacks with bare or gauntleted hands have the Grab quality. Defeat in unarmed combat tends to result in unconsciousness or capture, but can still have more serious results, including maiming and death. Characters can likewise suffer injuries and wounds in unarmed combat to stave off defeat.



ATTACKING OBJECTS

Sometimes it takes a hammer. There will be times when you need to smash your way through barriers, destroy objects, and batter your way to victory. When faced with such an obstacle, breaking and smashing things may be your only solution.

BREAK

When you break something, you rely on your raw strength to damage or destroy an object. A good example is when you are shackled or bound. There's no good way to wield a weapon to cut through the restraints, so you might attempt to snap the chains or break the ropes. Whenever you would use your strength to break something, roll an Athletics test (bonus dice from Strength apply). The Difficulty of the test depends on the object you intend to break. Most objects tend to be Hard (15), but fragile things such as glass may be Challenging (9) or easier, while bursting through a stone wall is Heroic (21+). A success reduces the Difficulty on your next test by 5 per degree. Once you reduce the Difficulty to Automatic (0), you break the object.

Example

Vord lies chained to a wall. Each day, he struggles against his chains so that one day he might wrap his hands around the neck of his captors. Vord has Athletics 4 and Strength 2B. The Narrator states the chains are Very Hard (18). Vord rolls and gets a 14. He strains, but it's not enough to weaken the chains today.

SMASH

If you have the luxury of having a weapon on hand, you can always try to chop up or smash an object. Roll a Fighting test (you can't generally smash items with Marksmanship weapons). Again, the Difficulty depends on the object you're trying to smash. Most objects tend to be Formidable (12) but can be Routine (6) or Automatic (0) for papers or glass or Very Hard (18) for stone walls. If you succeed, you reduce the Difficulty by your weapon damage multiplied by the degree. Once the Difficulty has been reduced to 0 or lower, you've smashed the object.

Some weapons are wildly inappropriate for this work—a dagger is useless for smashing through doors. The Narrator has the final say on what weapons are appropriate.

Example

Facing a locked and solid door with no key in sight, Santhel decides to smash the door down. He has Athletics 4, Fighting 3, and a maul. The Narrator sets the door's Difficulty at Formidable (12). Santhel rolls and gets a 13. He beats the Difficulty, so he reduces the door's Difficulty by his damage (5), dropping the Difficulty on his next test to 9.

SMASHING WEAPONS

In lieu of attacking your opponent, you can attack your opponent's weapon with a Fighting weapon. Resolve this as a normal attack

against your foe's Combat Defense or the weapon's Difficulty, whichever is greater. You reduce the Difficulty by your weapon damage multiplied by your degree of success, as usual.

A skilled smith can repair a damage weapon. It takes one hour per point of damage. A destroyed weapon cannot be repaired; it must be made anew.

ADVANCED ACTIONS

The following actions broaden your tactical options in combat.

AIM	LESSER

By lining up your attack, you gain a +1B on your Fighting or Marksmanship test.

CAUTIOUS ATTACK	LESSER

While fighting, you reserve some of your efforts to defend yourself. You may pick up –1D to increase your Combat Defense by 3. You may not accumulate more than –1D in this way.

COUNTERATTACK	GREATER

Counterattack allows you to hold back an attack for use at a later point in the round, but you must use it sometime before the start of your next turn. Upon taking the Counterattack action, your turn immediately ends. At any time thereafter, you may make a standard attack against any opponent that engages you or whom you see for Marksmanship attacks. This attack interrupts your opponent's action. If, however, no opponent presents themselves before the start of your next turn, the counterattack is wasted.

Setting for a Charge: This is a special case of the Counterattack action. If an opponent charges to attack you during a round in which you have used the counterattack action and are armed with a Fighting weapon, you may strike with deadly effect. If your attack hits, increase your weapon's base damage by +2.

DISARM	GREATER

You may attempt to knock an opponent's weapon from their hands. Resolve as a standard attack except your Difficulty is equal to your opponent's passive Fighting result. If you succeed with at least two degrees, you disarm your opponent. If you roll a Critical failure, your opponent disarms you. If you have a hand free and have Fighting 4 or greater, you are able to snatch the weapon out of the air. Otherwise, a disarmed weapon lands 1d6 yards away in a random direction.

DISTRACT	LESSER

Through misdirection and subterfuge, you create an opening in your opponent's defenses. Roll a Cunning test against your opponent's passive Will result. A successful test causes your opponent to lose their Awareness rank from their Combat Defense until the end of their next turn or until they are attacked, whichever comes first.

KNOCKDOWN	LESSER

Using brute strength, you send your opponent crashing to the ground. Roll an Athletics test against your foe's passive Agility result. On a success, your opponent falls prone. If you combine this action with a move, you add +2 to your Athletics test result.

KNOCKOUT	LESSER

A well-placed blow can send your opponent into unconsciousness. You may only use this maneuver against an unaware foe. Roll a Fighting test against your opponent's passive Endurance result. On a success, you stun your foe, and they take a –5 penalty to Combat Defense. If you succeed by at least two degrees, you knock your opponent unconscious. Each round, on their turn, they may attempt a Formidable (12) Endurance test (Resilience applies) to wake up or shake off their stunned state. A stunned opponent recovers normally after 1d6 rounds, while an unconscious opponent recovers after 1d6 minutes.

Destiny: You may spend a Destiny Point to negate the effects of a successful Knockout.

MANEUVER	LESSER

By pressing your attack, you can cause an opponent to shift position. Roll a Fighting test against your opponent's passive Fighting result. On a success, your opponent takes –1D on all tests for one round. As well, you may force the target to move 1 yard per degree in any direction.

If a maneuver would force a target into a lethal situation (into a roaring fire, off a cliff or parapet, into the tentacles of a kraken), your opponent is entitled to a Routine (6) Awareness test to notice the danger and move into a different space.

RECKLESS ATTACK	GREATER

Throwing caution to the wind, you hurl yourself at your opponent. Subtract 5 from your Combat Defense to gain +1D on your Fighting test. The benefits of this action last until the start of your next turn.

TRAMPLE	GREATER

While mounted, you can trample over your enemies by moving in a straight line through them. Resolve as a normal attack, except you substitute Animal Handling for Fighting. If your steed is not trained for war, the Difficulty increases by 6. Each target you trample after the first gains a cumulative +5 bonus to its Combat Defense; thus, the second target gains a +5 bonus, the third a +10 bonus, and so on. On a successful test, you deal damage equal to your steed's Athletics rank, with each degree of success providing additional damage as normal.

ADVANCED REACH

A weapon's length conveys a lot about its function and effectiveness in combat. While a pole-arm offers the advantage of being able to strike opponents from afar, it can also be a liability when an enemy with a small sword, dirk, or even hand axe manages to slip past the blade and deliver a vicious attack. The basic combat rules distil the concept of reach into the weapon qualities, offering a stripped-down method for handling the strategic concerns of weapon length through qualities and weapon damage. While this stripped-down method does make handling this factor easier, it loses some of the granularity between the various weapons, favoring longer and heavier choices. **Advanced Reach** rules add extra components to highlight the tactical distinctions between these weapons.

Fighting Weapons and Reach

Weapon	Specialty	Reach
Battleaxe	Axes	0
Crowbill	Axes	0
Hand Axe	Axes	0
Longaxe	Axes	2
Mattock	Axes	1
Woodsman's Axe	Axes	1
Ball and Chain	Bludgeon	1
Cudgel/Club	Bludgeon	0
Flail	Bludgeon	2
Maul	Bludgeon	1
Morningstar	Bludgeon	0
Quarterstaff	Bludgeon	2
Warhammer	Bludgeon	1
Gauntlet	Brawling	0
Improvised	Brawling	0+
Knife	Brawling	0
Unarmed	Brawling	0
Whip	Brawling	3
Left-hand Dagger	Fencing	0
Rapier	Fencing	1
Small Sword	Short Blade	0
Bastard Sword	Long Blade	1
Greatsword	Long Blade	2
Khopesh	Long Blade	1
Longsword	Long Blade	1
Halberd	Pole-arm	2
Peasant Tool	Pole-arm	1
Pole-axe	Pole-arm	2
Buckler	Shield	0
Small Shield	Shield	0
Medium Shield	Shield	0
Large Shield	Shield	0
Dagger	Short Blade	0
Dirk	Short Blade	0
Stiletto	Short Blade	0
Boar Spear	Spear	3
Fishing Spear	Spear	2
Pike	Spear	6
Spear	Spear	3
Tourney Lance	Spear	3
Trident	Spear	2
War Lance	Spear	4

REACH

Reach is an exclusive property of Fighting weapons. Thrown weapons may also have a reach, but this condition applies only when the weapon is used as a Fighting weapon. Reach is measured in yards; 0 yards means you must be adjacent to the opponent to attack, 1 means the opponent can be up to 1 yard away, 2 yards means the opponent can be up to 2 yards away, etc.

EFFECTS OF REACH

When attacking an opponent at your reach, you resolve the Fighting test normally. You may still attack a foe inside or outside of your reach up to 1 yard in either direction by accepting –1D on your Fighting test.

Example

Regiol squares off with a knife fighter. Armed with a longsword, Regiol's reach is 1. The duelist, however, fights with two daggers and has a Reach of 0. On the duelist's turn, he moves inside Region's reach to attack. So when it comes to Regiol could attack without moving by taking –1D on his Fighting test because his opponent is within his reach, or he could spend a Lesser Action to move back to put 1 yard between themselves and his opponent.

REACH AND TWO WEAPONS

Most Off-hand weapons have a shorter reach than other weapons. When armed with two weapons that have different reaches, you may attack as normal, but you take –1D on your Fighting test given the disparity of the reaches.

FREE ATTACKS

If you include the reach rules in your games, you should also consider including free attacks. A free attack is a special attack granted to your opponent whenever you move in such a way as to leave yourself open to attack.

Generally, the only way to trigger a free attack is to begin your turn when you are in reach of your opponent's weapon and spend a Lesser Action to move more than 1 yard. Should this occur, your opponent compares their passive Fighting result to your Combat Defense. If their result beats your Combat Defense, they hit you and deals damage as normal.

FATIGUE

Fatigue measures your ability to call upon hidden resources and push yourself beyond your normal limits. At any time during a combat, even when it's not your action, you can accept a point of fatigue to negate specific effects until the start of your next turn. Each point of fatigue you accept imposes a –1 penalty on all test results. You cannot accumulate more fatigue than your Endurance rank. Possible uses of fatigue include:

- Ignore armor penalty
- Ignore 1 wound
- Ignore all injuries
- Gain one Lesser Action
- Once you gain fatigue, it goes away on its own. For every four hours you rest, you remove one point of fatigue.

Chapter 10: Warfare



The rules of warfare are specifically designed to be a natural extension of the combat system described in **Chapter 9: Combat** so that the Narrator can change the perspective from player characters and their individual battles to describing the movements and heroics of entire armies. While the rules here are designed to reflect the ebb and flow of large-scale battles, many of the peculiarities of combat hide inside necessary actions to enable the game to proceed in a manner where the players and their characters remain the focus of the game and prevent it from devolving into a war game.

SCALE

Warfare occurs on a scale beyond the individual combat rules, involving hundreds or thousands of fighters instead of tens. Rather than dealing with single combatants, the battle rules involve units, which are groups of 100 soldiers each. When the game "zooms" in to deal with individual player characters, the players don't face entire units, but they may face squads—groups of 10 men. In combats that feature 20 combatants or less, use the standard combat rules. For larger engagements, you can use the player mode described in this chapter.

In the combat system, the default unit of measurement in combat is the yard. Each character occupies a space about 1-yard square, and how a character moves is also measured in yards. As you move up to a new level of scale, the scale also increases. In warfare, you measure distances in increments of 10 yards, so each space is effectively a 10-yard square, an area that can easily hold a unit of 100 soldiers on foot. When dealing with cavalry units, each 10-yard space holds about 20 horses and their riders. A battle can occupy a large area, although you can choose to break it down into smaller skirmishes and conflicts in order to keep it focused.

TIME

Since the action unfolds in a larger area and involves many more combatants, each round covers more time than it does in combat, so 1 battle round equals 10 combat rounds, or one minute. When switching to the PCs, you track their actions in rounds.

COMMANDERS

For a fighting force to be effective in battle, it needs a commander, a visible leader on whose shoulders rests the responsibility of issuing orders and directing the troops in battle. A force's actions all derive from the commander, and without a clear leader, an army is in danger of collapse or routing. Generally, the character with the highest Status is the army's commander.

ORDERS

The commander's primary function on the battlefield is to direct the units under his command. Each commander achieves this by issuing orders to attack, charge, move, and so on. Supporting the commander are a number of sub-commanders, made up of officers, aides, advisors, and other characters who possess some skill at leadership. A commander may employ one sub-commander for every two full units in his army.

Miniatures and Warfare

In a normal combat, it is usually possible for everyone to keep their locations and those of their opponents straight, as long as the number of combatants is manageable. In the case of war though, there's a lot more going on, requiring a greater degree of precision. Therefore, it is helpful to have some way to represent units and companies, even if you use sticky-notes, glass beads, or some other token. If you have the luxury of miniatures, simply have each miniature stand for one unit. Wet-erase maps or more elaborate terrain set-ups can work the same as regular combat, each square, hex, or inch equaling 10 yards.

Before the battle begins, each side must select a single commander. That commander can issue a number of orders equal to his Warfare rank. Each sub-commander also has one order. Thus, a commander with Warfare 4 can issue four orders. If he had two sub-commanders, they could each issue one order, and so their side in the battle could issue a total of six orders each battle round.

ISSUING ORDERS

Issuing an order is not as simple as telling the unit where to go and what to do. It requires a commander with some tactical sense and force of personality to cut through the fog of war and properly instruct the unit to do as desired. Any time a commander or sub-commander would issue an order, the character must roll a Warfare test. The Difficulty of the test is the unit's Discipline, plus any modifiers based on the order given. Complex orders can increase the Difficulty, while simple orders rely on the unit's Discipline alone.

A successful test indicates the unit performs the order as directed.

A failed test means the unit does not receive or refuses to perform the order. However, if a unit has already been commanded, it will follow any standing orders (see **Step 7: Orders**) it has received even on a failed test.

Finally, a Critical failure on a test indicates the unit takes no action and doesn't follow standing orders.

ACTIVATING UNITS

Whenever you first successfully issue an order to a unit, that unit becomes activated. Until a unit is activated, it takes no action during the conflict. Once a unit is activated, though, you do not need to issue new orders to the unit, for it follows its first instructions each battle round until its objective is met, it breaks, or you issue a new command.

NO COMMANDERS

When a force loses its command structure, it quickly disintegrates. Each unit drops to Disorganized (see page 163) and follows the last order it was given. Henceforth, the entire force has one order each round until each unit is Routed or Destroyed. Any character who joins the army and has at least Status 2 can take command.

HEROES

In addition to commanders, armies often have heroes, notable individuals that can influence the outcome of a battle by their mere presence. A hero can rally troops, lead charges, or even attack units if desired. Heroes differ from commanders in that they have more freedom and can act independently of a unit. Heroes do not add to a commander's orders. An army can have one hero per rank of the commander's Status, usually filled by player characters first and important Narrator characters second.

HEROES IN BATTLE

Generally, a hero acts during the player character steps of battle, taking turns independently from the developments of the battlefield. Heroes can, however, join units to improve their abilities and shore up flagging defenses.

VICTORY AND DEFEAT

In war, the consequences of defeat are more than just the lives lost on the battlefield. A disastrous defeat could cripple a house, reducing their holdings and ambitions to ashes. A defeat in war often results in the loss of valuable resources. The sack of one of your castles or towns results in losing resources bound up in those holdings. Having enemies occupy your lands reduces your domains and your resources invested in those lands. When an army marches through your field, burning crops and murdering peasants, you lose Population and Wealth. Thus each battle you fight, if you must fight, puts at risk all you hold dear.

Components of Warfare

Like characters, units have a number of abilities and derived abilities that describe their effectiveness in battle. The most important components of units are presented here.

ABILITIES

Like characters, the basic capabilities of a unit are described by abilities, ranks, and specialties. Individually, each character in the unit may be unremarkable, an ordinary individual thrust into the heat of battle, or he could be a skilled warrior, a mighty hero noted for courage, battle prowess, and raw toughness. A unit's abilities, however, are independent of the fighters that make up the unit. Instead, the abilities reflect the unit's effectiveness as a collective fighting force, describing the training, teamwork, and discipline of all its members.

DETERMINING ABILITIES

When you create a unit (using the rules described in **Chapter 5: House and Lands**), your unit begins with rank 2 in each ability. The unit's type opens up the abilities you can improve, while the unit's training describes by how much you can improve these abilities in the form of

upgrades. Any time you invest your Power into units, you must assign your upgrades to your chosen abilities. From these assignments, you derive other important battle statistics.

DEFENSE

As with individual characters, Defense describes a unit's ability to avoid attacks. It functions as the base Difficulty enemy units need to defeat on Fighting or Marksmanship tests to deal damage to the unit. A unit's Defense equals:

Agility rank + Athletics rank + Awareness rank

HEALTH

Also like characters, units have Health, which functions in the same way as it does in combat.

Health = Endurance rank × 3

MOVEMENT

When a unit is ordered to move, it moves 40 yards. A unit ordered to sprint moves four times its normal Movement. A unit that has bulky equipment (see following) reduces its base rate by 10 yards for each point of Bulk.

EQUIPPING UNITS

On the battlefield, the specific types of weaponry and armor are unnecessary. Under most circumstances, a unit carries a variety of weapons—axes, swords, spears, and so on. Similarly, soldiers are assumed to be wearing some form of protective armor and may carry shields. The **Unit Starting Equipment** table establishes the base damage the unit deals with a successful Fighting or Marksmanship test, its starting armor, and Bulk if any. If a unit has two or more types, select the package you prefer from the various types listed.

MARKSMANSHIP ATTACKS

Units armed with Marksmanship weapons are equipped with Close Range or Long Range weapons. Close Range weapons allow units to attack enemies up to 20 yards away. Long Range weapons allow units to attack targets up to 200 yards away.

EQUIPMENT UPGRADES

You can improve the armor and weapons of any unit under your command by permanently spending points from your Wealth resource. Each point spent on a unit increases its AR, its Fighting Damage, or its Marksmanship Damage. You can increase each component once. The **Equipment Upgrades** table shows the changes to units and the various upgrades.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

In addition to the normal arms and armor possessed by a unit, you can also equip units with a variety of specialized equipment. Doing so



Unit Starting Equipment

	—Armor—				
Unit Type	AR	AP	Bulk	Fighting Damage	Marksmanship Damage
Archers	2	–1	0	Athletics –1	Agility +2; Long Range
Cavalry	5	–3	2	Athletics +3	—
Criminals	1	0	0	Athletics +1	—
Engineers	2	–1	0	Athletics –1	—
Garrison	3	–2	0	Athletics +1	—
Guerillas	1	0	0	Athletics	Agility +1; Close Range
Infantry	3	–2	0	Athletics +1	—
Mercenaries	4	–2	1	Athletics +1	—
Peasant Levies	0	0	0	Athletics –1	Athletics –1; Close Range
Personal Guards	6	–3	2	Athletics +1	—
Raiders	2	–1	0	Athletics +1	—
Sailors	0	0	0	Athletics +1	—
Scouts	2	–1	0	Athletics	Agility; Long Range
Special	2	–1	0	Athletics	Agility; Close or Long Range
Support	0	0	0	Athletics –1	—
Warships	5	—	—	Athletics +1	Agility +1; Long Range

Equipment Upgrades

	—Armor—				
Unit Type	AR	AP	Bulk	Fighting Damage	Marksmanship Damage
Archers	3	–2	0	Athletics	Agility +3; Long Range
Cavalry	9	–5	3	Animal Handling +5	—
Criminals	4	–2	1	Athletics +2	—
Engineers	5	–3	2	Athletics	—
Garrison	5	–3	2	Athletics +2	—
Guerillas	3	–2	0	Athletics +1	Agility +2; Close Range
Infantry	4	–2	1	Athletics +2	—
Mercenaries	5	–3	2	Athletics +3	—
Peasant Levies	2	–1	0	Athletics	Athletics; Close Range
Personal Guards	10	–6	3	Athletics +2	—
Raiders	5	–2	2	Athletics +2	—
Sailors	2	–1	0	Athletics +2	—
Scouts	3	–2	0	Athletics +1	Agility+1; Long Range
Special	6	–3	2	Athletics +1	Agility+1; Close or Long Range
Support	2	–1	0	Athletics	—
Warships	10	—	—	Athletics +4	Agility +3; Long Range

requires an expenditure of a resource, permanently reducing the value of the resource indicated by the specialized equipment.

BOILING OIL/WATER

Resource: 1/2 Wealth per use

Flung from a catapult or dropped from the walls, use of boiling oil and boiling water is vicious, scalding enemy troops or catching them on fire to spread it among their ranks.

- Boiling water deals 5 damage to a unit ignoring AR.
- Boiling oil deals 10 damage ignoring AR. If a unit hit by boiling oil is hit by a fire attack in the same round, the flames deal 1 point of additional damage each round for 1d6 battle rounds. Units Routed by this attack risk spreading the fire to other units they pass. Each time they pass or move through a unit gives a 1 in 6 chance that the fire spreads, dealing 1 damage to the other unit.

MANTLETS

Resource: 1 Wealth per use

Mantlets offer units protection against Marksmanship attacks. Consisting of a reinforced and heavy wooden shield attached to a wheeled frame, units can approach their enemies without fear of bolts and arrows. A unit protected by a mantlet reduces their Movement by –10 yards but gains a +5 bonus to Defense against Marksmanship attacks.

RAM

Resource: 1 Land (battering) or 2 Land (covered)

RAM, BATTERING

A battering ram is a basic weapon used to smash through doors or gates. A simple ram is made from a felled tree, stripped of limbs, and capped with a steel or iron head (sometimes fashioned into a fantastic shape). The ram is hefted by a small team who can move it quickly into an attack position.

You may equip any one non-cavalry, non-warship unit with a small ram. While equipped, the unit cannot attack but gains +2D on Athletics tests made to burst through doors and gates. A small ram counts as Destroyed if the unit carrying it is Routed or Destroyed.

RAM, COVERED

A covered ram is a larger variant of the simple battering ram, wherein the ram is installed into a wheeled frame. The frame is covered by a canopy that provides protection for the crew, shielding them from arrows, boiling oil, and so forth. The frame takes time to move into position, but once in front of its target, the ram is pulled back on a swinging harness by a team of soldiers (or horses) and pulleys. The swinging harness lets the ram crash into its target with much greater force.

To equip a large ram, you must have one unit of engineers and another non-cavalry, non-warship unit. The ram must be rolled into position (move 10 yards), at which point the units use ropes and horses to pull the ram back and release to allow the speed and weight of the device to punch through doors. A large battering ram has Athletics 8 for the purposes of bursting doors and gates. A large ram has 20 Health and an 8 Armor Rating. Units manning the ram gain a +5 bonus to their Defense. Once the ram is reduced to 0 Health, it is Destroyed.

SCALING LADDERS, ROPES, AND GRAPPLES

Resource: 1/2 Wealth per unit armed

Scaling ladders and grapples are used to scale enemy walls. Ladders often feature a hooked end to secure it to the battlements and make it more difficult to dislodge the ladders. A unit can carry ladders to a fortification, but while so equipped, the unit cannot make attacks. Once in place, all climbing units gain +1D on Athletics tests.

A defending unit can be ordered to clear the ladders. Each order negates one unit's worth of scaling ladders and grapples, though units that perform this order take a –5 penalty to Defense against Marksmanship attacks.

SAGE'S FIRE

Resource: 5 Wealth per unit armed

Restricted: In most case's sage's fire is a state secret or controlled by alchemists or other learned individuals who do not share its secrets. Sage's fire is similar to the historical Greek Fire, whose true recipe has been lost because it was similarly well-hidden.

Sage's is a volatile substance, a thick, noxious fluid carefully contained until used. Older sage's fire is even worse than the newly manufactured measures, as it is known to ignite with even the faintest disturbance. The only way to put out sage's fire is to smother it completely. It floats on water, creating standing pools of flame. Thus, it is a popular weapon in naval engagements. It sticks to flesh as it burns. It is usually used in pots, which are thrown, broken, and ignited, or in hand pumps that spray it on targets. Both delivery systems may ignite in the hands of incautious wielders holding them too close to heat sources.

Sage's fire makes even the most disciplined units hard to control, such is their healthy respect for the substance. The Difficulty to issue an order to the unit increases by +3. While armed with sage's fire, they can make no other attacks until they use it. Furthermore, a unit armed with sage's fire that takes damage stands a 1 in 6 chance of having it erupt, affecting them instead.

When successfully ordered to attack using the substance, the unit makes a Marksmanship test. A failed test indicates the sage's fire strikes an adjacent 10-yard space. A Critical failure on a test results in a mishap, and the sage's fire instead affects the unit. On a hit, however, the sage's fire deals 7 damage (ignoring armor, with additional damage per degree) on the first round and again every round for 2d6 rounds. Units Routed by sage's fire risk spreading it to other units they pass. Each time they pass or move through a unit, there is a 3 in 6 chance the sage's fire spreads, dealing 3 points of damage to the other unit each round for 1d6 rounds.

SIEGE TOWER

Resource: 2 Wealth per unit armed

A siege tower is a simple fortified wooden tower on wheels, designed to transport troops to an enemy fortification while protecting those

soldiers from missiles and other attacks. A siege tower moves 10 yards per round and is drawn by horses or slaves. A tower can hold one unit. The tower grants the unit inside a +5 bonus to their Defense. If the siege tower reaches the walls of a castle or similar stronghold, the unit does not need to roll Athletics tests to climb the walls.

A siege tower has AR 8 and 20 Health. Should the tower be reduced to 0 Health, it, and the unit it contains are Destroyed.

TURTLE

Resource: 1 Wealth per unit armed

Used to protect soldiers as they approach a fortification, the turtle stops arrows and projectiles from catapults and trebuchets. A turtle is a stout wooden frame equipped with a rounded top and mounted on six to eight huge wheels. The turtle has space enough for 1 non-cavalry, non-warship unit.

Units protected by a turtle have their Movement reduced to 10 yards, but gain a +10 bonus to their Defense. While protected, the unit cannot make attacks. Exiting a turtle takes a standard order for the unit to move.



DISCIPLINE

Discipline is the Difficulty of the commander or sub-commander's Warfare test to issue orders and regain control over troops in battle. Inexperienced troops are harder to control than veterans, and troops of specific types may be less controllable than others. Whenever a commander would give an order to a unit, they must make a Warfare test. If the test succeeds, the unit performs the order. See **Waging War** for details on orders. A commander can issue one order per rank of Warfare, while a sub-commander can only issue one order, regardless of Warfare rating, On a failed Warfare test, the unit either performs the last standing order it received or, if it has no standing orders, does nothing. The more orders a unit receives, the harder it is for it to understand or obey them all, so each new order beyond the first issued in a battle round adds +3 to the Difficulty of the commander or sub-commander's Warfare test. Standing orders in force from prior rounds do not add to the Difficulty.

Anatomy of a Battle

A battle takes place over a number of battle rounds. While resolving the particular battles may take place over a relatively short period of time, most engagements include a great deal of travel, maneuvering, and feints, none of which are included in the actual battle and which occur outside of the battle's resolution. A battle consists of eleven steps, followed in order.

Step 1: Battlefield
Step 2: Unit and Leader Placement
Step 3: Parlay and Terms
Step 4: Initiative
Step 5: Siege Weapons
Step 6: First Player Actions
Step 7: Orders
Step 8: Second Player Actions
Step 9: Resolve Standing Orders
Step 10: Repeat (4-9)
Step 11: Resolution and Consequences

STEP 1: THE BATTLEFIELD

The battlefield is the scene of the engagement, the stage on which the drama of war unfolds. All battlefields have five components: scope, terrain, visibility, weather, and fortifications. During **Step 1: Battlefield**, the Narrator describes each component in turn, noting them on a map or sketching them out for the players.

SCOPE

Scope is the size of the battlefield, the effective area where the combat unfolds. Scope may be small—confined to a single road through a wood—or quite large, spreading out over a mile or more. The Narrator should define the scope of the battlefield to be commensurate with the size of the armies involved. There's no need to have a massive battlefield when playing through a skirmish that involves a handful of units. Similarly, an enormous engagement involving dozens of companies on a side should have enough room for the units to move and maneuver.

If you're using miniatures (or something else) to represent the units, the size of the battlefield should be at least 10-inches square for every four units on a side. Should a unit move beyond the scope of the battlefield, remove it from play.

TERRAIN

Of all the battlefield components, terrain is perhaps the most important and the one that's likely to have the greatest influence on the battle's outcome. Terrain can provide strategic advantages, such as when an opponent holds higher ground, or weaknesses, such as slowing troop movement and reducing visibility. A battlefield can have any number of terrain types, but Narrators are encouraged to mix it up to create interesting scenarios. The more terrain features, the more complicated the engagement. As a rule of thumb, consider including one terrain type for every four units involved.

EFFECTS OF TERRAIN

Terrain can modify Movement, provide cover, restrict actions, and provide combat bonuses, as shown on the **Terrain** table. A commander may spend 1 Destiny Point to ignore the effects of terrain for one order.

BLOCKS MOVEMENT

Units (non-warships) cannot enter areas containing the "blocks movement" terrain feature.

BONUS DICE

Defending units in this terrain feature gain the indicated number of bonus dice to Fighting and Marksmanship tests. As usual, their ability ranks restrict the number of bonus dice they may roll.

COVER

Defending units in this terrain feature gain a bonus to their Defense against Fighting and Marksmanship attacks.

ENABLES WARSHIPS

This terrain feature allows you to use warship units on the battlefield. Such units can only make Fighting tests against adjacent units and Marksmanship tests against units in range.

NO CAVALRY

This terrain feature prevents the use of cavalry on the battlefield. Certain terrain features negate this effect.

NO SIEGE WEAPONS

This terrain feature prevents attackers from using siege weapons. If the defender has a fortification, they may use siege weapons normally.

SLOW MOVEMENT

This terrain reduces Movement by –10 yards (or –1 yard at the character scale).

VERY SLOW MOVEMENT

This terrain reduces Movement by –20 yards (or –2 yards at the character scale).

Terrain

Terrain Type	Effects
Coast	Enables warships
Community, Hamlet	Slow movement
Community, Small Town	Cover (+1 Defense), slow movement
Community, Large Town	Cover (+2 Defense), slow movement
Community, Small City	Cover (+3 Defense), slow movement, no cavalry
Community, Large City	Cover (+5 Defense), slow movement, no cavalry
Desert*	Slow movement
Grassland	—
Hill	Slow movement, +1B on Fighting and Marksmanship tests†
Island	Enables warships
Mountain	+2B on Fighting and Marksmanship tests†, very slow movement, no cavalry, no siege weapons
Plain	—
Road	Removes slow movement, changes very slow movement to slow movement, enables cavalry (in mountains)
Ruin	Cover (+2 Defense)
Wall	Cover (+5 Defense), blocks movement.
Water, Stream	Slow movement
Water, River	Blocks movement or slow movement with bridge, enables warships
Water, Pond	Slow movement, enables warships
Water, Lake	Blocks movement, enables warships
Wetland	Slow movement
Woods, Light	Cover (+2 Defense)
Woods, Dense	Cover (+5 Defense)

*Desert is any plains terrain without grasslands, water, or woods.
†This bonus applies on attacks made against opponents at lower elevations.

VISIBILITY

Visibility functions as Vision Qualities described in **Chapter 9: Combat** and imposes all the same penalties, which are summarized here.

When in an area of dim light, you take –1D on all Agility, Athletics, Awareness, Fighting, and Thievery tests. You take –2D on all Marksmanship tests.

In areas of darkness, all terrain counts as slow movement (or very slow if already slow). You also take –2D on all Agility, Athletics,

Awareness, Fighting, and Thievery tests, and –4D on all Marksmanship tests. Due to difficulties in lighting an entire battlefield sufficiently to improve visibility, battles are rarely fought in the dark; armies typically await the first light of dawn to attack.

WEATHER

There's a reason why most armies choose to fight on clear days and in perfect conditions. Weather is a significant factor; it interferes with Marksmanship attacks, makes moving a chore, and can be a deciding factor in many engagements. The Narrator picks the weather, though some characters may be able to predict various conditions, advising their forces when to strike or hold accordingly.

RAIN

Rain comes in two varieties: light and heavy. Light rain imposes no penalties. Heavy rain, however, imposes a –2 penalty on all Fighting and Marksmanship test results. Extensive rain can change the terrain to slow movement and increase streams to rivers.

SNOW

Like rain, snow comes in two varieties: light and heavy. In light snow, all units take a –2 penalty on all Fighting and Marksmanship test results. Heavy snow functions as light snow but reduces visibility to darkness.

FORTIFICATIONS

Fortifications are any constructed terrain that interferes with Movement and provides cover. Examples include ditches, stakes, walls, buildings, and so on. A terrain feature includes a fortification if the house that governs the lands invested in one. Fortifications provide bonuses to Defense to a number of units they contain. The following fortifications refer to the ones described in **Chapter 5: House and Lands**. Moving through an area containing a fortification requires an order—scale the walls, cross the moat, and so on.

- **Superior Castle (+12 Defense):** A superior castle can house up to ten units.
- **Castle (+8 Defense):** A castle can house up to five units
- **Small Castle (+6 Defense):** A small castle can hold up to three units
- **Hall (+4 Defense):** A hall can hold up to two units.
- **Tower (+3 Defense):** A tower can hold up to one unit.

TEMPORARY FORTIFICATIONS

When a permanent structure is not available, you can construct temporary fortifications, such as ditches, stakes, earthen ramparts, and so on. Any unit can assemble temporary fortifications, provided they have at least six hours before the battle begins. These fortifications can provide protection for just one unit. So long as the unit occupies the temporary fortification, it gains a +1 bonus to Defense. If the fortification was constructed by an engineer unit, the bonus increases to +2.

STEP 2: UNIT AND LEADER PLACEMENT

Once the battlefield is described, both sides may place their units, commanders, sub-commanders, and attach any heroes they have to units if desired. The defender goes first, placing a unit somewhere on his side of the battlefield. The attacker then places a unit, then the defender, and so on until all units are placed. Next, the attacker can place his commander and all sub-commanders. The defenders then place their commanders and sub-commanders. Finally, if either side has heroes, they can, starting with the defender, place them on the battlefield or attach them to units (see **Attached Heroes** for details).

CONCEALED UNITS

Attackers and defenders may try to conceal units during placement, provided there is terrain or a terrain feature that grants cover. In order for a unit to be concealed, the unit must roll a Stealth test against the closest enemy unit's passive Perception result. A success indicates that the concealed unit gains +1D on its first Fighting or Marksmanship test. If it's detected before it can attack, it loses this benefit.

If you have successfully concealed a unit, do not physically place the unit on the battlefield. Note where you placed the unit on scratch paper. Once the unit attacks, place it on the battlefield.

STEP 3: PARLAY AND TERMS

Before any battle is engaged, the attacker has the option to offer terms by sending forth an envoy under the peace banner to treat with the enemy. Likewise, the defender may also send forth an envoy to parlay with the attacker. During this step, the attacker declares what terms he's willing to offer in exchange for surrender—usually sparing the lives of the troops and taking the heroes hostage. The defender may offer up resources to appease the attacker. If the terms are agreed upon, the battle is averted, and normal play resumes.

Attacking an envoy under the banner of peace is a dishonorable act. Doing so reduces the house's Influence resource by 1d6.

STEP 4: INITIATIVE

Initiative sets the order in which each commander issues orders. To determine initiative, each commander rolls a Warfare test. The Narrator takes the results and notes them on paper or cards from highest to lowest. In case of a tie, the character with the highest rank in Warfare and then bonus dice from the Strategy specialty goes first.

Unlike combat, the order of initiative is determined each round to account for all the unquantifiable elements that alter the tenor of the battlefield, including botched orders, set-backs, smoke, noise, and numerous other factors. As well, should a commander fall, changing the order of initiative may reflect differences between commanders.

STEP 5: SIEGE WEAPONS

Weapons of war have evolved to respond to battlefield innovations, to circumvent fortifications, and, above all, to wipe out large numbers of soldiers. Siege weapons can provide a strategic advantage but at the cost of resources and mobility.

USING SIEGE WEAPONS

Each side, starting with the side that won initiative, may spend an order to fire a number of siege weapons equal to the commander's Warfare rank. The engineer unit controlling the siege weapon (remember, an engineer unit can control up to four siege weapons) rolls a Warfare test against their target unit's Defense and deals damage on a hit multiplied by the degree of success. Once a siege weapon is fired, it cannot be fired again on the next battle round. Effectively, a siege weapon can fire every other round. Specific rules for siege weapons are included in each entry.

COMMON SIEGE WEAPONS

The following siege weapons can be found on many battlefields. Each entry includes the cost to resources, relevant combat statistics, and any special rules pertaining to the weapon.

CATAPULT

Resources: 1 Wealth (small), 2 Wealth (medium), 4 Wealth (large)
Move: Stationary in battle **AR:** 5
Health: 10 (small), 20 (medium), 40 (large)
Damage: Varies by ammunition (see special rules)
Range: 300 yards (small), 400 yards (medium), 500 yards (large)

Having monstrous wooden frames like great, skeletal birds, catapults are some of the most fearsome siege weapons. Used both offensively and defensively, these siege engines use counterweights to launch deadly ammunition.

SPECIAL RULES

A catapult deals damage depending on the type of ammunition used. Stone shot incurs no extra cost. To use barrels of oil or sage's fire, you must spend Wealth to equip it as you would an ordinary unit. See the **Catapult Ammunition** table for damage based on size and ammunition type. Multiply the base damage by the degree of success on the Warfare test.

You may use the catapult to shatter walls and fortifications. For the purpose of breaking objects (see **Break** in **Chapter 9**, which siege weapons use instead of the related Smash action), it has an effective Athletic 5 (small), Athletics 7 (medium), or Athletics 9 (large).

Catapult Ammunition

Size	Stone Shot	Pitch/Oil	Sage's Fire
Small	3	3†	7‡
Medium	5	5†	7‡
Large	7	7†	7‡

† Damage ignores AR. ‡ As **Sage's Fire** (see page 155)

MANGONEL

Resources: 3 Wealth **Move:** 10 yards **AR:** 3
Health: 20 **Damage:** 6 **Range:** 200 yards

A siege weapon that is cousin to both the catapult and the trebuchet, the mangonel hurls projectiles at a castle's walls. The mangonel was an earlier invention than the trebuchet, and it throws shot at a lower trajectory but at a higher velocity than the trebuchet—its purpose is to tear down walls, rather than attack the defenders by shooting over the walls. It has been described as kicking like a mule when fired. The mangonel is more of a field weapon, is often built on wheels, and can hurl both stones and flaming pitch. Although not very accurate, its maneuverability and versatility make it a useful weapon on the battlefield.

SPECIAL RULES

You may use the mangonel to shatter walls and fortifications. For the purpose of breaking objects (see **Break** in **Chapter 9**, which siege weapons use instead of the related Smash action), it has an effective Athletic Athletics 10. When used against units, the mangonel imposes –1D on Warfare tests.

SCORPION

Resources: 1 Wealth **Move:** 10 yards **AR:** 1
Health: 10 **Damage:** 3 (ignores armor) **Range:** 500 yards

A projectile siege engine that is essentially a giant crossbow, a scorpion uses torsion springs made of horsehair or animal sinew. The scorpion hurls spears or stones and can do terrible damage to a man or a building.

SPECIAL RULES

At the battle scale, each scorpion is, in fact, three separate devices. When fired during the battle round, all three devices fire at a specific unit, dealing the normal damage. A scorpion can be used against an individual character. When used thus, the attacker rolls a Warfare test but with –1D. On a successful hit, the scorpion deals 10 damage.

SPITFIRE

Resources: 2 Wealth **Move:** 10 yards **AR:** 2
Health: 10 **Damage:** Special **Range:** 200 yards

This siege weapon is specifically designed to hurl pots of boiling oil. The pots are made of clay, so they will shatter on impact, burning any targets unlucky enough to be caught in the spray. Spitfires can also launch pots of sage's fire with terrible results.

SPECIAL RULES

A spitfire comes equipped with boiling oil ammunition. A successful hit deals 3 damage (ignoring armor). You can upgrade the ammunition to sage's fire, but you must spend Wealth to equip it as you would an ordinary unit. Sage's fire deals 7 damage and behaves as described on page 155.

TREBUCHET

Resources: 4 Wealth **Move:** None **AR:** 4
Health: 40 **Damage:** 7 **Range:** 500 yards

A siege weapon cousin to the mangonel and catapult, the trebuchet can smash down castle walls or hurl objects over them. Trebuchets can fling shot weighing several hundred pounds at high speeds. Normally, stone shot is used, but disease-infected corpses and dead bodies can

be flung into a fortified holding to terrify the people within. Smaller trebuchets (treat as medium catapults), which are relatively portable for siege weapons, are fired by a pulley/rope mechanism, while larger ones used a series of counterweights (treat as large catapult). Some armies have built massive trebuchets to besiege the greatest castles in the land; although, construction is slow and requires massive amounts of timber. These devastating weapons are built in a permanent position, and they can reduce a stone fortification to rubble.

SPECIAL RULES

You may use a trebuchet to shatter walls and fortifications. For the purpose of breaking objects (see **Break** in **Chapter 9**, which siege weapons use instead of the related Smash action), it has an effective Athletics 12.

STEP 6: FIRST PLAYER ACTIONS

Before the commander issues orders, any characters on either side that are not attached to a unit may take actions over the course of five combat rounds. During this time, characters may move about the battlefield, engage enemies, discuss battle plans, and more, doing whatever a person could do in the space of about 30 seconds. Should combat break out between these characters and their opponents, resolve it using the normal combat rules.

In addition to the normal options available during combat, individual characters may take any of the following actions. Commanders and sub-commanders cannot take actions during this step except to renounce command or attach themselves to a unit.



RENOUNCE COMMAND	GREATER

Any character who functions as a commander or sub-commander may renounce command and take normal actions during this phase, and if not attached to a unit, they can act during the second player phase. If the army has any sub-commanders, the one with highest Status becomes the commander.

ATTACH	GREATER

Characters, commanders, and sub-commanders can attach themselves to a unit to improve that unit's capabilities. Any player character or Narrator character not already part of a unit can attach themselves to any unit. If the character has issued any orders during the battle round, the character can only attach themselves to a unit they gave orders to.

A unit with an attached character improves its Discipline, reducing it by –3. In addition, the unit gains +1D on Fighting and Marksmanship tests. Attached characters can take no action apart from the orders issued to their unit. Attached commanders and sub-commanders cannot issue orders and reduce the overall number of orders by the normal amount. Attached characters beyond the first do not confer any additional benefits.

ATTACK UNIT	GREATER

A character can attack another unit using the normal rules for attacks. However, since a character is one against many, it's harder to fight scores of foes at the same time. Against attacks from individual opponents, units gain a +20 bonus to Defense.

ATTACK PORTIONS OF UNITS	LESSER

Rather than fling yourself against a unit, a better tactic is to train your focus on a small segment of the unit. To do so, you resolve the attack using the normal combat rules, but instead of facing 100 men, you face just 10 soldiers at a time. For every 10 soldiers of the unit that you defeat, that unit loses 1 point from its Health. Resolve this action or series of actions at the character scale. See **Chapter 9: Combat** for details on how to play out this combat, keeping in mind that one battle round equals 10 combat rounds, so the Narrator may permit a brief combat to play out in one battle round.

ORGANIZE/RALLY	GREATER

Characters may Organize or Rally Disorganized or Routed units. You must roll a Warfare test against the unit's Discipline. On a success, the unit becomes Organized (if Disorganized) or Disorganized (if Routed).

STEP 7: ORDERS

During a round of war, each commander gets a turn to issue an order. A commander issues just one order at a time. Once they've issued an order, the next commander gets to issue an order, followed by the next commander, until each commander has issued an order. Then, play returns to the commander that went first, at which point they issue their next order. Play continues until each commander and sub-commander has issued all orders for the round. Each round, a commander can issue a total number of orders equal to their Warfare, while each sub-commander can only issue one order in that time.

To issue an order, a commander must make a Warfare test against the chosen unit's Discipline. On a success, the unit follows the order. On a failure, the unit performs the last order it received during **Step 9: Resolve Standing Orders**. If the unit does not have standing orders, it does not act. If the unit hasn't yet received an order in the engagement or if the commander's test was a Critical failure, the unit takes no action. Whether you succeed or fail, issuing an order uses up one of your orders for the battle round.

You can issue orders to the same unit in battle multiple times. Each time you issue an order to the same unit during a single battle round, increase the Difficulty of the Warfare test by +3. Therefore, if you must give a unit multiple orders, it's better to issue the more important ones first. You may also attempt to re-issue an order that failed to get through the first time by using up another order and taking the accumulated Difficulty modifier.

ATTACK

With this order, the unit attacks a unit you indicate. To make a Fighting attack, the unit must be engaged with the enemy unit (i.e. adjacent). To make a Marksmanship attack, the enemy unit must be within range. To resolve the attack, the unit tests Fighting or Marksmanship against its opponent's Defense. If the result beats the target's Defense, it scores a hit and deals its damage (according to its type) multiplied by degree of success to the opposing unit's Health minus the opposing unit's AR.

Standing Orders: Once ordered to attack, the unit continues to attack adjacent enemy units each battle round if using Fighting weapons or against the closest enemy unit if using Marksmanship weapons.

UNITS AGAINST CHARACTERS

Since there are many more soldiers in a unit, a unit deals more damage on a successful hit. When a unit attacks an individual character, it gains +2D on its Fighting or Marksmanship tests.

CHARGE

You command a unit to charge the enemy. The unit then combines a move with a single attack. The unit can charge any foe within its sprint Movement. The unit takes –1D penalty to its Fighting test but increases its base damage by +2 on the attack.

Standing Orders: Once ordered to charge, the unit continues to attack adjacent enemy units each round.

DEFEND

You can order a unit to go on the defensive. The unit tests Agility and replaces its Defense with its Agility test result for one round, even if the result is worse than its Defense. If the unit is armed with shields, it adds its shield rating to its Agility test result.

Standing Orders: Once ordered to defend, the unit continues to defend each round.

FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL

You can order your unit to attack and then pull back. If the order succeeds, the unit may make a Fighting or Marksmanship test with –1D and then move away up to half its move. If the test is a Critical failure, your unit becomes Disorganized in addition to the unit taking no action.

Standing Orders: Once ordered, the unit continues to move back toward the commander each round.

MOVE

This simple command moves a unit at its normal rate (to wheel, change direction, and so on) or sprint. If you order the unit to sprint, the unit must move in a straight line.

Standing Orders: Once a unit moves, it does nothing until it receives a new order.

ORGANIZE

A unit can be Disorganized after taking a nasty attack, and thus, these units are harder to control, which puts them one step closer to Routing. Issuing this order allows you to organize a unit and restore their Discipline.

Standing Orders: Once a unit organizes, it does nothing until it receives a new order.

READY

You command a unit to take a delayed action. The unit may ready an attack or movement. As part of the order, you must also define the conditions in which the unit may act. Examples include another unit coming within reach or range or moving if another unit Routs.

Standing Orders: Once a unit is ordered to ready, it remains ready until the condition occurs that allows the unit to act. Thereafter, the unit attacks or does nothing, depending on its last action.

RALLY

You rally a Routed unit, returning them to fighting capability. A successful test indicates the unit is no longer Routed and is simply Disorganized, thus allowing you to issue commands to the unit as normal.

Standing Orders: Once a unit rallies, it does nothing until it receives a new order.

REGROUP

A successful order removes 1 point of damage done to the unit per degree of success.

Standing Orders: Once a unit regroups, it does nothing until it receives a new order.



RETREAT

You call for an orderly retreat. On a Critical failure, your unit Routs in addition to taking no action.

Standing Orders: Once a unit retreats, it moves away from the battle at a move each round until it receives a new order.

SURRENDER

You can call for a general surrender of your forces. You must test Warfare for each of your active units. On a failed test, that unit Routs.

Standing Orders: Once a unit surrenders, it is removed from play.

STEP 8: SECOND PLAYER ACTIONS

After all the orders are given, any characters who are still not attached may take another 5 rounds worth of actions. Characters can perform any of the actions normally available to characters in combat, plus take any new actions described in this chapter. Commanders and sub-commanders that issued commands during **Step 7: Orders** cannot take actions during **Step 8: Second Player Actions**.

DETACHING CHARACTERS GREATER

Any character attached to a unit can detach himself from that unit at any time during this phase. Detached characters may still not take any other actions until the next battle round.

TAKE COMMAND GREATER

If at any time a side loses a commander or sub-commander, another allied character with a Status of 2 or greater may step in to fill that role. Characters of lesser status may attempt to Take Command as well, but this requires a simple intrigue (see **Chapter 8**) or other gesture to win their forces' trust, with the Difficulty and other requirements determined by the Narrator. Henceforth, the character no longer takes actions during the first or second player steps and functions as a normal commander.

STEP 9: RESOLVE STANDING ORDERS

Starting with the side that won initiative, the commander may pick one unit that has not acted yet nor has received orders for the round and resolve any orders that stood from the previous round. For example, a unit ordered to attack on the previous round but does not receive new orders on the current round would attack during this step. Orders that can be made standing are indicated in the order descriptions.

STET 10: REPEAT

Repeat **Steps 4-9** for the remainder of the battle. As per **Step 11**, below, the battle ends when all sides but the victor's have surrendered, been Routed, or been Destroyed. Note however that individual units may suffer all these consequences before the battle completely ends. Consult **Step 11** when such conditions arise, then return to **Steps 4-9** to see how other combatants fare.

STEP 11: RESOLUTION AND CONSEQUENCES

If the opponent's forces have all surrendered, been Routed, or been Destroyed, the battle is at an end. Otherwise, return to **Step 4: Initiative** to determine a new order of initiative. Repeat **Steps 4-9** until the battle is concluded and one side achieves victory.

DAMAGE AND MORALE

Whenever a Fighting or Marksmanship test beats a unit's Defense, the unit suffers damage equal to the attack, plus additional damage per degree. Damage is deducted from the unit's Health. So long as the unit's Health is above 0, that unit is not impaired in any way. If, however, the damage would reduce the unit's Health to 0 or lower, the unit may become Disorganized, Routed, or even Destroyed.

DISORGANIZED

Whenever a unit is reduced to 0 Health, the unit becomes Disorganized. The unit takes –1D on all tests, and its Discipline Difficulty increases by +3. A Disorganized unit may still receive orders and fight, though it is significantly weakened.

A Disorganized unit that takes damage again Routs. A commander can reorganize a Disorganized unit by giving it the Reorganize order. If the test succeeds, the unit removes all damage but keeps the penalties. The effects of Disorganization are cumulative. Should the penalties equal the unit's Endurance rank, the unit is instead Destroyed.

ROUTED

A unit becomes Routed once it takes any damage while Disorganized. If the damage would normally exceed twice the unit's maximum Health, it is Destroyed instead. The unit's formation automatically changes to Mob (if you are using formation rules), and the unit immediately sprints away from the attacking unit. If this Movement would take the unit beyond the scope of the battlefield, the unit is removed from play.

A Routed unit that takes damage is Destroyed. A commander can regain control over a Routed unit by giving it the rally order. If the test succeeds, the unit becomes Disorganized. A Reorganize order restores the unit.

DESTROYED

A unit is Destroyed in one of three ways as follows:

- The unit takes damage in excess to twice its maximum Health in a single hit.
- The unit takes any damage while Routed.
- The accumulated penalties from Disorganization equal its Endurance rank.

Remove Destroyed units from play.

ATTACHED CHARACTERS AND DAMAGE

Whenever an attached character is in a unit that takes damage, that character is at risk of injury as well. Since the character is a cut above the common man in the unit, they are somewhat insulated from the attacks. The amount of damage an attached character takes depends on the damage inflicted on the unit, as shown on the **Attached Characters and Damage** table. Characters can reduce damage taken through normal means, such as by gaining fatigue, injuries, or even wounds.

Attached Characters and Damage

Unit…	Character…
…takes damage	takes 1 point of damage (ignoring AR)
…is Disorganized	takes 2 points of damage (ignoring AR)
…is Routed	takes 5 points of damage (ignoring AR)
…is Destroyed	takes 10 points of damage (ignoring AR)

Battle Glory

Circumstances	Glory Earned
Defeated 3 or fewer units	1
Defeated 3–6 units	2
Defeated 7–9 units	3
Defeated 10 or more units	4
Outnumbered 3:2	+1
Outnumbered 2:1	+2
Outnumbered 3:1 or more	+3

DEAD COMMANDERS AND HEROES

The death of a commander or hero can be disastrous to an army. Not only does the force lose its leadership, they also lose the symbol and possibly the cause of their formation in the first place. Any unit adjacent to a slain commander or hero must immediately pass a Formidable (12) Will test when a commander falls or a Challenging (9) Will test for a hero. A failed test indicates the unit becomes Disorganized if organized, Routed if Disorganized, or Destroyed if Routed.

CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

Each battle can have far-reaching consequences, earning fame for the victor and ruin for the defeated. When one side has been vanquished, a number of factors are involved in determining the aftermath.

GLORY

The commander that won the battle gains Glory for their house. The amount of Glory won depends on the number of units faced and defeated as shown on the **Battle Glory** table. In addition, the defeated commander also earns 1 Glory for participating in the battle, even though they lost the engagement.

RESOURCES

Another effect of warfare is the acquisition and loss of valuable resources. A victorious commander might gain Land resources from

Survivors

1d6	No Damage	Damaged	Disorganized†	Routed	Destroyed
0 or less	–2 training	–3 training	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed
1	–1 training	–2 training	–3 training	Destroyed	Destroyed
2	Intact	–1 training	–2 training	–3 training	Destroyed
3	Intact	Intact	–1 training	–2 training	–3 training
4	Intact	Intact	Intact	–1 training	–2 training
5	+1 training	Intact	Intact	Intact	–1 training
6	+2 training	+1 training	Intact	Intact	Intact

†Subtract –1 each time the unit was Disorganized.

conquered territory, Wealth from seized holdings, Population from occupied communities, and even Defense from strongholds taken. Conversely, the defeated house loses these same resources.

DEFENSE

If the stronghold wasn't Destroyed in the fighting, the victor increases his house's Defense resource by an amount equal to that invested in the stronghold and also gains the holding. The vanquished lose the same amount and the holding. The victor may later relinquish control of the stronghold to a banner house, thus lowering his Defense.

LANDS

The victor may seize the lands held by the defeated force. If so, the loser's house immediately adds the domain and the corresponding value of the investment to the winner's Lands resources. The losing house reduces their Lands resource by the same amount. To retain this land, the victor must hold it (keep units present) for at least 3 months.

LAW

The loser reduces his Law resource by 1d6. If the victor holds the domain, the victor also reduces his Law resource by 1d6 from the upheaval created.

POPULATION

If the loser lost a domain, reduce the house's Population resource by 1d6. If the victor chooses to hold the land, his house increases its Population by 1d6–1.

POWER

Any units that were Destroyed (see **Units and Casualties**) reduce their house's Power by an amount equal to the investment.

WEALTH

If the domain included a community or stronghold, the victor increases his Wealth by 1d6–1. The loser decreases his Wealth by 2d6. In addition, any Wealth investments tied to the domain also transfer (with a corresponding loss and gain to Wealth) to their new owners.

CAPTURED COMMANDERS AND HEROES

If the victor captured any characters or commanders, the winning commander decides their fate. Usually, the captured are ransomed, but any outcome described under **Defeat and Consequences** in **Chapter 9: Combat** are possible. Ransom fees are usually equal to 1 point of Wealth for each rank of Status held by the captive. Characters with Destiny Points may burn one to avoid certain death and dictate different consequences to their defeat, just as with character scale combat. See **Destiny and Defeat** in **Chapter 9** for more information.

The Narrator may wish to use defeat in battle as an opportunity for characters to interact with their enemies as prisoners, providing a unique venue for intrigues (see **Chapter 8**).

UNITS AND CASUALTIES

Every unit that participated in the engagement likely lost soldiers to injury or desertion. The depletion of these units depends on their condition at the end of the battle. For each unit, roll 1d6 and compare the result to the **Survivors** table column that best describes the unit's condition. Only use the Routed column if the unit was removed from play because of being Routed or was Routed when the battle ended.

DESTROYED

The unit was utterly destroyed, both by casualties and deserters. Reduce your Power resource by the amount you placed into it.

INTACT

Remove all damage and penalty dice from the unit.

TRAINING

A training result increases or decreases a unit's effective level of training by one or more steps. A trained unit that gets a –1 training result would become green as reinforcements and raw recruits replace the dead. A trained unit that gains a +1 training result would become veterans as they become more seasoned on the battlefield. Adjustments to training may force you to reduce abilities for lower experience or increase abilities based on new experience. If a training result would lower a unit below green, it is Destroyed—again, from casualties, deserters, and so on. A

training result that increases a unit's training above elite instead grants the unit an increase of 1 rank to any one ability per step above elite. You do not need to pay for these improved units from your Power resource. Units Destroyed, however, reduce your Power resource as normal.

Advanced Rules

Once you get the basics down, you can expand your battles to incorporate a variety of advanced rules, including complex orders, facing, and formation rules. As with advanced rules in other chapters, it's recommended you gradually introduce these techniques as you become more familiar with the system. An engagement using the basic rules can be completely satisfying on its own, but incorporating advanced rules broadens the scope of the game to give skilled commanders more options on the battlefield.

ADVANCED ORDERS

The basic orders reflect the simplest commands a leader might issue. Each advanced order includes a Difficulty modifier, an amount by which you must increase the Difficulty to issue the order. For example, when giving a command to a hidden unit to ambush a passing foe, you must make a Warfare test against the unit's Discipline +3. So if the unit had a Challenging (9) Discipline, you would have to roll a 12 or higher for the order to take effect.

AMBUSH — **DIFFICULTY: +3**

You may only give this order to a concealed unit. If you succeed on the Warfare test, your unit increases its damage by +2 for the first round of battle.

Standing Orders: As Attack.

BLITZ — **DIFFICULTY: +6**

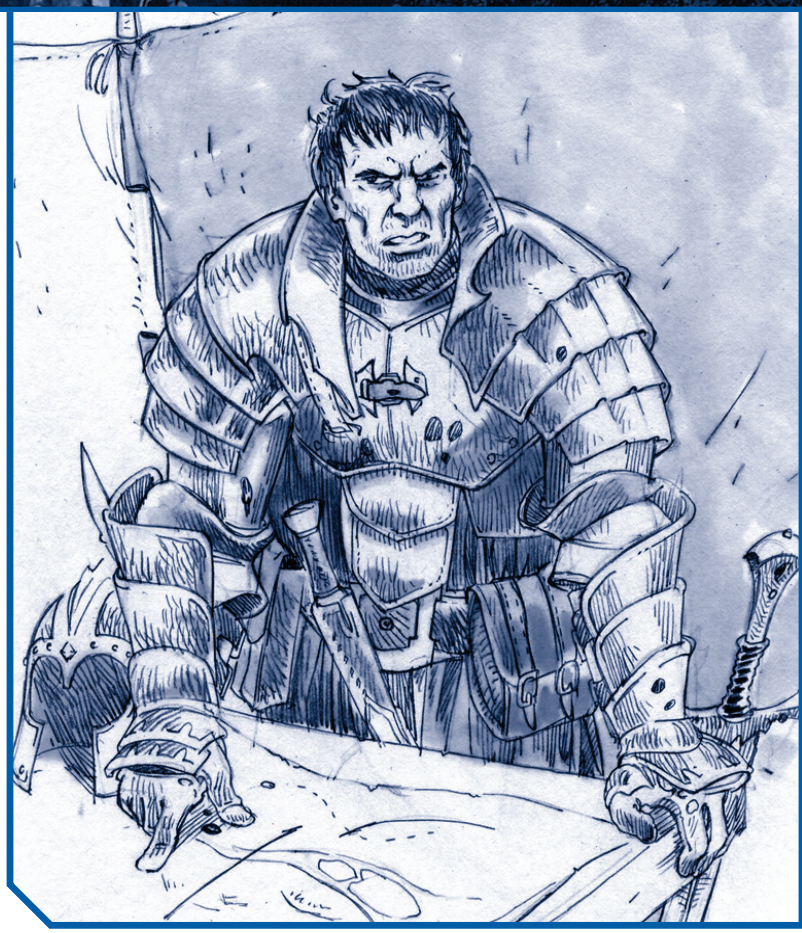
Upon successfully issuing this order, the commanded unit moves up to its sprint speed in a straight line. It may move through enemy units and make a Fighting attack against any enemy unit in its path. Each unit attacked after the first causes the blitzing unit to take –1D that remains until the end of the battle round. The unit cannot end its movement in another unit's space.

Standing Orders: As Attack.

ENVELOP — **DIFFICULTY: +6**

Units with this order completely envelop the enemy unit, merging with their foes. As part of this order, the unit makes a Fighting attack as normal. However, if the foe tries to retreat or disengage, your unit may make one free attack. Successful Marksmanship attacks made against enveloped units deal damage to both units.

Standing Orders: A unit continues to envelop its enemy. Once the enemy moves away, your unit does nothing until it receives new orders.



FORCE BACK — **DIFFICULTY: +3**

The unit tries to push its opponent back. To do so, it must make a Fighting test against the unit's passive Athletics result. On a success, the enemy unit moves back 10 yards per degree. The enemy cannot be forced back into another unit. Movement penalties from terrain apply, so if the force back order does not push the opponent far enough to enter slow or very slow terrain, the unit stops at the edge of the terrain.

Standing Orders: As Attack.

HAMMER AND ANVIL — **DIFFICULTY: +6**

For this maneuver to work, you must have already given another unit the Ready order to attack. If so, you can command a nearby unit to drive an opponent into the waiting unit's teeth. The unit to which you gave the hammer and anvil order must be engaged with the enemy unit and succeed on an opposed Athletics test. If your unit beats your opponent, they push their foes back to a distance equal to half their move. If this push back puts them into contact with the readied unit, that unit may make its Fighting attack with +1D.

Standing Orders: As Attack.

PINCER — **DIFFICULTY: +3**

You may split your Warfare dice to order two nearby units to attack the same enemy unit. If you succeed on both tests, the units may each make a single attack with +1D. You may only issue the pincer order to Fighting units.



PROBING ATTACK	DIFFICULTY: +6

You can command a unit to attack with caution. The unit makes a Fighting test with –1D that remains until the end of the battle round. However, the unit increases its Defense by +2 until the start of the next battle round.

Standing Orders: As Attack.

REFORM	DIFFICULTY: +3

You can combine two damaged units into one healthy unit. The two units must be adjacent. If your Warfare test succeeds, remove the most injured unit (noting the resources you invested in the unit to reduce it from your house's Power resources at the end of the battle) and remove all damage from the remaining unit.

Standing Orders: Once reformed, the unit does nothing until it receives new orders.

SAP	DIFFICULTY: +3

You can order a unit of engineers to destroy fortifications. The unit must be adjacent to a fortification to receive this order. It must then succeed on a Formidable (12) Knowledge test. The architecture Knowledge Focus (see **Knowledge Focus** in **Chapter 4**) applies to this test, and is often possessed by trained sappers. A success reduces the Defense bonus the fortification confers to targets by 1 point per degree. Some fortifications are so large that a team of sappers can affect just a small area at a time. While performing this order, the engineers take a –5 penalty to their Defense.

Standing Orders: Once the unit attempts the sap, the unit does nothing until it receives new orders.

SCALE WALLS	DIFFICULTY: +3

You order a unit to scale an enemy's walls. The unit must succeed on an Athletics test against a Difficulty determined by the Narrator as appropriate for the wall. If the test succeeds, the unit climbs a number of yards equal to its normal move. If the unit is armed with grappling hooks and ropes, or scaling ladders, this order does not increase the Warfare Difficulty.

Standing Orders: Once the unit attempts to scale the walls, it keeps trying until it succeeds or receives new orders. If the unit encounters an enemy unit at the top of its climb, it attacks.

SET FOR A CHARGE	DIFFICULTY: +3

With this order, you command a unit to make ready for a charge. If an enemy unit at any time in the round charges your ordered unit, it may make a Fighting attack. If the attack hits, the unit deals double the weapon damage plus additional damage for degrees as normal.

Standing Orders: As Attack.

SLASH AND BURN	DIFFICULTY: +3

A unit under this order slashes and burns crops, torches buildings, and terrorizes commoners. The lord or ruling family of the land reduces their Population and Wealth resource by 1 each time the order is given.

Standing Orders: Once the unit slashes and burns, it does nothing until it receives new orders.

SPLIT ATTACK	DIFFICULTY: +6

A unit successfully ordered may divide its Fighting or Marksmanship dice to attack two or more opponents. Each attack must have at least one die. Bonus dice derived from specialties or other sources may be similarly divided, subject to the normal limitations on bonus dice. Resolve each attack separately.

Standing Orders: As attack.

SUPPRESSING FIRE	DIFFICULTY: +3

A successful order causes an archer unit to fire a volley of missiles to keep an enemy unit from moving. The unit must then make a Marksmanship test. If the test succeeds, the Difficulty to issue orders to the targeted unit increases by +3. Each additional degree of success increases the Difficulty by an additional +1. This attack deals no damage on a success, and normal damage for two degrees, with additional damage each degree thereafter.

Standing Orders: As attack.

TRAMPLE	DIFFICULTY: +3

You may only issue this order to cavalry units. If you succeed, your unit moves at its sprint speed in a straight line as directed. The unit may make a Fighting attack on any units in its path, and on a success, it deals an extra 5 points of damage. Each attack after the first takes –1D on the Fighting test.

Standing Orders: As attack.

FACING AND FORMATION

In normal game play, a unit's facing is unimportant to the encounter. Each unit is thought to wheel and turn to face any threats coming from any direction. As well, the basic rules allow for a great deal of flexibility with formations, assuming the units adjust their formations as needed without a command to deal with their threats.

Using facing and formation rules offers a bit more realism to your battles, but it involves a little more record keeping.

FACING

A unit's facing describes what the unit can see and whom it's most likely to attack. In a line of soldiers, those toward the middle are less likely to notice enemies that come from their sides, and a unit that is engaged with an enemy at the front is less able to spin around and attack from the rear. The following modifiers are used when one unit attacks another unit from the flank, the rear, or when multiple units completely surround the enemy unit. The modifiers apply only to Fighting tests.

FLANKS

When a unit attacks another unit's flank (or side), the attacking unit gains +1B on its Fighting test.

REAR

When a unit attacks another unit from behind, the attacking unit gains +1D on its Fighting test.

SURROUNDED

When several units surround an enemy unit, units attacking the front gain +1B, units attacking the flanks gain +1D, and units attacking from the rear gain +2D.

ATTACKING THE ATTACKERS

A unit may attack enemies on its flanks, albeit at a penalty. Against flanking units, the unit takes –1D on its Fighting test. A unit may not attack enemies that strike its rear.

FACING ORDERS

If you use facing rules, add the following orders to a commander's options.

REVERSE	DIFFICULTY: +0

You can command a unit to reverse its position, so it then points in the opposite direction. On a failed Warfare test, the unit still reverses it's orientation, but its opponent retains its benefits until the start of the next battle round.

Standing Orders: Once ordered, the unit attacks any unit in front of it or on its flanks.

WHEEL	DIFFICULTY: +3

You can command a unit to change its facing to the left or right. Such a maneuver is more complex than a simple move, as the unit must move precisely to maintain its line. On a failed Warfare test, the unit still changes its facing, but the opponent retains its flanking bonus until the start of the next round.

Standing Orders: Once ordered, the unit attacks any unit in the front or on the flanks.

FORMATION

A unit's formation reflects how the individual members rank up and how they can respond to attacks. Some formations are particularly suited to resisting volleys of arrows (checkered), while other formations can be disastrous to charging enemies. As an order, a commander can change a unit's formation to better respond to other threats. During a skirmish or battle, you should note each unit's formations using sticky notes or scratch paper to help you stay organized.

BATTLE	DIFFICULTY: +0

Benefit: None **Drawback:** Slow Movement

The common formation for most fighting forces, the battle formation sees the members forming up into tight ranks, each man protecting his neighbor. Similar in some respects to the Phalanx, it is a faster and more versatile formation.

CHECKERED	DIFFICULTY: +0

Benefit: +5 Defense against Marksmanship attacks, +1D on Fighting tests against mobs.
Drawback: +3 to Discipline, slow movement

A Checkered formation sees soldiers spreading out to make themselves less of a target for Marksmanship attacks. Unfortunately, the expanded size makes the unit difficult to control as the formation makes it hard to disseminate new orders.

COLUMN	DIFFICULTY: +0

Benefit: None **Drawback:** –1D on Fighting tests

Used primarily for moving troops in an orderly fashion, the members organize themselves in rows of tight ranks.

MOB	DIFFICULTY: -3

Benefit: None **Drawback:** –5 Defense, +6 Discipline

A Mob formation is the least desired formation and is found in Routed units and untrained levies. The Mob formation is completely disorganized and is particularly vulnerable to attacks. Whenever a unit Routs, it enters the Mob formation for free.

PHALANX	DIFFICULTY: +9

Benefit: +5 Defense against Fighting attacks
Drawback: –5 Defense against Marksmanship attacks, very slow movement

You may only issue this order to non-cavalry, non-warship units. The unit's front ranks form a shield wall while the rear ranks use spears to attack their enemies. It's a formidable formation against melee attacks, but it takes a great deal of discipline and skill to pull off effectively.

SHIELD WALL	DIFFICULTY: +6

Benefit: +5 Defense against all Fighting attacks, negates benefits of charge, see text
Drawback: No Movement

Designed to thwart charges and frontal assaults, the unit erects a solid barrier of shields to form a temporary obstacle. Any units behind a unit in this formation gain a +5 bonus to Defense from the cover they create.

SQUARE	DIFFICULTY: +6

Benefit: Negates bonuses from flanks and rear attacks
Drawback: No Movement

A unit organized in a Square formation can defend itself from attacks coming from any direction. The unit arranges itself in a large square, defenders facing out in each direction. While a suitable defensive formation, a unit so arranged cannot move.

TORTOISE SHELL	DIFFICULTY: +9

Benefit: +5 Defense against all attacks
Drawback: No attacks, very slow movement

The Tortoise Shell formation is a mobile shield wall arranged in a square formation, shields facing out and shields from troops inside the formation raised up, completely encasing the unit in a wall of shields.

WEDGE	DIFFICULTY: +3

Benefit: +1D on Fighting tests related to charges
Drawback: –5 Defense against Marksmanship attacks

A Wedge formation sees a unit organized into a V formation. Designed to punch through enemy ranks, it's an extremely effective formation for charges, though it does leave the unit vulnerable to ranged attacks.

Example of Warfare

House Margoth has, of late, suffered numerous attacks from raiders. Chris's character Gerald, heir to House Margoth, believes his house's enemies may be secretly aiding the outlaws to drain House Margoth's resources. Rather than let any more of his peasants be absconded or slain by the raiders, Chris and his fellow players decide to wipe out the raiders and perhaps learn who exactly is behind these attacks.

Gerald convinces his father to let him lead a force to find and destroy the outlaws, so he takes the household guard and their unit of peasant foot into the forest. He also takes his retainer, the elf Vaathey, with him to command the foot in the battle. The other players decide to keep their characters safe in the house's keep, but they will still participate by rolling dice for the units, offering advice, and helping to direct the battle. Chris's character leads the force. Since he's commanding two units, he gains a sub-commander, a position Hal's character will fill.

HOUSE MARGOTH FORCE	HOUSEHOLD GUARD

TRAINED GARRISON (POWER 5)

Discipline *Easy (3)* **AR** *3 (AP –2)* **Defense** *7* **Health** *9*
Fighting Damage *3*
Awareness 3 Endurance 3 Fighting 3 Peasant Foot

GREEN PEASANT LEVIES (POWER 1; POPULATION –2)

Discipline *Formidable (12)* **AR** *0* **Defense** *7* **Health** *6*
Fighting Damage *1;* **Marksmanship Damage** *1; Close Range*
Awareness 3

With the army assembled, Chris leads his force into woods. Making their way through the gloom of the forest, they stumble into an ambush, where a group of vicious outlaw raiders lay in wait. The battle is joined.

OUTLAW FORCE	OUTLAW RAIDERS

VETERAN RAIDERS

Discipline *Routine (6)* **AR** *2 (AP –1)* **Defense** *7* **Health** *12*
Fighting Damage *3*
Agility 3 Endurance 4 Fighting 4

STEP 1: THE BATTLEFIELD

The Narrator describes the battlefield, defining the scope, terrain features, lighting, weather, and any other pertinent detail. The battle takes place in a forest clearing about 100 yards across and extends some 100 yards deep. Dense forest looms to all sides. The terrain in the valley is good. There are no other factors. The Narrator then sketches out the battlefield.

STEP 2: UNIT AND LEADER PLACEMENT

As it is House Margoth that's being attacked, Chris gets to set up first. He places his unit of household guards and peasant foot and indicates that he's sticking with the garrison, while Hal's character Vaathey is with the peasants. The raiders emerge from the opposite side of the clearing.

STEP 3: PARLAY AND TERMS

Ordinarily, there would be a chance for parlay, but the outlaws have no terms, and Chris fully intends to destroy them with his superior numbers. Therefore, they skip this step and move on to the next.

STEP 4: INITIATIVE

Chris and the Narrator each test Warfare to see which side goes first. Chris, with rank 4 in this ability, rolls and gets a 13. The outlaw leader has only Warfare 3 and rolls a 5. Even though the outlaws sprung the trap, Chris was ready for them.

STEP 5: SIEGE WEAPONS

Neither side has siege weapons, so they skip this step.

STEP 6: FIRST PLAYER ACTIONS

Again, since Hal and Chris are both acting as sub-commander and commander respectively, they have no unattached players. Likewise, the outlaws are all formed up in units. There are no actions during this step.

STEP 7: ORDERS

Since Chris's side won the initiative, Chris gets to give the first order. He has Warfare 4, giving him four orders. Plus, Hal acting as a sub-commander grants an extra order, so their side has a total of five orders. Chris sends Hal's unit forward at a charge. To do so, he must make a Warfare test against the unit's Discipline (12). Chris rolls and gets a 16. The unit charges the outlaws. They have enough Movement to reach the enemy host, so when they engage, they make a Fighting test with –1D. They roll a total of 5, missing the outlaws.

It's now the outlaw leader's turn. He has Warfare 3 and no sub-commanders, so he gets only three orders. He commands his unit to attack the peasants that charged. He rolls a Warfare test and gets a 13. The outlaws attack. Rolling a Fighting test, they get an 18! With this roll, they hit with three degrees, dealing a total of 9 damage. Since the peasants have no armor, they immediately become Disorganized and take –1D on all tests for the duration of the battle.

Astonished by the ferocity of the outlaw attack, Chris leads the garrison force forward to relieve the harried peasants. Again, he must test Warfare, and he gets a 10 on his roll. Charging into the fray, his unit attacks, also with –1D. Rolling the Fighting test, they get a 9, which is enough to hit the outlaws. Because they charged, they deal their weapon's damage +2, for a total of 5 points. Subtracting the AR, the outlaws take 3 damage to their Health.

Again, it's the outlaw force's turn. With two orders left, the outlaw leader decides to press the attack against the peasant foot. He tests Warfare, but this time the Difficulty increases to 9 (+3 for the second order). He rolls and gets a 12, which is enough for the unit to act. The unit again rolls a Fighting test, getting a 10, beating the unit's Defense. Since the unit was already Disorganized, it's now Routed and immediately retreats, heading away from the enemy unit.

Rather than lose this force, Hal decides to take his order. He tries to rally the unit. He rolls a Warfare test (with 3 dice) and gets a 9. Ordinarily, he would have to beat a 12, but because they were Disorganized, the Difficulty raises to 15. Also, this is the unit's second order, so its Difficulty raises again to 18 for this round. Obviously, the order fails, and the unit is still Routed.

The outlaw's final order comes up, and this time, he directs his soldiers to attack Chris's garrison. He has to get a 12 or better (6 +6 for two prior orders). He rolls and gets a 13. The outlaws press the attack. They roll a Fighting test and get an 12. The attack hits with two degrees and deals 6 damage. After the unit's AR, the garrison takes 3 damage.

Chris now has two orders left. Not wanting to lose the Routed unit, he tries to rally them. Adding one more command raises the Difficulty to 21. He rolls and gets a 9, a failure. Any more attempts are bound to doom him, so he directs his force to attack the outlaws one last time. He rolls his Warfare test (this time against a Difficulty of 6 for their second order) and gets an 18. The unit attacks; rolling a Fighting test and getting a 15, the unit hits with two degrees. The attack deals 4 damage after AR, bringing their total damage up to 7. Chris's forces bloodied their noses, but they aren't beaten yet.

STEP 8: SECOND PLAYER ACTIONS

Since there are still no non-commanders on either side, both sides skip this step

STEP 9: RESOLVE STANDING ORDERS

All units were commanded this round, so there are no standing orders.

STEP 10: REPEAT

At the end of the round, play returns to Step 4: Initiative, at which point both sides roll for initiative again and move through the steps of war until there's a clear victor. It's unclear at the end of the first round whether or not Chris and Hal will prove victorious. Losing their peasants was disastrous, but there's still a chance they can be rallied. But the outlaws grow confident and are ready to crush the enemy beneath their axes.

Chapter II: The Narrator



When it comes down to it, *Sword Chronicle* is a game of heroic and villainous tales, shadowy and misunderstood magic, and the brutal reality of human failings. Unlike a conventional story, the actions, emotions, motivations, and events are not controlled by the author; rather, they arise from the shared experiences of those who participate in the storytelling.

All but one of the players in *Sword Chronicle* control protagonists, the point-of-view characters on whom the story centers. It is *their* tale that's being told. Their rise and fall are central to the game. The player who does not control these main characters is the one that keeps it all straight. Called the Narrator, it's this player's job to move the game forward, to help construct the scenes of the story in a way that makes it engaging, compelling, and fun for everyone. Where players usually control just one character each, the Narrator controls peasants, knights, lords and kings, enemy sorcerers—and everyone and everything else besides the player characters. The Narrator sets the stage, assembles the scenery, and directs the show, leaving the lines, dialogue, and actions up to the players who play their parts in the drama that iss this game.

Being the Narrator can be the best job in the game. As Narrator, you know all the secrets, know what will likely happen next, and you have the broadest range of characters and options at your disposal. You are a storyteller. You decide on the story's plot and fill in all the setting details. You are also the referee, making judgments about the rules when necessary, calling for tests when characters attempt actions in the game, and defining what sorts of tests are needed and when. You can also be the adversary, controlling all the players' enemies that appear as the story unfolds. You have many roles and responsibilities, and sometimes the effort of keeping it all together can be a challenge, but it can also be the most rewarding.

Basic Concepts

As a game, *Sword Chronicle* provides the tools to make the play experience fun, but it can only go so far. It's up to you to use the tools in this sourcebook to engage your players and keep them invested in the game. The following concepts are elementary to running games, and they lay out the basic structures you should be familiar with when playing *Sword Chronicle*.

TIME

Since the game simulates a world where time and its effects can be felt, you should pay some attention to the order in which events occur and how to manage the elements of the story.

NARRATIVE TIME

Most of the game takes place in Narrative Time. Here, time is flexible, sometimes corresponding to the conversation taking place around the table. At others, it is condensed, moving very quickly to let the player characters reach the next interesting scene in the story. In a tense negotiation, where the players weigh the issues of a thorny problem or work to devise a workable strategy for a battle, time unfolds pretty much at the same rate as it does in the real world. If the players spend 30 minutes discussing a game plan, you can assume a similar amount of time passes in the game.

You can also speed up Narrative Time to bypass the uninteresting or unnecessary stretches of time. There's no need to reenact every mo-

ment that passes as the characters make the journey from their keep to the imperial capital. Time simply passes until an event or occasion comes up that merits playing through. Certainly, you might punctuate periods of extensive "downtime" with pure roleplaying moments, giving the players a chance to explore their characters' personalities and relationships, discuss plans, and reveal something about their goals and histories. Then again, extensive downtime can become tedious when no one is much interested in filling the empty stretches covering the same ground as they've covered before. So it's perfectly acceptable to move forward when it suits the needs of the game. Part of being a good Narrator is responding to the needs and desires of the players, indulging them when they want to roleplay and moving along with the plot when they'd rather get into the action.

STRATEGIC TIME

In a normal game session, the player characters face numerous challenges. These might be negotiations, combats, warfare, or other conflicts. Usually, these instances mark a shift in timekeeping, whereby you move from the flexible Narrative Time to rigid Strategic Time. When such a switch is in order, you cut it up into smaller segments called rounds, exchanges, or battle rounds. A round is a discrete period of time, usually six seconds in combat. A battle round, used for warfare, is about a minute. An exchange, the most flexible, can be anywhere from a few seconds to even a few hours. The point behind breaking up time in this way is to ensure that all participants have a chance to contribute to the conflict's resolution.

Strategic Time is far slower than Narrative Time, consuming more of your game session than the amount of "game time" that actually passes. Thus, it's in your best interest to leave Strategic Time and return to the more flexible and dynamic Narrative Time once the conflict is resolved.

SCENES

A scene is a distinct and important moment in game play, centering on an event that has a larger effect on the overarching story's outcome. A scene may exist in Narrative or Strategic Time, depending on whether there's a conflict or challenge to be resolved. A scene lasts as long as is necessary. In between scenes, the characters may go about their business, exploring a city, finding new scenes to participate in, and do whatever they wish until the next scene occurs.

ANATOMY OF A SCENE

A scene has a number of components. When constructing a scene of your own, be sure to include each of the following elements.

SETTING

A scene has a setting. It's where it takes place. A setting might be in the hall of a lord, or the deck of a storm-tossed ship. When the scene begins, establish the salient details related to the setting. Describe it in broad strokes: mention what it feels like, smells like, looks like, and so on. If players want more detail than these overviews, let them ask or tell them if they obviously seem curious.

In addition, some settings may contain destiny qualities, elements that can change the outcome of the scene if a player spends a Destiny Point to activate it. Combat scenes usually have a setting quality, be it lighting, bystanders, or something else. Intrigue scenes can have qualities, too. A painting might feature a person that the players' opponent might feel strongly about. Similarly, a sacred place such as inside a temple could also alter the outcome of the intrigue. A scene should have at least one setting quality but no more than three. Decide if these are obvious or take some digging around to discover, and tell players accordingly.

Finally, the setting might hold hidden details. Clues, secret passages, and similar elements might all lie in wait for perceptive characters to find. Hidden details aren't necessary and should usually tie into how the scene relates to the adventure.

PARTICIPANTS

Every scene has participants, even if they are just the player characters. If the scene includes any people with whom the PCs can interact, you should provide simple descriptions for each person that's important to the scene. A description should always provide the most basic details, plus one interesting element—a hook to help you roleplay that character. One wily peasant could have a constant gap-toothed smile, while a veteran warrior queen might have a Y-shaped facial scar. You need only provide one such detail for each character.

OUTCOME

Every scene must advance the plot in some way. The how of it isn't important so long as the scene contributes to the story. A fight with a few bandits generally doesn't advance the story, but if the bandits were sent by a rival house, and the PCs managed to extract this information from a captured brigand, the fight would qualify as a scene.

CHALLENGE

A scene's challenge describes how hard it is to complete, describing its complexity, danger, and involvement. Challenge has three broad ratings: minor, moderate, and major. While the challenge has meaning, it is also flexible. A minor combat challenge for a typical group could be a major challenge for a group consisting of wandering troubadours and scholars. In published adventures, the challenge set is for a typical group of characters, but you should adjust it based on how the scene unfolds. See the **Challenge Benchmarks** table for benchmarks. Intrigue benchmarks describe the highest Intrigue Defense possessed by an opponent. Combat benchmarks describe the highest Combat Defense present (see Building Combat Encounters for details on numbers). War benchmarks describe the highest Defense present. Ability benchmarks set the highest Difficulty for the scene. Do note that challenges can exceed the benchmarks listed, but they do so only rarely and usually when the player characters' defeat is the scene's intended outcome.

Challenge Benchmarks

Challenge	Intrigue	Combat	Warfare	Ability
Minor	9	9	9	Challenging (9)
Moderate	12	12	12	Formidable (12)
Major	15	15	15	Hard (15)

REWARDS

Each scene propels the story forward in some way, providing useful information, creating a complication, or defeating a major adversary. Completing these scenes and attaining the outcome usually carries its own rewards, but they also reward the player characters in more tangible ways, giving them a chance to earn Glory, Experience, or even Coin. So at the end of every completed scene, you should reward the players who took part in the scene for their efforts. The type of reward depends on the scene. Guidelines follow.

- **Coin:** Coin awards come from scenes where there is a financial stake in the scene's outcome. Participating in a tournament for a prize could grant a Coin reward, and successfully negotiating a trade agreement with a Free City merchant might also produce a Coin reward. Characters can invest Coin into their house. For every 1,000 gold pieces invested, the house's Wealth resource increases by 1.
- **Experience:** The default award, Experience contributes to the characters' own abilities, giving them a chance to advance their talents in Fighting, Awareness, and so on. If neither Coin nor Glory is appropriate, grant the characters an Experience award. Characters can keep Experience in reserve or spend it right away.
- **Glory:** A Glory reward comes from scenes where the outcome advances their personal reputations and, by extension, that of their house. Glory rewards can be invested immediately into one of the character's resources.
- **Combinations:** Few rewards are just one of the three categories; most are combinations of two or all of the rewards. For example, winning a tournament would bring Coin *and* Glory rewards, and if the character defeated a particularly skilled knight, they might gain an Experience reward as well.

REWARD AMOUNTS

The amount of the reward depends on the degree of the challenge. Take care when dispensing rewards, for if you give too much, the characters and their fortunes swell too quickly. If you give too little, the game becomes stale, and the characters may be too weak to deal with greater threats. The **Scene Rewards** table gives base rewards that correspond to the scene's challenge. In addition, each entry includes a second value for when you combine the reward with another reward, and a third value for when you combine the reward with two other rewards. You should grant each participating character the indicated reward. In the case of Coin, combined rewards allow you to group larger rewards at a time. However, you should modify these numbers based on the needs of your game and the circumstances of the scene.

Scene Rewards

Challenge	Coin (gp)	Experience	Glory
Minor	100/50/25	2/1/0	1/0/0
Moderate	200/100/50	4/2/1	2/1/0
Major	400/200/100	8/4/2	4/2/1

STORY

A story is a collection of related scenes that tell the story of the characters' house. A typical story has seven scenes. As mentioned above, a scene has to move the story forward for it to qualify as a scene and, thus, grant a reward. However, you can add in several unrelated encounters to further flesh out the story, but remember, unless these encounters directly affect the story, they usually don't provide rewards. Note that over the course of playing the game, the characters might come across silver drachmas or even a few gold pieces. When doled out in small amounts, these don't count as rewards.

SCENES IN THE STORY

Like stories in books, a *Sword Chronicle* story should have a beginning, middle, and end. Each part of the story needs at least one scene, though a typical story will have one or two scenes at the beginning, three to five scenes in the middle, and one or two scenes at the end. When constructing the scenes, consider the challenges of each scene. As a rule of thumb, the challenges should intensify as the story unfolds. Therefore, you would have minor challenges at the beginning of the story, build to moderate challenges, and have a major challenge at the end. You can mix this up as needed to tell the story, perhaps beginning with a moderate challenge, going to a few minor challenges, and concluding with a major challenge. Ultimately, the distribution of challenges is up to you. The **Challenges by Story** table lays out a typical arrangement of challenges for a standard story, providing the number of challenges by each type.

Challenges by Story

Challenge	Number per Story
Minor	4
Moderate	2
Major	1

SCENE EXCHANGES

You can adjust the number of scenes in the story by adjusting the degree of challenge. If you want more major challenges, the story is likely to be shorter. If you want fewer major challenges, the story is bound to be longer. See the **Scene Exchanges** table for equivalencies.

Scene Exchanges

Scene	Equivalent Scene
Minor	1/2 moderate; 1/4 major
Moderate	2 minor; 1/2 major
Major	4 minor; 2 moderate

STORY REWARDS

Just as player characters earn rewards for completing scenes in a story, so too do they earn rewards for completing a story. A story reward is usually a more significant gain, an extra benefit for successfully surviv-

ing the hazards of the story and improving their fortunes—or at least averting their destruction. Whenever a group completes a story, you should grant each player a bonus reward as if they had completed a major scene, awarding Coin, Experience, or Glory as appropriate for the story's plot. In addition, grant each player 1 Destiny Point.

CHRONICLE

Just as a story is a collection of scenes, a chronicle is a collection of stories. There are no hard and fast rules on how many stories make up a chronicle; you can have as many as you like or as few as you need, even just having a chronicle consist of one tragic story that ends in loss and devastation. In short, a chronicle describes the tale of a specific house at a specific time, and through the chronicle, you and the players tell stories about its victories and defeats, explore its rise and fall through the adversaries and challenges you create, and judge the players' ability to meet those challenges through game play.

Good Narrating

There's more to being a Narrator than understanding the rules and putting together scenes and stories. It's a craft that develops as you become more comfortable with the game and its setting. The following entries are tips to help you succeed at being a Narrator and help you to manage all the game elements in *Sword Chronicle*.

PREPARATION

The biggest thing you can do to be a good Narrator is to be prepared. Doing so helps you remember the what's going to happen in the story, how the scenes should unfold, and above all to respond to the players' sometimes unexpected actions. If you are designing your own story, part of the design process includes preparation, for you'll have put together the adversaries, set up the scenes, and so on.

DETAILS

Create the illusion of detail. Take notes on the areas where the story is set, and keep that information handy. If the PCs interact with any noble families, a few notes about their colors, motto, and key family members would be a good idea. During the game, provide rich and evocative descriptions to capture the mood and tone of the story, but avoid dropping in trivia unless the players ask. Rather than providing the exact heraldic terms for a specific house, just remark on the most important feature of the banner. Essentially, give only what you must to keep the players engaged and the story moving forward.

GROUP DYNAMICS

Your stories ought to reflect the concerns that a noble house is bound to deal with as they maneuver in the treacherous waters of feudal politics. Thus, stories incorporate elements of intrigue, character development, and conflict, sometimes within a house but most often without. A noble house is bound to have enemies, certain to have rivals who might profit from the demise of the players' house. From them, you derive your adversaries. It's also important to remember adversaries aren't the same as villains. Odds are, the players will contest against well-meaning individuals who believe that, right or wrong, their path is the best for the players' house, even if it means trampling the PCs' house into the mud.

Of course, this is not to say you can't have thrilling combats and fantastic adventures in *Sword Chronicle.* Quite the contrary, such stories—when they relate to pervasive intrigues and treachery—can enhance game play. Combat is often a repercussion for failed negotiation, and warfare is, in some eyes, just another form of diplomacy. You should be aware that every combat, every battle, is potentially deadly to the player characters. Even a minor injury can prove lethal if left untreated. Thus, combat, while present, should be used with caution and when it serves the story.

Finally, always consider the characters. Some groups may have a more martial inclination and may not be interested in the finer points of diplomacy and intrigue. Other groups might avoid combat at all costs, preferring to stay in the shadows and manipulate events from behind the scene. Most groups, though, include a mix of schemers, warriors, and everything in between. Based on the group composition, tailor your stories so that every player has a chance to affect the outcome of the story and be a valued member of the group.



Managing the Rules

Sword Chronicle is a game. Games have rules. Therefore, *Sword Chronicle* has rules. The rules, however, support the game and not the other way around. As Narrator, you're encouraged to ignore, bend, break, and twist the rules—and even come up with a few new ones as you need or desire. Use what works, discard what doesn't, and above all, have fun.

Sword Chronicle's system uses one resolution mechanic to handle every task. You roll the dice, add them up, and compare the total to the task's Difficulty. Generally, this process is all you need to worry about, but the *Sword Chronicle* system has a number of permutations to address the various opportunities that come up in game play. All the necessary rules to play and narrate the game are described throughout the book, but this section covers additional information to help you make good decisions during game play.

ROUTINE SUCCESS

Every action involves a test, every action, from slipping on a pair of boots to walking down a hallway. But these tests hide in the background, lurking underneath the game. You won't actually roll tests for putting on boots, eating dinner, or opening your eyes since it's assumed these tests are automatically successful. Clearly, these examples are extremes, but there are plenty of cases in the game where some things are automatic for some characters but not for others. This is where Routine success comes into play.

Routine successes are used to speed up the game and can be used in one of two ways—in "no pressure" situations and pressure situations. In a no pressure situation, a character automatically succeeds if twice the rank they have in the related ability equals or beats the Difficulty. No pressure indicates the character has plenty of time and isn't rushed to complete the task.

In a pressure situation, a character automatically succeeds if the ability rank equals the Difficulty. Pressure situations could be in the middle of an intrigue, a dangerous situation such as combat or on a battlefield, and so on. See the **Routine Successes** table for examples.

Routine Successes

Rank	—No Pressure— Automatic Success	—Pressure— Automatic Success
1	Automatic (0)	—
2	Easy (3)	Automatic (0)
3	Routine (6)	Easy (3)
4	Routine (6)	Easy (3)
5	Challenging (9)	Easy (3)
6	Formidable (12)	Routine (6)
7	Formidable (12)	Routine (6)
8	Hard (15)	Routine (6)
9	Very Hard (18)	Challenging (9)
10	Very Hard (18)	Challenging (9)

Example

Steve's character walks across an icy battlement. Ordinarily, this action would require a Routine (6) Agility test. However, since his character is not under pressure and has an Agility of 4, Steve automatically succeeds at the test.

PASSIVE RESULTS

Passive Results and Routine successes both help to eliminate unnecessary dice rolling. Where they differ is in their application. A Routine success serves when a character is putting minimal effort into a task to succeed. A Passive Result establishes the Difficulty for one character to do something to another character. For example, a character would use a Routine success to juggle a couple of sticks, but that same character would use a Passive Result to notice someone trying to sneak past him.

Another way to look at this is to consider Routine successes as conscious efforts, while Passive Results are unconscious. You should only use Passive Results when a character's ability is being tested without their knowledge. Any character can use a Routine success.

ROUTINE SUCCESS AND DEGREES

When using Routine successes, a character never gets a degree of success greater than 1, even if that character would beat the Difficulty by 5 or more. To get a higher degree, a character must test their ability.

ABILITIES

Since every action attempted in the game ties to an ability test, it's up to you to decide which abilities are tested. **Chapter 3**: Abilities and Specialties is your best resource for making these decisions, as it lays out which abilities are most appropriate to which tasks.

There's a little overlap, though. Sometimes, an action might be resolved with two, three, or even four different abilities. The trick is to be flexible. If you call for an Agility test, and a player comes up with a viable way that they could use Athletics, instead, go with it. Remember, the story is most important, so if something works in a logical way, you should allow it. If the substitution is a little far-fetched, you might increase the Difficulty by one or more steps to account for the unlikelihood of using the ability in an unusual way. For some guidance on which abilities are appropriate substitutions, see the **Ability Substitutes** table.

SUBSTITUTION CAVEAT

Ability substitution allows for a great deal of flexibility in game play, encouraging players to find unusual uses for their talents and areas of expertise. On one hand, players become more engaged in the game and can still contribute when out of their characters' comfort zones (schemers in combat, warriors in intrigues, and so on). On the other hand, excessive substitution discourages diversification in abilities, which can lead players to invest some or all of their experience into a narrower selection of abilities, resulting in fewer but far higher abilities. So use care in allowing substitution, reserving these options for when it really matters in the game.

OPTIONAL RULE: DESTINY AND SUBSTITUTION

One excellent way to control ability and specialty substitution is to attach a Destiny Point cost. Whenever a character would use an ability other than the one called for by action, they can spend a Destiny Point to resolve the test using a different ability. The use must be logical, and a successful outcome for the original test must be possible with the substituted ability. The burden is on the player for coming up with a suitable way in which they can use the ability to attain the same outcome.

EXPANDED SPECIALTIES

Specialties reflect the improvement of one area of a particular ability and give players the ability to distinguish their character from their peers and other characters they might meet. As each specialty corresponds to a "parent" ability, normal game play sees players rolling bonus dice from their specialties whenever these areas of expertise are applicable to the specific use of the ability. A cursory look at the list of specialties and abilities described in **Chapter 3**: Abilities and Specialties reveals scenarios in which the specialty of one ability could apply to another ability.

Crossing specialties from one ability to another is perfectly legitimate in *Sword Chronicle* and is inherently more balanced than substituting one ability for another ability. The reason is simple. Bonus dice cannot exceed the number of test dice rolled; thus, the ability automatically limits the number of bonus dice rolled. For example, say a player wanted their character to throw a rock to hit a lever lying well beyond their normal range. You might allow that character to use the Throw bonus dice from Athletics with their Marksmanship test to reflect the extra strength needed to hurl the rock the extra distance. If the character has 3 test dice from Marksmanship, it wouldn't matter if the character had 5 bonus dice in the Throw specialty; they could only use 3 bonus dice.

The following entries describe some of the possible combinations that might crop up during game play, but these are by no means exhaustive. Use them as a guide for reacting to situations in the game and for coming up with new maneuvers of your own design.

ANTICIPATE STRATEGY

Ability: Awareness **Specialty:** Strategy (Warfare)

Skilled commanders can anticipate their enemies' strategies by simply examining their movements and positions on the battlefield. To use this combination, a character must have a vantage that encompasses the full battlefield.

APPRAISE ANIMAL

Ability: Animal Handling **Specialty:** Notice (Awareness)

This combination allows a character to notice any hidden flaws or weaknesses in a mount. A Routine (6) test allows the character to discover one flaw (if any) per degree of success.

CASE

Ability: Awareness **Specialty:** Steal (Thievery)

Characters can use bonus dice from Steal to aid their Awareness tests to look for any weaknesses in a location's defenses, gaps in watches, and similar vulnerabilities.

Ability Substitutes

Ability	Possible Substitutes
Agility	Athletics, Fighting, Marksmanship, Thievery
Animal Handling	Athletics, Knowledge, Will
Athletics	Agility, Endurance, Fighting, Will
Awareness	Cunning, Knowledge
Cunning	Awareness, Knowledge
Deception	Cunning, Knowledge, Persuasion
Endurance	Athletics, Will
Fighting	Agility, Athletics
Healing	Awareness, Knowledge
Language	Cunning, Deception
Knowledge	Animal Handling, Awareness, Cunning, Status, Warfare
Marksmanship	Agility, Athletics
Persuasion	Cunning, Deception, Will
Status	Cunning, Deception, Knowledge
Stealth	Agility
Survival	Animal Handling, Awareness, Knowledge
Thievery	Agility, Cunning
Warfare	Cunning, Fighting, Knowledge, Marksmanship
Will	Endurance

CONCEAL ANIMAL

Ability: Animal Handling **Specialty:** Sleight of Hand (Thievery)

A character might try to hide an animal on their person, such as a rat, snake, or some other potentially dangerous animal.

EVASIVE MANEUVERS

Ability: Agility **Specialty:** Run (Athletics)

A character can run and avoid hidden dangers such as pits, falling pots of wildfire, and the like while running. An agile sprint can be combined with the sprint action in combat. The character tests Agility with bonus dice from the Run specialty. The test result replaces the character's Combat Defense until the start of their next turn.

FALCONRY

Ability: Animal Handling **Specialty:** Hunt (Survival)

A character with a falcon can make an Animal Handling test in place of a Survival test to hunt.

HERALDRY

Ability: Knowledge **Specialty:** Breeding (Status)

A Knowledge test can be used to identify the colors and blazons of another house's arms.

IDENTIFY

Ability: Healing **Specialty:** Research (Knowledge)

When faced with a particular illness or poison, a character might make a Healing test with bonus dice from Research to diagnose the ailment.

IMPERSONATE

Ability: Status **Specialty:** Disguise (Deception)

A character can test Status to pretend to be someone other than who they really are.

LEAP AND CATCH

Ability: Agility **Specialty:** Jump (Athletics)

A character can leap up to catch a swinging rope or chandelier by combining Agility with Jump. The Difficulty depends on the how fast the object moves and how far it is from the character's reach, though Formidable (9) is a good base Difficulty.

LONG DISTANCE RUNNING

Ability: Endurance **Specialty:** Run (Athletics)

A character running for long distances might test Endurance with bonus dice from Run to keep up the pace.

MOVE SILENTLY

Ability: Stealth **Specialty:** Climb, Swim (Athletics)

When a character wants to move quietly, they can use bonus dice from the specialty that best relates to the sort of movement he's attempting.

RECOGNIZE

Ability: Awareness **Specialty:** Memory (Cunning)

A character can use bonus dice from Memory to recall if they recognize someone or something they've noticed before.

SIZE UP

Ability: Awareness **Specialty:** Diagnose (Healing)

A character can use this combination to assess their opponent's health and if their opponent has injuries or wounds.

THREATEN

Ability: Athletics **Specialty:** Intimidate (Persuasion)

In an intrigue, a character might substitute Athletics to threaten or intimidate an opponent.

TRICK-RIDING

Ability: Agility **Specialty:** Ride (Animal Handling)

A character can perform stunts while on the back of a steed by testing Agility in place of Animal Handling. Examples include leaning down from the saddle to snatch an object while mounted on a moving steed or standing atop the saddle. The base Difficulty for Trick-riding is Challenging (9) and can be higher for more daring acts.

VAULT INTO THE SADDLE

Ability: Animal Handling **Specialty:** Acrobatics

This combination allows a character to leap from the ground and land in the saddle of a waiting steed. A successful test against at least a Challenging (9) Difficulty is required.

SETTING DIFFICULTIES

One of the hardest jobs as the Narrator is coming up with the Difficulty of an action. The Difficulty must not be too hard, or the characters will never succeed at anything. Similarly, if you make them too easy, they'll succeed at everything they do. Furthermore, you should be consistent. If walking across a tightrope in clear weather was Formidable (12) one game session, it ought to be the same the next time the character attempts the same task in similar circumstances.

Setting the Difficulty is part art and part science. The art is adjusting the Difficulty based on the demands of the scene and the capabilities of the player. The science comes in when you consider the actual likelihood of attaining a successful test based on the Difficulty. **Chapter 3: Abilities and Specialties** describes the typical Difficulties for actions under each ability. Use that information as a guide to help set Difficulties for things that happen in the game not covered by the rules. Alternatively, you can use the **Chance of Success** table as a way to gauge the Difficulty by the expected chance of success (each entry is rounded down). This table only covers the probability based on the testing character's ability.

DIFFICULTIES DEFINED

The **Chance of Success** table reveals a lot about Difficulties. When taken with the definitions for rank, you should have a good idea about where to set your Difficulties.

EASY

The Easy Difficulty should rarely come into play since all but characters with 1 rank are almost assured success. Thus, Easy tasks are any that a common person should be able to perform every time without trouble. Consistently, a character with rank 3 will achieve a Great suc-

Chance of Success

	—Difficulty—						
Rank	Easy (3)	Routine (6)	Challenging (9)	Formidable (12)	Hard (15)	Very Hard (18)	Heroic (21)
1	66%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2	97%	72%	27%	2%	0%	0%	0%
3	100%	95%	74%	37%	9%	0.5%	0%
4	100%	99%	94%	76%	44%	15%	2%
5	100%	99%	99%	94%	77%	50%	22%
6	100%	100%	99%	99%	93%	93%	54%
7	100%	100%	99%	99%	98%	98%	80%
8	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	93%
9	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	98%
10	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%

cess (two degrees). A character with rank 5 will achieve an Incredible success (three degrees), and a character with rank 7 will achieve Astonishing success (four degrees).

ROUTINE

Routine difficulties suggest a complication with an Easy task that makes it slightly harder to achieve or tasks that a talented person could achieve without trouble. A character with rank 4 will consistently achieve Great success. A character with rank 6 will achieve Incredible success, while a character with rank 7 should succeed with Astonishing success.

CHALLENGING

Challenging Difficulties reflect multiple complications that make it hard for a common person to achieve without trying several times. A talented character should be able to perform the action, while a trained character would have no trouble in handling the action. A character with rank 5 or more will usually succeed with Great success. A character with rank 6 should succeed with Incredible success. Characters with rank 7 can achieve Astonishing success a little more than half the time.

FORMIDABLE

Actions at this Difficulty are at the uppermost end of what a common person could hope to achieve without spending a great deal of time and effort. Formidable tasks are also typically beyond what a talented individual could achieve without trying hard. Thus, this Difficulty should be reserved for those actions that require training. A character with rank 6 or more consistently achieves Great success, while a character with rank 7 can achieve Incredible success.

HARD

At the Hard Difficulty, not even trained characters can be assured of success all the time. These tasks may be Lesser Actions complicated by circumstances or environment or may require a level of expertise beyond what ordinary training can typically imbue. Hard tasks should be used to describe any action only a highly trained person could hope to achieve with regularity. A character with rank 7 should usually achieve Great success and achieve Incredible success about half the time.

VERY HARD

Very Hard tasks are usually beyond people with simple training and are difficult for even accomplished characters. Even the best-trained characters can only expect to succeed about half the time at these tasks. Therefore, this Difficulty is reserved for actions that demand complete mastery. A character with rank 7 can achieve Great success a little over half the time.

HEROIC

Any task with a Heroic Difficulty is one that can thwart even a master. While masters can succeed on these tasks, it usually takes a great deal of effort. Only paragons can regularly succeed on these tasks.

ROLL OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Circumstances and environment can complicate a simple task, making it far more difficult than it would be under normal conditions. A complication could be an environmental factor, being in the thick of combat or intrigue, or any of a variety of factors. Once you determine the base Difficulty, you can increase it by one step for every one or two complications.

For example, hitting a target with an arrow fired from a few yards away would be a Routine task, something a trained person should be able to do with no trouble. However, it's raining and there's a gathered crowd. The rain is enough to raise the Difficulty from Routine (6) to Challenging (9), but the added pressure of the audience increases it again to Formidable (12).

WHEN IN DOUBT, IT'S CHALLENGING

Challenging (9) is the default Difficulty for most acts that warrant tests. They're attainable by the average person but only about a quarter

of the time. However, because the player characters aren't likely to attempt dramatic tests using abilities in which they have a rank of only 2, the odds of success are vastly improved with 3 dice, allowing characters to succeed 3 out of 4 attempts. At rank 4, a character succeeds at this test a little over 9 out of 10 attempts. For the average test, this Difficulty allows the characters to perform most of the things they'd want to achieve in the game without a serious risk of failure.

MODIFIERS

In lieu of altering the Difficulty from complications, you can impose modifiers. Doing so allows you to establish consistency with the difficulties while still accounting for the effects of circumstance. Generally, modifiers are fixed adjustments that increase (called bonuses) or decrease (called penalties) a test result. Bonuses can come from having excellent tools, a favorable wind when sailing, or just having the proper research materials at hand when studying up on a house. Penalties might arise from weather, terrain, lighting, using improper tools, pressure, and so on. Bonuses shouldn't normally exceed +3, while penalties should rarely go below –3. As with modifying the Difficulty, each positive circumstance would provide a cumulative bonus of +1, while each adverse circumstance would impose a cumulative –1 penalty.

WINGING IT

Ultimately, there's no way to anticipate what will arise in your games. No amount of advice will be helpful in every situation. Instead of trying to account for every eventuality, just relax and wing it. Common sense is your best tool, so if some situation feels like the characters should have a penalty, give them one. Likewise, if the conditions are favorable, give them a bonus. You can also give extra test dice, bonus dice, or penalty dice, or just modify results with bonuses and penalties. Use what works best for you and leave the rest behind.

Exploring The World

In addition to the dangers of combat and the pitfalls of intrigues, the player characters may be faced with a broad range of perils, including starvation, extremes of cold, roaring fires, poison, and more. The following rules cover the mundane obstacles the characters may encounter.

SUSTENANCE

Even though this game is one of imagination, the characters are people in the imagined world. Like people in the real world, they need some basic things to survive. Foremost of those needs are food, water, and air. Going without any of these for very long is as lethal as taking a sword through the gut. In addition, characters also need rest. They must sleep to recover from their exploits and injuries, as well as to remain alert to react to new dangers as they arise.

Tracking sustenance helps maintain a sense of realism and can create dramatic tension when characters go without food or water—or have been manning the battlements for days without sleep. However, these rules are not designed to simulate reality; they are here to augment game play. For the most part, if the characters eat at least one good meal each day and have a steady supply of water and rest (and air!), ignore these rules. Only worry about them when the characters go without some or all of these vital resources.

STARVATION AND THIRST

A character's Endurance determines how long they can go without food and water. A character can go without food for a number of days equal to their Endurance rank. They can go a number of days without water equal to one half their Endurance rank (round down, minimum 1 day). Once the character exceeds either of these periods, they're at risk of injury and possibly death.

The first day after, the character rolls a Routine (6) Endurance test. A successful test allows the character to go another day without food without penalty. A failed test indicates the character takes a wound. This injury cannot be removed until the character eats regularly (twice per day) or drinks for a number of days equal to one half the number of days they went without.

The next day after the character failed or passed the test, they must succeed on a Challenging (9) Endurance test with the same results as above with wounds being cumulative. Each day thereafter, the character must succeed on another Endurance test at a Difficulty one greater than the previous test. At any time when the number of wounds equals the character's Endurance rank, the character dies.

Should a character be denied both food and water, the character starts rolling Endurance tests as normal on the day after their normal limits on going without water, but the Difficulty starts at Challenging (9) and increases by two steps every day thereafter.

SUFFOCATION AND DROWNING

A character's Endurance rank also determines how long they can go without breathing. Characters can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to one half their Endurance rank. After this, the character must succeed on a Challenging (9) Endurance test. A failed test indicates the character takes 2 wounds. One minute later, the character must test again, this time at a Formidable (12) Endurance test. This testing continues each minute and at a higher Difficulty until the character accumulates wounds equal to the character's Endurance, at which point the character drowns or suffocates. Wounds immediately vanish once the character gets a good deep breath.

SLEEP

Finally, Endurance also determines how long a character can go without sleep. All characters can go a number of days without sleep equal to their Endurance rank. Each day thereafter, the character takes a cumulative –1D on all tests. Once the penalty dice equals the character's Endurance, the character collapses from exhaustion and sleeps for 2d6+6 hours.

TEMPERATURE

Adequate provisions and protections can reduce all but the worst temperature extremes to simple discomfort, but when characters are improperly prepared, exposure to such climes can be disastrous.

EXTREME COLD

Unprotected characters in temperatures below freezing must succeed on an Endurance test each hour they remain exposed. The first test is Routine (6), but each test thereafter increases by one step. Every time a character fails a test, they take an injury. Once their injuries equal their Endurance rank, they take a wound with each failed test. Once the wounds equal the character's Endurance rank, the character freezes to death.

At any time, a character can take a level of frostbite to negate the effects of a failed Endurance test. At the first level of frostbite, the character's ears become frostbitten and are lost if the character survives. At the second level, the character loses 1d6 fingers and 1d6 toes. At the third level, the character loses their nose. A character can't take any more than three levels of frostbite. The result of these losses is as follows:

Frostbite

Frostbite	Effects
One Level	–1D on all Awareness tests
Two Levels	–1D on Fighting and Marksmanship tests and any tests involving manual dexterity
Three Levels	–1D on all Deception and Persuasion tests

EXTREME HEAT

Unprotected characters exposed to hot temperatures must succeed on an Endurance test each hour they remain exposed. The first test is at Routine (6), but each test thereafter increases by one step. Every time a character fails a test, they take an injury. Once their injuries equal their Endurance rank, they fall unconscious and automatically takes a wound for each additional hour of exposure. Once the wounds equal the character's Endurance rank, the character dies. Characters can keep test Difficulties from increasing by drinking at least half a gallon of water for every hour in which the heat threatens them. This freezes the Difficulty at its last rating, but can't reduce it.

At any time, a character can take a level of heatstroke to negate the effects of a failed Endurance test. At the first level of heatstroke, the character becomes dizzy; lighter skinned characters may acquire minor burns, which heal after 1d6 days. At second level, the character becomes extremely disoriented and nauseous. At third level, the character has been debilitated to the point of permanent damage. They will never be as healthy as they were before and permanently take –1D on all Endurance tests (a burned Destiny Point removes this effect). A character can't take more than three levels of heatstroke. The result of these losses is noted on the **Heatstroke** table.

Heatstroke

Sunburn	Effects
One Level	–1D on all Awareness tests
Two Levels	–1D on Fighting and Marksmanship tests and any tests involving concentration for 1d6 days
Three Levels	Permanent –1D on all Endurance tests

Rates of Travel

Mode	Distance per Hour
Walking	1 league
Hustling	1.5 leagues
Running	2 leagues†
Horseback, Trot	3 leagues
Horseback, Canter	6 leagues
Horseback, Gallop	10 leagues†
Burden, Moderate	×3/4‡
Burden, Heavy	×1/2‡

Terrain	Trackless	Trail	Road
Desert	×1/2	×3/4	×1
Hills	×1/2	×3/4	×1
Mountains	×1/4	×1/2	×3/4
Wetlands	×1/4	×1/2	×3/4
Woods, Light	×1/2	×3/4	×1
Woods, Dense	×1/4	×1/2	×3/4

†At the end of each hour sustained at this pace, the traveler or steed must make a Challenging (9) Endurance test. A success allows another hour of travel at this pace per degree. After this time, another Endurance test is required but at the next higher Difficulty. If at any time the test fails, the pace can be sustained, but the traveler takes an injury. Once the traveler's injuries equal their Endurance rank, the pace can be sustained further, but the traveler accumulates wounds instead. Should the number of wounds equal the Endurance rank, the traveler dies. Most people have common sense enough to stop and rest long before the risk of death.

‡A moderate burden could be carrying a heavy load or traveling by wagon or as part of a large entourage. A heavy burden includes carrying an extremely heavy load or traveling in a massive group, such as a royal entourage.

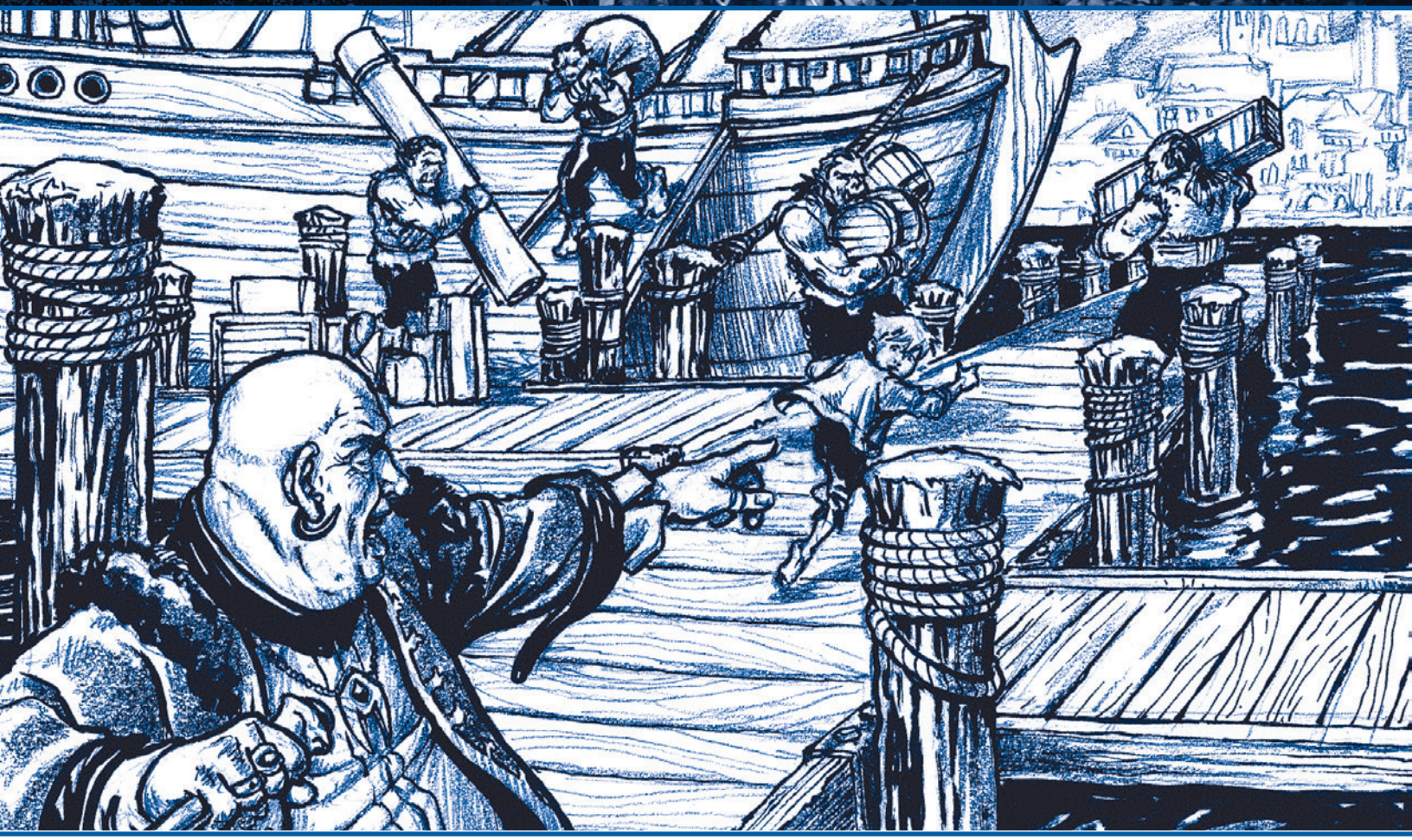
TRAVEL

Overland travel is abstract, and you are encouraged to use your best judgment when determining how long it takes a group of characters to reach their destination. If you prefer concrete numbers, use the rates and modifiers in the **Rates of Travel** table for determining how much distance a traveler can cover in an hour.

CHASES

Sometimes it's better to get away than fight—and sometimes that's exactly what the characters want to stop a fleeing foe from doing. Either way, a chase is on.

A chase has particular characteristics, a quality of ebb and flow, of near misses and fleeting glimpses of the quarry that demands more from you than a simple competition test. Furthermore, the setting of a chase covers a lot more ground than a typical combat or battle and, thus, requires a great deal more area. The following rules help you resolve these sequences in a way that captures the thrill of the hunt while keeping things simple.



A chase has three components: hunter, prey, and space. The hunter and prey are both obvious, and you each can have multiple characters or creatures. The space is the area in which the chase takes place.

HUNTERS AND PREY

At the start of any chase, establish who is chasing whom. The pursuing characters are the hunters. The fleeing characters are the prey. Note that creatures can also be hunters and prey; a stag fleeing a band of hunters might use the same rule, just as a group of characters fleeing a pack of ravenous wolves would, also.

SPACE

The space is where the chase takes place. Once you've decided on the participants, determine the type of area where the chase is taking place. You need not map out the space; in fact, doing so is counterproductive. Characters are moving so quickly through the area that they won't have the time or ability to note too many details about their surroundings. For an area to support a chase, it must be large enough to accommodate a protracted flight. Good areas include communities, forests, or any area where there's plenty of room to run.

ANATOMY OF A CHASE

The objective of any chase is for the prey to escape the hunters and for the hunter to catch the prey. Since these objectives are at odds with one another, a chase is resolved using conflict tests, wherein the participants simultaneously test their Athletics abilities (Run bonus dice apply as does armor penalty) against each other to create or close the distance between the two groups. Whoever wins the conflict test gains 1 point of advantage. The prey wins in the case of a tie. The side that gains 3 points of advantage wins, escaping or catching their quarry.

Example

Steve's character chases a thief through the streets. Steve has Athletics 4 (Run 1), while the thief has Athletics 3 (Run 3). Both Steve and the Narrator roll and compare their results. Steve gets a 15. The thief gets a 14. Since Steve has the higher result, he gains 1 point of advantage, closing the distance.

MODIFIERS

Two factors can modify the Athletics tests rolled during a chase: relative speeds and terrain.

RELATIVE SPEEDS

The prey gains +1D for each yard of Movement they can ordinarily move in excess of their pursuer. The pursuer gains +1D for each yard of Movement they can move in excess of their prey.

TERRAIN

Any terrain type that would reduce Movement (water, hills, mountains, crowded streets), imposes –1D on all Athletics tests.

CHASE OPTIONS

A series of simultaneous conflict tests can provide chase results quickly but without the flavor or thrills that a chase should entail. Thus, participants can perform a number of special actions to alter the outcomes of the conflict tests.

ATTACK

A pursuing character can forgo their Athletics test (and, thus, their chance to gain 1 point of advantage) to make a Marksmanship (or rarely Fighting) attack against the fleeing character. Resolve the attack normally.

CREATE AN OBSTACLE

A fleeing character can overturn barrels, push people down, or create some other obstacle to slow their pursuers. There must be an obstacle of some kind present—a crowded city has plenty of obstacles, while an empty plain usually has none. The character creating the obstacle takes –1D on their Athletics test for the round, but if they manage to beat their opponent, they gain 1 point of advantage, and their opponent loses 1 point of advantage (minimum 0).

A character who spends a Destiny Point can create an obstacle where there are likely no obstacles. Examples would include hidden pits, sharp stones, or other hidden dangers that can slow down pursuers.

EXTRA EFFORT

A character can push himself harder at the expense of exhausting their resources. A character who takes extra effort may convert all bonus dice from Run to test dice. However, for the duration of the chase that character takes –1D on all Athletics tests until the chase is over. If you're using fatigue rules, the character instead gains one level of fatigue (see **Fatigue** on page 150).

A character who spends a Destiny Point can use extra effort without taking a penalty die.

HIDE

A fleeing character can try to dive for cover or duck into a crowd to disappear. The character forfeits their Athletics test for the turn to, instead, roll a Stealth test (bonus dice from Disguise [Deception] or Sneak may apply) against their closest pursuer's passive Awareness result, with –1D per point of Advantage gained by the pursuing character. If the fleeing character wins, they manage to throw off the pursuer, and the lead pursuer loses any points of advantage gained so far in the chase. If, however, the character fails, their pursuer gains 1 point of advantage. There must be places suitable for hiding for this option to work.

A character who spends a Destiny Point finds a hiding place where none might be present.

CHASES BETWEEN MULTIPLE CHARACTERS

Adding more participants can quickly complicate matters, especially when there are multiple hunters and prey. The easiest way to handle this situation is to resolve the chase in groups, the prey with the lowest Athletics rolling against the hunter with the highest Athletics. Resolve the chase between these characters normally until either the prey escapes (in which case all the prey escape) or the best hunter catches the prey, in which case the remaining hunters (if any) can continue their chase against the remaining prey if they so choose.

Example

Steve and Hal chase after a trio of thieves. Steve has an Athletics 4 (Run 1) and Hal has Athletics 5. The thieves all have Athletics 4 (Run 2). Since Hal has the highest rank in Athletics, he resolves the chase against one of the thieves. He rolls and gets a 14. The thief rolls and gets a 16, meaning the thieves gain 1 point of advantage. Hal rolls again on the next round and gets a 19. The thief rolls and a 19, a tie, which always favors the prey, so now the thieves have 2 points of advantage. Play proceeds until the thieves get away or until Hal manages to overtake their prey.

HAZARDS

Swords and arrows aren't the only dangers player characters face. Fire, disease, poison, and more represent potentially lethal threats that can undo even the hardiest hero. Hazards represent a broad range of threats that lay outside the standard sorts of opponents characters are likely to face.

ACID

Acid is an important ingredient for mixing inks, preparing velum, maintaining weaponry and armor, and in any number of other ways. While there are many types of acids in the world, any kind of concentrated acid produces the same effects.

Concentrated acid can be used as a weapon in combat. Splashing another character with a volume of acid requires a successful Marksmanship test against the target's Combat Defense. With a successful test, the acid deals 1 damage per degree. At the start of the second round, the acid deals 1 injury per degree. Finally, at the start of the third round, the victim takes 1 wound. A character who takes a wound from acid gains the Marked drawback. Burning a Destiny Point removes this drawback. If a character wears armor or wields a shield and is hit by acid, the acid reduces the armor's AR or shield's Defensive Bonus by 1 point per degree instead of dealing damage to the character. The acid works its way through the shield first, armor second, and then deals damage to the target once the Defensive Bonus is reduced to 0 (ruining the shield) or AR is reduced to 0 (ruining the armor).

A character can halt the acid's progression by diluting the acid with water and spare himself injuries or wounds that would result over later rounds.

DISEASE

Disease comes in three forms: infection, sickness, and plague.

INFECTION

Infection occurs when an injury or wound becomes septic and worsens. Usually, infection results when a character rolls a Critical failure on an Endurance test to remove the injury or wound. The result is always the accumulation of another injury or wound until the wound incapaci-

tates or kills the victim. Luckily, a skilled healer can usually deal with these wounds and prevent infection through the use of boiled wine, herbs, or even maggots to eat away the dead flesh.

SICKNESS

Sickness is any kind of normal illness from a common cold to a mild viral outbreak, from rashes to social diseases. Sicknesses are rarely life threatening and go away with rest. Sickness left untreated can intensify until it becomes crippling and even lethal.

Sickness usually spreads by proximity. The closer to the carrier, the greater the chance for it to spread. At the end of any scene including a sick character, all characters present in the scene must succeed on an Endurance test (Resilience bonus dice apply) against a Difficulty determined by the extent of contact. Simply being in the same area as the carrier requires only an Easy (3) test. Casual contact increases the Difficulty to Routine (6), close contact to Challenging (9), and intimate contact to Formidable (12). A successful test means the character is not infected. A failed test indicates the character becomes ill, while a Critical failure means the character becomes grievously ill. Ill characters take a –1 penalty on all test results, while grievously ill characters take –1D on all tests.

Sickness lasts for 1d6 days. At the end of this time, the character is entitled to a new Endurance test against the same Difficulty to overcome the sickness. A failed test indicates the character remains sick for another 1d6 days. A Critical failure means the character worsens, taking –1D to all tests on top of any previous penalty or penalty dice. Penalty dice and penalties remain until the character recovers. If the number of penalty dice equals the character's Endurance rank, the character dies.

A character suffering from sickness can benefit from a skilled healer. Provided a healer has treated the ill character for at least one hour of every day of the sickness, the healer may substitute a Healing test for the Endurance test to overcome the sickness.

PLAGUE

Plagues are contagious illnesses that spread rapidly and with disastrous consequences. A plague may spread through lice, fleas, or parasites. It may arise from dirty drinking water, open sewers, or from any other place of filth. Plagues are far more serious threats than sickness and usually have lethal effects.

Plague can spread through a variety of means, bodily fluids, breathing the same air, or physical contact being the most common. At the end of any scene involving a plague, any character participating in the scene must roll an Endurance test. The Difficulty depends on the plague, but most plagues are Routine (6). A character who fails the test becomes grievously ill (as sickness), while a character who rolls a Critical failure takes 1 wound and becomes plagued. Each day thereafter, the victim must succeed on a Challenging (9) Endurance test or take another wound. Wounds gained from a plague last until the victim overcomes the plague. Plagued characters who succeed on three consecutive Endurance tests overcome the plague.

A character suffering from sickness can benefit from a skilled healer. Provided a healer has treated the ill character for at least one hour of every day, the healer may make a Challenging (9) Healing test. On a success, the healer grants +1B per degree to the plagued character's Endurance test.

A character who takes precautions before encountering a plagued victim gains +1D on the Endurance test. Precautions include face wrappings, drinking an herbal infusion to stiffen up the constitution, and so on.

DRUNKENNESS

Excessive drinking functions as being poisoned. Characters can safely drink alcohol in quantities determined by their Endurance rank. A character can have a number of servings of ale, beer, or wine equal to their rank, or a number of servings of spirits equal to one half their rank (round down, minimum 0). Drinking in excess of these numbers causes the alcohol to function as a poison. See **Chapter 7: Equipment** for rules on poisons. The alcohol takes effect five minutes after the character's last drink.

ALCOHOL	INGESTED

Virulence: 1 per drink in excess of normal limits
Frequency: 1/hour
Toxicity: 2 for ale or beer, 3 for wine, 4 for spirits
Diagnosis: Automatic (0)

Effects: Alcohol imposes –1D per degree on all tests. The first time the alcohol attacks, the character gains a +3 bonus on all Endurance and Will tests. If the penalty dice equal the victim's Endurance rank, they pass out for 1d6 hours. If the penalty dice triple the victim's Endurance rank, they die from alcohol poisoning.

Recovery: The victim regains 1D each hour after the alcohol has run its course.

FALLING

When a character falls from a height, the amount of damage depends on the height of the fall as shown on the Falling Damage table. Damage from a fall ignores AR. A fall onto a soft surface, such as water or foliage, halves this damage.

Falling Damage

Distance Fallen	Effect
2–10 yards	1 damage/yard
11–20 yards	1 injury/2 yards
21–30 yards	1 wound/2 yards
31+ yards	10 + 3d6 wounds

REDUCING FALLING DAMAGE

A character can reduce damage from a fall by making a Routine (6) Acrobatics test. A successful test effectively reduces the distance fallen by 3 yards plus 1 yard for every additional degree, thus allowing a character to ignore damage from 3 yards on a result of 6, 4 yards on a result of 11, 5 yards on a result of 16, and so on. Since falls often happen outside of combat, any damage under the character's Health vanishes right away. However, if this damage exceeds the character's Health, the character will likely take an injury to survive the fall.

FIRE

Fire is another hazard characters are bound to face. An unprotected character who comes into contact with fire takes damage. The amount of damage taken depends on the size of the fire, as shown on the Fire table. In addition to the damage fire deals, characters caught in large fires are subject to suffocation from smoke. See **Suffocation and Drowning** on page 178 for details. Damage from fire ignores AR.

See **Chapter 10: Warfare** for more details on fire and battlefields.

CATCHING FIRE

A character in contact with fire is at risk of catching fire. Each round a character spends in contact with the flames, he's at risk of catching fire. At the start of the character's next turn, they must succeed on an Agility test against a Difficulty set by the size of the flame (see the Fire table). On a failed test, the character catches fire, and takes fire damage at the start of their next turn. Each round they remain aflame, they take damage as if the fire is one step larger until they take 3d6 damage each round. Each round, the character is entitled to another Agility test to put the fire out. Complete immersion in water automatically puts a fire out. Other circumstances may grant bonus dice or extra test dice.

Fire

Size	Damage	Catch on Fire
Tiny, Candle	1	Easy (3)
Small, Torch	1d6–1 (minimum 1)	Routine (6)
Medium, Campfire	1d6	Challenging (9)
Large, Bonfire	2d6	Formidable (12)
Massive, Inferno	3d6	Hard (15)

BOILING WATER

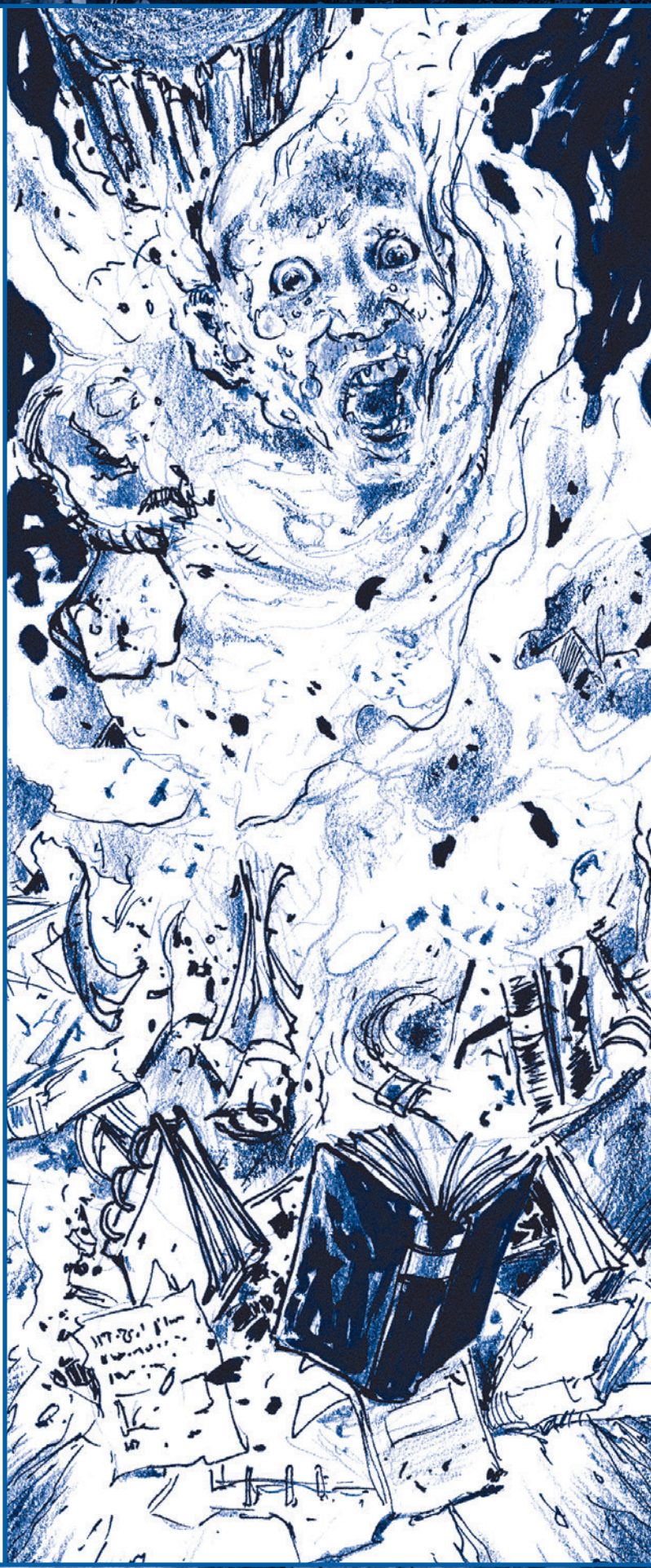
Boiling water burns the flesh and, in large quantities, can kill. A character immersed in boiling water takes 1d6 damage that ignores AR each round of immersion and 1 damage on the round that follows. Being splashed by boiling water deals just 1 point of damage.

BOILING OIL

Boiling oil is far worse than boiling water because it can, and often does, combust. A character immersed in boiling oil takes 2d6 damage for each round of immersion, 1d6 damage on the round after, and 1 damage on round after that. In addition, there's a 1 in 6 chance that the oil catches fire, dealing an extra 1d6 damage each round. All damage from boiling oil ignores AR. Being splashed by boiling oil deals just 1d6 points of damage.

SAGE'S FIRE

Sage's fire is a deadly substance similar to the Greek Fire of real history. A character hit by it takes 2d6 damage each round for 1d6 rounds. The substance burns until completely deprived of oxygen—a splash of water or quick roll in the dirt usually won't work.



Noble Houses

The concept of the noble house helps unite the players under a single banner, binds them to the setting, and gives them a haven in an often uncertain world. Creation of the players' noble house is a cooperative enterprise that involves you and the players, wherein you generate a family, its coat of arms, and most of its significant figures. Given the importance of this phase of character creation, establishing a worthwhile house is important to the development of the game and the stories you tell.

YOUR ROLE

Before the characters start work on their noble house, you should have a good idea about the chronicle you'd like to tell. Having in mind the places and events that will occur before the players begin is a good way to make sure that the decisions made are the right ones. In addition, foreknowledge allows you to plant good story seeds early in the process, weaving in the relationship between the players' house and their rivals early, so the players will be familiar with the other powers in their area.

OTHER HOUSES

The house creation rules are designed to provide structured creation for a noble house that's controlled by the players. When you sit down to create a noble house under your control, you are not restricted to these rules, though they are a good way to help you build comparable houses to the one created by the players. Instead, you should use the rules as support, as guidance for making good decisions about the lands and holdings of rival realms.

HOUSE FORTUNES

House Fortunes are designed to help simulate the unexpected events that can improve or diminish a house's resources, but more importantly, they offer ways for you to create new stories—to introduce new characters, plots, and other events—to further develop the chronicle. When the players roll for House Fortunes, success is up to them. The players must roll at least once every three months (see **Months and Actions** on page 83) but may roll each month if they choose. If the players decide to roll for a Household Fortune, the character (or Narrator character) acting as steward rolls a Status test (Stewardship bonus dice apply), the result of which determines the nature of the fortune.

There are six possible fortunes, three positive and three negative. The fortune reveals itself sometime during the following turn, in a form and fashion the Narrator decides. The fortune may function as a new story seed—sparking an idea for a new story, or it could just be a development that occurs regardless of the characters' actions.

BOON

A Boon is a fortune of considerable benefit and value to the house. Its occurrence might signify favor from a lord or the king, a windfall, a beneficial alliance, a business opportunity, or a profitable marriage. A boon should always improve one of a house's resources by 1–6 points or two of a house's resources by 1–3 points.

BLESSING

A Blessing is a minor benefit, an upturn in events that improves the house in some way. Blessings might be useful alliances, receiving an invitation to participate in a notable tournament, a visit from a powerful lord, and so on. Blessings improve one resource by 1–3 points or two resources by 1 point each.

GROWTH

A Growth result reflects the improvement of one or more of the house's resources. It might result in a gift of land, a sudden swell in population, an upturn in the economy, and so on. Growth should improve one resource by 1 point.

DECLINE

When Decline results, it reflects a diminishing of one or more of the house's resources. Decline reveals a shift in the house's fortunes, such as the loss of land, the weakening of defenses, an outbreak of sickness, and other minor but unfortunate developments. Decline should reduce one resource by 1 point.

CURSE

A Curse is an unfortunate downturn in events that could weaken the house in some way. Curses are significant setbacks, and they can include brigands, bad weather, blights, desertion, lawlessness, and other effects. A Curse reduces one resource by 1–3 points or two resources by 1 point.

DISASTER

A Disaster is an event of catastrophic proportions and sets the house back in a significant way. Examples include the outbreak of plague, the disfavor of a lord or king, the disgrace of a staunch ally, widespread lawlessness, or a combination of any of these dire events. Disaster reduces a single resource by 1–6 points or two resources by 1–3 points.

Adversaries & Allies

Adversaries and allies are the human characters who populate the world. Narrator characters are similar to player characters in many respects and use all the same rules as the characters controlled by the PCs. While similar, Narrator characters rarely require the same degree of detail as player characters; NCs simply need enough information to fulfill their function in the story. Narrator characters all fall into one of three groups: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The group describes how the character interacts with the story and the amount of detail you should supply for the character.

PRIMARY CHARACTERS

Primary characters are the closest to player characters in terms of mechanical detail, history, goals, and motivations. These characters figure prominently in the story and may be a continuing character featured in multiple stories or throughout the entire campaign. Primary adversaries are rivals, important villains, and any mastermind character who's opposed to the player characters and their house.



Primary allies are the immediate family members in a house, major supporting characters, and other allies who have an important place in the characters' lives.

CREATING PRIMARY CHARACTERS

Primary characters use all the rules described in **Chapter 2: Character Creation**. Once you have finished creating the character, you can give the character 1d6×10 Experience to improve abilities, specialties, or qualities if you choose.

PRIMARY CHARACTERS AND THE GAME

Primary characters have all the same options and follow all the same rules as player characters. They take injuries and wounds to reduce or negate damage, and they have Destiny Points, benefits, and flaws. Many primary characters are also part of a house, and you should create the house if so.

SECONDARY CHARACTERS

A secondary character is a Narrator character whose presence and importance rarely lasts further than a single story. These characters may have an important role within a particular story but not as significant as primary characters. Secondary characters are often valued-but-minor servants, lieutenants, and minions of primary adversaries.

CREATING SECONDARY CHARACTERS

Secondary characters are easy to create. To create a secondary character, follow these steps:

- Select the secondary character's most important ability and assign it rank 5.
- Select two more abilities, and assign rank 4 to each.
- Choose four rank 3 abilities.
- Choose four specialties associated with any ability. Each specialty provides a number of bonus dice equal to one half the ability's rank (round down).
- Finally, calculate the character's derived statistics (Combat Defense, Intrigue Defense) as normal.
- Equip the character as appropriate
- With the mechanics complete, come up with one physical trait and one personality trait to help you portray the character in the game.

SECONDARY CHARACTERS AND THE GAME

Secondary characters use most of the same rules as player characters. In combat, these characters may take injuries, but they may not take wounds. In an intrigue, they may take frustration as normal. Most secondary characters do not have benefits or flaws, and none of them have Destiny Points.



TERTIARY CHARACTERS

Tertiary characters are all the minor characters who populate the world. They include innkeepers and merchants, lordlings, men-at-arms, guards, bandits, thugs, soldiers, and just about everyone else. A tertiary character is only important to a single scene and, thus, requires a lot less detail than a secondary or primary character does.

CREATING TERTIARY CHARACTERS

Creating tertiary characters is simple. To create a tertiary character, follow these steps:

- Select one or two abilities and assign them rank 3 or 4.
- If you assigned rank 4 to the first ability, select two more abilities and assign rank 3 to each.
- Select two or three specialties. These specialties have 1B each.
- Calculate only those derived statistics relevant to the scene (Combat Defense for combats or Intrigue Defense for intrigues).
- Equip the character as appropriate.

TERTIARY CHARACTERS AND THE GAME

Tertiary characters never take injuries, wounds, or frustration. Once their Health or Composure is reduced to 0, they are defeated. Tertiary characters don't have benefits or flaws, nor do they have Destiny Points.

PROMOTING NARRATOR CHARACTERS

You can promote a Narrator character from one group to another. The decisions you have already made serve as a map to rebuilding the character using the procedures already described. Simply rebuild the character, and make sure you assign abilities in a way that covers all previously assigned abilities. Therefore, if a tertiary character had Fighting 4, he should have Fighting 4 or 5 when promoted to a secondary character.

IMPROVING NARRATOR CHARACTERS

You can improve Narrator characters as they appear in stories at whatever rate you need to support the game. Adversaries should improve their abilities to keep in step with the player characters, so as the players improve their Fighting abilities, you should also improve your primary adversaries' combat-related abilities to ensure they remain a significant threat and challenge in the game. With secondary characters, improvements aren't necessary because the PCs are expected to eclipse these Narrator characters and face new secondary characters in future stories. Tertiary characters never improve.

DEMOTING NARRATOR CHARACTERS

If a primary or secondary character fades in importance over the life of the chronicle, there's no need to worry about demoting that character since odds are, they will not appear as often or at all in future stories. Simply use the character's statistics as already written. However, the character might not take injuries or wounds, reflecting their reduced presence in the story.

SAMPLE NARRATOR CHARACTERS

The following tertiary characters are provided to help you flesh out stories with ready-to-use adversaries and allies.

ASSASSIN

Hired knives are useful tools for eliminating rivals and enemies when an open confrontation is impossible. Many assassins are desperate men and women who take up killing for money to make ends meet. Others are members of sinister organizations. The following entry describes a typical hired killer: not untrained, but not the elite. Assassins are typically used for combat scenes. You might also use an assassin in an intrigue scene, especially a poisoner. If so, use statistics for courtiers instead.

BANDIT

Most bandits are groups of disorganized commoners and petty warriors who strike when they significantly outnumber their foes. Should they face any kind of stiff resistance, they are quick to flee. The following statistics can be used for common brigands and other violent criminals. These adversaries are designed for combat scenes.

COURTIER

Courtiers are privileged lordlings and lesser nobles who make up a lord's entourage. Courtiers can include minor knights, envoys from

Assassin

Agility 3, Endurance 3,
Fighting 4 (Short Blades 1B), Stealth 4 (Sneak 1B)

Intrigue Defense 6 ✪ Composure 6
Combat Defense 8 ✪ AR 2 (soft leather) ✪ AP –1
Health 9 ✪ Movement 4 yards

Stiletto	4D+1B	3 damage; Piercing 2

Bandit

Fighting 3 (Axes 1B), Stealth 4 (Sneak 1B), Survival 3

Intrigue Defense 6 ✪ Composure 6
Combat Defense 6 ✪ AR 5 (hides) ✪ AP –2
Health 6 ✪ Movement 4 yards

Battleaxe	3D+1B	2 damage; Adaptable

Courtier

Awareness 2 (Empathy 1B), Cunning 3,
Deception 3 (Bluff 1B), Status 4

Intrigue Defense 9 ✪ Composure 6

far-off lands, ladies in waiting, suitors, and other individuals of quality. Courtiers scheme with varying degrees of ability but are useful sources of gossip and intrigue. Use the following statistics for a typical member of a court. These adversaries are designed for intrigue scenes.

GUARD

Guards are a common sight at any lord's keep or castle, and they provide security for the noble family. Guards represent members of the city watch, sentries, and infantry. Guards are best used for combat scenes.

KNIGHT, LANDLESS

Landless knights may have arms and other petty social honors but must still sell their swords to lords, landed knights, or any who will hire them. Many treat them with scorn, for they are often of common birth, or fell from some greater station. They are often found in the company of lesser lords, merchant princes, and other characters of middling rank. They are typically used in combat scenes.

KNIGHT, VETERAN

This experienced knight is probably sworn to a liege, but might also be working as a mercenary, or may frequent tournaments, turning their skills to gold. Such a knight almost certainly has a squire and perhaps even a page on hand, as the business of war requires their assistance in everything from caring for horses to dressing the knight for battle.

Guard

Athletics 4, Awareness 3 (Notice 1B),
Endurance 3, Fighting 4 (Pole-arms 1B)

Intrigue Defense 6 ✪ Composure 6
Combat Defense 8 ✪ AR 5 (mail) ✪ AP –3
Health 9 ✪ Movement 3 yards

Halberd	4D+1B	7 damage; Bulk 1, Powerful, Two-handed

Knight, Landless

Animal Handling 3, Athletics 3,
Fighting 4 (Long Blades 1B, Lance 1B)

Intrigue Defense 6 ✪ Composure 6
Combat Defense 7 (+4 with large shield) ✪ AR 5 (mail)
AP –3 ✪ Health 6 ✪ Movement 2 yards

Longsword	4D+1B	4 damage
War Lance	4D+1B	7 damage; Bulk 2, Impale, Mounted, Powerful, Slow, Vicious
Heavy Shield	4D–1D	1 damage; Bulk 1, Defensive +4

Knight, Veteran

Agility 3, Animal Handling 3 (Ride 2B), Athletics 3,
Awareness 3, Endurance 4, Fighting 5 (Long Blades 2B,
Shields 1B, Spears 2B), Status 4, Warfare 3, Will 3

Intrigue Defense 9 ✪ Composure 9
Combat Defense 9 (+4 with large shield) ✪ AR 10 (plate)
AP –6 ✪ Health 12 ✪ Movement 2 yards

Longsword	5D+2B	4 damage
War Lance	5D+1B	7 damage; Bulk 2, Impale, Mounted, Powerful, Slow, Vicious
Heavy Shield	5D	1 damage; Bulk 1, Defensive +4
Tourney Lance	5D+1B	6 damage; Bulk 1, Mounted Powerful, Reach, Slow

Noble, Minor

Fighting 3 (Long Blades 2B), Knowledge 2 (Education
1B), Status 3 (Breeding 2B), Will 3

Intrigue Defense 7 ✪ Composure 9
Combat Defense 6 (+4 with large shield) ✪ AR 4 (ring)
AP –2 ✪ Health 6 ✪ Movement 4 yards

Longsword	3D+2B	3 damage

Bear

Agility 2 (Quickness 1B), Athletics 4 (Climb 1B, Strength 4B, Swim 1B), Awareness 3 (Notice 2B), Cunning 1, Endurance 5 (Resilience 2B, Stamina 2B), Fighting 4, Survival 5 (Forage 2B, Track 1B)

Combat Defense 9 ✪ AR 2 ✪ AP 0
Health 15 ✪ Movement 5 yards

Claws	4D	5 damage; Grab
Bite	4D	8 damage; Piercing 1, Powerful, Slow, Vicious

Boar

Agility 3 (Quickness 2B), Athletics 3 (Run 1B, Strength 1B), Awareness 3 (Notice 2B), Cunning 1, Endurance 3 (Resilience 1B, Stamina 2B), Fighting 3 (Gore 1B), Stealth 3, Survival 4 (Forage 2B)

Combat Defense 9 ✪ AR 1 ✪ AP 0
Health 9 ✪ Movement 6 yards

Gore	3D	4 damage; Powerful, Vicious

Ferocious: A boar can take injuries to reduce damage to its Health.

Eagle

Agility 4 (Quickness 2B), Athletics 2, Awareness 4 (Notice 2B), Cunning 1, Fighting 3, Survival 3 (Hunt 2B)

Combat Defense 10 ✪ AR 0 ✪ AP 0
Health 6 ✪ Movement 1 yard or Fly 8 yards

Beak	3D	2 damage
Claws	3D	2 damage

Blinding Claws: An eagle that gains at least two degrees on a claws attack temporarily blinds its opponent. The opponent takes –2D on all tests and automatically fails Marksmanship tests until the end of the combat. An eagle that gains four or more degrees *permanently* blinds its opponent, granting the Impaired Sense flaw to its opponent.

Hound

Agility 3 (Dodge 1B, Quickness 1B), Athletics 3 (Jump 2B, Run 1B, Swim 1B), Awareness 3 (Notice 2B), Cunning 1, Endurance 3 (Resilience 1B, Stamina 1B), Fighting 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3 (Hunt 1B, Track 2B)

Combat Defense 9 ✪ AR 0 ✪ AP 0
Health 9 ✪ Movement 8 yards

Bite	3D	3 damage

Veteran knights often appear in combat scenes, but have the experience and social connections to cultivate their own political interests.

NOBLE, MINOR

The scion of a typical minor house, assuming they have not neglected a cursory education in the art of war. Those who prefer talk over sword-play substitute Persuasion (Charm 2B) for Fighting. Higher ranking members of a house, or the junior members of greater houses, have higher Status, while house traditions may dictate additional changes.

CREATURES

Not all the foes and friends the PCs make will be human. Many are common animals, domesticated and wild alike. For the most part, animals have little cause to attack humans and, in fact, avoid them. However, a mother protecting her young or wild beasts driven by some supernatural agency can prove fearsome foes.

Creatures typically don't take injuries or wounds, though they can for larger or significant animal threats. Animals bonded to characters through the Animal Cohort benefit take injuries and wounds just like regular characters.

Creatures have rank 0 in the following abilities: Animal Handling, Deception, Healing, Language, Knowledge, Marksmanship, Persuasion, Status, Thievery, and Warfare. They can never take tests related to these abilities and automatically fail when called to do so. Certain uses of other abilities may be impossible. Creatures can make Fighting tests with their natural weapons only.

BEAR

Bears are ubiquitous throughout the north, but can be found in warmer climes.

BOAR

Hunting wild boar is a popular pastime in many kingdoms, as it is a sport that proves a warrior's strength and cunning. Boars are aggressive creatures, but they rarely attack humans unless provoked in some way first.

EAGLE

Eagles are predatory birds who hunt with keen vision and swift wings. These game statistics reflect larger breeds, and can be used for other large raptors. In many cultures, certain breeds are used for falconry, with many being restricted to certain social classes.

HOUND

Used for war, hunting, and for companionship, hounds can be found in any community or in wild packs. They are usually kenneled in a castle or household, looked after by a kennel- or hound-master. Hounds are naturally nervous around larger predators, and often react by growling and yipping when they smell such threats.

LINNORM

Linnorms are an example of a fictional beast that might appear in your chronicle. Haunting untamed forests, these serpents are twice as long as the biggest crocodiles, but slender enough that one only weighs

about as much as a panther. Using their toothy jaws, and two clawed legs, linnorms prey on deer, and this often leads to encounters with hunters. Linnorms who taste human flesh sometimes stalk villages, making their eradication a problem for frontier lords. It is rumored that a linnorm can grow throughout its life, and can only be killed by wounds or disease, and tales of enormous examples abound.

MAMMOTH/ELEPHANT

Mammoths are found in northern climes; elephants are found in the south. Both have been hunted for their meat and used as beasts of burden and war, though their intelligence means they are never truly tamed.

MESSENGER BIRD

Ravens, pigeons, and other small birds are often trained as messengers—and in a pinch, can provide meagre sustenance for hunters.

STEEDS

Given their importance, steeds come in many sizes and shapes, from the destriers used by knights in tournaments and coursers used in bat-

Linnorm

Agility 3 (**Contortions** 1B, **Quickness** 1B), **Athletics** 4 (**Strength** 2B, **Swim** 4B), **Awareness** 3 (**Notice** 2B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 4, **Fighting** 3, **Stealth** 3, **Survival** 3

Combat Defense 10 ✪ **AR** 3 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 12 ✪ **Movement** 6 yards, swim 8 yards

Bite	3D	6 damage; Grab

Camouflage: A linnorm gains +2D on Stealth tests made in forested terrain.

Mammoth/Elephant

Athletics 4 (**Strength** 3B), **Awareness** 3, **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 6 (**Stamina** 2B), **Fighting** 3

Combat Defense 9 ✪ **AR** 5 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 18 ✪ **Movement** 4 yards

Gore	3D	8 damage; Staggering
Trample	3D	10 damage; Staggering

Messenger Bird

Agility 4 (**Quickness** 1B), **Athletics** 1, **Awareness** 3 (**Notice** 1B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 1 (**Stamina** 1B), **Fighting** 1

Combat Defense 8 ✪ **AR** 0 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 3 ✪ **Movement** 1 yard, fly 6 yards

Beak	1D	1 damage

Destrier

Agility 3 (**Quickness** 1B), **Athletics** 5 (**Jump** 2B, **Run** 2B, **Strength** 2B), **Awareness** 3 (**Notice** 3B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 5 (**Resilience** 2B, **Stamina** 4B), **Fighting** 3, **Will** 4

Combat Defense 11 ✪ **AR** 0 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 15 ✪ **Movement** 6 yards

Bite	3D	4 damage
Hooves	3D	6 damage; Powerful

Courser

Agility 4 (**Quickness** 2B), **Athletics** 4 (**Jump** 2B, **Run** 2B, **Strength** 2B), **Awareness** 3 (**Notice** 3B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 4 (**Resilience** 1B, **Stamina** 3B), **Fighting** 3, **Will** 3

Combat Defense 11 ✪ **AR** 0 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 12 ✪ **Movement** 8 yards

Bite	3D	4 damage
Hooves	3D	6 damage; Powerful

Rounsey

Agility 3 (**Quickness** 1B), **Athletics** 4 (**Jump** 1B, **Run** 2B, **Strength** 2B), **Awareness** 3 (**Notice** 3B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 5 (**Resilience** 2B, **Stamina** 3B), **Fighting** 2, **Will** 3

Combat Defense 10 ✪ **AR** 0 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 15 ✪ **Movement** 8 yards

Hooves	2D	4 damage

Garron

Agility 4 (**Balance** 2B), **Athletics** 3 (**Strength** 1B), **Awareness** 3 (**Notice** 2B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 4 (**Resilience** 2B, **Stamina** 3B), **Fighting** 1, **Will** 3

Combat Defense 10 ✪ **AR** 0 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 12 ✪ **Movement** 6 yards

Bite	1D	3 damage

Hule

Agility 3 (**Balance** 1B), **Athletics** 4 (**Strength** 3B), **Awareness** 3 (**Notice** 2B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 4 (**Resilience** 1B, **Stamina** 3B), **Fighting** 1, **Will** 3

Combat Defense 10 ✪ **AR** 0 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 12 ✪ **Movement** 6 yards

Bite	1D	4 damage

tle to the lowly garron, favored for its sure step. Descriptions of these steeds can be found in **Chapter 7: Equipment**.

WOLF

Wolves typically avoid humans, but can become dangerous is deranged by disease, if hunger forces them to enter settled areas, or if they get in the habit of eating livestock or people.

Palfrey

Agility 4 (Balance 1B, Quickness 2B), **Athletics** 3 (Jump 1B, Strength 1B), **Awareness** 3 (Notice 2B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 4 (Resilience 2B, Stamina 3B), **Fighting** 1, **Will** 3

Combat Defense 10 ✪ **AR** 0 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 12 ✪ **Movement** 8 yards

Bite	1D	3 damage

Pony

Agility 3 (Balance 1B, Quickness 1B), **Athletics** 3 (Strength 1B), **Awareness** 3 (Notice 2B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 3 (Resilience 1B, Stamina 2B), **Fighting** 1, **Will** 3

Combat Defense 9 ✪ **AR** 0 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 9 ✪ **Movement** 6 yards

Bite	1D	3 damage

Stot

Athletics 3 (Strength 3B), **Awareness** 3 (Notice 1B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 4 (Resilience 1B, Stamina 3B), **Fighting** 1

Combat Defense 8 ✪ **AR** 0 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 12 ✪ **Movement** 6 yards

Bite	1D	3 damage

Wolf

Agility 3 (Dodge 1B, Quickness 1B), **Athletics** 3 (Jump 1B, Run 1B, Strength 1B, Swim 1B), **Awareness** 3 (Notice 1B), **Cunning** 1, **Endurance** 3 (Stamina 1B), **Fighting** 3, **Stealth** 4 (Sneak 1B), **Survival** 4 (Forage 1B, Hunt 1B, Track 1B)

Combat Defense 9 ✪ **AR** 0 ✪ **AP** 0
Health 9 ✪ **Movement** 6 yards

Bite	3D	3 damage

Knockdown: Whenever a wolf gets at least two degrees of success on a Fighting test, it can forgo the extra damage on the attack to knock its opponent to the ground.

SUPERNATURAL CREATURES

Depending on the chronicle, supernatural creatures may be common or rare. Every supernatural being has an origin story tied to the nature of the chronicle's world, which can be used to draw characters into an ongoing story. For instance, if unfallen (see Unfallen) arise from sorcerers' experiments, encountering them may be a sign that a magic-using rival challenges the characters' house for power.

GIANT, COMMON

A "common" giant (which may not be that common, but appears more frequently than bigger or stranger counterparts) has the general shape and build of a person but stands as tall as 12 feet. Giants' forms are usually distorted by human standards. They may have thicker legs and feet, an extra face, or rubbery, greenish skin. These traits vary from giant to giant, and in some cases provide additional benefits, though for every giant with working eyes in the back of its head, there's another whose extra eyes are useless. Most giants have poor vision, and rely on a keen sense of smell. Giants and ogres are rumored to be somehow related, as both have inconstant shapes, but modern ogres have no evidence of a connection. Common giants are intelligent, but use primitive tools, though some are legendary smiths.

GRYPHON

Majestic beasts with the head and forelimbs of a bird and the torso and hindquarters of a lion. They are relentless hunters. The smallest and only nocturnal gryphon is the forest gryphon, which has the head of an owl and the body of lynx. Slightly larger is the brown gryphon, which has the head of a hawk and the body of a panther. Brown gryphons are found in a variety of areas including plains, hills, and mountains.

UNFALLEN

Legends detail numerous forms of undead creatures, and most remain unconfirmed tales—for most. The unfallen are more common than most undead, but it is exceedingly rare to stumble upon them. Unfallen are typically raised by necromancers, curses, improper burials, and other notable circumstances. Unfallen may be called wights, pagru (from the Sumerian for "corpse") and a host of other names, and might be called "zombies" by modern people. Unfallen shamble and strike with the ferocity and intelligence of fearless, if slow-witted, predators. They continue to rot, and eventually lose the ability to move as they deteriorate, though those who rise in cold regions may stalk the world for longer than a human lifespan.

Whenever a human or animal is transformed into an unfallen, apply all the following changes:

- Lose all specialties.
- Lose all Destiny Points.
- Lose all benefits, though retain flaws, if any.
- Modify the creature's abilities as follows:
- Reduce Agility and Fighting by 1 rank (minimum 1).
- Increase Athletics and Endurance by 1 rank.
- Reduce Cunning to 1 rank.
- Reduce Language to rank 0.

Giant, Common

Agility 2 (Quickness 1B), Animal Handling 3 (Train 1B), Athletics 5 (Strength 3B, Throw 2B), Awareness 3 (Notice 1B), Endurance 5 (Resilience 2B), Fighting 5 (Bludgeons 1B), Language 2 (Giant, Common), Survival 4 (Forage 1B, Orientation 1B, Track 2B)

Intrigue Defense 7 ✪ Composure 6
Combat Defense 10 ✪ AR 4 ✪ AP 0
Health 15 ✪ Movement 5 yards

Massive Club	5D+1B	6 damage; Shattering 2, Slow

Gryphon

Agility 3 (Quickness 2B), Athletics 4 (Fly 1B, Jump 2B), Awareness 4 (Notice 2B), Cunning 1, Endurance 3, Fighting 4, Stealth 4 (Sneak 2B), Survival 4 (Hunt 1B)

Combat Defense 11 ✪ AR: 0 ✪ AP 0
Health 9 ✪ Movement 4 yards or Fly 8 yards

Beak	4D	2 Damage
Fore Talons	4D	4 Damage, Grab
Rear Claws	4D	4 Damage

Rake: If a gryphon succeeds in grabbing its opponent in its fore talons, it may make an additional attack with its rear claws.

Swoop: A gryphon can swoop down upon its target, moving up to twice its flight Movement in combination with an attack. The attack is at -1D and at +2 damage for the round.

Sneaky: A forest gryphon gains +1D on Stealth tests at night.

Trainable: Gryphons are considered beasts for the purposes of training them, but their fiercely wild nature is harder to tame, their Will considered one rank higher for training rolls.

Human Unfallen

Agility 1, Athletics 3, Cunning 1, Endurance 3, Fighting 2, Language 0, Stealth 4

Combat Defense 6 ✪ AR 5 (hides) ✪ AP –2
Health 9 ✪ Movement 4 yards

Claws and Teeth	2D	3 damage; Grab

Death Grip: Whenever an unfallen takes damage equal to or in excess of its Health, it immediately removes half this damage and takes –1D on all tests. It may now make two attacks each round as a Lesser Action.

Vulnerable to Fire: All fire attacks that hit unfallen gain one additional degree of success. An unfallen that takes fire damage equal to or in excess of its Health is instantly slain.



Unfallen cannot roll and automatically fail Animal Handling, Deception, Healing, Knowledge, Persuasion, Status, Survival, Thievery, Warfare, and Will tests.

- **Claws and Teeth:** Unfallen use their hands and teeth to attack. These attacks deal Athletics damage. For human unfallen, these attacks also have the Grab quality.
- **Death Grip:** Unfallen of human origin gain this ability. Whenever an unfallen takes damage equal to or in excess of its Health, it immediately removes half this damage and takes –1D on all tests. It may now make two attacks each round as a Lesser Action.
- **Vulnerable to Fire:** All fire attacks that hit unfallen gain one additional degree of success. An unfallen that takes fire damage equal to or in excess of its Health is instantly slain.



Play Styles

The noble house provides an excellent unifying device and provides opportunities for schemers and warriors alike, and it can serve just about any kind of chronicle from warfare to intrigue and everything in between. However, there are many stories to tell about beyond a house's struggle for power. The following alternate play styles present variant options for different kinds of games and exploring the necessary changes to facilitate these styles.

ADVENTURERS

Although possessed of many unique characteristics, *Sword Chronicle* is a fantasy roleplaying game—and one in which there is opportunity aplenty for the more traditional themes of exploration, high adventure, and quests employed by other games in this genre. Rather than explore the fortunes of a noble house, you can alter the tone of the game to support characters of a variety of origins, uniting them through some other common purpose, namely high adventure. Stories in this play style would see the characters traveling to remote corners of the world, exploring old temples, lost fortresses, and perhaps even "dungeons." The characters might set out to recover ancient artifacts from a lost civilization. Another possibility is for the characters to all be crewmembers on a sailing ship. They may be pirates raiding merchant and military ships, smugglers, or even explorers, sailing to far-flung ports throughout the world.

Another, probably superior, option is for the players to take the roles of questing knights. They might be hedge knights or heirs to a noble house, but they seek fame and fortune, selling their swords or undertaking courageous quests to right wrongs and save damsels and bachelors in distress. Between adventures, they could participate in tournaments and rub elbows with some of the greatest knights in the land.

GAME MODIFICATIONS

To run an Adventurers style campaign, consider making the following changes.

HOUSE CREATION

Ignore the house creation rules defined in **Chapter 5: House and Lands.** If any players have characters of noble birth, they may use the house creation rules to define their family's heritage and background, but the mechanics of running the house are not used.

REWARDS

Characters earn Experience and Coin. They do not earn Glory.

PEOPLE OF THE LAND

Many societies feature tension between settled, mostly agrarian people—and people whose ancestors often conquered the lands where they now dwell—and nearby peoples who live in hills, on the steppes, or in the mountains, and in many cases, have either always lived there, or were forced there by "civilized" invaders. These people of the land may not acknowledge local lords or the laws of kings. They freely mix with outlaws, hunt and fish where they will, and dispense justice according to their own codes. In a People of the Land game, you belong to one of these nations, not a noble house—though noble blood may still be your heritage, even if it goes unrecognized by valley-dwellers.

GAME MODIFICATIONS

To run a People of the Land style campaign, consider making the following changes.

HOUSE CREATION

Ignore the house creation rules defined in **Chapter 5: House and Lands.** You might consider extrapolating some of the rules to come up with a similar set of guidelines for constructing your tribe or nation.

REWARDS

Characters earn Experience and Coin. They only earn Glory if you have created the equivalent of a house.

A THOUSAND INTRIGUES

An interesting variant that can explore some of the deeper tensions in the setting is to widen the scope of each player so that instead of playing the part of a single character, each player takes the role of a house. Within the house are a number of characters—the lords, oathbound warriors, and more—whom the player might use to interact with the setting. Any given story might feature characters from different houses, bound together by circumstance or design, and players might move their characters in and out of stories depending on their needs and the challenges presented by the story.

The benefit of this variant is that it allows you to tell a variety of stories, each controlled by different players, who settle their disputes on the battlefield. Players can create new characters when necessary, so when battle calls, the player creates a knight to lead their house's forces.

All of these advantages come with a price, however. The stories you would tell rapidly approach the epic, with numerous characters, plots, and developments. With the sheer number of characters present, it becomes much harder to keep everything straight, requiring a great deal more preparation and anticipation on your part. Finally, the game is always at risk of devolving into a war game rather than a roleplaying game, which can be very unattractive to players who would rather devote their time to developing one or two characters.

Therefore, before embarking on a Thousand Intrigues chronicle, be sure to talk with your players to gauge their interests in such a game. While a challenging style of play, it does carry its rewards, so proceed with caution.

GAME MODIFICATIONS

To run a Thousand Intrigues campaign, consider making the following changes.

HOUSE CREATION

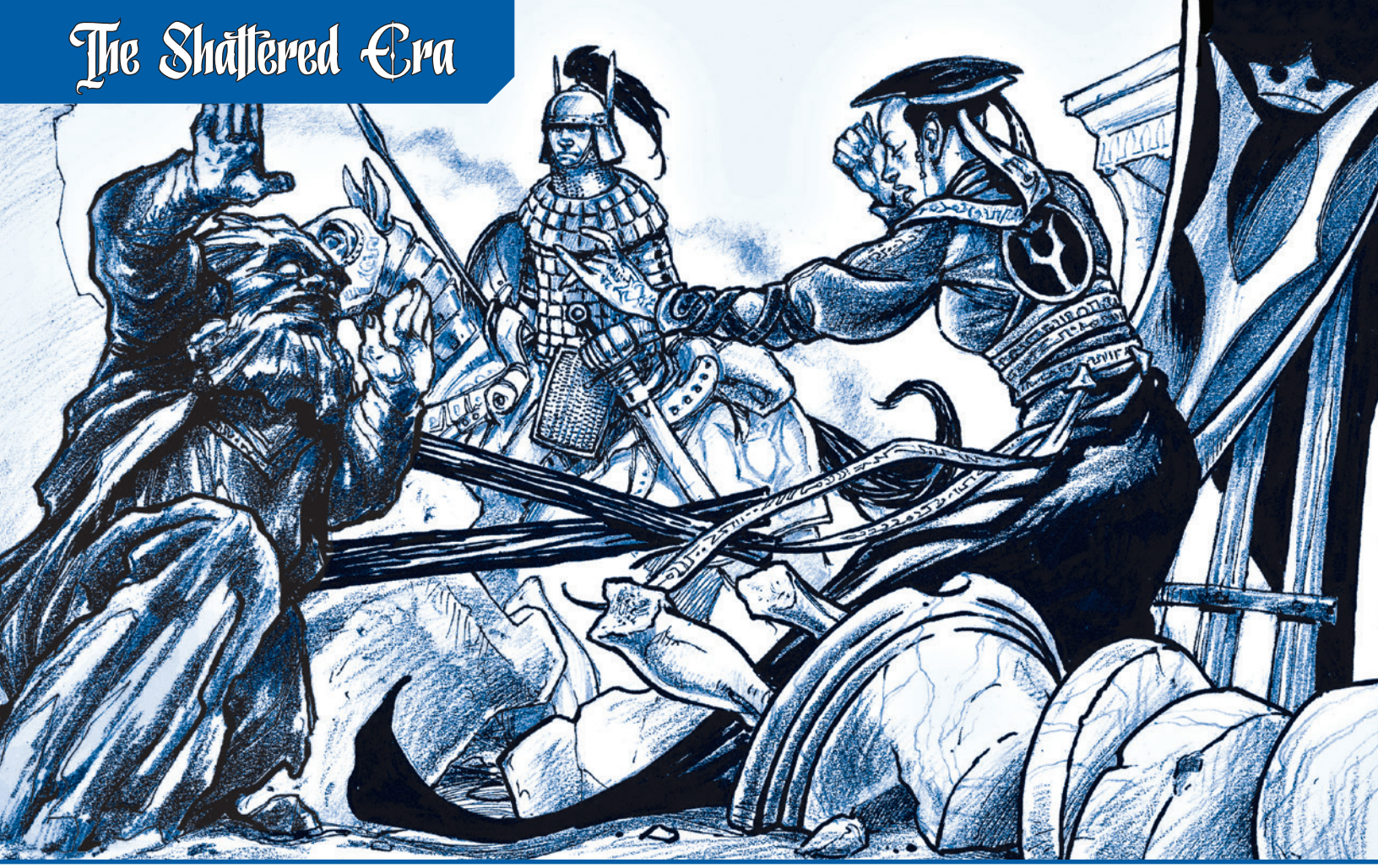
Each player creates their own house. All houses should be in a realm of your choosing to avoid the inescapable contrivances bound to arise in games where the houses are on different sides of the world.

CHARACTER CREATION

For every full 10 points of Influence, a player creates one character. At least one character must be of blood relation to the house. Other characters can be knights, spies, and so on, as normal. Players may save one of their character "spaces" for later, making a character who fits a story role when the occasion arises. In a competitive game, when these characters die, they can't be replaced, and once they're all gone, the player's house has fallen, as by fate or skill the protagonists were the only ones capable of defending its interests.

As Narrator, you should consider allowing characters who are "offscreen" to continue to earn as much Experience as their active counterparts, or slightly less (say, 75%) so, for example, the house spy doesn't grow relatively incompetent just because the chronicle has been focused on battles.

The Shattered Era



The **Shattered Era** is a setting intended to give you a place filled with political conflict and opportunities for adventure: the twin sources of *Sword Chronicle* stories. Here, we present the world of **Annarum**, once the heart of a cluster of worlds, in the era where high magic ruled. But that mighty force undid itself with its own capricious nature. Now Annarum is a sphere alone, healing from the end of the old order. Scars remain, and where twisted magic left behind stranger lands, enterprising warlords and ambitious kingdoms have come, as settler-conquerors (for never has one failed to be accompanied by the other) eager to claim land and wealth. These contested regions can be found throughout Annarum, but we'll focus on **Erz**, also called the **Breachlands**.

The World of Annarum

Annarum is not the only world. Legends tell of ships which could travel through the air and across the iron Night between worlds, through which only the stars may burn. While the heroes, monsters, gods, and ill-defined terrors of myth are difficult to verify, the so-called nightships of the ancients existed. Remnants of their hulls, made of blood-colored elaborately carved wood and beaten copper, adorn the halls of aristocrats and the wealthiest merchants. The wrecks of the old engines, used to focus high magic, can also be found around the world. Most have been picked clean of valuable metals and other prizes, but the Order of the Forgotten guards a few, building monasteries around them. These examples may be more complete, but are as nonfunctional as the sorry hulks outside the Order's grasp.

Furthermore, no mere legendarium includes the remnants of trade ledgers and diplomatic communiques. Most of these records defy full translation, and they must be passed through several languages to fully understand, but we know Annarum is the word for "jewel" in one such forgotten language. These fragmentary records describe 800 years of peace, when Annarum became the center of a cluster of fertile worlds, and maintained amity between their peoples through diplomatic rituals, trade, and mutual aid agreements. Annarum remained a world of many nations itself, but all shared in interworld trade, and conflict was limited to unpopular rebellions against the status quo, and instances of armed criminality. A council of nations resolved other disputes, and its name became the name of this time of peace: the Whole.

LIGHTFALL

Eccentric sages and fringe politicians predicted doom for the Whole from its very genesis, through a thousand gruesome scenarios, but none of them came to pass. Instead, the cataclysm came from a single point: a star that fell from the heavens. This was the Unbidden Light, the star astronomers warned should never be used in high magic. Where it struck, it not only created a blazing crater, but roused the earth and rock around it. The world shook with quakes, and some cities were annihilated. Worst of all, the nightships fell from the sky, their magic slain by some property of the Unbidden Light. Some of the Great Engines exploded, while others lost the ability to create portals along with some or all of their other functions. Of the world's two moons, the Watcher turned blood red, and the Traveler, the moon thought to protect the paths between worlds, vanished. This was the Lightfall, the end of the old world.

Hapless Geography

This section contains no map, so the Narrator can customize it as they see fit. This is a matter of intentional design, since a *Sword Chronicle* setting so strongly depends on the political implications of territory that fixing it too firmly may limit Narrators' ability to come up with interesting stories. The Breachlands might be a claustrophobic crush of mutually belligerent city-states, or a vast network of newborn kingdoms with room to grow. However, there is a general geography of the region, as follows:

Erz and the Breachlands: The Erz was the name of a significant river which also demarcated the line of the mystic Wall that separated the East from the Monster Kingdoms. Many cities existed along the Erz, but were destroyed by the Wall and the event called the Lightfall. The Wall caused the Erz to dry out by blocking its flow. Refugees from the city became the Ziyatul. Now the Wall has fallen, and many powers and cultures rush to colonize the region around the former river, which is now called the Breachlands. In most cases, this chapter describes cardinal directions in relation to the Breachlands. Since these follow the dried bed of the Erz, they go as far as the Broken Sea.

The Broken Sea: At the northern coast, the Erz used to run into the Broken Sea, whose climate resembles that of the mid- to north Atlantic. The Yahi-Addu live in a subarctic archipelago in the northeast of the Broken Sea. The sea itself runs into the Monster Kingdoms.

The East: The "East" refers to all the lands which were not sealed off by the Wall. This also includes the Southwest. The mountain dwarves, Aglam Empire, and Misral nations can be found some distance from the Breachlands. In the Northeast, the Lossthari Wood stands between other nations and the Breachlands.

The Monster Kingdoms: The Monster Kingdoms occupy the Northwest, which was sealed off by the mystic Wall for 1200 years. Besides a number of small ogre-led communities, the closest Monster Kingdom is Ubarzin, dominated by the kurgulan. Maldig and its supposed hegemon Triandi lie a significant distance west, and beyond them, one hears of intelligent snakes and other wonders.

With the Lightfall came sinister dreams, beyond the nightmares expected of survivors. These were visions of power and self-hatred. It was a simple enough thing to reject these dreams, but there were a few who welcomed them out of ambition, despair, and nihilism. Thus, the dark intelligence of the Unbidden Light found a willing home in the heart of Auregian, merchant-king of Triandi. Triandi relied on interworld trade more than any other city, and was half-ruined by fallen nightships and wrecked Great Engines. Possessed by the Unbidden Light (or merely human madness and ambition, though to suggest that to a Triandi nomad is a deadly insult), Auregian lead his desperate people to pillage the neighboring kingdom of Maldig. Against Maldig's Citadel of the Thirteen Towers, which was widely believed to be impregnable, he brought strangely modified Great Engines, and worked an unknown form of high magic even as the sorcerers of the time discovered their own arts were failing.

The Citadel is no more. Eastern records do not record exactly what happened, but by the end, Maldig was ruled by monsters, and surrounded by fearsome predators and toxic flora from unknown worlds, somehow transported to Annarum even as the old ways of interworld transport failed. Refugees from the two kingdoms carried never before seen lethal diseases. Sometimes, mysterious warriors followed on their heels. These soldiers carried arms and armor from no known nation or world, but in their actions appeared to do the bidding of the so-called Monster Kings.

The Order of the Forgotten

Any literate, well-educated person (or convincing charlatan) can call themselves a sage, but wealthy houses recruit theirs from the Order of the Forgotten. Founded to preserve the knowledge of the Era of the Whole, the Order allows any recruit who has the permission of any living parents, has no children, and can pass its entrance examination, which asks its students to predict the next shape in a series by finding each series' underlying pattern. A successful entrant completes no less than 50 series, and takes a vow to refrain from procreative sex, marriage, raising children outside the order, accepting land or noble honors, or practicing any form of sorcery. These restrictions are intended to reinforce the order's neutrality. Order sages are also supposed to speak the truth at all times, though they may refuse to answer a question, and even refuse to explain their refusal. Since mistreating a member of the order prompts it to bar its presence from the offender's domain, reticent sages often get away with it. Beyond advising nobles, Order sages with the appropriate specialties also act as healers, engineers, and in other capacities where their knowledge is useful.

THE WALL

The remnants of the Whole met for a final time, and scorched its name in history with their decision: Wall off Maldig, Triandi, and the other fallen lands from the rest of the world. The dwarves drew upon a secret reserve of high magic, buried in their mythic creation. Dwarves were flesh raised from stone and flame, and though every dwarf felt this heritage in their bones, and their love of the mineral things of the world, and of making things, only their Elzahi sorcerer-priests fully communed with that power. On the Winter Solstice, every Elzahi traveled to the Erz, a river marking the westernmost edge of the affected lands. They summoned the whole of their power and banished these Monster Kingdoms from the world. The Elzahi became the Wall between these lands and the realms of the Whole, for they turned to stone, and while they did not link arms, they faced the shimmering black barrier which was as tall as the sky, like cold glass to the touch, and utterly impassable. Thus, the last of the high magic passed from Annarum, and the Northwest, the Monster Kingdoms, became like unto another world.

A Proto-Colonial Setting

As part of the wider Shattered Era setting, the Breachlands are designed as a "frontier" area where power is fluid and virtually any house can rise to supremacy. However, no frontier has ever been truly uninhabited. The Ziyatul and elves dwell here, and at the default start of Shattered Era chronicles, have long despised the invaders from both sides of the Erz.

While it lacks the religious influences of its historical counterparts, the region is intentionally designed to resemble the Crusader States, where invading Europeans attempted to found kingdoms in the Levant. The Crusader States represent an early instance of European colonialism, with many of its immoral aspects. The Narrator can present as much or as little of the discrimination, exploitation, and violence of colonization as they like, but make no mistake: These crimes are inherent to colonization. These possibilities are available to introduce the maximum amount of potential conflict so a wide variety of stories beyond adventure and political intrigue can prosper, not to condone colonialism.

High Magic and the Stars

The sorcery described in *Sword Chronicle* is a shadow of the high magic, a lost discipline combining aspects of sorcery, science, and engineering to produce wonders beyond the reach of modern magic. Most sorcerers believe the ancients were particularly adept at creating magical devices, but this belief could be driven by the fact that they know of high magic chiefly through such artifacts. The high sorcerers of old do not appear to have written down their knowledge very often, and many of these already-rare texts seem to have been deliberately destroyed. The most famous applications of high magic were the nightships which traveled between worlds, and the Great Engines, which are believed to have made portals between worlds, and channeled various energies for other tasks.

High magic is known to have either been powered by the stars, or to have relied on them in some way. Ancient texts on astronomy allude to the importance of certain stars for magical purposes, and warn of "intelligences" who, in certain situations, may interfere with magical workings. The end of the Whole led many to believe high magic should never be rediscovered, but naturally, most sorcerers disagree.

THE WALLED ERA

Twelve centuries passed. The Whole divided, but the world healed. The Order of the Forgotten rose around the ruined wonders of the old world, and sorcerers revived a shadow of the high magic. While less potent, and incapable of providing passage between worlds, it was strong enough to assure them places in the courts of well-prepared nobles. Yet some communities blamed magic for the fall of old Annarum, and sorcerers faced harassment or death there. To define itself as a neutral sect, the Order of the Forgotten forbade sorcerers from membership even while hoarding magical artifacts and the few texts ancient workers of magic left behind. Consequently, a rivalry arose between sorcerers and Order sages, and resolving spats between them is considered a routine duty for wealthy lords.

Why did the Whole disband? Many member kingdoms fell, and all struggled after losing the ability to trade with both other worlds and the lands beyond the Wall. Empires rose in a newly impoverished Annarum but in a world with less, none could rise without another falling. The Whole was an impediment to these new paths to power and its palace now lies pristine yet deserted, save for the Order of the Forgotten, who maintain it and the surrounding city of Confluence in the hopes that the monarchs of the world may one day place their crowns below its seal.

The feudal order now common in the East arose out of the same forces, as warlords claimed pieces of old kingdoms for themselves, battled for supremacy, and after battles, won peace through oaths of fealty. Virtually every scrap of land became subject to a claim from some baron, who was in turn beholden to a petty king or duke and above them, a high king, even an emperor—and even if the residents of such places had never seen their overlords. Only the Erz, a land named for the now-dead river that once followed much of the Wall, could count itself free of these ambitious claims. None would settle within sight of the stone Elzahi, and beyond them, the elves claimed the forests. This is not to say the land was uninhabited, as the Ziyatul, who were changed by the Lightfall but remained near Erz, survived as nomadic herders, but few recognized their territorial claims.

This was the rough, violent status quo, until the Wall fell.

THE SHATTERED ERA

At first there were rumors, the night-fogged hallucinations of caravan guards or the visions of some wandering hermit. Then more credible tales came out of Erz, escaping the elves' attempts to deny them. Witnesses saw bizarre creatures, and Northwestern birds which had gone unseen for a thousand years. Strangely clothed people speaking unknown tongues appeared. Before long, none could deny that things were passing through the Wall.

For the first time since the fall of the Whole, Eastern envoys came to the city of Confluence, and while they refused to prostrate themselves before the Seal of the Whole, they agreed to send expeditions to Erz bound by non-aggression pacts except against the elves, who opposed this incursion so close to their lands. In search of new opportunities, peasants and nobles alike came, defying elven patrols through stealth, bribes, and force of arms. Some witnessed creatures passing through the Wall, and even say the Elzahi *moved*.

Then the Wall fell. The Traveler Moon returned. The Monster Kingdoms of the Northwest rejoined the world, and the settlers of Erz not only discovered that the lands beyond the Wall were as firmly governed as their own, but that their diverse peoples had also previously avoided lands near the Wall. Now they shared a vast, unsettled space with opportunities for land and trade not seen in living memory. It became known as the Breachlands.

Naturally, the lords of the East forgot their peace treaties entirely.

Peoples of the Breachlands

When interworld trade was common and a variety of strange creatures could be seen throughout Annarum, the Whole defined a person as someone possessed of a human-like body plan, the ability to speak a language, and the ability to recognize themselves in a mirror. Such characteristics must belong to the person themselves or at least one of their parents. This definition excluded many intelligent beings from personhood. Thus, despite the fact that the Order of the Forgotten believes there are at most twelve distinct peoples in the world, there are in fact many more intelligent beings, along with unintelligent creatures capable of speech.

Of the twelve known peoples, three built significant kingdoms in the East: dwarves, elves, and humans. These three peoples remained in the Monster Kingdoms as well, but were joined by the ogres, who came to Annarum from another world through the influence of the Unbidden Light. Complicating matters are the kurgulan, who rule a significant territory bordering Erz but who are *not* considered people by Eastern standards. Thus, no law or cultural custom prevents an Easterner from visiting any abuse they please upon one of them, and one need not keep oaths made to the "hoofmen." They're not the only influential "non-people" in the Monster Kingdoms either. Obviously, the Monster Kingdoms consider these Eastern beliefs despicable.

DWARVES: THE VALNADH

Called "dwarves" in the East, the Valnadh (the "necessary people," in their tongue) are said to have been sculpted from stone and animated with the Flame of Making before the worlds were separated from one another. The Valnadh made Night to separate the worlds, forging it from black iron in the foundries of Bel-Amaron, the world between worlds. After the rise of Night, their Elzahi wisdom-keepers maintained the secrets of this high magic, which they would eventually use to make the Wall.

After making Night, the dwarves were dispersed into most of the known worlds of antiquity. Dwarven ancestry is associated with skill in the making of things and resistance to magic. Thanks to these influences, dwarves are generally respected in both the East and the Monster Kingdoms. Yet mutual mistrust exists between the mountain dwarves of the East, who retreated into their tunnel realms after raising the Wall, and the citadel dwarves who maintained their namesake fortress-settlements in the Monster Kingdoms. The mountain dwarves' one great city is the Glassmere, in the Broken Crowns. A forest of delicate structures carved from an obsidian mountain, the Glassmere is ruled by the Matriarch, rumored to be the last surviving Elzahi.

DWARVEN HOUSES

Dwarven society is matrifocal, in that while all genders may take various positions in their societies, few significant decisions occur without the approval of the oldest women in the community. As dwarves respect trade skills, this often means that matriarchs will choose the greatest artisan in a generation to succeed their parents. Notable houses include:

THE COMPANY OF THE GLASS PRINCESS

A fierce warrior-sorcerer, the half-dwarven youngest daughter of the Matriarch founded a mercenary company that rampages across the Breachlands, though it refuses to take contracts against Easterners or dwarf-ruled opponents. It is popularly thought the company represents the Matriarch's desire to unite Eastern and Monster Kingdoms dwarves under her rule, but the Glass Princess is known for her mercurial, individualistic personality, so many people believe her passions, not her mother, determine the Company's actions.

HOUSE AKLUMERE

Aklumere is a house dominated by citadel dwarves from the Monster Kingdoms, though they display no bias against other peoples. Allies rely on Aklumere's knowledge of the lands beyond the Wall, so while its leaders maintain the dwarven tradition of nobility through artisanship, they are more often called upon to act as diplomats and advisors. Aklumere was a wealthy house before the Wall fell, and strategically funds groups and projects it wishes to prosper. They are selective enough that most people assume they have some ultimate goal, but who knows what it could be?

HOUSE HIGHSTORM

As master smiths, jewelers, and engineers, the women of the Eastern House Highstorm were each a power in their own right before they and their mates united into a polyfidelitous hexad. They maintain the house's namesake fortress and have encouraged their heirs to claim territory in the Breachlands under various cadet branches, to both enrich the greater house and solve the succession issues behind having a large number of heirs.

Ancestry, Culture, and Inheritance

One notable difference between the Easterners who battle over the Breachlands and what might be common elsewhere is that lineage and culture trump more crudely identifiable inherited traits. If one is the human-looking child of a human and a dwarf, their identity would depend on where they were raised, while inheritance would be based on a combination of who their parents are and whatever prevailing customs are relevant. If such a person had a brother who was born of two dwarves, this would not in itself place the brother ahead of his part-human sibling. Dwarven matriarchs would choose based on other criteria. Some customs highly favor particular ancestral traits, such as elves and their respect for age, but even these can be bypassed when practical considerations (or political cleverness) point to a different approach.

Further complicating matters are customs around adoption, which vary from total equality with birth children among ogres to barely recognized among Yahi-Addu, and among the many variations on marriage which exist. In practical terms, this means if players want their human characters to belong to the house of a different ancestry, even as its heir, this can always be accommodated.

ELVES: THE REKHU

The Rekhu, or elves, are the long-lived inhabitants of forest realms and seaside fortresses. The elves say they sailed to the world of Annarum from Sema, the "godhome," to teach the arts of worship and enlightenment. The sea elves await the call to return to the gods, while the forest elves have accepted Annarum as their true home. Though they have long avoided the appearance of any political ambitions beyond maintaining their homelands, the fall of the Wall has made this a much more complicated agenda, as Fal Lossthar and the Lossthari Wood stand close to the Breachlands. According to some elves, the Breachlands are entirely Lossthari territory. As no elves appear to have survived on the other side of the Wall, the Lossthari have little respect for territorial claims from the Monster Kingdoms either. Now, certain sages say the elves have been hoarding wealth and manipulating other realms over the long spans of their lives—a most convenient accusation if one plans to claim a kingdom in any woodland close to Erz.

ELVEN HOUSES

Though there are many enclaves (elven: Falshi) of Rekhu throughout Annarum, the citadel of Fal-Lossthar stands on both the coast of the Broken Sea and in the north of the Lossthari Wood, bringing the sea and forest elves together. It has become the home city of sorts for all elves, who visit from other Falshi at least once in their lives. Previously a quiet holy city, the return of the Monster Kingdoms has inspired powerful figures to make themselves known, and begin their first overt maneuvers in the Breachlands. Each of them rules a house in the elven manner of absolute gerontocracy.

HOUSE KANNISH

The current head of the Lossthari Council, crafty Kannish is old even for an elf, and her powers are fading, but she has three children—two full-elf sons (including Halbishe, now her rival) and a daughter with a human father—who enforce her will. The daughter, Thyrsi, has been given a fortress and detachment of warriors to build her own power base in the Breachlands, as Kannish knows her daughter is the most competent of her three children, but will age too quickly to rule in Fal Lossthar.

HOUSE HALBISHE

Halbishe is Kannish's eldest son, devoted to his mother, even as she sees him as a competitor. Halbishe's father raised him in another enclave, Fal Voltharn. He didn't see his mother for 200 years, and she treated him like a stranger. When his father was forced into retirement after accruing debt from dozens of failed trading expeditions, it was up to Halbishe to make things right. He emigrated to Fal Lossthar to avoid saddling the enclave with his family's debts, and has begun to pay them down by sponsoring trade missions and "adventurers" (that is to say, pillagers and mercenaries) in the Breachlands. It's hard to say where Halbishe's desires begin and that of his creditors end.

HOUSE SHAMASH

Kannish's main rival in Fal Lossthar, Shamash is culturally elven but the son of humans who established the Salmon River trade clan during the first years of the rift. He's an old man, but as a human has the benefit of being respected for his age relative to his heirs while keeping his knowledge current. Elves sometimes snidely refer to him as "the Fisherman," but he's come to enjoy the nickname, and the fact that it causes people to underestimate him since in point of fact, the Salmon River Clan now makes most of its money from Monster Kingdom steel.

HUMANS

Humans are the most populous people, and their cultures are the most popular ones, absorbing those of other ancestries to the point where human ideas are often considered a threat. In the trade language of the ancients, humans were called Salu, or the "red people," alluding to the notion that in any world with clay (and thus, living earth), humans would arise. Before the Lightfall, humans from other worlds traded with the people of Annarum and even emigrated there. Racists from other ancestries believe this marks humans as "common," coming from neither the gods, as the elves, nor creation itself, as the dwarves do. Humans explore fearlessly, change their cultures and languages whenever expedient, and have thus spread among many nations of both their own making, and those founded by other peoples. So too, do other peoples freely mingle with humans. Thus, other peoples may be found within the following human nations and houses.

THE AGLAM EMPIRE

Formed from the kingdom of Agal and its vassal states, the Empire of Agal dominated the Walled Era through willing vassal states and the conquered Misral. Even though the Imperial Family and Elector Houses had driven themselves into debt paying for the war against the Misral, there wasn't much their creditors among the merchant class could do about it, since the Empire controlled trade routes and monetary policy. Thus, the end of the Wall proved to be the end of the empire, as the returned Monster Kingdoms created uncontrollable opportunities for mercantile profit. This gave traders the power to sponsor

Aglam Esthetics

The Aglam Empire still holds great wonders, from artifacts of high magic and intricate copperwork to the elaborately-patterned textiles used in nobles' long-sleeved robes. Spiral patterns are a common motif, with seven whorls being reserved for the Imperial Family. But sometimes the old magic fails, the copper is dented, and the inherited cloth fades and frays with age. Such is the way of faded glory. Current fashions among the younger generation prefer clean lines and a durable look inspired by soldiers' clothing, and the trailing sleeves and fragile, occasionally garish antique textiles of their elders are seen as marks of senility and decadence.



puppet warlords and mercenary armies to use against tight-fisted debtors, and it tore the Empire to pieces. A shadow of it holds dominion over the old Agal Kingdom and seven small vassal states.

Life in the Aglam remnant is desperate for the poor and dull for the wealthy. Thousands of soldiers, too physically or mentally damaged to continue fighting, clog the Warrior's Way of Agal Prime, the capital. Threadbare propaganda tapestries and angry graffiti cover the walls, to be cleaned only when the Emperor holds a triumphal march. Since the merchant class divested, Agal Prime and other major cities have rapidly depopulated. The wealthy hide in crumbling mansions, and the poor scavenge plentiful building materials from abandoned homes. Otherwise, the only new constructions consist of tower mausoleums, which the remaining Elector families erect, each attempting to build the tallest. Occasional collapses shower the streets with stones and corpses.

Outside the capital, the remnant is better run, since the merchants pay for working local governments which past Emperors have given functional autonomy to. A number of fiefdoms beyond these don't swear allegiance to the Empire, but are culturally Aglam and very similar to "loyal" domains. But even as the heart rots out of the center, the periphery has begun to prosper, as nascent city states send expeditions to Erz, and even command vassal states there.

THE 10TH HORSE GUARDS

Once a unit of the Aglam military, the 10th Horse Guards (often called the "Tenners") became mercenaries when their patron, the Elector of Postune, couldn't afford to pay them. The Tenners historically boasted many noble members, including the scions of various royal houses. Enlisted members turned to these officers for pay, and such was the loyalty instilled by the force that by and large, these lords split their inheritances with their troops and sought work for them all somewhere where they could get paid, and avoid fighting their own people. Thus, they came to the Breachlands. The Tenners may still be the finest heavy cavalry in the world.

HOUSE KAVIR

House Kavir is the plaything of Imperial Prince Jagrid, and named after the Y-shaped impaling post that used to be used on traitors to the Empire, though Jagrid insists that it should be literally translated as "Meeting the Sun," the euphemistic function for which the device is named. Jagrid is the third to rule his Breachland kingdom, which boasts a handful of vassal lords and an impressive swath of territory. Technically subordinate to the Emperor, Jagrid expects to reverse the balance of power after his father dies. To keep the merchant class in line he offers them low taxes and other generous terms, but won't hesitate to send them to meet the sun, should they prove disloyal.

FALLEN MISRAL

In the Era of the Whole, the Misral Empire began as a trading bloc among four sorcerer-kings, the Elder Tetrarchs. They practiced the old, high magic, and working together, produced the greatest fleet of nightships Annarum had ever known. Unlike their rivals, they invested most of the profits in their own people. The Tetrarchs knew magic was an

Misral Culture

Misral culture thrives alongside local customs in Malambra and Safram. The Order of the Forgotten takes its own testing customs from the Misral Empire, and both successor nations carry on the tradition of determining a citizen's lot in life through test scores. In the Misral states, the process has somewhat ossified, and state examinations rotate through a cycle of standard tests whose answers are passed on through families, maintaining a de facto class system. True genius as a scholar, fencer, or sorcerer still entitles one to noble privileges, however, though it also mandates a term of service as a soldier or tax collector.

Bright clothing and other flamboyant forms of self-expression are encouraged, especially if they relate to one's achievements. Malambra and Safram are where sorcerers dress like *sorcerers*, rune-stitched robes, carved staves, and all, and where state-licensed fencers invariably blow their teaching fees on jeweled swords. Typical dress for all genders is tight-fitting hose with a loose, slashed tunic covering a contrasting tighter shirt or jacket. Those inclined to feminine dress wear elaborately pleated wigs and jeweled bangles. Masculine styles include brightly colored knotted cords to tie back loose sleeves, and forked, dyed beards.

Religion on Annarum

Most religions in Annarum are loosely structured institutions that pass on stories, rituals, and customs without an organized priesthood. One's faith is usually considered synonymous with one's culture. Belief in the metaphysical claims of religions is less important than following common customs. Therefore, failing to offer a libation to the Immortal Emperors at a wedding would still offend most Aglam atheists. What you think is secondary to what you do.

The elves are an exception. They believe they follow the one, true, universal, and nameless faith, where countless gods represent different mixtures of moral and metaphysical principles. By their combined will, the gods send the deceased to reincarnate in the worlds of the dead, which are pleasant or harsh according to a soul's character. The elves do have a dedicated priesthood, and perform services for all peoples who wish the comfort of the Faith. Many people who otherwise follow their own traditions have elves perform funerals.

Religion is considered an entirely different thing from the Creation Cycle, which was set down in the Era of the Whole. This is considered akin to scientific fact because it was recorded by wielders of high magic. Dwarves were made of fire and stone on Bel-Amaron, and made Night to separate the worlds. The elves came from Sema, home of the gods (though the gods may have nothing to do with the making or working of the world). Humans rose from the soil of many worlds. Doubting these facts isn't considered heretical, just irrational.

unpredictable force, and designed their nation to benefit from magic, but never require it to survive, and their investments in precious metals, steel, durable roads, and a functioning bureaucracy helped maintain stability in the new era.

This made the Misrals an attractive target for the upstart Aglam Empire. The Aglam military was larger and better trained, but poorly equipped, and lacked the military sorcerers who were in every Misral company. Over a century of war, the Aglams threw generations of soldiers at their foes, turning the tide through sheer attrition. This eventually reduced the Misral Empire to two of its four original kingdoms, and of the four dynasties that shared imperial rule, only one remained. The head of that dynasty's name is not commonly known, for after he dissolved the Imperial Parliament, he became known as the Mad Emperor.

Some say he attempted to summon the gods of Sema. Others believe he rebuilt a Great Engine. Whatever he did, it happened in Starhollow, the imperial retreat. What followed was three days without night, as a pillar of light from Starhollow lit the darkness. Thousands around the retreat were blinded. When the light passed, Starhollow was gone.

Now, Misral is split between the modern nations of Malambra and Safram, while all its former vassals are now independent states of varying stability and power. Both countries maintain the old Empire's devotion to knowledge, along with its bureaucratic bent, and although each maintains independence from the other, they've remained allies. Now that the Wall has fallen, however, they compete with each other for an opportunity to remake the Misral Empire. When both nations seized territory in the Breachlands, they mutually agreed their peace treaties would not apply to these vassal states.

NEW MALAMBRA

New Malambra is solidly wedded to its parent state. Its "ruling house" is the Subordinate Council, where each member obeys their counterpart in Malambra's own Succession Council (so named for the unlikely notion that it will, one day, crown a new Misral Emperor). It's ruled by a Steward, who answers to the Malambran head of state, its Autarch. Consequently, the Malambran presence in Erz is utterly loyal to its parent state, but slow to react to local problems, as anything above a certain threshold of importance requires counsel from afar. Consequently a clique of newly-minted petty nobles called the "Young Prodigies" handle many affairs without alerting the cumbersome leadership.

HOUSE ERZIA

Safram responded to opportunities in the Breachlands by founding House Erzia and giving the sorcerer Vurm Redsigil the title of Despot, which hadn't been granted since the fall of the Misral Empire. Redsigil is said to be one of the strongest sorcerers in Safram, a nation already known for a preponderance of wonder-workers. He appears to be a competent ruler, and quick to respond to his people's needs, though a full tenth of the taxes he collects fund experiments that are the subject of terrifying rumors, and few facts, save that they seem to require a great deal of meat and copper.

YAHI-ADDU

Holding the cold and stormy Broken Sea, the Yahi-Addu divide their lives between icy cliffside long-halls and twin-hulled ships. "We do not dance upon soil," say their Yassa sea queens. "Grace belongs to the water, on slick ice or hulls rocking to the call of the moons." It is said the Yahi-Addu possess underwater palaces their ancestors built during the Age of the Whole, which they can visit when their highest towers break the surface of the water.

Each Yassa rules a long-hall, having been elected to the position from a group of women who meet age (thirty or older) and bloodline (descent from Addu, a supposed goddess) criteria, provided no ill omens haunt them and they have demonstrated their prowess as providers by feeding a hundred people for a year. Peaceful candidates operate fishing vessels to satisfy the requirement, but it's much faster to win it through pillaged gold. Consequently, politically ambitious candidates terrorize the Broken Sea and the northern coast of Erz. The return of the Monster Kingdoms has given them more to raid, and greater ambitions, including dreams of building long-halls in the warm mainland. The most successful sea raiders are sponsored by the strongest Yassa, the Prime Mothers.

YASS-SILASH

As her regnal name means "Queen of Queens," Yass-Silash has made no secret of her plans to rule all Yahi-Addu. She's a reformer among the Prime Mothers, and has even allowed men to captain ships even though this is commonly considered bad luck among her people. Her long-hall has a stone annex built in the fashion of mainland keeps, and her ruling council makes decisions that other queens would ask their Fed Hundred to vote on. These breaks with tradition have alienated conservative Yassa, but have also allowed her to create the closest thing to an organized navy her people have ever known.

YASS-ZERIM

Yass-Zerim, "Queen Silent Ice," was forced onto the throne by the elders because of overwhelming oracular evidence she was destined to rule. Before that, she put her devotion to Addu above everything else. At once point she spent a year without making landfall, dividing her time between ships and ancient sea palaces. Due to these preoccupations, she may be the greatest explorer in Yahi-Addu history. She has mapped much of the Northwestern coast, determined the fates of places not seen since the rise of the Wall, and knows the location of seven undersea fortresses. Her people have prospered as traders, and attempts by rivals to take her territory have proven fruitless, as reserves hiding in undersea palaces can always retake whatever she loses.

ZIYATUL

The nomadic Ziyatul are all that remain of the original populations that once thrived along the Erz. After the end of the Whole, their suffering was threefold. First, Lightfall quakes ruined their cities. Second, they were struck by lethal and body-changing plagues from the newly-formed Monster Kingdoms. Third, the Wall divided their families and over time, drained the Erz itself. The survivors became nomads, and even though the Breachlands healed, they remained so.

Ziyatul vs. Ogres

Ziyatul mutations are the same as ogre physical ancestral traits, and many Ziyatul look very similar to ogres. This may indicate that ogres are merely infected by Chaos, or that they at least share deeper similarities with the Ziyatul. However, the Ziyatul define themselves as humans, and trace their origins to the human-dominated cities of Erz, and their tribes record no history of intermarriage with ogres until centuries after they became nomads. While Ziyatul are rarely biased against ogres, calling a tribal member an ogre is considered a not-quite-deadly insult, which a Ziyatul would traditionally answer by slashing the offender's face with a knife.

The grasslands suited their livestock, and they considered their ruined cities sacrosanct.

Other nations ignored their claims to the land and have colonized the lowlands, forcing the Ziyatul to the hills. On the surface, this may seem to be a desperate position, but the nomads know the land better than any newcomer, and with the fall of the Wall, they've reunited with kin from the Monster Kingdoms. Ziyatul who live on the other side retained remarkably similar customs, though they speak a much different dialect of the common Ziyatul language. This common culture may have survived because the Ziyatul are highly literate. Each tribe carries the civic shrine of its original home city, along with its books of laws and rituals.

Currently, the Ziyatul are divided about whether to carve out their own state, or avoid borders and crowns completely by staying mobile and maintaining fastnesses in the hills, where settler armies would be hard-pressed to follow.

BAQQANU

Descended from the citizens of the mining city of Enlili on the eastern side of the Wall, the Baqqanu frequently clash with the fiefdoms that now claim its ruins, since they travel to Enlili to perform rituals of castigation and binding. The Baqqanu believe they are necessary to contain an evil presence bound to the mines and certain streets. Baqqanu stand out due to the aluminum jewelry they wear, which has been handed down through generations. One of the old mines was used to harvest bauxite, but high magic was used to produce aluminum from its ore. That magic is gone, so aluminum stays locked in bauxite stones, making it is a precious metal once again. The Beqqanu wish to stay nomadic, but drive settlers away from any part of the Breachlands they believe is as cursed as Enlili.

IPTITA

The Iptita dwelled on the far side of the Wall, in the periphery of the Monster Kingdoms. They once belonged to a confederation of towns, but after the Wall cut off access to water, they abandoned them. To maintain their independence they fought numerous small wars against the kurgulan, eventually earning their respect. Iptita mercenary scouts can frequently be found beside kurgulan war parties, and some kurgulan are culturally Iptita. Treaties with the Monster Kingdoms cede the western lowlands to its vassal states, but give the highlands, herding routes, and certain traditional gathering places to the Iptita, who increasingly believe these pacts are being ignored.

MILITANT ORDERS

Born of Aglam custom and popular throughout the East, militant orders skirt the line between charity and self-interest. Orders known for good works see robust recruitment wherever they provide aid, but they're also popular refuges for warriors seeking redemption, or a way to earn coin by the sword without ending up hanged or impaled as bandits.

THE ORDER OF SEFA

The Warbound Chirurgeons of the Grace of the Princess Sefa, also called the Bandaged Knights, the Eight-Fingered Soldiers, the Order of Sefa, or simply Sefanites, are the most powerful and popular order in Erz, and are well-known throughout the East. They're one of the first militant orders. Traditionally, they trace their origins to Princess Sefa, sister of Thayzus III, one of the "emperors of power," who ruled when the Aglam Empire was at its height. Accompanying her brother to a battle against the Misrals, Sefa was moved by the plight of the wounded on both sides, and led her bodyguards to collect and treat them, regardless of their affiliation. Among Aglam nobles is said that Sefa was the premiere strategist of the Empire, and by abandoning its armies to create her order, she condemned the Aglams to their current ruin. The Sefanites maintain a network of hospital fortresses throughout the Breachlands, and while they serve all persons, their military actions definitely favor Aglam and Misral-culture interests. They can be identified by the sign of a left hand missing its last two fingers, a golden circlet representing its royal origins, and the bandages its warriors wear wrapped around their armor.

From the Monster Kingdoms

When the Wall sealed the Northwest off from the rest of Annarum it concealed over a thousand years of history in a region remade by the Lightfall. Auregian's assault on Maldig did more than destroy an ancient citadel. Whether inspired by the Unbidden Light or some malicious genius, the merchant-king created the first Chaos Gates with his modified Great Engines. Multicolored, shimmering holes in the earth and sky devoured the Citadel of the Thirteen Towers, and avalanches of earth, stone, and water from other worlds stormed upon the remains. Creatures from those worlds followed, along with alien seeds, strange artifacts, and more, sometimes distorted in passage so that an otherworldly sword might look as if it melted like wax—or might sprout a living eye.

Other Chaos Gates soon erupted across the Northwest, though nobody can be certain whether they spread from Auregian's working or appeared in separate incidents. Later gates proved to be less violent and longer-lasting, and it is from these intelligent beings came forth. Some of these "monsters" were as terrified as the natives of the Northwest, but others seem to have been prepared for the Chaos Gates, and came with armies and strategies of conquest. More lethal than any army, however, were the plagues the newcomers brought. Some were virulent, lethal, but ultimately mundane diseases, but others brought the touch of Chaos, as if the sufferer had themselves passed through a gate and was unlucky enough to suffer the distortions of mind and body that sometimes occurred.

The Chaos Gates stopped appearing about a century after Lightfall, after the rise of the Wall. Once the last gate flickered out of existence, the refugees, alien diasporas, and beleaguered indigenous peoples of the Northwest organized into new nations, often ruled lords who were unique among the other newcomer "monsters." Their realms were called the Monster Kingdoms and they, the Monster Kings. A four-winged being called Nethuns Sar built a new fortress in Maldig: the three-sided, iridescent Black Prism. He then went to Triandi and bent knee before Auregian, now a mutant giant, and sent bronze-armed, winged warriors to rebuild the merchant-king's city. A serpentine swarm consciousness called the Giver of Hands drew the Ahibana to the world. Of course, some beings came through without leaders, largely by accident. Of these creatures, the largest group were the Kamtain, called ogres in the East.

Over the 1100 years after the last Chaos Gates, nations rose and fell, and monster and native battled and eventually, reconciled themselves to coexistence and sometimes, even alliances. The plagues subsided. The Monster Kings didn't seem interested in conquering the world at the expense of forming stable governments, and even understood they required sympathy from their subjects. Many appointed regents from the ogres or native populations.

When the Wall fell, Easterners were as surprised at the Monster Kingdoms' stability as they were terrified of some of its inhabitants. The full political situation in the reopened Northeast is largely un-

DISTANT MONSTERS

Ogres and kurgulan represent a small sample of the unusual peoples of the Northeast. People in the Breachlands have heard of others, including the following.

Ahibana: Ahibana are brightly colored, tree-dwelling, snake-like predators. They do not have hands, living in symbiosis with dexterous mammals called Baba-Il. Kurgulan say they're temperamental, difficult to reason with, proud and easily angered by suspected disrespect. They do not live in cities, claiming a nation in far jungles, unknown to the East.

Mituxul: Mituxul are born dead, clawing their way out of the corpses of other peoples who are buried in the marshes of the far west. They have hearts, but these do not beat. Their blood is a black syrup, and they do not feel pain as other beings do. When they "die," they come to life for the first time, and their bodies erupt in flowers and vines, which stand upon the marshes of their births.

Sabitu: Sabitu are air elementals who were ripped from their homes in the subtle realms. Cast down upon Annarum, they now rule a mighty empire whose full extent can never be known, because they're invisible. Sabitu leave no involuntary sign of their presence except for breezes whose temperatures depend on their moods. A cold wind warns of their wrath.

known, but besides the Ziyatul, House Orknai, and House Beyore, the relevant powers near the Breachlands are the kurgulan nations and beyond them, Maldig.

OGRES: THE KAMTAIN

The Kamtain say they were once a group of related peoples who lived on many planes, where they lived as rangers, herders, and keepers of wild places. The Kamtain shared a common language across many worlds, but on each world, they had a distinct appearance. Some were lithe and horned, while others were broad-shouldered and green-skinned. Kamtain were never populous on any world, and until the Lightfall on Annarum, largely escaped notice by sages and princes alike.

Chaos Gates swallowed many ogre holdfasts, and not only deposited their people on Annarum, but changed their features. Chaos blossomed within them, and the Kamtain could no longer pass their shapes to their children. Now families might see a minor trait pass from generation to generation, but these are overshadowed by the fact that smooth-skinned, slender ogres might give birth to scaled giants. And while there were few ogres on each of their original worlds, the ogres of many worlds combined proved to be a significant number indeed.

OGRE HOUSES

Modern ogres maintain the communal cultures of their ancestors, but even these have leaders of sorts, and various professions pass through family lines. Now the East has opened, and some clans have sponsored settlements in the Breachlands. Easterners call it an invasion, and often harass ogres who cross where the Wall once stood.

HOUSE ORKNAI

Named for an old word for "boar," Ork is a social role among ogres, similar to knights-errant in the East. To be an ork means one joins other ogres to demonstrate their strength in martial games, intimidate would-be enemies, and if necessary, battle threats to ogrekind. House Orknai is a first: a community whose adult members have almost all become orks. The Orknai are too busy with military drill to till the soil, so their Standing One (ogre lords stand among their seated subjects) has recruited peasants from other peoples, offering (among other things) a promise they will never be levied for war in another domain in exchange for their labor. Orknai warriors have the stated goal of protecting ogres who venture east, but in recent years this "protection" has allegedly included pillaging raids on other domains' towns.

HOUSE BEYORE

House Beyore made a daring claim at the very edge of Lossthari Wood, in disputed territory between the elves and human settlers. Standing One Bagda Beyore brought seven families with her, and they transformed the area into a lush paradise. Like the elves, ogres know how to farm without cutting down trees, so among the old growth one can find ogrish crops, living sculptures made of flowering saplings, and sprawling fortified cottages. Beyore ogres keep oxen and deer to trade with the elves of Fal Lossthar, and heal animals and people brought to them in exchange for modest payments, including trade and friendship pacts.





THE KURGULAN

The closest Monster Kingdom to the Breachlands is Ubarzin, named for a famous fortress carved from a mountaintop, was claimed after the rise of the Wall by kurgulan settlers. Kurgulan are the best known "monsters" in the East, and a state of mutual hostility exists between them and virtually all Easterners, who consider kurgulan "hoof-men" animals.

Kurgulan are long-limbed quadrupeds, who stand four to five feet at the shoulder. Their rear legs each have a single hoof, while their forelimbs have multiple, thick-nailed digits. Kurgulan use these in conjunction with their mouths for the same tasks as human hands. Kurgulan can balance on their hind legs better than horses or deer, but not well enough to comfortably walk. Coat patterns pass through families. Unlike their presumed animal "cousins," kurgulan are omnivorous hunters, with forward-facing eyes. In their kinship system, one's sexually bonded huntgroup comes first, followed by the "closeherd" of parents, siblings, and children, then the "greatherd" of other relatives. Most kurgulan reflexively use this order of importance when making all decisions, though rituals exist to bring individuals "closer to the hunt," improving their relative status.

KURGULAN GREATHERDS

Ubarzin is ruled by the Shulpae, the hegemonic greatherd, to whom the allied greatherds of other settlements pay tribute. Each of these have claimed territory in the Breachlands as a buffer zone against the East.

SHULPAE

The Shulpae occupy Ubarzin, complementing one of the mightiest castles in the world with their skilled troops. Shulpae are excellent skirmishers and in direct combat, they're bigger and stronger than most other peoples. The greatherd's Command Union and its functionaries assign kurgulan to form all other greatherds in a combination of military assignment and arranged marriage. Originally the lowest-status huntgroups farmed and performed other non-military tasks, but the fall of the Wall has introduced the greatherd to a new custom: slavery. Ubarzin's periphery now supports a growing population of helots who perform all tasks considered "beneath warriors."

MURRIM

The Murrim greatherd rules Adduma, a city on the border between Ubarzin and the Breachlands. Murrim's paramount huntgroups claim their wealth through trade, and have declared Adduma a free city. Ubarzin previously claimed Adduma as its vassal state and is displeased with the city's new status, but Murrim merchants have successfully placated Ubarzin's Shulpae rulers with increased tribute. Murrim Kurgulan are the ones most often seen in other peoples' settlements. Despite different clothing and mane styles, Easterners can rarely tell the difference between Murrim and Shulpae kurgulan.

Kurgulan Characters

Kurgulan ancestry is relatively unusual, and compared to, elves, dwarves, humans, and ogres, requires special treatment, as follows.

STEP 1: HOUSE & LANDS

Kurgulan rarely belong to houses consisting of non-kurgulan, with the exception of Ziyatul tribes, who sometimes accept individuals and huntgroups into the fold. A typical kurgulan "house" is a dominant huntgroup and its closeherd.

STEP 2: CONCEPT

Kurgulan have the same lifespans as ogres. There is no partial kurgulan ancestry, as kurgulan cannot mate with members of the other ancestries presented in *Sword Chronicle*.

Kurgulan Ancestry Benefits always include Kurgulan Swiftness and Kurgulan Toughness. Kurgulan also all possess the Kurgulan Form and Non-Person Flaws. See **Step 5** and **Step 6**, later in this section.

STEP 3: ASSIGN ABILITIES

As a kurgulan, you begin with 4 ranks in Athletics and 3 ranks in Survival, as your large body and instincts provide advantages in this regard. Kurgulan only begin with 1 rank each in Agility, Stealth, and Thievery, however, representing natural deficiencies in those areas.

STEP 4: ASSIGN SPECIALTIES

Kurgulan automatically gain the following Specialties at +1B, and may increase them further:

- **Athletics:** Run, Strength
- **Endurance:** Resilience
- **Survival:** Hunt

However, kurgulan cannot take the following Specialties at any point in their development:

- **Agility:** Contortions
- **Animal Handling:** Drive, Ride
- **Fighting:** Fencing
- **Status:** Breeding
- **Stealth:** Blend In
- **Thievery:** Sleight of Hand

STEP 5: DESTINY POINTS AND BENEFITS

Kurgulan may not invest Destiny Points in benefits that require Specialties they can't take. Furthermore, instead of selecting two Ancestry Benefits, all kurgulan have the following, which use up their two mandatory choices.

Kurgulan Swiftness — Ancestry (Kurgulan)

Your body is better adapted to running than that of a humanoid creature, and even without a weapon, your hooves make you a dangerous foe. Your base Movement is 6 yards per round, not 4, and your unarmed attacks inflict Athletics-1 damage.

Kurgulan Toughness — Ancestry (Kurgulan)

Your heavy body (350 lbs. on average) makes you difficult to harm. Your Health is 4 x Endurance instead of 3 x Endurance, and you have a natural AR of 1 that stacks with worn armor and cannot be bypassed by attacks with the Piercing quality. Finally, foes must sacrifice two degrees of success to deprive you of a greater action when using the Staggering weapon quality, not one.

OPTIONAL KURGULAN BENEFITS

The following are also Kurgulan Ancestry Benefits, but unlike Kurgulan Swiftness and Kurgulan Toughness, are optional, and may be purchased with Destiny Points.

- Blood of the Wasteland
- Blood of the Wild
- Cadre (requires Persuasion 3 or Warfare 2 with Command 1B for kurgulan, and the cadre is almost always kurgulan)
- Danger Sense (requires Awareness 2 for kurgulan)
- Fast (increases starting Movement to 7 yards per round)

STEP 6: DRAWBACKS

All kurgulan suffer the following Flaws regardless of age, gaining no additional advantages in return.

Kurgulan Form — Ancestry (Kurgulan)

Your large body is more expensive to armor, and its unusual form (by human-like standards) incurs even more expenses outside kurgulan territory. Your armor costs twice as much as it would for human-like characters, and the price goes up even more outside Kurgulan territory. Furthermore, the Narrator may make other items more expensive for you, and impose penalties to actions someone with a body like yours would struggle with.

Non-Person — Ancestry (Kurgulan)

You are not considered a person in the eyes of many non-kurgulan. Among them, your Status is considered 3 lower than its actual rating, unless it is conferred by a position in a non-kurgulan house, in which case it is considered 1 lower when dealing with people from outside the house, but has its normal rating inside the house. In a situation where your effective Status is 0 or less, you may be cheated and assaulted without consequence, and people will not respect your oaths or other actions that would otherwise have legal or strong customary significance.

STEP 7: POSSESSIONS

As a kurgulan, your starting possessions include a vest and cloak to deal with the elements, a dagger, and a harness you use for bags, scabbards, and other gear. For heirs, a kurgulan "signet ring" is a steel sigil embedded into one of the thick nails of a kurgulan's fingers.

STEP 8: DERIVED STATISTICS

Remember that due to the Kurgulan Form benefit, your starting Health is 4 × Endurance. Otherwise, these remain unchanged.

House Statistics

The following table describes the houses in this chapter using the rules in **Chapter 5**. Naturally, Narrators are free to adjust these statistics however they please. These have been designed with a bias toward being on the cusp of a higher category, so that the Narrator can easily increase their power in response to the events of the chronicle.

Houses of the Breachlands

House	Culture	Defense	Influence	Lands	Law	Population	Power	Wealth
10th Horse Guards	Aglam	30	45	15	15	20	55	35
Aklumere	Dwarf	45	55	20	35	40	20	60
Baqqanu	Ziyatul	5	15	0	20	45	45	10
Beyore	Ogre	15	20	25	35	35	15	25
Company of the Glass Princess	Dwarf	45	55	20	25	20	50	40
Erzia	Misral	30	45	30	25	30	20	20
Halbishe	Elf	30	40	35	10	30	25	15
Highstorm*	Dwarf	40	25	20	25	20	25	30
Iptita	Ziyatul	10	20	10	15	35	35	20
Kannish	Elf	35	60	50	40	25	40	50
Kavir	Aglam	40	65	40	45	40	50	55
Murrim	Kurgulan**	35	40	35	35	25	30	50
New Malambra	Misral	25	50	25	35	30	25	30
Order of Sefa	Aglam	40	55	20	30	15	50	35
Orknai	Ogre	10	20	25	15	25	50	20
Shamash	Elf	20	40	25	25	35	15	55
Shulpae	Kurgulan**	65	50	30	35	30	50	40
Yass-Silash	Yahi-Addu	40	45	20	25	30	45	40
Yass-Zerim	Yahi-Addu	60	40	30	20	30	40	20

* Typical Highstorm branch house ** Individual Status is considered 3 lower outside the Monster Kingdoms

Index

Symbols

10th Horse Guards 199

A

Abilities 21, 132, 174–175, 205
Ability 13
Ability Improvement 21
Ability Rank 26–27
Ability test 13
Accurate (benefit) 47
Acid 181
Acquire Specialty 25
Acrobatic Defense (benefit) 47
Acrobatics (specialty) 29
Actions 131, 140–143, 149
Advanced *149*
Free *131*
Greater *131, 140*
Interrupting *147*
Lesser *131, 140*
Act (specialty) 35
Adaptable (weapon quality) 134
Addicted (drawback) 60
Adept Negotiator (benefit) 47
Age 16–17
Agility 27, 29–30, 132
Aglam Empire 198–199
Ahibana 202
Aim (action) 149
Alchemy 86
Ambush (order) 165
Anatomy of a Shield 80
Ancestry 15–16
Animal Cohort (benefit) 47
Animal Handling 27, 30–31
Annarum 194–196
Anticipate Strategy (maneuver) ... 175
Appraise Animal (maneuver) 175
Archers (unit) 76
Archery Contests 145
Armor 114–115, 133–134
Bone *114*
Breastplate *114*
Brigandine *115*
Coin *114*
Half-Plate *115*
Hides *114*
Leather, Hard *114*
Leather, Soft *114*
Mail *114*
Padded *114*
Plate *115*
Ring *114*
Robes *114*
Scale *114*
Splint *115*
Wood *114*
Armor Mastery (benefit) 47
Armor Penalty 133
Armor Rating 23, 133
Artisan Garb 110
Artisan (holding) 78
Artist (benefit) 47
Assassin 186–187
Assist (action) 142
Assistance 11
Astrology 86
Athletics 27, 31–33, 132
Attach (battle action) 160
Attack 140
Mounted *141*
Attacking Objects 148
Attack (order) 161
Attack Portions of Units (battle action) 160
Attack (specialty) 36, 39
Attack Unit (battle action) 160
Attractive (benefit) 47
Attunement 91
Authority (benefit) 47
Averting 87
Averting Adept (benefit) 47
Avert Magic (action) 87
Awareness 27, 33, 120, 132
Axe Fighter I (benefit) 48
Axe Fighter II (benefit) 48
Axe Fighter III (benefit) 48

B

Background 19
Balance (specialty) 29
Ball and Chain 111, 136
Bandit 186–187
Baqqanu 201
Barding 116
Bargain (intrigue technique) 125
Barter 108
Battering 155
Battleaxe 111, 136
Battlefield 156–158
Battle (formation) 167
Battle Glory 163
Bear 188
Beastfriend (benefit) 48
Begin Projects (house action) 84
Benediction, Art of 91
Benefits 15, 22, 47–60, 205
Berserker (benefit) 48
Bewitching 102
Blend In (specialty) 41
Blessing 92
Blitz (order) 165
Blood of the Ancient Ones (benefit) 48
Blood of the Beyond (benefit) 48
Blood of the Citadel (benefit) 48
Blood of the Far Isles (benefit) ... 49
Blood of the Heroes (benefit) 49
Blood of the Mountains (benefit) 49
Blood of the Sorcerers (benefit) .. 49
Blood of the Wasteland (benefit) 49
Blood of the Wild (benefit) 49
Blood of the Witch-Hunters (benefit) 49
Blood of the Wood (benefit) 49
Bludgeon Fighter I (benefit) 49
Bludgeon Fighter II (benefit) 49
Bludgeon Fighter III (benefit) 49
Bluff (specialty) 35
Boar 188
Boar Spear 111
Boiling Oil 155, 183
Boiling Water 155, 183
Bonus Dice 11, 13
Boundaries 138
Bow 111, 137
Brawler I (benefit) 50
Brawler II (benefit) 50
Brawler III (benefit) 50
Break 148
Breeding (specialty) 40
Buckler 136
Bulk 134
Bulk (weapon quality) 134
Bystanders 139

C

Cadre (benefit) 50
Candle 108
Castellan 82
Castigate 100–101
Casting 97–98
Castle (holding) 72
Castle, Small (holding) 72
Castle, Superior (holding) 71
Catapult 159
Catch Your Breath (action) 142
Cautious Attack (action) 149
Cautious Diplomat (benefit) 50
Cavalry (unit) 76
Character 8
Character Creation Summary 25
Charge (action) 142
Charge (order) 161
Charismatic (benefit) 50
Charm (intrigue technique) 126
Charm (specialty) 30
Chases 179–181
Modifiers *180*
Multiple Characters *181*
Options *181*
Cheat (specialty) 35
Checkered (formation) 167
Childhood Ailment (drawback) 60
Chronicle 173
Cleric 82
Clerical Vestments 110
Climb (specialty) 31
Close Range (weapon quality) .. 134
Clothing 110
Club 112, 136
Coat of Arms 81
Cohort (benefit) 50
Coin 24
Coinage 108
Cold 179
Colors 80
Column (formation) 167
Combat 138–143
Action *140–143*
Battlefield *138–140*
Detection *140*
Resolution *143*
Combat Defense 23, 132
Combining Attacks (action) 141
Commander's Curse 102
Command (specialty) 44
Company of the Glass Princess 197
Compelling (benefit) 50
Composure 23, 120
Losing *128*
Recovering *129*

Conceal Animal (maneuver)..... 175
Connections (benefit)..... 50
Consecration..... 93
Consequences..... 143
Consider (intrigue action)..... 127
Consort..... 81
Contortions (specialty)..... 29
Convince (intrigue technique).. 126
Coordinate (specialty)..... 44
Counterattack (action)..... 149
Courage (specialty)..... 44
Courser..... 115, 189
Courteous (benefit)..... 50
Courtier..... 186–187
Courtier's Garb..... 110
Covered..... 155
Cowardly (drawback)..... 61
Craftsman's Garb..... 110
Craftsman's Tools..... 108
Criminals (unit)..... 76
Crippled (drawback)..... 61
Critical Hits..... 146–147
Crossbow..... 112, 137
Crowbill..... 112, 136
Cruel (drawback)..... 61
Crusaders (unit)..... 76
Cudgel..... 112, 136
Cunning..... 27, 33–34, 87, 120
Curse..... 101–102
Cursed (drawback)..... 61

D

Dagger..... 112, 136
Damage..... 131, 13
Lesser Characters..... *144*
Outside of Conflict..... *144*
Reducing..... *144*
Danger Sense (benefit)..... 51
Deadly Nightshade..... 116
Deadly Shot (benefit)..... 51
Death (consequence)..... 143
Debt (drawback)..... 61
Deception..... 27, 34–35, 120
Decipher (specialty)..... 34
Dedication (specialty)..... 44
Defeat..... 131, 143
Destiny..... *143*
Defend (order)..... 161
Defensive (weapon quality)..... 134
Deft Hands (benefit)..... 51
Degrees of Failure..... 12
Degrees of Success..... 12
Derived Statistics..... 23, 205
Destiny Points....15, 22, 45–46, 13, 205
Burning..... *46*
Gaining..... *46*
Investing..... *46*
Spending..... *45*
Destiny's Call..... 129
Destrier..... 189
Destroyed..... 163
Destruction..... 103
Detaching Characters (battle action)..... 162
Detection..... 140
Dexterous (benefit)..... 51
Diabolism..... 86
Diagnosis (specialty)..... 36
Dice..... 8, 13
Difficulties..... 176–178
Difficulty..... 13
Dirk..... 112, 136
Disarm (action)..... 149
Disaster..... 103
Discipline..... 156
Disease..... 181–182
Disguise (specialty)..... 35
Disorganized..... 163
Disposition..... 122–124
Affectionate..... *123*
Amiable..... *123*
by Circumstance..... *123*
by Circumstances..... *124*
Changing..... *122*
Dislike..... *123*
Friendly..... *123*
Indifferent..... *123*
Malicious..... *124*
Unfriendly..... *123*
Distract (action)..... 149
Disturbing Habit (drawback)..... 61
Divided Attack (action)..... 141
Divination, Art of..... 95–100
Dodge (action)..... 142
Dodge (specialty)..... 29
Domestic Animals..... 115
Doom..... 100
Double-Curved..... 111
Double Shot (benefit)..... 51
Dowsing..... 98
Drawback..... 13
Drawbacks..... 22–23, 60–64
Drink..... 110
Drive (action)..... 142
Drive (specialty)..... 30
Drowning..... 178
Drunkenness..... 182
Duelist I (benefit)..... 51
Duelist II (benefit)..... 51
Duelist III (benefit)..... 51
Duels..... 146
Dutiful (benefit)..... 51
Dwarves..... 197

E

Eagle..... 188
Education (specialty)..... 37
Eidetic Memory (benefit)..... 52
Elephant..... 189
Eloquent (benefit)..... 52
Elves..... 198
Empathy (specialty)..... 33
Endurance..... 27, 35–36, 87, 132
Engineers (unit)..... 76
Ensorcell..... 102–103
Entangling (weapon quality)..... 134
Entertainer's Garb..... 110
Envelop (order)..... 165
Eunuch (drawback)..... 61
Evaluation (benefit)..... 52
Evasive Maneuvers (maneuver)... 175
Experience..... 24–25
Expertise (benefit)..... 52
Expert (role)..... 18

F

Face in the Crowd (benefit)..... 52
Failure..... 12
Falconry (maneuver)..... 175
Fall Down (action)..... 142
Falling..... 182
Familiar (drawback)..... 61
Famous (benefit)..... 52
Fast (benefit)..... 52
Fast Talk (intrigue action)..... 127
Fast (weapon quality)..... 134
Fatigue..... 150
Favored (benefit)..... 52
Fear (drawback)..... 61
Features (holding)..... 73
Feeble (drawback)..... 61
Fencer I (benefit)..... 52
Fencer II (benefit)..... 52
Fencer III (benefit)..... 53
Fields..... 80
Fighter (role)..... 18
Fighting..... 27, 36, 132
Fighting Withdrawal (order)..... 161
Fire..... 183
Fist..... 136
Flail..... 112, 136
Flash of Insight..... 99
Flask..... 109
Flaw (drawback)..... 61
Flaws..... 22, 205
Flint and Steel..... 109
Focus Ward..... 105
Folk-Wards..... 87
Food..... 110
Forage (specialty)..... 41
Force Back (order)..... 165
Forgetful (drawback)..... 62
Formation..... 167–168
Fortifications..... 158
Frostbite..... 179
Frustration..... 12, 13
Fumbles..... 146–147
Furious (drawback)..... 62
Furtive (benefit)..... 53
Fury (benefit)..... 53

G

Gain Destiny Point..... 25
Garrison (unit)..... 76
Garron..... 115, 189
Gauntlet..... 136
Gazing..... 95
Giant, Common..... 190–191
Gifted Athlete (benefit)..... 53
Gifted Ritualist (benefit)..... 53
Gifted Spellcaster (benefit)..... 53
Gifted Teacher (benefit)..... 53
Glimpse Ahead, the..... 97
Glory..... 24
Glossary..... 13
Goal..... 20
Goods..... 109
Grab (weapon quality)..... 134
Grand Melee..... 145
Grapples..... 155
Great Hunter (benefit)..... 53
Greatsword..... 112, 136
Gryphon..... 190–191
Guard..... 187
Guerillas (unit)..... 76
Guilds (holding)..... 78
Guttersnipe (benefit)..... 53

H

Hail of Steel (benefit)..... 53
Halberd..... 112, 136
Hall (holding)..... 72
Hammer and Anvil (order)..... 165
Hand Axe..... 112, 136, 137
Hardy (benefit)..... 54
Haughty (drawback)..... 62
Haunted (drawback)..... 62
Hazards..... 181–183
Head for Numbers (benefit)..... 54
Head of House (benefit)..... 54
Healer's Kit..... 109
Healing..... 28, 36–37, 145
Health..... 23, 133
Hearth-Ward..... 106

Heat ... 179
Heatstroke ... 179
Heir (benefit) ... 54
Heirloom (benefit) ... 54
Heirs ... 81
Heirs (holding) ... 73
Helpless Targets ... 133
Heraldry (maneuver) ... 176
Hex ... 101
Hieroscopy ... 95
Higher Ground ... 148
Holdings ... 71–79
Defense ... 71–72
Influence ... 72–73
Land ... 73–74
Law ... 74
Population ... 74–75
Power ... 75–78
Wealth ... 78–79
Honor-Bound (drawback) ... 62
Horses ... 115–116
Host Tournamentc ... 84
Host Tournament (house action) ... 84
Hound ... 188
House Actions ... 83–84
House Aklumere ... 197
House Beyore ... 203
House Erzia ... 200
House Fortunes ... 83, 184
Blessing ... 184
Boon ... 184
Curse ... 184
Decline ... 184
Disaster ... 184
Growth ... 184
House Halbishe ... 198
House Highstorm ... 197
House Kannish ... 198
House Kavir ... 199
House Orknai ... 203
House Shamash ... 198
Humans ... 198–202
Hunt (specialty) ... 41

I

Identify (maneuver) ... 176
Ignoble (drawback) ... 62
Illegitimate (drawback) ... 62
Impaired Sense (drawback) ... 62
Impale (weapon quality) ... 135
Impersonate (maneuver) ... 176
Improve Ability ... 25
Improved Armor Mastery (benefit) ... 54
Improved Weapon Mastery (benefit) ... 54
Improvement ... 24, 24–25
Improve Specialty ... 25
Improvised ... 136
Incite (intrigue technique) ... 126
Inept (drawback) ... 62
Infantry (unit) ... 76
Infection ... 181
Influence ... 13
Influence (intrigue action) ... 127
Initiation ... 86
Initiative ... 140, 147
Changing ... 147
Delaying ... 140
Ties ... 140
Injuries ... 12, 12
Injury ... 13
Ink ... 109
Insight Dice ... 97
Insights ... 97
Inspiring (benefit) ... 54
Interact (action) ... 142
Intimidate (intrigue technique) ... 126
Intrigue ... 119–130
Abilities ... 120
Complex ... 130
Defeat ... 129
Defense ... 120
in the World ... 125
Objective ... 121
Simple ... 120–121
Standard ... 121–130
Statistics ... 120
Victory Points ... 130
Intrigue Defense ... 23
Investiture ... 94
Investiture of Regalia ... 94
Investiture of Telesma ... 94
Iptita ... 201
Iron Stakes ... 109

J

Javelin ... 137
Jousts ... 145–146
Jump (specialty) ... 32

K

Kamtain, the ... 203
Keen Senses (benefit) ... 54
Kennel Master ... 82
Khopesh ... 112, 136
Knife ... 112, 136, 137
Knight ... 187
Knockdown (action) ... 149
Knockout (action) ... 149
Knowledge ... 28, 37–38, 87
Knowledge Focus (benefit) ... 54
Kurgulan ... 204–205

L

Lamp ... 109
Lance ... 112, 137
Landed (benefit) ... 54
Landless ... 187
Language ... 28, 38–39
Lantern ... 109
Lascivious (drawback) ... 62
Leader (role) ... 19
Leap and Catch (maneuver) ... 176
Left-Handed ... 112
Lightfall ... 194
Linked strictures (drawback) ... 62
Linnorm ... 188–189
Lodging ... 110
Logic (specialty) ... 34
Longaxe ... 112, 136
Long Blade Fighter I (benefit) ... 54
Long Blade Fighter II (benefit) ... 54
Long Blade Fighter III (benefit) ... 55
Longbow ... 112, 137
Long Distance Running (maneuver) ... 176
Long Range (weapon quality) ... 135
Longsword ... 112, 136
Looking Glass ... 109
Lord ... 81
Lucky (benefit) ... 55

M

Mace ... 112, 136
Magic Resistance (benefit) ... 55
Magnetic (benefit) ... 55
Maimed (consequence) ... 143
Maimed (drawback) ... 62
Malediction, Art of ... 100–103
Mammoth ... 189
Manage Resources (house action) ... 83
Maneuver (action) ... 149
Mangonel ... 159
Manipulate (intrigue action) ... 128
Mantlets ... 155
Marked (drawback) ... 62
Marketplace (holding) ... 78
Marksmanship ... 28, 39, 132
Massive (benefit) ... 55
Master at Arms ... 82
Master of Horse ... 82
Master of the Hunt ... 82
Mattock ... 112, 136
Maul ... 112, 136
Memory (specialty) ... 34
Menacing (drawback) ... 62
Mercenaries (unit) ... 77
Messenger Bird ... 189
Militant Orders ... 202
Mine (holding) ... 79
Miniatures ... 140
Miracle Worker (benefit) ... 56
Misral ... 199–200
Mituxul ... 202
Mob (formation) ... 168
Modifier ... 13
Modifiers ... 11, 178
Mollify (intrigue action) ... 128
Money ... 108
Monster Kingdoms ... 202–205
Morningstar ... 112, 136
Motivation ... 20
Mottos ... 79
Mounted (weapon quality) ... 135
Move (action) ... 142
Movement ... 133
Move (order) ... 161
Move Silently (maneuver) ... 176
Mule ... 115, 189
Mummer (benefit) ... 56
Musical Instruments ... 109
Mute (drawback) ... 62

N

Naïve (drawback) ... 62
Narrating ... 173
Narrator Characters ... 184–188
Demoting ... 186
Improving ... 186
Primary ... 184–185
Promoting ... 186
Sample ... 186–188
Secondary ... 185
Tertiary ... 186
Natural Leader (benefit) ... 56
Natural Sorcerer (benefit) ... 56
Nemesis (drawback) ... 62
Net ... 112, 137
Neurotoxic Venom ... 117
New Malambra ... 200
Night Eyes (benefit) ... 56
Noble Houses ... 14, 65–84, 184
Creating ... 65–82
Defense ... 66
Distinctions ... 79–81
History ... 69–71
Holdings ... 71–79
Household ... 81–82
Influence ... 66
Lands ... 67

Law ... *67*
Population ... *67*
Power ... *68*
Resources ... *66*
Wealth ... *68*
Noble, Minor ... 187–188
Noble's Garb ... 110
Northern Garb ... 110
Notice Magic (action) ... 88
Notice (specialty) ... 33

O

Oath-bound (drawback) ... 63
Obedience ... 129
Obligation (drawback) ... 63
Obstacles ... 138
Off-Hand (weapon quality) ... 135
Ogres ... 203
Oil ... 109
Omens ... 95
Oneiromancy & Trances ... 95
Opium ... 117
Order of Sefa ... 202
Order of the Forgotten ... 195
Orders ... 160–162
Advanced ... *165–167*
Ordinaires ... 80
Organize (order) ... 161
Organize/Rally (battle action) ... 160
Orientation (specialty) ... 42
Outcast (drawback) ... 63

P

Palfrey ... 190
Palfreys ... 115
Pass (action) ... 142
Peasant Levies (unit) ... 77
Peasant's Garb ... 110
Peasant Tool ... 112, 136
Penalty Dice ... 12
Penalty Dice ... 12
Penalty die ... 13
Pennyroyal ... 118
Personal Equipment ... 108–109
Personal Guard (unit) ... 77
Persuasion ... 28, 39–40, 120
Phalanx (formation) ... 168
Pick Lock (specialty) ... 43
Piercing (weapon quality) ... 137
Pike ... 112, 137
Pin (action) ... 141
Pincer (order) ... 165
Pious (benefit) ... 56
Plague ... 182
Play Styles ... 192–193
Adventurers ... *192*
A Thousand Intrigues ... *193*
People of the Land ... *193*
Poisonous Mushroom ... 118
Poisons ... 116–118
Pole-Arm Fighter I (benefit) ... 56
Pole-Arm Fighter II (benefit) ... 56
Pole-Arm Fighter III (benefit) ... 56
Pole-axe ... 136
Poleaxe ... 112
Polyglot (benefit) ... 56
Pony ... 116, 190
Poor Health (drawback) ... 63
Port (holding) ... 79
Possessions ... 23
Powerful (weapon quality) ... 137
Probing Attack (order) ... 166
Prophetic Alignment (benefit) ... 56
Prophetic Dreams (benefit) ... 57
Protection Ritual ... 104
Pulling a Rider from a Mount (action) ... 142

Q

Qualities ... 46–64
Types ... *46*
Quality ... 13
Quarterstaff ... 112, 136
Quickness ... 30
Quit (intrigue action) ... 128

R

Raiders (unit) ... 77
Rally (order) ... 161
Ram ... 155
Rank ... 13
Ransom (consequence) ... 143
Rapier ... 112, 136
Reach ... 137, 149–150
Advanced ... *149–150*
Reach (weapon quality) ... 137
Reading ... 99
Reading the Spirit ... 99
Read Target (intrigue action) ... 128
Ready (order) ... 161
Reckless Attack (action) ... 149
Recognition ... 124
Recognize (maneuver) ... 176
Recovery ... 144–145
Damage ... *144*
Healing ... *145*
Injuries ... *144*
Wounds ... *145*
Reform (order) ... 166
Regroup (order) ... 161
Rekhu ... 198
Reload (weapon quality) ... 137
Renounce Command (battle action) ... 160
Reputation (specialty) ... 40
Research (specialty) ... 38
Resilience (specialty) ... 35
Resonances ... 86
Respected (benefit) ... 57
Result ... 13
Retreat (order) ... 162
Reverse (order) ... 167
Reviled (drawback) ... 63
Rewards ... 24
Ride (specialty) ... 31
Rite of Alignment ... 105
Rite of Calibration ... 106
Rite of Cursing ... 101–102
Ritual Assistance ... 88
Ritual of Anointing ... 92
Ritual of Convocational Blessing ... 92
Ritual-Working ... 88
Rogue (role) ... 19
Role ... 18
Rope ... 109
Ropes ... 155
Rounds ... 131
Rounsey ... 115, 189
Routed ... 163
Routine Success ... 174
Ruination ... 103
Rune-craft ... 86
Run (specialty) ... 32

S

Sabitu ... 202
Sage ... 82
Sage (holding) ... 79
Sage's Fire ... 155, 183
Sage's Garb ... 110
Sailors (unit) ... 77
Sanctum Ritual ... 107
Sap (order) ... 166
Scale Walls (order) ... 166
Scaling Ladders ... 155
Scenes ... 171–172
Scents ... 109
Schemer (role) ... 19
Scope ... 156
Scorpion ... 159
Scouts (unit) ... 77
Seduce (intrigue technique) ... 127
Seeming ... 102
Seers ... 87
Sensitives ... 87
Services ... 109
Set for a Charge (order) ... 166
Set for Charge Only (weapon quality) ... 137
Shattered Era ... 196
Shattering (weapon quality) ... 137
Shield Mastery (benefit) ... 57
Shield of Reputation (intrigue action) ... 128
Shields ... 113, 136
Shield Wall (formation) ... 168
Short Blade Fighter I (benefit) ... 57
Short Blade Fighter II (benefit) ... 57
Short Blade Fighter III (benefit) ... 57
Sickly (drawback) ... 63
Sickness ... 182
Siege Tower ... 155
Siege Weapons ... 158–160
Sinister (benefit) ... 58
Size ... 132
Size Up (maneuver) ... 176
Slash and Burn (order) ... 166
Sleep ... 178
Sleight of Hand (specialty) ... 43
Sling ... 113, 137
Slow (weapon quality) ... 137
Small (drawback) ... 63
Smash ... 148
Sneak (specialty) ... 41
Somatomancy ... 95
Sorcerer's Aura (drawback) ... 63
Sorcerer's Bane ... 107
Sorcerous Aegis ... 105
Sorcerous Drawbacks ... 60
Sorcerous Initiation (benefit) ... 58
Sorcerous Proclivity (benefit) ... 58
Sorcerous Works (benefit) ... 58
Sorcery ... 85–107
Acquiring ... *90*
Alignment ... *88*
Arts ... *85*
Invocation ... *88*
Points ... *87*
Price ... *86, 89*
Qualities ... *85*
Statistics ... *87*
Unleashing ... *88*
Works ... *85*
Sorcery Defense ... 87
Sortilege ... 96
Spear ... 113–114, 136
Spear Fighter I (benefit) ... 58
Spear Fighter II (benefit) ... 58
Spear Fighter III (benefit) ... 58
Specialties ... 21–22, 21, 11, 205
Costs ... *22*
Expanded ... *175*
Special (unit) ... 77

Spellcasting (action) 89
Spell-Working 89
Spitfire 159
Split Attack (order) 166
Sponsor (benefit) 58
Sprint (action) 142
Square (formation) 168
Staggering (weapon quality) 138
Stamina (specialty) 36
Standard Attack (action) 141
Stand Up (action) 142
Starting Possessions 23
Starvation 178
Status 17, 28, 40–41, 120
Steal (specialty) 44
Stealth 28, 41
Steeds 189–190
Steward 82
Stewardship (specialty) 41
Stiletto 114, 136
Story 172
Stot 116, 190
Strategy (specialty) 44
Streetwise (specialty) 38
Strength (specialty) 32
Stress 129
Strictures 60
Structure 88–90
Stubborn (benefit) 58
Success 12
Suffocation 178
Support (unit) 77
Suppressing Fire (order) 166
Supreme Arrogance (drawback) . 64
Surprise 140
Surrender (order) 162
Survival 28, 41–43
Sustenance 178
Swim (specialty) 32
Switch to Combat
(intrigue action) 128
Sword 114, 136

T

Taboo (drawback) 64
Tactics (specialty) 44
Take Command (battle action). 162
Taking More Time 11
Talented (benefit) 58
Target Shooting (specialty) 39
Taunt (intrigue technique) 127
Telescope 109
Temperature 178–179
Temple (holding) 79
Tent, Pavilion 109
Tent, Soldier's 109
Terrain 139, 157
Terrain (holding) 73
Terrain Specialist (benefit) 59
Terror 103
Test 13
Test die 13
Test Difficulties 12
Tests 9–11, 9
Basic *10*
Competition *11*
Conflict *11*
Extended Basic *11*
Modifying *11*
Process *9–10*
Thaumaturgy 86
Thievery 28, 43–44
Thirst 178
Threaten (maneuver) 176
Throw (specialty) 33
Time 170–171
Narrative *170*
Strategic *171*
Torch 109
Tortoise Shell (formation) 168
Tough (benefit) 59
Tournaments 84, 145–146
Tournaments (specialty) 41
Tourney Knight (benefit) 59
Tower (holding) 72
Track (specialty) 42
Trade (benefit) 59
Trade Goods 108–109
Traditions 86
Train (specialty) 31
Trample (action) 149
Trample (order) 167
Travel 179
Traveler's Garb 110
Treacherous (benefit) 59
Treat Ailment (specialty) 36
Treat Injury (specialty) 36
Trebuchet 159–160
Trick-Riding (maneuver) 176
Trident 114, 137
Triple Shot (benefit) 59
Turns 131
Turtle 156
Two-Handed (weapon quality) 138
Types 10–11

U

Unarmed Attacks 148
Unconscious (consequence) 143
Unfallen 190–191
Unfolding Path 98
Units 154
Casualties *164*
Concealed *158*
Starting Equipment *154*
Units (holding) 75–77
Unwieldy (weapon quality) 138
Use Ability (action) 142
Use Destiny Points (action) 143

V

Valnadh 197
Vassal Houses (holding) 75
Vassal Knights 82
Vault into
the Saddle (maneuver) 176
Veteran 187
Vice 20
Vicious (weapon quality) 138
Virtue 20
Visibility 139, 157–158
Vision 99–100
Vulnerability (drawback) 64

W

Wage War (house action) 84
Walled Era 196
Wall, the 195
Warcraft 28
Ward (drawback) 64
Warding, Art of 103–107
Warding Gesture 104
Warding Marks 106
Warding Marks (benefit) 59
Warding Walls 106
Ward Penalty 104
Ward Rating 104
Warfare 44, 132
Abilities *152*
Actions *160, 162*
Attached Characters *163*
Commanders *151*
Consequences *163*
Damage *163*
Defense *153*
Discipline *156*
Equipment *153–156*
Health *153*
Heroes *152*
Initiative *158*
Morale *163*
Movement *153*
Orders *151*
Parlay and Terms *158*
Scale *151*
Time *151*
Warhammer 114, 136
War-Mage I (benefit) 59
War-Mage II (benefit) 59
War-Mage III (benefit) 59
Warship (unit) 77
Wealthy (benefit) 60
Weapon Mastery (benefit) 60
Weapon Quality 110–111
Common *111*
Extraordinary *111*
Poor *110*
Superior *111*
Weapons 110–114, 134–139
Damage *134*
Qualities *134–138*
Reach *150*
Specialty *134*
Training *134*
Traits *134*
Weapon Savant (benefit) 60
Weather 158
Web of Influence 103
Wedge (formation) 168
Wheel (order) 167
Whip 114, 136
Will 28, 44, 87, 120
Winging It 178
Witchery 86
Witchmark (drawback) 64
Withdraw (intrigue action) 128
Wolf 190
Wolfsbane 118
Woodsman's Axe 114, 136
Works 85
Learning *90*
Worldly (benefit) 60
Wound 13
Wound Ointment 118
Wounds 144
Wrack 100

Y

Yahi-Addu 201
Yass-Silash 201
Yass-Zerim 201
Yield (action) 143
Yielding (consequence) 143
Yielding (intrigue action) 128

Z

Ziyatul 201

Sword Chronicle
Feudal Fantasy Roleplaying

Name					
Age		Gender		House	

Abilities

Rating	Ability	Specialties	Rating	Ability	Specialties
	Agility			Knowledge	
	Animal Handling			Marksmanship	
	Athletics			Persuasion	
	Awareness			Status	
	Cunning			Stealth	
	Deception			Survival	
	Endurance			Thievery	
	Fighting			Warfare	
	Healing			Will	
	Language				

Ancestry & Other Qualities

Destiny Points ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Intrigue

Intrigue Defense

Awareness + Cunning + Status

Composure

Will ranks × 3

Combat

Combat Defense

Agility + Athletics + Awareness + Defensive Bonus

Health

Endurance ranks × 3

Weapons

Attack	Test Dice	Weapon Damage & Special Qualities

Damage ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ / ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ / ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Injuries ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ / ❑ ❑ ❑

Armor

Armor Rating

Armor Penalty

Wounds

Equipment

Appearance

Height		Weight	
Eye color		Hair Color	

Mannerisms

Distinguishing features

Retainers

Personal History

Allies

Enemies

Oaths

Heraldry

Portrait

Motto

PERMISSION IS GRANTED TO REPRODUCE THIS PAGE AND THE PREVIOUS ONE FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY.

Sword Chronicle

Feudal Fantasy Roleplaying