

ALL FOR ONE

Régime Diabolique

RICHELIEU'S GUIDE TO

Fencing Schools 2❧ *Introduction* ❧

Two swordsmen lock blades with their rivals atop the roof of a moving carriage. One, a muscular man, swings a large sword at his opponent's legs, hoping to trip him and send him tumbling into the roof. The other casually flicks her blouse open another button, distracting her wide-eyed opponent long enough to deftly thrust her rapier between his ribs. Unorthodox tactics, but all is fair in war! This supplement provides details on new fencing schools and their special Talents, and is a companion volume to *Richelieu's Guide to Fencing Schools*, requiring use of that supplement.

Simulating the Movies

Although *All for One* uses dice and rules (and maybe miniatures), it's also an interactive "movie" being played out in the imaginations of everyone at the table. The Gamemaster is the writer, director, and producer (among other things) of a film where the players are the stars. With an unlimited budget for locations and special effects, and a cast of thousands at the Gamemaster's disposal, it is also probably the best swashbuckling movie you'll ever "see." This section provides some brief guidelines for helping you capture that cinematic experience, especially in combat situations.

Terrain

We said it in the core rulebook, but it's worth repeating again: in order to stop the game devolving into nothing but a continuous string of dull combat scenes, the Gamemaster should ensure the encounters take place in an interesting locale. Not only does a cool location create an exciting mental image, it gives the players (and Gamemaster) instant props they can use in tricks and stunts (or as weapons).

The Gamemaster cannot be expected to think of every possible prop that may be found within a given location. For common props that can reasonably be expected to be found in the location, then she need simply confirm its existence if a player asks. If the prop *might* be found in the location, a player can have it exist by spending Style points. The number of Style points required depends on the nature of the object. A street might reasonably contain an empty barrel (1 Style point), but a barrel of fish oil is more unusual (3 Style points), and an unattended barrel of gunpowder extremely unlikely (5 points). Naturally, the Gamemaster always has the option of refusing to allow a prop to be found... but player improvisation and creativity is more often than not an excellent way to spice up a game!

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Movement in Combat

Let's face it, watching two swordsmen stand toe-to-toe, trading blow after blow would make for a very dull cinematic combat scene. As anyone who has watched a swashbuckling movie knows, combat is a fluid affair. First one combatant drives his foe back, only to then retreat as his foe regains the upper hand and goes on the offensive. Since *All for One* places an emphasis on narrative combat rather than miniatures on the tabletop, Gamemasters should ensure fights are both dramatic and mobile.

Movement in combat is partly covered by the knockback rules. However, this relates purely to a staggering blow caused by injury, rather than the more fluid motion shown in movies. No game mechanic is actually required to simulate the frantic to-and-fro of a fight. Rather, the Gamemaster need do nothing more than describe how a defender is forced backward by his attacker, only to do the same when it is his turn to attack.

As a very rough rule of thumb, a defender is driven back 5 feet per die of his attacker's Average rating for his chosen combat Skill. The attacker automatically maintains the gap with his opponent (this is free movement). Characters who know any special Talent from the L'École de Position de Fer are exempt from this movement.

In order ensure fair play, the Gamemaster should never describe how a combatant is slammed into a wall, maneuvered off a cliff, or forced into a fire—such maneuvers should be left to the knockback rules. Of course, the Gamemaster might describe how the defender has been forced back to the cliff edge and is now teetering on his heels, or can feel the heat of a fire on his back. Although this puts the fighter in danger, it does not cause immediate harm, and allows him a chance to escape unscathed.

This fluid combat can be a handy tool for moving the fight to a different location. For instance, if two swordsmen are fighting in a nobleman's grand dining hall, the Gamemaster can steer the fight toward the kitchen (a location strewn with dozens of props).

Many on One

One recurring image used time and again in swashbuckling movies is the lone defender successfully blocking two or more simultaneous attacks, and usually with consummate ease and more than a little flair. In *All for One*, parrying successive attacks lowers one's Defense rating—even a skilled fencer might be overcome by sheer weight of number. However, there is an easy solution that perfectly mimics the movies.

Instead of attacking individually, the attackers make a single Teamwork Attack. One of them acts as the lead, with his comrades each granting a +2 bonus to the attack roll. Now instead of facing several attacks he has to parry successively, resulting in a lowered Defense rating, the brave defender has just one to contend with. This works best with faceless extras, whose combat Skill ratings are typically 4 dice; it is also an ideal way of speeding up combat when there are lots of minor enemies involved.

Assuming three attackers with 4 dice each, the lone hero is facing a single attack rating of 8 dice (Average 4). A swordsman who has Parry can likely muster at least that many dice, and probably more, while even a competent but Talent-less fencer likely has 6-8 dice at his disposal.

Gamemaster's may wish to limit this multiple parry option to characters with Fencing, representing their flair and skill compared to their comrades who favor Melee as a preferred skill.

Important Reminder

In addition to its basic style, each fencing school teaches a number of special moves known as techniques. These are never taught to non-members, even if they know the school's basic fighting style. In addition to the listed prerequisites, these new Talents all have a requirement of Fencing School 0, with regard to the appropriate fencing academy. This applies equally to academies that teach other weapons, such as firearms.

New Fencing Styles Bonuses Table

Style	Disarm	Feint	Parry	Thrust	Slash
Drunkard	+1	+1	0	-1	-1
English	-1	0	+1	-1	+1
Geometria	-1	0	+1	+1	-1
German	-1	-1	+1	0	+1
Leonardo	-1	+1	0	-1	+1
Rodriguez	-1	0	-1	+1	+1
Tarrasque	+1	-1	0	+1	-1
Umberto	+1	-1	+1	0	-1
Venus	-1	+1	0	+1	-1

Deutsche Fechtschule

Fencing Style: German

Prerequisites: Strength 3

Special: The German style can only be used when wielding a great sword. Because of this heavy focus (and limitation), the school's Talents only cost 10 Experience points, instead of 15 Experience as normal.

The Deutsche Fechtschule ("German school of fencing") was taught in the Holy Roman Empire during the Medieval and Renaissance periods. As Italian fencing developed, so the German style fell out of practice. Originally teaching several varied styles, such as polearms, grappling, the quarterstaff, and even mounted combat, its primary focus was on the great sword, known as the *Zweihänder* (two hander). Considered archaic and ungainly compared to the modern, elegant styles developed by the French, Italian, and Spanish, it is nevertheless making something of a comeback.

Ritter Heinrich Bothe, a retired German mercenary captain, minor nobleman, and refugee from the war ravaging the Holy Roman Empire, recently opened a salon in Paris. Few gentlemen have been attracted to the school, and as a result its students have a reputation for being lower class thugs, a not-altogether undeserved one.

While many of the basic moves can be utilized with other weapons, the modern style focuses on the great sword at the exclusion of all other weapons. While its reliance on a single weapon is a great strength, it is also its primary weakness, for disarmed, the fencer can utilize none of his school's special techniques. The style is built around three basic attacking moves (known as "hews"), five master hews, and four defensive guards. Combined, these produce an array of fighting moves. Added to these are three special moves, known as the "great secrets."

While every fencing style teaches one how to kill, the German style also focuses on grappling and trips, again relying on the great sword. Movement of the legs is restricted in order to retain balance while wielding the cumbersome great sword, with triangular steps taught over sudden lunges or long strides.

Suggested Talents

The German School revolves around mastery of a single, powerful weapon. Its basic moves are remarkably simple, but highly effective. Flurry, Parry, and Riposte are all recommended Talents.

Blunt Strike represents using the flat of the blade to stun foes, or holding the sword by the blade and wielding it like a club. Since Strength is the school's prerequisite, Strong Defense is an option for those who feel defense is important. At the Gamemaster's discretion, Sweep, if not available as a general Talent, may be open to students of this style. Given the physical size and damage potential of a great sword, a student may get some mileage from Fearsome and Fearsome Attack (see *Richelieu's Guide to Nobles and Courtiers*). Students learn multiple stances,

each with different strengths and weaknesses. This can be simulated by taking Combat Aptitude.

Grappling Sword

Prerequisites: Fencing: German 4

As well as simply hacking opponents to death, students learn how to use the great sword to aid in grapples.

Benefit: So long as your character is wielding a great sword, he may substitute his Fencing: German for Brawl when making a grapple attack. Furthermore, your character may use his Fencing: German in place of his Strength for resisting attempts to break out of his grapples.

Normal: Your character must use Brawl to make a grapple attack.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to grapple a foe when using a great sword at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Leg Strike

Prerequisites: Fencing: German 4

By striking at his opponent's legs, the character hopes to drive him back or knock him prone, placing him at a disadvantage.

Benefit: Your character gains a +1 bonus to knockback his opponent when using a great sword. This bonus is only applied to the damage total for purposes of the knockback check after you've determined whether or not the blow hit. No additional damage is done, but the bonus makes it possible for your character to stagger or knockdown his opponent.

Normal: Your character's unmodified damage is compared to his opponent's Strength rating.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to four times. Each Level grants your character an additional +1 bonus to knockback your opponent.

Trip & Stab

Prerequisites: Fencing: German 4

The student has learned not only to use his blade to trip an opponent, but to follow up with a powerful stab to his prone foe.

Benefit: If armed with his great sword, the character may use Fencing: German in place of Brawl to Trip his opponent. If he successfully Trips a foe, he may immediately follow up with a 0L stabbing attack (using Fencing: German). The free attack suffers a -4 penalty, and must be a straight attack—no maneuvers (such as Called Shot or Total Attack) can be used in conjunction with it.

Normal: Your character can only use Brawl to make Trip attacks and cannot immediately follow a Trip with another attack as part of the same action.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to his Fencing roll to deliver the stab at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

English Style

Fencing Style: English

Prerequisites: Body 3

Special: English style can only be used with a long sword and buckler in combination. By spending 5 Experience points, the student can negate off-hand penalties when using his buckler as a separate weapon. This cut-down version of the Florentine Talent does not work with any other weapons.

Popular in England until the turn of the century, when it was replaced by continental fencing styles and weapons, the English style is regarded as rather uncouth and rustic. As far as many European nobles are concerned, it neatly sums up the backward nature of the English. The only salon in France is found in Calais. Its master, Salvation Jacobs, a Catholic, left England in 1604 in protest of King James's crackdown on the Catholic faith.

Although mocked by his French counterparts, Jacobs has persisted in teaching the antiquated style. Many of his students are English exiles or ex-patriots. Some seek instruction simply to keep alive the memories of olden times, others to show their contempt for the European fencing styles that now dominate, and some because the basic style is relatively easy to master. Jacobs cares little for his pupils' motives, so long as their money is good.

Jacobs is a known critic of King Charles I. The English king's spies report him a harmless crank, but Jacobs is more dangerous than they realize. He seeks to place a Catholic monarch on the English throne, and actively sponsors those who seek to overthrow Charles. A small cadre of fanatical Catholics within the school is secretly being trained to assassinate the King. Richelieu's agents have approached him in a bid to recruit him as a spy, but his hatred of King Charles doesn't run quite deep enough to openly support France.

The school, which operates out of a disused tavern, focuses entirely on wielding the long sword and buckler in combination. Students begin with just a long sword, getting them used to basic fencing moves. Only when they have proven their competency is the buckler introduced. As well as learning how to use the small shield to deflect blows, students are taught how to use the buckler as an effective weapon. Rather than academic subjects, the school's curriculum covers more practical skills—Athletics, Intimidation, and Warfare.

Jacobs is currently looking for a student capable of running a Parisian branch of the school. Such a candidate would need to have learned the school's special Talents to at least a basic level, have Fencing: English 8, possess the social abilities required to attract students and patrons, and ideally be French. In return for running the school, the instructor would retain 50% of the income as his salary.

Suggested Talents

The English style is unusual in that it teaches a strong

offense and defense in equal combination. Florentine is very useful, as it allows the buckler to be wielded as a separate weapon. Riposte allows the student to block with his buckler and follow up with an immediate attack with his primary weapon. Flurry is typical of the school's furious fighting, and Parry is the primary defensive Talent. Given the school's emphasis on physical stamina, both Strong Attack and Strong Defense can be handy.

Students can take Knockout Blow and Staggering Blow with regard their buckler. Fencing: English replaces the Brawl prerequisite. To differentiate the Talents, add "Shield" before "Blow" in each case.

Shield Bash

Prerequisites: Fencing: English 4

Students are taught how to follow up stunning blows with a rapid shield smash for extra impact.

Benefit: If your character makes a Fencing: English attack with his sword and stuns an opponent, he may make an immediate attack to deliver a 0N shield bash (using Fencing) against the same target as a free action. The free attack suffers a -4 penalty and must be a straight attack—no maneuvers (such as Called Shot or Total Attack) can be used in conjunction with it. No off-hand penalty applies to the shield bash.

Normal: Your character cannot follow up an attack with a shield bash.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to his Fencing roll to deliver the shield bash at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Special: If your character has the Florentine or Flurry Talents, he may perform a shield bash after each sword attack that leaves his opponent stunned. The Flurry penalty applies only to the initial attacks, not the follow-up blows.

Sword & Shield as One

Prerequisites: Fencing: English 4

The student has learned to strike with his sword and buckler to deliver a single, more powerful blow, though at the cost of using his buckler for defense.

Benefit: Your character can forfeit the +2 Active Defense bonus granted by his buckler and instead add +2 to his Fencing roll. Defense remains lowered until the start of the student's next turn. If the character loses his Active Defense for any reason, he may not make this substitution.

Normal: Your character's buckler grants +2 Active Defense and it cannot be traded for attack dice.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +4 bonus to his Fencing roll to deliver the twin strike at second level and a +8 bonus at third level.

Special: Because the student has already used his buckler as a weapon, this Talent cannot be combined with Shield Bash.

L'Académie de Venus

Fencing Style: Venus

Prerequisites: Charisma 3 (must be female)

Special: Unlike most academies, the school forgoes academic training in favor of more courtly pursuits, such as Diplomacy, Linguistics, and Performance.

Arguably one of the most exclusive fencing schools in Paris, the Academy of Venus caters only to women of acceptable social standing. Rather than teaching fishwives how to fence, its clientele are noblewomen, the daughters of the rich and famous, and the Queen's Musketeers. Regardless of their social status, the thought of women bearing arms is anathema to most men. The notion of actually training them to fence borders on blasphemous.

Political attempts to have the academy closed have been thwarted by Cardinal Richelieu, whose decree allowing the formation of the Queen's Musketeers has given the salon tacit approval. Indeed, he has labeled it as one of the two schools the Musketeers should consider attending (the other is the Musketeers' Academy). Rumors abound that the Queen herself trains here, though these are completely unproven. Undeterred, its critics have taken to slandering the school in a bid to sully its reputation, accusing the master, Mme. Marguerite Pelletier, of running a brothel. That the school only accepts attractive women and those with forceful personalities has not gone unnoticed by its detractors and women who fail to meet the entry requirements, either.

In order to combat these claims, the school's rules concerning men are very strict. A student may have only one male guest at a time, who is forbidden from visiting between dusk and dawn, and the student and her guest may never be alone together. The school has developed a following among young men of good social standing. Filled with romantic (or at least lustful) intentions, they loiter outside the academy in the hope of glimpsing the attractive students. More than a few have dared to scale the garden walls in a bid to get closer to the women. This inevitably ends in a sound thrashing and physical expulsion onto the streets. In addition to fencing moves, the school eschews academic pursuits in favor of good manners, courtly etiquette, courtly dancing and musicianship, literature and poetry, and a working knowledge of socially acceptable foreign languages. The school's martial style focuses heavily on distraction, students being taught to use their looks and bodies to beguile weak-willed men in a bid to lower their defenses. Unsurprisingly, students make great use of tear-away skirts (see *Richelieu's Guide to Wondrous Devices*).

Sensing a profitable business opportunity, Mme. Pelletier, a former student of the School of Dance, founded the Academy of Venus a month after Richelieu ordered the formation of the Queen's Musketeers. With the two schools competing for the same client base and offering similar social instruction, a fierce rivalry has quickly developed. Mme. Pelletier is a stunningly beautiful woman, and despite having a string of suitors, she remains un-

married (although it is rumored that she has had an "on again, off again" relationship with El Toro of the Spanish Style school for the past several years).

Although the school has a very public face as an institute for ladies of good social standing, it has a more sinister side. Mme. Pelletier is actually a high-ranking member of the Daughters of Medea. Her academy serves as both a recruiting ground and training center for the organization.

Suggested Talents

Although very much a combat style, Venus places a heavy emphasis on distracting appearance and feminine wiles. Attractive, Bold Attack, Bold Defense, Charismatic, and Combat Skill (Con) are very important Talents.

Captivate ties in well to the style's beguiling nature. Although little use in combat, Barbed Tongue can help in social situations. Tricky Fighter fits nicely, though most tricks involve feminine charms to distract foes.

Disarming Flesh

Prerequisites: Fencing: Venus 4

A quick flash of flesh can put even the most skilled opponent off his aim.

Benefit: The character substitutes her Con: Seduction rating for her Active Defense in her Defense roll when using either the Block, Dodge, or Parry maneuvers (pick one when this Talent is taken). If the character loses her Active Defense for any reason, she may not make this substitution.

Normal: Your character substitutes her Athletics, Brawl, or Melee rating for her Active Defense in her Defense roll, depending on whether she is dodging, blocking, or parrying.

Advanced: This Talent may be taken three times. Your character picks a second defensive maneuver at second level. Your character uses her Con: Seduction in place of her Active Defense with all three maneuvers at third level.

Special: This Talent only works on opponents who find the character sexually attractive.

Killer Looks

Prerequisites: Fencing: Venus 4

Your character is a flirt on the battlefield, capable of using her good looks and seductive charm as a weapon and forcing her opponent into making deadly mistakes.

Benefit: Once per combat encounter, your character can use Con: Seduction as a Skill Synergy with Fencing: Venus. This is a free action. This bonus may only be used to make attacks—never to block, dodge, or parry.

Normal: Your character cannot use Skill Synergy with Con: Seduction to boost her Fencing: Venus Skill.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. Each level allows an additional use of this Talent in a single combat encounter.

L'Académie des Mousquetaires

Fencing Style: —

Prerequisites: Firearms 4

Special: The school focuses exclusively on the use of firearms, and thus has no entry on the Fencing Style Bonus Table. Due to their prestige, members of the King and Queen's Musketeers receive the benefits of membership even if not full members.

Despite its name and the implications it carries, the Musketeers' Academy has no official relationship with the King's Musketeers, though many Musketeers do elect to study at the school. M. de Tréville has repeatedly asked King Louis to order the name changed to avoid any confusion, but Cardinal Richelieu has continually blocked this motion, claiming that the Musketeers do not have exclusive rights to the word "musketeer." As well as catering to the King's and Queen's Musketeers, who are especially welcome since their patronage boosts the salon's reputation, the school accepts students from the Cardinal's Guard, regular army musketeers, marines, and the nobility. It has yet to open its doors to the general public—the school's master, M. Armos Noir (a pseudonym), fears this would lead to an influx of ruffians and highwaymen seeking to improve their aim.

The school focuses exclusively in firearms, with equal bias toward pistols and muskets. Before they load a single ball, yet alone fire a weapon, students first learn how to clean and maintain the weapons. Next comes the basic drill of how to load the powder and ball.

Only when these tasks have become second nature for the student does actual marksmanship training commence. Students begin firing at targets placed at close range, the range being slowly extended as their competency improves. Because of the length of firing range required, the academy operates on the very outskirts of Paris, where open ground abounds.

Critics of the salon claim that shooting a man dead at 20 paces lacks both finesse and good manners. Some go so far as to claim the students are cowards, lacking the stomach to stare a man in the face while killing him. Students retort by mocking their antiquated view of war, for musketeers are now a vital component of any army, and casually pointing out that a sword is only of use if one can close with one's opponent. Countering that it takes greater skill to kill a moving man at 20 paces than one standing at arm's length rarely goes down well.

Although dueling is illegal in France, instructors turn a blind eye to students and "guests" who wish to settle disputes with firearms on the academy's grounds. Any deaths or injuries are reported as accidental misfires or the result of exceptionally poor marksmanship.

Suggested Talents

With the school's primary focus on firearms, Accuracy,

Long Shot, Musketeer, and Ricochet Shot are the most obvious Talents. Students who favor pistols should not only carry multiple pistols to save time having to reload in combat, but should seriously consider Quick Draw. For sharpshooters who intend to spend time aiming, Savvy Fighter allows them to retain their full Defense rating should they be attacked. Alertness can be useful for spotting targets and potential attackers.

Aim on the Move

Prerequisites: Firearms 4

The character has mastered the difficult technique of maintaining his aim on an opponent while moving, thus allowing him to make good an escape, close the range, or move into cover while keeping his target squarely in his sights.

Benefit: When aiming with any firearm for which he meets the minimum Strength requirement while unassisted (i.e., he cannot be using a brace, even a mobile one such as a lackey), the character may take a standard Move action and still gain the aim bonus.

Normal: Your character cannot move while aiming.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. At the second level, the character may Run while aiming. At the third level, he may Sprint while aiming.

Speed Aim

Unique

Prerequisites: Firearms 4

Your character can draw a bead on his target quicker than other marksmen.

Benefit: If your character forfeits his Move action and the use of Block, Dodge, or Parry maneuvers in the turn in which he fires, he gains a +2 aim bonus as part of his Firearms attack action.

Normal: Your character must spend a full turn aiming to get a +2 aim bonus.

Steady Aim

Prerequisites: Firearms 4

Aiming is frequently spoiled by even the most minor action from the marksman, such as breathing. Your character has learned to control his body, allowing him to maintain a steady aim for longer, and thus fire a more accurate shot.

Benefit: Your character's maximum aim bonus is +6. Aiming still requires a full turn for each +2 aim bonus.

Normal: Your maximum aim bonus is +4.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. Your character increases his maximum aim bonus to +8 at second level, and +10 at third level.

Special: Your character cannot use Steady Aim if he does not meet the Strength requirement for his firearm—long barrel firearms are too cumbersome and heavy to hold unassisted for multiple turns and maintain a steady aim.

L'Académie du Tarrasque

Fencing Style: Tarrasque

Prerequisites: Strength 3

The school and style takes its name from the tarrasque, a legendary dragon-like creature that is believed to have haunted the French countryside long ago. Its sole salon is in Marseilles (in Provence), near to the region haunted by its namesake. The school's founder and master is François Brémond, a bull of a man and former soldier. Among his pupils and admirers he is affectionately known as *Le fils du tarrasque* ("the son of the tarrasque"), or simply *Le dragon* for short. Stoic and laconic most of the time, Brémond is a true monster worthy of his nickname when demonstrating his style. Except when discussing fencing (any style), he communicates through a mixture of grunts and facial expressions.

Students begin their instruction by building up their strength and resilience through rigorous exercise. The school's methods for toughening pupils' bodies are considered barbaric by many: students are expected to stand in the center of the salon while their peers punch, beat, and beat them with sticks. Like the dragon, fencers are expected to be able to shrug off blows in combat. Only when their bodies are properly developed do they pick up a weapon.

Although it has many similarities with Spanish Style, Tarrasque students don't believe in expending energy unleashing a rain of frantic blows. Better, they say, to hit once and make it count. The school's fighting style is glacial. Slow, methodical steps and single, powerful blows are taught in preference to nimble movement and lightning-fast strikes. Once a student enters a fight, he is expected to be an unstoppable force of nature, crushing all in his path while relentlessly moving forward. Secret techniques allow students to beat aside opponents' blades and shove them back with minimal effort.

Unusually, fencers are also expected to be able to deal punishing blows with their hands and feet as well as weapons. Training begins with thin wooden boards, and ends with punching through brick and stone walls. Bruised, bloody, and broken knuckles are a trademark sign one is learning Tarrasque. Jokes abound that *Le dragon* must have been attacked by a tree, but few laugh when one of his students batters down the door they are hiding behind.

Suggested Talents

Tarrasque places a very heavy emphasis on hard-hitting attacks, brutal parries capable of inflicting harm, and shrugging off damage over finesse. Combat Aptitude and Flurry are ideal offensive Talents. Riposte compliments the style's focus in heavy, damaging parries. Given the lack of focus on defensive training, students may wish to consider High Pain Tolerance, Iron Jaw, and Robust.

Since Strength is the school's prerequisite, Strong Defense is an option for those who feel a good defense is important. Students can take Knockout Blow and Staggering Blow with regard their fencing style. Fencing: Tarrasque replaces the Brawl prerequisite. To differentiate the Talents, add "Tarrasque" before "Blow" in each case.

Beat

Prerequisites: Fencing: Tarrasque 4

By knocking aside his opponent's blade and launching an immediate attack, the student negates his enemy's ability to parry effectively.

Benefit: As part of an attack action, your character may beat his opponent's blade. Your character rolls his Fencing: Tarrasque attack at -2 and compares the results to his opponent's Strength. If your character scores more successes than his opponent's Strength rating, his opponent loses his Active Defense for resisting the attack.

Normal: You cannot beat an opponent's weapon aside to cause him to lose his Active Defense.

Advanced: This Talent may be taken three times. Your character has no modifier to perform a beat at second level, and a +2 bonus at third level.

Breaking Blow

Prerequisites: Fencing: Tarrasque 4

As well as wielding weapons with great force, characters are taught to use their fists and feet to equal effect. He knows exactly how and where to hit an object to do the most damage, allowing him to remove barriers and destroy his opponent's weapons and equipment.

Benefit: When attacking an inanimate object with his fists or feet, your character replaces his Brawl with Fencing: Tarrasque. Your character's unarmed attacks do Structure damage to objects. Every two points of nonlethal damage inflicted does one point of Structure damage instead. Additional points do cosmetic damage only.

Normal: Your Brawl attacks do nonlethal damage.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Fencing: Tarrasque bonus when attacking an object at second level, and a +4 bonus at third level.

Shoulder Barge

Prerequisites: Fencing: Tarrasque 4

Students are taught how to focus their strength into shoving opponents away.

Benefit: Your character can shove an opponent he is in melee with without having to make a charge. He gains the +2 charge bonus to his Fencing: Tarrasque roll and does not lose his Active Defense.

Normal: Your character must move before making a shove attack and loses his Active Defense.

Advanced: This Talent may be taken three times. Your character has a +4 charge bonus at second level, and a +8 bonus at third level.

L'École de la Pensée

Fencing Style: Geometria

Prerequisites: Intelligence 3

The School of Thought was founded 165 years ago in Bologna, Italy. Originally a center of learning specializing in mathematics, its transition to a fencing salon began in response to a student refuting a dean's claim that all fencing could be reduced to geometrical patterns. Although the school continues to teach geometry as part of its curriculum, its primary focus now is training fencers.

The school's moves are entirely based on geometry. Within the salon are four training rooms. In the first, two equilateral triangles are carved into the floor, overlaid so the tip of one touches the center of the other's base, and vice versa. The second room has a square divided diagonally into four quarters. The third room has a circle divided into eight equal segments. The final room combines all three shapes into one beautiful pattern. Each intersection in the pattern is given a unique number. Students work their way through the rooms, mastering the various geometrical steps available at each level before finally learning to combine them into an unlimited array of options that defy prediction.

All movement is based on following the lines of the fencing diagrams, with one's feet ending exactly at the intersection of lines. Students perform their training moves by rote, the master calling out the numbers of an intersection and which leg to move. While novices are limited to three simple points of reference, a weakness that makes them relatively easy to defeat once an opponent deduces their fighting style, a true master's moves range from short and long steps, to sudden changes of angle, to graceful arcs. Speed is also important: as a student progresses in ability, the regimes to be mastered become faster and more complex.

Before advancing to the next level, a student must complete a series of intensive practical exams while blindfolded. Because the odds of finding the pattern conveniently carved onto a battlefield are virtually nil, the complex lines and intersections must be thoroughly ingrained in the student's mind's eye.

Note that although students initially learn to fight within the boundary of a static geometrical shape, they are not expected to confine themselves in actual combat. Thus, they must have the intelligence to mentally visualize and rotate the position of the grand pattern in an instant as they move to and fro across the battlefield. Throughout their training they must be able to demonstrate this ability by responding to attacks and feints from a sparring partner.

Although based on geometry, the style is neither dull to watch nor rigid in form. What matters is where the student places his feet, not how he gets there. Thus, while some pupils perform functional steps, others are more akin to dancers, whirling gracefully and with uncanny precision. However, its reliance on geometry makes it unappealing to many swordsmen.

Suggested Talents

The style revolves around geometrical patterns, exacting strides, and precise placement of the feet.

Since Intelligence is the core attribute, Calculated Attack and Calculated Defense play to the character's strength. For added effect, consider boosting it with the Intelligent Talent. Accuracy simulates the character's precision with the blade. Geometrical defensive moves are stressed as much as offense. While Parry is the primary defensive Talent, the style works equally well with Block and Dodge. Quick Reflexes ties into a student having memorized the fencing pattern and being able to instantly know where to end his first move.

Geometry of Form

Unique

Prerequisites: Fencing: Geometria 4

Students of Geometria view the world through geometry. They are always aware of their surroundings, and the positions of their enemies. Through calculating likely courses of action as dictated by the environment, the swordsman can anticipate his enemy's likely moves and be prepared to counter them.

Benefit: Your character may use his Fencing: Geometria in place of his Initiative rating.

Normal: Your character uses his Initiative rating to determine his initiative score.

Special: Any Talent that provides a modifier to your Initiative rating, such as Quick Reflexes, applies equally to this Talent.

Geometry of Style

Prerequisites: Fencing: Geometria 4

By studying an opponent's movement and attacks, the student quickly understands the underlying geometrical patterns in that individual's fighting style and can develop a strategy to counter its strengths and exploit its weaknesses based around the training pattern.

Benefit: If your character forfeits a number of attack actions equal to 6 - his Intelligence in order to study an opponent, he may make a Fencing: Geometria roll opposed by his opponent's Brawl, Fencing, or Melee, as appropriate.

If your character scores more successes than his opponent, he gains a +2 bonus to all Fencing: Geometria rolls against that opponent until the end of the current combat. If the opponent switches to a different attack Skill or Fencing style, the bonus is lost as the geometrical patterns automatically change. If the opponent switches back to the original style the student studied, the bonus is automatically reapplied.

Normal: Your character gains no inherent benefit from studying his opponent's combat style.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. Your character has a +4 Fencing: Geometria bonus at second level, and a +8 bonus at third level.

L'École des Trognons

Fencing Style: Drunkard

Prerequisites: Con 4

Special: Can be used with improvised weapons.

It is said that the founder of the appropriately named School of Drunkards was a notorious drunk who spent more time inebriated than sober. Despite his perpetual state of intoxication, he somehow managed to avoid defeat and emerge victorious. While it is true the founder enjoyed a drink or two, he was rarely ever drunk—his “luck” was simply a mix of deception, designed to put opponents off their guard, and disguised skill.

Students are taught that deception is the better part of valor. If an opponent underestimates you, he leaves himself open to attack. By acting like a drunkard rather than a master fencer, the student may also be able to disarm or trip his foe and make it look like a total accident.

Students are notoriously loud and boisterous, deliberately calling attention to their supposed inebriated state, yet are also overtly apologetic to their opponents and self-deprecating, hiding behind the illusion of drunken luck even when victorious. This ruse is actually a double blow for their defeated foe, for not only was he beaten, but as far as any witnesses are concerned he was beaten by a drunkard. Heavy drinking actually forms a core part of the school's social activities. Its members have a reputation for being socialites rather than fencers, an illusion they take great pains to maintain.

Suggested Talents

The style favors deception and tricks. Students most often hide behind “lucky” blows and maneuvers, preferring to act like drunks. Block, Combat Aptitude, Mobile Attack, Parry, and Tricky Fighter are the core Talents.

Con is a very important Skill. Combat Aptitude and Skill Aptitude are useful in boosting its effectiveness. Savvy Fighter is helpful for maintaining the illusion of avoiding blows by luck rather than skill. Provoke can also be effective.

Drunkard's Blow

Prerequisites: Fencing: Fool 4

Students learn to disguise trip and disarm maneuvers as acts of drunken clumsiness or sheer good fortune.

Benefit: The character has a +1 bonus to perform Disarm and Trip maneuvers. The character uses Fencing: Fool in place of Brawl when making a Trip.

Normal: Your character must use Brawl for Trip attacks and has –2 to Disarm an opponent.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to Disarm and Trip a foe at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Special: Bonuses from the Fencing Style Bonus Table apply as normal. Thus, while any student who knows the basic style has +1 to disarm foes, for a –1 penalty overall,

members of the school who learn the full technique end up with a net +0 on taking this Talent for the first time.

Drunkard's Dance

Prerequisites: Fencing: Fool 4

Your character dodges and weaves erratically, confusing and misleading his foes, leaving them unsure where to strike next.

Benefit: The character substitutes his Con rating for his Active Defense in his Defense roll when using either the Block, Dodge, or Parry maneuvers (pick one when this Talent is taken). If the character loses his Active Defense for any reason, he may not make this substitution.

Normal: Your character substitutes his Athletics, Brawl, or Melee rating for his Active Defense in his Defense roll, depending on whether he is dodging, blocking, or parrying.

Advanced: This Talent may be taken three times. Your character picks a second defensive maneuver at second level. Your character uses his Con in place of his Active Defense with all three maneuvers at third level.

Drunkard's Feint

Prerequisites: Fencing: Fool 4

By acting like a buffoon before a fight begins, the student lulls his opponent into a false sense of security.

Benefit: Before making a damaging attack of any sort, your character may make a Con roll opposed by his target's Intelligence. Each success above that of your opponent gives your character a +1 bonus to his first Fencing: Fool attack roll against that foe. The bonus is lost if your character attacks a different opponent first or the combat ends before the attack is made.

Normal: Your character cannot gain a bonus by fooling his opponent.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to his Con roll at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Special: This counts as a trick, so the style's +1 Feint bonus applies to the Con roll as well.

Hardened Drinker

Prerequisite: Body 3

As part of their deceptive repertoire, students of the style are taught how to hold their liquor.

Benefit: Your character can safely consume as many alcoholic drinks as his Body rating +2. For every drink beyond that, he suffers a –1 penalty to all actions. If the character has more drinks than twice his Body rating +4, he becomes violently ill and suffers a nonlethal wound.

Normal: A character can safely consume a number of drinks equal to his Body rating before suffering a penalty of –1 per drink.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. At each level he adds two to the number of drinks he can consume before becoming drunk and being ill.

Leonardo's Academy

Fencing Style: Leonardo

Prerequisites: Athletics: Running 4

Named after its founder, an Italian swordsman of uncertain surname, the style has only recently found its way to France. It is the very antithesis of the School of Iron Stance, favoring constant movement and powerful charges over static fighting. While it has certain similarities with the Scarlotti style (Leonardo studied under Scarlotti for a short time), students of Leonardo use their movement for attack, not to avoid combat (though they are quite prepared to run away when necessary).

An essential part of the training regime involves sprinting and long distance runs, both to improve pace through technique and raw strength, and to boost stamina. Students are made to sprint until they are on the verge of exhaustion before immediately moving on to fencing practice. Students who make the mistake of remaining stationary when sparring, even to catch their breath, are beaten on the soles of their feet—the painful welts prevent them from standing still for long. Masters also encourage their students to learn to dance, though dancing is not a formal part of the curriculum.

Runs are not limited to flat surfaces, either. Battlefields can range from crowded streets to busy taverns, from dense forests with tangling undergrowth to deep rivers one must wade through, and a master of Leonardo must be able to move fast in any surroundings. Similarly, students are trained to move quickly while carrying heavy loads, such as fallen comrades. It is not unusual to see breathless students running through the streets of Paris, nimbly avoiding pedestrians, animals, and carriages.

The style has one weakness: confined spaces. Once an opponent realizes he is fighting a student of Leonardo, his best option for leveling the playing field is to try and hem his foe into a corner or move the fight into a confined space, such as a small room. Unless one is a student of Renoir, attempting to fight a student of Leonardo in an open space only plays to the strength of your opponent, a mistake that is often fatal.

Suggested Talents

The style emphasizes constant movement, never giving your opponent a chance to close to melee. Instead of standing and fighting, students run, leap, and roll, delivering swift blows before moving out of range and forcing their opponent to come to them.

Run and Swift are fundamental to this teaching, and Mobile Attack is the perfect complimentary offensive Talent. Jump is very useful, especially combined with a high Move rating, but not essential. Since being knocked prone negates your speed advantage, Rising Handspring is almost essential.

Both Dexterity and Strength are important, since these are used to calculate your Move rating. Although Strength is the base Attribute for Athletics and Fencing,

Dexterity aids both Initiative and Defense. Depending on your character's preference, Strong Defense and Finesse Attack are beneficial, as are Agile and Strong.

Fleche

Prerequisites: Fencing: Leonardo 4

A flèche is an explosive burst of movement intended to allow an attacker to deliver a powerful strike to his opponent and then move past him to avoid a counter attack in one smooth motion.

Benefit: When performing a charge to make an attack using Fencing: Leonardo, your character gains the +2 charge bonus without losing his Active Defense. Additionally, your character may continue moving after making a charge as if he had Mobile Attack.

Normal: Your character loses his Active Defense when making a charge and cannot continue moving afterward unless he has Mobile Attack.

Advanced: This Talent may be taken three times. Your character has a +4 charge bonus at second level, and a +8 bonus at third level.

Special: This Talent can be used when making a shove, but due to the force of contact required with his opponent your character cannot continue moving afterward unless he has Mobile Attack.

Mobile Defense

Prerequisites: Fencing: Leonardo 4

The student has learned that his best chance of surviving is to keep moving, never giving his enemies a chance to accurately target him or anticipate his position.

Benefit: Your character may use his Move rating in place of his Defense rating. If your character loses his Active Defense, he loses his Mobile Defense ability as well.

Normal: Your character cannot use his Move rating in place of his Defense rating.

Advanced: This Talent may be taken three times. Your character has a +2 Move rating for the purposes of calculating his Active Defense at second rank, and +4 at third level.

Sprinter

Prerequisites: Fencing: Leonardo 4

An intensive training regime has built up the character's stamina, enabling him to sprint for longer distances before tiring.

Benefit: Your character may sprint for a number of turns equal to double his Body rating before having to exert himself. In addition, he need only rest for half his Body rating number of turns before sprinting again.

Normal: Your character can sprint for a number of turns equal to his Body rating before having to rest or exert to continue sprinting.

Advanced: This Talent may be taken three times. Your character may sprint for his Body rating x 3 turns at second level, and Body rating x 4 at third level.

Rodriguez's Academy

Fencing Style: Rodriguez

Prerequisites: Dexterity 3

Special: The style requires a dagger in either hand.

Alberto Rodriguez was not a rich man, nor was he particularly well educated. He grew up on the streets of Toledo, surviving on his wits, his reflexes, and his skill with a dagger. Desperate to escape his wretched life, he joined the navy (others say he was press-ganged into service). His skill with a blade proved most effective on the crowded decks and in the rigging.

Rodriguez left the navy a rich man. He claims he served aboard a successful privateer, but refuses to name the ship or its captain; rumors abound he was actually a pirate. Regardless, Rodriguez had the money to start a new life, and he chose to open a fencing academy specializing in knife combat.

While noblemen and soldiers generally prefer heavier weapons, there are plenty of times when there is nothing to hand but the ubiquitous dagger. At times like these, Rodriguez's style is worth its weight in gold. Most of his clients, however, were mariners (of varying repute). Business boomed, and Rodriguez opened a second school in La Rochelle, hoping to attract French sailors.

The style focuses almost exclusively on attacking. Rodriguez knew that while there were circumstances in which a dagger was more beneficial, in most instances it placed you at a disadvantage over a longer weapon. Kill first, the Spaniard said, and you don't have to worry about the length of your opponent's weapon. Thus, students are taught to strike first and strike hard.

The academy places almost no emphasis on scholastic pursuits. While they are free to pursue such activities in their own time, Rodriguez's is a school for people who want to fight, not become gentlemen or improve their intelligence.

Suggested Talents

Rodriguez is an offensive style, favoring serpent-like thrusts and short but powerful slashes. As such, defensive techniques are few and far between.

Students who want to maximize the Dexterity requirement should invest in Finesse Attack. Those who want to be really dexterous should take Agile during character generation. A poor defensive style, students are taught to kill quickly and efficiently—Florentine and Flurry are both ideal for this. If your fencing opponents can't get close they can't harm you, so think carefully about Long Shot. As a dagger is an easily concealed weapon, the style works well with Subtle Strike. Winning is everything to students of Rodriguez, and Tricky Fighter can put your opponent at a disadvantage.

Corps-à-Corps

Prerequisites: Fencing: Rodriguez 4

Multiple Talent Bonuses

In some cases, different Talents may provide bonuses to the same roll. Whenever two or more Talents provide overlapping bonuses, only the highest bonus applies. Therefore, it is only necessary to boost one Talent to gain the benefit on all related rolls. However, there are subtleties to different Talent bonuses. When in doubt, the Gamemaster has the final say on whether a specific bonus applies to a particular roll.

Rodriguez knew that if he could get inside his opponent's reach he could improve his chances of surviving while being able to deliver lethal blows.

Benefit: Your character may make a grapple attack to enter close quarter combat with his opponent. Conduct the basic grapple as normal, except you use Fencing: Rodriguez instead of Brawl.

If you rolled more successes than your opponent, you are now in close-quarter combat. You can attack normally with your dagger while "grappling." Your opponent cannot attack or Parry.

If you rolled more damage than twice the opponent's Strength rating, you are so close that he only gets to use his Passive Defense rating for Defense rolls.

Normal: Your character cannot use a weapon while making a grapple.

Advanced: This Talent may be taken three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to his Fencing: Rodriguez roll to initiate close quarter combat at second level, and +4 at third level.

Stop-Thrust

Prerequisites: Fencing: Rodriguez 4

A stop-thrust is a do-or-die counterattack. Unlike a riposte, the student makes no attempt to parry the incoming weapon. Instead, she strikes back, hoping to down her foe and halt his attack.

Benefit: Instead of declaring a Defend action, your character may declare a stop-thrust attack. Your character makes a Fencing: Rodriguez attack at -2 (-4 if she has attacked in this round already). Each additional use of this Talent in the same turn incurs a further -2. Your opponent cannot attempt to Parry this attack, but may use his normal Defense rating.

If your attack fails to reduce your opponent to 0 Health of lower, he makes his attack roll. However, he suffers a -1 penalty for each wound inflicted by your stop-thrust (to this attack only). You may only use your Passive Defense to resist.

Normal: Your character cannot make an attack in response to an opponent's attack.

Advanced: This Talent may be taken three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to her stop-thrust attack roll at second level, and +4 at third level.

Umberto's Academy

Fencing Style: Umberto

Prerequisites: Dexterity 3

Special: The style requires the use of a main gauche in the off-hand.

Some critics of Umberto Pignatelli, the school's founder, branded him a coward, others labeled him a pacifist (not that there is much between the two in this age of near-constant war). In truth, Pignatelli simply believed in gaining as much advantage over his opponents as possible, and that meant disarming them. Although Umberto has been dead for 25 years, his philosophy lives on in the Milanese fencing school he founded.

The school's fundamental teachings are extremely simple in theory, but notoriously difficult to pull off in practice—an opponent without a weapon is already defeated. Early instruction focuses on building a solid defense, quickly moving onto techniques for rendering an opponent weaponless. Only once these are mastered does the school begin offensive training.

The school has a reputation for promoting ungentlemanly behavior. Its students don't much care: in combat the goal is to defeat your opponent, not earn his respect. Despite its reputation, the school has attracted members from the nobility, foppish types with little wish to engage in swordplay, but who wish to defend their body and honor from armed ruffians. It also has a following among pacifists and clerics, both of whom would rather end a fight without bloodshed.

Suggested Talents

The school's specialty is disabling an opponent's weapon, accurate counterattacks, and powerful thrusts.

Finesse Attack plays into the character's need for a good Dexterity, and Agile boosts this. Coincidentally Dexterity also modifies Pace, handy for pacifists who would prefer to run away when the going gets tough. Although the main gauche is primarily used for parrying, it can be wielded offensively. Hence, Florentine is very beneficial. Defensively, both Parry and Riposte play to the school's style, Talents helped by the use of a main gauche. If you lose your Active Defense then you can't Parry, so invest in Savvy Fighter early.

Bind

Prerequisites: Fencing: Umberto 4

By using his main gauche to lock an enemy's weapon, the student renders his opponent's weapon useless for attacking and parrying.

Benefit: As an attack action, your character can make a Fencing: Umberto touch attack to bind his opponent's weapon. You have a -2 penalty if your opponent has a two-handed weapons. The off-hand penalty for using the main gauche for something other than parrying does not apply when using Bind.

If successful, you do no damage. Instead, compare the opponent's Strength rating with the amount of damage your character would have done. If the damage you rolled is less than or equal to your opponent's Strength rating, your character's bind attempt fails. If you roll more damage than his Strength rating, your main gauche and your opponent's weapon are bound. While the weapons are bound, you cannot benefit from your main gauche's Active Defense bonus. Your opponent cannot use his bound weapon to attack or Parry.

Your character may break the bind as a free action. Your opponent must use an attack action to make an opposed Fencing or Melee roll (+2 bonus if he has a two-handed weapon) against your Fencing: Umberto. He may release the weapon and leave himself unarmed as a free action.

Normal: You cannot bind an opponent's weapon.

Advanced: This Talent may be taken three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to Fencing: Umberto to make the bind at second level, and +4 at third level.

Disarming Parry

Prerequisites: Fencing: Umberto 4

Your character may immediately try to disarm after parrying with a main gauche.

Benefit: Your character may reflexively disarm as part of the Parry maneuver. Resolve the Parry normally. If you succeed and your extra successes at least equal your opponent's Dexterity rating, you may make a Disarm maneuver as a free action.

Any Defense modifiers that apply to the Parry maneuver apply to the Disarming Parry ability equally. If your character loses his Active Defense, he loses his Disarming Parry ability as well.

Normal: You character parries normally.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Active Defense bonus against Fencing or Melee attacks at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Twist and Flick

Prerequisites: Fencing: Umberto 4

A foe without a weapon presents less of a threat and is often easier to kill or subdue.

Benefit: Your character suffers no penalty when performing a Disarm maneuver.

Normal: Your character suffers a -2 penalty to perform a Disarm maneuver.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to Disarm a foe at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Special: Bonuses from the Fencing Style Bonus Table apply as normal. Thus, while any student who knows the basic style of Umberto has +1 to disarm foes, for a -1 penalty overall, members of the school who learn the full technique end up with a net +1 on taking this Talent for the first time.

Other Schools

This section details a number of other fencing schools. They are presented in shorter format, and share most of their special techniques with other schools. As well as providing players with more options, they demonstrate how Gamemasters can use existing Talents to create entirely new fencing styles.

Note that Talents taken from other styles use the new school's Fencing Skill as the prerequisite. For example, students of the School of Shadows use Fencing: Nocturne with First Strike, despite the Talent being primarily associated with Renoir.

L'Academie de l'Epee Gracieuse

Fencing Style: L'Epee Gracieuse

Prerequisites: Acrobatics 4

The Academy of the Graceful Sword is the perfect marriage of dance and swordsmanship, though members of the Danse style argue otherwise. Ballet skills help the practitioner to get close to his opponent while evading his attacks and uses precise thrusts to defeat him. Special attention is paid to disarming opponents or distracting them long enough to get away, as the slight body of a ballet dancer usually can't match an opponent's raw strength.

One strength of the style is the focus needed to maintain one's effectiveness. L'Epee Gracieuse practitioners are amongst the most beautiful to watch as every movement, while improvised, looks as if it was carefully choreographed.

Suggested Talents: The style focuses heavily on movement, making Mobile Attack and Run ideal choices. The leaps and jumps of ballet make Jump worth considering, while Combat Skill (Acrobatics) ties in to the style's prerequisite. Dodge and Parry are fundamental to defense. Students with Performance may wish to consider Captivate as a means of distracting their opponents.

Style Specific Talents: Disarming Strike (see Del Rio in *Richelieu's Guide to Fencing Schools*), Flèche (see p. 10), and Stop-Thrust (see p.11).

Fencing Style Bonuses: Disarm: +1, Feint: -1, Parry: 0, Thrust: +1, Slash: -1

L'École des Ombres

Fencing Style: Nocturne

Prerequisites: Stealth 4

Special: Due to its heavy focus on blind fighting, members of the school (those with Fencing School 0) may purchase the first level of Blind Fight for 10 Experience Points instead of 15 Experience points.

Although humans have five senses, they rely primarily

Optional: Multiple Actions

Characters in *All for One* may attack, defend, and move each turn. Player characters and certain villains, though, are men of resolve and heroic deeds. Depending on the style of game, such characters may be permitted to perform multiple actions. No matter the style of game, no more than one additional attack or defend action may be gained in any given combat turn.

Gritty: This option is not available.

Low: The character must spend two Style points and exert (take a nonlethal wound). He may make a second attack, move, or defend action, but only one of the three. Defend uses the current Defense pool against a second (or third) attacker in a turn.

Swashbuckling: As above, except the character may spend Style points and exert twice in the same turn, allowing him to gain an additional attack, move, or defend action.

High: As above, except the character does not have to exert himself.

Legendary: As above, except the character need only spend one Style point for each additional action.

on their sense of sight. Unfortunately, there are many instances in which sight can be impaired, most commonly at night. The School of Shadows teaches swordsmen to hone their senses of smell and hearing. Blindfolds are routinely used in training to simulate total darkness. The school has many adherents from the Black Blades, Musketeers (and other select individuals) whose quarry is most active at night.

Suggested Talents: Given the school's specialty, Blind Fight is the quintessential Talent and should be taken during character generation. Boost your levels in it as soon as possible. Alertness is a close second. Subtle Strike is an ideal offensive Talent for those who walk in the shadows. Mobile Attack is another useful Talent when fighting those who cannot see you—by delivering an attack and moving back out of reach, your opponent is left groping in the dark.

Students develop an almost sixth sense for being able to note the location of opponents, allowing them to react to multiple attacks. Vigorous Defense should be the character's primary defensive Talent.

Style Specific Talents: First Strike (see Renoir in *Richelieu's Guide to Fencing Schools*)

Fencing Style Bonuses: Disarm: -1, Feint: +1, Parry: 0, Thrust: -1, Slash: +1

L'Épée en Bois

Fencing Style: Staff

Prerequisites: Dexterity 3

Optional: Long Weapons

As it stands, the rules allow a pike to be wielded in melee as easily as a dagger. Historically, pikes were intended to thwart cavalry charges and attack at range. At the Gamemaster's discretion, attacks made at targets closer than 6 feet or between 11 and 15 feet (the pike's maximum effective reach) suffer a -2 penalty due to their unwieldy nature and the pikeman's inability to put his full strength behind attacks. A pike's long haft also means it cannot be used to Parry an attack made by an opponent standing closer than 6 feet.

Halberds are shorter than pikes. They cannot be used to attack targets over 10 feet away or Parry attacks made within 6 feet, and still suffer the -2 penalty when used to attack opponents within 6 feet.

Special: The style only works when armed with a quarterstaff.

Although fighting with a quarterstaff (2N, Str 2, cost 2 *livres*, weight 4 lbs., two-handed) is most closely associated with England, it has been a weapon of the common people across Europe for centuries. The Wooden Sword is one of a diminishing number of martial schools still focusing on the weapon. Its style focuses on precision jabs and short strikes while maintaining a solid defense, rather than wild swings that leave one open to counterattack.

The style is considered extremely rustic, a little barbaric, and totally unbecoming for a Musketeer or noble. Any character of inappropriate social class or profession (Gamemaster's call) who learns this style suffers a -2 penalty to Social rolls.

Suggested Talents: Florentine lets a student strike with both ends of his quarterstaff in the same round, while Flurry allows him to deal multiple attacks with the same end. While Parry is the primary defensive Talent, Vigorous Defense allows the student to use both ends of his quarterstaff to block multiple blows. Riposte ties in with this nicely. To get the best from both, the student really needs Parry.

Students can learn both Knockout Blow and Staggering Blow for use with the quarterstaff. Fencing: Staff replaces the Brawl prerequisite. To avoid confusion, add "Staff" before "Blow."

Style Specific Talents: Dirty Blow (see *Del Rio* in *Richelieu's Guide to Fencing Schools*), Trip & Stab (see p. 3; the follow up attack inflicts 0N damage).

Fencing Style Bonuses: Disarm: -1, Feint: -1, Parry: +1, Thrust: +1, Slash: 0

The School of Pike

Fencing Style: Pike

Prerequisites: Strength 3

Special: The style can only be used when wielding a pike or halberd.

Developed for use in massed ranks, the pike, a lengthy and cumbersome weapon, can be a moderately effective melee weapon in the hands of a skilled fencer. The style focuses on attacking opponents at range, for the pike's great weakness is its inability to be of much use against attackers who get too close. Students are advised to master other weapons to cope with such circumstances.

Suggested Talents: With the pike unsuitable for Parrying at close range, the best option for staying alive is a strong attack and the ability to shrug off damage. Strong plays to your character's need for a high Strength, and Strong Defense turns his offensive power into a defensive boon. Since Parry might be limited (see the sidebar), Talents like Iron Jaw and Robust are essential.

Style Specific Talents: Set for Charge (see below)

Fencing Style Bonuses: Disarm: -1, Feint: +1, Parry: -1, Thrust: +1, Slash: -1

Set for Charge

Prerequisites: Fencing: Pike 4

When charged by an opponent, your character may set his pike to receive the charge.

Benefit: If your character has not acted in the turn, he may respond to an enemy's Charge maneuver by making a Fencing: Pike attack at -4 when the opponent reaches a distance of 10 feet. The attack must be a straight attack—no maneuvers (such as Called Shot or Total Attack) can be used in conjunction with it.

You automatically interrupt your opponent, as if you were holding your action, and your initiative is adjusted as per the rules for holding actions. Set for Charge may be used a maximum of once per combat turn.

Normal: Your character cannot interrupt an opponent's action unless he is holding his action.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to Fencing: Pike to thwart the charge at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

🌀 New Rules 🌀

Clarifications

Feint: The Feint entry in the Fencing Style Bonus Table refers to general tricks made using a melee weapon. It uses the Trick mechanics, with Fencing as the governing Skill. A specific Feint maneuver is detailed below. Fencers use their style's modifier for this maneuver as well.

Thrust & Slash: These are basic Fencing attacks, in the same way as kick and punch are both Brawl attacks. The entries are representative of styles, and have no specific associated game mechanics. A fencer is naturally going to use the most beneficial attack, but there may

be instances when his options are limited. For instance, slash may not be possible inside a crowded carriage, and thrust is of little use when trying to hack through a rope or perform the Sweep maneuver.

New Firearms Rules

Bracing a Musket: Muskets are not only heavy, their long barrels make them extremely difficult to aim unassisted. As well as using musket stands to reduce the Strength requirement by two, characters gain similar benefits if resting the barrel on a wall, tree, or even a lackey's shoulder. If the brace is inanimate and immobile (Gamemaster's call), the range is also increased by 10 feet, as per a musket brace. In general, lackeys are too nervous to make the weapon stable.

Muskets in Melee: Due to their length and cumbersome nature, muskets are easy to knock aside. When used against an opponent at point blank range, the opponent may choose to use Block or Parry in place of Dodge.

New Maneuver: Feint

A feint is a maneuver, made using the blade or body, designed to distract or mislead an opponent into either parrying prematurely or believing he has exploited a weakness that does not in fact exist. Feints are not easy to perform, and are recommended only for master swordsmen. Performed badly, a feint actually leaves the attacker open to a potentially devastating attack from his foe.

The attacker forfeits his attack action. Instead, he makes a Brawl, Fencing, or Melee roll opposed by his opponent's Brawl, Fencing, or Melee. Whoever rolls the most successes gains bonus dice equal to the difference in successes. No one benefits in a tie. These dice may be added to the winner's next attack or defend action, or divided between them as he wishes. The dice can only be used against that opponent, and are lost if not used by the end of the following turn.

Example: Marcel (*Fencing 8, Intelligence 2*) is dueling Paul (*Fencing 6, Intelligence 3*). In order to test his opponent's skill, Marcel elects to perform a feint.

Marcel and Paul roll their dice. Marcel manages 2 successes, while Paul scores just one. Marcel gains 1 bonus die to add to his next attack or defend action. Still unsure of his opponent's combat prowess, he elects to add it to his Parry rating.

New Talents

The following Talents are open to any character who meet the prerequisites.

All for One

Prerequisites: Brawl, Fencing, or Melee 4

Your character has learned to assist his allies in combat without hampering his own abilities.

Benefit: Pick one comrade adjacent to your character at the start of your turn to act. So long as your chosen ally remains adjacent to you, your character provides him with a +2 Teamwork bonus. This may be applied to your ally's Brawl, Fencing, or Melee attack, or his Block, Dodge, or Parry roll, but nothing else. You may nominate a new ally to aid at the start of each of your turns.

The maximum Teamwork bonus your character may bestow on his ally is +2, even if you have the Skilled Assistant Talent—combat is simply too dynamic and too dangerous for your character to devote his full attention to the task of aiding a comrade.

Normal: Your character must forfeit his turn to provide a Teamwork bonus to an ally in combat.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character may simultaneously aid a second ally adjacent to him at second level and a third adjacent ally at third level.

Special: Characters are deemed adjacent when fighting shoulder to shoulder or back to back.

One for All

Unique

Prerequisites: Diplomacy 4

Your character knows how to lead men in combat and get them to function as a cohesive unit.

Benefit: At the start of any combat, your allies may agree to let your character lead them. If they do, only your character rolls Initiative. Those allies act on your Initiative score, acting in turn after you based on their Dexterity scores.

If you or an ally critically fails an Attack or Defend action, is rendered incapacitated, changes the initiative order in which he acts (such as by holding an action), or moves more than 10 feet from you then the bond breaks down immediately. All characters acting on your initiative score, including you, are automatically stunned. At the start of the next combat turn, the characters, again including you, must roll their Initiative's individually to determine in which order they act from now on.

Normal: Your allies must roll their own Initiative.

Customizing Swords

A sword of any type as described in the *All for One* rulebook, is a standard, no-frills example. Swordsmen willing to spend extra money can have their weapon modified in various ways. All prices are based on the standard cost of the sword.

Basket Hilt

A basket hilt completely encloses the swordsman's sword hand, rendering it immune to attack. A sword can have one modification from basket hilt, bell guard, and double cross guard.

Game Mechanics: The sword hand cannot be targeted

with Called Shots. In addition, a pommel strike made using the sword inflicts 1N damage.

Cost: +15%.

Bell Guard

A metal half dome that sits above the quillons (the cross guard) and protects the swordsman's hand from attack. A sword can have one modification from basket hilt, bell guard, and double cross guard.

Game Mechanics: Called Shots to strike the swordsman's hand suffer an additional -2 penalty.

Cost: +10%.

Double Cross Guard

The sword has two cross guards, giving the swordsman's hand slightly better protection than normal. A sword can have one modification from basket hilt, bell guard, and double cross guard.

Game Mechanics: Called Shots to strike the swordsman's hand suffer an additional -1 penalty.

Cost: +5%.

Cheap Sword

This is not technically a modification. A cheap sword is exactly that—a shoddy piece of craftsmanship unworthy of a true swordsman except in the most dire circumstances. Such weapons are poorly balanced, and prone to rust.

Game Mechanics: Attack rolls with a cheap sword are made at -2. A character with Fencing School 0+ who uses a cheap sword as his primary weapon gains the Bad Reputation Flaw until he procures a better weapon.

Cost: -50%. This modification cannot be added to an existing blade—it applies only to new purchases.

French Grip

The standard grip is sculpted in the Italian style. With a French grip, the hilt is contoured to allow it to be gripped nearer the pommel for extended reach. However, this comes at the cost of power and accuracy.

Game Mechanics: The swordsman can extend his arm to attack targets between 6 and 10 feet away if using a thrust attack. The attack roll suffers a -2 penalty at this extended range.

Cost: +10%.

Heavy Blade

The weight of the sword is shifted forward along the blade, giving it greater impact potential but making it harder to parry with. A sword cannot have a heavy blade and a heavy pommel.

Game Mechanics: The character gains a +1 bonus when using a slash attack, but suffers -1 to Parry. If the weapon is used to perform a riposte, the number of suc-

cesses rolled above those of the attacker is increased by one.

Cost: +25%.

Heavy Pommel

The balance of the sword is heavily weighted toward the pommel, resulting in a shift of balance. This modification makes the sword unwieldy when attacking, but easier to manipulate when parrying. A sword cannot have a heavy pommel and a heavy blade.

Game Mechanics: The character suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls with the weapon, but gains +1 to Parry. If the weapon is used to perform a riposte, the number of successes rolled above those of the attacker is reduced by one, to a minimum of zero.

Cost: +20%.

Martingale

This simple modification, which can be applied to any weapon (not just swords), is nothing more than a looped leather strap attached to the pommel. The swordsman places his hand through the loop.

Game Mechanics: A Disarm attack does not cause the sword to fly away 5 feet per successes. Rather, the weapon dangles from the martingale. Readyng the weapon for use requires an attack action unless the character has Quick Draw, in which case it is a reflexive action.

Cost: +1 livre.

Master Sword

The sword has been crafted by a master, and it shows. The style of the hilt, the sheen of the blade, the way it moves in the wielder's hands are all indicative of its origins. Such blades produce a mixture of awe and fear in those who see it. Note that a master sword is rarely ever gaudy—a bejewelled weapon is the mark of a dandy, not a master swordsman.

Game Mechanics: When the character's reputation as a swordsman is mentioned and his weapon visible, he gains a +2 bonus to Social rolls.

Cost: +100%. This modification cannot be added to an existing blade—it applies only to new purchases.

Pommel Blade

Invented by a Del Rio master, the pommel blade is a short, spring-loaded spike concealed in the lower part of the hilt. It is triggered by a simple catch as a free action. Retracting the spike requires an attack action. Using a pommel blade is a sure way to stain one's reputation.

Game Mechanics: When used to make a pommel strike, such as with Dirty Blow, the weapon inflicts 1L damage. If a character's use of a pommel blade is reported, word spreads quickly. The cur gains the Bad Reputation Flaw until the end of the next adventure.

Cost: +50%.